

Chain of Being™

THE FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME OF EPIC ABSURDITY



WHOSOEVER PULLETH THIS
AXE FROM THE STONE SHALL
BE ONCE & FUTURE RULER
OF ALL NORFACORDIA





**GAME CONCEPT AND
DEVELOPMENT BY:**

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Chain of Being™

THE FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME OF EPIC ABSURDITY

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DEDICATION

This game is dedicated to our hope for a rational future as we humans work to resolve our differing points of view and solve our many problems, keeping in mind the knowledge that life will never be perfect, and retaining a sense of humor rather than a sense of despair.

DISCLAIMER

This book is not based on an idea by L. Ron Hubbard and Gene Roddenberry. No animals or monsters were harmed during the creation of this manual. All supernatural and mystical phenomena and entities described and ignored herein are entirely fictional. No offense toward preternatural creatures not mentioned is intended. Product may cause strange fits of laughter; if this happens, flush your head in cold water for five minutes and consult a comedian. Limestone Publishing is not liable if you teleport yourself into a wall while using this product. Limestone Publishing is also not liable for any damages resulting from headwashing performed at the prompting of this disclaimer.

Chain of Being: A Seriously Humorous Fantasy Roleplaying Game is the first of at least two roleplaying games set in Paranesia, the *Chain of Being* universe.

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In Memory of Yozan Pitwickler



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APPENDIX 253

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 1

On Gameality: The Chain of Being Universe

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Welcome to Paranesia, the world of *Chain of Being* — once an ordinary fantasy world, now radically transformed by the overthrow of the old gods. Unlike more conventional fantasy games, *CoB* encourages you to explore your wackiest creative impulses and immerse yourself in a world where just about anything imaginable can and does happen, given the right set of circumstances.

In the world of Paranesia, a Renaissance has come to pass, ending many millennia of divine oppression. Today there are superheroes and giant mechanical battle machines, aliens and people who know that their world is really a roleplaying game. Corporations struggle for control in soda wars, necromancy is an industry, and governments work to master interterrestrial travel. Magic is diverse, creative, and, above all, *silly*. Yet at its heart Paranesia is still a traditional fantasy world, with all the ordinary fantasy trappings...

ROLEPLAYING

To play, you'll need a few things.

- A character sheet for each player, on which he will keep a record of the traits his chosen fictional persona possesses. Character sheets are available in this book, on page 254. You have permission to photocopy said character sheets for personal use. Rules for understanding them are in Chapter 6.
- Two ten-sided dice. These are available in most hobby stores.
- An understanding of some basic rules (all of which you can glean from this book).
- Your imagination and the imaginations of a few friends, one of whom is willing to be the gamemaster (also called the Cobbler). Friends can be a bit hard to come by, but if you use your imagination, you will likely be able to obtain some. Imaginations are even harder to come by, but if you use your imagination, you'll probably be able to find one of those as

well. Gamemasters, on the other hand, are available in six packs in most hobby stores.

Other things which are useful but optional include: CoBulator software, which you can download for free at www.limestonepublishing.com, and miniature figurines (or some other kind of marker) to help you keep track of your character's position relative to the other characters and the (fictional) game environment.

What's Fantasy Roleplaying?

The phrase "fantasy roleplaying" usually refers to roleplaying in a fairly specific type of setting. It's a universe populated by various beings inspired largely by fiction writers like J. R. R. Tolkien — lighthearted elves, bearded dwarves, stupefyingly idiotic trolls, and many others. Fantasy civilization is based very loosely on a blend of aspects of ancient, medieval, and modern Western culture and folklore, usually with bits from other cultures thrown in here and there. It's made of vast kingdoms and small villages, strange geographies, and economies based on precious metals. Tribal cultures, feudal monarchies, and other governments dominate various areas. Though fantasy technologies are generally primitive (suspended perpetually in the early gunpowder era), magic is a powerful force that more than makes up for these limitations in most respects, making possible everything from fireballs to floating cities. Supernatural creatures are fairly common, and the gods are real and sometimes quite active in mortal lives. As a whole, the world is a mysterious place, full of dangers and unknowns. There are invasions and revolutions. And there is a surprisingly large number of big dungeons. Perhaps the most essential elements of fantasy roleplaying, though, are the adventurers — the wizards, fighters, thieves, clerics, and so on who venture forth on quests, providing the players with characters.

CoB is definitely fantasy roleplaying in this sense of the phrase. However, it's also fantasy roleplaying in a much broader sense — it's *imaginative fiction*. In *CoB*, fantasy



In Paranesia, one out of four monks is very, very silly indeed.

means more than just gaming in a world with castles and kobolds — it means you take a totally open-ended approach to what can happen. In other words, there are no more restrictions on what kinds of concepts you can incorporate. We've added comic-book style superheroes, philosophical movements, conspiracies, aliens, mechanical battle machines, interactions with the real world, and a whole host of other stuff in addition to the basic swords-and-sorcery approach. You're welcome to add anything else you can think of.

What's Humor Fantasy Roleplaying?

Humor fantasy roleplaying is just what it seems to be — fantasy roleplaying with an emphasis on comedy. So why add humor to a fantasy game?

In a typical fantasy roleplaying setting, you're likely to find an interesting mix of ideas lifted from fiction, myths, folklore, archetypes, fairy tales, and actual history. Traditionally, it's a world where adventurers gain most of their life experience by killing things, and vast sums of money lie around in caves and labyrinths guarded by what one would presume to be very bored monsters. In a fantasy world, a cleric is just about as likely to attempt to murder you for your gold as a thief or a fighter, and whole classes of people earn their livings by bumbling from one mishap to another and stealing enough treasure to totally destabilize the local economy. Without a twinge of guilt, witches fatten up the neighbor children and have them for lunch. Towns are routinely terrorized by fierce dragons and wizards with nebulous motivations. Fighters walk away from battle unfazed by even the most severe wounds. Mages are annoyingly mysterious runts who look contemptuously upon their muscular companions. Death is a minor setback for the wealthy. Evil is accepted by most as a valid philosophical position. Elves prance about the countryside, dwarves putter with pyrotechnics, and trolls while away the hours digging spiked clubs out of their thick, gnarled hides. And yet, despite all this, fantasy roleplaying games generally aren't intended to be funny.

CoB is *humor* fantasy roleplaying mainly because — whether you've noticed this before or not — fantasy worlds make hilarious campaign settings. Fantasy is full of conventions that virtually beg to be parodied, and humor fantasy roleplaying provides the perfect opportunity to twist around the many clichés with anachronisms, parodies, and exaggerations. Furthermore, *CoB*'s tendency to blur the boundaries between genres often has a somewhat silly effect on games. Frankly, it's kind of hard to keep a straight face when you're playing a superhero trying to stop a meteor from colliding with a coven of witches.

The Prime Directive

Nothing in this book is canon. Every concept is subject to change, there are exceptions to every rule, you can change any concept you don't like, and you're the most important part of the game. *CoB* is about imaginative, amusing, and compelling storytelling — *your* stories, the way you want to tell them.

Despite this sort of zaniness, the world of *CoB* remains in many important respects a traditional fantasy world. Many of the clichés normally associated with storytelling in general and roleplaying in particular remain; the main difference is that the various preposterous situations and clichés that are a normal part of most fantasy are embraced rather than ignored or downplayed. In the *CoB* world, hanging out in a pub may really be the easiest path to adventure. Mortal wounds really aren't necessarily fatal. And the most lucrative opportunities for earning extra income really do involve dungeons.

If you've been roleplaying for a while, you may be able to remember a few really goofy fantasy games which took place early in your gaming career. *CoB* is your chance to relive those ludicrous experiences. If, on the other hand, this is your first time playing absurd fantasy, welcome! A world without boundaries awaits you.

Beyond Humor Fantasy Roleplaying

As a humorous roleplaying game, obviously *CoB* is normally played as a comedy. That's why the universe is structured so strangely, and that's the main sort of assistance you'll tend to get from Limestone Publishing supplements. But you'll also find help adding other narrative elements. Drama, action, and heroism are all welcome parts of the atmosphere of the game, and tragedy and horror have their place as well. So if romance, complex themes, elaborate tactical scenarios, and other elements like these suit your fancy, by all means, incorporate them into your stories.

You can take this game to all sorts of weird places. You can still be playing *CoB* if you bring your characters into another roleplaying game. You can still be playing *CoB* if your characters emerge into the real world and get jobs as chartered accountants. You can even still be playing *CoB* if your characters subsequently undergo cryogenic freezing and remain dormant until the year 2267, at which time they decide to devote themselves to blowing up alien installations. There are always reasons why your "ordinary" game of *CoB* can change radically for a while, or forever, if you desire.

WELCOME TO *CoB*

Before you plunge into the world of Paranesia, it's helpful to understand some basic concepts about the nature of the *CoB* world and about humor fantasy gaming in general.

The Great Chain of Being

Among Paranesian scholars, the *chain of being* is a metaphor for the structure, purpose, and organization of the Paranesian universe. It defines a hierarchy upon which all things can be ranked according to their cosmic value, function, and significance. Everything in Paranesia has a position on the chain of being, and everything behaves accordingly. From the mightiest god to the lowliest peasant, from the most terrible fiend to the noblest paladin, everything has a place.

Purpose on the Chain of Being

Traditionally, the chain of being dictated that all things

Levels on the Chain of Being

The now mutable levels on the chain of being are these:

- **Nonexistence:** The lowest category on the chain of being is comprised of things which don't exist, not even in the fictional context of the game world. Naturally, there are no examples of things in this category.
- **Substance:** Things which have substance but nothing more are those inert forms which exist in gameality. Even if given the capacity for thought, they are not capable of perceiving their environment or reacting to it (except in some cases, such as if they are magically animated). A stone or a puddle of water fall within this category.
- **Body:** When a substance gains at least rudimentary methods of locomotion and perception (although not necessarily the means to use them), it has a body. A plant and a mech fall into this category.
- **Brain:** Things with brains are capable of initiating action, although unless they have minds, they lack the volition to do so. This means that they are capable of responding to simple commands, although they don't necessarily (that depends on the circumstances). Most skeletons and zombies, as well as some golems, fall into this category.
- **Soul:** Beings with souls have an immortal nonphysical component. Without a mind, this component isn't especially useful. A human without a mind (and thus in a coma) falls into this category, though there are very few other examples.
- **Conscious Mind:** Something with a conscious mind has the ability to think and initiate independent action of its own volition. Because it is merely conscious and not sentient, however, it is not especially sophisticated in its thinking. Examples include the cow and the squeaver.
- **Sentient Mind:** Beings with sentient minds are just like those with conscious minds, only smarter. Humans, elves, kobolds, and even trolls fall into this category.
- **Transcendence:** Beings who have transcended become capable of performing truly amazing actions, often with the aid of ambrosia. The gods are the only beings known to occupy this category.

Sublevels between these categories also exist. In general, things that have magical replacements for the various levels on the chain are considered “unnatural,” which means that beings without magical substitutions are higher on the chain of being than those with them. Undead, for example, usually have no functioning brain (magic performs brain functions instead), meaning that they're officially unnatural and therefore inferior to other beings with real brains. Golems, thinking objects, and so forth also suffer similar stigmas. Further subgroupings also exist. A beggar, for example, falls below a ruler, and the landowner outranks the slave, though all have sentient minds. It's not fair, but that's tradition.

behave according to the conventions of heroic fantasy. Barbarians were to roam the plains in their underwear. Evil wizards were to plot nefarious schemes against the forces of

good from their towers. Knights in shining armor were to rescue damsels in distress from terrible dragons. Peasants were to scrape a meager existence from the barren soil. And adventuring parties of thieves, priests, warriors, and mages were to raid dungeons and kill ferocious monsters. While events out of line with traditional fantasy *could* happen, they weren't proper to the functioning of the universe, and so they rarely did.

When the shift in the gods of the Olympiad led to the Renaissance, the actions of the new gods redefined the chain of being. The purpose of gameality became to create comedic stories, and it became appropriate to change one's very position on the chain of being. This not only meant that evil wizards could sometimes be found roaming the plains in their underwear (or conversely that barbarians would sometimes forge melodramatic plots from towers), but that even divinity was not out of the question for those lower on the chain of being. Roles formerly off-limits to typical fantastic denizens, like superheroes and mech operators, became plausible, and exotic places, such as the mechanosphere, reality, and entirely different universes became accessible. The chain of being that once restricted the inhabitants of Paranesia now mandated: *anything is possible*.

Position on the Chain of Being

Besides defining the purpose of everything in a fantasy world, the chain of being also ranks things according to their cosmic importance. A thing's place on the chain of being is defined primarily by the parts that compose it. The basest things on the chain are mere substances, like dirt and dead wood. Things higher on the chain have increasingly complicated parts, like brains and minds. And at the top of the chain are beings with great power — the gods (see Levels on the Chain of Being).¹

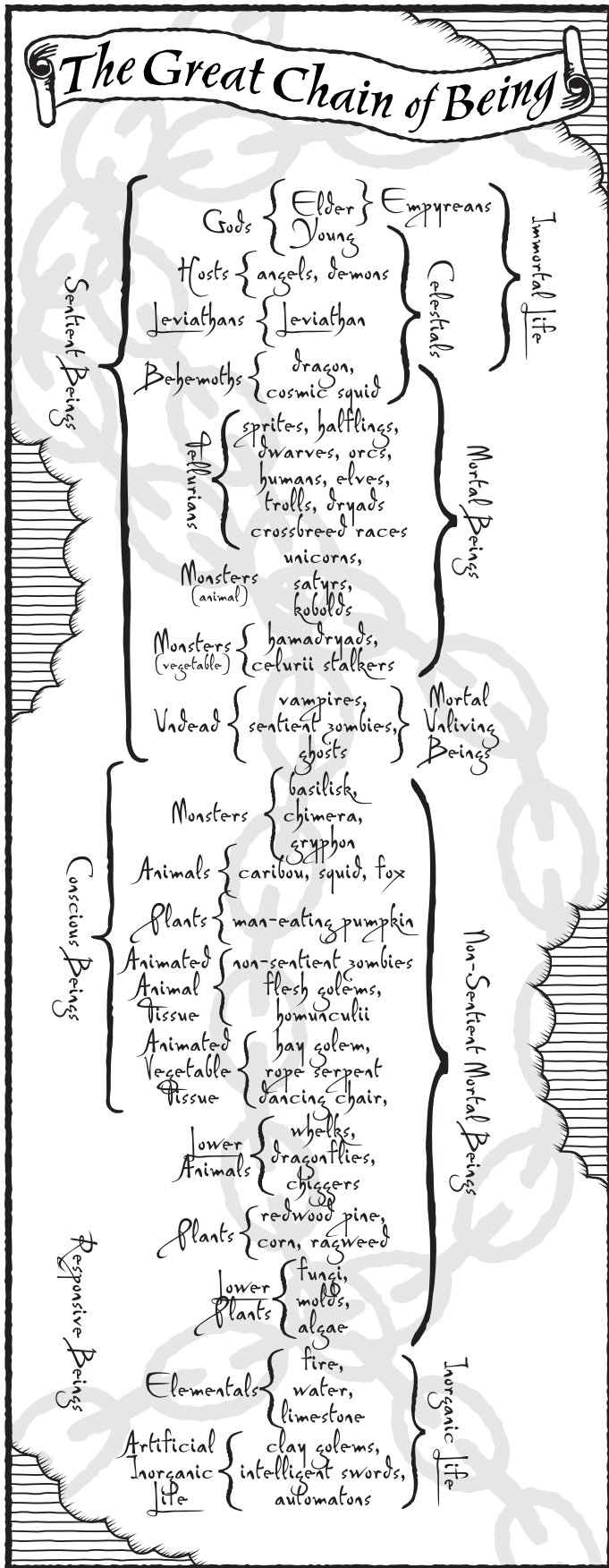
Traditionally, a person's “level” on the chain was immutable. The miracle of the Renaissance, of course, is that it is now absolutely right and proper for it to change. Everything has the potential to become more than it is, which not only means that an evil wizard isn't always what she seems, but also that even the lowliest beings can acquire divine status. Naturally, it's easiest to move up to the levels nearest to you on the chain; a donkey, for example, isn't likely to make the jump to god directly, though it is theoretically possible. Regression might also be possible, but only in rare cases.

Gameality: Such a Silly Place

The post-Renaissance world of *CoB* is always a little twisted, but there are different ways to be twisted, and different types of humor. One way a game's approach to humor can vary is in its overall consistency and attitude toward causality. Before you start, you'll have to make a decision about the kind of game you want to play and make sure all the players are happy with this approach. If you wait until after you start playing, you might have to resolve some frustrating debates about what should and what should not be possible. Two

¹ An organization known as the Meta-Oracles (see page 84) believes in a chain of being level higher even than the gods. This level consists of beings called the players, but few other people know of it.

approach, weird stuff happens almost constantly, and without apparent cause. Strange events and deviations from what one would normally expect are not necessarily explained, and gameality is not necessarily consistent. Most people are



extreme approaches toward humor gaming are presented below.

- **Willy-Nilly Silliness:** With the willy-nilly silliness

A Word on the Higher Arc System

CoB is first and foremost a storytelling game. Therefore, its system, Higher Arc, is designed to be simple enough that you can learn it quickly. You don't have to mess around with a lot of rules in order to play *CoB* — you can just learn the basics and jump in. If you're the kind of gamer who prefers to game with a minimum of rules, just reading Chapter 2 (On Rules) and Chapter 6 (On Individuals) should be enough.

However, detail can be an important part of a story, and more complicated rule permutations can sometimes make a roleplaying situation more dramatic and exciting. More rule options can help you create more diverse, entertaining characters and situations. Also, there are entertaining elements to roleplaying which don't directly pertain to storytelling. Having a character who grows in power as time passes has its own rewards, as does engaging in tough challenges and coming out on top when there was a real possibility of failure. That's why Higher Arc also has rules for doing all the other sorts of things that make roleplaying fun. These rules — which are designed to be consistent with each other and thus be easily customizable — can be used by some groups of players and ignored by others, or used sometimes and ignored at other times, depending on your group's preferences.

insane in one way or another. This is a Renaissance which has gone more or less totally haywire — conventional causality has almost completely broken down, resulting in a totally freeform, seat-of-the-pants kind of game.

- **Structured Silliness:** In the structured approach to silliness, everything that happens makes sense within a certain bizarre framework. Every event has a cause, although often not the cause you might expect. Pure nonsense and randomness are rarely factors. Renaissance or not, a good many people in the world are relatively normal, although just about everyone has a few eccentricities and individual characteristics. Totally wacky beings exist, and your players might be examples of them, but not everyone is weird. You'll sometimes run into people who'll be put off by outlandish behav-

A Word on *CoB* Humor

One thing you shouldn't do is allow this manual to tell you what's funny. If you think that something is funny, then it is. Despite a generally positive theme, *CoB* humor can be light or dark, rude or proper, campy or dramatic, punny or non-punny. Slapstick is welcome if you like it, as is irony. Dry humor fits in fine, as does aqueous humor. *CoB* can be parodic and satirical or just silly, full of scathing societal criticism or just lighthearted homage.

ior. And although totally random, apparently nonsensical events can happen in certain areas or at certain times, there's always a reason — maybe the structure of gameality is breaking down, or commies have been messing with the game mechanics, or something.

Generally, *CoB* is designed to accommodate the second type of game. We find that consistency is a more satisfying comedic and dramatic device than incoherence, and that a healthy dose of normality sets a standard against which the bizarre can be contrasted. However, *CoB* can be whatever you want it to be, and we strongly advise you not to let some stupid paragraph written by people you've never met tell you what to do. No, not even this one.

Humor from the Mundane

As you glance through the *CoB* manual you're currently reading, you may notice that while it offers a lot of sugges-

Facing the Camera

Facing the camera is a metaphor used to describe what a character is doing when, as a result of her knowledge or her player's, she acknowledges the fact that she is (in reality) nothing more than a character in a roleplaying game. Facing the camera can be a frequent activity for a character (as it often is for anyone who actually knows that he's fictional), or it might occur only occasionally when a character is granted mystical insight into the nature of gameality. By convention, "facing the camera" temporarily shatters "the lens," resulting in the slightly audible sound of breaking glass. Facing the camera is sometimes called "breaking the fourth wall."

tions for creating amusing stories and provides lots of bizarre equipment, spells, characters, and so on, not everything in it is funny. It also contains a variety of ordinary objects, a few perfectly normal spells, rules governing typical activities, and so forth. This is because a great deal of the humor you'll be creating while playing *CoB* results from an interaction of unexceptional things. Raiding a dragon horde isn't an especially funny concept, and even the idea of doing it in the middle of the day while roaring drunk isn't necessarily hilarious. But if you tackle such a mission with the right mindset, or if you have a character with a few strange ideas, you'll undoubtedly find plenty of reasons to fall on the floor laughing as you go along.

Even the simplest things can be hilarious when they interact properly. Castles aren't funny. Casting an illusion spell isn't funny. Sneaking around in the dark isn't funny. But if we didn't provide you with a way to do these things, you wouldn't be able to sneak into the royal castle, pose as the emperor long enough to enact legislation establishing an expensive fine for the public consumption of cheese, and sneak out again before breakfast.² The manual will give you plenty of ideas for how to derive humor from the ordinary and supply you with oodles of inherently humorous things to get you through the dry spots.

Games Other Than *CoB*

Obviously, *CoB* is not the only roleplaying game in the universe, and other games sometimes devote space to things that *CoB* doesn't cover, or doesn't cover in detail. In such cases, there's no reason why you can't combine games. We particularly recommend supplementing the information provided in the *CoB* manual with spells, equipment, monsters, and so forth from other games, but obviously you can use as many elements from other games as you like. You can even mix rules, or use *CoB* organizations, spells, and so forth in other games. And because *CoB* is intentionally multi-genred, almost any other setting has elements which will fit right in (even when, and sometimes especially when, they may have nothing whatsoever to do with *fantasy* roleplaying).

The Ages of *Chain of Being*

Another thing you need to decide on is the age in which you want to play *CoB*. The easiest answer (and the one we'll be assuming for now) is probably about a millennium after the start of the Renaissance, when the immediate chaos of the changeover has died down and all the people who would remember it have kicked off.

Alternatively, you could play in the dark ages, when those who favored a less serious approach to life were still living underground. You could be one of the brave few who fought for (or one of the brave not-so-few who fought against) silliness. You could play right after the beginning of the Renaissance, or even shortly before it. Or maybe your characters are even partly responsible for bringing about the Renaissance.

AN ABRIDGED HISTORY OF GAMEALITY

Gods are seldom forthcoming to mortals concerning their own histories or their knowledge about the metaphysics of the universe. A few deities are so powerful that they regard individual mortals as unworthy of their contemplation. Even if a mortal can manage to acquire an audience with a god, most of them appear to consider direct requests for such information akin to blasphemy. As a result, reliable information on deities or on the Paranesian cosmology in general is extremely rare, and there exist very few records of early times. Still, mortal scholars have managed to put together what isolated facts they know to come up with a kind of abridged history. Some of this information follows.

The Dark Times

In the dark times, the authority of the gods was absolute. Life for most consisted of bland subservience to authority. Odd behavior was strictly forbidden in accordance with the Code of Seriousness. No one knew that the world was really only a roleplaying game. For the most part, the people of Paranesia eked out humble and pious existences, spending their time working and being bored. It had been this way for almost as long as anyone could remember. According to legend, in these times people could actually smell the normali-

² *With a large wheel of cheddar.*

ty hanging in the air.³

Most people, be they sprites, halflings, dwarves, orcs, humans, elves, trolls, or dryads, were peasants or slaves of those who reigned above them on the chain of being. Almost no middle class existed, and only a handful of people made up the ruling classes. The upper classes ruled over their subjects oppressively, but even they had little real power, for the gods watched them closely. No one of any class was allowed to exercise much creativity, and almost everyone worked their lives away in somber piety, spending whatever precious free time they possessed praying to their gods to forgive them for having the audacity to perpetuate their pathetic existences.

In these dark days, social status was immutable. A slave was a slave for life; a ruler remained a ruler until death. Mortality, too, was necessarily a permanent affliction; there was no way of becoming much more than a generic and finite member of a race. Plagues ran rampant, privies were rare, and the dead were heaped in ditches. Tremendous inflation ensured that only a tiny few were rich. Nearly everyone lived inside hovels of dirt and sticks, except people who lived in dungeons and castles — which were almost as prone to collapsing, and usually more dangerous when they did.

Magic in those days was relatively rare and generally feared, as the gods hated those who used it. Spellcasters who became too powerful sometimes seemed to meet with untimely deaths. The only mortals with sanctioned magic were the avatars, who received their power at the whim of the gods (usually in exchange for worship).

It seemed that there was no part of life in which the gods did not interfere if they saw fit. These were the dark times.

The Coming of the Renaissance

Yet the gods were not so mighty as they led mortals to believe. Their powers were limited, and they spent vast amounts of their energy battling each other in the heavenly war. Thus, though it was not widely known, it was possible for a mortal to defy the gods and live. Those mortals who dared did great and inexplicable deeds. They raised their livestock from the dead. They built hidden castles out of metal studs and rubber. They wandered around naked in public.

As the long centuries passed, these brave and heroically silly adventurers developed their skills and their magical abilities beneath the notice of the gods. Some grew enormously in power. As they slowly became more conscious both of their divine oppressors and of each other, many began to band together out of desperation and to engage in strange behaviors in secret. Some of them even began hatching plots of revolution against the gods.

After many years, the conflict among the gods reached a crucial stage. As the gods devoted the overwhelming majority of their efforts to the war, one group of mortals seized the opportunity and crashed the celestial realm, overthrowing a very shocked pantheon. They usurped the positions of many of the old deities and proclaimed themselves the new gods, the ones who would finally bring an end to what was later called the Age of Solemnity. Then, thrilled with their victory, they deluged themselves with fermented ambrosia and plunged, intoxicated, into the making of a new era. Mere

mortals had achieved godhood! A Renaissance was at hand.

As the new gods began experimenting with their powers, they unleashed the pent-up ridiculousness of millennia upon the world. The chain of being, so long a rigid prison, now crackled with a sudden flexibility and freedom. That which was proper to the life of the mortal opened up and flooded with possibilities — now, with the right combination of fortune, skill, and foolishness, anyone could become a god, a ruler, or a lunatic. The Dark Ages collapsed as the divine tyranny ended, and a Renaissance dawned — a new world, with a newfound potential. A world with no masters — and no limits.

THE WORLD DURING THE RENAISSANCE

The coming of the Renaissance changed the universe of Paranesia utterly, and nowhere was this change more evident than on Terrek. Terrek was one of the final terraces created by the old gods in their quest for ambrosia. It is perhaps the most earthlike of all the terraces; coincidentally, it's also when *Chain of Being* usually takes place.

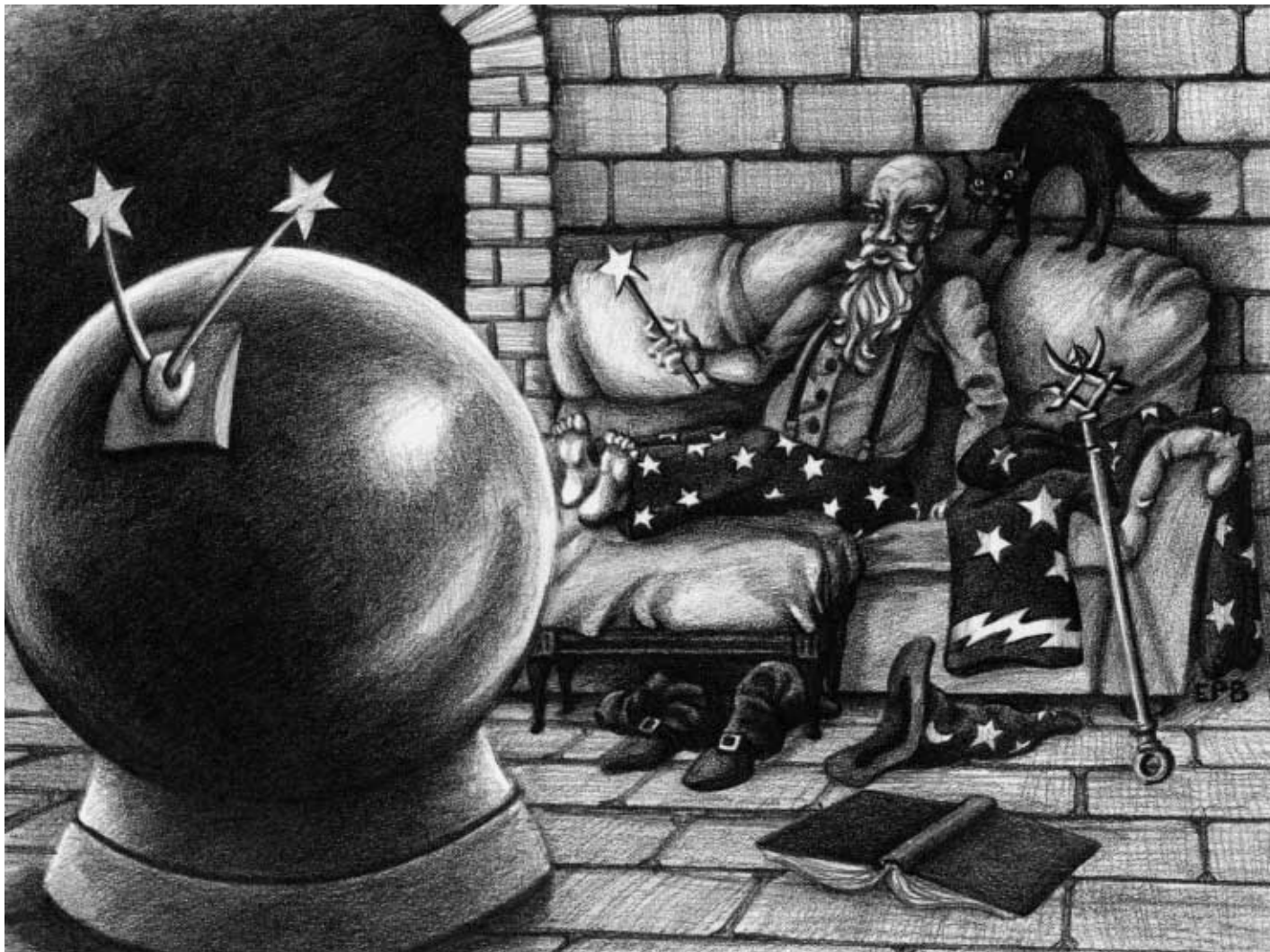
An Introduction to the Renaissance

As the new gods remade gameality in their image, they parodied the world's monsters and magical items, and gave literal meanings to clichés and hyperboles. They tormented their followers with obscure instructions and deluged their avatars with bizarre visions and new spells. They confronted mortals everywhere with the ridiculous and the seemingly impossible. Nothing was sacred to the new gods, and their strange perspectives wreaked havoc all over the mortal realm.

Mortals from cultures all over Terrek witnessed these changes and heard tales of them. Slowly, they began to absorb their significance. Many came to see that their lives no longer need be dominated by traditions, nor by gods — and they began, tentatively, to claim their freedom. As they experimented with independent action, they learned that their world was malleable, that their possibilities were practically endless, and that the bizarre was not only functional but also almost invariably *more* successful than the mundane. This realization caused an explosion of liberty, and soon all manner of different lifestyles, activities, religions and philosophies were cropping up all over.

Philosophers often sum up the changes of the Renaissance as aspects of *Mortalism*, a philosophy which stresses the importance of individualism, humor, and personal achievement. All over Terrek, people were infected with the spirit of Mortalism. Universities opened as an explosive interest in the social sciences, the physical sciences, the magical arts, and the (so-called) humanities blossomed. There was immense optimism about mortal potential, and literacy increased tremendously. People began to realize that the chain of being no longer restricted their actions. Great strides in literature, music, and the arts were made, and mortals started to learn how to tinker with forces previously assumed to be to unknowable, producing fantastic results and far surpassing

³ The stench was not entirely unlike stale beer, actually.



Tinnefisch relaxes after the gruelling commute to and from his consulting practice for the Ring Division of the Toswald Bureau of Cursed Magic Item Disposal.

anything that had come out of the Silver Age. Once-lifeless economies dominated by endless supplies of nearly worthless gold pieces sprang to life, revived from inflation-paralyzed, practically dormant markets. New professions, from therapist to lawyer and corpse carter, sprang up.⁴ While monarchies still reigned in most areas, there was a growing awareness of democracy. New faces began to jockey for power and control. Slaves rebelled, and keeping slaves began to lose its popularity as a way of life. In a few places, alternative philosophies to capitalism were devised; in many parts of Terrek, people began to settle into capital cities and city-states. A middle class emerged, and private organizations of all kinds popped up, propagating just about every idea under the sun and selling everything from Staves of Fireballs to Earwax Remover Tonic. Mages started coming out of the closet as the old taboos associated with their kind of magic lost their power and people found new ways to use magic to better their lives. New spells and devices reflected an increasingly individualistic and silly vision of the world. As people realized that they had only the vaguest awareness of their environment, they began to explore their world, spreading the Renaissance as they went.

Of course, not everything about the Renaissance was positive. With more control over one's life came the fear of mak-

ing the wrong choices. With greater freedom came the ability to cause chaos, initiate conflict, hurt people, and screw things up. With territorial expansion came colonialism and imperialism, and with the ability to transcend the chain of being came new forms of oppression from new sources. Furthermore, the Renaissance didn't affect everyone positively. Different people and places were affected in different ways, and some people and places were scarcely affected at all. In fact, while it is undeniable that the Renaissance changed the world irrevocably, most people are still quite ordinary. However, as a whole, the world is vastly different than it once was.

The Divine in the Renaissance

Even in the Renaissance, the divine still has influence. Avatars still thrive, and the old gods are no less present, even if their persecution is reduced (and generally recognized for what it is).

Divine Persecution

Oppression from above is greatly reduced in the

⁴ While not well respected in most places, corpse carters provide a valuable function in society by purging an area of potentially disease-ridden bodies. See Chapter 16, *On Corpse Carters: The Essential But Much Maligned Profession*, for more information.

Renaissance. These days, in the absence of the powerful old Olympians, it's easier for lesser gods to compete, and as a result, deities must find some way of convincing a prospective idolizer that venerating them is worth the effort. This often means offering a better "salvation package" than the god next door. Also, the gods are frequently too busy competing with each other to have time for large-scale persecution. It also helps that the new Olympians aren't as control-obsessed as the old ones.⁵

Still, it would be highly inaccurate to say that the gods no longer make life difficult for mortals. In fact, most gods (and their servants) are constantly struggling to acquire more worshippers and motivate them to achieve various divine goals. Divine tactics for gaining worship are creative and diverse,⁶ and settling on a god doesn't exempt you from being targeted by another one. Even people who do their best to avoid the divine or who make a point of sticking it to religious people might have the occasional run-in with a deity's evangelical followers.

This isn't as true of the Olympiad, which doesn't need to work so hard to maintain a gargantuan worship base. Since few people saw any need to switch religious systems just because most of the specific gods changed, the vast momentum of reverence for the Olympiad carried right on into the Renaissance. Today the Olympiad is still undisputedly the most worshipped (and hence, easily the most powerful) group of gods in Paranesia. Although more people worship the Olympiad by default than by conscious choice, the billions of worshippers they have really add up. The Olympiad does take steps to encourage their collective worship, but mostly they spend their time drunk and plotting ways to amuse themselves.

Worship & Afterlives

Despite the relative lack of divine persecution these days, it's probably a good idea to find a god to worship. Whenever a mortal dies, the destination of his soul depends on the afterlife policy of the god he worshipped during life.⁷ Most deities send their followers to some kind of afterlife based around their own particular self-concept; some others reincarnate them or "promote" them to host (angel or demon) status. Some of the nastier gods obliterate their deceased followers, leave them to walk Terrek eternally, or even ritually consume them. At least one rather strange causality-defying deity dispenses with the concept of an afterlife entirely in favor of a prelife, in which his one-day followers either suffer or are rewarded based on how they will eventually behave during their mortal life. There are almost as many different possible fates as there are deities, so in the interests of avoiding a really unpleasant afterlife, it's best to choose a decent god.

All this afterlife business isn't really a concern for a lot of people, though, since just about everybody worships the Olympiad. This means they end up in the primary afterlife realm, Hades. Worshipping the Olympiad these days is a pretty safe choice. As long as you devote at least a bit of lip service to it, you'll ensure yourself a halfway decent afterlife. Most gods with fewer worshippers tend to require a bit more devotion, though, because to them, every little iota of

ambrosia is crucial.

Naturally, the whole afterlife system isn't perfect, even aside from the unpleasantness people who choose the wrong god have to endure. Some gods misrepresent the nature of the afterlives they have available, though other gods do their best to defraud such scams. And as in all bureaucracies, sometimes mixups occur and people get sent to the wrong places.

The Olympiad was once despised by the other gods, for obvious reasons. Now that the original gods of the Olympiad are (for the most part) no longer in power,⁸ the Olympiad is no longer quite so actively resented. However, most gods are still quite jealous of its power, especially since a good percentage of the Olympiad is comprised of former mortals. Few gods acknowledge former mortals as equals, even when the former mortals are in fact considerably more powerful than they are.

Alignment: Good & Evil on the Chain of Being

If you examine the diagram of the chain of being on page 5, you'll notice that unlike on the traditional chain, where evil is located way down under inanimate objects, evil entities in Paranesia share their place in the hierarchy with good ones. This is not because we game designers endorse the doing of evil deeds. Rather, it's because in Paranesia, cruelty doesn't necessarily subordinate a person to good beings in terms of ability, status, or inherent cosmic acceptability. As much as the forces of good would like to believe otherwise, the universe doesn't discriminate against evil.

Further, in Paranesia the distinction between good and evil isn't always clear. All sorts of cruelty and insanity are frequently called good, and even shining examples of benevolence or malevolence are rarely without both negative and positive consequences. In any case, Paranesians do the things they do for a whole slew of complex psychological reasons, and most of them aren't motivated primarily by considerations of good versus evil or order versus chaos.

Prejudice & Race Relations

When it comes to prejudice, in some important respects, Terrek is an idealized version of our own world. Here the practical effects of the physical differences between the sexes are nonexistent (or so minuscule as to be irrelevant), and rigid ideas about gender roles are uncommon. For all purposes, there is equality of the sexes. Just as irrelevant to most people are superficial physical differences, such as one's skin pigmentation or the shape of one's eyelids. Most everyone regards these trivial differences much like real world people usually regard eye or hair color. Real-world racial characteristics are just as variable as traits like hair color, and they are passed on from generation to generation in exactly the same way. Prejudice based on sexual orientation is similarly negli-

⁵ Although some gods are still surprisingly successful persecutors, especially in isolated areas where life is so dull that people regard live sacrifice as welcome diversions.

⁶ Just a few popular tactics are advertisements, brainwashing, avatar training, and threatening.

⁷ If you don't worship a god during life, you'll most likely become a ghost.

⁸ Of course, old-Olympiad gods Hades and Aphrodite have managed to stick around.

gible.

Don't let these splashes of utopianism confuse you, though. The people of Terrek still abuse each other quite a bit, and examples of cruelty aren't that difficult to find. Prejudice exists — people simply base it on other traits. The eight mortal races have far more biological and cultural differences from each other than any real life races do, and in most places, people aren't shy about expressing their opinions about them. Racial discrimination, while not by any means a constant, is neither a rarity.

Despite these racial conflicts, Terrek has a thriving world culture. All eight races mix freely in most large cities. In many other locales, a few of the races are common, while others are less numerous but present. Humans are the most populous of the races and, in general, individual humans are unlikely to isolate themselves from other races. As a result, humans tend to dominate the communal culture. Members of the other races tend either to make their homes in small communities with members of their own race (this is the traditional way) or to adapt to communal culture. Of course, many people forgo settlement entirely. See the racial descriptions on Chapter 4 for more information on how different cultures live.

FANTASY WORLD PHYSICS

Somewhere beyond the spiraling mists of unknown time and space, a group of entities gathers together in a chamber. There they consult texts, speak of arcane formulas, and repeatedly toss fistfuls of glyph-inscribed polyhedra onto a flat plane. They doodle on scraps of parchment and speak of amazing or impossible deeds, gesticulating and occasionally ingesting a variety of greasy substances. The occasion is intense, yet mirthful; their invocations are earnest, yet bizarre. But as incomprehensible as it may seem, the gathering has a purpose, for the thoughts and words of these beings shape the very fabric of a series of impossibly ridiculous events which make up a story — then a whole web of stories — and finally the entire world of *CoB*. To understand how a bunch of people sitting at a table can generate an entire universe, an examination of gameality's most basic constituents — the particles and energies that make up Paranesia — is required.

Paranesian Laws

In addition to all the ordinary logical, causal properties of the universe, the world of Paranesia has at least two other laws, both of which usually win out against more conventional physics. As a result, the universe has some peculiarities which make it an excellent place for storytelling.

The Dramatic Principle

The Dramatic Principle dictates that in any given situation, the most theatrical, comedic, and otherwise interesting event is the one most likely to happen. Truly inspired, dramatically interesting, or exceptionally amusing acts tend to succeed where boring or more clichéd responses fail; events resolve themselves more neatly than in real life; and the laws of the universe have been known to discriminate against

NPCs. In *CoB*, you shouldn't fight your tendency to let drama decide the outcome of a situation — that's the way the world really works.

The Principle of Game Balance

The Principle of Game Balance dictates that if a character tries to do something that will unbalance the game, he will probably fail. Any attempt to get thousands of gpeepe or take over an entire continent as a result of a single action, for example, will almost certainly not succeed. Because this is so much more satisfying, success usually comes as a result of long, concentrated effort rather than blind luck. Furthermore, because of the Dramatic Principle, attempts to grab a lot of power quickly usually terminate humorously and often at the expense of the grabber. Be wary of sudden shifts of power.

Paranesian Particle Physics

Even in a fantasy world, big somethings are made of smaller somethings. In Paranesia, the smallest possible particle is known as a *quirk*.

Fundamental Particles

Quirks are infinitesimal particles created as a result of the interaction of words and gestures inevitably exchanged between roleplayers. In a typical gaming session, zillions of quirks form, all identical to each other, and individually quite insignificant.

However, because they're not very interesting in themselves, quirks tend to attach to each other and bond into different kinds of particles. Each of these types of particles is called an element, and the four primary elements are setting, plot, style, and characterization. Legend has it that there is also a fifth element known as "theme." Considered mythical by some, theme is said to grant a significance to events which, astoundingly, extends beyond the literal.

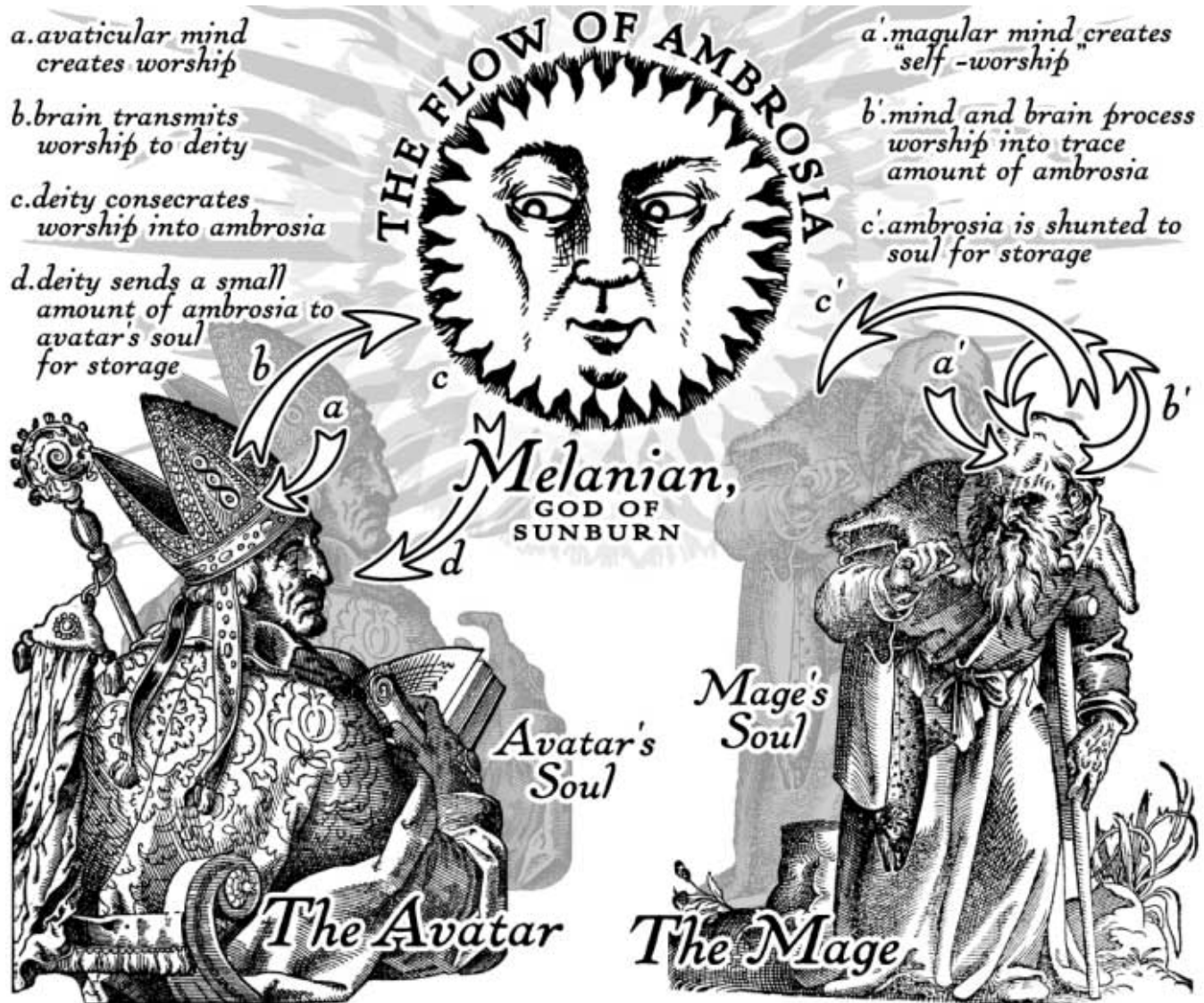
In any case, elements also bond together — less urgently than quirks, but for basically the same reasons, and in more complicated ways. In fact, the results of bonded elements are as diverse as the possibilities of a roleplaying game. And together, they make up the Great Narrative — that is, the *CoB* world and everything that happens within it.

Keep in mind, however, that the fact that the *CoB* universe is basically made out of ideas doesn't mean that the beliefs of the beings within it define the nature of the universe. In fact, it's the ideas of the *players* that make the world what it is. For the characters in gameality, the laws of the universe are quite objective and immutable — though of course they can be manipulated using certain unusual laws of physics, as defined by the rules and concept of the game.

Popular Knowledge of Particle Physics

Most people who are reasonably educated in the magical sciences know about the four elements, although there are plenty of misunderstandings of these.⁹ However, it's hardly common knowledge that the universe is made from quirks. Some scholars know, and in a sense it's only a short jump to

⁹ One particularly ridiculous popular misconception holds that the four elements are earth, fire, water, and wind.



this realization for people who already know that gameality is but a roleplaying game.

In fact, some mage philosophers who know about quirks have speculated that the particles are evidence that some power greater even than the gods wanted reality to be silly from the very beginning of the universe, citing evidence that the movements of quirks actually cause absurdity. Why exactly it took the birth of the Renaissance to set quirks in motion is unknown, although it has been suggested that they were formerly suppressed by the now defunct Code of Seriousness.

Paranesian Dualism

In the world of Paranesia, not everything is physical. Beyond matter lies a fundamental spiritual essence called aether. All objects in Paranesia are either material or aetheral, and thinking beings (mortals, deities, most animals, and so on) are usually both.¹⁰ Matter makes up a being's physical flesh, which consists of body and brain. Aether makes up a being's spirit, which consists of a soul (the aetheral equivalent of a body) and a mind (the aetheral equivalent of the brain).

How to Recognize Different Parts of the Body

A functional body, brain, mind, and soul all must coexist in any entity for it to remain alive without magical assistance. If any being lacks one or more of these parts, it will immediately stop living unless some form of magic (or technology, in rare cases) starts filling in for the missing part. Death doesn't necessarily mean the end of consciousness, but it is nevertheless usually perceived as a bad thing.

- **The Body:** The body is a being's physical form, for anyone who has such a thing. The body works more or less just like it does in real life. It usually has joints and muscles for moving around, senses for perceiving its environment, and various organs to keep itself (and the brain) alive and functioning. Occasionally, as in the case of an animated object or a golem, magic takes the place of muscles, senses, and organs.

- **The Brain:** The brain, oddly, has nothing to do with higher thought processes; rather, it merely manages all the autonomous, unconscious functioning of the physical body. It keeps the heart beating, regulates temperature, controls motor functions, processes sensory data, and performs a thousand other essential tasks. A thing which lacks a mind

¹⁰ A few beings, called spirits, are entirely aetheral.

but possesses a brain or its magical equivalent has no individuality, but can take simple actions if commanded to do so. Without a brain, a body cannot function, and the entity in question will expire almost immediately (of course, some creatures, such as golems and skeletons, have magic taking the place of their brains).

- **The Soul:** The soul is essentially the body of the mind. Although it's made from a uniform substance (rather than from a variety of different tissues and organs), its exterior shape is identical to that of the physical body it inhabits (or once inhabited). When independent, the soul has most of the same abilities and all the same senses as the body, although under normal circumstances it loses the ability to interact with normal matter. The soul is naturally immortal in the sense that it will never stop functioning of its own accord, although it can be destroyed with a great amount of effort. The soul receives ambrosia and stores it (if a person has any) in its aura. A soul containing ambrosia will bleed it when wounded. The soul is connected to the body via a silver cord.

- **The Mind** is the seat of consciousness and individuality, housed in the soul. Anything which lacks a mind also lacks the capacity for volition, and cannot make decisions or initiate action. The mind is normally nested in the soul in a manner analogous to the way the brain is nested in the body, meaning that if the entire soul is destroyed, the mind is destroyed as well. A mind requires a soul; without one, it quickly dissolves into nothingness (although it can also exist with the aid of magical thought support, as the minds of some golems and intelligent magical items do). A mind which is preserved in the absence of a soul can do nothing more than think; it has neither an aethereal nor a material body with which to manipulate its environment. The mind is the only part of a being capable of generating worship.

Bodies & Spirits in Gods & Mortals

Deities and mortals have both material and aethereal parts, and both require all the same organs (including senses). One of the primary differences between the two types of beings, however, is the particular way their spirits fit into their bodies. In mortals, physical bodies are connected to spiritual ones by a tenuous silver thread between their brain and their minds.¹¹ The soul of a deity, however, is far better anchored within its body. No tenuous cord is needed to hold the two together.

Aether & Matter in Interaction

Mortals, who live in a primarily physical world all their lives, tend to have direct experience only with matter. This tendency is exasperated by the fact that matter and aether normally pass through each other. Most aethereal beings have some ability to perceive material ones, though the extent of this varies, and the reverse usually isn't true — material beings generally remain oblivious to the aethereal.

Death

Mortal death always has one of three basic causes, all of which involve destroying the connection between spirit and body.

- **Brain Destruction:** The easiest and most obvious of these is the destruction of the brain, which renders the mortal in question incapable of the basic biological functions necessary to maintain a physical body. The body thus expires, and the soul becomes a ghost; in many cases, the soul is then transported by a heavenly minion to an appropriate afterlife. This is the most standard type of death, as brain death is the logical end result of all lethal physical attacks on body or brain. Recovery from such a death involves healing both the body and the brain, and then re-linking the latter to the silver cord that connects it to the spirit.

- **Mind Destruction:** Another way to kill a mortal is to destroy the mind via some form of mental or spiritual assault. This disrupts the soul/body union, and essentially makes vegetables out of both the physical body and the spirit. A body divorced from the mind that gives it conscious thought cannot think or initiate action (it lapses into a coma), and a soul without a mind is just a worthless lump of nondescript spirit matter. Destroying the soul wreaks upon the mind the nonphysical equivalent of what happens to the brain when the body is destroyed. Without a soul, the mind quickly disintegrates. Recovery from such a death is extremely difficult. The mind must be repaired or restored to the soul, then reconnected to the silver cord that links it to the body.

- **Silver Cord Destruction:** A third method is to attempt some kind of direct astral assault on the spiritual thread that joins the soul and the body. Since the mortal body and soul overlap in space (except during astral travel), this thread is not easily accessed even by spirits. Severing it is generally possible only when the cord doesn't overlap the entity in question — in other words, when the being is engaged in astral travel. If such an attack is successful, the physical body will lapse into a vegetative state, and the soul will become a ghost. This kind of death is the most easily repairable, since a mending of the silver cord is all that's necessary.

¹¹ This silver cord is a physical/nonphysical adapter which makes normal brain/soul interaction possible.

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 2

On Rules: The Functioning of the Mechanosphere

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Rules are an important part of a roleplaying game. They make it possible to define the extent of a character's successes and failures, they help prevent disputes, and they keep your game relatively fair and consistent. Rules grant structure to what would otherwise most likely be a bunch of people sitting around a table trying to outbellow each other. Essentially, they're the artificially imposed physics of the game. Trying to roleplay without them would be something like trying to live in a world without physics — to the extent to which it would be possible, the universe would be too chaotic for anyone to know what was going on.

The *CoB* rule system is called Higher Arc. It has quite a few permutations, which it uses to simulate reality and create the details that bring the world to life. However, there's only one basic way that all situations are resolved, and every roll you'll make will be a variation on this. If you feel a little overwhelmed as you read through the rules at first, don't worry. Once you've learned a few of the basics, you'll find that most of the specifics follow intuitively from what you already know.

ROLEPLAYING RULE BASICS

All roleplaying action ultimately boils down to a simple set of steps:

- 1) The Cobbler tells the players what's going on.

- 2) The players speak for their characters and/or describe their intended actions.

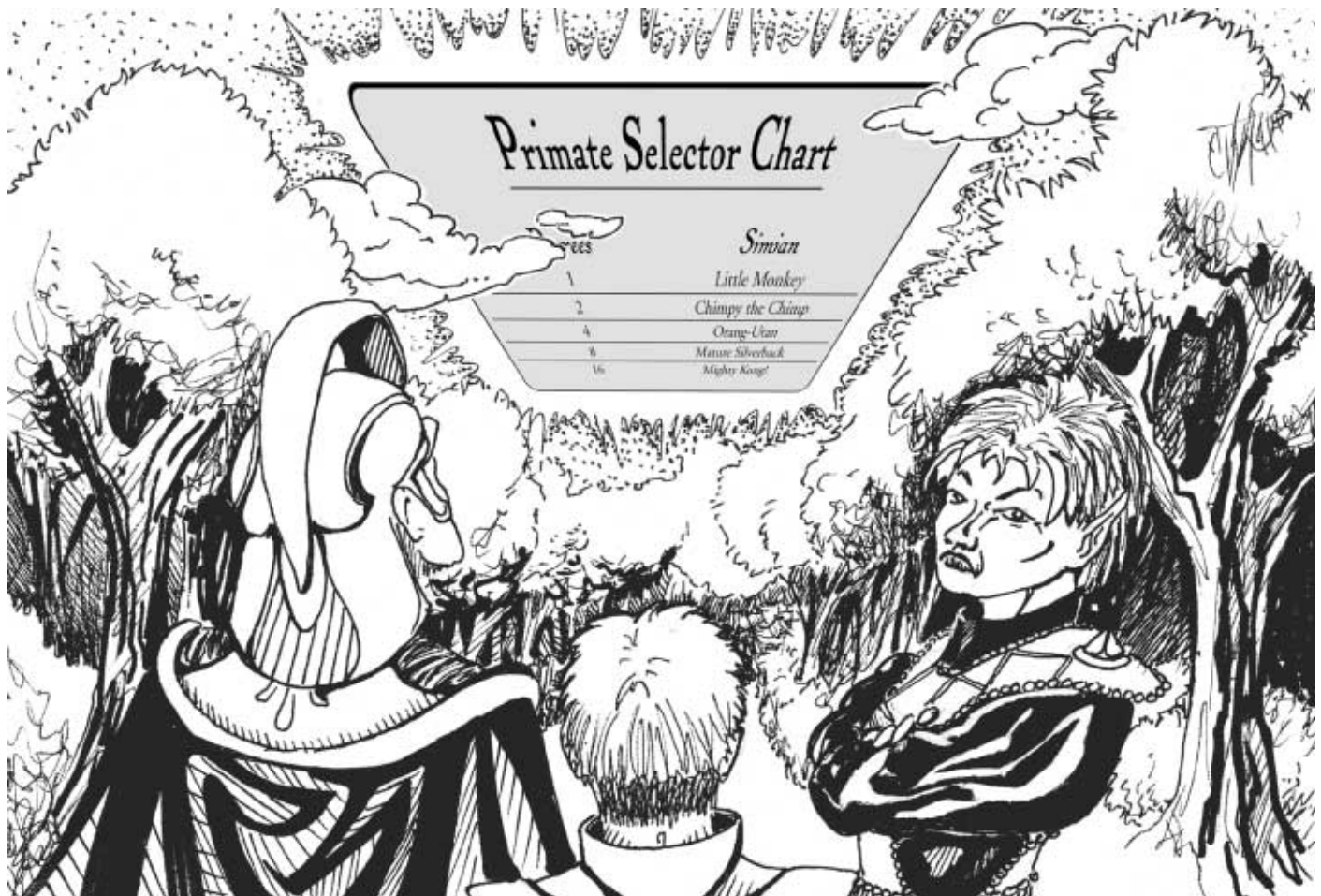
- 3) The Cobbler tells them what happens as a result.

Still, when you add rules to this process, it can get a bit more complicated. The following chapter details some of the most fundamental rule concepts — those concepts central to roleplaying, and the basics of *CoB*'s Higher Arc system.

Temporal Units

Like most roleplaying games, *CoB* makes a distinction between two different kinds of time — real time and game time. Real time is time as you experience it; game time is time as it passes within the game. Needless to say, just like in a play or a movie, these two types of time don't necessarily pass at the same rate. Because some in-game actions happen faster than the players can calculate their results, a particularly intense ten minutes of game time might take several hours of real time. Or alternatively, because it's not much fun to roleplay a character who's doing very little, a single session of real time might encompass several days or weeks of game time. Some sessions could even call for the passage of months or years of game time. Different Cobbler styles and different types of campaigns call for different variations between these two types of time.

CoB uses certain terms (in addition to standard time measurements like “minute” and “hour”) to help stave off temporal bafflement.



“What? That’s the second one this week!” — A group of Meta-Oracles, having sought out a rip in the very fabric of gameality, discover another chart of dubious value.

- **Action:** An action is the amount of game time it takes to do a single thing. The actual amount of time taken up by an action depends on the action in question. Researching a spell could take hours or days, while inserting a dagger into your unsuspecting good buddy might take only a few seconds. Usually, however, an action fits into a single turn. It's also possible to take multiple actions in a single turn by using the rules for multiple actions (page 24).

- **Turn:** A turn is a six-second unit of real time.¹ Many actions can be assumed to fit neatly into this period; those which cannot may require a bit of fudging on the Cobbler's part. If necessary, the Cobbler can adjust the amount of time in a round on a situation by situation basis.

- **Round:** Like a turn, a round is a six second period of time, but a round refers to an entire series of turns taking place simultaneously. During a round, everyone who wants to (and can) take an action takes one (or more than one, in the case of multiple actions).

- **Scene:** A scene is a variable period of game time entirely spanning a single situation. A scene is defined by the dramatic logic of the story. One begins any time a new dialogue or action sequence starts, and ends whenever a fade or cut to a new location or group of people seems appropriate.

- **Shift:** An eight hour period of game time, of which there are three in a day. Normally adventurers spend one shift traveling or adventuring, another eating, practicing their skills, resting, and making merry, and the third sleeping and keeping watch.

- **Session:** A session is a single meeting of gamers, of variable length, in which the players and Cobbler play *CoB*. Sessions usually last a number of hours of real time, or until all the junk food has been consumed.

- **Scenario/Module:** A single adventure, featuring a highly specific goal or a related series of events, which usually takes up at least one session.

- **Campaign:** An ongoing series of adventures usually featuring a particular long-term quest or goal, and usually involving all or most of the same characters.²

POLYHEDRA OF FORTUNE (DICE)

Like most roleplaying game systems, Higher Arc uses dice to determine the outcomes of attempted actions. Die-rolling can introduce an element of ambiguity, suspense, and heightened tension which is difficult to reproduce when the Cobbler has to decide the effects of every sword swipe and shopkeeper reaction manually. Dice also have the advantage of making players feel like they have a sporting chance. Yes, indeed, they're pretty nifty little devices.

CoB isn't meant to be primarily an exercise in calculating die results, however. To keep the story interesting, it's best to avoid rolling unless there's a reasonable degree of uncertainty about whether the outcome of an action will be success or failure.

When to Roll: Dicelessness & the Lack Thereof

Most actions are so easy they can be accomplished automatically. Walking across a room, talking idly about the weather, and taking out the garbage, for example, don't tend to tax your average character's abilities. For these sorts of activities, there's no point in rolling; the Cobbler should simply assume everything works as planned.

Occasionally, characters will want to take actions which are utterly beyond their capabilities. In a silly fantasy world all but the most insanely difficult actions are at least possible, but there are *some* exceptions. If a mortal wishes to leap over the moon, or swallow a dragon, for example, the Cobbler should rule straight out that the action is doomed to failure. This doesn't mean the character can't try it, but it does mean that the attempt will be futile at best, and suicidal at worst.

Most importantly of all, if the dice are likely to get in the way of something spectacular or humorous, ignore them. In fact, if it doesn't seem like a roll is going to make things more interesting in some way, don't roll. A good story always takes priority over the dice.

On the other hand, if (for example) a character wants to persuade a zombie that his companion's brain is actually far tastier than his own, or if he's trying to take out a really stinky bag of garbage, his chances of success will naturally depend on his skills. In most of these situations, dice are usually helpful and should be rolled.

Generating Numbers

To play *CoB*, you'll need to have some way of generating "random" numbers from 0 to 9. Assuming you don't have access to CoBulator software (which will resolve your mechanics for you), you'll just need two ten-sided dice. Although you could play with only one die and just roll it twice every time you need to roll, you'll probably be much happier if you have two. Ideally, each player, including the Cobbler, should have two ten-siders, although you can certainly share if you don't have enough.

RESOLVING ACTIONS

Before plunging headlong into game after thrilling game of *CoB*, the Cobbler should become familiar with the rules for resolving actions and their most common manifestations.³ All essential information is provided here, although additional permutations and more detailed methods of applying these rules are described later, in Chapter 3.

Proficiencies

Characters can differ greatly in the extent of their abilities. The Higher Arc system measures a character's competence in various areas by assigning numeric ratings to a number of *proficiencies*. The higher your rating in a given proficiency, the more capable you are of accomplishing the goals that relate to it. Whenever you want to do something about which success isn't guaranteed, all you need do is describe

¹ Because seconds come in sixpacks.

² Or until a PC (Player Candidate) gets elected.

³ But for heaven's sake, use protection!

that action to the Cobbler, who will ask you to roll the appropriate proficiency. The Cobbler will then use the resulting information to determine what happens. Rolling a proficiency to accomplish a goal (whether or not that goal is conscious) is called a *check*. Nearly all rolls in Higher Arc involve proficiency checks. Occasionally, however, when the outcome of an action has nothing to do with any character's capacities, a random roll can be made.

Because Higher Arc uses a hierarchical proficiency development system, all proficiencies in this manual are usually given as a series of three words, representing the three levels of the hierarchy (the *abilitree*). For example, in the proficiency Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Pain, Resolve represents the highest tier in the hierarchy (Tier I, the Ability), Concentration represents the middle tier (Tier II, the Capability), and Resisting Pain represents the bottom tier (Tier III, the Skill). In the standard Higher Arc rules, the Skill is ignored and players roll the Capability as their proficiency. However, Skills are provided for players who wish to use them in order to add more detail and individuality to their characters. For more information, see Chapter 6.

Check Modifiers

Not every action is equally difficult. To reflect this, a character's proficiency is typically modified, either positively or negatively, with a *check modifier* before any roll is made. Actions of standard difficulty don't need a check modifier, but if an activity seems somewhat harder or easier than average — as will very often be the case — it should be treated as such.

Check Modifier Ranges

Check modifiers generally fall between -16 and +16, depending on the Cobbler's estimation of the overall difficulty of the action being taken. An action with a +16 modifier is practically automatic, while an action with a -16 penalty is almost impossibly difficult. The Cobbler decides the check modifier by considering a character's action in context, using the basic guidelines provided by the examples on the chart below. Unless they're simply refusing to be realistic, beginning characters should rarely encounter check modifiers less than -8 at the very worst, and the majority of their actions won't invite modifiers lower than -4. As they become more capable, however, they will more and more often be able to attempt things with lower modifiers — actions which are really tough or even impossible for normal people. Also, the more skilled they become, the more pointless it becomes to roll easy tasks. Conversely, characters with really low proficiencies are likely to flub even fairly simple things occasionally, and the Cobbler should occasionally take perverse pleasure in forcing them to roll in order to accomplish what would be easy for anyone else.

Any time an action is easier or harder than average due to some external or internal cause, the Cobbler will apply a check modifier. Whether someone greased the pole you have to climb or you got drunk before you tried to climb it, you'll have to suffer the consequences. As a wise metamonk once said, "the wages of attempting to do a difficult thing is a check penalty."

Gazereth is about to participate in an elephant-carrying tournament (ECT). Before she begins, she has to strap an elephant to her back. The Cobbler rules this a Ludicrous task, meaning a check modifier of -16 applies. This reduces her proficiency to 5. Fortunately, Gazereth is practically bubbling over with muscles (her Prowess / Strength / Lifting proficiency is normally 21).

Check Modifiers Chart

<i>Modifier</i>	<i>Easiness</i>	<i>Example</i>
+16	Instinctive	Talking to yourself about the weather
+8	Simple	Remembering not to spit into the wind
+4	Easy	Terrifying a young child
+2	Unhard	Staying afloat while unencumbered in a calm lake
+0	Standard	Juggling two balls at once
-2	Tricky	Appearing to pull coins from other people's ears
-4	Formidable	Fast-talking your way into a guarded treasury
-8	Daunting	Taming a wild horse
-16	Ludicrous	Balancing on your little toe in a strong wind

Multiple Modifiers

In general, when you get multiple modifiers, they are cumulative. Just add them all together to get your total modifier. In a few cases, only the highest modifier counts; these exceptions are noted on a case-by-case basis.

Nonstandard Modifiers

As is hopefully obvious, you're free to apply any check modifier to an action; there's no reason to limit yourself to those listed on the chart. If an action seems harder than "Tricky" but easier than "Formidable," for example, it's perfectly possible to assign it a modifier of -3.

Making a Proficiency Check (Rolling the Dice)

After all modifiers have been applied to your proficiency, it's time to roll the check. Pick up two ten-siders and toss them down onto the nearest hard surface. When they stop moving, note the two numbers which come up (treating zeros as zeros) and take care not to become so excited that you knock the dice onto the floor.⁴ Then add the two numbers together. Unless you are either extremely bad at math or prone to cheating, this should give you a result between zero and 18. Compare this result to the proficiency you're rolling. If the result is equal to or higher than your modified proficiency, you fail. If the result is lower, you succeed.

Degrees of Success

Those are the basics. However, there are also degrees of success, as measured by how much higher your proficiency is

⁴ *Stress resulting from loss of dice is now the leading cause of gamer insanity.*

More on Modifiers

Tools and effects are further causes of modifiers.

Tool Modifiers

Your use of an item can affect the success of an action. Hence, some items apply modifiers to certain actions. The best example of this is weapons, which have a variety of modifiers depending on the function for which you're attempting to use them (see the weapon charts, pages 168-172). Modifiers for other objects are occasionally provided; Cobblers can also make up modifiers depending on the situation.

Cyst wants to pick a lock, so she searches through her pockets for something suitable to the task. She discards a banana peel (which the Cobbler says will apply a modifier of -14) and a wrench (which would apply a -12) and contemplates using her bare fingers (which the Cobbler declares will still apply a modifier of -6, since hands just aren't designed for picking locks). However, Cyst eventually decides to try using a long fingernail (still not a particularly good tool), which the Cobbler rules will apply a -4 modifier (because it's short, improperly angled, and flimsy). With a toothpick, her modifier might have been -2; with a lockpick kit, it would probably be at least +0. If the lockpick were high-quality, it might even impart a positive bonus.

Effect Modifiers

Effects are another possible cause of modifiers. An effect is just about anything which impacts a character's activities, not just for a given action, but over an extended (or relatively extended) period of time — excluding the character's inherent qualities (like proficiencies) and anything which applies to the situation rather than the character (like check modifiers). Effects include such things as wounds, spell effects, strong desires, fatigue, and more. They often involve either positive or negative modifiers, and can occur as a result of anything which can potentially aid or handicap you. Effect modifiers apply in addition to any other check modifiers.

than your roll. Each number by which your proficiency is greater than your roll is called a *degree*. The more degrees you get, the better you've done.

Slick the orc is doing his very best to look cool in front of an evil wizard, despite the fact that the wizard has just caught Slick sucking his thumb. Slick's Eloquence / Emoting / Acting is 8, and the Cobbler assigns his action a difficulty of -4, making his final proficiency 4. Slick's player rolls and gets a 9 and a 6, which add up to 15. This is a very distinct failure — to succeed even a little, Slick would have had to roll 3 or less.

Bippy Liptoggle (known to her friends as BLT) is cheating in an elephant-carrying tournament by surreptitiously replacing her elephant with a papier-mâché, helium-inflated substitute. The Cobbler assigns the task of lifting the phony elephant a check modifier of +5. BLT's unmodified Prowess / Strength / Lifting is 8, so with the check modifier, her proficiency becomes 13. She rolls a 5 and a 5, which gives her 10. This is 3 less than

her proficiency, so she gets 3 degrees. BLT lifts the elephant.

Degrees of Failure

It's also possible to consider degrees of failure. When using this rule, each number by which your proficiency is lower than your roll is a negative degree. Most of the time, it isn't really necessary to worry about degrees of failure, however. One failure is often the same as another — except when it comes to bungling.

Bungling

The spectre of incompetence looms over every action. Thus, in addition to the possibilities of success and failure, another possible action complication is *bungling* — otherwise known as flubbing, fumbling, botching, blundering, mucking up, or (occasionally) bugging the cheesecake. Sometimes, really bad stuff goes down. That's just the way things are.

Here's how it works. If you fail at your action and simultaneously roll doubles (ie, you roll a total equal to or greater than your proficiency and the same number shows on both dice), the action bumbles. Furthermore, even if you otherwise would have succeeded, a roll of double nines is always a bungle.

A bungle is something worse than just ordinary failure. When you fail, your goals are simply not achieved. In the case of a bungle, they're actively thwarted.

Godwin the diplomat is attempting to open up peaceful relations with the Queen of a hostile neighboring country. However, his efforts are being somewhat hampered by the homicidal rambblings of his traveling companion Xetoramastigmious the Quite Literally Insane. Godwin rolls his Eloquence / Elocution / Persuading proficiency to determine if he can convincingly explain away Xetoramastigmious's threatening babbling as harmless. His roll comes up with 16, which is two more than his proficiency of 14 — a failure. Furthermore, both dice show results of 8, so his failure is in fact a bungle. The Cobbler rules that after a few false starts and blatantly unconvincing assertions of their good intentions, he finally blurts out, "What can I do to convince you, your majesty? Most of us mean you no harm!" Unfortunately, Godwin's open admission that some of the party do in fact mean the Queen harm is enough to get him and his companions thrown into the dungeon, where Godwin is forced to reconsider whether Xetoramastigmious is really quite literally ideally suited for a diplomatic mission. (If Godwin had merely failed in his action, the Queen would probably have simply remained unconvinced as to his intentions, with only minimal skepticism.)

Standard Actions

When characters don't bungle, it's necessary to determine exactly what their degrees mean. This depends on whether their action is standard or contested. A *standard* action takes place when a character is dealing directly with some unconscious force. If you're jumping over a gorge or fixing a catapult, and no one's trying to stop you, you might still fail, simply because the task is difficult in itself. An action is *contested*, on the other hand, whenever the character involved is competing directly against another person or a group of peo-

ple. Trying to win a race, locate the place where your arch-nemesis has hidden the Sausage of the Apocalypse, or convince your sister that a vote for the Draconian party is a vote for slavery before she convinces you of the opposite are all contested actions.

Determining how well you do at a standard action is easy. Simply compare the number of degrees you get to the corresponding success level on the Level of Success chart. Note that if you get more degrees than necessary to attain a particular level of success, the level below the number of degrees rolled is assumed, not the one above.⁵

Level of Success Chart

Degrees	Success Level
1	Minimal
2	Complete
4	Excellent
8	Phenomenal
16	Fantastical
32	Phantasmagorical

The sisters Pong are engaging in their family's time-honored tradition to venerate their dead grandfather — the annual coffin-throwing ritual. This year it falls to Unis, the second-eldest sister, to chuck the coffin over a ravine. The Cobbler declares a check modifier of -4, based on the weight of the coffin. She rolls her modified Prowess / Strength / Lifting proficiency of 14 and gets 5 degrees — in other words, Excellent success. The Cobbler decides that she not only clears the ravine, she manages to land the coffin in the branches of a nearby oak tree. There is much rejoicing, for next year the tradition will continue on the other side of the ravine — provided, of course, that the wolves don't get to ol' gramps first.

Contested Actions

Contested rolls can be slightly more complicated than standard ones. In a contested action, at least two characters are rolling, and the check modifiers and proficiencies involved aren't always identical for everyone. Naturally, it's going to be significantly harder for Sheriff Punkwrench to climb Mount Rilirilital than the average person, since the sheriff is cross-eyed and missing her left arm. Or if Smelly Sig is trying to fly to a treetop in the time it takes Potgourney to climb there, he probably deserves a bigger bonus to his check modifier than his clambering friend.

Contested actions take place when a character is trying to do something faster or more efficiently than a competitor, or when one character tries to resist, prevent, or otherwise cancel some unwanted action or effect being imposed by another. To simulate this, all involved characters roll their proficiencies and compare their degrees to those of the other characters involved in the action. The more degrees a character scores than a given competitor, the better he does relative to her. When competitors score the same number of degrees, they tie.

Types of Contested Actions

Sometimes one character's action challenges a state of affairs previously established by another character's roll. In these instances, instead of scoring a number of degrees which determine an independent level of success, he subtracts his degrees from his opponent's. In this way, he can negate her degrees. If he negates her degrees completely, he reduces her to failure; if he only partly depletes her degrees, he reduces her level of success correspondingly. Trying to avoid being wrestled to the ground or stop a rival's spell from taking effect by countering it are examples of this kind of contested action.

Skrump the Lowly is attempting to stop Traggia the Magnificent from hurling herself off the Precipice of Almost Certain Demise. As Traggia prepares to leap, Skrump (who is standing only a few feet away) tries to grab her, shouting, "nooooooooooooo!" as he reaches out. Unfortunately, however, his yell only alerts Traggia to his approach, and she immediately realizes that she must jump quickly to achieve self-destruction. The Cobbler rules that no modifiers apply in this situation, so Traggia rolls her Maneuver / Agility / Running proficiency and comes up with 4 degrees. Skrump rolls 3 degrees with his proficiency and subtracts them from Traggia's proficiency, reducing her total (which would otherwise have been Excellent success) to 1 degree, or Minimal success. Traggia just barely makes it over before Skrump arrives. (Since this is just short of Complete success, the Cobbler rules that this means Skrump has one chance to grab Traggia, now at a modifier of -2, but if he fails, she plummets. If Skrump had gotten 4 or more degrees, he would have grabbed Traggia before she had a chance to jump.

In some cases, though, while two or more characters may be competing, they aren't really directly undoing each other's actions. In a race, for example, one character might do exceptionally well, but still lose to the other character, who did even better. In such cases, each character scores an independent success level (as with a standard action) which determines how well they did objectively. However, they also score a success level in relation to each other, which determines their relative success. The extent by which one runner beats another in a race is decided by determining the margin of degrees between their success levels and checking that against the success level chart.

Glib and Flewk, two sprites with clipped wings, are each attempting to swim to the center of a lake of liquid rubber from opposite sides before the other gets there. Each wants to be the first to reach the magic item they believe lies in the center, the Scrub Brush of Infinite Cleanliness. Glib rolls 3 degrees; Flewk rolls 8. Flewk beats Glib by a margin of 5 degrees, and arrives in plenty of time to snare the scrub brush first. Relative to Glib, Flewk has achieved 5 degrees (Excellent success); relative to a stationary object, Flewk has achieved 8 degrees (Phenomenal success).

Winning & Losing at the Same Time

It's possible that where multiple people are involved, characters will beat some of their competitors while losing to others. In a race, someone with two degrees gets to the finish

⁵ Interpreting what each level of success means in a given context can require a little bit of practice. See "Interpreting Results" (page 20).

line faster than anyone with one or fewer, and slower than anyone with three or more.

Dildo Norook the halfling has auctioned off all his belongings for a substantial sum and traveled back in time to the week before the auction, where he hopes to steal back all his stuff from his unsuspecting past self. In order to successfully sneak into his past self's house during the night, however, he must make a Maneuver / Dexterity / Sneaking roll. His modified proficiency is 15, and he rolls 12, which give him a total of 3 degrees. The Cobbler rolls Dildo's past self's Intuition / Awareness / Alertness to detect his presence and comes up with 1 degree, reducing future Dildo's degrees to 2 — but this still leaves future Dildo with Complete success, so he remains undetected. Unfortunately for him, however, future Dildo had forgotten that his mother was visiting him during this week. Momma Norook manages to roll 3 degrees as well — just enough to completely cancel future Dildo's degrees. She hears him enter and goes out to investigate — it looks like future Dildo will have to talk his way out of this one!

When Characters Tie

If two or more characters roll the same number of degrees in a contested action, the Cobbler can usually assume that the contest has resulted in a draw. If it's absolutely necessary to determine a winner, victory goes to the character who has rolled the lowest result. In the unlikely event that both characters have rolled the same number, the tying characters can roll again. If the characters tie again, the winner can be determined through player versus player gladiatorial combat.

Jorli Satch-Anvilson, the famous dwarven lute prodigy, is playing in the Battle of the Bards against Coal, the lead lutist from the troll "rock" band Megamonolith. Jorli's Eloquence / Creativity / Music proficiency is an impressive 20, while Coal's is a decent but comparatively low 12. Jorli rolls 8 and gets 12 degrees; Coal rolls 0 and gets 12 degrees as well! The judges



St. Gouge emerges from an accidental and tumultuous journey through the Mechanosphere with naught but an otherworldly polyhedron as proof of his strange journey.

spend an hour deliberating before finally deciding that no decision can be made regarding the better musician.

Negative Degrees in Contested Actions

Paying attention to degrees of failure (ie, negative degrees) is more useful in contested actions than it is in standard ones. If two runners are competing and they both fail their roll without bungling, they didn't fall down, and they probably didn't just stand around incompetently at the starting gate. More likely they ran — just not very fast. Negative degrees can give you an idea of who did better than who even when everyone involved fails.

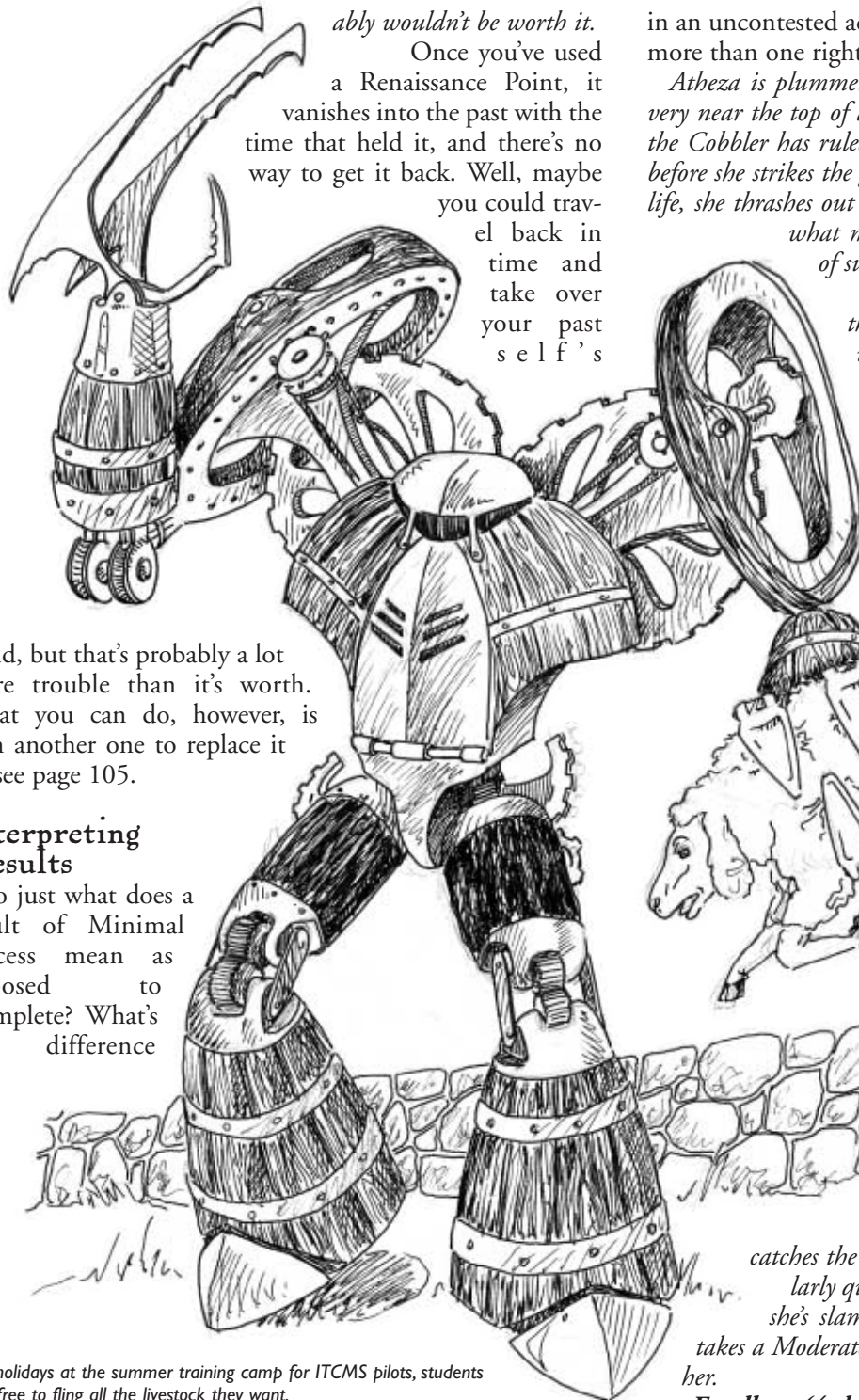
Onibag Rolon enrolls in a pie-eating contest at the fair. Attempting to win requires a Maneuver / Wits / Initiating check (to stuff down lots of pies quickly) and a Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Poison check (to avoid disgorging the sugary confections before he's finished eating them). The Cobbler rules that every 2 degrees scored on the first check allows Onibag to scarf down an entire pie. Unfortunately, however, Onibag has rotten luck on this roll and ends up with a total of -4 degrees. This does not mean, however, that Onibag has managed to eat negative 2 pies. The Cobbler rules that Onibag simply is not able to stomach more than half of his first pie in the allotted time frame. Still, he does better than his competitor, Pelva, who rolled -16 degrees and only managed a few bites.

Renaissance Points

Every character has a set of something called *Renaissance Points* (see the character sheet, page 254). Whenever you really, really want to succeed at a roll, you can spend a Renaissance Point to bump yourself up to the next highest level of success. A Renaissance Point turns a bungle into failure, failure into Minimal success, Complete success into Excellent success, and so on, always skipping any intervening degrees. Better still, Renaissance Points can be spent *after* a roll is made, when you know how many degrees you've attained.

More than one Renaissance Point can be spent on a given roll, but any point spent after the first is worth only one degree, *not* an entire success level. (Spending a second point is useful when one degree is the entire distance between success levels, or when a roll is contested and a single degree means the difference between success and failure.) Renaissance Points also *cannot* be used to go to a level of success beyond Phantasmagorical, since no such level exists. Any Renaissance Point spent after you've attained 32 degrees merely grants an extra degree.

In a crucial, life-or-death political crisis, Tumescence, the advisor to the king of Norfacordia, is summoning all of his political knowledge to mentally untangle the latest snafu involving religious zealots upsetting the state-sanctioned theomachy with mood rings. He rolls his Intuition / Wisdom / Politics proficiency and gets 3 degrees. This is Complete success, but Tumescence isn't satisfied, so he decides to spend a Renaissance Point, which jacks his level of success to Excellent, the equivalent of 4 degrees. Spending another Renaissance Point at this stage would only increase his effective number of degrees by one (to 5) and prob-



ably wouldn't be worth it. Once you've used a Renaissance Point, it vanishes into the past with the time that held it, and there's no way to get it back. Well, maybe you could travel back in time and take over your past self's

in an uncontested action, although keep in mind that there's more than one right way to do it:

Atheza is plummeting to what may well be her doom from very near the top of an enchanted and very, very tall tree, and the Cobbler has ruled that she has only about 2 rounds to act before she strikes the ground. In a desperate attempt to save her life, she thrashes out at a nearby branch with her whip. Here's what might happen if she achieves various levels of success with her weapon proficiency.⁶

- **Bungle:** *Atheza accidentally drops the whip, and must come up with another way to save herself in her six remaining seconds. (Or, if the Cobbler is feeling particularly sadistic: Atheza not only fails to wrap the whip around a branch, she ends up wrapping it around her own neck, and she chokes herself to death on the way down.)*

- **Failure (0 degrees):** *Atheza lashes out with the whip, but misses her target. Since this action didn't take a full 12 seconds, she can try again next turn, but for now she's still falling — and she has about 6 more seconds before she smacks violently into the ground.*

- **Minimal (1 degree):** *Atheza catches a branch other than the one she wanted. This one is rotted, however, and it immediately breaks off. Although this doesn't stop her fall entirely, it does slow her descent as it gets caught in other branches. Atheza now has about 3 rounds to act before she transforms into a pancake.*

- **Complete (2 degrees):** *Atheza catches the branch she wanted, although not particularly quickly, and doesn't get a chance to act before she's slammed into the side of the tree, where she takes a Moderate wound and gets the wind knocked out of her.*

- **Excellent (4 degrees):** *Atheza catches the branch quickly enough that she has time to use her legs to avoid colliding violently with the tree.*

- **Phenomenal (8 degrees):** *With a smile and a quick flick of the wrist, Atheza secures the branch. She can take her next action without so much as a pause, possibly with a bonus to her Check Modifier. Passersby have the general impression that she meant to fall off in the first place, and may have to make a Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Distraction roll or stand gap-*

⁶ Normally, this whole action would require two rolls — first a Prowess / Grappling / Whipping check (to wrap the whip around the branch) and then a Prowess / Strength / Grasping check (to keep a tight grip on the whip when it becomes taut). For purposes of simplifying this illustration, however, we've chosen to assume that Atheza attains at least Complete success on her Gripping roll.

mind, but that's probably a lot more trouble than it's worth. What you can do, however, is earn another one to replace it — see page 105.

Interpreting Results

So just what does a result of Minimal success mean as opposed to Complete? What's the difference

On holidays at the summer training camp for ITCMS pilots, students are free to fling all the livestock they want.

between a result of Excellent and a result of Phenomenal? Figuring this out is more than just pure mechanics, and sometimes the answers are rather ambiguous. Unfortunately, the best advice for coping with this ambiguity isn't very specific: be logical (within the ridiculous context of the game) such that the results of a character's action follow from whatever he attempted, and be creative, so that whatever happens is fun and silly.

You'll learn to interpret results best from doing it a few times. An example or two might help as well. In any case, as tricky as it is, it can be an interesting challenge. Here's an example of how you might interpret various levels of success

ing at the spectacle for a few rounds.

- **Fantastical (16 degrees):** *Atheza yawns. With absolutely no effort whatsoever and without making a sound, she snares the branch, avoids the tree, and guides herself to a nearby lower branch. She then returns the whip to her hip and disappears into the foliage before anyone even notices she fell. (Note: this level of success is meant to be borderline mythical and should never be achieved casually).*

- **Phantasmagorical (32 or more degrees):** *Gameality warps around Atheza as she achieves more success than may even be possible. In a split second, she has never even fallen off the branch in the first place. All characters viewing this event must roll Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Distraction or suffer extreme disorientation for the next five minutes or so, or the next few days if they bungle. (Note: this level of success is basically equivalent to doing the impossible and should practically never occur).*

No level of success beyond Phantasmagorical exists.

Degrees As Modifiers

Sometimes, in addition to interpreting a number of degrees as a success level, it can be useful to treat it as a modifier to a proficiency. For example:

Six the troll is annoyed with Vrigo the sprite for constantly sipping her ale. To discourage him, she delivers a brief, monosyllabic diatribe with accompanying gestures on the subject of how much it pisses her off. The Cobbler has her roll Eloquence / Emoting / Intimidation versus Vrigo's Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges proficiency, and she attains 3 degrees (after Vrigo's degrees are subtracted out). This is Complete success, so Vrigo is intimidated. The Cobbler rules that in order to steal any more of Six's ale, Vrigo has to roll Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges (to overcome how intimidated she feels) at -3 (because Six rolled 3 degrees).

Onward & Upward

Well, that's really all you'll need to know to accomplish any basic task in the Higher Arc system. We suggest you mess about with these rules for a little bit to get the hang of them, or perhaps reread them; also, the flowchart on page 45 should be of use. Once you've got it down, you can move on to some more advanced permutations of the rules, or just start playing!

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Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 3

On Permutations: Beating People Up & Turning Them into Newts

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Although the previous section explains all the rules you really need for resolving actions, some additional rules can serve to enhance play and make more advanced actions possible. In particular, spellcasting and fighting tend to be a bit more complicated than other actions. Both sometimes require multiple rolls, and both involve a few details that just don't apply to most other actions. Other possible actions also have specific permutations, but these are generally simpler than either combat or spellcasting, and are hence covered with the descriptions of the individual proficiencies in question (Chapter 7).

BASIC ACTION PERMUTATIONS

The following rules apply to almost any action, except on Thursdays, and probably even then.

Cooperation

Most of the time, if you're working with someone else to acquire degrees in order to accomplish some goal, you have to do so independently, even if you have help. When searching for a hidden object, for example, the fact that one person is looking won't directly help someone else find it (although obviously, more searchers are better than less, since more independent chances increases the overall probability of any one person succeeding). Hence, when two or more characters are trying to accomplish something, they can both independently try, but usually they don't get to add their degrees together. Only the most successful character's degrees actually count for anything.

Still, there are exceptions to this rule. It's a lot easier for three people to pin an adversary down to the ground, for example, than for one person to do so. In such cases, characters are allowed to add their degrees together. This only works for certain kinds of actions, however, and the Cobbler is the ultimate arbiter on whether or not a cooperative action allows for cumulative degrees.

Actions Requiring Multiple Proficiencies

Some actions are a bit more complicated and require a combination of proficiencies to perform. For example, designing a working catapult requires proficiency in both Intellect / Inventiveness / Mechanisms and Intellect / Crafting / Assembling. Teaching someone to sing requires proficiency in Eloquence / Elocution / Instructing and Eloquence / Creativity / Music. Designing a satirical political cartoon necessitates proficiency in Intuition / Wisdom / Politics and Eloquence / Creativity / Visual Art. Since you're only as good as your lowest relevant proficiency in such situations, just use whichever proficiency is lower.

Alternatively (if you want to draw the whole process out beyond the point of diminishing returns), you can divide the action into two separate actions. Using this system, if you fail at Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Exposure but succeed phenomenally at Prowess / Strength / Toting while carrying a harpsichord across a desert, you can manage to keep holding firmly onto the instrument even as you collapse from heat exhaustion. Or, if you succeed at the former proficiency

but fail at the latter, you can manage to cross the desert, but only if you drop the harpsichord on the way.

Random Rolls

Occasionally, things happen which are in no way determined by a character's abilities. It may be, for example, that a potion has ten different possible effects, and that the one which becomes actual when the potion is consumed has nothing to do with a character's proficiencies. In such cases, just assign percent chances to every possible outcome and roll d100. To do this, decide which of your two ten-siders will determine your tens column and which will be your ones column. Then lob those little buggers into the air. When they land, they'll give you a result between 1 and 100 (treat two zeros as a result of 100).

Multiple Actions

Most of the time multiple actions take place over the course of multiple turns. When you want to take two or more actions in the time it would normally take you to take only one, however, you can use the rules for *multiple* (or *extra*) actions.

Declaring Multiple Actions

When taking more than one action in a round, the number of actions you want to take must be declared at the beginning of your turn. You don't have to declare what each one is until just before you get around to taking it, however. If you don't declare how many actions you want to take during a round before you take your first action, you'll only be allowed a single action. Multiple actions not taken at the end of a round are wasted, but your local Cobbler will normally remind you to use them before the turn ends.

The Price of Multiple Actions

The more actions you take in a 6 second turn, the more stuff you can get done (obviously). Unfortunately, though, the more things you're doing at once, the more pathetic you become at accomplishing each one. To simulate this, apply a penalty of -2 to every action you're attempting for every action you're taking beyond the first. Taking a total of two actions, therefore, applies a modifier of -2 to both rolls; taking four actions applies a modifier of -6 to all four; taking fourteen actions applies a modifier of -26. And so on.

Isis Jujubean is attempting to simultaneously win a dancing competition, convince Poach (her dance partner) of her personal theory of ethics, and swipe Poach's money pouch. This requires three checks — a Maneuver / Dexterity / Contorting check to dance impressively, a Eloquence / Elocution / Persuasion check to convince Poach,¹ and a Maneuver / Dexterity / Tinkering check to take the pouch. Because Isis is taking 3 actions (that's 2 more than usual), her penalty is -4. This penalty applies to her dancing, her discourse, and her deftness — in other words, all her actions this turn.

Illegal Multiple Actions

To make a multiple action legal, you need the proper

¹ *Maneuver / Dexterity / Contorting governs dancing only when a dance is pre-choreographed; the creative aspects of dancing are the purview of Eloquence / Creativity / Performance.*

number of free limbs, all the necessary equipment, and so on. If taking a certain combination of multiple actions would reduce any proficiency being used to zero or less, you can't take those actions simultaneously (unless your Cobbler is in a silly mood). Especially implausible combinations of actions (like reading the same book twice at the same time or swimming across a river while mixing up a batter of sponge cake) are allowable at the Cobbler's whim.

Free Multiple Actions

Not every extra little thing you do during your turn adds a penalty to your roll. You can usually perform one or two additional simultaneous tasks without penalty, so long as those tasks are fairly simple. You could, for example, move across a room, shout a warning to a companion, or hum a little ditty to annoy your party members while you perform some more complicated action — without taking any penalty from it. This is at the Cobbler's discretion.

Multiple Actions Without Rolls

Occasionally, an extra action requires no roll, although it still applies a penalty. This is the case in situations where an additional action isn't especially difficult, but it does take up valuable time in a fast-paced situation, such as combat. Reloading a weapon is a good example. There's usually no reasonable doubt that your character will successfully fit a bolt into her crossbow (unless her hands are covered in weasel bites), but it still slows her down. Any activity which requires concentration also counts as an extra action for a round.

Initiative Checks

Sometimes it's important to know the order in which characters will act during a turn. This is most often used in combat, but it's useful in any intense situation. To determine who acts first, all characters participating in the action can make a contested check with their Maneuver / Wits / Initiating proficiency at the beginning of the turn. This is known as rolling *initiative*.

Making an Initiative Check

Initiative rolls are usually uncomplicated, no-frills rolls; just roll as you would for a standard action. Normally, the only modifier will be based on the length of your weapon (see the Weapon Length Modifiers chart), although circumstances which assist or hamper initiative naturally imply other appropriate bonuses and penalties. Once all characters have rolled initiative, the action begins, starting with the person with the most initiative degrees. When two or more characters get the same number of degrees, their actions are assumed to occur simultaneously.

Multiple Actions & Initiative Rolls

No matter how many people are taking action in a given turn, and no matter how many actions are being taken, all characters get a chance to act once before anyone takes a second action. Similarly, all characters must have a chance to take second actions (if they get any) before anyone takes a third, and so on.

Weapon Length Modifiers Chart

<i>Modifier</i>	<i>Range</i>
+0	Close
-1	Short
-2	Medium
-3	Long
-4	Distant
-5	Remote
-6	Ludicrous

Waiving Initiative

Any person can choose to waive initiative when his turn comes. If he chooses to do this, his turn is skipped until such time as he elects to take it later that turn. Characters waiving initiative can act at any other point in the turn, provided it isn't in the middle of another character's turn. When two or more characters who have waived initiative all want to go last, those with higher initiative rolls win out over those with lower ones. If they all have the same number of degrees, they all go last simultaneously.

Modifiers to Initiative Rolls

A character rolling initiative for combat gets a bonus based on the length of her weapon. This bonus can be found on the Weapon Length Modifier Chart above (reverse the penalties so that -2 is actually +2, -6 is actually +6, and so on).

When Not to Roll Initiative

Initiative checks are often unnecessary. Sometimes, it will just make sense who acts first. Other times, only one character will want to act, or the specific sequence of events won't really matter. Also, actions which are themselves concerned entirely with accomplishing something quickly don't require initiative rolls. Trying to run at a certain speed just takes a Maneuver / Agility / Running check, or attempting to dig a yourself a grave before the sun comes up just takes a Prowess / Strength / Lifting check. Initiative checks are only useful when a character's initial reaction time is in question. Whenever an initiative check appears to be superfluous, simply skip it and get on with the action.

Simplifying Initiative Rolls

Some players prefer to roll initiative only once, at the beginning of any given action sequence. This cuts down the amount of rolling significantly (albeit at the cost of some realism). Some Cobblers also save time by allowing entire groups of NPCs only one initiative check between them. For players wishing to focus on stories rather than rules, this simplification is probably worth the cost in realism.

Involuntary Initiative

Initiative rolls are always *involuntary*, meaning that they don't count as an action for a turn. See below, Involuntary Actions, for details.

Involuntary Actions

Most actions — at least the ones you don't automatically succeed at — require that you expend at least a minimal amount of thought on them. Whether you're engaging dragons in combat, begging for pork rinds, or doing cartwheels, you need to be at least minimally conscious of what you're doing.

There are a few things, however, that you can do without even being aware of them. You might, for example, fight off a terrible infection, happen to notice that your traveling companion hasn't moved much ever since you left that jungle full of gorgons, or shake off the curse of the old hag who told you your nipples would rot and fall off all without ever consciously deciding that you would do so. Actions that are a result of other actions which you're taking, or those which are the result of unconscious processes are called *involuntary actions*. Rolls to resist nasty effects, like diseases, spells, or insidious desires, are usually involuntary; observation rolls sometimes are as well. In combat or in other such situations, the initiative roll is always involuntary.

Involuntary actions take place automatically, with little or no effort. Often a character won't even be aware she's performing one, although usually her player is. Hence, involuntary actions don't count as additional multiple actions as defined on page 24; any number of them can be taken at the same time as any number of other involuntary actions without penalty. Involuntary actions can also be made at any time in a turn, regardless of the initiative order, and regardless of whether another character's turn isn't finished.

Chilli Spoonwrangler, the dwarven chef, food critic, and cooking instructor, is enjoying some soup which (unbeknownst to her) is poisoned. Although she is also lecturing her pupils on the subject of "How Not to Spoil the Broth" as the poison begins to take effect (and has thus already rolled her action this turn), she is allowed to roll her Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Poison without any multiple action penalties. (Neither is there any penalty to her original Eloquence / Elocution / Instructing roll.)

Initiating an Involuntary Action

Rarely will a player initiate an involuntary action — far more often, the Cobbler asks a player to make a check whenever something happens to necessitate one. An involuntary action can be standard or contested. It can, obviously, fail, but it normally cannot bungle (unless the Cobbler has something amusing in mind).

Voluntary Actions Performed Involuntarily

Some actions which are best performed consciously at the request of the player can also be done involuntarily. Your chances of noticing a secret door, for instance, are greater when you're searching for one than if you're simply standing around in its general vicinity, but even if you aren't looking, you still might notice it. Characters performing such actions involuntarily usually have a small penalty to their proficiency check.

Trying It Again

Failure doesn't really mean much if you can immediately correct the mistake with a second roll, so generally a single



It was too late to flee...

roll should mean that the you've tried everything you can think of and (perhaps after repeated efforts) given up. Until something about the situation changes — say, you see something that gives you an idea, your proficiency increases, or you get more training — you usually can't try again.

There are a few exceptions to this rule. First, in some cases, the Cobbler might rule that Minimal success is enough to allow the character to try again. This is usually acceptable only once for every time the character achieves Minimal success. Characters can also try again immediately when attempting contested actions, or any other action which delivers a penalty for failure. Throwing a punch or dodging a blow, for example, are contested actions, and can be attempted as often as desired (you can't, of course, dodge or parry the same blow more than once). Spellcasting causes loss of ambrosia, so characters can repeat them as long as they have sufficient ambrosia.

Igloo Q. Stormrider has decided to defy conventional wisdom and spit into the wind. With a complete lack of regard for tradition, he hawks a magnificent loogey. Perhaps not surprisingly, however, the loogey turns in mid-flight and heads back toward him. He tries to dodge, but fails and gets it straight in the face. Although Igloo is not allowed to re-attempt to dodge that self-same spittle, he is allowed to spit again (if his player decides that he remains undaunted by the experience) and attempt to dodge the next spittle that comes his way.

THEM'S FIGHTIN' RULES: COMBAT PERMUTATIONS

Although combat basically works the same way other actions do, certain rule permutations are unique to situations in which the object is to prevail physically over some other being. These rules, therefore, can supplement the primary action resolution rules.

Attacking

There are many different kinds of attacks, and lots of possible desired end results. You can just throw yourself at your opponent and start trying to hit her with whatever you happen to be carrying, but it often works better if you first decide exactly what it is you want to accomplish. Do you want to back your foe into a corner? Kill him any way you can? Knock him unconscious? Pin him down? Chop off his head? Baffle him? Terrify him? Knee him in the groin? Deciding your goals will help you determine all the decisions you need to make for your attack.

Melee & Missile Combat

When entering melee combat, the first thing you'll need to do is select a weapon from those available to you (see the Implements of Destruction Chart, pages 168-172). Then choose the attack proficiency you want to use. Usually, this will be of a sort which fits with the weapon you're using. If you have a crossbow, for example, you'll probably want to shoot it, which means using Maneuver / Aiming / Shooting. Of course, you can also use weapons in really weird ways. For example, you could thrust your crossbow at your opponent

with your Prowess / Thrusting / Jabbing proficiency, or swing it at her with Prowess / Swinging / Whacking, if you didn't mind the fact that these attacks are considerably less damaging when used in conjunction with a crossbow. Similarly, you would normally use a broadsword for Prowess / Swinging / Chopping or for Prowess / Thrusting / Stabbing, but you could also use it for Maneuver / Aiming / Throwing.

Unarmed Combat

Alternatively, you can elect to forgo weaponry in favor of unarmed combat. When doing this, the method of attack you use is wide open; you can attempt to kick, wrestle, sweep, punch, head butt, elbow, bite or whatever else comes to mind (there are hundreds of possibilities).² Your means of attack can be anything, so long as you have the proper number and types of body parts available, and in reasonably convenient positions. Each unarmed attack type goes with a particular proficiency. Punching, for example, is Prowess / Thrusting / Striking; throwing yourself on top of someone qualifies as Prowess / Grappling / Toppling.

Attack Modifiers

Different kinds of attacks have different kinds of modifiers. To determine the modifier for your attack, cross-reference the weapon you're using with the Capability (the second tier — either Aiming, Grappling, Swinging, or Thrusting) with which you're using it on the Implements of Destruction chart. If you're not using a weapon, you probably won't get a modifier, unless the attack you're using is especially difficult to pull off (in which case there may be a penalty). Weapons, after all, are designed to make combat easier, and fighting without one is harder (all else being equal). However, weapons do have disadvantages. Your foe can't take your weapon away from you if you don't have one, and unarmed attackers have far more options. These options are especially important because combatants can learn to anticipate each other's attacks, and it's much easier to anticipate an armed combatant than an unarmed one (see page 34).

Types of Attack Results

Different attacks have different potential results. A very successful Prowess / Grappling / Toppling attack is likely to indicate that the attacker has knocked her foe over and is sitting on top of him, while a successful Prowess / Thrusting / Stabbing attack probably means a very deep cut. Damage Types are listed with weapon proficiencies on the Implements of Destruction chart; these can give you an idea about the particular way the victim of an attack gets hurt. If multiple Damage Types are listed, either type is possible. For more ideas about how to interpret Damage Types, consult the B/E/R/P Suggested Damage Effects chart or the P/E/C/T Suggested Damage Effects chart. Cobblers can use these as guidelines for creating colorful results.

Note that characters in battle can switch between different types of attacks as much and as often as they like, although drawing or sheathing a weapon counts as an extra action. See

² We would know — in the development of the Higher Arc system, many fights broke out...

P/E/C/T Suggested Damage Effects Chart

	<i>Minor</i> -1 Pain Penalty	<i>Moderate</i> -2 Pain Penalty	<i>Major</i> -4 Pain Penalty	<i>Severe</i> -8 Pain Penalty
Photonic	Sunburned Skin	Scorched Muscle	Fried Bone	Blasted Organ
Electrical	Shocked Skin	Zapped Muscle	Jolted Bone	Zotted Organ
Chemical	Eroded Skin	Corroded Muscle	Dissolved Bone	Liquefied Organ
Thermal	Singed/Chilled Skin	Burned/Frosted Muscle	Blistered/Iced Bone	Charred/Frozen Organ

B/E/R/P Suggested Damage Effects Chart

	<i>Minor</i> -1 Pain Penalty	<i>Moderate</i> -2 Pain Penalty	<i>Major</i> -4 Pain Penalty	<i>Severe</i> -8 Pain Penalty
Blunt	Bruise	Deep Bruise	Contusion	Severe Internal Bleeding
	Sprain	Fractured Bone	Broken Bone	Shattered Bones
	In a Daze	Delirious	Swoon	Coma or Paralyze
	Knocked Off Balance	Sent Stumbling	Knocked Down	Sent Flying
Edged	Slit Skin	Gashed Muscle	Cleaved Joint	Slashed Organ
	Abraded Skin	Lacerated Muscle	Avulsed Ligament	Eviscerated Organ
	Oozing Blood	Dripping Blood	Streaming Blood	Gushing Blood
	Knocked Off Balance	Sent Stumbling	Knocked Down	Sent Flying
Restrictive	Grasped	Held	Pinned	Immobilized
	Gasp	Winded/Ischemia	Blackout	Suffocated
	Knocked Off Balance	Sent Stumbling	Knocked Down	Sent Flying
	Sprain	Fractured Bone	Broken Bone	Shattered Bones
Pointed	Perforated Skin	Gored Muscle	Pierced Joint	Punctured Organ
	Abraded Skin	Lacerated Muscle	Avulsed Ligament	Eviscerated Organ
	Oozing Blood	Dripping Blood	Streaming Blood	Gushing Blood
	Knocked Off Balance	Sent Stumbling	Knocked Down	Sent Flying

the proficiency descriptions (pages 114 to 120) for specifics on the different combat proficiencies.

Attacking with Unusual Weapons

If you wish to attack with an object for which weapon stats aren't provided, like a chair, ladder, marble, scissors, or giant slab of ham (an activity we heartily encourage), your Cobbler will just have to make up a weapon modifier for you. Weapon modifiers should usually be +1 or above, although particularly lousy weapons (like, say, rubber chickens) or weapons used in particularly stupid ways (for example, trying to thrust with a whip) can conceivably have no modifiers or negative modifiers.

Parrying Modifiers

Some weapons also have parrying modifiers. These indicate weapons which are harder for defenders to parry. Parrying modifiers apply to parry checks versus that weapon.

The Attack Check

To attack, take the relevant attack proficiency from your character sheet, together with any appropriate modifiers for the type of weapon you're using (and the way you're using it), and also any modifiers resulting from unusual elements in the situation. Then roll, just like you would for any other action.

Interpreting the results of an attack is different from interpreting the results of other actions. See page 38.

Size in Combat

When people of different sizes face off in combat, both have certain advantages. Two of these, namely size and reach, effectively cancel each other out. While the smaller fighter in any melee is harder to hit, the advantage this affords is negated by the longer arms (and thus the greater reach) of a larger foe. Any other logistical problems resulting from size differences are taken into account by differences in Racial Predispositions. For example, a troll is obviously substantial-

ly bigger than a sprite, which is part of the reason it has higher Prowess proficiencies. While a troll can attack with substantially greater force than a sprite (in part because of its size), the sprite is likely much more maneuverable and quick (partly because it's smaller).

As a result, reach and size can safely be disregarded as mechanical factors in melee under normal circumstances. Any bonus that one factor imparts is canceled by the other, which means that players rarely have to concern themselves with them. The only times that players have to worry about size as it pertains to combat is when they're hitting stationary targets, firing missile weapons, or aiming for specific parts of the body.

When a character wants to hit something stationary — or if he wants to hit something with a missile weapon, whether or not that thing is moving — modify his attack based on the number of size categories between him and his foe. For every level his foe is larger than he is, he gets a +1 bonus. For every level his foe is smaller than he is, he gets a -1 penalty. Hence a human hitting a cantaloupe (of Minute size) has a modifier of -4, while a sprite hitting a barn (of Tremendous size) has a modifier of +7. (Alternatively, you can use the Called Shot chart on page 37 to calculate the modifier for attacking a given area; this chart is usually used for determining modifiers to hitting specific parts of the body, but it works here as well).

Size Categories Chart

<i>Category</i>	<i>Mundane Example</i>	<i>Monster Example</i>
Microscopic	Plankton	Displacer Yeast
Eensy-Weensy	Bumblebee	Bunee
Itty-Bitty	Cockroach	Maple Jacket
Teeny-Tiny	Mouse	Cotton Wren
Miniscule	Rat	Buffalemon
Minute	Groundhog	Glittergopher
Puny	Chicken	Cockatrice
Tiny	Fox	Squeaver
Small	Wolf	Sprite, Halfling
Medium	Human	Dwarf, Orc, Elf
Large	Tiger	Troll, Dryad
Huge	Horse	Centaur
Humongous	Rhino	Gryphon
Enormous	Elephant	Baalrogue
Gigantic	Tyrannosaurus	Dragon
Tremendous	Brachiosaurus	Roc
Colossal	Blue Whale	Kraken
Gargantuan	Redwood Tree	Behemoth
Vast	Mountain Range	Leviathan

Splashes & Explosions

Some things explode. To make an attack with an explosive, make an ordinary attack roll, adding in the bonus of the

explosive and subtracting out any range penalties as normal. The only important mechanical differences between explosives and ordinary weapons are that explosives tend to have rather high bonuses, and that explosives tend to hurt lots of people or things when they go off, rather than just one.

To determine damage to secondary targets, first determine how much damage is done to the primary target. This damage is calculated normally. Then compare the explosive's attack bonus to the number of degrees of damage which has been done to the primary target. If the explosive has caused more degrees of damage than its bonus, it impacts the target and explodes. If the explosive does the same number of degrees of damage as its bonus, it detonates right next to the target.

If, on the other hand, the explosive does less damage than its bonus, take the difference between the explosive's bonus and the number of initial degrees achieved on the roll (note that negative degrees count negatively here, and that defense modifiers for armor, dodging, and parrying don't count at all) and consult the Lob and Explosion chart, below. This will tell you how far the explosive lands from the target. You can then roll d10 and consult the Lobbing Direction chart to determine the direction in which the explosive lands (relative to the intended target).

Lob & Explosion Chart

<i>Number</i>	<i>Distance</i>
0	0 ft to 1 ft
1	1 ft to 3 ft
2	3 ft to 6 ft
3	6 ft to 10 ft
4	10 ft to 15 ft
5	15 ft to 21 ft
6	21 ft to 28 ft
7	28 ft to 36 ft
8	36 ft to 45 ft
9	45 ft to 55 ft
10	55 ft to 66 ft
11	66 ft to 78 ft
12	78 ft to 91 ft
13	91 ft to 105 ft
14	105 ft to 120 ft
15	120 ft to 136 ft
16	136 ft to 153 ft

Lob: How far an object lands from target

Number: Difference between Bonus and Degrees of Success

Distance: How far away from Target does the Missile Land

Explosion: Degrees of damage from explosion

Number: Degrees subtracted from bomb bonus to get damage

Distance: How far Target is from where the explosion went off

To determine the damage done to any given secondary target, determine how far she is from the explosion. Then use this distance to determine a number from the Number category on the Lob and Explosion Chart. Subtract this number from the explosive's bonus to get the damage done to the secondary target.

Explosive attacks don't require a roll on the Hit Location chart; all body parts facing the explosion are damaged (see the rules for full-body wounds, page 43). For a simple approach to explosive damage, assume that all explosives do Thermal (heat) damage. If desired, however, a Cobbler can attribute some of the damage to shrapnel and other additives. Different kinds of bomb casings can also affect the Damage Type of the shrapnel.

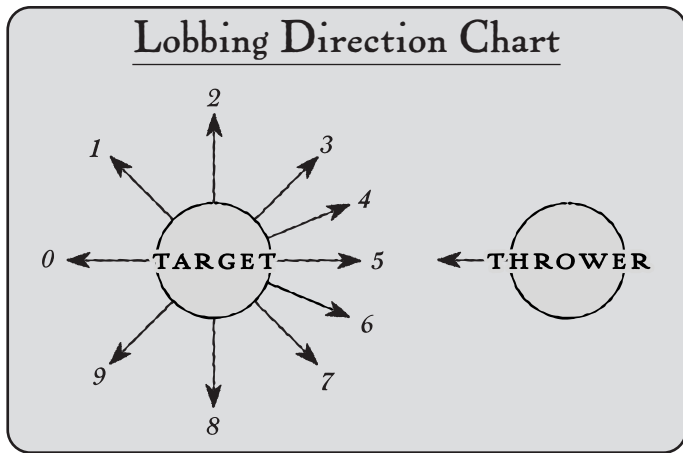
When Tiskren discovers that her pants are on backwards, she blames her tailor, Dwan Gruenert. She tracks Dwan back to the tailor shop, whips out a grenade, and lobs it at her. Tiskren's Maneuver / Aiming / Lobbing proficiency is 14; she adds in the grenade's +6 attack bonus for a result of 20. She rolls her attack

and gets 8 degrees; after Dwan dodges for 2 degrees, Tiskren's result is 6. This means the grenade strikes Dwan and explodes. Unfortunately, Maypole (Dwan's apprentice) is standing 5 feet to the west of the detonation. Consulting the Lob & Explosion chart to get a result of 2, the Cobbler determines that a person standing 5 feet from the explosion will take 4 degrees of damage (the grenade bonus is 6, minus the chart result of 2, equals 4 degrees of damage). Maypole, because he forgets to dodge and is wearing no armor, takes the full Major wound.

Getting Attacked by Inanimate Objects

Not all damage is the result of foes trying to do you in. There are many other ways to get injured, including falling, standing under falling objects, walking into pointy things, and accidentally hitting yourself with your own weapon. When gameality messes with you in this fashion, it essentially gets a free attack against you at an attack proficiency equivalent to the level of danger imposed by the situation. For most types of gameality-inspired attacks, the Cobbler will have to determine this attack proficiency using common sense.³

For damage from falling, attack proficiencies are listed on the Damage from Falling chart. Modify this attack based on the hardness and the shape of the falling object or the surface the falling person is falling on, as described on the Damage from Falling Chart Modifiers chart. Provided she's capable of moving around in the air, a falling person gets a Maneuver / Dexterity / Contorting check to reduce the effect of the fall.



Quantity	Bonus	Heft
1 Ounce	+0	0
2 Ounces	+1	1
4 Ounces	+2	2
8 Ounces	+3	3
1 Pound	+4	4
2 Pounds	+5	5
4 Pounds	+6	6
8 Pounds	+7	8
16 Pounds	+8	10
32 Pounds	+9	12
64 Pounds	+10	16
128 Pounds	+11	20
256 Pounds	+12	24
512 Pounds	+13	32
1024 Pounds	+14	40
1 Ton	+15	48
2 Ton	+16	64

Distance	Attack Proficiency
1'	2
3'	4
6'	6
10'	8
15'	10
21'	12
28'	14
36'	16
45'	18
55'	20
66'	22
78'	24
91'	26
105'	28
120'	30
136'	32

Verb Bellowsmember, a dwarven barbarian, has fallen from the top of his horse. Since he was standing on his horse's head at the time, and he had a very large horse, this entails a fall of 7 feet (the distance between the bottom of his feet and the ground is 7 feet). The Cobbler checks the Damage from Falling Chart and finds that a 7 foot fall means an attack proficiency of 8. Since Verb is falling on some sharp boulders, she adds a bonus of

³ If your Cobbler lacks common sense, quantities are available in most hobby stores.

+5 to the attack (+4 for landing on a rigid surface, +1 for the sharpness). Then she rolls the attack. Verb, if he survives, will learn a valuable lesson about standing on his horse's head above sharp objects.

Damage from Falling Modifiers Chart

<i>Resistance</i>	<i>Modifier</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Fluffy Surface	-4	Feathers, Hay, Leaves
Fluid Surface	-2	Ale, Slime, Water
Squishy Surface	-1	Manure, Mud, Tomatos, Thin Branches
Yielding Surface	+0	Dirt, Grass, Melons, Sand
Firm Surface	+1	Gravel, Table, Thick Branches
Hard Surface	+2	Loose Rocks, Sheet Metal, Wood Floor
Rigid Surface	+4	Thick Metal, Solid Rock
<i>Impact Area</i>	<i>Modifier</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Moderate	+0	Relatively Flat Surface, Pile of Stuff
Small	+1	Turtle, Large Rock, Sharp Boulder,
Tiny	+2	End of Pole, Spikes, Blades

Some Offensive Actions of Note

There are many actions that take place frequently in combat, from attacking to reloading. From straightforward attacks to wacky fake-out moves, here's a list of some of the things your character may want to try.

Straightforward Attacks

A character's most obvious and straightforward option in combat is to make an attack with one of her proficiencies. This is usually done by declaring the weapon and the proficiency being used (such as Prowess / Swinging / Chopping with a broadsword), and then rolling the proficiency. Whatever attack you use, add any modifiers to your chosen proficiency and roll normally. See page 38 for how to interpret the results.

Disarming

Alternatively, you can try to disarm your foe. The proficiency you use to do this depends on your means of disarmament. You could attempt to knock a weapon out of a foe's hand by striking it with your own weapon using Prowess / Swinging / Whacking (in which case your weapon bonus for Whacking applies normally), or you might try to grab it from her with Prowess / Grappling / Wrestling. Other methods are possible, too. Your foe always gets an involuntary Prowess / Strength / Grasping roll to resist your attempt to disarm them (modified by -6 if they aren't aware that you're there). If you can still manage Minimal success, you've made her fumble her weapon, forcing her to use one of her actions

to regain control of it (if she can't or won't, she drops it). If you manage Complete success, you knock the weapon out of her hands onto the ground a few feet away. If you manage Excellent success, you take the weapon from her. If you manage Phenomenal success, you take the weapon from her and can use it against her that same round without using an extra action (due to her surprise). And at Fantastical success, you can not only take the weapon away and use it against her without an extra action, you get +4 to your attack. Attempts to disarm are anticipatable (see Anticipating which can be found, by you, on page 34).

Posturing

Posturing is a strange "attack" which consists, essentially, of an attempt to intimidate a foe into surrendering or otherwise giving up before the combat begins. Posturing can be done with any weapon or unarmed attack type, and theoretically at any time, although the intended subject of the attack must be paying attention for it to work. To make a posturing attack, a character simply displays her combat moves by making a proficiency check. A character who wields nunchaku, for instance, might whip them around her head and body in a highly dexterous fashion while making cryptic "martial arts" sounds; a bowslinger might pull a pair of hand crossbows out of their holsters, twirl them around his fingers and fire off a few shots before returning them to their place. In mechanical terms, this means that the posturing character makes a check in whatever combat proficiency is most appropriate to the attack she's demonstrating. Any potential enemy who notices the posturing must make an involuntary check in either Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges *or* in their primary (and currently usable) combat proficiency (whichever proficiency is greater). If the posturer fails, she appears foolish; if she bungles, she appears *extremely* foolish, and anyone who was watching gains +8 to posturing against her in return. If the posturer succeeds, see the chart below for the results (penalties apply to all activities which the target

Posturing Success Chart

<i>Degrees</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Foe's Penalty</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Minimal	-1	Foe is somewhat shaken.
2	Complete	-2	Foe is very shaken and will make every reasonable effort to leave the situation.
4	Excellent	-4	Foe will panic, fleeing if possible, hiding or cowering if not.
8	Phenomenal	-8	Foe is reduced to a gibbering, cowering, defenseless idiot and may wet herself.
16	Fantastical	-16	Foe must roll Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury at -4 or pass out from fright.
32	Phantasmagorical	-32	Foe must roll Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury at -4 or die of a heart attack.

perceives as in opposition to the posturer's wishes). Note that when posturing or resisting posturing, characters who obviously have help with them (in the form of friends) can add +2 to their proficiencies for every extra person they have on their side which is greater than the number of people on the opposing side. Note that posturing is an excellent way of getting rid of inferior combatants without a fight. Also note, however, that posturing does not work on trolls, as they do not feel fear.

Touching

Some attacks require that the attacker merely touch his foe in order to unleash an attack. In such cases, simply make a Prowess / Thrusting / Striking attack. The defender's armor (found on page 38) is useless in defending against such an attack. The achievement of Minimal success indicates that the attacker has made a successful touch attack, unless firm contact is required, in which case Complete success is necessary.

Rushing

If you begin a round some distance from a foe, you can elect to rush her in the hope of catching her off guard and beating the crap out of her before she can figure out how to respond effectively. When doing this, the extent to which you throw yourself willy-nilly at your foe is the extent to which you reduce her ability to defend herself, though of course the more reckless your charge, the less effectively you can defend yourself. Mechanically, you rush a foe by making a Maneuver / Agility / Running check (or a check of whatever movement proficiency is most appropriate). All attempts to defend — either by yourself or the

person you're rushing that round — are reduced by the number of degrees you get on that check. (Of course, you can always reduce that number if you want to deliberately move more slowly). Note that since rushing almost inevitably takes place during the first round of melee combat, characters involved in rushing should also gain their bonus for having a longer weapon than their foes (see Rolling for Initiative, above).

Feinting

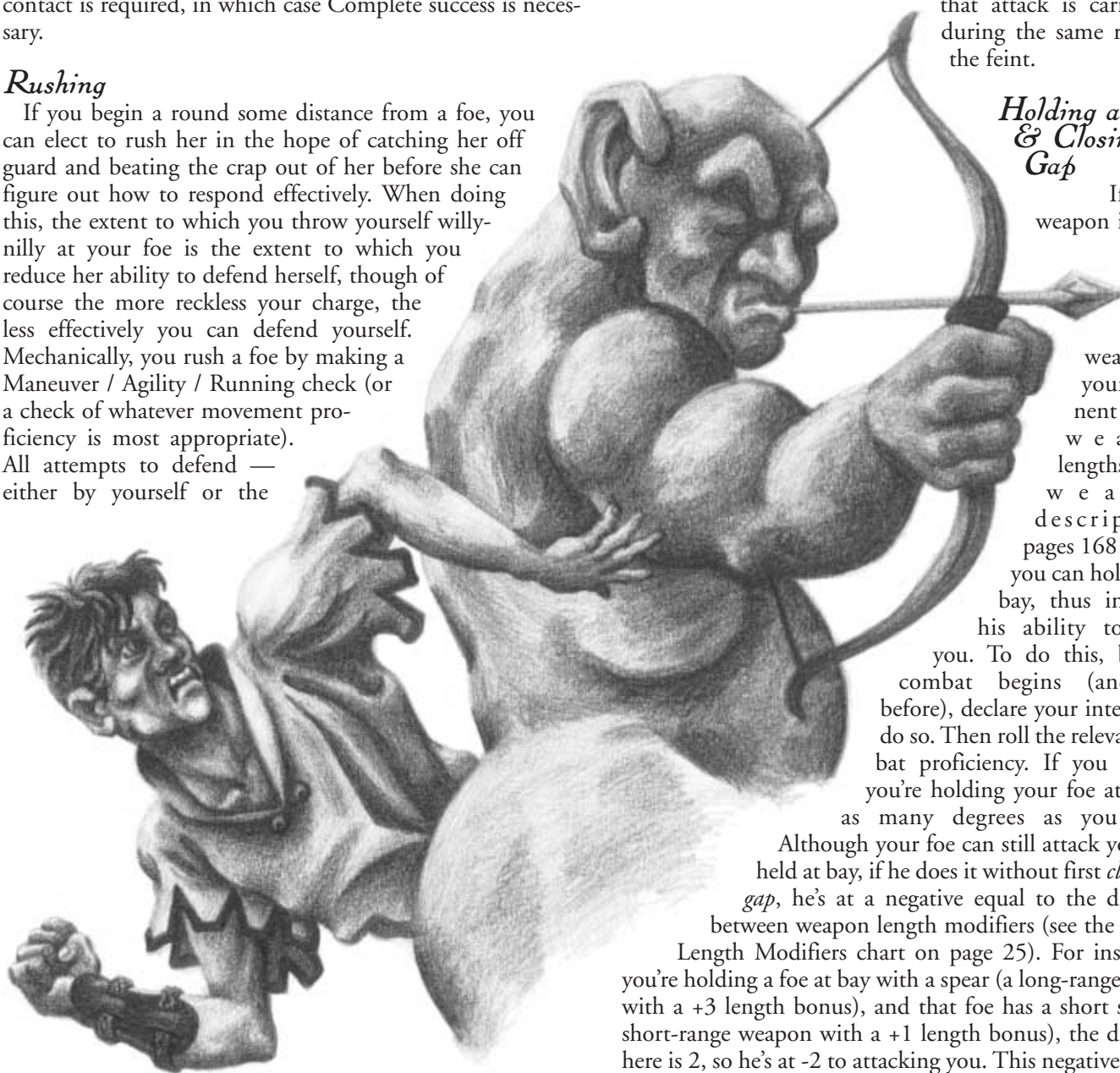
A feint is a fake attack, made in order to draw attention away from a real attack. When you make a feint attack, that attack automatically does no damage. However, the number of degrees you score (minus any degrees your opponent scores on an involuntary Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Distraction roll) will negate degrees from all of your opponent's attempts to parry or dodge your next attack, so long as that attack is carried out during the same round as the feint.

Holding at Bay & Closing the Gap

If your weapon is longer than the

weapon of your opponent (see the weapon lengths in the weapon descriptions, pages 168 to 172), you can hold him at bay, thus inhibiting his ability to attack you. To do this, before a combat begins (and only before), declare your intention to do so. Then roll the relevant combat proficiency. If you succeed, you're holding your foe at bay for as many degrees as you rolled.

Although your foe can still attack you when held at bay, if he does it without first *closing the gap*, he's at a negative equal to the difference between weapon length modifiers (see the Weapon Length Modifiers chart on page 25). For instance, if you're holding a foe at bay with a spear (a long-range weapon with a +3 length bonus), and that foe has a short sword (a short-range weapon with a +1 length bonus), the difference here is 2, so he's at -2 to attacking you. This negative remains for each attack he makes until he manages to close the gap. A foe can close the gap by making a Maneuver / Wits /



Employing the use of his butt grip, a curious troll separates an archer from the tools of his trade.

Dodging check (to duck around your weapon), a Maneuver / Wits / Parrying check (to knock it aside long enough to pass), or by successfully disarming you (removing the weapon from your grasp). To do this successfully, he must beat the number of degrees you rolled to hold them at bay in the first place. If he fails, he hurts himself on the weapon with which you're holding him at bay with a number of degrees of wound equal to the margin by which he failed to close the gap. Further, he's still being held at bay for the remaining number of degrees. Note that you can attack someone you're holding at bay.

Multiple Attacks

It's possible to attack as many times as you wish in combat — either the same foe, or any number of other foes, as long as you don't run out of actions. These multiple attacks are treated exactly like any other multiple action. When attacking more than once in the same round with the same weapon, the attacks are assumed to take place in succession rather than simultaneously. Using more than one weapon for each attack is also possible, so long as you have a way to wield the extra weapons (using your off hand means a penalty of -2; using another part of your body to hold a weapon, like your feet, should also impart a substantial penalty).

Drawing or Sheathing Weapons

Drawing a weapon during combat takes no special effort, and therefore doesn't require a penalty. Sheathing a weapon while engaged in combat, however, requires an extra action. You don't have to roll sheath a weapon. If a combatant simply drops a weapon, she suffers no penalty.

Reloading Missile Weapons

Success in loading a ranged weapon is usually assumed, but it can take time — or, in mechanical terms, extra actions. The simplest ranged weapons (like shortbows and longbows) don't take any extra actions, but others (like crossbows) take a full action to load, resulting in a multiple action penalty of -2 if you wish to load and fire the weapon in one round. Some especially complicated weapons can take even more actions to load. Of course, all this assumes that you keep your ammunition in an easily accessible place. If you don't, it probably takes even more actions.

Although you don't have to roll to reload, in all other respects a reload works like any other multiple action. It's impossible for you to load a weapon in one round if doing so will reduce your proficiency in Maneuver / Wits / Prestidigitation to zero or below. For very large missile weapons, (catapults, cannons, and so forth) you can sometimes split the task of reloading with other people. Note that characters who walk around with loaded weapons are just asking for trouble, and the Cobbler should give it to them in the most amusing ways possible.

Using Ranged Missile Weapons

The further you're shooting your missile, the harder it gets for you to hit your target. If you're firing within Close range — within 10 feet — no penalty applies. However, for each range category further out than Close, you're at an addition-

al -1. Furthermore, all missile weapons have ranges, and you can't fire a missile beyond its range. For example, if you're trying to fire a Heavy Crossbow (which has a long range) into long range (between 90' and 270'), you're at a penalty of -3. And if you're trying to fire it into Distant range (270' to 810'), you automatically fail (and you waste a bolt).

Except where otherwise noted, all weapons which fire projectiles (Shooting, Slinging, and Launching weapons) require the use of two hands.

Missile Range Chart

<i>Penalty</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Distance</i>
+0	Close	0'-10'
-1	Short	10'-30'
-2	Medium	30'-90'
-3	Long	90'-270'
-4	Distant	270'-810'
-5	Remote	810'-2,430'
-6	Ludicrous	2,430'-7,290'

Attacking a Stationary, Slow, or Nonresistant Target

The Higher Arc combat system assumes that in a "default" combat situation, all combatants are moving around a bit in response to offensive advances, even if they aren't actively dodging or parrying. If your target is stationary or slow, however, that's an exception. Anyone attacking such things as inanimate objects, or sleeping or oblivious individuals, gets a couple of bonuses. The first is a result of the fact that their target isn't moving (or is moving slowly). This gives the attacker a +4 (for a motionless target) or +2 (for merely slow-moving targets), as per the Target Speed chart below. Additionally, the ability to move in close to your target without any resistance is immensely useful. It grants +4 (see the Other Combat Modifiers chart) to your attack. Between these modifiers, you have a modifier of +6 or +8, which is enough for even the most pathetic of fighters to perpetrate a successful attack.

Attacking an Exceptionally Stupid Target

To attack an exceptionally stupid target, use the rules for normal attacks.

Target Speed Chart

<i>Bonus</i>	<i>Target Status</i>
+4	Motionless / No Movement
+2	Slow Movement / Slow Walk, Crawl
+0	Medium Movement / Fast Walk, Combat Movement
-2	Fast Movement / Humanoid Run
-4	Blazing Movement / Horse Gallop

Damaging Inanimate Objects

Because inanimate objects are stationary, attacking them is easier (see *Attacking Stationary, Slow, or Nonresistant Targets*, above). Also, they usually can't parry, and they certainly can't dodge. Damaging them isn't necessarily any easier, though. Inanimate objects don't have Pain Thresholds, but they do get to ignore all pain penalties, for obvious reasons. Neither do they have vital organs (although some machines might have equivalents). And they may have armor (see the rules for armor, page 38). When someone wants to attack an inanimate object, add in any bonuses for the stationary and nonresistant nature of the target (usually a total of +8), roll the attack, and subtract the relevant number for the object's armor protection. (Note that some inanimate objects are so fragile that they have negative armor in some categories.)

Determining how the damage affects the target can require a bit of judgment. The following Barrel Attack chart makes a good starting point.

Barrel Attack Chart

Degrees	Damage	Description
1	Minor	You have scratched or dented the exterior of the barrel.
2	Moderate	You have made a small to medium-sized hole in the barrel.
4	Major	You have made a large hole in the barrel.
8	Severe	You have ripped an entire side off the barrel.
16	Extreme	The barrel is in several pieces lying on the ground.
32	Obliterative	The barrel is reduced to splinters and is no longer recognizable as a barrel.

Some Defensive Actions of Note

Combat is dangerous. So unless you're a loony or a masochist, you might want to try to defend yourself from the slings and swords fate unleashes upon you. To do this, you'll need to reserve some actions for self-defense rolls — dodging and parrying.

Dodging and parrying both work like any other contested action. A defending character subtracts his degrees from his attacker's total, reducing the effectiveness of an attack by that many degrees. Like other responses to contested actions, dodge and parry rolls are taken at any point in an action sequence, provided of course that there's an attack to respond to. You can't dodge or parry if you've already used all your actions that round; you need to have at least one action left.

Parrying

Each successful attempt to parry blocks a single attack. You can parry as many times as you like in a round by using multiple actions, and you can even parry more than once in a

single round with the same implement (although you can't parry the same attack more than once with one implement). You need an object of some kind to parry. Shields work best, but almost any weapon or even any hard object will do. Another benefit of parrying over dodging is that the item you're using to parry usually imparts a proficiency bonus, making success more likely. You can also elect to parry for other people, if they're standing near you.

Parrying with Body Parts

It is possible to parry a blow with a body part. This dangerous feat is done the same way any other parry is, except that if it's successful, the part of the body blocking the blow takes all the damage it absorbs. If you successfully use your arm to parry 3 degrees of a 5 degree attack directed at your head, 2 degrees of damage apply to your head, but 3 apply to your arm. Some adventurers prepare for this eventuality by padding their arms with armor. A few prepare for this eventuality by padding their heads with armor.

Dodging

Unlike when parrying, each dodging attempt applies to every attack made against you in a round (excluding sneak attacks, of course). If you're dodging 2 attacks and you get 3 degrees on your dodge roll, those 3 degrees reduce both attacks by 3. Obviously, weapons and defensive implements are useless when dodging; they imply no bonus as they do with parrying. To dodge, a character must be relatively mobile and have enough space to move about in. Prone characters, or those in cramped quarters, endure substantial penalties to their dodge roll.⁴ A character can only dodge once per round.

Kutzgreezi Phlordertphast, a dwarven janitor, has flown into a rage upon noting that two punk adolescent halflings have dripped iced gravy treats all over his newly buffed floor. Kutzgreezi decides to attack, and he gets the initiative. He sets aside 3 actions and uses the first to swing at the blue-haired halfling (at -4 since he's taking 3 actions), but he misses. The halflings then retaliate. The Cobbler rolls the blue-haired halfling's attack and gets 3 degrees. Kutzgreezi, who had decided to dodge (again at a -4 penalty), rolls 3 degrees with his Dodging proficiency, so the halfling misses. Now the other halfling (the one with the mohawk) attacks, rolling 5 degrees. Kutzgreezi has already rolled a dodge, so he can't do it again, but fortunately the effects of that dodge also apply to this attack, reducing it to 2 degrees. Kutzgreezi still has one action left, however, which he elects to use to parry the mohawked halfling. His roll turns up 1 degree, which further reduces the mohawked halfling's attack to an effective 1 degree.

Anticipating

Certain kinds of attacks are described as *anticipatable*. When you declare that you're expecting such an attack, and it turns out that your expectations are correct, your knowledge of your enemy's tactics will help you to defeat them. This reflects the fact that combatants will probably begin to

⁴ In theory, you could dodge as many people as could fit around you and attack simultaneously, but naturally, large groups of hostile individuals tend to restrict one's movement. Thus dodging a lot of people all at once without a tremendous modifier is only possible if they're courteous (or foolish) enough to give you enough space.

catch on to the moves of their opponents, if those opponents keep repeating the same actions. Any attack which is fairly specific is anticipatable. For example, called shots to any body part are always anticipatable, as are attempts to disarm. Melee attacks using tomatoes, tangerines, tamarinds, or tangelos may or may not be anticipatable. Missile attacks, however, are never anticipatable. To anticipate an attack, tell the Cobbler what type of attack you want to anticipate, and decide how strongly you want to anticipate it (on a scale of +1 to +8). If your anticipation is correct, you get that same bonus to all defenses you employ toward that attack. If it's incorrect, you get that same modifier to your defenses — only at a negative.

Other Actions of Strategic Import

Other actions common in combat situations which don't pertain specifically to attacking or defending include the following.

Moving

Even when you're locked in mortal combat or some other equivalently stressful activity, you can move around somewhat as an involuntary action. As a general rule, characters are allowed to move a number of feet equal to their proficiency in Maneuver / Agility / Running (or their proficiency in Flying, if they're in the air). If any character wants to move more than this, he'll have to take an extra action. If a character is in the water or some such liquid, or if he's climbing, he can't move without taking another action.

Employing a Spell, Counterspell, or Magic Item

Casting and countering spells, or using magic items is common in combat. See page 40 for information on spells and counterspells. Use a magic item the same way you would take any other action.

Employing Non-Combat Proficiencies

The only real difference between performing a combat proficiency in an intense action sequence and performing a non-combat proficiency in an intense action sequence is when the activity doesn't fit into a 6 second round. In such cases, you may have to spend several rounds engaged in a single action while the other characters finish multiple combat rounds.

Kale is trying to close an important business deal. His associate, Tiskren, is nearby, waiting for him to finish. However, when someone accidentally steps on Tiskren's toe, Tiskren wigs out and attacks the offending toe-stepper. While Tiskren's attack will presumably be finished after a few six second rounds, Kale might take several minutes (perhaps dozens of rounds) to complete the deal. Therefore, Kale's player probably will have to wait while Tiskren's player resolves her attacks.

Employing a Special Ability

Some characters have special abilities which they can employ at will. These are resolved as ordinary actions, with the exception of any special permutations which are discussed in the special ability itself.

Hit Location

In combat, it can be important (or at least interesting) to know what part of a body has been hit by a blow. If you want to allow for the possibility of wearing different kinds of armor in differing degrees on various body parts in your game, hit location becomes especially important. On the other hand, you may not always care about hit location. If your campaign doesn't use the custom armor rules, you can just ignore the entire concept, or use it only when you're in the mood.

Determining a Hit Location

To figure out where a character hits, roll 2 dice and consult the Hit Location Chart. The first die represents the result on the Macro Body Area section of the Hit Location chart. The second die represents the result on the Micro Body Area section. Cross-reference these to determine the part of the body struck.

Note that the first six sections of the Macro Body area section of the Hit Location chart (0-5) represent Vital areas. The last four sections (6-9) represent Nonvital areas. This becomes important when interpreting damage — see section 38.

When the hit location chart refers to an interior part of the body, such as the kidneys, it actually means the exterior area of the body covering that organ. Whether the strike actually hits the organ underneath that section of the body depends on the depth of the wound, which is determined by the severity of the hit (page 38), *not* the hit location.

Of course, if hitting a particular location makes sense, ignore this chart and make something up. Sometimes, particularly in the case of large creatures, your hit location will be decided by the area you're standing nearest — or when fighting small critters, hit location tends to be fairly irrelevant. Certain types of attacks — like acid — may splatter and affect multiple parts of the body. To simulate this, Cobblers should disregard the hit location chart (or simply use it as a guideline about where the majority of the attack hit) and divide the degrees of the attack over the body, resulting in many smaller attacks rather than one large one.

It's also possible to choose where you want to hit — see Called Shots, below.

Hit Location with Excessive & Obliterative Wounds

When you inflict a really nasty wound, hit location becomes less important. An Excessive wound (see page 38) is necessarily bad enough that you should only roll to see what Macro Body Area it affects — it totally destroys that entire area rather than affecting the specific part of it determined by the Micro Body Area. An Obliterative wound, on the other hand, is so severe that you shouldn't roll hit location at all — it affects the entire body, inevitably killing the target and probably mangling her body utterly. Note that Limestone Publishing does not condone body mangling in real life.

Attacking Beings with Nonstandard Forms

Many creatures have body types which differ somewhat from humans. To determine if any of these types of creatures

Hit Location Chart

R. = Right / L. = Left / Ba. = Back / Fr. = Front / Up. = Upper / Lo. = Lower
 * Use Standard Attack Locations Chart but interpret Arms as Front Legs, Legs as Rear legs, etc...

Macro Body Area (Horizontal) (Vital Areas: 0-5) / Micro Body Area (Vertical)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Abdomen</i>	<i>Chest</i>	<i>Fr. of Head</i>	<i>Ba. of Head</i>	<i>Up. Ba.</i>	<i>Lo. Ba.</i>	<i>L. Arm</i>	<i>R. Arm</i>	<i>L. Leg</i>	<i>R. Leg</i>
0 L. Fr. Kidney	L. Fr. Ribs	Fr. of Crown	Ba. of Crown	L. Ba. Ribs	L. Ba. Kidney	L. Blade	R. Blade	L. Buttocks	R. Buttocks
1 L. Fr. Kidney	L. Fr. Ribs	Forehead	L. Ear	L. Ba. Ribs	L. Ba. Kidney	L. Shoulder Fr.	R. Shoulder Fr.	L. Hips	R. Hips
2 Abs	L. Pec/Breast	Forehead	R. Ear	L. Ba. Ribs	L. Ba. Kidney	L. Armpit	R. Armpit	L. Up. Leg	R. Up. Leg
3 Abs	L. Pec/Breast	L. Temple	Ba. of Skull	Up. Backbone	Lo. Backbone	L. Up. Arm	R. Up. Arm	L. Up. Leg	R. Up. Leg
4 Abs	Collarbone	Up. Face	Ba. of Skull	Up. Backbone	Lo. Backbone	L. Up. Arm	R. Up. Arm	L. Up. Leg	R. Up. Leg
5 Abs	Breastbone	Lo. Face	Ba. of Skull	Up. Backbone	Lo. Backbone	L. Elbow	R. Elbow	L. Knee	R. Knee
6 R. Fr. Kidney	R. Pec/Breast	R. Temple	Neckbone	Up. Backbone	Lo. Backbone	L. Lo. Arm	R. Lo. Arm	L. Lo. Leg	R. Lo. Leg
7 R. Fr. Kidney	R. Pec/Breast	Throat	Neckbone	R. Ba. Ribs	R. Ba. Kidney	L. Lo. Arm	R. Lo. Arm	L. Lo. Leg	R. Lo. Leg
8 Groin	R. Fr. Ribs	Throat	Neckbone	R. Ba. Ribs	R. Ba. Kidney	L. Wrist	R. Wrist	L. Ankle	R. Ankle
9 Groin	R. Fr. Ribs	Throat	Neckbone	R. Ba. Ribs	R. Ba. Kidney	L. Hand	R. Hand	L. Foot	R. Foot

Pre-Hit Location Chart

R. = Right / L. = Left / Ba. = Back / Fr. = Front / Up. = Upper / Lo. = Lower
 * Use Standard Attack Locations Chart but interpret Arms as Front Legs, Legs as Rear legs, etc...

Macro Body Area (Horizontal) / Micro Body Area (Vertical)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Winged Humanoid (wings out)</i>	<i>Winged Humanoid (wings in)</i>	<i>Quadruped</i>	<i>Rider & Mount</i>	<i>Ornithoid (wings out) (feet in)</i>	<i>Ornithoid (wings in) (feet out)</i>	<i>Winged Quadruped (wings out)</i>	<i>Winged Quadruped (wings in)</i>	<i>Serpentoid</i>	<i>Taurid</i>
0 Standard	Standard	Standard*	Mount	Fr. of Head	Fr. of Head	Standard*	Standard*	Fr. of Head	Standard- Legs
1 Standard	Standard	Standard*	Mount	Chest	Chest	Standard*	Standard*	Ba. of Head	Standard- Legs
2 Standard	Standard	Standard*	Mount	Abdomen	Abdomen	Standard*	Standard*	Chest	Standard- Legs
3 Standard	Standard	Standard*	Mount	Ba. of Head	Ba. of Head	Standard*	Standard*	Chest	Tail
4 Standard	Standard	Standard*	Mount	Up. Ba.	Up. Ba.	Standard*	Standard*	Chest	Standard*- Head
5 Standard	Standard	Standard*	Mount	Lo. Back	Lo. Back	L. Wing	Standard*	Up. Ba.	Standard*- Head
6 L. Wing	Standard	Standard*	Mount	L. Wing	L. Wing	L. Wing	Standard*	Up. Ba.	Standard*- Head
7 L. Wing	Standard	Standard*	Rider	L. Wing	R. Wing	R. Wing	L. Wing	Up. Ba.	Standard*- Head
8 R. Wing	L. Wing	Standard*	Rider	R. Wing	L. Leg	R. Wing	R. Wing	Tail	Standard*- Head
9 R. Wing	R. Wing	Tail	Rider	R. Wing	R. Leg	Tail	Tail	Tail	Standard*- Head

Optional Hit Location Chart

R. = Right / L. = Left / Ba. = Back / Fr. = Front / Up. = Upper / Lo. = Lower
 * Use Standard Attack Locations Chart but interpret Arms as Front Legs, Legs as Rear legs, etc...

	<i>Up. Face</i>	<i>Lo. Face</i>	<i>L. Hand</i>	<i>R. Hand</i>	<i>L. Foot</i>	<i>R. Foot</i>
0	L. Up. Eyelid	L. Cheekbone	L. Pinky Finger	R. Pinky Finger	L. Heel	R. Heel
1	L. Eye	L. Lo. Cheek	L. Ring Finger	R. Ring Finger	L. Heel	R. Heel
2	L. Lo. Eyelid	R. Cheekbone	L. Middle Finger	R. Middle Finger	L. Foot Top	R. Foot Top
3	R. Up. Eyelid	R. Lo. Cheek	L. Index Finger	R. Index Finger	L. Foot Top	R. Foot Top
4	R. Eye	Up. Jaw	L. Thumb	R. Thumb	L. Foot Top	R. Foot Top
5	R. Lo. Eyelid	Up. Lip	L. Thumb	R. Thumb	L. Sole	R. Sole
6	Bridge	Inner Mouth	L. Backhand	R. Backhand	L. Sole	R. Sole
7	Nose	Lo. Lip	L. Backhand	R. Backhand	L. Sole	R. Sole
8	Nose	Lo. Jaw Front	L. Palm	R. Palm	L. Toes	R. Toes
9	Nostrils	Lo. Jaw Bottom	L. Palm	R. Palm	L. Toes	R. Toes

get hit in a part of the body that humans don't possess, make a roll on the Pre-Hit Location chart before you roll on the standard chart. Sprites, who have wings, are probably the most common reason for using this chart.

Optional Hit Locations

If you want to be really exact about which part of the body you hit, roll an extra die and consult the Optional Hit Location chart. This will take away most of the remaining ambiguity about the specific manner in which you've caused your foe to suffer.

Called Shots

Where you hit can be as important as how much damage you do. Obviously, certain parts of the body are more vital than others, and being struck in certain places can result in types of damage not possible anywhere else. For example, it's unlikely for someone to become paralyzed by a severe blow to the left kneecap. Also, if you use the custom armor rules, it's often worth your while to try to hit your enemies in places where they haven't got any protection.

To call a shot, decide what areas of the body you want to hit. Then determine all the columns on the Hit Location chart which encompass these areas. The more columns you're willing to include in your targeted area, the easier it is for you to hit what you want. Then determine the penalty to your attack by consulting the Called Shot chart. Note that called shot penalties don't apply in all situations. When you're surprising your target, for instance, or if she's standing still, you can probably select whatever hit location you desire automatically (Cobbler's discretion).

Called Shots Chart

<i>Attack Modifier</i>	<i>Attacking Areas</i>	<i>Attacking Entities</i>
+4	x16 Your Size	Attacking 11 or more densely packed entities or 21 or more entities with elbow room
+3	x8 Your Size	Attacking 6 to 10 densely packed entities or 11 to 20 entities with elbow room
+2	x4 Your Size	Attacking 3 to 5 densely packed entities or 6 to 10 entities with elbow room
+1	x2 Your Size	Attacking 2 densely packed entities or 3-5 entities with elbow room
+0	Your Size	Using 8 or more columns from the SAL chart
-1	x1/2 Your Size	Using -4 to 7 columns from the SAL chart
-2	x1/4 Your Size	Using 2 to 3 columns from the SAL chart
-3	x1/8 Your Size	Using 1 column from the SAL chart
-4	x1/16 Your Size	Using 4 to 7 cells from the SAL chart
-5	x1/32 Your Size	Using 2 to 3 cells from the SAL chart
-6	x1/64 Your Size	Using 1 cell from the SAL chart
-7	x1/128 Your Size	Using 4 to 7 cells from OAL chart
-8	x1/256 Your Size	Using 2 to 3 cells from OAL chart
-9	x1/512 Your Size	Using 1 cell from OAL chart

SAL = Standard Attack Locations / OAL = Optional Attack Locations

If you're successful in hitting your target, you've successfully hit the desired location.

Accidental Attacks

If the Cobbler rules that you might have accidentally hit something (or someone) you weren't trying to hit, she can determine whether or not this happened by rolling an attack on that thing (or person). This attack has a proficiency equal to the proficiency of the original attack, minus the number of degrees scored on that attack. (The Cobbler may also apply a modifier to the proficiency based on the probability of hitting the thing or person in question. This modifier is based on their size and distance from the original target; the called shots chart should be of use here.)

Attacking Crowds

Using the Called Shot Chart, you can also determine your bonus for attacking an entire group of people. The bigger the crowd, the bigger the bonus you receive to hitting it.

Taking Cover

Any time you take cover behind an object, you force your opponent to make a called shot at whichever parts aren't protected. Many a brave fighter has protected his or her vitals (especially the head and groin) to the last in this manner. Of course, if your opponent can easily reach around the object you're using as cover, then this doesn't work. Note that taking cover behind an object often results in accidental attacks against the cover (see above).

Using Living Beings as Cover

Whether or not you're the sort of person who has qualms about using innocent bystanders as shields, you may at times end up in situations where another person gets between you and a threat to your life. Even if you don't, an evildoer might elect to use your fiancé as protection from your barrage of deadly arrows. This works just like any other situation where a target is under cover, and requires the attacker to make a called shot. However, the person in the way may be moving around. This is dealt with simply by applying an additional -2 to the attack roll.

Quelwidth is firing a sling at an unsuspecting dwarf with a relatively relaxed (and hence stationary) monkey hanging on him. Not wishing to harm the innocent monkey, she makes a called shot to hit any part of the dwarf which isn't obscured by monkey. The Cobbler rules that the available non-monkey-covered-area on the dwarf comprises about 3 columns on the Called Shot chart, so Quelwidth applies -2 to her attack proficiency. Since her Maneuver / Aiming / Slinging proficiency is 11, after subtracting 2, her effective proficiency is 9. She makes the check and gets a result of 1 degree. Because she wasn't especially effective in hitting her target, the Cobbler decides that she may have hit the monkey. Quelwidth rolls her attack again, this time against the monkey and at a proficiency of 10 (her attack proficiency is 11, minus the number of degrees which struck the dwarf). This time she gets 2 degrees, meaning that she gives the monkey a Moderate wound. As the shocked dwarf and his simian companion retreat, Quelwidth readies another shot and shouts her deepest regrets to the monkey.⁵

Damage Types

Since the whole point of fighting is (usually) to harm an opponent, combat effects (the ones inflicted on a combatant, anyway) are usually of a kind rather detrimental to his well-being. There are eight basic combat-related effect types (others exist, but they're unlikely to come up). The four most common of these, the mechanical ones, are Blunt, Edged, Restrictive, and Pointed; the remaining types are Photonic, Electric, Caustic, and Thermal. Each type of combat effect is caused by some appropriate object, substance, or energy — blunt weapons cause Blunt effects, acid causes Caustic effects, and so on. With the exception of Restrictive effects, which can also control or affect an opponent's location or position, all eight of these effect types usually inflict physical injury. Different weapons (and projectiles, in the case of Aiming proficiencies) deliver different types of damage. Of course, if you wield your weapon in an unusual way (say, you whack someone with a sword hilt), you might change the type of damage done with it. Determining damage for atypical uses of weapons is left to Cobbler discretion.

Damage Types Chart

B/E/R/P

Blunt:	Damage done with blunt objects, or with sound.
Edged:	Damage done with bladed objects.
Restrictive:	Alterations to position or damage done by constricting.
Pointed:	Damage done with pointed objects.

P/E/C/T

Photonic:	Damage done by light.
Electric:	Damage done by electricity.
Caustic:	Damage done by caustic substances, like acids and bases.
Thermal:	Damage done by temperature extremes, like heat and cold.

The type of damage a weapon causes you is important for a few reasons. Firstly, it adds flavor to the game to know what kind of wound you've incurred in addition to how nasty it is. Secondly, it's often useful in healing a wound to know what, exactly, is wrong with it. And thirdly, different armor materials defend to different extents against different Damage Types (see below).

For the problems involved in getting damaged, see *The Trouble with Trauma* on page 42. For ways to recover from damage, see *Stabilizing Wounds & Recuperating* on page 44. And for more information on resisting non-combat, non-damage effects, see on page 41.

Armor

All attacks can potentially be deflected, in whole or part, with armor. Each piece of armor has a particular rating against all damage effect types — Blunt, Edged, Restrictive,

Pointed, Photonic, Electrical, Caustic, and Thermal. This series of ratings is called its B/E/R/P and its P/E/C/T. This is written as a row of numbers, all between 0 and 4, with slashes separating them. When an attack strikes a part of the body with armor protecting it, consult that armor type's B/E/R/P or P/E/C/T and find the rating which corresponds to the kind of damage the attacking weapon is doing. This is the number of degrees the defender can subtract from the attack against him.

Kale Ecuttel, entrepreneur and adventurer, is quarreling with a government official over the local regulations governing his business establishment. Upset, he stabs the official in the chest with his rapier, initially achieving a total of 5 degrees. Fortunately for her, however, her uniform consists partially of a metal breastplate, which protects her chest. The breastplate provides 2 degrees of protection against the Pointed damage that is the hallmark of a rapier, so Kale's final number of degrees is 3 (rather than 5). Regretting his hasty action, Kale apologizes profusely.

Interpreting Damage Results

In combat, success is generally measured in terms of damage done to an opponent. Conventional descriptions of success, like "Minimal" or "Phenomenal" don't really apply. So although degrees add up to levels exactly the same way they do for basic actions, the combat success levels (called damage levels) have different names.

- **Minor Wound (1 Degree):** A Minor wound is the smallest possible unit of damage that the average adventurer wouldn't simply sneer at. It's a good deal worse than a typical paper cut or hangnail, but it still won't slow most people down much. Medical attention isn't absolutely necessary for a Minor wound, but it might be necessary to prevent scarring. Typical Minor wounds include 4 inch-long cut a quarter of an inch deep along the arm, or a bruise the diameter of an orange.

- **Moderate Wound (2 Degrees):** A Moderate wound is basically two Minor ones on top of each other. Most adventurers getting a Moderate wound will be more than just annoyed, and they would certainly benefit from medical attention, but they are still capable of taking action as usual. Sample Moderate wounds include a four-inch deep puncture in the shoulder, a fractured forearm, or a cracked skull.

- **Major Wound (4 Degrees):** The average person interacting with a Major wound is quite unhappy and almost certainly very inconvenienced. In real life, a Major would require hospitalization, though in Paranesia a few expensive herbs should do the trick. Examples of Major wounds include a slashed-open belly, a partially-cleaved ankle, or a broken femur.

- **Severe Wound (8 Degrees):** A Severe wound affecting an important body part (say the neck) is so unpleasant that it jeopardizes the life of a victim, and a Severe wound threatening a less important spot (such as the left buttocks) means that even sitting down requires a check at a substantial penalty. Either way, it's painful enough to give even the staunchest adventurer pause. Severe wounds include a broken spine, a severed arm, and disemboweled guts.

⁵ If *Quelwidth* chooses to attack the dwarf again, there will be an additional -2 penalty because the monkey is no longer holding still.

• **Excessive Wound (16 Degrees):** An Excessive wound to a Vital area kills you dead, and fast. In a round, you've completely expired. An Excessive wound to a Nonvital area makes it impossible to use that body part. Excessive wounds tend to totally mangle the part of the body they hit. Examples include a diced leg or a chest cavity that looks more like paste with a few broken bones sticking out.

• **Obliterative Wound (32 Degrees):** No one survives the nasty Obliterative wound. A person who has received an Obliterative wound is a scarcely recognizable mound or pile of flesh, or perhaps just a cloud of vapor.

Level of Damage Chart

<i>Degrees</i>	<i>Success Level</i> <i>"Doctor's Probable Reaction"</i>	<i>Damage</i>
1	Minimal "Just put a bandage on it and you'll be fine."	Minor
2	Complete "Hmmm... you'll need a more than a few stitches."	Moderate
4	Excellent "Break out the whiskey--this is gonna hurt."	Major
8	Phenomenal "We need to operate! Now!"	Severe
16	Fantastical "Holy crap. I'll go fetch the mortician."	Excessive
32	Phantasmagorical "What am I supposed to do with these chunks of meat—make stew?"	Obliterative

Determining Damage Descriptions

Between this chart, the weapon being used, and the Hit Location chart, it's possible to figure out anything that happens to a target. A Moderate wound to the knee with a mace might dislocate the knee joint. A Severe sword strike to the neck might decapitate (or nearly decapitate) the target. A Minor strike to the abdomen with a battle axe might mean a shallow slash across the belly. Of course, there's more than one correct answer to what a particular result means. If you think you need help figuring out exactly what happens, the Suggested Damage Effects charts await on page 28.

"Nondamaging" Damage

Keep in mind that not all combat attacks are physically damaging. When attempting to push somebody over, for example, or frighten them, the effects of combat are entirely different, and the Cobbler should adjust the results accordingly. When one combatant is trying to push another down, a Minor effect might mean that the target is unbalanced, while a Severe could mean that he's been thrown all the way across the room, and that he's landed in an extremely compromising position. Whether an attack does damaging damage or nondamaging damage depends on the intent of the player and the whim of the Cobbler. Cobblers, in particular, are encouraged to be creative in interpreting results. If a character achieves 5 degrees on a roll, for example, the Cobbler

could rule that the attack does 4 degrees of damage, and the final degree knocks off the opponent's helmet. Of course, this probably shouldn't happen constantly, or the players will get frustrated with their inability to cause actual damage.⁶

Multiple Interpretations

Note, too, that the same result can be interpreted in more than one way. The Cobbler has more than one option for describing the damage when characters get hurt — that's part of the fun of Cobbling. The specific consequences of the damage (in mechanical terms), on the other hand, are a bit more objective. See page 42, Damage Effects: the Trouble with Trauma.

The Pain of Damage

In the real world, pain hurts. When people get wounded, they usually complain a lot and go to the doctor, or at least lie down for a while. In Paranesia, pain hurts just as much as it does in real life, so this is exactly the sort of behavior most people will expect from the injured. However, your campaign can probably derive some comedy from flouting these expectations (since powerful characters are probably going to defy them in any case). So long as you're still capable of moving around and performing actions and your pain penalty doesn't exceed your Pain Threshold (see page 42), you can walk around with gaping wounds as if you felt fine. You can let entire days pass with a sprained ankle or a big gash in your shoulder without bothering about medical treatment. This gives the Cobbler an excellent opportunity to amuse himself by having NPCs react — say, by remarking on the PC's stamina, or mistaking them for the walking dead.

FIXIN' FOR A BEWITCHIN': SPELLCASTING PERMUTATIONS

The same permutations that apply to basic actions also apply to spellcasting. Indeed, since it's perfectly possible (and indeed fairly common for adventures) to use magic and other such paranormal abilities while fighting, the rules for combat also apply to using casting spells (when appropriate). There are a few rules, however, that are entirely specific to the supernatural.

Casting Spells

To employ a spell, you must know on what (or whom) you're casting it, and exactly where that thing (or person) is located, if applicable. For abilities which affect areas (a spell that affects a sphere around the caster, for instance, or a lightning bolt which is cast on the air immediately above one's hand), this is easy. But many spells (like those designed to change a target's shape, communicate telepathically, or start someone on fire) affect individuals or objects directly, and

⁶ And rise up en masse against said Cobbler, likely with the intent of causing some damaging damage.

such spells are impossible to cast if you don't know precisely where your target is.

Once you've decided on your target, you merely need roll the proper proficiency. This is always the Activating proficiency under the magical art (the Capability of Aether, Cosmos, Force, or Matter) and the magical method (the Ability of Presence or Vision) in question. This works just like any other action, though a few special rules apply to interpreting the results (see below).

See page 132 for descriptions of the magical arts and methods. Rules for infusing spells into objects to create magic items will be provided in an upcoming supplement.

Resisting Spells

When a spell flies your way, you might be tempted to leap out of the way, but this is pointless. Dodging something without physical substance is harder than running away from one of those farts that clings to your leg. You can, however, resist it. Anytime a spell tries to gain purchase upon you, you can, at your option, make an involuntary Resilience roll (if using Skills, this could be Body, Brain, Mind, or Soul Resilience, depending on what part of you is under attack). This reflects the fact that any conscious entity has some resistance to magic (although it's *not* necessary to be aware that a spell is being cast to resist it). Using Resilience Skills is always optional for players — anyone can elect to simply let a magical effect run its course. Again, however, this process need not be conscious; characters do not decide whether or not to let a spell affect them — players do.

Mechanically, resisting a spell is the magical equivalent of dodging a blow, in that the same check applies to every spell targeting a given part of you (Body, Brain, Mind, or Soul) in a given round. Hence, if a witch is trying to turn you into a rat and a sorcerer is trying to make a rutabaga grow out of your ears in the same round, you would resist both with the same Resolve / Resilience / Body Resilience check. Resisting spells, unlike dodging, is involuntary. Of course, there's also no need to be mobile to resist a spell. If you're using Skills and you're under attack from spells which affect more than one resilience Skill, you can make multiple checks.

When Arbitus Varshoe sells snake oil to Malin Glist, the gnomish wizard and mail carrier, Malin looses his cool and throws his Seal Envelope spell upon Arbitus' mouth. Malin's Presence / Matter / Activating check turns up 6 degrees. Arbitus makes a Resolve / Resilience / Body Resilience check and gets 4 degrees. Malin's Seal Envelope spell thus achieves 2 degrees, or Complete success.

Blocking Spells

The malleability of gameality which makes magic possible to begin with can also be used to make magic *impossible*. In fact, anyone who knows even a single spell in a given magical art can attempt to block other spells of that same art, if they're aware that a spell is being cast, what person or item that spell is coming from, and exactly where that person or item is located. This can be difficult to determine, but you might be tipped off by gestures, incantations, prayers, and so forth, or you might successfully descry the magic (see page 123). Of course, you can only descry a continuous effect

which is already in operation — obviously, you can't descry a spell before it's been cast.

Blocking (also called countering in the context of magic) works in some of the same ways Maneuver / Wits / Parrying does. When you know that a caster is about to cast a spell, you can state that you wish to counter it, just as you might counter a physical blow with a weapon. You must target a specific effect you know is taking place or is about to take place, although you don't necessarily need to know what the effect is going to do (if you don't know the spell's art, you'll have to guess). When you block a spell, the degrees you accumulate on the check are subtracted from the spell's degrees. The remaining spell degrees, if any, indicate how powerful the spell ends up being. Once the spell has been cast, it can no longer be blocked, unless it continues to generate a magical effect. Blocking a spell which continues to generate a magical effect is done exactly like an ordinary block, except that nothing short of a full cancellation of all the spell's degrees has an impact. Furthermore, you can generally only attempt to block a given spell once, even if you have multiple rounds in which to do so. However, in the unlikely event that you're both a mage and an avatar, you *can* use both the appropriate Presence / Blocking proficiency and the appropriate Vision / Blocking proficiency, giving you two tries. Blocking can't be done cooperatively with other characters, though of course you can block spells affecting people other than you.

A counterspell consists, essentially, of magical noise. It's basically like throwing a wrench into a spell's workings. Hence, you can't block a counterspell. In order to undo a counterspell, you'll have to recast the original spell.

Before they sneak into the dragon's lair together, Zandur wants to cast an invisibility spell on his friend, Turret. Zandur makes a Presence / Force / Activating check and gets 5 degrees, a very respectable success. Turret, however, is terrified by the idea of not being seen, so he uses his powers as an avatar of the God of Shouting to counter the spell. He can do this because he knows a Force spell of his own — namely, Linda's Damn Hot Fireball spell. He makes a Vision / Force / Blocking check and gets 18 degrees. This is far more than enough to negate the invisibility, so Zandur's spell fizzles and dies. The two then bicker about this waste of party resources briefly, until the dragon overhears them and reduces them to crispy bits of human bacon that she sprinkles onto her breakfast the next morning.

Spellcasting Modifiers

Spellcasting situations don't make use of many check modifiers, but a few do apply. In particular, avatars have modifiers based on how pious and devoted they are, and mages have modifiers based on their spell components and their ability to speak and gesture.

Interpreting Spell Results

Determining the results of a spell is somewhat less open to interpretation than determining the results of most other kinds of actions, since each spell provides a chart that cross-references the number of degrees attained with a number of areas in which the spell can succeed. For example, an invisibility spell could have a chart like this:

Invisibility Spell Sample

Range	Duration	No. of Effects Possible	Target
0'	5 minutes	1 Partial Effect	1 Object
5'	1 hour	1 Full Effect	1 Being with Equipment or 2 Objects
10'	4 hours	2 Full Effects	4 Beings with Equipment or 8 Objects
20'	8 hours	3 Full Effects	16 Beings with Equipment or 32 Objects
40'	16 hours	4 Full Effects	64 Beings with Equipment or 128 Objects

To figure out what your result means, simply find it on the spell results chart. You attain every category of the spell which corresponds to the spell results chart level you achieved, regardless of how many different categories there are.

Shuffling Spell Results

You don't have to be content with whatever static spell result you get.⁷ Spellcasters can increase the effectiveness of their spell in certain areas by reducing its effectiveness in others. This is done quite simply — just count the number of degrees you get from reducing the level of success in one category, and use those degrees to increase other categories. A spell category is worth the number of degrees it took to attain it. If you reduce two spell categories from 4 degrees to 2, for example, you can then spend the extra 4 degrees to raise a third category from 4 to 8 degrees. Do this as much as you like, so long as you have enough degrees.

Ambrosial Depletion

A spellcaster stores a limited supply of ambrosia in her aura (a part of her soul). Avatars get this from their gods; mages get it from themselves. By channeling this ambrosia from their auras into particular spells, they are able to bring about desired magical effects at the cost of some of that ambrosia. In mechanical terms, the process works as follows:

Every mage has a Powering Threshold in each of the four magical arts governed by Presence, and every avatar has one in each of the four magical arts governed by Vision. (A spellcaster's Powering Thresholds are identical to half her relevant Powering proficiencies.) Furthermore, all spells have Drain ratings. Each time you cast a spell of a particular art and method, you incur a certain amount of Drain. When the cumulative Drain of all the spells cast in that particular art and method begins to exceed its Powering Threshold, the caster acquires a penalty which is equal to the difference. This penalty applies whenever the caster attempts to activate, block, or infuse any spells of that art and method.

Lightfoot (a mage) has finally had it with the screeching of the demented rat which lives in the walls of her halfling hole, so in a fit of rage and frustration she throws a fireball at the wall the little bugger currently occupies. Her Powering Threshold, which starts at 5, is currently only 2 because of spells she cast earlier. Since this gives her no penalty, she is able to use her full Presence / Force / Activating proficiency of 13. Since the Drain of her fireball spell is 3, once she casts the fireball her Powering Threshold is at -1. Hence, the next time she casts a Presence / Force spell (assuming she hasn't had a chance to recharge ambrosia first), she'll have a penalty of -1.

Restoring Ambrosia

Characters who are even marginally capable of powering spells with ambrosia (in other words, using magic) are said to be *ambrelliant*. Ambrosia is restored to an ambrelliant character constantly. However, it takes rest to convert that ambrosia into a usable form. A full shift (8 hours) of rest restores all of a caster's ambrosia (in other words, eliminates all his spell Drain) in all arts and methods. Half of that time restores half the ambrosia; an eighth of the time restores an eighth, and so on. When determining the amount of ambrosia restored, round down.

DAMAGE & OTHER EFFECTS

For game purposes, an *effect* is any temporary phenomenon which impacts a particular character and directly affects his ability to perform certain actions.⁸ Probably the most popular effect types are the result of fighting and involve getting hurt, but some other common effects include encumbrance, spells, distraction, ambrosia depletion (for spell-users), tiredness, intense desires, temperature extremes, and high wombessence.⁹ With the exception of those effects intentionally generated by magic, effects almost always apply negative modifiers.

Resisting Effects

You needn't just take whatever nasty things gameality throws at you. Your proficiencies can help you deal with them. When an effect threatens a character, the Cobbler can choose to deal with it in one of two ways — either with a check or a Threshold.

Effect Thresholds

Some kinds of effects tend to build up. Though in small doses they may cause little or no problem, experiencing many of them or having to deal with them over a prolonged period wears you out. Pain, fatigue, exposure, spell drain, and distraction are some of the effects which might use Thresholds.

When using a Threshold, the Cobbler will assign negative modifiers based on the severity of all effects incurred. The sum of these modifiers, once it accumulates enough to cancel out the relevant Threshold, becomes a penalty to activity. This penalty is equal to the amount of modifier remaining after the Threshold is gone. For example, a modifier of -7 obliterates a Threshold of 5 and leaves a final penalty of -2. In addition, at Cobbler discretion, something special might happen when a modifier accumulates enough to cancel a Threshold twice. For example, a modifier of -10 canceling a Threshold of 5 might cause the afflicted character to pass out.

Determine your Threshold versus a particular thing by taking half of the relevant proficiency. For example, your Fatigue Threshold is half of your Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Fatigue proficiency.

⁷ Unless you're a devotee of the God of Contented Mediocrity.

⁸ It should also be noted that effects very rarely punch holes in time and space. We just thought that would be a little excessive.

⁹ An ambient field caused by too many wombats.

Effect Resistance Checks

When the results of an effect are not likely to be cumulative with other effects of that type, it makes more sense to allow a character a resistance check to attempt to shake it off. Diseases, poisons, and urges usually use checks instead of Thresholds.

To determine whether or not an effect impacts a character, make a contested proficiency check. As with all contested actions, resistance rolls negate the degrees they oppose — if an avatar afflicts a character with an intense desire to eat a live rat (scoring 3 degrees on the spell roll), the character needs to achieve 3 degrees on an effect resistance check in Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges to resist it.

Simplifying Effect Resolution

For the sake of simplicity, the Cobbler may wish to deal with all effects in the same manner. This may be somewhat less realistic, but it works well enough.

Effect Duration

Effects last until they're cured, fixed, or sated, or until the cause has been removed, depending on their nature. Some effects will simply go away on their own given enough time, but most also allow the possibility that certain in-game events (like spells, herbs, or whatever) will eliminate the effect immediately (or at least pretty soon).

Damage Effects: The Trouble with Trauma

There are, in short, two basic problems with getting hurt. One is that it hurts. The other is that it can cause the loss of valuable body parts.¹⁰ Although mercifully, players don't have to feel their characters' negative emotions (nor do they die or lose the use of their limbs and organs when their characters do), such events have distinct consequences in the game.

Suffering Penalties Due to Pain

The same modifiers which apply to other negative effects also apply for pain. An attack result of 2 degrees (a Moderate wound) means a penalty of -2. A result of 5 degrees (a Major wound) means a penalty of -5. However, different people are able to fight off the effects of such pain to different extents.

With the Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Pain proficiency, you can relegate pain to the periphery of your consciousness by ignoring it, repressing it, thinking pleasant thoughts, or other such mental tricks. This allows you to shrug off some of these penalties. This is done with your Pain Threshold, a number identical to half of your Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Pain proficiency. When the amount of pain you take from wounds exceeds your Pain Threshold, you start taking all your actions — mental and physical — at a negative equal to the amount by which the penalty exceeds your Threshold. If your Pain Threshold is 3, for instance, you can ignore a pain negative of up to -3. Once your pain penalty is -4, however, you have an effective penalty of -1. When your pain negative grows to -5, you have an effective penalty of -2.

Although characters can potentially take substantial abuse in this fashion, everyone has a breaking point. When a char-

acter accrues so many wound negatives that the total numbers of her penalties are more negative than her Pain Threshold is positive, she passes out and stays unconscious until she's healed or until she's given painkillers — or until she dies (if that's applicable — see below).

Starlet the sprite has been repeatedly trodden upon by at least four different woolly mammoths, causing her several wounds individually ranging from Minor to Severe (-1 to -8). Together, these penalties add up to -17. Starlet's Pain Threshold is 4 (since her Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Pain proficiency is 9), and hence she gets to ignore 4 points of that penalty, making her effective penalty to activity -13. Unfortunately, for her, though, this is 9 fewer than she would need to stay conscious, so she passes out from the intensity of the pain.

Death & Loss of Body Parts

The exact consequences of losing the functionality of a body part depends a lot on whether the part of the body is Nonvital or Vital, as defined by the Hit Location chart (it's also common sense — your heart is Vital, your leg is Nonvital, etc.). In either case, consult the Wound Problem chart, cross-referencing the severity of the wound with the type of body part the wound has struck (Nonvital or Vital). This will tell you how to resolve the damage, often with a Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury check.

For Minor, Excessive, or Obliterative wounds, you don't need to roll. Minor wounds aren't bad enough to cause you damage or threaten your life. Excessive wounds automatically kill in a round (if Vital) or automatically render the part unusable (if Nonvital). Obliterative wounds always kill instantly.

If the wound isn't Minor, Excessive, or Obliterative, however, you'll make a Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury check to determine exactly how the wound has affected you. This check determines how well you can shake off the damage.

If the area struck is Nonvital, you're not going to die. Well, not soon, anyway. Instead, you're simply going to have a harder time using the affected body part for a while. A penalty, called a Use Penalty, will apply to all attempts to use it. To determine your Use Penalty, make a Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury check. Then subtract 4 (for Moderate wounds), 8 (for Major wounds) or 16 (for Severe wounds). If the result is still negative, this is your penalty to all actions which involve the use of that body part. (If it's positive, disregard it — you can still use the part without any penalty, but of course you don't get a bonus for being wounded.) Any Use Penalty exists *in addition to* any pain modifiers, and it will persist regardless of your Pain Threshold and regardless of how much you dope yourself up on painkillers. This is because it's a result of your damaged body, not your mind.

If, on the other hand, the part of the body struck is Vital, you are probably in even more trouble. In these cases, make a Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury check to determine your Death Countdown. This is how much time you have before you drop dead, in units specified by the severity of the wound. For Moderate wounds, you have one day plus a day for every degree you roll. For Major wounds, you have one

¹⁰ This, incidentally, may kill you.

Wound Problem Chart

Degrees	Level	Pain Penalty	Vital Wounds (DC)	Nonvital Wounds
1	Minor	-1	No Death Countdown	No Use Penalty
2	Moderate	-2	Death in 1 Day + X Days	Additional X - 4 Penalty to Using that Body Part
4	Major	-4	Death in 1 Hour + X Hours	Additional X - 8 Penalty to Using that Body Part
8	Severe	-8	Death in 1 Round + X Rounds	Additional X - 16 Penalty to Using that Body Part
16	Excessive	-16	Death in 1 Round (No Resolve/Endurance/Resisting Injury roll)	Body Part Unusable
32	Obliterative	N.A.	Instant Death (No Resolve/Endurance/Resisting Injury roll)	N.A. (All Wounds Are Vital—No Hit Location Roll)

X = Result on Resolve/Endurance/Resisting Injury check

hour plus another hour for every degree you roll. For Severe wounds, you have only a round plus an additional round for every degree you roll.

There are no special penalties for bungling your Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury check.

Salmonella, the grocer of Starvington, is stabbed by a band of lawless bird people on a violent ride through town. This attack gives her a Major wound to the right elbow. After she determines her pain penalty, she rolls Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury and gets 6 degrees. Since the elbow isn't a Vital body part, this means she has a penalty of -2 to all actions which require her to use her elbow (a penalty of -8 for a Major wound negated by 6 degrees on her check equals a penalty of -2). If the wound had been to a Vital area and she had rolled the same, she would die from it in 7 hours (1 automatic hour plus 6 hours, one for each degree).

Fantastical Success & Better on Resisting Injury Checks to Vital Areas

A result of Fantastical success (16 degrees) or better on a Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury check for a Nonvital wound imparts no special benefit, other than that, as described above, you've managed to weather the damage and you can use your body part as normal. If you score Fantastical success (16 degrees) on a Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury check when trying to shake off the effects of damage to a Vital area, however, you can extend the Death Countdown to a single unit one level higher than the wound for which you're rolling. This means that for a Severe wound, you'll die in an hour instead of 16 rounds; for a Major wound, you'll die in a day instead of 16 hours, and for a Moderate wound, you'll shake off the effects completely instead of dying in 16 days.¹¹

If, on the other hand, you can manage Phantasmagorical success (32 degrees), you have no Death Countdown to worry about at all! Although you're probably pretty badly shaken and any pain penalties still apply, you're okay. Even if it seems impossible, somehow your body has managed to adapt. Managing the potentially ludicrous results of these rules is left up to the discretion of the Cobbler.

Fortunately, even if you don't roll very well, death isn't the inevitable result of damage to Vital areas. Wounds of almost any severity can be healed, or at least stabilized until they can be healed later. Wounds to Nonvital areas also require tending. See page 44, Stabilizing Wounds & Recuperating.

Full-Body Wounds

Occasionally, characters will acquire wounds which affect their entire bodies. They may, for example, be dumped into vats of acid, or find themselves at ground zero in a thermonuclear explosion. If something like this happens to one of your characters, treat the resulting wounds as a single wound for purposes of the Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury check. Once the character has made this check, you can assume that the wound affects all of the different parts of his body equally (with the exception of those parts protected by armor, which take the same number of degrees minus the relevant protection afforded by the armor). Since a Full-Body wound affects both Vital and Nonvital parts of the body, the wound is Vital as it applies to the former parts and Nonvital as it applies to the latter.

While wandering around outdoors in the dead of winter in nothing but his favorite pair of woolly undies, Yozan Pitwickler has, not surprisingly, gotten frostbite. The Cobbler rolls the frostbite's "attack," getting 3 degrees (a Moderate wound). This wound applies to all the exposed portions of Yozan's body — in this case, everything but his pelvic region. Yozan rolls Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury and gets 2 degrees. This leaves Yozan with a penalty of -2 to using any of his body parts (in addition to his pain penalties) and gives him 3 days to live.

Keeping Track of Wounds

When you take a wound, note it on the "Wounds" portion of your character sheet. There's a space there for the wound's wound and location, type, severity, Death Countdown (DC) or Use Modifier, and pain modifier. Fill these in. Then add the pain modifier to any other pain modifiers from other wounds accumulated and put this total in the "Total Pain Modifiers" blank. If this number is more than enough to negate your Pain Threshold (as shown in the second die-shaped blank), fill in the amount by which it exceeds the Threshold in the Pain Penalty blank. This is your total penalty to activity due to pain.

Gord, a dryad, has been bitten on his bare leg by a giant skunk and given 4 degrees of damage (a Major wound). His player notes his wound type and its location (Leg Bite) in the "Wound & Location" blank. He then writes down the type of wound (Pointed) in the "Type" blank and the severity of the wound (Major) in the "Severity" blank. Since this is a Nonvital

¹¹ Yes, this means that if you get very lucky, you can survive for an entire hour as a disembodied head.



The Four Hobbyhorsehalflings of the Apocalypse, from top: Pestilence, Famine, War, and Death.

wound, he writes down his Use Penalty rather than his Death Countdown in the “DC/Use Penalty” blank. Finally, since he has a pain modifier of -4, he writes “-4” in the “Pain Modifier” Blank. He adds this pain modifier to a previous wound (he fell into a pit of pineapples, which gave him a pain modifier of -2) to get a Total Pain Modifier of -6. His Pain Threshold is a mere 2, so he’s at -4 to all actions.

Consolidating Wounds

When you receive two or more wounds in the same area, you no longer have multiple wounds — you have a single, bigger wound. Whenever this happens, consolidate these multiple wounds into one. To do this, just add their degrees together, and consider the new wound to be whatever level the degrees add up to. A 3 degree wound (Moderate) and a 5 degree wound (Major) together add up to a 8 degree wound (Severe). All the effects of these previous wounds are overridden by the effects of the final wound (except, of course, the type of damage — Blunt damage does not suddenly change to Cold just because you spilled a magically cold-enhanced ice cream cone on your wound — consolidated wounds can consist of multiple damage types). When calculating revised Death Countdowns, use the Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury check from the most recent wound, and use the units of the newly formed, larger wound (so if you have two Moderate Wounds consolidating into a Major one, use hours (not days) as your DC time frame). To create the new, larger wound, add the degrees from your previous wound to your more recent one. If the wound went up one or more wound levels (say, from Major to Severe), roll Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury to replace the old Death Countdown, with a new set of units (so if you have two Moderate Wounds consolidating into a Major one, use hours rather than days as your DC time frame). Otherwise, keep the old Death Countdown.

If you’re not using the rules for hit location, you can consolidate all wounds together, if you like. Or not. Hey, it’s your game.

The Bird-People Anarchist Union (B-PAU) is at it again, attacking innocent people to promote their distinct lack of political agenda. Once more, Salmonella’s left elbow is the victim of their fury. She takes another Major (4 degree) wound there this time, on top of her previous 4 degree Major wound. This means a total of 8 degrees, or a Severe wound. Her player recalculates her Use Penalty. She rerolls her Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury and gets 7 degrees. Since she now has a Severe wound, she adds these 7 degrees to -16 (see the Use Penalties on the Wound Problem chart) to get a modifier of -9. If the wound had been to a Vital area and she had rolled the same, she would die from it in 8 rounds (1 automatic round plus 7 rounds, one for each degree).

Stabilizing Wounds & Recuperating

Fortunately, death as a result of damage to Vital areas can be completely averted by healing the wound with an herb or a spell. When an instant cure isn’t available, however, a wound can be stabilized in order to prevent any chance of death and send the victim on the slow journey toward natural recovery. This process might be as simple as stopping the

bleeding, or it might involve surgery, depending on the type and severity of the wound.

Stabilizing a Wound

A wound can be stabilized by achieving two or more degrees on an Intellect / Erudition / Medicine check. This averts any risk of death as defined by the Death Countdown (if applicable) and starts the wound healing, as defined below (see The Slow & Not Funny Process of Healing). It doesn't help negate a Use Penalty or a Pain Penalty. This check is modified by the amount of time available, the nearness of proper tools, and the severity of the wound as per the Wound Stabilization Modifiers chart. Needless to say, this is a bad time for a would-be doctor to bungle. Naturally, it's very difficult to stabilize *oneself* with a Intellect / Erudition / Medicine check, because all modifiers which apply (see the chart, below) are cumulative with any wound penalties one happens to be suffering.

Wound Stabilization Modifiers	
Medicine Check Modifier	Situation
-1	Minor Wound
-2	Moderate Wound
-4	Major Wound
-8	Severe Wound
N.A.	Excessive/Obliterative Wound
-4	Brain Surgery Required
Varies	Access to Relevant Medical Supplies

The Slow & Not Funny Process of Healing

Once a wound has been stabilized, it can begin to heal. Even wounds to Nonvital areas of Moderate or greater severity need to be stabilized if they are to begin to improve (if they're ignored, they're likely to heal badly, not at all, or become infected). To find out how long it will take for your wound to heal once it's stabilized, consult the Wound Recuperation Chart to get a Base Recuperation Time (in days). Then make an Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury check and divide this number of days by the number of degrees you've rolled. The result is the number of days it will take for the wound to drop down to the next highest damage level. (If your medic got more than Complete success on the check, you can also subtract that number of degrees (minus 2) from these days as well.) When the wound has healed one damage level (say, Severe), it can begin to heal the next (Major). It will continue in this way until completely healed or until the wounded person fails or bungles the check. In the event of a failure or bungle, the wound starts to worsen (roll another Death Countdown for the current damage level of the wound) and must be stabilized again. In either case, another Intellect / Erudition / Medicine check must be made to once again stabilize the wound and resume the healing process.

Ikthyosis has accidentally sat down on her own suit of spiky armor and, in the process, given herself a Major wound to the left buttock. Fortunately, for her, however. Doc Hilbilly is near-

by, and he manages to stabilize her condition (rolling 4 degrees). While resting shortly thereafter, Ikthyosis makes a Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury to determine how long the healing process will take. She rolls 3 degrees. Since her wound is Major, the Recuperation Chart tells her she has a Base Recuperation Time of 32 days. Thirty-two divided by 3 is 10.66. Since the Doc rolled 4 degrees to help her out (2 more than necessary), she can also subtract two days from this number. So in about 8 and 2/3rds days, Ikthyosis' wound will be reduced to a Moderate wound. At that time she will roll again to determine how long it will take to be reduced to a Minor wound, and finally she'll roll to decide how long before the wound is completely healed.

Note that this process is not especially funny, except to certain insane mathematicians. Unless you're one of those, it's probably a lot easier and a lot more fun to cure yourself with herbs and spells.

Recuperation Time Chart			
Degrees	Damage	Penalty	Base Recuperation Time
1	Minor	-1	8 Days
2	Moderate	-2	16 Days
4	Major	-4	32 Days
8	Severe	-8	64 Days
16	Excessive	N.A.	Recovery Impossible
32	Obliterative	N.A.	Recovery Impossible

BASIC ACTION FLOWCHART

Phase I: Initiative

If the order in which characters act is important, all players roll Initiative. The player with the highest roll who also wishes to act at this time proceeds to the next phase. If two or more characters are tied, or if an action is contested, these character's actions are resolved in any order or together, and they're assumed to take place simultaneously.

Phase II: Action Declaration

The player decides how many actions he wishes to take and informs the Cobbler. He also describes in detail the action he's immediately about to take. (If he's taking multiple actions, the others can be described later, just before they're taken.)

Phase III: Action Definition

If the Cobbler decides the player needs to roll, she informs the player what proficiency must be used, using the descriptions in Chapter 7 to sort it out if necessary. The player locates the appropriate proficiency on his character sheet while the Cobbler chooses the check modifier or modifiers (or decides that none are necessary) based on her estimation of the action's difficulty. The player then applies any of these modifiers to his proficiency, adding any other appropriate modifiers (including those for effects like encumbrance, multiple actions, wound penalties, brain tumors, called shots, and items). If the action is contested, the challenged

character also performs these steps.

Phase IV: Die Rolling

The player rolls a pair of dice. The amount by which he rolls under his proficiency is his number of degrees, unless he rolls double nines, in which case he bungles.

If he rolls no degrees, he fails. If, in addition to failing, he also rolls doubles, he bungles; proceed directly to the results phase. Otherwise, continue.

Phase V: Success Determination

If the Action Is Uncontested: Check the Success Level chart for the success level corresponding to the number of degrees attained, rounding down. The result describes how well the character succeeds (or fails).

If the Action Is Contested: If one character's actions deplete the results of the other, subtract the degrees of the character resisting or negating the action from those of the character taking the original action. This final result is how successful the original character's action is after the attempt to negate it. Otherwise, simply determine the difference between the number of degrees achieved by any two competing characters, and check the Success Level chart for the success level corresponding to this number. The result describes by how much one character beats the other.

Phase VI: Hit Location Phase (Combat Only)

If the attack succeeds and no shot has been called, roll to determine hit location. If a shot has been called, the player rejoices in the knowledge that the desired part of the body has been hit. (Note: Rejoicing is obligatory.)

Phase VII: Armor Phase (Combat Only)

If the attack succeeds and an armor type which defends against the kind of damage done is being worn in the area hit, subtract the number of degrees for which that armor protects from the number of degrees acquired by the attacker.

Phase VIII: Shuffle Phase (Spellcasting Only)

If the action is a spell that's being cast, the player now has the opportunity to shuffle the results.

Phase IX: Results Phase

The Cobbler interprets the meaning of the success or damage level (be it a bungle or a Fantastical success, a Minor wound or an Excessive one) within the context of the game, describing the results to the players.

Phase X: Restart Phase

If any player who has previously waived initiative now desires to take his turn, he can now interrupt the initiative order to do so. Otherwise, the character with the next highest initiative can go.

After all characters have taken at least one turn, any multiple actions can begin, in the same order as the original initiative sequence.

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 4

On Cultures: Beings on the Chain

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The primary player-character races in *CoB* are dwarves, elves, halflings, humans, orcs, sprites, treeples, and trolls. Each has its own unique genetics and culture. But just like in real life, while stereotypes usually exist for a reason, they often prove inaccurate. *CoB* players are encouraged to make frequent exceptions to racial tendencies when designing their characters' personalities. This will usually make for more interesting (and funnier) characters, since a good deal of humor comes from finding exceptions to expectation. In addition, people in Paranesia — just like healthy people in reality — are individuals first and members of races, organizations, professions, and so forth second. Prejudices are never universal (if you are prejudiced, it should be a dramatic or comedic device). All racial tendencies are at least partly cultural, and no one has the same set of experiences as anyone else. So don't take race too seriously. A care-free dwarf or a somber sprite is no big deal. A happy dryad or a relaxed orc aren't that unusual. A smart troll... well, that might be pushing it a bit.

This chapter details the eight original races.

- **Appearance:** The physical appearance of the race in question. (For the typical attractiveness rating of a member of the race, see "Idiosyncrasies.")
- **General:** General information about the race. This includes most of what you'll want to know about the culture and the innate tendencies of each of the races.
- **Prejudices:** Any special opinions members of this race tend to have, especially regarding other races, and their mechanical and magical tool preferences.
- **Idiosyncrasies:** The Idiosyncrasies that the race possesses. These are the special Benefits and Drawbacks with which all members of a particular race begin the game (though PCs can rid themselves of Drawbacks by paying experience points or gain experience points for ridding themselves of Benefits). Idiosyncrasy experience point costs are balanced so that all races start on equal footing. All races have a typical attractiveness rating, with which they start the game unless they pay to increase it or take experience points for reducing it. See page 135 for descriptions of the Idiosyncrasies.
- **Language:** The native language of the race in question, if any.
- **Racial Slurs:** Ways to refer to a member of this race that will be likely to provoke hostility.
- **Typical Quote:** A quote from a member of the race which might exemplify some of the race's common traits.

DWARF (DWARVES)

Appearance

Dwarves are muscular and sturdy, averaging about four foot two inches in height and weighing in around 133 pounds. Their features tend to be slightly oversized. Of particular note are the beards that nearly all dwarven adults have. These can be a handicap in certain kinds of interactions with other races, especially for dwarven women.

General

It's said that dwarves are born with a spiked, serrated silver spoon in their mouths. While this is not literally true in most cases, it's easy to see how the saying originated. Dwarves as a cultural whole are fascinated by minerals in general, especially precious metals and gemstones, and they are loathe to part with these things or even display them to others unless it is absolutely necessary. This has earned them a reputation as greedy. Furthermore, they tend to be very brusque and belligerent unless there is some clear reason why they shouldn't be. These sorts of behaviors have prompted many people to suspect that perhaps dwarves do have a valuable piece of silverware lodged in some part of their anatomy, if not the mouth.

Indeed, dwarves are rugged creatures, hardened by years of hanging out in cramped mine shafts, made suspicious by centuries of encounters with less-hairy races. Still, they also have a strong predisposition toward being social, especially with other dwarves, and even more especially when alcohol is present. Dwarves do have a gentle side, but they usually don't reveal it to strangers. When they discover someone they like, however, they can become quite friendly and personable. Anyone who takes the time to get past a dwarf's callous exterior (or spends the sack of money it takes to get a typical dwarf drunk) may find a loyal friend, for once dwarves are committed to something — whether a person, a thing, or a course of action — their devotions are practically limitless. And when dwarves are in a good mood, their excitement can be contagious.

Most of the time, though, dwarves come off as proud, gruff, and fairly violent. Actually, their reputation for violence has less to do with any general tendency to pick fights — although they do — and more to do with the way they present themselves. Dwarves are rarely without some kind of tool which doubles easily as a weapon, such as an axe, a hammer, or a pick. It also doesn't help that they're nearly always fully armored. They usually wear horned helms and chain mail (although kilts and furs are also popular), even when there's no apparent reason for it. Dwarves are strangely enamored of gunpowder, and they seem to derive an inordinately large amount of glee from blowing things up. They also have a reputation for being able to turn nearly any object, no matter how innocuous, into a weapon. Some clans are even known to use their own beards as lethal implements — or, as they call them, halbeards.

Paradoxically, however, dwarves are also some of the most down-to-earth beings on Terrek. As long as they aren't riled up or intoxicated, they are quite methodical and goal-oriented. They have long memories (especially for insults, unfortunately) and have a strong work ethic. When it comes to understanding the mechanical, they are absolutely unparalleled. Some dwarven communities are always building some new device or other, and they are almost single-handedly responsible for all of Terrek's technological development. Related is their love of industry, especially the mining, smithing, and engineering industries. In fact, most dwarven economies are based so thoroughly in these trades that they experience severe difficulty in the absence of other races with whom they can trade their materials and services. Over a



"Now there's a brew with a nice head on it!" — Betrothed dwarven couples often exchange beer instead of rings.

third of all dwarves are involved in the mining industry alone. Dwarves make such high-quality crafts of all kinds, however, that they have little difficulty finding people willing to trade with them, despite their tendency to seclude themselves on, in, or near mountains away from large settlements of other races.

Dwarven culture places a huge amount of emphasis on beards. A beard is a symbol of dignity, its length a sign of status more telling even than wealth or profession. Dwarves braid and decorate their beards. They celebrate the days their beards reach certain lengths, and the anniversaries of those days. Most dwarves can carry on conversations about the history and personal significance of beards for hours. A dwarf that isn't immensely proud to have long tufts of hair growing from his or her chin is bucking thousands of years of tradition.

Prejudices

Dwarves tend to harbor some prejudice against anyone who lacks a lot of hair. They are initially slightly skeptical of people without beards, including all elves, who they sometimes refer to as “bald-faced liars” due to various complicated (and ancient) disputes. Dwarves tend to be critical of conventional wizardry, witchery, and other magical disciplines, though they do forge some high-quality magic items.

Idiosyncrasies

For Benefits, Dwarves start with Intimidation Swearing (+12), Spatial Acuity (+12), and Smell Minerals (+8). For Drawbacks, they have Cultural Restriction (Must Wear Beard) (-4) and Racial Stereotype (Greedy) (-8). Their average appearance rating is Unsightly.

Language

Dwarven language sounds like grumbling or cursing under one's breath, and is extremely difficult for anyone except someone raised among dwarves to master, due to the subtleties of pronunciation involved. Dwarfsspeake has lots of umlauts, apostrophes and those little hut-shaped characters that go on top of vowels, and the dwarves are not very tolerant of people who try to speak it but can't pronounce it properly.

Racial Slurs

Scruffs, Fuzzfaces

Typical Quote

“Pass the dw'ale, laddie! Aye, 'tis one more drink, and then I'm off to do demolition work in Old Town. I hope someone tries to stop me; I'll bury my axe in their hide. Ah, 'tis such a beautiful morning!”

ELF (ELVES)

Appearance

Elves are tall and thin, averaging about six feet, eight inches and weighing around 160 pounds. They have pointed ears and delicate features, and they are usually beautiful. They

grow body hair only upon their heads, where it is usually luxurious and occasionally unusually colored (reds, blues and greens are not unheard of). All elves are incapable of growing beards.²

General

If rumors and stereotypes are to be believed, elves are truly amazing creatures. They are agile enough to walk on light surfaces like snowbanks and dried mounds of cheese curds without leaving a trace. They can hit a bee's elbow with an arrow at over a hundred paces. They are at least as strong as humans, and practically immune to disease and illness. In fact, they are immortal, excepting violent death. Their musical and linguistic talents are no less impressive — their best bards and poets can stir the dead from sleep. Elves are extraordinarily capable craftspeople and skilled spellcasters. They require only a few hours of guided meditation, and no sleep, each night. They have excellent senses, including the ability to see heat with their eyes. Furthermore, all elves possess an enchanting aura which arouses intense feelings of love and respect in their companions. And as the first race created by the gods, they are guaranteed a place in the afterlife when they die.

Unfortunately, almost none of this is completely true, although as with most stereotypes, not *all* of it is arrant hogwash. It is true that elves are dexterous, and that they make competent archers, spellcasters, linguists, and artists. Most of the other stuff is pretty ridiculous, particularly to the elves, who are constantly reminded by experience that they have to sleep just as much as anyone else and that they can't see into the infrared spectrum. Most elves try to ignore these rumors, although others work to discourage them or take advantage of them. No one is really clear on how this exaggerated sense of elven capabilities became so entrenched, although it may simply be because elves are, as a rule, happy — and people assume that there must be something very special about someone who manages to be happy in an imperfect world.

Actually, elves really aren't that much different from humans. This is becoming more and more the case, too, as traditional elven forest culture is replaced by urban developments of mainly elves and humans (or sometimes just elves with human cultural influences), and as elves assimilate into human culture in general. In more urban areas, the myths about elves are considered somewhat embarrassing if anyone even knows about them, and most of the time elves get along just fine with the other races.

Despite their similarities to humans, elves definitely retain many of their own customs and racial tendencies. In general, they are more inclined to value personal happiness and laughter for its own sake than most of the other races. They generally pursue their goals quite rationally, and though they are not as rigorous or painstaking about it as the dwarves, they are more likely to enjoy getting there. Elves are usually lighthearted and joyful, and prone to making merry at the

¹ *Dw'ale is an exceptionally potent alcohol beverage made almost exclusively by dwarves. It tastes like a mix of equal parts rubbing alcohol, kerosene, and onions, with a slight ginger ale aftertaste. One or two sips is enough to reduce the average human to a delirious, half-conscious state.*

² *Especially the women.*



"What you do mean I look silly? Our ancestors would be proud!" — Traditional elven forest garb is not always appropriate for modern social functions.

slightest provocation. They are inquisitive, playful, amorous, and inclined to prance. They are, however, sometimes a little low on self-control, a fact which has landed more than one elf in trouble. They sometimes have difficulty focusing on long-term goals, and tend to get distracted with more frivolous pursuits, like frolicking in leafy glades or doing the funky chicken.

As both social and individualistic beings, elves enjoy the company of others for the opportunity to discover adventure, laugh, share thoughts, reminisce about old times, and consume liberal quantities of waybread. However, they are also quite introspective, with a tendency to become distracted in their own thoughts. They can be quite self-focused, and at times, this aloofness causes others to see them as arrogant.

Elves are creatures of passion. They are generally pleasant, but they are by no means immune to darker emotions. In fact, because they are such intense creatures, they can be particularly prone to emotional disturbances. An angry, disgusted, or contemptuous elf who gives in to corruption can be a dangerously creative force. Elves who fall into darkness, insanity, or obsession rarely do so casually.

Traditional elven custom dictates that at all elves should set sail for a far away land shortly before they die. No one knows where the elves who obey this custom go, but they never return.

Prejudices

The dwarves seem to expect the elves to fight with them, and many elves do their best to accommodate. A few elves do legitimately despise dwarves, usually for some reason having to do with a dispute that no one remembers any longer.

Idiosyncrasies

Elves have the Apparent Agelessness (+8) Benefit and the Racial Stereotype (Amazing) (+0) idiosyncrasy, which has both advantages and disadvantages. Their average appearance rating is Gorgeous.

Language

Originally, elvish sounded a lot like a typical human language, but over the last thousand years, in response to the demand for amazing elves, it's become much more flowery, musical, and poetic. Today a lot of spellcasters like to use it when using magic because they think it sounds impressive.

Racial Slurs

Pansies, The Chosen Ones (sarcastic)

Typical Quote

“So you're a highway robber, huh? Well, there's no point in threatening me; I'm immortal. Now if you don't mind, I'd like to head out to the forest to do some moonlight prancing.”

HALFLING (HALFLINGS)

Appearance

Halflings (sometimes pronounced “haw-bitt”) look much

like short humans, only fuzzier. They have large, furry feet and big hands. Humans often see them as cute. Indeed, few halflings are either terrifically ugly or drop-dead gorgeous, but most are decent-looking. A number of them tend toward being plump, resulting in an overall babyish appearance. Thin halflings are a minority, but a large one. They are usually subject to criticism (and even discrimination) from their pudgier peers. Halflings average 69 pounds and stand about three feet, four inches (“three pumpkins tall,” as the saying goes). Fat halflings are *extremely* fat.

General

Halflings are well-known as proponents of comfort and familiarity. Rather than venture out in the world, they usually prefer to stay tucked away in their cozy little halfling holes, and they are inclined to be suspicious of outsiders, especially members of bigger races. However, for every part antisocial recluse that makes up a halfling, there are two parts friendly, happy-go-lucky next-door neighbor. Halflings almost always live near other halflings (or even other races) in towns rather than in isolation, and their day-to-day lives are full of happy interaction with their large families and their communities. They enjoy social gatherings, and they are apt to be cheery folk; they are especially personable when they get going on a subject that interests them.

When it comes to negative emotions, however, halflings are not especially intense. Rather, they are peaceful and unassuming; they tend to take things as they are, and they don't get too upset about anything. Even cultural catastrophes, like wars, plagues, and famines don't get them down; they simply live through hardships and get on with life.

However, halflings also have extremely addictive personalities. They don't do anything halfway — in fact, they do nearly everything to excess. Hence, the average halfling — who knows little more of the world than the eating, sleeping, and smoking bits — will tend to do these things *constantly*. This means eating six or more meals a day, taking two or three naps each afternoon, smoking pipeweed by the cartload, and spending most of the rest of the time being obsessively domestic. Most halflings talk a lot about having very little interest in wealth, excitement, or adventures, and their chosen lifestyles would initially seem to support this claim. However, in most cases, they are disapproving of adventure only because they haven't ever done it, and they can usually be bullied or enticed into going without too much effort. Furthermore, once they *start* adventuring, their compulsive personalities seldom let them stop.

Halflings are nimble and quick. Their fingers are thin and perfect for picking locks and disarming traps, so they are often sought after as accomplices by parties who wish to raid dungeons and go on other such adventures. Unfortunately, due to the halfling tendency to excel in those professions (and the frequency with which they have gotten involved in larceny), halflings who adventure these days are often assumed to be thieves and burglars. This stereotype can be frustrating for those who want to adventure sans sticky fingers — say, as holy clerics or something.

When it comes to living arrangements, halflings prefer the coziness that can only be found inside a hole in the dirt.



While the community understood Podin's opium addiction, they never quite accepted Dedena's obsession with roleplaying.

They dislike buildings which rise above the ground, and they refer to any edifice over two stories somewhat disparagingly as a “skyscraper.” They live all over Terrek, but they are particularly partial to hillsides, highlands, and riversides.

It is an interesting but totally unrelated and irrelevant fact that out of all the races, halflings are far and away the most succulent. Fortunately for them, this is not widely known.³

Halflings celebrate any time they can contrive an excuse to do so. Their parties involve vast quantities of food and drink, plenty of interesting herbs with addictive qualities, and a number of highly risqué activities (including roleplaying). Even after the party, they keep giving gifts to each other.

Unfortunately, due to their lifestyle, most halflings don’t live long enough to die of natural causes. Typical causes of death include heart failure and bowel distention (from eating so much unhealthy food), cancer (from smoking so much tobacco), or drug overdoses of various kinds. And those with less conventional vices, like adventuring or skydiving (for example), usually face different kinds of risks.

Prejudices

Much to the annoyance of many halflings, other races sometimes look down on them.⁴ This condescension is presumably a result of their small stature, coupled with a perception of them as simple folk. This perception isn’t entirely inaccurate, as halflings typically have little use for complex machinery, though they are competent crafters. Traditionally they have seldom been interested in learning magic, and over the centuries, this reluctance to learn has developed into an innate magical resilience. Today, halflings who become interested in learning magic get the best of both worlds, and typically become quite obsessed.

Idiosyncrasies

For Drawbacks, halflings have Addictive Personality (-4) and Racial Stereotype (Burglar) (-4). For Benefits, they have Hand & Foot Temperature Resistance (+8) and Roll Running (+16). Their typical attractiveness rating is Commonplace.

Language

Halflings have never bothered to invent their own language. Most halflings just speak human languages, though they often add a lot of their own words to express concepts normally ignored by other races. This lack of language indigenous to halfling culture is unusual, given that the god many halfling cultures traditionally worship is associated with linguistics.

Racial Slurs

Dirt Babies, Cherubs, Pecks, Habits

Typical Quote

“Shucks, that adventure stuff isn’t for me. I mean, golly. I’d rather just stay here at home. What I’m trying to say is... aw, hell, who am I kidding? Let’s go summon a bunch of demons from the Unholy Abyss and slay them!”

HUMAN (HUMANS)

Appearance

The best way to get a look at a human is to peer into a mirror — unless you have a Really Big Secret, in which case you’ll probably be better off observing someone else. To do this, find a public area and observe the bipedal passersby. These are probably humans, the same beings that you’ll find on Terrek. Humans average five foot ten inches and are an average of 153 pounds.

General

Humans on Terrek are just as diverse as they are in real life, but that said, there are a few characteristics which seem to be particularly typical of the species. For one thing, humans seem to enjoy making others of their kind; their population is considerably bigger than that of any other single humanoid race. In fact, humans make up over half of Terrek’s total mortal population. Relatedly, humans seem to have a strong tendency to expand their territory. Humans can now be found in more parts of Terrek than not, with the possible exceptions of the oceans and the air space (although even these areas are starting to be colonized using innovative new forms of magic).⁵

Curiously, humans seem to have no strong preferences regarding what sort of land they occupy. Although they often avoid extremely dangerous areas and places where the difficulty of building would make life there impractical (such as wetlands), they are capable of settling almost anywhere. This adaptability seems to be another major characteristic of Terrek humans. Stick humans in a hostile environment, and they’ll probably find some way to adapt — either that, or they’ll adapt the environment to fit them.

In fact, with the help of dwarven mechanical skill and elven magic, humans have become experts at adapting their environment to meet their needs. Having learned quite a lot about the nature of their world, they’ve used their knowledge to build cities, universities, businesses, and all sorts of other things. Human cultures possess the largest number of institutions, and they’re responsible for most of the world’s organizations (for better or worse). Because it’s so pervasive, most of the other races have been influenced by human culture — to the point where human culture is ceasing to be distinctly human and starting to become a kind of hybrid culture. Few cities are still inhabited completely by humans; in most, there are at least a few members of some of the other races, and in some places, there are members of all the races all over.

³ Except among a few extremely rare orc tribes. And a few Baalrogues.

⁴ Pun intended.

⁵ Examples include cities suspended from skyhooks and flying balloons, giant townboats, and an entire citadel held up by winged monkeys. Another venture is the Syltwater Manor, an estate located right on the ocean, with no barrier between its citizens and the water—save an invisible magical field. Its rich inhabitants figure that the added defensibility, reduced plumbing costs, and lack of inconvenient moat maintenance makes up for the inconvenience of occasionally losing field stability and being dumped into the ocean.



Ah, the never-ending human mating season...

Prejudices

Humans tend to see themselves as the norm, and hence they can be rather unthinkingly human-centric in their dealings with other races. As a race, they have no special prejudices, but they are not especially tolerant, either. Their policy of continually expanding sometimes puts them in conflict with other races, monsters, and animals (and with other humans as well). Neither are humans adverse to using any form of magic or technology they think might benefit them.

Idiosyncrasies

Humans have few extreme inherent characteristics, either positive or negative, but they do have one Benefit — Majority Race Member (+16).

Language

Different groups of humans speak all sorts of different languages. Most humans speak the common tongue, a language known to many linguists as “Inglysh” (which, due to dramatic reasons, seems to be identical to English).

Racial Slurs

Mundanes, Breeders

Typical Quote

“You got orc armies? Dragons? Jabberwockies? Bring ‘em on — I’ll conquer them all. Avalanches? Plagues? Falling cattle? Heck, those things don’t bother me. If I can’t stop the danger, then my children will — and if they can’t, and their children will, with good old-fashioned human adaptability and the broadsword given to me by my father, and my father’s mother before him.”

ORC (ORCS)

Appearance

Orcs are green-skinned creatures with tusks protruding from their prominent lower jaws. They are often misshapen and ugly. They have a wiry build by human standards, and they are on average about five feet tall, weighing around 130 pounds. They also have pointed ears which droop slightly.

General

Orcs are generally regarded as a race of vicious soldiers, without exception crude, petty, and murderous. People have this view of orcs with some reason. Orcish culture rewards acts of selfishness and blatant cruelty with status, and punishes acts of cooperation and kindness with banishment or death. Orcs fight amongst themselves as often as most other races make eye contact. Indeed, most of them are not above slaughtering someone for looking at them with what they have decided is the wrong eye. Orcish culture is highly battle-oriented; orc tribes are nearly always at war with someone, and individual orcs are often abusive even of those they regard as friends.

Orcs are very much caught up in a struggle for status. Each tribe has a pecking order based on which orcs are the most violent and brutish, at the top of which is the tribe leader.

Tribe leaders order the other orcs around, decide when to go to war, and have their pick of loot, food, and mates. Status is not settled forever, and if tribe leaders behave like weaklings or otherwise deviate from cultural expectations, they will suffer the penalties — being ridiculed and beaten up by the other orcs, forced to carry more than their share of supplies, deprived of food, and sent to fetch drinks for the higher-status orcs.

In fact, however, orcs are not inherently evil. They are not even necessarily naturally predisposed toward wickedness.⁶ Much of their behavior is learned. The truth is, living in a society as violent as theirs is bound to make anyone more than a bit paranoid and adversarial. Even so, not all orcs are victims of their environment. In fact, a substantial number of them, if not the majority, are unique individuals who would be total outcasts if their true natures were revealed. Such orcs find such a consistently violent lifestyle distasteful or dull, while others secretly despise it and long to pursue different goals, like painting or dentistry. As a rule, anything that doesn’t involve beating up other orcs, harassing people, or killing something is socially unacceptable in orc culture, so intellectual and social pursuits are right out.

Many orcs long to escape their tribes, for obvious reasons. However, most end up staying because they lack the experience, the self-confidence, and the individual initiative required to escape. Of course, any orc caught trying to get away is dealt with quite harshly — and few orcs realize that there are others like them who don’t fit the mold. As a result, many orcs end up staying with the tribe into which they were born. They do their best to fit in and achieve a high enough status that they don’t get beat up, trying to pretend that pillaging cities, laughing at fart jokes, playing really mean practical jokes, and hitting their closest friends as hard as they can constitute a satisfying life for them. So orc culture goes on as it has for centuries, despite the fact that a good number of orcs would prefer it not to.

Orcs who get who away from other orcs for a while are likely to develop unique personalities,⁷ even if they originally thought that they enjoyed orcish culture. This is apparently because orcs tend to be very susceptible to groupthink. That is, they tend to make their decisions based on what others around them are doing rather than on their own opinions. This is a flaw many orcs are able to overcome once they’ve spent sufficient time on their own.

Orcs are not “book smart,” and they are sometimes at a loss for what to do in the absence of a group opinion. However, in spite of what the stereotypes say, they are not necessarily stupid. Many of them are extremely devious and clever.⁸ And when they aren’t behaving like violent idiots, they are quite practical. They don’t like to bother with aesthetics; functionality is all that concerns them. They don’t worry about being good-looking (none of them are) or decorating their possessions. Other races see this extreme utilitarianism as barbaric, especially in certain cases — such as

⁶ Although it would be hard to deny that orcs are at least very much “in touch” with their negative emotions.

⁷ Albeit one with a strong tendency to bash anything that gets in their way.

⁸ Despite their cleverness, orcs tend to be quite gullible. They have been known to fall for their own attempts at deception.



"So you were Gron's girlfriend, eh? Let me get you some of the tender loin..." — Festivities at a typical orcish funeral include a potluck.

when orcs consume their fallen tribe members. To the orcs, however, this practice is a logical use of otherwise wasted resources.

Orcs prefer the night, though (contrary to what is generally believed) they are perfectly capable of functioning during the day. Many cultures operate on a kind of half-night, half day schedule, getting up around 3:00 in the afternoon and going to bed around 7:00 in the morning. Most orcs prefer to live in secluded areas, usually in caves, deep under the earth, or in thick, dark forests, though their are noted exceptions.

One of the most surprising aspects of orcish culture is the singing. It's not that orcish voices are especially good, or that their songs are artfully composed. It's the astounding level of organization that would seem to be required to get all the orcs to come in on time, stay together, and sing fairly complex harmonies. Orcs sing most frequently when they're headed for a fight. Their songs are usually about slaughter and the necessity of it, but a few orc songs have to do with other things. They are normally accompanied by a number of orc instrumentalists who have mastered the whip as both a percussive instrument and a motivational tool for keeping other orcs on-key.

Prejudices

According to orcish legend, the orcs were the first race created by the gods. Next were elves, who (supposedly) were meant as a twisted parody of the orc race. As a result, some orcs particularly hate elves.

Idiosyncrasies

Orcs get Rapid Healer (+24), Venomous Bite (+12), and Orc Poison Immunity (+8) Benefits. They're stuck with Orcish Mating Cycle (-4) and Cultural Restriction (Must Behave Violently) (-16) Drawbacks. They are typically Ugly.

Language

Orc language is ugly and guttural, with lots of words for killing and not very many words for loving.

Racial Slurs

Dorcs, Orcs⁹

Typical Quote

"Just between you and me, I'd don't really want to go into battle right now, but heck, the tribe leader's the one with the whip. Urgmph! Oh well — where there's a whip, I suppose there's a way."

SPRITE (SPRITES), PIXY (PIXIES)

Appearance

Sprites are dainty humanoids with wings that resemble those of various insects sprouting from their backs. On average, they are about two feet, six inches tall and weigh around 19 pounds. They have extremely delicate features and long,

pointed ears.

General

Of all the races, the sprites were affected least by the Renaissance. Sprites are and have always been frivolous creatures who while away their lives with happy games and mischief in the wooded areas they call home. They are immensely silly most of the time. They bounce about the forest, dancing and making utterly strange or cryptic comments. Most of their games are childlike, and they seem almost incapable of taking anything entirely seriously. Sprites make elves look almost somber with their constant jokes and playing.

Sprites have short attention spans, and they are not long-term thinkers. They rarely accomplish tasks which take more than an hour or so to complete. Instead, they mainly go with whatever is happening around them at any given time. They live mostly on berries and herbs, about which they are very knowledgeable. They are fast and agile. They are also extremely creative, and they often produce superb theater and excellent music (without necessarily devoting much time to these pursuits).

Unfortunately for other mortals, their creativity is more often directed toward performing some kind of mischief. To whatever extent they have a sense of what other races consider unacceptable, they are rarely interested in investigating these taboos before they proceed to play their jokes. For example, most sprites would not hesitate to switch one of their own children for a human baby (which they would then proceed to raise as their own) simply because they would regard this action as sidesplittingly funny. Sprites sometimes seek out other people to torment, but they normally just wait for unknowing travelers to happen along.

Originally, sprites were almost all avatars, but since the dawn of magular magic, their entire culture has become immersed in it. Today most sprites develop at least a few magular abilities. Sprites like to use natural elements, like rings of mushrooms, twigs, herbs, and sand as components in their enchantments.

Sprites are almost always hedonists with whimsical attitudes and few fears. They do not fear death, since they often semiconsciously regard themselves as immortal (although they definitely aren't). They are very sensual, emotional, and descriptive; they are most comfortable at night, especially in moonlight. Some speak in blank verse;¹⁰ most enjoy rhyming and playing word games.

Most sprites are rather emotionally immature. They often don't consider the feelings of others, and they fight bitterly over trivial matters. They are quick to make up, however, and show concern for someone they have hurt. They are more intuitive than intellectual, and are not easily persuaded by means of rational argument, but they are deeply moved by feeling and they may respond to emotional appeals under certain circumstances.

Although sprites usually live together in small "towns" (actually clusters of magically-enlarged mushrooms or holes in treetops), their societies are informal and rarely possess much structure. They do have a vague legal system and a

⁹ Sometimes, just calling orc an orc is considered insulting.

¹⁰ Or otherwise metered speech. Some of the wittier sprites show off with heroic couplets.



It was at this point that Bjorn had to reconsider the importance of having sprites in the adventuring party.

ruler (who is usually called the queen regardless of gender), but this individual may well be responsible for as much chaos as he prevents. Sprites rarely have currency or unique possessions, so fortunately there is a minimum of things to fight about. Still, life among the sprites is confusing and ever-changing. A good number of sprites forgo their societies in favor of traveling.

As you might expect from a race with wings, sprites can fly (see racial advantages, below). Their wings can also be ground up and used as the primary ingredient in a concoction called *pixie dust*, which allows anyone who is merely sprinkled in it to fly for a limited time. Pixie dust has spawned an entire industry. Some sprites in urban areas have been known to chop off their own wings and sell them for a few quick geepee. Sprites who get their wings ripped out must roll Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Pain at -2 or pass out for several minutes.

Traditional forest sprite attire is a full-body suit of latex, made from the sap of a rubber tree and painted with various colors. Recently, as human culture becomes more prominent, more sprites are dressing in cloth-based clothing. Some sprites have adapted themselves to human culture, although few ever shed their mischievous demeanor entirely.

Prejudices

Except to the extent to which they lack the ability to consider anyone besides themselves, sprites are rarely especially prejudiced against other races. They generally have little interest in magic items and no patience for technology.

Idiosyncrasies

Sprites have Regenerating Magic Wings (+40) and Versatile Sleeper (+4) for Benefits. However, they're stuck with Commodity Body Part (Wings) (-20) and Racial Stereotype (Tricky) (-12) for Drawbacks. They are typically Handsome.

Language

Sprite language is rapid and chatty. Over twenty-five percent of their communication is nonverbal.

Racial Slurs

Flies, Fairies, Spites¹¹

Typical Quote

"Laws, and pain, and gloominess,
Toil, and tax, and boring dress,
Technology and industry —
Lord, what fools these mortals be!"

TREEP (TREEPLE), DRYAD (DRYADS)

Appearance

Treeples look mostly like powerful humans and a little bit like trees. They are thick and tall — on average weighing about 310 pounds and standing around eight foot four. Each

treep takes after a particular type of tree — an oak, a redwood, or a birch, for example (some take after plants which aren't trees, but these are unusual). Treeples are frequently beautiful in an earthy sense. Where the other races grow hair, treeples grow branches and leaves.

General

Although treeples look very much like woody, perennial plant life, they are not literally trees. The treeples themselves find this state of affairs entirely natural, although it has prompted some speculation among philosophers of other races. The general consensus is that the Olympiad didn't want to waste their nifty tree design on a life form not sentient enough to appreciate it, so they incorporated it into one of the mortal races as well. Some say that the treeples were originally created from trees.

Treeples are slow and stoic. Their movements are tightly controlled, and their reactions to most things are highly understated. They definitely have feelings, but in most of their societies it is considered inappropriate to display them to others. Despite this, treeples nearly always develop one or two strong interests, which they then spend most of their time pursuing. Treeples do not commit lightly, but once they do, they have immense mental inertia and they are not easily swayed from their goals.

Although they are physically quite powerful, treeples are, as a rule, pacifists. They prefer to settle disputes with low-key debates and patient discussions. They rarely kill, except if there is an abundantly clear reason to do so. This is especially true in their own societies; instances of treeples initiating violence against other treeples are extremely rare. All this changes, however, when a treep becomes *roused*. Roused treeples totally lose control of themselves and become raving lunatics. They bellow, stomp around, and destroy anything that gets in the way of their goals.

In truth, though, it's usually very hard to get treeples this upset. You might be able to annoy them mildly if you set your mind to it, but this will just make them try to avoid you. Even attacking a treep won't have much effect; most of them will react by calmly doing their best to defend themselves (and placidly trying to kill you, if necessary). In order to rouse a treep, you have to misbehave severely or repeatedly about something the treep really cares about.

The easiest way to do this in most cases is to defile the environment. Treeples see themselves as the stewards of nature, and they object to excessive abuses of their charge. They can get especially angry at magic-based industrial pollution, the slaughtering of animals and plants, and wide-scale deforestation. People sometimes try to get treeples riled up by stomping on flowers or peeling bark off trees; treeples regard such insignificant acts of defiance with disdain but rarely do anything about them. They are very likely to get roused if their home forest is defiled in any significant way, though, and they have a special reason for this.

When treeples get old, they do not age as the other races do (or don't, in the case of elves). Instead, they become more and more tree-like. Instead of getting wrinkled, they get barked; they tend to stand straighter and adopt more rigid

¹¹ "Spites" is an insult usually applied to an evil, or at least generally disagreeable, sprite.



Seasonal Affective Pattern Balding is a major problem for many treeple.

positions; they move more slowly. Eventually, treeple take root. A treep at this stage of development — essentially a slow-talking, scarcely moving, sentient tree — is called a *hamadryad*. Eventually, hamadryads completely transform into trees, whereupon they and live out a normal tree lifespan and die. Some people think that treeple worship trees because they sometimes appear to be communing with them, but in fact they are merely having a moment with a former relative.

At the other end of the treeple life cycle are the treeple children. These look very plain until they enter puberty (called “blooming”), at which point they start taking on characteristics of a particular plant. This transformation is psychological as well as physical. A treep who begins to develop into an aspen might remain relatively short and develop nervous tendencies, while an oak might develop some extra height and some leadership skills. One’s social position in treeple society is based to a large extent on one’s tree type. Non-trees have low status, with the exception of those rare individuals based on herbs, who are treated as special.

Treeple enjoy polemics; debating important subjects of contention is considered a form of recreation. This civilized argumentation of the treeple typically takes a very long time, as most treeple tend to get caught up in discussing details and theoretical permutations. Treeple can be very concrete; they understand nature metaphors well enough, but somehow they seem to take everything else literally. They also enjoy storytelling (although they are longwinded and not necessarily very good at it). A large number of treeple are either avatars or mages, and magic is firmly entrenched in their society.

Prejudices

Treeple are too relaxed to feel hatred and usually too sensible to hold an entire race responsible for the actions of an individual. They are very prejudiced against people who try to chop down their ancestors, though.

Idiosyncrasies

Treeple have the Plantlike Appearance (+12), Weather Comfort (+12), and Berserking (+20) Benefits. They have the Cultural Restriction (Must Be Reserved) (-16), Cultural Restriction (Must Promote Environment) (-8) and Isolated Culture (-8) Drawbacks. They are typically Handsome.

Language

Treeple language (treepish) is extremely slow and specific. The simplest concepts require minutes to convey, and even treeple get impatient waiting for each other to finish talking. Less traditional treeple don’t even bother with their native language, and just speak the common tongue instead (although treepish can come in handy in situations which require great attention to detail). Treeple think of most things in terms of plant metaphors, and their language reflects this. Good translations retain the metaphors.

Racial Slurs

Stick People, Tinder

Typical Quote

“Sit with me, sapling, and I will tell you a tale long as a dwarf beard, of the days of old when the twisted orcish lumberjacks were many and our people were nearly always roused...”

TROLL (TROLLS)

Appearance

In the words of Think, the great troll philosopher, “trolls is big.” Trolls average seven feet, six inches tall and 355 pounds. They bulge with angular, rocky muscles; those in colder climates have sparse tufts of body hair. Like treeple, trolls are colored mainly in browns, grays, and greens, but unlike treeple, they are generally quite ugly. Thus is due mostly to their disproportionally-sized features and their low, sloping foreheads.

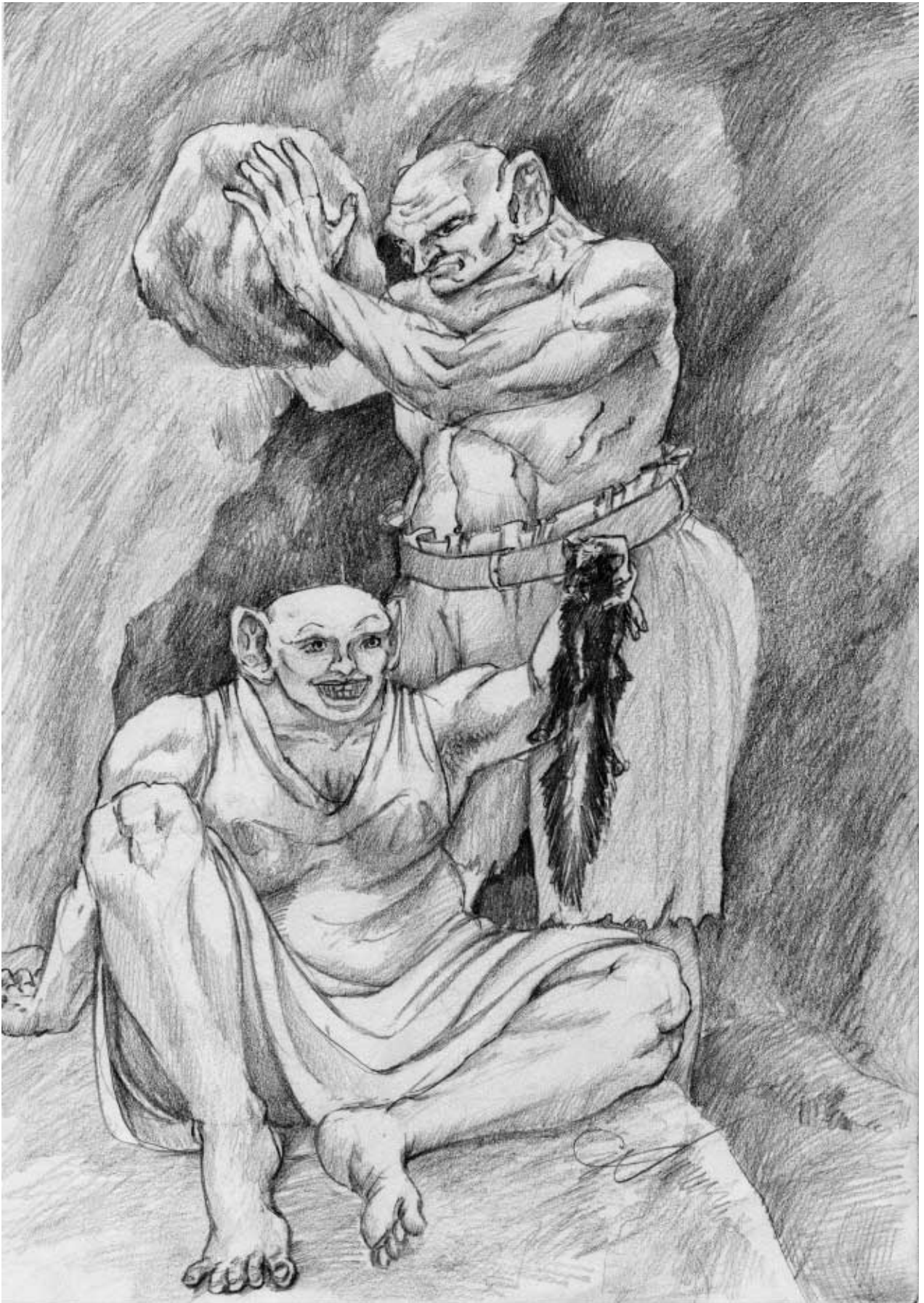
General

Unlike orcs, who are just usually considered to be stupid, trolls actually *are* stupid, at least mostly. What’s more, they are rarely aware of this. At their least lucid, they draw simplistic conclusions using faulty reasoning from insufficient facts and walk away happily convinced that they fully understand the situation. At their most lucid, they simply end up baffled by most things. However, since they view themselves as highly competent at nearly everything they decide they want to do, they are fiercely proud of their intelligence, even though they haven’t got any. Trolls rarely admit to being wrong.

Trolls are prone to make all decisions immediately, based on whatever information they might have or they might think they have at a given time. They rarely see the need for further investigation, preferring to make a decision and stick with it. They are extremely stubborn; patient determination is far more important than logic for anyone interested in changing a troll’s mind.

Furthermore, the egocentric troll psyche seems to regard itself as the most fundamental thing in the universe. Trolls interpret everything as having direct relevance to them. Everything they perceive tends to get incorporated into their previous understanding of the world without any revisions, even when there are glaring inconsistencies between what they believe they know and what they think they’re learning. Trolls observe their environment and fill in the details with their own personalities, leading to a highly skewed perspective. Trolls are unlikely to understand completely what’s going on in any situation more complicated than a dungeon crawl, but their own interpretation of the situation is likely to be at least as interesting as what’s actually happening.

Where sprites tweak or defy social conventions, trolls have difficulty understanding the concept. This can put them in conflict with other races who have social customs in abundance. Their concept of ownership troubles them especially. To the extent to which they recognize the concept at all, they usually assume that whoever is currently holding a thing, owns it. Trolls do understand trade, though — barter is common practice in their societies. They value money because



Magrunt's new perfume proves unpopular with her cavemate.

they're accustomed to seeing it coveted, but the idea of using it to simplify the exchanging of goods won't usually occur to them. Another custom trolls don't really understand is style. Actually, it's not that trolls have no concept of style or theme — it's that they have many, each of which is contradictory to the others.

All trolls have a deeply entrenched sense of life that is reflected in everything they do. This can range from the innocent and whimsical all the way to the utterly malevolent. However, nearly all trolls prefer action to words, and the action that most trolls prefer is hitting things with rocks. Trolls have a reputation for brutality, and many of them live up to it — violence is, after all, one of the few things at which trolls excel. However, such attacks aren't necessarily motivated by hostility; in fact, they might even be a sign of affection. Such behavior is highly contextual, and sometimes it takes a few concussions before you can figure out whether a troll likes you or not.

Basically, trolls are giant, brawny, parentless five-year-olds who never really grow up. But for all their blatant idiocy and violence, trolls have another side of them that can be pleasant and even charming. They can be refreshingly trusting and unjaded, and they are capable of deriving immense joy from the simplest things. In a complicated world, trolls are one thing that is almost always what it seems to be. Trolls express their feelings simply and easily, in language and art. They hit themselves, gurgle, yell, and bang rocks together to make music. Of course, some trolls are just foul-tempered and best avoided.

Trolls love to eat. The bulk of their diet consists of grubs, roots, and other people's livestock. They especially enjoy mutton, and will take goat as their second choice, though in fact a troll will eat nearly anything organic.¹² They are solid and patient, and they often hunt by standing perfectly still until their prey walks by. Once they catch something, they prefer to cook it, but this isn't really necessary, and they aren't very particular about whether or not the process of holding their meal over an open flame actually accomplishes anything.

Trolls are strangely interested in rocks — pretty ones, ugly ones, boulders, pebbles — they love them all. In fact, nearly everything about their culture has *something* to do with rocks. They collect rocks, trade rocks, use rocks for tools, build homes with rocks, entertain with rocks, and have pet rocks. They make decisions using an early form of “rock, paper, scissors” called “rock.” So that they can be near their precious rocks, they usually make a point of living in caves and ruins, or under bridges. They prefer secluded areas, and rarely gather into large societies but instead live with their extended families (usually between 1 and 8 trolls live in the same area, though some families get as large as 50). Large groups of trolls are nearly always best avoided, even if they're the more benevolent sort, lest you get involved in some troll-ish plot or game.¹³

Some trolls (less than 5%) are reasonably intelligent, but even these tend to speak without a significant number of parts of speech. Some trolls (perhaps 8%) don't even have basic linguistic skills and resemble extremely intelligent animals more than mortals, but these trolls usually live in the

wild with other trolls and practically never with other mortals. Among troll societies, the most common troll names are “Rock,” and “Thag,” followed quickly by “Troll.”

Many people believe that trolls turn to stone when exposed to sunlight. In fact, this is only true of vampire trolls; regular trolls are nocturnal, but they have nothing to fear from the sun.

Prejudices

In a manner of speaking, trolls are prejudiced against everything, since basically all their judgments are formed without an attempt to examine the relevant facts. They have no strong biases against a particular race, though.

Idiosyncrasies

Trolls have the Tough Hide (+36), Fear Immunity (+28), and Butt Grip (+16) (about which the less said, the better) Benefits. They also have the Dislike Bright Lights (-4), Egocentric Worldview (-8), Grammatical Incompetence (-36), and Racial Stereotype (Stupid) (-8) Drawbacks. They are typically Ugly.

Language

Complex language eludes troll consciousness; the best they can normally muster is a debased form of the common tongue. Few trolls know many polysyllabic words, and some can't even speak at all, but instead communicate with grunts and gestures. Scholars have records of a troll language, but no trolls are known to speak it.

Racial Slurs

Galoots, Blockheads¹⁴

Typical Quote

“Hey, what this slop you make for lunch? Thag no like, so Thag kill! No, Thag just make joke. Hee hee. You is Thag's friend. Thag no kill you.”

¹² Some trolls develop a guilty taste for the flesh of other mortal races, but fortunately this is fairly rare.

¹³ Trolls love to play, and their games range from innocent and harmless to innocent and extremely dangerous. Cruel trolls play games that are just plain nasty.

¹⁴ Nearly anything else that implies stupidity is probably a common derogatory name for a troll.

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 5

On Organizations: Ideas in Action

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When left to fend for themselves, people have a disturbing tendency to get together and get organized. Since the coming of the Renaissance, this tendency has become somewhat exacerbated, and Terrekians have done quite a lot of it, resulting in the founding many of organizations with a great variety of goals. This can mean a few things for your campaign. One possibility is for *CoB* organizations to serve as professions for player characters, though joining an organization or two (or three, or all of them) is entirely optional. Alternatively, organizations can make great long-term adversaries for a campaign — or they can just be part of the background. Note that *CoB* is not necessarily about these organizations; you can play the game without using them at all. All that said, the *CoB* organizations are pretty funny, and they can add a lot to any fantasy campaign.

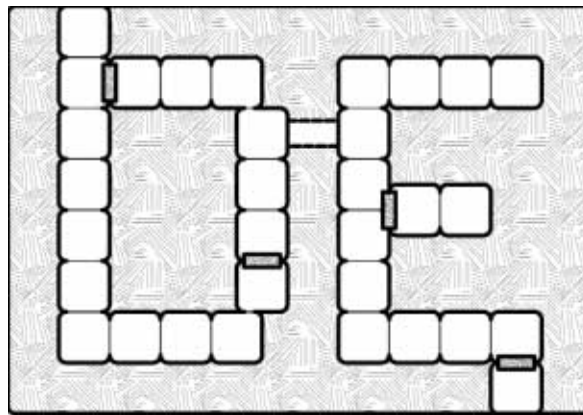
If you do decide to use organizations as a central focus for your campaign, keep in mind that it will be more fun for you and the other players if your character concepts are more than the organization itself. You don't always have to buck the system, but all characters will probably have at least a *few* of their own ideas about how things should work, and not all of these ideas will necessarily be compatible with the organization. Also, the organization is probably not going to be a character's entire life — you will have an independent personality with thoughts and feelings of your own. Cobblers, too, should exaggerate the parts of an organization that they like and downplay the parts they enjoy less.

Cobbler permitting, starting PCs can be allowed to begin the game as members of any organizations they wish. Of course, some organizations won't mesh too well with certain types of adventures, and members of some organizations don't fit too well with members of others. Another thing to keep in mind is that in some organizations (particularly the Mages in Blue and Iron Titan Conflict Management Services), you get a lot of cool equipment to start out with, more or less for free. This isn't as unbalancing as it might seem, however. Organizations which give members nifty equipment without a cost in experience points or geepee also expect the players to behave in a specific fashion, and — if they don't — they lose access to the equipment. Then they get kicked out of the organization. Depending on the organization, they may even get hunted down. They may even get their asses kicked.

Each organization has a number of characteristics, which are grouped into these categories.

- **Philosophy:** The concept behind the organization, and any moral basis (or lack thereof) the organization has.
- **Worshipfulness:** The organization's restrictions on which gods must be worshipped and how (if relevant).
- **Abilities & Equipment:** Important equipment or special abilities, if any, that the organization uses to accomplish its goals.
- **Structure:** How the organization is organized, or not.
- **Activities:** The sorts of activities the organization participates in.
- **Other Goals:** Additional goals the organization wants to accomplish.

- **Relationships:** How the organization gets along with other people and other organizations.
- **Members:** The kinds of people who join the organization.
- **Membership Requirements:** The organization's recruiting practices and the expectations it places on its members.
- **Recruiting Quote:** What a member might say to convince you to join or aid them.



DUNGEON ENTHUSIASTS

Dungeons are obviously nothing new, and neither is adventuring in them. However, it took the Renaissance (coupled with a growing dissatisfaction with crochet and flower arranging as Terrek's most popular pastimes) to transform the actual *creation* of dungeons into a hobby in its own right. For the Dungeon Enthusiasts, dungeoncraft is no longer about hiding ancient secrets or valuables. It's about showing off your skill and expressing yourself creatively.

Before the Renaissance, dungeons were mainly regarded as adventuring tools. Sure, people built dungeons, but they usually had some very specific goal in mind when they did it. Many used dungeons to keep prisoners and obscure treasures, hide out from lawful vigilantes, or express feelings of malevolence. And some dungeons came about when more innocent structures, like castles and catacombs, fell into ruin and came to be inhabited by nasty monsters.¹ Regardless of how a dungeon came into existence, however, before the Renaissance, a dungeon was known primarily as a place to adventure, not as an expression of artistic ingenuity.

After the Renaissance, however, many individuals realized the enjoyment potential inherent in creating complicated labyrinths, stocking them with deadly encounters, and using treasure to lure people in to explore them. It wasn't long after this before dungeoncraft really came into its own, and an organization calling itself the Dungeon Enthusiasts sprang up to oversee the hobby and assist those wishing to engage in it.

To a Dungeon Enthusiast, few things are more fulfilling

¹ Why some people refer to dangerous underground labyrinths as "dungeons" is something of a mystery. Ancient tomes tell of a time when the word was used to refer exclusively to a place where prisoners were kept, but these days are clearly long gone. Today the word is commonly used to refer to any sort of underground area, and some liberal-minded (some would say insane) Dungeon Enthusiasts have extended the definition so far that even outdoor areas can be considered dungeons.



"This is fine, but I'm looking for something that says 'Lizard Man.' Do you have anything in Slime Green?" — A Dungeon Enthusiast makes some critical decisions regarding interior decor.

than a maze laden with pointless twists and turns, death-traps, and monsters. Thanks to the Enthusiasts, dungeoncraft is now the fastest growing hobby on Terrek.

Philosophy

The owners of the Dungeon Enthusiast organization are ridiculously wealthy. If these owners have a philosophy, it's merely that dungeons are pretty great, and that so is making lots of money by collecting exorbitant membership dues from people who join their organization.²

Individual members of the Dungeon Enthusiasts are only very loosely organized, and the uniting force among them is more of a shared interest than a philosophy. Enthusiasts all love building, populating, upgrading, and testing dungeons. While some regard this process as a way to kill free time, more of them regard it as an art. Some Enthusiasts go so far as to consider dungeoncraft to be the defining purpose of life. These are the people who drive the organization forward with their intense passion for dungeoncraft.

Despite a strong tendency toward personal intensity, Dungeon Enthusiasts can be more than a bit amoral. However you look at them, they are certainly not especially ethical. After all, the whole point of joining the organization is to create horribly dangerous labyrinths and convince adventurers to come in and explore them. With any luck, the adventurers won't survive, which gives you bragging points and enhances your status in the Enthusiasts. If they do survive, of course, you can learn from the experience, identify your design's weak points, and upgrade so the next party of test adventurers won't stand a chance. Still, the Enthusiasts do not advocate any particular moral code, good or evil.

Abilities & Equipment

It could be argued that many members of the Dungeon Enthusiasts are a bit short on compassion, but they certainly have no shortage of equipment. The organization provides some dungeon materials in exchange for its outlandishly high membership dues, and plenty of other dungeon materials are available for a price on the free market. Loads of bricks and mortar are obviously standard. Monsters, traps, implements of torture, and puzzles are also quite commonly available. Of course, mood is an important part of the dungeon experience as well, so such dungeoney items as mold, bugs, manacles, stench, corpses hanging from chains, garbage heaps, and many other things are available. Some popular dungeon-stocking companies include Unsanitary Conditions Supply Company, Traps To Die For, Ambiance Unlimited, Death From Nearby Monster Distributors, and Dungeon Drywall.

Sometimes these supplies are purchased, while other times, they're rented. A few trap-building companies even provide service from beginning to end, taking the trap into the dungeon and installing it, then returning to remove it at the end of the rental. If the trap snares an adventurer in the meantime, the Enthusiast can profit by looting the body (some Enthusiasts see this looting as the fee for the adventurer's use

² Of course, there are those who say the owners have lost sight of what dungeoncraft is all about, and criticize them for being more interested in the cash than the crypts, caring more about the moolah than the mazes, and preferring the dollars to the dungeons.

of the trap). Of course, there are many Dungeon Enthusiast “purists” who regard all this purchasing and renting of dungeon goods as antithetical to the spirit of dungeoncraft, a supposedly creative endeavor. These members do all the work themselves, and often regard those who rely too heavily on the work of merchants to be unimaginative.

Almost everyone in the Dungeon Enthusiasts wields significant power. Building dungeons is expensive, so virtually all its members have to be rich to be able to do it. Those Enthusiasts who are especially successful at building lethal dungeons tend to get even more wealthy, since they can loot the bodies of the adventures who explore their labyrinths.³ The owners of the Dungeon Enthusiasts are even wealthier. If something can be owned, the owners of the Dungeon Enthusiasts can probably throw enough money at it to own it. After all, they have the benefit of the combined wealth of tens of thousands of people terracewide and the ability to collect dues from them.

Structure

A small number of wealthy individuals own and operate the Dungeon Enthusiasts, but the bulk of the organization is made up of an extensive but very loosely organized network of individuals who either create dungeons or dream about doing so. Dreamers generally lack the resources to build decent dungeons (although they occasionally build on the cheap). Those who can and do build dungeons are called *Masters*. Some Masters reside in towers or castles near their dungeons. Others prefer to place their sanctum within one of their dungeons, so that they can spend all their time maintaining and adding to it. Often this is dangerous, because adventurers can be a rather vengeful group. This is why a Master’s sanctum is usually the most heavily guarded and booby-trapped portion of a dungeon. For these Masters, just getting up in the night to get a glass of water is pretty dangerous, but no one in the organization seems to mind the semi-frequent fatalities caused when Masters accidentally fall victim to their own deathtraps.⁴

Activities

Most Masters spend their time toiling away in their dungeons in an effort to make them more lethal. They try to hire or capture monsters, build traps, design puzzles, engage in discussions with each other about what an adventurer might be likely to do in a given scenario, or any number of other related activities. They also look for adventurers to explore their dungeons. Some Masters paint little silhouettes of adventurers on their door lintels to signify how many people have died in their dungeons. Almost all Masters claim (at least to adventurers) that no one has ever made it through any of their dungeons alive, but these claims can usually be regarded as wishful thinking. Many Masters are really just amateurs, although there are plenty of deadly dungeons out there.

Different Enthusiasts have different ideas about what dungeoncraft is all about. Most Masters go the standard route, creating a dungeon with the basic monsters-and-traps layout. Stock dungeon experiences in such dungeons include the Dungeon Crawl, which is just an ordinary trip through a

dungeon; the Dungeon Run, which is the same thing with a time limit; and the Dungeon Walk, which is like a Cake Walk in a maze, only almost invariably lethal. In homage to the traditional Dungeon Crawl, Dungeon Enthusiast parlance sometimes refers to adventurers as “crawlers.”

Other, more modern Masters often experiment with bafflingly surreal scenarios featuring such elements as rooms full of cotton candy or bugbears on stilts. Some members of the Dungeon Enthusiasts even prefer not to limit their dungeon-creating pursuits to underground settings. These people have been known to transform small forests, plains, and even lakes into dungeons. More conservative forces within the Enthusiasts regard these sorts of dungeons as cheap cop-outs and not actual dungeons, and though both sides feel passionately about their views, most disagreements are settled peacefully (if often competitively) through debate or tournament dungeoncraft.

There is also a small but growing movement in the Dungeon Enthusiasts which favors the dungeon as a means to telling stories. Enthusiasts favoring this approach lead adventurers through a sort of narrative, which the adventurers are not supposed to realize is totally faked. Such stories might emphasize any kind of challenge. They usually include combat, but with interludes involving encounters with actors performing drama or other individuals hired to help or hinder the adventurers. Of course, just because the story isn’t real doesn’t mean that the encounters are any less lethal. If there’s one thing all Enthusiasts agree on, it’s that an authentic experience requires real danger.

Another popular Enthusiast activity is competing in tournaments. These tournaments might involve any dungeon-related circumstances, but often involve contests to see who can build the more lethal dungeon with the same amount of money (or even with the same materials). Some consist of placing adventurers at opposite ends of a dungeon (each half of which is built by a different Master) to see which crawler reaches the center first.

As Dungeon Enthusiasts often say, “dungeons don’t explore themselves.” Adventuring is the lifeblood of the Dungeon Enthusiast’s enterprise, and as such, recruiting adventurers is an essential part of the Dungeon Enthusiast lifestyle. This takes up a lot of time and is usually done by individual Masters, although the organization as a whole also sponsors recruiting efforts. The obvious method of recruitment is to lure adventurers in with geeper or other treasure, but more creative Masters use other means. Unfortunately, some Dungeon Enthusiasts employ false pretenses to lure in explorers.

The Dungeon Enthusiasts organization also often holds lectures and seminars on a great variety of topics related to dungeoncraft. For example, there is a whole series of very popular annual seminars dedicated to installing doors. There are, after all, so many types of doors — metal doors, wooden doors, stone doors, metal-reinforced wooden doors, stone-reinforced metal doors, wood-reinforced stone doors, and so on. And there are so many ways to make a door work

³ Considering the common tendency for adventurers to carry sacks full of geeper with them wherever they go.

⁴ Sometimes, these accidental deaths are actually taken as signs of good dungeon design.

— there are endless kinds of hinges, locks, doorknobs, and basic designs. Some Enthusiasts find the properties of each of these things forever fascinating, and attend the seminars each time they're held.

The Dungeon Enthusiasts also hold a semiannual “parade” of dungeons, where people (especially adventurers and other individuals who aren't members of the organization) come to view expensive dungeons. Many don't survive the experience.

Goals

The goal of individuals within the Dungeon Enthusiasts is usually just to have fun expressing themselves creatively, and hopefully to kill (or at least permanently mutilate) an adventurer or two in the process. Some build for more traditional purposes, such as to store old magic items or treasure; others have more personalized goals, such as those who do it to blow off steam.

The goal of the organization itself is slightly less clearly defined. Certainly, money making has a lot to do with it, but officially the Enthusiasts strive for a number of other things. For one thing, they strive to improve the quality of dungeons everywhere. Some Masters create dungeons on the cheap with lousy materials, but nearly everyone, adventurers and Dungeon Enthusiasts alike, agrees that building low-quality dungeons is exceptionally bad form, and the Enthusiast organization works to eliminate shoddy dungeoncraft. To this end, they have a rating system which designates dungeons on a scale of 1 to 5 daggers, with a one-dagger dungeon being easily navigated and completed, and a five-dagger dungeon being almost certain death. Another of the organization's goals is to serve as a support network for its members. The Dungeon Enthusiast organization plans seminars, connects members with resources, supplies them with discounts on materials and access to freelance monster-catchers, and make the hobby more affordable.

Another major goal of the Dungeon Enthusiasts is to promote dungeoncraft in general. Ever since the early days of the hobby, when a prominent noble disappeared for several days and a rumor that he had gone dungeon building somehow got started, dungeoncraft has had something of a bad rap. It still hasn't completely recovered from this stigma, although on the positive side, the taboo has probably brought a lot of fresh blood into the hobby.⁵

One radical sect of the Dungeon Enthusiasts wishes to transform all of Terrek into a singular dungeon. Their efforts are regarded as naively idealistic by many other Enthusiasts, and rather dangerous by others.

Relationships

The Dungeon Enthusiasts is wealthy enough to get along with most everyone. It often uses its immense wealth to influence individuals, other organizations, and governments from whom it needs something. Its ability to influence government is particularly important because terrible things can happen inside a dungeon. Certainly, horrifying and protracted deaths are not uncommon — after all, the more lethal a dungeon, the better — and certain things worse than death have been known to happen there, as well. As you might expect, most areas which have governments at all have laws

against this sort of thing, but the Enthusiasts usually have special provisions which exempt them from accountability under these laws. Some countries have even established legal precedents making all deaths which take place inside dungeons unprosecutable. This makes the Dungeon Enthusiasts a far bigger threat than many might assume.

Outside of the context of doing what needs to be done to make their dungeons more pernicious, Dungeon Enthusiasts really are quite mild people (usually). They certainly don't see themselves as unethical — indeed, for the most part they are a jovial, friendly bunch. They tend to live up to their name as extremely enthusiastic individuals, and they regard themselves as without enemies. After all, by and large, they are without malice, and who could dislike such friendly people? Interestingly, many people, even some adventurers, see them this way. Other adventurers view them as useful for the adventurers they provide, although some Dungeon Enthusiasts have made quite a few enemies over the years. Regardless of how positively an adventurer views the Enthusiasts, however, almost all adventurers agree that becoming a Dungeon Enthusiast after striking it rich is selling out. That doesn't stop it from happening, though.

Dungeon Enthusiasts are often accused of being obsessed with a pointless activity. They are also occasionally accused of being evil, due to their unduly cruel treatment of adventurers. Most shrug off these accusations, simply throwing money at anyone who actually threatens their way of life.

Membership Requirements

Anyone who can afford to join the Dungeon Enthusiasts is allowed to join.

Members

Most Dungeon Enthusiasts have to be wealthy to afford the membership dues. However, all the races are represented. Even evil people are accepted within the ranks of the Dungeon Enthusiasts, so long as they limit their evil behavior to abusing adventurers legally, within the confines of their dungeons — and sometimes even when they don't.

Recruiting Quote

“Centuries of tradition have defined our purpose as the creators of the most fundamental structures inside or outside of Paranesia. Now it's your turn to add your words to the great work of literature that is dungeoncraft. Join us in the most imaginative, escapist, entertaining, and pleasantly dangerous activity of all time!”

⁵ *Pun intended.*



EVANGELICAL VALIDATORS OF IMMORALITY & LOATHING

Evil has existed in various forms for time immemorial, but rarely, if ever, has it been particularly successful in any long-term sense. No matter how much of an advantage it seemed to have, it was always thwarted by good before it could achieve complete domination. Yet not until the Renaissance has a group of evil visionaries actually attempted to address this problem by pooling their talents together. More than 800 years ago, a bunch of evil people decided to found the Evangelical Validators of Immorality and Loathing, a group dedicated exclusively to achieving the philosophical principles of the higher evil.

Despite its hopeful beginnings, however, EVIL has had its problems. Plagued by bickering and backstabbing, the organization has so far made few significant strides toward its primary goals. Still, even its critics have to agree that EVIL has succeeded in bringing a more democratic feel to the phenomenon of evil, allowing people of all races and economic backgrounds to start with nothing and eventually become prosperous evil sorcerers and clerics responsible for dominating and terrorizing entire kingdoms.

Philosophy

EVIL's basic philosophy, obviously, is that good is bad and evil is good.⁶ Beyond this, things tend to get rather baffling. EVIL's charter states the purpose of the organization is to serve the so-called "greater evil." In other words, its mission is to promote pain and suffering, not because its members enjoy doing so, but out of a purely altruistic desire to make the world a more terrible place. To this school of evil philosophy, all happiness and pleasure — even one's own — is looked at as a necessary good. However, many of the more recent recruits see this traditional philosophy as dated and its adherents as hopelessly idealistic. These people stress the importance of *enjoying* evil deeds. They do evil for purely selfish reasons — the enjoyment of torture, the desire for absolute power, or whatever. These two factions clash a great deal, and their spirited debates often threaten to rend the whole organization in two.

Members of EVIL are a quarrelsome lot. Another popular debate that challenges the organization's united front is that of exactly what kind of evil is best. Most favor the standard, more neutral kind, which essentially involves hurting people at every available opportunity. Some believe, however, that while the promotion of woe and wretchedness is obviously of



"Mwahahahahahaha!" — Brother Wormbody hosts an informational seminar on Dwarf Harassment.

⁶ *Confusing semantics like this are rather common in EVIL.*

great importance, it is nevertheless imperative not to violate the law while doing it; legal loopholes must be found wherever there are ordinances which prevent the doing of evil deeds. According to this philosophy, only an act which uses the law against itself is *truly* evil. Still others take the opposite, more chaotic approach, defining evil as the antithesis of whatever legal system happens to be in power; these individuals go out of their way to defy all the laws they can in their pursuit of evil. Needless to say, these debates can get quite heated, and they certainly impede the progress of EVIL as an organization.

Worshipfulness

There's a sort of vague expectation in EVIL that you worship some kind of god, and not to do so would be viewed as at least a bit eccentric. Even mages are expected at least to pay lip service to a deity. However, EVIL doesn't tell you which god you have to choose; so long as it's evil, you'll fit in just fine. Gods which require humanoid sacrifice are especially in vogue these days, as are divinities so horrible that their very manifestations tend to spontaneously cause insanity in mortals.

Structure

EVIL is a fairly formal group, heavy on ritual and costuming. Their ceremonies tend to involve a lot of chanting, incense, body fluids (particularly blood), reading from ancient and eldritch texts, dancing with sharp objects, cursing, and, strangely, yodeling. These rituals are sometimes quite functional, and many of them culminate in some spell being cast.

EVIL is mostly based in large monasteries, where its members live in seclusion from the rest of the world. Individual monasteries are actually run quite differently, but the whole organization is still subservient to a single Supreme High Dictator. The organization is somewhat hierarchical, so other ranks also exist, but they vary from monastery to monastery, and who outranks who is yet another subject of frequent debate.

Other than rank and authority, rewards for success in EVIL include various awards, such as "Most Evil Laugh," "Most Sheep Slain with the Skull of a Two-Year-Old," and "Most Virgins Defiled in a Twenty-Four Hour Period." The very successful can look forward to having dictatorial-type control over a particular geographic area.

Goals

EVIL's goals are about what you'd expect. They include defeating good forever in this realm, taking over Terrek, causing misery, and just generally making life rotten for everybody. The best (or worst) way to do this, like most matters of interest to EVIL, is the subject of contention. EVIL is generally tries to accomplish its goals by amassing armies and trying to take things over, although so far this tactic hasn't proved particularly successful, perhaps because it's so hard for its individual members to agree about anything. Still, while it may be difficult for EVIL members to reconcile their differences, a certain amount of camaraderie is achieved on occasions when members can manage to remember that

making people suffer horribly is *really* what they're all about. In any case, EVIL has devoted so many resources to world conquest that even the organization's many spats don't keep it from the occasional major step toward their goals.

Activities

Ceremonies are popular at most monasteries, as are meetings to plan an appropriate way to accomplish the organization's goals. Of course, these meetings almost always degenerate, either into polemics regarding typical EVIL philosophical disagreements, or personal squabbles about who's the most evil, the most mysterious, the least scrupulous, or whatever. Occasionally actual plans get made, and some sort of scheme is implemented.

Typical afternoons in an EVIL monastery are spent reciting forbidden prayers, making pacts with demons, and studying the deepest, darkest annals of mortal knowledge. Some of the Order's senior members who are well known for their despicable behavior offer regular classes and seminars (with visual aids and free samples), and many members while away a great deal of time at such events. Of course, individual members of the organization are often sent on missions to achieve the organization's objectives. These tasks might include anything from fetching powerful magic items to assassinating a prominent good person. Sometimes, members go adventuring of their own accord in order to earn money, tagging along with whatever adventurers they can find.

EVIL also owns and operates its chain of Evil Casinos™ at which the gambler can bet either money or (as he is encouraged to do) his immortal soul in return for big cash prizes. Of course, the house only gives out a tiny percentage of what it takes in, so this is a big source of income for EVIL.

In accord with its name, EVIL also places a great deal of value on the importance of proselytizing, and its always been big on mounting intense marketing campaigns designed to spread its philosophy. Missionaries are often dispatched to remote areas to convert the natives. Representatives of EVIL can also be found in most major cities, passing out pamphlets and decapitated heads, preaching on street corners, mutilating small animals, spreading lethal diseases, and offering legal advice.

Relationships

Needless to say, EVIL is not well-liked by other organizations, nor by anyone who isn't a member, really. Many people on Terrek are opposed to evil as a matter of principle, and some even feel ethically obligated to persecute any organization that actively promotes it. EVIL's members bear this abuse stoically (or even gleefully, depending on their personal philosophy), reminding themselves that it's important always to do what's wrong.

Even in cases where EVIL's philosophy isn't diametrically opposed to that of another group of people and a positive relationship is possible, that relationship is often sabotaged because many members of EVIL like to backstab even when it's not necessarily in their best interests — just because it's such a mean thing to do, and they can't help themselves.

Members

Humans dominate. All races are allowed (although prejudice and discrimination are generally encouraged, at least until such point their effects become so disruptive as to halt all productivity). Avatars and mages are preferred members, but fighters, thieves, rangers, and whatnot are also admitted. To do their physical dirty work, the organization prefers to capture people, wipe their memories, and turn them into mindless drones who do their bidding. Trolls are popular subjects of this procedure.

One way EVIL gains new members is by indoctrinating people from birth rather than trying to convince them later in life that evil is the right way to go.⁷ Still, most of its members are “born again” into the philosophy of evil after a lifetime of believing a more conventional creed.

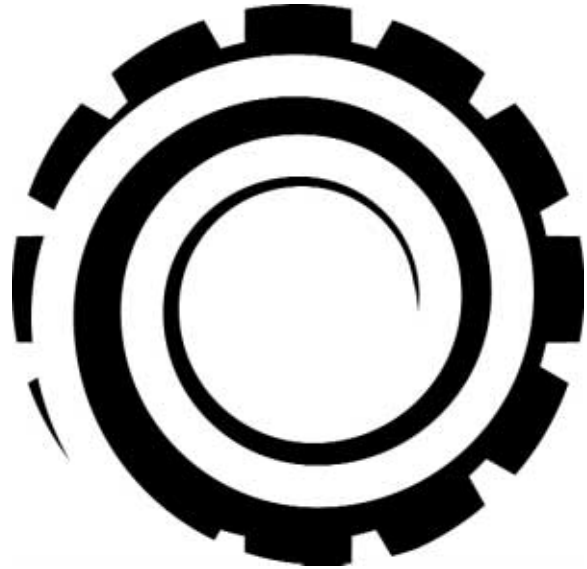
Membership Requirements

The ideal candidate for EVIL membership displays a bizarre combination of violent, uncontrollable hatred and happy-go-lucky whimsicality. A melodramatic sense of life and the tendency to turn ordinary situations into grandiose theatrical productions is highly appreciated, as is the ability to cackle maniacally. Generally, members are sneaky and mysterious. In order to distinguish themselves for the “common bad,” members of EVIL are also expected to maintain a snappy enough wardrobe to keep the organization looking its most malevolent. Usually, this means dressing in snazzy black robes (except when embarking on espionage-related missions).

However, while these traits tend to be characteristic of EVIL’s most successful members, deviants from the formula are accepted, if seen as a bit mentally disturbed. Anyone wishing to join up just needs to submit an application explaining what a great big jerk she is, and have an interview with a ranking member in order to verify her bad intentions (since good people sometimes try to infiltrate the organization). If your membership is approved, the new member of EVIL signs a blank document, which the organization fills in with a contract later.

Recruiting Quote

“You know, there *are* ideals in the world worth dying for. Don’t be so selfish! Joining us would be the best... er, worst... thing for you. Mwa ha ha!”



IRON TITAN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SERVICES

As the organization itself is fond of reminding people, Iron Titan Conflict Management Services is the biggest company on Terrek.⁸ Its popularity with nearby governments and organizations has increased rapidly, largely because of its rather enticing promise to eliminate their need to worry about defending themselves:

Border disputes, clan warfare, and monster attacks are the leading causes of death on Terrek. Why risk losing even a single citizen to the occasional orc attack? Why waste valuable resources fending off the undead forces of some upstart evil wizard? Hire us to do your dirty work for you, and never bother with all the tedious details of military management again!

Iron Titan Conflict Management Services mainly manages conflict by manufacturing giant magically-powered clockwork battle machines called Iron Titans, and then renting them out (with operators) to whoever will hire them. Needless to say, renting an Iron Titan is quite expensive, and usually only a country, large organization, or retired adventurer can afford it. These are good times for ITCMS, as rental orders for Iron Titans are piling in and employees are lining up outside their door.

Philosophy

ITCMS promotes itself primarily as a preemptive defense for countries afraid of being invaded, emphasizing several humanoiditarian policies. This allows its owners to construct an image of themselves as socially responsible and morally upstanding members of society — albeit somewhat coercive, violently-inclined socially responsible and morally upstanding members of society.

Actually, it’s a little-known fact about ITCMS that we were founded almost exclusively to save lives. Yes, that’s right! That’s why we never attack first, and why we only use our clockworks

⁷ A typical expression of this recruitment policy is for a prominent EVIL member to kidnap the child of a good rival and raise that child as his own. Often, this child is incorporated into a plot to bring about the downfall of the birthparent.

⁸ By volume, anyway...



“Luther! Stop drinking the ballast!” — An Iron Titan co-pilot prepares to kick back with a cold one after a hard day of pummeling and smashing things.

in pursuit of your best interests. It's also why, in the event of an attack, we have absolutely no mercy on the contemptible bastards who would disrupt the harmony of your lifestyle. So let us help you resolve your conflict before it becomes necessary to beat your foe into a bloody pulp. It's the moral thing to do!

ITCMS is generally seen as a defender of good and proper things, and it does everything it can to encourage this perception. It officially refuses all orders of an ethically questionable nature, and it is not especially likely to accept work from unpopular governments or well-known scoundrels. Still, it claims complete neutrality except when hired, and its services always come at a premium. Also, it does occasionally take jobs with no clear ethical implications (these are downplayed by their Public Relations department), and there are rumors of ITCMS engaging in some extremely unpleasant tasks in exchange for particularly large sums (although ITCMS strenuously denies this). Also, despite what its marketing paraphernalia suggests, Iron Titans do occasionally make preemptive strikes and largely unprovoked attacks, though if pressed the organization claims to do this only when it's justifiable.

Abilities & Equipment

Iron Titans (or, more generically, “clockworks” or “mechs”) are really the whole reason for the organization's existence. These machines generally stand about fifteen feet tall and weigh about four to five thousand pounds. Most of this area is taken up by mechanics like gears, servos, gimbals, and capstans, but there is just enough room inside for two small passengers (or one medium-sized passenger).⁹ Sometimes, only one person operates the machine. Other times — especially on Iron Titans with multiple ranged weapons — two people share the responsibility, one operator controlling the clockwork's legs and the other controlling its arms. Operating an Iron Titan is quite difficult, as their controls consist of an immensely complicated series of levers, switches, buttons, dials, and other doohickies (see the side box, page 74).

Iron Titans walk on two legs and are made partly of various metals (including iron, copper, and brass) and partly of other components (especially wood, leather, and rubber). Excepting a few magical armaments, they are entirely technological in nature (though the science behind them does make use of a few obscure laws of gameality which almost certainly wouldn't work in a real universe). In particular, Iron Titans have a power source which operates on the theory of Narrative Nonconservation of Energy, which dictates that the energy in an isolated system can change if the method of change is sufficiently silly. Each Titan has a winding key which is stuck into its back and turned when it needs to be charged. This key is shaped rather like a long-headed hammer, and is also used as a melee weapon by the Iron Titan's driver when necessary.

Sometimes Iron Titans are outfitted with non-weapon attachments. One model comes with giant spoon and salt shaker appendages (useful in cooking for really big parties).

⁹ Without modifications, a typically-sized dwarf or halfling or a small orc can fit in with enough room for someone their own size to cram in after them; alternatively, the clockwork can seat a single normal-sized human or elf.

Operating an Iron Titan

Iron Titans are quite complicated, and operating one is extremely difficult. To begin with, you have to be inside it, and seated at either the movement controls (the legs) or the weapon controls (the arms). Both of these are really complicated (some would say unnecessarily so — that's job security for the operators and mechanics). Getting the contraption started is the easy part, however; the hard part is steering it afterward.

Titan

(Plural Titans)

Mental Designation: N.A.

Size Designation: Enormous

XP: 10363

BERP: 7/10/7/8

PECT: 8/9/8/7

CFRS: 5/N.A./40/N.A.

Proficiencies

Prowess

Grappling	45
Strength	45
Swinging	45
Thrusting	45

Eloquence

Creativity	0
Elocution	0
Emoting	0
Subterfuge	0

Resolve

Concentration	0
Endurance	45
Evocation	0
Resilience	0

Vision

Aether	0
Cosmos	0
Force	0
Matter	0

Maneuver

Agility	14
Aiming	14
Dexterity	14
Wits	14

Intellect

Crafting	0
Inventiveness	0
Erudition	0
Reasoning	0

Intuition

Awareness	0
Instinct	0
Savvy	0
Wisdom	0

Presence

Aether	0
Cosmos	0
Force	0
Matter	0

Pre-Hit Location Chart

0-9: Standard (Minus Head)

Anyone without an Iron Titan Operation Benefit must make a check. To do this, roll either your proficiency in Intellect / Inventiveness / Mechanisms, or the Iron Titan's in whichever proficiency is most relevant to the action being taken — whichever is lower. For example, to get the Iron Titan to run, roll the lower of your Intellect / Inventiveness / Mechanisms proficiency or the Titan's Maneuver / Agility / Running.

Anyone who has had training in specifically in Iron Titan operation can select one of these Benefits:

- **Iron Titan Movement Operation:** This Benefit allows a person to move an Iron Titan around freely, but not operate any of its weapons. [8 Point Benefit]

- **Iron Titan Weapons Operation:** This Benefit allows a person to operate an Iron Titan's weapons, but not move the machine around. [8 Point Benefit]

- **Iron Titan Solitary Operation:** This Benefit (which can only be taken after the first two feats have both been taken) allows a single operator to move the Iron Titan and simultaneously operate its weapons, eliminating the necessity of a co-pilot. [16 Point Benefit]

Structure

ITCMS has grown extremely fast, and for the most part it hasn't been able to keep up with itself. The organization is fairly lost in bureaucracy, with lots of forms to fill out if you want to do anything and quite a few departments, some of which overlap in function and at least a few of which are largely without any purpose. There are three primary departments, however, which are far bigger and more important than any of the others: Administration, which consists of the highest ranking members and makes most of the decisions about the direction the company is going, Public Relations, which is charged with manipulating public consciousness of ITCMS, and Clockwork Operations, which is made up of the actual clockwork drivers and mechanics dispatched to complete missions.

Adding to the confusion is the organization's rank system. Everyone in ITCMS starts as an ensign with the opportunity to move up the ranks to lieutenant, commander, captain, and eventually admiral. However, all members are also designated according to yet another rank scale depending on their department. Members of Clockwork Operations start as apprentices and move up through the positions of journeyman, mechanic, archmechanic, and specialist. Members of Administration progress from assistant clerk through clerk, administrator, archadministrator, and chancellor. And members of the PR department start as handbill distributors and can soon become publicists, archpublicists, propagandists, and eventually — if they're good enough — liars. All this is, of course, rather befuddling, since no one has much of a sense of whose rank is higher than whose. Does an ensign specialist outrank an admiral apprentice, or is it the other way around? Nobody knows, which makes for a rather chaotic chain of command.

Despite its immense bureaucracy, ITCMS generally comes through when there's profit to be made. Still, the fastest way to hire the organization is to defy the company's policy and go directly through the drivers, who have quite a bit of discretion about where they're going and when.

Activities

The main activity of ITCMS is straightforward enough. When the organization accepts a request for "conflict management" from a client, one or more Iron Titans are "dispatched," naturally with trained pilots, to "eliminate the problem." When "the situation is under control," the pilots "request payment in full" from their employer and "return to base."¹⁰ Some missions last a long time. Interestingly, the organization has evolved a highly specialized jargon over the years; the drivers especially get into this "gearspeake," using phrases such as "10-4, good buddy," "affirmative," and "copy that," occasionally with alarming frequency.

Another necessary activity is chasing down people who have stolen clockworks. Security is tight at ITCMS, and it's quite hard to make off with a machine, but it can happen. Still, it's hard to hide the fact that you own a stolen Iron Titan and still make very effective use of it, so most thieves eventually end up getting caught. Most of them tend to be

¹⁰ ITCMS found that it was a lot more effective to have their drivers ask for payment with a clockwork standing by than to bill their clients afterward.

rather combat crazed, and they often go down fighting. What to do with the thieves when they're caught is still an unresolved issue at ITCMS. In the short term, they're usually housed in "The Brig." Later they might be set free, turned over to local authorities, or possibly used as target practice.

Unfortunately, no matter how intelligent they are to begin with, longtime drivers at ITCMS are strangely prone to a mind disease commonly known as "Mad Admiral Syndrome." Drivers with Mad Admiral Syndrome tend to go off halfcocked on some fairly ill-advised crusade to save somebody or destroy something, much to the distress of their colleagues and administrators. Despite its name, Mad Admiral Syndrome can strike a driver of any rank, though higher ranks are generally the most prone, presumably because they've been at it longer.

Goals

All pretense aside, this organization's primary goal is to make profit. Still, not all of the company's image is manufactured tripe; many of the organization's high-ranking members are legitimately concerned with helping the oppressed, if only the wealthier amongst them, and the organization undeniably does a lot to protect the borders of various countries and prevent widespread takeover by evil wizards.

To a perceptive eye, however, the organization clearly has a dark side. There is some evidence to indicate that ITCMS has actually caused some of the conflicts it has later put a stop to, though it denies this. It also denies that it ever takes advantage of countries and organizations which have grown dependent on its services. Whether these rumors are true or not, however, is unclear.

Relationships

ITCMS is generally perceived as a fairly objective and trustworthy organization, so it gets along pretty well with more governments and organizations than not, and is highly regarded by most people who have heard of it. Organizations, governments, and so forth which have borne the brunt of its conflict management services tend not to like it much for obvious reasons; unpopular groups or those sympathetic to evil tend to feel similarly. Not a lot of people who know about ITCMS are indifferent to it — most people either approve of it or despise it.

ITCMS clockworks have a somewhat exaggerated reputation for being extremely powerful, and the organization's P.R. department does everything it can to encourage this perception by frequently suggesting in their literature that only a lunatic would ever attack a country which has hired an Iron Titan or six. Of course, Iron Titans actually *are* pretty powerful, so this reputation is by no means entirely undeserved.

Members

ITCMS employs all races, but members are mainly dwarves. Many are also halflings, orcs, and humans. Dryads and trolls, because of their inability to fit inside an Iron Titan without extreme discomfort, are uncommon in Clockwork Operations, but they're welcome in other departments.

Membership Requirements

ITCMS has no official size requirements, but if you want to drive a clockwork, being small enough to fit into an Iron Titan is pretty important. Raw mechanical skill (Intellect / Inventiveness / Mechanisms) is valued highly, as is some modicum of common sense and sanity (to stave off the effects of Mad Admiral Syndrome).

Recruiting for ITCMS is more a matter of screening out thousands of unfit applicants than trying to convince people to join the organization, especially when it comes to finding drivers. Applicants are put through an extensive personality test with verbal, written, and "real life" components designed to determine both their level of skill and whether or not they're the sort of person who's likely to run amuck or make off with an Iron Titan at the first opportunity.

Recruiting Quote

"Hey, buddy, how'd you like to be twice the size of a troll and capable of discharging fireballs from underneath your armpits? Yeah, I thought so. Sign here..."



JUSTICE GUILD

Magic is not the only force on Terrek that bears reckoning. Maybe it was the unpredictable movements of the quirk particles, or perhaps it was a side effect of a random fluctuation in the game mechanics, but something about the Renaissance caused spontaneous alterations in the sequences of heredity which govern normal mortal development, causing certain individuals to develop some very unusual abilities. In other words, some people began to develop *mutations* — bizarre but apparently non-magical powers which allowed them to perform extraordinary feats.

Initially, most mutants used their abilities for their own purposes. But some of the more powerful mutants eventually realized that, if properly harnessed, their powers could become a formidable force for good. As they began to get organized, many non-mutants also joined up, and soon the Justice Guild was founded to fight for truth, justice, and the principles of democratic feudalism.

Since that fateful day, the Justice Guild has fought evil in all its forms with astounding creativity. Unfortunately for the forces of good, however, its originality has also inspired evil-doers who might otherwise have gotten bored with wickedness into taking a similar approach to their own goals. Today the Justice Guild has to spend a lot of its time and energy defeating nefarious plots which probably wouldn't even have



"Ah! Très Magnifique!" — A group of Bedlam City heroes poses for a promotional portrait for the Justice Guild's 'We are the Champions' PR campaign.

been attempted if the Justice Guild hadn't inspired them in the first place. Still, if nothing else, the struggles of the Justice Guild lend purpose and entertainment to the lives of its adoring public, and all with a justifiable amount of damage to city property.

Philosophy

The Guild believes in doing good. To this end, it strives to break down barriers of misunderstanding, battle the forces of evil (especially EVIL and superheroes with evil philosophies), rescue kittens stuck in cat-eating trees, and destroy oppression wherever it lurks. The Guild also believes in a highly personalized sense of style. This means adopting personal themes, creating secret identities, and wearing utterly ridiculous costumes. Of these two beliefs, it would be hard to say which is held with the most conviction, but one thing is clear: the Justice Guild is one of the most unique group of organized heroes on Terrek.

Actually, the Justice Guild prefers not to think of itself as a group of heroes. In their view, ordinary heroes lack style. That's why Guild members generally prefer to call themselves *superheroes*. For similar reasons, they also refer to their enemies who share the flamboyant second half of their philosophy as *supervillains* rather than just villains.

Another value which is prized highly in the Guild is uniqueness. Nearly every member has some kind of theme upon which he bases his entire superhero identity. Animals and monsters, philosophies, political ideas, magical or mundane items, and abstract concepts are all popular choices, and many model their identities after whatever unique ability or abilities they possess. Whatever the theme, it's always incorporated into every aspect of the superheroes' lives, affecting everything from modes of speech to hairstyles, from preferred methods of transportation to trademark attacks.¹¹

Abilities & Equipment

Most members of the Justice Guild possess some kind of power that goes beyond the normal scope of mortal abilities. By no means is everyone in the organization a mutant, however. Although the Guild's founding members started off by recruiting others like them, Terrek's limited mutant population made it necessary to look elsewhere for potential superheroes.¹² Today, some non-mutant Guild members have powers that they acquired due to some special incident, like falling into a vat of potion, or getting bitten by a radioactive pygmy marmoset. Others have acquired special powers by virtue of having unusual origins, or as a result of divine intervention. An increasingly substantial number of superheroes are actually mages or avatars who use magic as if it were a mutant power. A few members are simply ordinary people with powerful talismans, and a not insignificant number are just fighters with no special abilities, but who prefer to fight crime in costume.

The only equipment that a typical member of the Justice Guild normally carries is some kind of costume, which could look like just about anything so long as it's swank. From

¹¹ With the possible exception of their normal mortal lives, should they choose to have one.

¹² Only about one in every eight thousand people on Terrek is endowed with a mutant power.

rapiers and dark elegant capes to full-body, glow-in-the-dark latex suits, the Justice Guild has costuming covered. Most members refuse to use their powers when they aren't wearing their costumes, presumably for the sake of protecting their secret identities. Some members actually derive their abilities from their costumes.

Structure

The Justice Guild is based in various Guild Halls scattered around Terrek. Guild Halls themselves are usually extravagant buildings which serve as homes for a few major superheroes and as meeting space for many of the local, minor ones. Guild Halls also have “control rooms” in which more magically-oriented superheroes monitor crime with scrying devices. They also have a large series of rooms dedicated to the immense bureaucracy of tracking and categorizing villains, keeping track of members, and cataloguing assignments for individual superheroes. A few areas are normally devoted to training, wardrobe manufacturing, and snacking. Most Guild Halls give regular or semi-regular public tours.

Officially, the Justice Guild has a fairly informal structure. Every week, all members who desire a new superhero-related activity can go to a Guild Hall and have one assigned to them. Hall meetings are conducted by a coterie of the Guild's most upstanding superheroes. People who skip too many guild meetings risk falling from the Guild's good graces. People who never go may, in some cases, be classified as supervillains.

Some superheroes like to go it alone. Others form coteries. Some superheroes tend to determine their own missions, while others take theirs from the Guild. Guild Halls vary, but at most of them a lot of leeway is granted to members to fight evil in their preferred fashion. Still, despite this initial appearance of relaxed structure, members face considerable social pressure to behave according to a certain set of unspoken guidelines. First of all, it's expected that every member of the Justice Guild have a theme (and a moniker and costume to go with it), and no one wants to hear it if you just can't think of a good idea, or if you don't know the first thing about putting your outfit together. If you want to fit in, you had also better be able to display some kind of special ability, even if it is just extreme competence in a skill. Second, all members who wish to attain a positive image in the Guild must maintain a respectful attitude toward all “inner-circle” superheroes. These are the Justice Guild's main players — the superheroes with extreme reputations. Usually inner-circle superheroes have impressive powers, stunning costumes, charismatic personalities, and arrogant demeanors. Of course, no one ever explains this rule. Officially, all superheroes are equal, and calling attention to power differences or asking who's in charge would likely yield a puzzled response from other superheroes. This is usually as true within individual coteries as it is in the organization at large.

Activities

When not hanging out at the Justice Guild or working on some secret project at their sanctuary hideouts, superheroes engage in a variety of activities. Many have alternate identities which they need to devote time to maintaining, partly to

protect themselves and their families from being harmed, but mostly to be fashionable. Naturally, a good part of a superhero's time is supposed to be taken up by fighting crime and/or getting into tight spots and relying on the supervillains to make stupid mistakes.¹³ And of course, unless you're lucky enough to land a sponsorship or choose a wealthy but careless nemesis, superheroism may or may not pay the bills. Some superheroes apply for government grants, while others take second jobs or even go adventuring in their spare time.

Another activity which many superheroes consider necessary is searching for an archnemesis. A superhero's archnemesis has to be powerful enough to be a threat, but not so powerful that the superhero's defeat is inevitable. Ideally, an archnemesis has a theme which counterpoints that of the superhero in question. Good archnemeses are hard to come by without some sort of cooperative effort between hero and villain, and planned villainy — despite the obvious problems involved — is becoming more popular.

Goals

As an organization, the Justice Guild's only goals are summed by the vague directive, “defeat evil, and look good doing it.” However, individual superheroes usually have more specific goals involving defeating particular evil people or bringing justice to specific wrongs. Although bona-fide high-quality archnemeses are in short supply, scoundrels of various types are common enough, and EVIL's schemes are enough to keep many superheroes busy. Of course, since membership in the Justice Guild is so informal, superheroes can get away with doing just about anything they want, as long as they attend regular meetings and avoid being spotted actually abetting the forces of evil (or otherwise engaging in dark deeds). Some superheroes actually disregard the principles of the Justice Guild completely and just go about whatever life they want to live however they want. This kind of behavior is sometimes tolerated, if frowned upon, though superheroes who go too far might find themselves reassigned to bring themselves to justice.

Relationships

The Justice Guild is still a relatively small organization, so the sight of superheroes hurtling through the sky is still fairly uncommon in most parts of Terrek. Of those familiar with the Guild, many view its members as incredibly stylish paragons of virtue, though others see them as buffoons or dangerous psychopaths.

Different places have had very different experiences with the Justice Guild. In some places, the organization has saved entire cities from nefarious plots; in others, it's done little more than cause a lot of costly damage. Considering this, attitudes about the Guild vary greatly from region to region.

Members

All races are represented in the Guild, and in numbers proportional to their presence in the population at large. Yet despite this, racism and discrimination are extremely rare. This is mainly because the Guild sees all superheroes as members, and partly because the Guild places a huge empha-

¹³ Or, for the metaphysically astute, hoping for plot flaws.

sis on diversity of all kinds. This doesn't mean psychological problems aren't an issue, though — very much the opposite is true. After all, it takes a special type of person to forge him or herself an entirely new identity based around some kind of weird concept. Most superheroes have problems. Many have few social skills, and quite a number are working out inferiority complexes. Probably at least a third of them have had bad experiences with crime in their youth and want retribution. And virtually all of them are totally obsessed with some pretty esoteric things. Still, a few are legitimately convinced that goofy costumes and off-the-wall, overblown behaviors are the most effective way to fight evil.¹⁴

Membership Requirements

Unless they act in a blatantly villainous fashion, the Justice Guild considers all superheroes to be members of the organization, whether those superheroes like it or not. Because of this extremely informal and ambiguous policy, the Guild doesn't have too much of a problem recruiting, although people with super powers are rare enough to keep the organization small. Nevertheless, the Justice Guild is quite popular as an alternative to the Mighty Equestrian Crusaders of Incorruptible Righteousness, since the Guild promotes rather than disapproves of uniqueness. However, with their somewhat black and white view of morality and emphasis on doing whatever its members decide is good, the Guild has more in common with the Crusaders than either organization would care to admit.

Recruiting Quote

"If your power is wacky enough, if you really hate the forces of evil, if you prefer to have more than one identity, and you look reasonably good in very tight clothing, join forces with Terrek's premier force for good!"



KEEPERS OF THE OMNICODEX

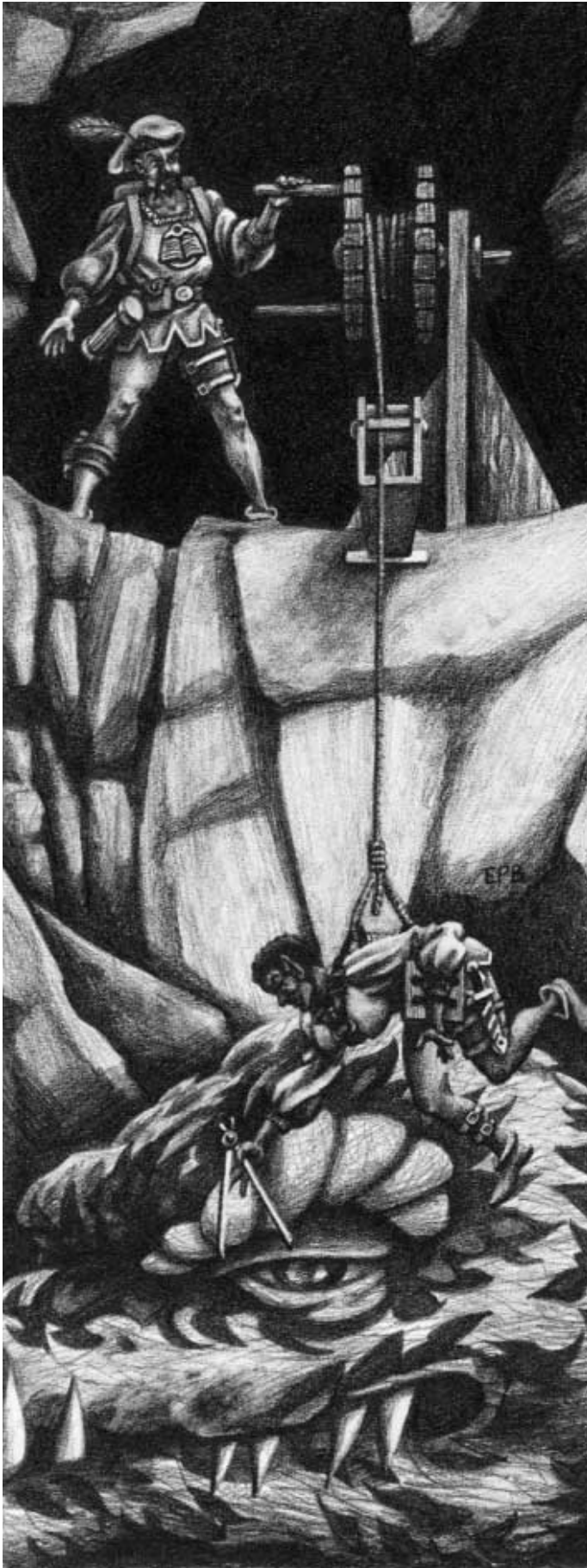
According to legend, the Keepers of the Omnicodex started many thousands of years ago when a mysterious figure appeared to the people of a small plague-ridden village which was far ahead of its time (in that most of its inhabitants were basically literate). The figure said that in return for tracking down an obscure piece of information for her and writing it down on parchment, she would eliminate the disease that had cursed their village for seven generations.¹⁵ The villagers did their best to acquire this information, and they carefully wrote down everything they found. Unfortunately, although they learned several related facts, they were unable to discover the exact information the figure wanted. So she bade them try again, and again they looked. However, again they failed to find the information she desired. A third time the figure bade them try, and once more they searched, but alas, their efforts were in vain. Becoming exasperated, the figure now gave up and left, but the villagers, who were very tired of the plague, remained determined to find the information in the hope that she would one day return and cure them of their plight.

For hundreds of years, the villagers searched for the information and inscribed everything they learned on parchment, even when it seemed to bear little relation to the information they were looking for. During this time, the plague that afflicted them slowly faded away on its own. But somehow the tradition of searching for information had become firmly entrenched in the culture, and soon the villagers even forgot what it was they were looking for and why. Now they were merely jotting down as many facts about the world around them as they possibly could.

When the Renaissance arrived, the inhabitants of this now-ancient village with silos filled with parchment paper began to question their tradition of recording obscure facts. Many abandoned it entirely. But a few realized that what had started as a pointless tradition had become a passion for them.

¹⁴ Some superheroes do it for their own reasons, like power or sex.

¹⁵ It is no longer known what information the figure desired. Today the Keepers refer to this unknown bit of knowledge as the Golden Fact.



"Just a few more inches..." — A pair of Keepers flirt with fiery, sudden death in the ongoing quest for draconic pupil dilation measurements.

On that day, the organization that would later be named the Keepers of the Omnicodex was formed, and in the following months the scraps of parchment were collected and bound into many volumes of nearly useless information.

Philosophy

The Keepers of the Omnicodex has come a long way from its humble origins. Today, it's an organization of scientists who have devoted their lives to understanding gameality. These scientists pride themselves on their ability to observe their environment, identify phenomena, categorize them, and — perhaps eventually — explain them fully. To the Keepers, magic and other apparently supernatural things are a natural part of the world, and hence a phenomena to understand and classify just like anything else.

The Keepers are a fairly levelheaded lot. Probably their biggest flaw, however, is that their focus on theoretical rather than applied knowledge is, to say the least, extreme. Modern members of the Keepers of the Omnicodex are brought together by their common fascination for *absolutely everything* about the universe. The Keepers are obsessed with acquiring a complete and well-sorted list of all true facts, and they won't be satisfied until they've succeeded. However, they aren't particularly interested in using this information toward any particular purpose, except perhaps discovering new information. It's the quest for facts that's important, and that's what keeps them going.

The Keepers don't actually have a problem with practical applications of knowledge. It's just that they generally have little interest in it, and only translate theory into application when there's some way that doing so would obviously benefit their quest for still more information. Although they are capable of being practical when doing so is likely to aid their goals, they seem strangely oblivious to the fact that their ultimate goal of recording all facts is probably impossible.

Abilities & Equipment

As might be expected, the Keepers of the Omnicodex found it extremely tedious sorting through scraps of loose parchment every time they wanted to recall a particular fact. Binding their work into books was the obvious solution, but considering how much parchment they had, the end result was a nearly unmanageable number of texts. Eventually they decided to copy all their information into a magical volume they then dubbed the Omnicodex. This single text is bound in owl skin and weighs about just under a thousand pounds. It contains an indefinite number of pages onto which every fact the Keepers have ever acquired has been written and carefully organized.

Only the core Keepers are allowed near the Omnicodex, and it's rumored to be very well-guarded. However, all the information in it is accessible via a number of Proxy Books specially designed to scry into the Omnicodex. Proxy Books can also be restricted to certain types of information. Obviously, no Proxy Book can read information that isn't in the Omnicodex.

The Keepers hope that the Omnicodex will one day contain all information on every single aspect of the entire universe. Of course, right now it's just a book of zillions of scat-

tered, semi-related facts. Some of its information is useful, but most of it is totally irrelevant. Most of it is fairly accurate, although the occasional glaring error has been noted.¹⁶

Structure

Members of the Keepers of the Omnicodex are sufficiently dedicated that they require minimal structure or hierarchy. Mostly the organization consists of intellectuals who are fascinated by obscure facts and want nothing more than to spend their lives gathering them, and most Keepers see their fellow members as fellow scholars — colleagues with compatible goals. While disagreements do sometimes crop up — usually over whether particular facts are true — they are settled by independent confirmation by other scholars and/or magical truth verification scrolls. Anyone fully accepted as a scholar is allowed to enter information into the Omnicodex. However, abusing this privilege is a serious offense. It's very unusual to be kicked out of the organization, although writing false things into the Omnicodex or having a consistent lack of regard for truth will likely lead to your being asked to leave.

The Keepers have no official position on what means of gathering information are acceptable. Blatantly immoral activities (like the murder of innocent people) tend to meet with disapproval from most of the organization's members, although some Keepers value ethics more than others, and sometimes morality seems to get swept under the rug where really interesting facts are concerned. Even under more casual circumstances, sometime it's necessary to really mess with people in order to get information, and most Keepers will do this if it will expand their body of knowledge.

Activities

Most Keepers spend a lot of time going on knowledge quests or researching facts. The manner in which they do this varies tremendously based on the kind of things they want to discover, but suffice it to say that it might involve anything from a trek across a forbidden wasteland to the careful examination of the underside of a bovine. Many Keepers devote their lives to discovering information about a single topic, like an organization or a body part. A typical adventure might involve being sent to discover the exact scent of a god's body odor, catalog the behavior of an exotic animal, or find out how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. If it's a fact that hasn't, to date, been logged in the Omnicodex, the Keepers will probably be interested.

The main trouble with all this, of course, is that there are just *so many* facts, and such a limited amount of time and resources in which to gather them. In order to speed the process along, the Keepers hire field researchers to collect information for them in order to supplement their own research. Unfortunately, the Keepers take whoever they can get, and they often end up hiring people who have few or no qualifications. Field researchers report to whoever hires them.

There's money involved in hiring field researchers, of course, and the Keepers need to eat as much as anyone else. This leads to a need for funding, so they lend out Proxy Books to wealthy clients and sell scrolls that allow people to

tap the Omnicodex for single pieces of information. They also sometimes allow themselves to be hired out as detectives.

The Keepers tend to keep to themselves whenever possible. Their official position is that, as scientists, they prefer not to influence the world they're studying. They tend to forget that they themselves are a part of the world rather than an objective force assigned to study it, which makes them a somewhat egocentric group. Of course, since the Keepers are part of the world too, someone has to write down information about them as well. This has given rise to a covert subgroup within their organization, known only to an elite few, which is assigned to gleaning information about the Keepers themselves.

Goals

As a means to acquiring even more extremely-difficult-to-find facts, the Keepers are currently trying to master time travel. Too many facts are lost to the past, and too many are not known because they simply haven't become the case yet. However, so far the Keepers have been unsuccessful, perhaps because it's hard for most of them to care about a project with such obvious practical applications.

The Keepers are also trying to develop more effective uses of magic to defend themselves. As the Omnicodex becomes richer and richer in facts (irrelevant though most of them are), the Keepers become more of a target for those who want that information. Currently the Keepers have minimal defenses, so in order to stop thieves and troublemakers, the organization hires mercenaries and sometimes even Iron Titans.

Relationships

Since the Keepers deliberately try to remain obscure, most people who don't do business with them know little about the organization. Those who know tend to be fairly indifferent to them. However, there are a growing number of people whom the Keepers have really pissed off. Some people have gotten upset when delicate information about them has been sold to their enemies. Another problem stems from the fact that eventually, the Keepers come looking for information about *every given thing*, and that includes all the subjects people don't want to think about. It also includes topics which are extremely difficult to access without breaching taboos, treading on private property, or disturbing treasured possessions. Keeper missions sometimes involve excessively dangerous deeds which may have an impact on the locals, or playing strange psychological games in order to get people to reveal desired information. Some people resent this sort of thing, and are inclined toward revenge, which makes for interesting enemies.

Members

The Keepers accept all races. Trolls and orcs, who are not famous for their love of theory, are rare, and humans are the most numerous members.

¹⁶ Sometimes, out of respect for a revered Keeper, errors are retained in the Omnicodex until the Keeper responsible for them dies.

Membership Requirements

The Keepers' recruiting efforts are directed mainly toward finding field researchers to go out and fetch facts for them. Field researchers aren't officially part of the organization, but they are an important part of the way the Keepers function.

Although the Keepers don't do much active recruiting for the core of their organization, anyone can join the core group of Keepers. There's no test involved, and no fees, so the organization is pretty easy to infiltrate, although you have to do some research and display ample enthusiasm for the organization's goals before you're granted the title of Scholar and allowed to approach the Omnicodex.

Recruiting Quote

"Come now, you can't tell me that tracking down a sample of Baalrogue feces for us to analyze doesn't have a certain appeal for you. I thought you said you were interested in knowledge and that you liked adventuring! Hmmm, I guess I'm going to have to do it myself. Now then, where'd I put that scroll of fireproofing?"



MAGES IN BLUE

Our terrace is not the only one wafting about in the celestial tempest raging through the mortal realm. Watch long enough from almost any vantage point and you'll see, from time to time, another terrace sail by on a bank of clouds. Usually passing in the distance, occasionally drifting breathtakingly close, these terraces have stunned mortals with their beauty since the dawn of humanoid history.

For many years, the inhabitants of our terrace gazed up at the other terraces and wondered, silently, if they were inhabited by other life forms. And today, thanks to the efforts of the Mages in Blue (MiB), they know that the answer is: *absolutely not*. From behind the scenes, the MiB has so effectively influenced public opinion that most people know for *certain* that aliens do not exist — and that even if they did exist, they wouldn't be hanging out on Terrek. There are no aliens — there never were any aliens — and there never will be any aliens.

Philosophy

Despite its subtle manipulations of mortal opinion, the MiB knows quite well that alien encounters are an almost everyday occurrence on our terrace. However, the MiB also knows that if most people knew the full truth about aliens, that knowledge would destroy them. Well, the MiB *thinks* it would destroy them, anyway. Maybe it wouldn't. But who



"Nothing to see here, folks." — A team of MiBs busts a loitering alien and implements Cultural Decontamination Procedure 4077.

wants to take that chance? Anyway, it reasons, surely the organization wouldn't have gotten started with all these cover-ups if there weren't a darn good reason for all the secrecy.

The main purpose of the MiB is to cover up all evidence of alien life. Its secondary purpose, which is almost as important, is to defend Terrek from dangerous alien plots (and other miscellaneous whatnot). This means destroying hostile aliens and exporting or hiding the rest. The MiB isn't really anti-extraterrestrial — it even helps offworlders when doing so doesn't compromise the organization's primary objective. However, it has little tolerance for alien mischief. In its view, there are enough troublemakers on Terrek without importing them from elsewhere.

For the most part, the MiB considers itself to be above the law and exempt from normal standards of morality and immorality. Although it clearly considers its cause to be a good one, and most of its members would be opposed in principle to any organization with openly evil goals, they prefer to leave the fight against evil for others. To them, their own battle is more important, since without them it would go completely unfought. Most actual MiBs are quite dedicated and will stop at nothing to assure the total success and secrecy of their organization.

Abilities & Equipment

Despite the organization's name, not all members of the MiB are mages. In fact, only about a third of them are. They all have magical equipment, though. MiBs ride enchanted horses which make no sound. When they need air transportation, they occasionally fly around on large, blue flying carpets (though they prefer to ride horseback when possible, since it's more subtle). MiBs always wear shades and blue robes, both of which are enchanted (see *Joining the MiBs*). The robes are capable of teleporting a certain number of objects back to a prespecified location upon the wearer's death, thus removing all evidence that the MiB existed. Remaining objects are left behind. Because of this, MiBs are discouraged from carrying any extra items around with them, which would too easily be traced back to the MiB using magic. This prohibition includes underwear.

Another ability most MiBs have is the ability to lie. A few MiBs are such good fibbers, in fact, that they even convince themselves that they don't believe in aliens, even as they devote their lives to covering up the existence of those aliens.

The MiB operates out of a number of bases. These are places where aliens and people who think they've seen aliens are "debriefed." One of these bases, constructed from the remains of an abandoned dwarven mine, is known as Mine 51. Some whisper of an alien craft hidden somewhere in the mine, along with a number of precious alien artifacts. So far, this rumor can be neither substantiated nor discredited, so it's probably a good bet that it's true.

Aliens, too, are often possessed of special equipment and extraordinary abilities. The kinds of things they have vary tremendously, usually depending on the race of alien. Some cultures may possess vastly superior magic and magic items. Some seem to have unusual abilities simply by virtue of being aliens. Many aliens, or at least the ones the MiB is like-

Joining the MiBs

All MiBs possess with the following equipment, all of which is derived in whole or part from alien magic:

- **Robes of Posthumous Teleportation:** These magic robes can teleport up to five items formerly possessed by the cloak's wearer back to a prespecified location upon the death of the wearer (the items are preset via a ritual before new MiBs receive their robes). Usually, these items include: the corpse of the recently deceased, their shades, their weapon, their badge, and the robes themselves. Once used, the robes can no longer teleport.

- **Shades of Foggy Recall:** These flashy shades affect the memory of anyone who looks at a person wearing them. Although the effect is not immediate, any later attempt to recall details about a person wearing the shades is made at a distinct disadvantage (-5). This effect is almost always enough to make spectators forget what the individual MiBs looked like, and often it even causes them to forget the outlandish garb and equipment. The shades are not perfect — a person determined to remember that something strange just happened will probably succeed — but most ordinary people are likely to simply shrug their shoulders and forget they ever encountered anyone out of the ordinary. The downside to wearing the shades, however, is that it becomes difficult to see in the dark (-4 to all vision-based Intuition / Awareness checks in dim lighting).

- **Saddles of Inaudibility:** The MiB saddle design was based on an alien magic intended to suck sound out of the atmosphere for use as a fuel. However, the MiB, unable to figure out how to use this magic, found an alternate use for it in their saddles. When the saddle horn is depressed, it becomes active. An active Saddle of Inaudibility stores all the sound within a 7 foot radius of the saddle, making it impossible for anyone or anything in that space to be heard. This renders MiBs and their horses perfectly quiet, lending a great advantage in stealth. Unfortunately, however, since the saddle *stores* sound rather than dampening it, after about two hours of continuous use the saddle must be emptied before it can continue to be used. Since the MiB doesn't know how to harness the sound as a fuel, they must simply release it. When this is done, all the sounds previously stored are released over the course of about 6 seconds — a process which, needless to say, makes a lot of noise. Anyone standing nearby when this is done experiences some ear pain, and the sound can be heard in a quarter mile radius. Naturally, this makes it harder to be stealthy, though there are some advantageous possibilities of this effect as well.

- **Multi-Setting Weapons:** MiB weapons, which are mostly of alien design, are often (although by no means always) plussed versus various kinds of aliens. They also have two settings — kill and stun. MiB weapons set to kill act no differently from other weapons like them — an axe, for example, behaves as an ordinary axe. When set to stun, however, the hit fatigues the target rather than

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causing pain (substitute a Fatigue Threshold for the usual Pain Threshold). When the target receives a fatigue penalty so severe that the number of her penalty is more negative than her Fatigue Threshold is positive, she passes out, and wakes up later with no ill effects (except maybe a headache from particularly nasty stun blows). Use penalties apply normally, except that a stunned body part will eventually “wake up” on its own far sooner than an equivalent wound will take to heal.

- **Badges:** MiB badges are just official-looking silver doohickies with the MiB logo inscribed upon them in pure gold (though the gold parts have been painted blue). These badges look so official that it is sometimes possible for the MiB to gain access to things which are normally restricted by flashing the badge quickly and spewing a little fast talk. The badges are not magical, but some people have assumed otherwise, based on how effective they often are.

It’s okay to equip starting characters with all of this stuff if you want to run a campaign with the PCs as MiBs, but keep in mind that all the gear belongs to the organization, not to the PCs personally. If they get too attached to it, they’re probably in the wrong profession — they should be out looking for loot in dungeons, not joining up with the MiB. The MiB demands dedication to the job of foiling alien plots in return for the equipment and the right to carry the MiB badge, and those who put their personal ambitions ahead of the organization are liable to be booted out. They should be careful not to misplace equipment, either — if they lose too much of it, they will start to catch hell from their superiors.

MiBs are often familiar with spells. The most common spells they use involve interrogation, freeze rays, making people forget recent or traumatic events, or detecting aliens and sinister plots.

Note that using the MiB in your adventure works well if MiBs are the adversaries, and it also works pretty well if all the PCs are MiBs. It can be more difficult to work a campaign where some of the PCs are MiBs and others aren’t.

ly to encounter, have access to some kind of long-range airship. Others use powerful portal spells or other special alien abilities to travel between worlds.

Structure

The MiB is structured in a loose hierarchy consisting of two levels. The individuals at the top level are in charge of coordinating the efforts of the lower-level agents, who are responsible for actually tracking down and eliminating alien-related problems and then covering them up. Agents generally travel in groups of three (although this isn’t a rigid rule).

Activities

The sorts of things that the MiB does to or with aliens varies a lot, depending on what those aliens are up to. Some

are refugees with nowhere else to go. Some are here to study the mortals of Terrek out of curiosity. Some are scouting information in preparation for an invasion. Some come to deliver messages of peace and goodwill. Some seek perverse pleasure from tormenting people and their communities. Some seek asylum. Some come for the dungeon raids. Occasionally, aliens are sent to warn people about invasions, or about the dangers of using a particularly powerful type of magic. Some are interested in hunting mortal prey. Others are just tourists. All things considered, aliens are as diverse as anyone else, and they might have any number of reasons for visiting.

The MiB knows this, but they usually tend to focus on the dangerous stuff. “Alien invasions,” says the top secret MiB training handbook, “are surprisingly common.” Actually, the MiB defines an invasion force pretty loosely as “a group of three or more beings from another terrace with dubious intentions.” When parties of alien adventurers come down from other terraces to do something ethically questionable, like slay monsters and loot magic items, that’s an invasion — and it’s up to the MiB to put a stop to it. The MiB also investigates and interferes with the stranger side of alien visitations — the alien tendency to destroy valuable crops, mutilate livestock, and impregnate watermelons. One common public service that the MiB provides, in fact, is stopping aliens from administering anal probes (or at least covering up the incident afterward). The exact reason aliens do these sorts of things is still unknown to the MiB.

MiBs are, usually, exceptionally stealthy people. Even given their skill in befuddling people and vanishing without a trace, however, it is difficult to explain how they manage to evade the public consciousness so effectively. However, they manage somehow.

Other Goals

Obviously, the MiB mainly strives to protect the denizens of Terrek from aliens, and sometimes vice versa. However, it also wishes to enhance its knowledge of aliens. To this end, it has classified aliens into three basic categories. *Bulbheads* are aliens with large, bulbous heads. *Bumpheads* are aliens with bumps on their foreheads. *Ugheads* are aliens that just plain aren’t pretty. The MiB has also categorized the alien crafts they’ve spotted so far into *saucer*, *cigar*, *orb*, *triangle*, *constitution*, and *egg* class ships. Frankly, even the MiB knows that their classification system needs work, but so far everyone’s been too busy hunting down aliens to do anything about it.

Funding for the MiB is accomplished mainly through black market sales of items looted from aliens. Obviously, the MiB doesn’t sell items which have obvious alien origins, and they keep most of the most powerful things they find for their own use.

Relationships

The MiB has no relationships with anyone because practically no one knows about it. Anyone the organization does end up having a relationship with, other than itself, is most likely going to end up an enemy, simply because they’ve learned about the organization’s existence. Most people, if they’ve heard of the MiB at all, think of it as nothing more

than a legend.

Members

Sprites, orcs, and trolls are uncommon. As usual, humans are the most common members, with elves running a close second. The other races are present in fairly population-representative numbers.

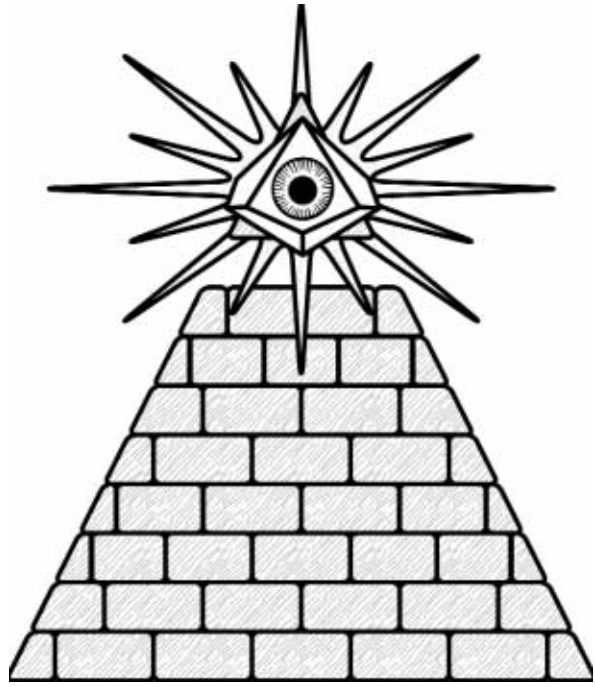
Members are often mages. Being an avatar doesn't exclude you from membership, but MiBs are typically a rather god-shunning lot. Most of them value self-reliance, and they also recognize that most gods don't really care much about whether there are any aliens on Terrek. Avatars in the MiB will probably have to endure some head shaking from their companions when they kneel to pray. For non-spellcasters, adapting to MiB rules can sometimes be difficult, given the emphasis the organization places on leaving no sign of its passing (and the difficulty of doing this effectively without magic).

Membership Requirements

The MiB finds highly skilled people they believe are capable of bearing what it considers a terrible burden — the knowledge that there are aliens among us. Then the MiB gives them the lowdown and gauges their reaction. If it's favorable, the person is inducted into the organization. If it's unfavorable, either they are cajoled into joining, their memories are wiped with magic, or they are launched into space.

Recruiting Quote

“What young child hasn't gazed into the heavens with innocent eyes and known with utter certainty that life on other terraces is impossible? Well, we're the ones who justify that child's faith. And we've chosen you because you're one of the few who have the strength to live without it. Here, don this conspicuous blue robe.”



META-ORACLES OF THE SACRED POLYHEDRA

Life for the people in Paranesia, the *Chain of Being* universe, is a roleplaying game. You know it, we know it — and oddly, a group of characters in Paranesia knows it.

That group is known as the Meta-Oracles of the Sacred Polyhedra. Their story begins almost a thousand years ago in the rural community of Khalhassin, four weeks after the beginning of the Renaissance. On that day, an unshaven man with ragged hair, ripped clothing, and all the normal trappings of a lunatic wandered into the town square raving about something he called “gameality” and claiming to have spent the last week trapped in a bizarre netherworld where numbers flow like water and giant polyhedra spin around rotating cylinders of energy. He recounted how each time he took an action, it would be simultaneously described by a disembodied voice. He ranted at length about how all his major decisions seemed to be accompanied by a clattering sound. Most of the villagers were inclined to disregard this man's ravings as just a little bit more of the same weirdness they'd been having to cope with recently (the Renaissance had just begun at this time, of course). But the town librarian was a little intrigued by his strange assertions, and she took him home to feed him in exchange for more information.

As the man told the librarian about his experiences, she became increasingly interested. She spent the next several days asking him detailed questions and noting down his responses in a journal. However, the man seemed to be going increasingly mad, and after a week he lost his wits completely and ran off into the wilderness screaming something about having “bungled his roll.” The librarian continued to research her findings, finally becoming obsessed. This obsession eventually drove her completely insane as well, and one



"Well, maybe we could try rolling 17d9." — A conclave of Meta-Oracles struggles in vain to determine Grak'tha's 'Brawn' score.

day she, too, disappeared into the wilderness.

Fifty-four years later, a rogue scholar named Miglomaxim accidentally discovered the librarian's notes buried underneath a mound of texts while visiting the Khalhassin library. Miglomaxim, who happened to be quite insane already, found them quite interesting indeed, and he was just crazy enough to believe wholeheartedly in their astounding implications. He immediately abandoned his previous studies and picked up the librarian's research where she had left it. Two years later, he started a religious movement based on what he had learned. He called it the Meta-Oracles of the Sacred Polyhedra.

Philosophy

The Meta-Oracles know that their universe is a roleplaying game. They don't necessarily understand exactly what that means, but they have a vague idea. They know, for instance, about the Cobbler, and about players. They also know about player characters (PCs) and non-player characters (NPCs). They understand that polyhedra and scraps of paper with numbers are involved. And they know that, when you get right down to it, nothing in their world actually exists.

Living with the knowledge that your life isn't real and that your identity is fictional is bound to have a disheartening effect on almost anyone, and the Meta-Oracles are not immune to this effect. Perhaps this is why the organization's members are almost always teetering on the brink of insanity. Probably the only thing that saves them from total lunacy, in fact, is that they are highly goal-directed — they are utterly obsessed with trying to exploit their knowledge of gameality to benefit them.

To this end, the Meta-Oracles are interested in somehow harnessing the power of the Cobbler. They may not know exactly who or what the Cobbler is, but they do know that it's an almost incomprehensibly powerful being whose words shape the very fabric of their universe. The Meta-Oracles figure that just as other mortals once replaced the gods of the Olympiad, their organization will eventually replace the Cobbler, giving them nearly unlimited power over everything. That's the long-term goal, anyway.

The Meta-Oracles have learned from their studies that the Cobbler controls NPCs. Naturally, this makes every NPC a pawn of the Cobbler, and necessarily an enemy of the Meta-Oracles. The Meta-Oracles thus ban NPCs from their organization.

Worshipfulness

The ultimate opportunists, the Meta-Oracles will worship whatever god or gods they think will get them closer to their goals. Indeed, some Meta-Oracles go through three or more gods in a week. However, most of them secretly view the gods as pawns of far greater forces (particularly the Cobbler). Some have carried this arrogance a bit too far, and met gruesome ends as a result of underestimating a deity.

Despite their cavalier attitude toward the divine, the Meta-Oracles are a very religious and very spiritual group. They speak in hushed tones about their most treasured beliefs and have definite ideas about which actions, words, and objects should be taboo and which should be sacred. In particular,

they have an extremely reverent attitude toward the game mechanics. They do their best to be “in tune” with gameality, and many of them wear crystal dice to prove it. Some of them even believe they can “sync” themselves with the game mechanics through excessive meditation.

Abilities & Equipment

Over the years, the Meta-Oracles have accumulated a wide variety of spells and items designed to delve into the nature of gameality and even to manipulate it. They particularly treasure this magic. Other than these things, the organization has no special abilities, save a determination borne of the unshakable conviction that anything is possible in a world where nothing is real.

The Meta-Oracles consider the words of the librarian to be holy writ. Since their founder Miglomaxim discovered that text, they have bound it with several other manuscripts they consider to be of importance and taken up referring to the whole thing as the Sacred Journals of Enlightenment. Today they consult the Sacred Journals whenever they feel the need for guidance. They can usually find some way of interpreting its passages that has relevance to their lives. They also use the Sacred Journal as their main source of information about the nature of the game mechanics.

Other tools the Meta-Oracles use are “character sheets.” A character sheet is a piece of parchment which contains a record of a given character’s traits, and the Meta-Oracles keep one for just about everyone they encounter. Character sheets are used to determine status, monitor which members have skills that are appropriate to particular tasks, and keep track of NPC abilities. They also function as a kind of ID. Unfortunately, the Meta-Oracles have no real clue about the game mechanics, and they haven’t the foggiest clue what a character sheet it supposed to look like. Their information ends up being rather arbitrary a lot of the time.

Structure

The Meta-Oracles is led by ten clerics who are usually referred to as Elders. In addition to directing religious services, Elders make most of the decisions about the organization’s direction and goals. Elders are under no obligation to reveal their reasons to other members.

Elders are discovered rather than recruited. All Elders-to-be have what is called the *stigmata* — a small mark that appears somewhere on their body. The stigmata is shaped like the face on a ten-sided die, with a single number between one and ten emblazoned backwards in the center. Each Elder is associated with one of these numbers, and when a particular Elder dies, a replacement with the same number is chosen. Sometimes, Elders who have previously not been members of the organization are discovered, but usually the stigmata seems to strike the most ambitious Meta-Oracles. Questioning why this is the case is generally considered unwise.

The Meta-Oracles have no official locations or bases. They tend to meet thrice a week in public places, such as town halls, to plan their goals and perform services. In the intervening time, their valuables are kept by individual members or locked into secret vaults in the woods.

Activities

The Meta-Oracles engage in a few fairly straightforward information-gathering activities. For example, they may go on a mission to the nether regions of gameality to figure out the structure of the game in more detail. Or they may be sent to test the abilities of particular people (willing or otherwise) in order to create character sheets for them. The organization considers it important to know a lot about gameality and about how the rules work, so studying the Sacred Journals of Enlightenment and doing research are also highly valued. And it is considered proper to attend services and act appropriately religious most of the time.

Most of the organization’s actual activities are quite baffling, however. The Meta-Oracles act for unknown reasons, and their goals tend to seem mysterious and contradictory to observers (if there are any observers — the organization tries to keep a low profile). They sometimes pass up obvious opportunities for worldly power and advancement in favor of apparently trivial gains. The truth is, although the Meta-Oracles really are very interested in power, they regard all worldly power as transitory, and thus they see intra-gameality politics (such as attempts to take over the world) as crude and ultimately pointless unless they somehow lead to the far more enduring and ultimate form of control brought about by domination of the Cobbler. The Meta-Oracles would certainly pass up the opportunity to control a country, for example, if they could gain a piece of useful information about the game, or some much-coveted information about the Cobbler’s personality.

The Meta-Oracles sometimes try to befuddle or defy the Cobbler for the purpose of gathering information about her, distracting her from one of their plots, or otherwise seizing control of their destinies. They might do this by trying to take an adventure off track — fiddling with details the Cobbler hasn’t had time to prepare, heading off on tangents, running really fast toward previously uncharted areas, and generally trying to catch the Cobbler with her pants down. Or they might try to complicate a situation by taking advantage of loopholes in the rules, or engrossing themselves in tons of technical details, hoping to exploit a Cobbler’s lack of knowledge of the rules.

Other Goals

The Meta-Oracles want immortality and total control over everything in gameality. Apart from these things, however, they have surprisingly few strong desires. All goals which aren’t means to this end are meaningless to them. They live ascetic, spiritual lives of quiet meditation punctuated sporadically by the vigorous pursuit of omnipotence. A few of the more enlightened members have a general sense that their goals are more than just a little bit difficult. Still, they really can’t let go of the idea of having that kind of power, so most of them believe they can do it even when presented with evidence to the contrary.

Most everyone does realize that Cobbler conquest is a very long-term goal. In the meantime, however, they have plenty of things to do — like somehow acquire a copy of the *Chain of Being* manual, make pacts with the players, or try to discover the Cobbler’s favorite snack foods.

Relationships

The Meta-Oracles are pretty obscure in most places, but they aren't completely hidden from the public view. The visibility that they do have generally isn't a problem for them, however, because most people immediately dismiss them as crackpots. Very few people are ready to accept that life is a roleplaying game.

The Meta-Oracles do have some interesting, though rather one-sided, relationships with NPCs. Most members see them as largely innocent people who, because they're under the control of the Cobbler, can often be dangerous. Others, however, see NPCs necessarily as spies and enemies of their organization. According to this second view, all that ignorance is a facade, and the primary purpose of NPCs is to foil the Meta-Oracles. People with both views tend to look down on NPCs, but some extremists who hold this second view often don't even see a reason to preserve an NPC's life. PCs are real in the sense that their players are real. But no one cares when an NPC dies.¹⁷

Members

All races are admitted. The majority of the organization consists of elves and humans.

Membership Requirements

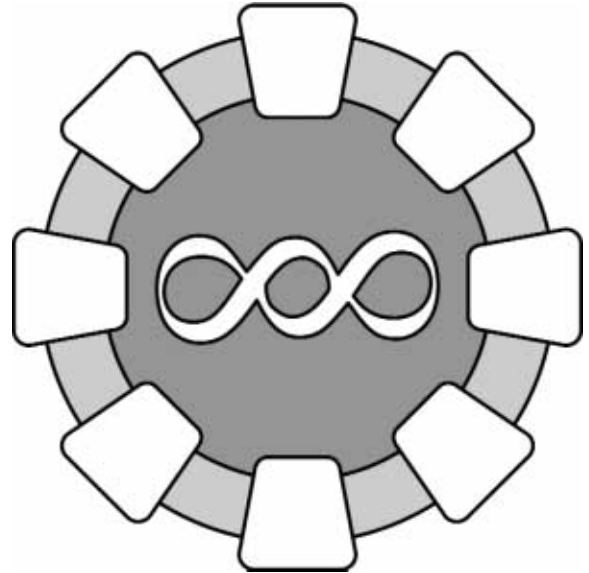
All members must be player characters. Of course, the Meta-Oracles don't actually have any way of detecting whether or not someone is a PC.¹⁸ The vast majority of the organization consists of NPCs who believe that they're PCs. Somehow, the Meta-Oracles seem blind to the fact that the many members of their organization can't *all* be PCs.

The Meta-Oracles bypass much of the problem of recruitment by kidnapping many of their members at a young age, choosing children they believe are PCs. When the organization recruits adults, it mainly seeks people who have accidentally discovered the truth about gameality and no longer know what to do with themselves. However, the Meta-Oracles are highly suspicious of any person who actually *wants* to join their organization.¹⁹ A determined person who demonstrates the fervor with which they believe that life is a roleplaying game will probably be successful in joining eventually, but not before she does a lot groveling to alleviate suspicion.

The Meta-Oracles don't care much about your skill level or what your abilities are. They can find something for almost anyone to do. However, they prefer people with an absolutistic and ritualistic approach to life, and those who can follow obscure orders without question. The best candidates are also a little bit insane, and have a tendency to be obsessive and megalomaniacal.

Recruiting Quote

"We are those who fathom the depths of the darkest numerals, who dance on the great decahedrons as they clatter endlessly on the eternal table, who spit at the feet of the greatest being the universe will ever know — and yet we live. Find your way with us, and you will go on quests you can't fathom for reasons you don't understand. Then, when you emerge on the other side, you will know invincibility!"



MIGHTY EQUESTRIAN CRUSADERS OF INCORRUPTIBLE RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Mighty Equestrian Crusaders of Incorruptible Righteousness comes from a proud tradition of military service and religious devotion. Six thousand years ago when the Olympiad still dominated the world of mortals, devoted worshippers forged this group to help them seek out and destroy the enemies of their gods. Eventually, those who dared to defy the Olympiad had to exercise great caution and creativity to avoid the Crusaders.

Since the Renaissance began, however, the Crusaders has had some difficulty adapting. Membership has fallen off as other more permissive and decidedly sillier organizations have come into existence, and the formerly rigorous standards for membership have become relatively lax. Worse, some of their gods no longer appear to take the Crusaders entirely seriously. The Crusaders' Grand Master and Cardinals initially tried to ignore the Renaissance and carry on as they always had, but as of late, they have reluctantly decided to adopt some measures to recharge their dwindling numbers.

Despite their recent problems, the Crusaders is still a powerful organization. They remain the strongest military power on Terrek, and their steadfast devotion to accomplishing their goals make them hard to ignore.

Worshipfulness

When the Renaissance came around, the Crusaders had already been serving the gods of the Olympiad for millennia. They weren't about to change their religion just because the

¹⁷ Meta-Oracles often meditate while considering the question, "if a tree falls on an NPC in the forest with no one around to hear, does it make a sound?"

¹⁸ Even if they did, they would soon discover that the overwhelming majority of their membership consists of NPCs.

¹⁹ Mainly because the Meta-Oracles are obsessively paranoid about making sure there aren't any NPCs in their organization.



"So much for the element of surprise..." — A pair of Crusaders attempts to maintain their dignity while on patrol.

Olympiad took on a bunch of new gods and lost most of the old ones. The Crusaders now serves whatever gods are members of the Olympiad, generally without regard to which gods those are. Individual Crusaders also sometimes devote themselves more fully to a specific god of the Olympiad.

Philosophy

Originally, all individual Crusaders took eight vows: piety, chastity, gallantry, obedience, humility, altruism, poverty, and legacy. One of the first things the new Olympiad did to the Crusaders, however, was to require the group to change the names of these vows. The actual traditions remain unchanged, but this somewhat cruel joke has had a rather negative effect on membership.

- **Tradition of Dependence:** Venerate the Olympiad and do its will, devote at least 4 hours per day to praying to it, observe all Crusader holidays and rituals, and do nothing without the consent of the Olympiad.

- **Tradition of Frigidity:** Waste not your energies on carnality, and display romantic affection for others only in accordance with the traditions of courtly love.

- **Tradition of Indiscretion:** Never hesitate to rush into danger when the opportunity to slay or destroy something evil presents itself.

- **Tradition of Obsequiousness:** Respect and obey high-ranking Crusaders, and defer to anyone who seems reasonably holy.

- **Tradition of Self-Debasement:** Be humble and mild in your dealings with others, and treat your enemies with more respect and courtesy than you treat yourself.

- **Tradition of Self-Sacrifice:** Rescue those in distress regardless of cost and without thought of yourself, and devote yourself to assisting the sick, the oppressed, and other disadvantaged people.

- **Tradition of Squalor:** Accumulate no more worldly wealth than you can carry with you, and give as many of your possessions as possible to the poor.

- **Tradition of Tradition:** Protect all Crusader traditions with your life, especially those aforementioned, and those of chivalry and courtly love.

All loyal Crusaders must follow these traditions unwaveringly. Still, since engaging frequently in behaviors consistent with these ideals would likely get most people killed (and make most everyone else miserable), a majority of Crusaders are not entirely perfect in their devotion. Some are well-intentioned but unsuccessful in living up to their ideals, while others deliberately seek loopholes to exploit. A few Crusaders defy the rules outright. Of course, many Crusaders do take their ideals quite seriously, and tend to challenge those they view as deviants to battles to the death, so outright defiance can be rather dangerous.

Structure

A council of eight Cardinals, each of whom is appointed by a single Grand Master, governs the organization. The Grand Master, in turn, is elected by the Cardinals. Each of the Cardinals occupies a position which represents a tradition, and the Cardinal in each position is responsible for enforcing that tradition. The council directs and controls the

activities of the Crusaders. New Cardinals are selected from the highest ranking Crusaders by the vacating Cardinals before they die.

In theory, the council receives guidance from the Olympiad in an extremely formal annual meeting at midnight on the shortest day of the year. Since the Renaissance, however, the gods haven't always shown up on schedule, and the Elders have had to make things up on their own a lot of the time. When the gods have shown up, it's usually been to issue a few obscure, ridiculous directives. Crusaders generally feel obligated to complete these quests, which causes no end of turmoil.

Advancement in the Crusaders is based on whether or not you appear to be sufficiently righteous, whether or not you can get recommendations from your peers, how many prayers you know, and what great deeds you've done. New members who wish to be trained as knights start as Squires who are assigned to assist higher-ranking Crusaders. If they do well, they become Knights. The best among the Knights eventually become Paladins. Members wishing to become clerics start as Acolytes who serve other clerics, and advance to Chaplains. With time and study, they can become Bishops. Even in these strange modern times, when little is working out well for the Crusaders, Bishops and Paladins are generally very well-known, respected, and/or feared.

Other benefits of success in the Crusaders include feasts of honor, various medals, and ceremonies of recognition. Joining the Crusaders and doing a few minor honorable deeds is probably the easiest way to get a town named after you, or to get a statue erected in your name.

Goals

Since they're constantly undertaking dangerous missions, seeking heroic quests, and going off on crusades, most people assume that the Crusaders is working to accomplish some very important goals. In fact, however, the Crusaders has almost no idea what it wants to accomplish or what the gods want from it. Actually, one of the most important goals of the Crusaders in recent years has been to recruit new members. Many Crusaders now often carry advertising slogans, like "Join the Crusaders! Self-denial was never so much fun!" on their armor and equipment. Some even carry advertisements for businesses in order to raise money.

The organization has also lowered its entrance requirements such that it now requires practically no skill or judgment to become an Acolyte or Squire (although advancing in rank can still be difficult), and it has started to offer free steeds, armor, minor holy items, or weapons to entice new members to join. This has attracted a number of Crusaders whose idea of being a Knight or Chaplain is to romp around the countryside on horseback telling people what to do in booming, authoritative voices.

Activities

Now that the Olympiad encourages rather than prohibits strange behavior, the Crusaders has had to stop seeking out and persecuting deviants and devote its energy to other pursuits. Most of its time is now spent searching for quests of some kind, praying, fasting, hanging around in chapels wait-

ing for sinners to absolve, or wandering around looking for that ever-evasive opportunity to do good deeds. When the Crusaders finds a cause it deems worthy, the activity usually consists of seeking out some long-lost object (a famous cup, a valuable sheepskin, etc.) or going to a foreign land to slay some population of allegedly evil beings. When at home, individual Crusaders enjoy challenging each other to duels or competing at endurance prayer contests.

Cardinals, as well as many Bishops and Paladins, spend a rather large amount of time debating which Crusaders deserve recognition, which should be punished or booted out, what new inquisitions to start, and who should get what sums of loot. Although technically all the individual members of the Crusaders take vows of squalor, many ignore this. Also, the organization itself is rather wealthy, and practices banking in many places.

Members who fall out of favor with the Cardinals can look forward to being dueled to death, getting dishonorably discharged in a humiliating fashion, or (in extreme cases), being completely stricken from all records. In the latter case, no loyal knights will ever again even acknowledge your existence.²⁰

Relationships

Theoretically, the Crusaders have no allegiances to any governments, and serve only their own council of Cardinals and the Olympiad. In fact, they make deals with various institutions and governments when it suits them.

Members

Most Crusaders are humans, a large number are elves, and a few are dwarves, halflings, and treeples. Troll and sprite Crusaders are rare, although not unheard of these days. Orcs are the least common members, since they are generally assumed to be evil, and they tend to meet with an even larger amount of discrimination from the Crusaders than is usual for them.

Membership Requirements

All new Crusaders must vow to devote their lives to following the 8 traditions. Each member is also expected to be a competent horseback rider, although many of the younger members now ride other animals (especially members too big or too small to fit comfortably on a horse). Those on the knighthood track are expected to wear metal plate mail armor pretty much all the time, and those on the Chaplain track are expected to wear nothing but robes and undergarments.

Knights who follow this tradition rigidly don't even take off their armor to go to bed at night. Since it's almost impossible to get up off the ground in the morning while wearing plate mail, however, these knights are forced to sleep standing up. Such knights sometimes fall prey to pranksters who enjoy the practice of "Knight Tipping."

Recruiting Quote

"For over six millennia, we have been relentless in our

²⁰ Although if you bother them enough, you might be able to get them to attempt to slay you.

struggle with evil. We have fought terrible dragons, defeated demonic armies, and squelched one immoral rebellion after another. Our cause is indeed a righteous one! Surely thou wouldst want to join us? No? Well... how about if I throw in this free gift?"

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 6

On Individuals: Creating Characters with Character

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Having a character that amuses and interests you is crucial to creating a *CoB* game you can really enjoy. We recommend that you devote at least one entire session to coming up with character concepts and interrelationships. In a game like *CoB*, your options are pretty much unlimited; you can play a standard fantasy character, choose from one of the many twists presented, or import any concept you can imagine. Ultimately you'll probably be playing some kind of adventurer, but this doesn't necessarily mean that you think of yourself that way. Very likely you'll just have various goals to accomplish, and adventures will be the things that keep getting in your way.

You don't necessarily need to have an unusual character concept to have fun playing *CoB*. Just hanging around in a ridiculous environment will provide plenty of amusement. Even when the setting isn't that funny, there are always quirky NPCs, strange missions, and mutant piranhas to keep things interesting.

INSPIRAMANCY: CREATING A CONCEPT

The most important part of your character is the idea — the central concept behind him which makes him fun to play. To come up with a character concept, you don't need to mess with experience points or numbers. Just use your imagination. This section is dedicated to helping you generate interesting character concepts.

Defining a Character with Profession

In a lot of fantasy roleplaying games, deciding on your character concept mostly comes down to choosing a particular profession. This in turn determines most of a character's abilities, and often a great deal of his personality.

In *Higher Arc*, your profession doesn't directly define your skills, and it has only as much impact on your personality as you want it to. However, your profession can still be a good place to start when you want to decide on a character concept, since it tends to determine what most of your day-to-day life is actually like, and because it does tend to reflect on your personality.

The Renaissance and the rising middle class have made lots of new occupations feasible, from sales directors to ring-dumpers. The list below should give you a general idea about some of the hobbies and professions which exist in *Paranesia* and stimulate your thinking with a little aimless rambling about each. Some of the points on the list aren't even strictly hobby- or profession-related. This list is not complete, nor are the character ideas provided in their descriptions exhaustive (not even close). However, they can help provide you with a starting point.

Once you find a basic profession or concept that you like, play with it a little. Remember that what profession you belong to, which profession you're good at, and what you actually spend your time doing aren't necessarily the same. For example, nothing in the rules says you can't be a member of the clergy who uses mage-style magic and focuses pri-

marily on developing thievery skills. Also keep in mind that you're free to choose multiple professions, and professions other than those endemic to typical fantasy. Instead of becoming a standard thief, warrior, wizard, or cleric, you can become a mortician or a wafflemaker, or both. You can be skilled or unskilled at your profession, and you can do something in a lot of different ways and for lots of different reasons. You can work for yourself, or for large or small organizations, families, gods, or whatever else. By combining things which don't ordinarily go together, you can often come up with some rather amusing or at least interesting concepts.

Note that the Cobbler might require you to spend extra experience points to acquire some of the things here, like prestige, wealth, leadership, and so on.

- **Addict/Alcoholic:** Your obsession with alcohol, an herb, silly behavior, a lifestyle, or some other pleasure (or displeasure, like hitting yourself on the head) consumes you.

- **Adventurer:** As a professional adventurer, you devote your life to going on quests, working for people in distress, advancing causes you believe in, or striving for glory and wealth.

- **Advisor:** You advise people who need help making decisions. Perhaps they need you because they have too much else to do, or because you're an expert (or pretend to be) in something they know little about. Or perhaps they're none too bright and need someone to make all their most basic decisions. You could advise a ruler, a council, an organization, a wealthy adventurer, or just about anyone if you're willing to get silly enough, on a long or short term basis.

- **Alchemist:** You practice the art of magical chemistry and make the creation of enchanted items your goal.

- **Animal Trainer:** Teaching animals (or monsters, or who knows what) is your trade or your pleasure. You could teach them to speak, fight, dance, eat disgusting foods...

- **Apprentice:** You are currently learning a craft, probably from an older practitioner.

- **Artist:** You might deal in words as a novelist, playwright, or poet — or in music as a composer, instrumentalist, or singer — or in visual mediums as a painter, sculptor, architect, caricaturist, or cartoonist. Or you can invent a new art (with magic, lots of strange new arts are possible). Maybe you wish to create beauty, make profit, make a point, decorate tombs, or shake up societal norms.

- **Assassin:** You kill things for money — or for free if you're particularly psycho. Assassination remains popular despite the many inherent dangers. Are you a freelance assassin? Do you work for a company? How do you finance your murders? Perhaps you have a Graduate Assassinship.

- **Asylum Tender:** You run, or work in, a home for people who are one wave short of a shipwreck. You may try to help them to sanity, prevent them from escaping, torment them... or something else.

- **Athlete:** You're a player at sporting events, like squid-pitch, dwarf tossing, or carnivorous dodgeball. Or perhaps you're a referee, coach, or benchwarmer.

- **Banker:** You invest other people's money for a living.

- **Barbarian:** You live on the outskirts of society, where you wig out in combat with your foes and live for treasure, coitus, and adrenaline.

- **Bard:** Maybe you're a traveling minstrel, a local entertainer, or hired help for parties of adventurers who need periodic morale boosting. Please note that just being a bard does not automatically make you a pansy.

- **Barkeep:** You run a bar — an excellent way to stay drunk, and an ideal way to meet companions for adventure.

- **Beggar:** You beg, harass, or tell stories about how you're down on your luck in exchange for currency. Your stories may or may not be true, you may or may not need the money, and your activities may or may not meet with approval where you live (in some places, begging is considered a legitimate occupation). There are many ways of going about this, ranging from straightforward to extremely creative.

- **Cartographer:** You make maps of uncharted areas, or perhaps of charted areas. Maybe you make a living in the bogus map racket.

- **Celebrity:** You are famous for something you may or may not have done — adventuring, singing,



Dwarven sex symbols Grittni Javilins and Wirenail Pittminer pose for a promotional portrait.

comedy, acting, politics, or something else.

- **Chimney Sweep:** You clean soot from chimneys, presumably singing about it as you do so. What you do with the soot after that is your own business.

- **Cleric:** You're a minister, friar, priest, preacher, pastor, or parson (or perhaps a nun, monk, or deacon). Probably you will never be a pope, but who knows? You may live in a seminary or monastery, with or without a congregation, or you could wander about the countryside, hang out in the woods or in a tower, or join an order.

- **Clerk:** You help file papers, keep records, correspond with people, and so forth. You may prefer to be called a Clerical Support Specialist.

- **Clown:** You are a fool, a buffoon, or a jester. You practice the arts of trickery and humor. Is your humor subtle or blatant, slapstick or sophisticated? Do you mostly tell jokes, perform skits, juggle, or what? Perhaps you're a mime.

- **Collector:** You amass items for your amusement. Just a few possibilities are stamps, coonskin caps, fungus, potion corks (the Paranesian equivalent of bottlecaps), celebrities, and corpses.

- **Commander:** You command something, such as a ship, or a small group of warriors, or mages, or something. Perhaps you're in the army, or you're a member of a professional organization responsible for enforcing something.

- **Commando:** You wear a headband and raid enemy installations, taking out hundreds of combatants for every minor injury you sustain.

- **Con Artist:** You pretend to be someone you aren't in order to cheat people of their possessions.

- **Concubine:** You are the secondary, tertiary, quaternary, (or whatever) spouse of another person, usually someone of high rank.

- **Construction Worker:** You wear a little yellow hat, and, incidentally, put buildings and such together.

- **Cook:** You create consumable substances. Since all mortals eat, you could work for any of them — or even a god, if you can contrive a reason. Is your work an art, an unfortunate necessity, or something in between?

- **Courier:** You deliver things — mail, packages, legal documents, diseases, illegal immigrants, illegal emigrants, frozen people... whatever.

- **Courtesan:** You run or work in a house of interesting repute.

- **Crafter:** You manufacture something — chairs, oil flasks, wagons, toys, pots, wooden models of cows, or who knows what.

- **Criminal:** Whatever the law is, you break it. This could be a moral imperative, a means of gathering possessions or venting frustration,

or just a way to have fun.

- **Dead Person:** You have died, and now you're back — restored to life, or given unlife. Perhaps you're still dead (or largely so). Or maybe only part of you is dead.

- **Deserter:** You have deserted or betrayed something — a military, a kingdom, a family, a community, a troupe of monkeys... you decide.

- **Detailer:** You decorate wagons, armor, weapons, homes, steeds, or golems with various designs in the form of decals, etchings, paintings, and so forth.

- **Doctor:** You cure the sick and wounded for fun and profit, using magic, herbs, “mundane” methods, or some combination. Are you a conventional healer, or do you practice “alternative” medicine?

- **Doomsayer:** You've chosen to pursue a career in calamity prediction. Do you get paid, or do you do it for the look on people's faces when you tell them the end of the world is nigh? Some doomsayers hire themselves to adventurers as members of the party, while others take up permanent positions at the entrances to dangerous areas and put out a hat with a few coins in it.

- **Druid:** You're a mystic with a thing for nature and probably some spells to back it up.

- **Evangelist:** You've made it your mission to convert the world to your way of thinking about things. Probably your perspective is religious, but not necessarily. You may be a Road Evangelist — that is, one who stands along the road pretending to hitchhike, who then attempts to convert the person who stops to help.

- **Exterminator:** Pest control is your game. Pests range in size from tiny to tremendous, and if you work for someone else you may not have a choice about whether you have to get rid of that tyrannosaurus infestation.

- **Farmer:** As an agricultural engineer, you plow the crops and harvest the fields — or perhaps you do it the other way around. Either way, you'd best keep your scythe close at hand.

- **Gambler:** You bet on races, play card games, and throw dice around until you've lost (or perhaps gained) sufficient funds.

- **Gang Member:** You work with a band of hoodlums for mutual protection and/or (illegal) profit.

- **Gardener:** The spade is your weapon; the garden, your battlefield.

- **Gladiator:** You fight lions, slaves, and members of unpopular religious orders in arenas (or other entertainment centers such as bars) for the entertainment of the masses. You could be a slave yourself, or a free agent.

- **Guard:** You guard someone or something — an important person, crown jewels, chunks of limestone, whatever — out of obligation, a sense of duty, fear, or desire to be paid.

- **Herbalist:** When it comes to herbs, you're an expert (or you think you are) — you know where herbs are found, what they do, and how to use them correctly.

- **Herder:** You keep particular sets of animals together — usually those of a similar kind, but not necessarily. If conventional herding grows tiresome, perhaps you can try a different sort — you could, for instance, herd mice in order to feed your herd of snakes, from which you harvest venom.

- **Hermit:** Living by yourself is what you do best. Most hermits are crotchety or at least a little crusty — how about you?

- **Hunter:** You seek out, and presumably destroy, a given category of things. Animals of a given type or species, members of a race or organization, gods, vampires, and specific individuals are some options. Or perhaps you set traps and wait for these things to come to you.

- **Inventor:** You invent and build new mechanical devices. You could be the oblivious “mad scientist” type, or you could be more market-savvy.

- **Investment Analyst:** You're hired by potential investors to investigate companies to determine if they're worth investing in.

- **Liar:** You lie. About *everything*. *All* the time. Or do you think you're a liar, but really you're not? Or perhaps your identity as a liar is really just your facade to prevent people from finding out who you really are.

- **Librarian:** You lead a quiet existence, sorting books, lending them out, and — when you're feeling particularly cliché — shushing people.

- **Lunatic:** You're nuts. You may adopt a particular style of insanity, or just go all-out whacko. However, you don't necessarily realize how weird you are.

- **Magician:** You perform magic tricks (not real magic), perhaps on stage or maybe for some other reason. You could be a magic school dropout pretending to do real magic, an entertainer, or a con artist of some kind.

- **Martial Artist:** You practice a particular art of combat. Many martial artists are members of some kind of sect and adhere to a related philosophy (like the ninja or the samurai), although you may just enjoy booting heads.

- **Mercenary:** Your fighting abilities are for hire. Do you cost extra without scruples?

- **Merchandising Analyst:** You're not exactly sure what you do. Presumably it has something to do with analyzing merchandise or coordinating production or something.

- **Merchant:** You sell products produced by someone else. You could set up shop in a store, or you could be a peddler with a cart (alternatively, you could keep all your items in a trench coat). You could sell items related to a particular theme, or just anything — furs, weapons, armor, goods, food... you know. Stuff.

- **Miner:** You extract ore from the ground. Popular choices include iron, limestone, salt, granola, and others. This is an especially popular profession for dwarves.

- **Mobster:** You're involved in organized (or disorganized) crime as a member of a syndicate.

- **Mortician:** You deal in death, embalming corpses and arranging for the disposal of bodies. Related professions include corpse carters (people who haul dead people away from populated areas) and gravediggers.

- **Nature Lover:** The world of plants, animals, and dirt interests you far more than that of civilization.

- **Noble:** You're a person of prominence and status (like a duke, lord, baron, etc.) in a monarchy or other governmental structure where people are given privilege by birth, or some other accident.

- **Peace Officer:** You're responsible for enforcing the law as

a constable or sheriff in some community.

- **Peasant:** You're a poor tenant who works on someone else's land. Normally, such a profession offers little opportunity for advancement, adventure, and so forth, but then, you could be an exception...

- **Performer:** There are many types of performance-oriented professions. Acting, playing an instrument, and dancing are some examples. The circus alone offers sword swallowing, acrobatics, clowning, lion taming, and juggling. Most artists can be performers if desired, sometimes with strange results.

- **Politician:** You are actively involved in the politics and government of a country or other legal body.

- **Primitive:** You live in a culture of people with little technology and a relatively simple way of life. Such cultures are relatively homogenous and frequently only slightly affected by the Renaissance (although it often takes only a small change to throw their world into chaos).

- **Prophet:** You are, or claim to be, divinely inspired and/or possessed of profound moral insight.

- **Prospector:** You explore geographies in search of valuable natural resources like gold, oil, and spam.

- **Psychopath:** Your difficulties with social interaction, characterized as they are by some combination of perversion and aggressiveness, are extreme enough to dominate your life. There are many ways to be a psychopath, but most of them are better left unsaid.

- **Quacksalver:** You are a fraud or a charlatan of some kind, and thus you make money with deception. You may sell something bogus or flawed, or claim to provide a service you actually don't.

- **Raider:** You hijack vehicles or raid buildings, companies, governments, zoos, or similar; presumably you do this in order to steal valuables and have your way with the populace.

- **Ranger:** There are a few kinds of ranger in a fantasy world. One is a warden who protects a nature preserve; another is an expert in tracking, herbalism, and wilderness survival skills. A third type of ranger is actually a king in disguise. Sometimes this can get confusing.

- **Refugee:** You are on the run and in search of refuge from someone or something — a government or political figure, a war, a person of great influence, a god, a religious organization, or some such.

- **Ringdumper:** You dispose of things for a living. Unlike a trash collector or a corpse collector, however, you don't just haul the materials to a trash pile somewhere and dump them — you specialize in items that are hard to get rid of, particularly cursed items. You drop these items into volcanoes and bottomless pits, or find other ways to destroy or permanently lose them.

- **Roleplayer:** You're a roleplayer. Probably you are socially incompetent, incapable of distinguishing fantasy from gameality, and almost certainly prone to demon worship. Most likely you are broke, as you have had to spend all your money on game supplements and gaudy dice.

- **Ruffian:** You're a bully who harasses others for kicks or spare change.

- **Ruler:** You have jurisdiction over some community. Kings, queens, quings, chieftains, and emperors are some examples.

- **Sailor:** You sail the seas, for treasure, exploration, or something else. Are you a member of a military force or public service vessel (like the Scurvy Patrol)? Are you a pirate? A swashbuckler? Do you colonize already-inhabited locations?

- **Scribe:** You write — to keep records, create art, or both — for some culture.

- **Servant:** You are employed to perform domestic services as a butler or maid.

- **Slave:** You're owned by another person, or you were until recently.

- **Slaver:** You own slaves which you sell, rent out, or use for your own, presumably nefarious, purposes.

- **Smith:** You forge metals into weapons, armor, equipment, currency, or cute little collectible figurines.

- **Smuggler:** You're basically a courier specializing in avoiding government entanglements due to the "specialized" nature of your cargo. You may owe a substantial debt to a giant, sentient slug.

- **Soldier:** You're a fighter (or something else — a cook, a strategist, a tailor) in a military organization, by choice or as a result of the draft.

- **Spy:** You investigate the enemy by hiding within their own ranks.

- **Tax Collector:** Your job gathering taxes for a government is probably quite an adventure, especially collecting from adventurers, who — despite their tendency to be wealthy — are usually extremely reluctant to give up a percentage.

- **Terrorist:** You'll stop at nothing to accomplish your political goals. Most likely you see yourself as a freedom fighter, but maybe you regard yourself as a great big meanie.

- **Theurge:** You're a person who works against the interests of a god, a set of gods, or all the gods. Technically the term "theurge" refers to mages, but it's acquired a more generic usage since the Renaissance.

- **Thief:** You come from a long tradition of amorality and lack of regard for the traditions governing ownership. Pickpockets, burglars, cheaters, highwaypeople (upper-class thieves) all fall into this class.

- **Thrill-Seeker:** You'll do just about anything for fun — mud wrestle a baalrogue, throw yourself off Mount Evil with a string tied to your little toe, or quaff a vial of bubbly beverage without pausing for breath.

- **Town Crier:** It's your job to warn the townspeople when something goes wrong. Some town criers have much bigger areas of jurisdiction than others (depending on the quantity of state funding), and thus have much harder jobs. Criers are also occasionally hired by other groups, like adventuring parties or individual businesses.

- **Traveler:** You want to see the world. You could be a hitchhiker, a balloonist, a teleporter, a hiker, a stowaway, or something else. Colorful shirts are optional.

- **Village Idiot:** You provide a valuable service to your community by being, or at least acting, quite stupid relative to everyone else. Maybe you're a sham village idiot who's just biding his time until he's ready to seize control of the village.

- **Watchmaker:** You design and create machinery, such as watches or clockworks.

- **Witch Doctor:** You're either a spellcaster in a small, secluded culture or a health care provider for witches, or per-

haps both.

- **Witch/Warlock:** You're a person who practices magular magic, usually focusing on spiritual, mental and life spells (the arts of Aether and parts of Matter).

- **Wizard:** For good or evil, you're a necromancer, sorcerer, enchanter, or other sort of mage.

- **Yard Gnome:** Whether you're actually a gnome or not, you spend your time standing perfectly still in people's yards for money.

- **Zoo Keeper:** Whether you actually own the zoo or just work in it, surely there are opportunities for hijinks aplenty... especially if you're the one going to foreign lands to gather exotic animals. Just remember, the zoo doesn't pay anything if you bring them back dead.¹

If you can't find a profession or hobby you like here, think about other professions — those that exist in the modern world, in other cultures, in works of fiction, or in the past. Or just ignore profession — define your character concept some other way. In any case, don't worry if the concept you've come up with isn't yet very funny; suggestions for twisting your concept around await on page 99, and ways to define your character without profession lie ahead.

Why No Levels or Character Classes?

Traditional fantasy roleplaying games usually make players choose a *class* — an unalterable profession-template which defines most of their character's initial abilities and permanently establishes a set of guidelines for her development. Traditional FRPGs also tend to use levels, which are checkpoints characters reach when they attain specified quantities of experience points. Higher Arc makes use of neither character classes nor levels, but if you're used to playing a system that does, you may be wondering what advantages systems without these rules have. In fact, there are many.

- No rule modifications or complicated extra rules are required to create characters who break the mold. Any combination of professions and personalities are possible.

- You're not forced to have certain abilities just because you've decided to take others. You can mix skills, spells, and so on to any specification without creating new rules or disrupting game balance.

- Assuming you can point to some experience that taught you the ability, you can increase a skill almost any time you like.

- You have much more control over who your character is, and by extension, you have all the more control over the story you're telling.

- Your skills go up gradually over time, rather than in large jumps at rare intervals.

- Your character's profession becomes just one of many elements governing her personality. As in real life, it's malleable, and it can change as often as your character and your concept of her changes.

Defining a Character with Race

One of the most important choices you'll make in character creation is that of your race. The eight primary *CoB* player-character races are as follows.

- **Dwarves:** Gruff, bearded mechanics with long memories, a constant urge to mine, and a way of waving an axe which makes most other races nervous.

- **Elves:** A tall race of lighthearted lovers and merrymakers, elves are sometimes paradoxically aloof.

- **Halflings:** Short, fuzzy-footed creatures with a tendency to indulge, halflings are excellent scouts and trackers, though they are sometime dismissed as thieves.

- **Humans:** A populous and highly adaptable species with a great deal of diversity, humans are a good choice for the starting player who probably is one.

- **Orcs:** A greenish race of violent (yet potentially whimsical) people who are, to put it nicely, very much "in touch" with their negative emotions.

- **Sprites:** Small, mischievous winged beings with a tendency to take things lightly and play practical jokes.

- **Treple:** This race of treeish beings is normally stoic and rational, but fearsome when roused.

- **Trolls:** Giant beings with great strength and will coupled with the intelligence of children.

For much more information on the races, see Chapter 4.

You must choose a race in order to make a character in *CoB*. More player character race options (including rules for mixed races and monsters as player characters), and information on creating your own races will be available in the in the future. In the meantime, a lot of funny concepts are possible with these options.

More Ways to Define a Character

Everyone's got an identity, but different people construct their identities in different ways. Some of the most popular options for self-definition are described below; feel free to mangle them until they amuse you.

Even if your character doesn't use any of the following as a defining characteristic, it's useful to know how they effect your character. All stories require that some facts are the case about the characters involved (things such as a character's attitudes, culture, and religion), and your roleplaying adventures are going to be a lot more interesting and consistent if you know what some of those are before you start. Others, of course, can be defined as you go; there's no reason to obsess over getting every detail established from the beginning.

Fleshing out some of a character's background before the game can also be a way of generating stories — the more you know about the characters, the more events can be tailored to meet their personal concepts, and the more details (people, places, and things) can become part of the story. And in a game like *CoB*, a complex background can be an excellent source of humor.

- **Age:** Age is a pretty straightforward part of identity, and while it's not particularly important in many cases, it can have a significant effect on a character's maturity and wisdom. Like many parts of a character, it's usually most interesting when taken to extremes, or in contrast to characters

¹ Unless you reanimate their corpses...perhaps you work for "The Zoo of the Undead."

with radically different ages. One way to make age interesting is to ignore the stereotypes; make old people who can hop around sprightly or young children capable of dispensing great insight. Varying a character's age is usually funniest in combination with some other twist on the typical player character. An arthritic sprite, an adolescent evil wizard, or a prepubescent dwarf (for example) all have some potential. Putting children and seniors into professions traditionally dominated by young adults (like adventuring) also has possibilities.

- **Alignment:** One belief-related issue of some importance in a fantasy world is what is often euphemistically termed *alignment* — in other words, are you good, evil, or somewhere in between? Further, do you tend to serve the forces of law and tradition, or the forces of chaos and flexibility? And what exactly do these things mean to you? The definitions of evil and good are not always clear, so your personal definition might be important. Another question regarding alignment is that of how active you are in promoting it. Are you obsessed, or is being evil just a minor detail to you? Of course, most people never make a conscious decision to serve the forces of evil or good, and simply serve their own interests (although most likely they think of themselves as good).

- **Attitude:** A character's fundamental attitude about life will have a huge impact on your experience playing her. Some characters tend toward personalities dominated by a single emotion (be that happiness, anger, depression, confusion, or whatever) most of the time. That's fine, although it's usually more interesting if there are established reasons for such permanent humors and the exceptions to them. Most people are generally possessed of a particular temperament, and react in various ways to different situations.

Some examples of mostly negative personality characteristics include: Abusive, Arrogant, Careless, Cheap, Cowardly, Controlling, Dependent, Depressed, Disloyal, Dogmatic, Envious, Extravagant, Fanatical, Filthy, Fickle, Forgetful, Gossipy, Greedy, Guilty, Gullible, Indifferent, Impulsive, Incompetent (in a specific area or in general), Jealous, Masochistic, Manipulative, Miserly, Murderous, Naive, Paranoid, Phobic, Psychopathic, Psychotic, Reclusive, Repressed, Rude, Sadistic, Self-Sabotaging, Selfish, Selfless, Snobbish, Stoic, Stupid, Superstitious, Suspicious, Timid, Violent, Vengeful, Vulnerable, and Wimpy.

A few more positive characteristics are: Artistic, Attentive, Balanced, Brave, Charismatic, Cheerful, Clever, Competent, Dedicated, Detailed, Educated, Egalitarian, Enthusiastic, Expressive, Fair, Flexible, Forgiving, Friendly, Fun, Generous, Helpful, Honest, Humorous, Idealistic, Innocent, Intelligent, Knowledgeable, Loyal, Memorable, Nonjudgmental, Open, Optimistic, Patient, Perceptive, Persistent, Polite, Practical, Prudent, Rational, Realistic, Reliable, Sage, Sexy, Silly, Soothing, Sophisticated, Stable, Thoughtful, Well-Connected, and Witty.

- **Beliefs:** Everybody believes something, but some people place quite a bit of emphasis on their personal beliefs. Beliefs about intellectual issues are generally most pertinent to thoughtful characters — visionaries, scholars, philosophers, obsessed lunatics, and similar. Such characters can have a big impact on a campaign — people who believe that the world

is about to end, that they have a personal mission to exterminate the forces of good, or that all monkeys should be catapulted off the edge of the world usually keep things interesting. On the other hand, simpler and more personal beliefs like, “smoking pipeweed is good for you,” “Norfacordian Sunshine Apes have no livers,” or “I age twice as fast as other humans,” can add detail and depth to a character in a less blatant but equally silly manner. Never underestimate the potential of false, strangely emphasized, or ironically true beliefs to spice up a campaign. What about a character who believes her own race stereotypes — an elf who thinks she's immortal or a troll who thinks he turns to stone in sunlight? Or sometimes it's what you don't believe that defines you — as with a character who doubts the existence of magic or gods.

Other important questions regarding belief include: What do you think about the sillification of gameality? Do you have any unusual theories about the way that life works? Are you essentially sane, or are you more or less totally nutty? If you're a troll, it's always good to ask yourself just how stupid your character is. And even people of above-average intelligence have blind spots.

- **Ethnicity:** Both biology and culture help shape identity. Your race, the area you're from, and the sort of culture you grew up in have all most likely influenced your personality. One big question is whether you grew up in a traditional village, as a part of the melting-pot world culture, or somewhere in between. You may have some unusual beliefs and attitudes, or certain experiences unique to your home region, especially if you grew up in a secluded area. If you're a sprite who grew up in an area where human teeth are used as currency, you may go into the dentistry field for all the wrong reasons.

Other questions to ask yourself about your background: How experienced are you? Do you know about races and cultures other than your own? Have you had any run-ins with private organizations or governments? Did you grow up under the same circumstances as most beings of your race? Did you have any siblings? Were your parents around much? Were you raised by your parents, by members of another race, or by something else entirely (like skunks)? Even if your ethnicity isn't especially relevant to your character concept, it can be useful in justifying your personality and explaining why you act how you do.

- **Emotional Problems:** Most people who define themselves around their emotional problems end up doing so by accident, but they do it nevertheless. Is your character afflicted with any psychological problems, like phobias, forms of insanity, prejudices, or low self-esteem? Overcoming a personal problem (addiction, stuttering, unassertiveness, stupidity, or inherent evilness, for example) can become the focus of a campaign.

- **Gender:** Although people define themselves around their sex and their sexual identity quite a bit in real life, this is something of an oddity on Terrek. Still, these sorts of things *do* impact the game, so it's a good idea to decide on your character's gender. Such decisions are all the more important if you decide to play an uncommon individual, such as, say, a transvestite or a eunuch.

• **Motivation:** What makes you get up in the morning? Is it the lust for power? Is it wealth? Are you attempting to get rich enough to become a philanthropist, at any cost? Are you motivated by the desire to become a god, or take over the world? Do you need to get revenge on someone by destroying them or something they require? Are you trying your best to help a particular philosophy prevail? To advance the goals of some organization? To overcome a personal problem?

Some possible goals for your character include: Acquire Information; Acquire Status, Power, or Influence; Be Holy or Good; Be Unholy or Evil; Become Immortal; Become Wealthy; Blend into a Society; Build or Invent Something; Capture Someone; Convey a Message; Convey a Person Safely; Convince Someone of Something; Destroy or Help an Enemy or Rival; Educate Oneself about Something; Escape Someplace; Explore the Unknown; Expose a Fraud or Conspiracy; Find a Cure; Find Answers; Find a Magic Item; Find a Teacher or Mentor; Find Friendship or Love; Find Romance; Get Food; Get Popular Admiration; Get Revenge; Get Rid of a Curse or Nasty Item; Get to a Certain Place; Have Fun; Help Someone In Need; Meet a Person;



In the lucrative and oft shady world of off-market indulgence trading, a sleazy merchant hawks his blasphemous wares.

Overthrow a Ruler; Protect a Secret; Protect Someone; Repay a Debt; Put Things on Top of Other Things; Rescue Someone or Something; Start a Movement; Start a Rumor; Survive a Witchhunt; Win a Contest; Win a Fight, Battle, or War; or Witness an Event.

• **Name:** Choosing your character's name can be defining. Names can be ironic or descriptive — is someone named Burly a sprite or a troll? Puns, parodies of typical race names, literary references, and slightly altered words that describe a character's personality all make good monikers. Adding titles, like "Regent," "the Magnificent," "the Flatulent," or "Who Asks Questions" can also go a long way, as can nicknames. Most races have their own ways of naming — dwarves, for instance, characteristically use a lot of umlauts, and throw in lots of references to smithing and mining. Incongruousness can be a source of humor as well. A party consisting of individuals named Sir Nobius, Groovy Spindlestick, and Ted shows clear signs of promise.

• **Organization:** Joining many of the organizations on Terrek is a pretty time-intensive activity, and so for those who have joined, organizations are usually a major part of their character concept. See Chapter 5 for organizational ideas, or play a character who wants to start her own organization (or who already has).

• **Relationships:** It's important to pay some attention to how your character will interact with the others. Making the various player characters relatives or friends, forcing them into a similar situation, or giving them complementary abilities and common goals is a good step toward staving off contrivance, but character relationships can also be a source of identity-defining humor potential. For instance, take a brains-and-brawn partnership where both people want to be the brains, or an adventure where the thief is posing as a wizard, the wizard is posing as a fighter, and the fighter is posing as a thief. Then again, maybe your characters don't need a reason to stay together. Of course, if all else fails, you can play a group of apparently sane characters who hang out with each other for no apparent reason, and who act terribly surprised when people ask them why they're together.

• **Religion:** Religion is extremely important to a lot of people — after all, if you worship the wrong god, you might end up rolling a rock up and down a hill for all eternity. If you're an avatar, you'll definitely need to decide on a deity, but even non-magical characters usually worship a god at least casually — it's the only semi-reliable way to get into an afterlife when you die.

Your own perspective on people who worship gods, or who worship gods other than your own, can be another defining characteristic. There are a lot of different degrees of religious tolerance, ranging from indifferent to evangelical to homicidal. Worshipping a god can result in a lot of amusing plot elements, too, if you pick an interesting god. You might, for instance, worship

Pense, the God of Anticipation — an especially problematic proposition for an impatient person.

- **Proficiencies:** Another way to define your character is to start by developing your proficiencies. Just start developing them (using the rules on page 100) to decide what sorts of things you want to be good at. Then go back and fill in your personality after the fact.

Tips for Generating Hilarious Character Concepts

Still short on ideas for a character concept? Here are some suggestions for digging one up, or taking a relatively normal character and making her silly.

- **Rip off Myths, Fairy Tales, and Other Stories:** Steal character ideas unashamedly from any and all sources without regard for their genre or setting. Rip off horror and fantasy movies, literary works, cartoons, nursery rhymes, old roleplaying manuals, and history books. Base your character on Little Miss Muffet or Rasputin, or a cross between the two. Develop an obsession with finding six of these little blue creatures so that you can turn them into a precious metal. If only you could find their mushroom village...

- **Look at Situations from the Perspective of the Antagonists:** Don't stay cooped up inside your own perspective. The witch from Hansel and Gretel had feelings, too, and what if she had some legitimate reason for wanting to cook those kids? Become the twisted necromancer, the homicidal maniac, the unwelcome solicitor.

- **Start with a Strange Name:** Never underestimate the power of a weird name to stimulate the imagination. Just who is El Verde Bastardo? Uselisses the Wanderer? Gregory Ian Chant? Chard Ecuttel? Elictra Phrudian? Xetoramastigmatic the Quite Literally Insane? Ignis Fatuus?

- **Flip through the Dictionary or the Encyclopedia:** Find unrelated words in the dictionary and put them together to create concepts upon which to base your character. Maybe you were court-martialed for discovering kinetic energy. Perhaps you have no memory of doing anything prior to the day you woke up in a barrel full of toadstool ashes. Perhaps you're hard at work writing your masterpiece, "Requiem for a Reptile." Use the encyclopedia for the same function, or to learn about obscure facts, which you can then make central to your character.

- **Reverse Stereotypes:** Take all the fantasy clichés and stereotypes and turn them around. Instead of an evil wizard — maybe you're an evil warrior, with all the same melodramatic trappings. Play a sprite who who is quite baffled by what she calls "human rings" (actually firepits), and is investigating their true nature. If trolls are stupid, be a smart one. Or, since one traditional type of spellcaster is frail and mysterious, what happens if your mage is well-fed, cheerful, and straightforward about her magical abilities? Make troll druids, halfling barbarians, and orcish bards.

- **Exaggerate Stereotypes:** Now take all the fantasy clichés and stereotypes and exaggerate them. The frail, mysterious mage mentioned above could be utterly determined to be mysterious about everything in her life. Now you've got a character who dresses in black, makes cryptic statements in response to everything that happens, and refuses to disclose

any of her motivations. Ever. Or make the most intensely reclusive halfling ever.

- **Abuse the System:** Abuse the system like a typical munchkin roleplayer — exploit any loopholes you can find in the rules. For instance, you could play a mage who starts the game without limbs in order to collect a whole bunch of experience points (for taking such a huge Drawback). Then use the points to buy a few telekinesis spells so that you can manipulate objects, and drive around in a magically powered wheelbarrow. Purchase tons of animals which cost practically nothing (like goats and chickens) and fill dungeons up with them to sate the monsters before you get there, or poison them and herd them into the dragon's lair. The same jokes should probably not be allowed more than once, and the Cobbler should be the final arbiter on whether a given example of this is allowed, but, if it's funny, why not?

- **Mix Value Judgments:** Sometime great concepts can be created by taking a concept usually associated with one set of value judgments and twisting it around. Thus a toymaker becomes a wicked creator of deathtraps for children, and a necromancer sends the undead on missions to spread joy and good cheer.

- **Defy the Rules:** Go through roleplaying manuals (this one or any others you might possess) until you find something you aren't supposed to do, and then do it. If another roleplaying game system says mages can't wear armor, why not make a mage that won't go anywhere without wearing full plate mail?

- **Create Problems for Yourself:** Sure, eventually you'll be up to your earlobes in evil wizards and dragons, but that doesn't mean you can't make your own life harder in the meantime. Perhaps you're a dwarf who is typically proud of his beard, but also phobic of it. Maybe you have a problem with substance abuse — herbs, alcohol, gravy, or something. Perhaps you're an avatar who's also schizophrenic, and you can't tell the voices in your head from the voice of your god. Or maybe you're a hemophiliac who can't get to sleep unless you're lying on a bed of nails. Options for self-torture are virtually limitless, and usually you can get yourself some additional experience points for them, too.

- **Combine Unlikely Concepts:** Some great tastes just weren't meant to go together, which is all the more reason for you to combine them. What if a black-masked cape-wearing swashbuckler with a fondness for carving his initials in everything he sees were also... a leper? What do you get when you make a beggar into a psychic? Or apply the stereotypes of one race to another, resulting in, say, an elf who smokes pipeweed and sings happy songs about the joys of isolation.

- **Come Up with Pet Theories and Strange Beliefs:** Develop some serious idiosyncrasies. Be a weaponsmith who thinks the world would be a better place if weapons were safe, and hence enchants them so that no one gets hurt. Or aim for hopelessly difficult things — devote your life to trying to change Terrek's slipstream path in the hope of eliminating winter, because you really hate the cold.

- **Use Anachronisms:** Take things that exist in the modern world and translate them into fantasy terms. A character could want to enforce weapon control (via waiting periods and picture identification) terracewide, or create a mass tran-

sit system for commuters. Take systems that could never have existed in a real-life medieval or Renaissance setting, like child labor protection laws or assembly lines, and put them in.

• **Add a Dose of Realism:** Look at a normal part of a fantasy world with a more realistic perspective. Have your character *notice* when someone who's loaded down with immense quantities of adventuring equipment walks by. Be the sort of person who actually gets scared in really dangerous situations, who yelps in pain when stabbed or grazed, or who actually has a conscience and worries about the potentially negative consequences of her actions.

• **Revel in Traditional Fantasy Concepts:** Revel in traditional fantasy concepts — especially the ones that make no sense when translated into real life. Make a character who talks endlessly about his “alignment” and asks other people about theirs without qualms, or somebody who is obsessed with figuring out how many experience points she has.

• **Develop Character Quirks & Trademarks:** Develop eccentricities, like a tendency to hiccup when lying, or a trademark attack which involves slashing off your opponent's kneecaps and keeping them. Use non-weaponly objects, like ladders and cloaks, as weapons. Always dress in fluorescent green. Refuse to answer to your real name. Or yell bizarre statements at random intervals designed to intimidate your foes.

• **If All Else Fails:** If all else fails, just be normal. In a crazy world like this one, even being ordinary can result in some ridiculous situations...

Once you've determined your character's concept and received the Cobbler's approval, sum it up in a short phrase in the Concept blank (see page 107 for a sample character sheet). You can note more specific details about your concept on the “Background, Personality, and Eccentricities” portion of your character sheet, and you can describe your physical appearance and typical costuming under “Appearance & Attire.”

GENETIMANCY: BUILDING YOUR ABILITIES

In real life, creating living entities is a rather messy business. Individual abilities and personality traits are determined by an insanely complicated interaction between the environment and a whole bunch of coded organic spirals rolling around in every person's cells. Even setting aside the experiential aspects of this process, you still have to deal with a whole boatload of messy chromosomes, amino acids, proteins, lipids, nucleotides, enzymes, and the like.

In *Higher Arc*, fortunately, the process is much simpler. Once you've determined your character concept, all that's left is to assign *experience points* (points earned for having experiences) to your choice of the various proficiencies and spells, and choose from other miscellaneous Benefits and Drawbacks.

Experience Points

Experience points can be used to purchase or increase the

following things:

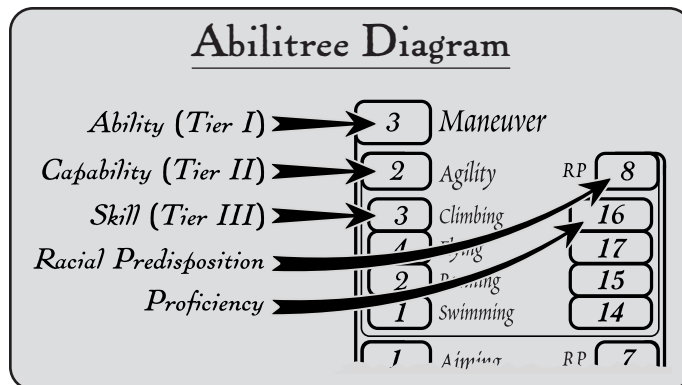
- Proficiencies (page 15 and Chapter 7)
- Renaissance Points (pages 19 and 105)
- Spells (page 39 and Chapter 9)
- Benefits (page 133)

A starting character gets 200 experience points (representing her genetic potential and her experiences before the start of the game) which can be spent any way her player wishes. This number can, of course, be modified for players looking for higher- or lower-powered campaigns. Characters can also gain additional experience points by accepting Drawbacks (page 133).

Proficiency Ratings

Now it's time to determine your character's proficiencies. To avoid tedious meddling with deoxyribonucleic acid, *Higher Arc* boils down all of a character's innate and learned capacities into exactly 32 *proficiency ratings*. Any action your character might want to take is governed by one of these ratings. For instance, if you want to run really fast over a floor covered in grease-coated ball bearings, you would use your proficiency rating in Agility. Or to design a dungeon, you would use your proficiency rating in Inventiveness. (For more on using your proficiencies, see Chapters 2 and 3, and see the proficiency descriptions in Chapter 7).

Proficiency ratings are not plucked arbitrarily from obscene portions of the Cobbler's anatomy, nor are they



determined by tumbling polyhedra. Instead, a character's proficiency rating is the sum of three numbers (four when using the optional rules for Skills). These three numbers are a character's *Abilities*, *Capabilities*, and *Racial Predispositions*. Abilities are sometimes called Tier Is; Capabilities are sometimes called Tier IIs. Skills, for those who use them, are Tier IIIs.

Ability and Capability numbers are measures of a person's individual genetic makeup and experiences. Both are subject to the control of the player, within certain defined parameters, at character creation. Each occupies a place on a hierarchy of proficiencies called the *Abilitree* (see the Abilitree diagram).

Positioned at the top of the hierarchy are the most general of these numbers, the Abilities. There are 8 total Abilities, including:

- Prowess, or your strength and melee skill;
- Maneuver, or your nimbleness and skill with missiles;

- Resolve, or your will and resistance;
- Intuition, or your astuteness and ability to process impressions;
- Eloquence, or your ability to express yourself;
- Intellect, or your rationality and intelligence;
- Vision, or your proficiency in manipulating supernatural forces with an exterior power source;
- Presence, or your proficiency in manipulating supernatural forces with an internal power source.

A character's Ability number affects all 4 proficiency ratings under its jurisdiction on the hierarchy. (For example, the Maneuver ability relates to the proficiency ratings near Agility, Aiming, Dexterity, and Wits.) Under every Ability category lie 4 Capabilities. There are a total of 32 different capabilities underneath the 8 abilities (too many to list here conveniently), but in the above example consisting of all Maneuver proficiencies, the Capabilities include:

- Agility, or your ability move rapidly through different environments;
- Aiming, or your skill in firing or throwing various kinds of missiles;
- Dexterity, or your ability to control the precise movements of your body;
- Wits, or your ability to react quickly and make small, deft movements.

The rating in a Capability affects the proficiency near it. To calculate your character's rating in a given proficiency, related Abilities and Capabilities are added together (see below). However, race also plays a role.

Racial Predispositions

Racial Predispositions are fixed numbers based on a character's race (see the Racial Predispositions chart). They cannot be changed unless the character's race changes (well, probably not, anyway). Racial Predispositions are always positioned at the same level on the hierarchy as Capabilities (at Tier II). In other words, a character has a Racial Predisposition (as well as a Capability) in Agility.

Humans start with a six in every racial predisposition, while the other races vary.² Thus, every member of a given race has a rating in each proficiency at least as high as their relevant racial predisposition.

Calculating a Proficiency

A character's rating in a given proficiency is determined by the sum of that proficiency's relevant Ability, Capability, Skill (if Skills are used) and Racial Predisposition ratings. Note that characters *never* actually roll their Abilities, Capabilities, Skills, or Racial Predispositions. These numbers are used exclusively to calculate their proficiencies. (The rules for actually using a proficiency are given in Chapters 2 and 3).

Normally, proficiencies are determined and rolled on the Capability level of the Abilitree. They can also be rolled on the Skill level of the Abilitree. To determine a proficiency in a given Capability, total the Ability, Capability, and Racial Predisposition ratings relevant to that proficiency. Then write this number in the total proficiency category on the standard character sheet (page 107). Alternatively, to determine a proficiency in a given *Skill*, total the Ability,

Racial Predispositions Chart

	Sprite	Dwarf	Human	Troll				
	Halfling	Orc	Elf	Dryad				
<i>Prowess</i>								
Grappling	4	4	6	8	6	5	9	7
Strength	4	5	7	6	6	6	9	8
Swinging	4	6	7	6	6	5	9	7
Thrusting	6	4	5	6	6	6	5	8
<i>Maneuver</i>								
Agility	8	8	5	6	6	7	6	6
Aiming	7	7	5	6	6	8	6	5
Dexterity	9	7	5	7	6	7	5	5
Wits	7	7	5	7	6	7	5	5
<i>Resolve</i>								
Concentration	5	6	7	6	6	5	8	8
Endurance	5	7	8	8	6	5	9	7
Evocation	5	6	6	6	6	5	6	5
Resilience	5	7	8	7	6	6	7	6
<i>Intuition</i>								
Awareness	5	7	6	6	6	6	7	6
Instinct	5	6	6	8	6	6	8	7
Savvy	7	6	6	4	6	6	4	5
Wisdom	4	6	4	4	6	6	4	7
<i>Eloquence</i>								
Creativity	9	5	5	4	6	7	5	5
Elocution	5	7	5	5	6	7	4	6
Emoting	7	6	5	5	6	7	5	4
Subterfuge	7	7	5	5	6	6	4	5
<i>Intellect</i>								
Crafting	5	6	8	7	6	5	5	5
Inventiveness	5	4	9	6	6	5	4	4
Erudition	5	8	8	5	6	5	5	7
Reasoning	5	7	4	5	6	6	4	7
<i>Vision</i>								
Aether	5	5	5	6	6	5	5	6
Cosmos	5	5	5	6	6	5	5	6
Force	5	5	6	7	6	5	7	6
Matter	5	5	5	7	6	7	7	5
<i>Presence</i>								
Aether	8	5	5	5	6	7	4	5
Cosmos	7	5	5	5	6	7	4	5
Force	7	5	7	5	6	5	5	6
Matter	7	5	5	5	6	5	5	5

Capability, Skill, and Racial Predisposition ratings relevant to that proficiency. Then write this number in the total proficiency category on the extended character sheet (the Mortal Abilitree Worksheet, page 258).

² Note that none of the eight races has the advantage when it comes to the Racial Tier. In other words, starting from zero, it would cost the same number of experience points to develop the Racial Tiers for each race to their current totals.

In order to reflect the fact that proficiencies can be rolled at the Capability level or the Skill level (and to help players locate the proper proficiencies), proficiencies in this manual are often expressed with the relevant Ability, followed by a slash and the relevant Capability, followed by a slash and the relevant Skill. For example: Maneuver / Agility / Flying. Players using the normal Abilitree can interpret this as rolling Agility; those using the extended Abilitree can interpret this as rolling Flying.

Optional Rule: Skills

In case two levels doesn't seem like enough of a hierarchy, *Skills* are an entirely optional additional level you can add. They allow characters to develop in a more detailed fashion — instead of stopping her development at the ability to move through environments (as determined by her Agility proficiency), for example, a character can develop specific ratings in its four components — Climbing, Flying, Running, and Swimming. Skills can be ignored completely, used occasionally when characters want to develop proficiencies more specifically, or incorporated into the game as a standard part of the system. Please note that they do add some complexity to the process of creating a character (and to locating the appropriate proficiency to roll), so a Cobbler should consider this before allowing them.

When using the rules for Skills, each of the 32 Capabilities governs 4 proficiencies below them on the Abilitree (making a total of 128 Skills). By way of example, the Skills listed under Dexterity are:

- Climbing, or your ability to climb anything from a mountain to a wall;
- Flying, or your ability to move through gaseous mediums quickly and nimbly;
- Running, or your ability to move over the ground with haste;
- Swimming, or your ability to move through liquid mediums efficiently.

These Skills add to the Racial Predispositions, Capabilities, and Abilities above them. When using the rules for Skills, proficiencies are rolled at the Skill level rather than at the Capability level. In other words, if a character has developed Skills under a given capability, he rolls at the Skill level. For example, a character who (without Skills) would be asked to roll Agility to swim across the lake of the flaming flamingos would instead be asked to roll Swimming, one of the 4 Skills falling under Agility.

For a complete listing of every Ability, Capability, and Skill, see the Mortal Abilitree Worksheet on page 258. This is a sheet players can use to record all their character's proficiency information, including Skills. This worksheet is not necessary for players using the standard rules.

Amazing Incompetence

Some characters are just really lousy at some things. If you want to be thoroughly incompetent in a particular proficiency, using the optional rule for Amazing Incompetence, you

can collect additional experience points for reducing your Abilities, Capabilities, and Skills below zero. This is, however, not a very efficient method of gaining experience points, so proceed at your own risk.

For each point you reduce an Ability, you get 16 experience points; for each point you reduce a Capability, you get 4, and for each point you reduce a Skill, you get 1. You can never lower an Ability, Capability, or Skill enough that you would reduce any of your proficiencies below 1. Still, a proficiency of 1 in anything should be sufficiently incompetent to satisfy even the most masochistic players.

Lola, a player, decides to make her character, Yolon Rolon, without parallel in his obliviousness about intellectual matters. At character creation, she decides to reduce his Intellect / Erudition proficiency to 1. Yolon is a human, which means he starts with a 6 in his Racial Predisposition for Intellect / Erudition. Lola can lower his Erudition to a minimum of -5, which leaves his total proficiencies in all four of his Erudition Skills at 1. This gives her a total of 20 extra experience points to spend (4 experience points for lowering a Capability x 5 levels lowered). Yolon is now appallingly incompetent when it comes to Linguistics, Medicine, Memory, and Theory.

Note that in some cases, the Cobbler might not allow you to lower your proficiencies in this manner. It is particularly inappropriate in cases where you have no intention of ever using a proficiency, such as in the case of a fighter character who has no intention of ever casting spells taking the opportunity to increase her experience points by reducing her Vision and Presence proficiencies to the minimum possible. The Cobbler should prevent players from taking advantage of such convenient incompetencies.

The Ultra-Simple System

If really simple roleplaying game systems are more your style, you don't have to mess with any of this Capability or Skill stuff. Just make characters by developing the character's Abilities and adding in these simplified Racial Predispositions (see the Simple Racial Predispositions chart. This makes character creation as simple as spending 200 experience points to develop 8 Abilities and adding a single number, the Racial Predisposition, to each. The simple character sheet (page 254) is provided for exactly this purpose.

Simple Racial Predispositions Chart

	Sprite	Dwarf	Human	Troll			
	Halfling	Orc	Elf	Dryad			
<i>Prowess</i>	4	4	6	7	6	5	9
<i>Maneuver</i>	8	8	5	7	6	8	6
<i>Resolve</i>	5	7	8	8	6	5	8
<i>Intuition</i>	6	6	5	5	6	6	6
<i>Eloquence</i>	7	5	5	4	6	8	4
<i>Intellect</i>	5	7	8	5	6	5	4
<i>Vision</i>	5	5	5	6	6	5	5
<i>Presence</i>	7	5	5	5	6	5	4

Raising Abilities, Capabilities, & Skills

Raising proficiencies costs experience points. The experience point cost to buy a single point in a tier depends on two factors. The first factor is the part of the hierarchy being changed (Ability, Capability, or Skill), and the second factor is the number to which you're increasing the score. To determine the cost to increase a proficiency by one, multiply the number to which the score is being increased by 9 for an Ability, by 3 for a Capability, or by 1 for a Skill.

Ability, Capability, & Skill Cost Chart

Tier	Cost to Develop to a Given Level
Ability	9 x Next Ability Level
Capability	3 x Next Capability Level
Skill	1 x Next Skill Level

The player of Megamouth Slamkan, an orc who is obsessed with "extreme" sports, has a Maneuver (Ability) of 3 and an Agility (Capability) of 5. With his Racial Predisposition of 6 in Agility, this gives him a proficiency of 14. After Megamouth undergoes an intense training session involving plenty of refreshing beverages and energy bars, his player decides to raise his Maneuver from 3 to 4. This costs 36 experience points (9 x 4 = 36). Megamouth now has an additional point in all his Maneuver proficiencies.

Later, Megamouth's player decides to raise his Agility from 5 to 6. This costs 18 points (3 x 6 = 18). Megamouth now has 6 in his Agility proficiency, which means he can climb, fly, run, and swim that much better now.

If allowed, increasing Skills works in the same fashion.

Megamouth Slamkan decides to do some extreme mountain climbing. When he finishes this grueling experience, his player thinks Megamouth has a suitable justification for raising his Climbing Skill. It costs only one experience point to raise it from 0 to 1 (1 x 1 = 1), so he does so. Then he raises it two more times, from 1 to 2 at a cost of 2 more experience points (1 x 2 = 2) and then to 3 at a cost of 3 more experience points (1 x 3 = 3). Megamouth has just spent 6 experience points on his Climbing Skill, which is now 3, meaning that his Climbing proficiency (once his new Maneuver, new Agility, and Racial Predisposition are added in) is now 19.

Racial Predispositions cannot be altered in this fashion.

If you don't enjoy multiplication and you don't have access to a computer for running Cobulator Character Creation software, the proficiency rating chart shown in the section on Developing Characters might help you out a bit.

Ability, Capability, & Skill Cost Breakdown Chart

Tier	Cost to Develop to a Given Rating									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Capability	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30
Skill	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90

Things to Remember While Developing Proficiencies

Keep in mind these helpful hints while creating your character:

- There are a couple of different philosophies you can take in developing your proficiencies. If you want to make a character quickly and have a more generalized proficiency set, focus on developing Abilities (this is also the most point-efficient method, since you essentially get 4 Capabilities for the price of 3 (or 16 Skills for the price of 9, when using the Skill rules). If you want to spend more time on your character and have more control over her proficiencies at the cost of some economy, focus on Capabilities (or, for even more control, focus on Skills). Most players prefer a blend of these two extremes.

- Sometimes there are exceptions to the above. It costs more to go from 9 to 10 in a Capability than it does to go from 2 to 3 in an Ability, for example (the former costs 30 experience points, while the latter costs 27). The bigger the difference between your Abilities and Capabilities, the more pronounced this difference will become.

- Remember that if you don't develop a particular proficiency at all, you are only going to have your Racial Predisposition with which to make checks. In other words, in most cases, you're going to be pretty bad at it. If a situation comes up in the game where you have to make a check with that proficiency, there's a very good chance that you'll fail. Unless you want to be mediocre at everything, you're going to have to be incompetent in some areas, and that's okay. However, spend all your points making yourself extremely good at only a few things at your own risk.

- Almost without a doubt, you'll be able to spend all of your experience points on proficiencies. Still, try to save a few for Renaissance Points and, if you want to use magic, spells.

Acquiring Idiosyncrasies

Idiosyncrasies are special characteristics or possessions assigned to you at the start of the game which give you special advantages or disadvantages of your choice. Characters have to buy the good ones (*Benefits*) with experience points, and they can gain extra experience points for taking the annoying ones (*Drawbacks*).

If your character starts the game with:

- the authority to enforce the law,
 - ownership of a sailing ship or a business,
 - command over a band of warriors, or
 - the ability to melt lead with a nasty look,
- ...then he has a Benefit.

If your character starts the game with:

- a specific code of honor which prohibits smiling,
 - a certificate designating him property of the state,
 - a hideous appearance, or
 - a stalk of celery for a left arm,
- ...then he has a Drawback.

Neutral Idiosyncrasies

A few Idiosyncrasies are neither Benefits nor Drawbacks, either because they are neither especially bad nor especially good, or because they have both positive and negative aspects which effectively cancel each other out.

Taking Idiosyncrasies

There are a few Idiosyncrasies which everyone has. Like it or not, you must choose an Attractiveness Rating and a Handedness (your preferred hand, right, left, or both; being ambidextrous costs experience points). You should also take all the Benefits and Drawbacks that necessarily apply to your race.³ If you don't want some or all of these, at your Cobbler's discretion you can pay an experience point cost to get rid of any Drawbacks, or accept experience points to eliminate Benefits. You can also buy (or get points for) whatever other Idiosyncrasies you desire by choosing from those presented or inventing your own. The Cobbler will determine the experience point value of new Idiosyncrasies. Some might be too insignificant to be worth anything, while others might be worth quite a lot. Most will be somewhere in between, in the range of 8 to 16. Some already established Benefits and Drawbacks (and their values) are listed on pages 134 through 139.

Eliminating Idiosyncrasies

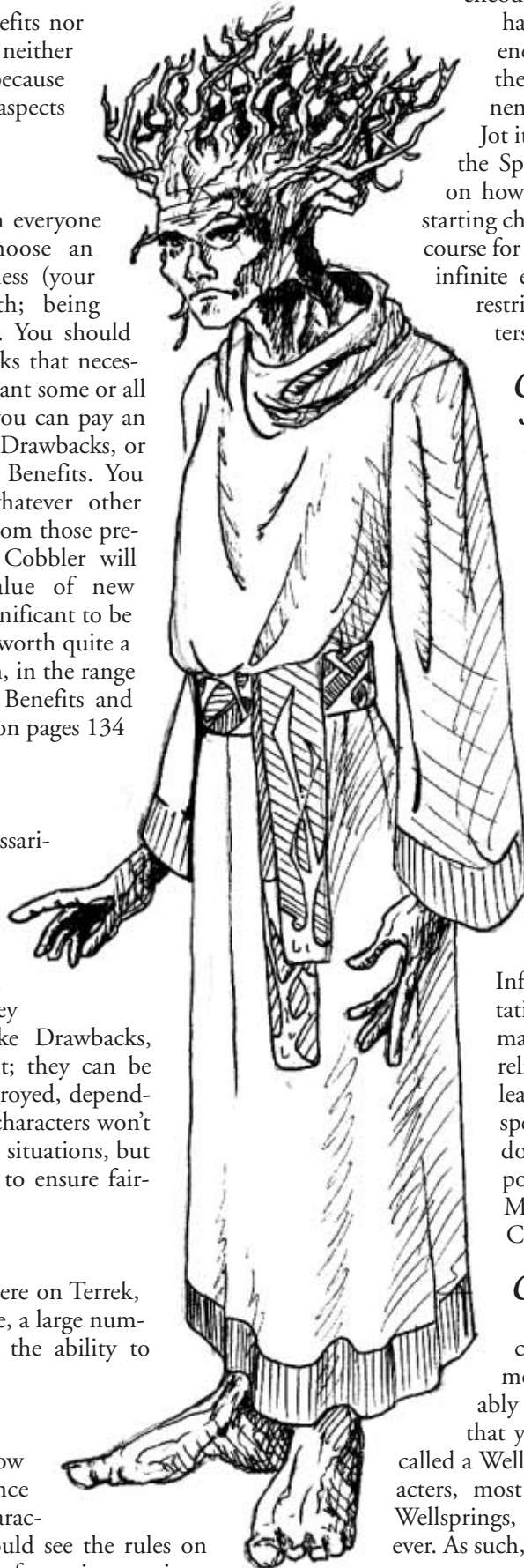
Benefits and Drawbacks are not necessarily permanent, but getting rid of a Drawback should require some effort and attention during play. Alternatively, Cobblers may require characters to "buy off" Drawbacks at a cost less than or equal to the points they got for them in the first place. Like Drawbacks, Benefits are not necessarily permanent; they can be stolen, spent, removed, revoked or destroyed, depending on what, exactly, they are. Usually characters won't get their experience points back in such situations, but the Cobbler should use her discretion to ensure fairness.

Learning Spells

Although magic isn't exactly everywhere on Terrek, it isn't incredibly rare, either. In any case, a large number of *player characters* seem to have the ability to manipulate it.

Learning a Spell

Starting characters are assumed to know whatever spells they spend experience points to learn as the game opens (characters who want to learn spells later should see the rules on page 112). Spells cost variable amounts of experience points, depending on their power. Costs for established spells are listed with their descriptions on Chapter 9, although you are



Solidoak Windstander the dryad cracks a great big smile.

encouraged to invent your own and have the Cobbler assign an experience point cost. Once you've spent the required points, you've permanently learned the spell in question.

Jot it down on your character sheet in the Spells section. There are no limits on how many spells you can learn as a starting character or otherwise, excepting of course for the limit imposed by your lack of infinite experience points. There are no restrictions on which kinds of characters can learn spells.

Choosing to Learn a Spell as Castable or Infusible

When a character opens a spellbook, she'll find that the spells inside aren't especially comprehensible. They consist of a lot of complicated formulas — numbers, arcane symbols, and diagrams that take time to digest. When learning this information, an ambrelliant character can choose to interpret it in one of two ways — as a *Castable* spell or as an *Infusible* spell. A *Castable* spell is an interpretation of a magical formula that, once learned, allows a person to cast it directly from their person whenever desired. An *Infusible* spell is different interpretation which allows the creation of magic items (talismans for mages, relics for avatars). A spellcaster can learn any spell either as a *Castable* spell or as an *Infusible* spell. Or (for double the normal experience point cost), he can learn it as both. Most casters learn the spells *Castably*.

Choosing a Wellspring

Now you know how to cast (or infuse) a spell or two, or more. If you're a mage, that's probably enough, because you can assume that your power source — commonly called a *Wellspring* — is yourself. Some characters, most notably avatars, have external Wellsprings, in the form of their deities, however. As such, they need to select a specific god

³ All eight races have the same number of points spent on Idiosyncrasies.

or group of gods to worship before they're granted the power to cast spells. Magular spells cannot be cast with a divine Wellspring, nor can an avaticular spell be cast using self-worship.

No one has to spend experience points on a Wellspring — it's simply a matter of choosing. While technically a god does have the option of refusing to grant a follower avatar status, for game purposes you can usually assume that anyone who wants to be the avatar of a particular god can be. Similarly, any character who wishes to be a mage can be assumed to have somehow been successful (even though it requires significant thought and study). If you are an avatar or another character with an external power source, be sure to note your character's Wellspring in the proper blank on the character sheet.

Developing Presence & Vision Proficiencies

Although it isn't required, it's extremely wise to also develop some of your ratings in whatever proficiencies are required for the use of your spells (Vision for external sources like gods; Presence for internal ones like the self). If you don't, you'll be fairly ineffective at using them. While incompetence can sometimes be amusing (if done well), it's also rather frustrating.

Inventing Your Own Spells

Players are encouraged to invent their own spells, and not merely rely on those provided. Any character with a decent intellect and access to some kind of library or research facility is capable of inventing his own spells, which he can then learn as either Castable or Infusible. To craft the spell, a character first does a little preliminary research (no roll required), and then decides what he wants the spell to do.

Meanwhile, in reality, the character's player writes a spell description and defines the spell's parameters by creating a chart which explains what physical result each level of success has on gameality (see the spells on pages 180 to 191 for examples). The Cobbler then looks over the spell and, if he deems it acceptable, assigns it an experience point cost. If the player still wants his character to learn the spell after he discovers the experience point cost, he can refer to the rules for Learning a Spell, page 112.

Acquiring & Recharging Renaissance Points

All characters start with a single Renaissance Point. All further points cost 6 times the rating to which you're raising your number of points. Renaissance Points are nifty little things which can be used to increase your success level when attempting to accomplish something. Buying one or two is highly recommended. For more specific information on how and when to use a Renaissance Point, see page 19.

Renaissance Points recharge when you accomplish significant goals. When your character achieves something which was both a bit difficult and somewhat important to her, she

regains a lost point.

Justifying Your Talents

You've decided on what talents and Idiosyncrasies your character will have, but you may not yet know why you have them or how you came to acquire them.

Justifying Proficiencies

If you haven't already, come up with some idea about how the experiences you've had have taught you your proficiencies. These may be partly innate, but most likely you've also had some kind of training, either formal or informal. People in big cities often learn in general or specialized schools, while people from smaller areas are more likely to have apprenticeships or be taught by members of their village, clan, or tribe. Belonging to an organization, like the military or a business (such as a shoe factory or a jewelry shop), can teach you a lot. Of course, many proficiencies can be self-taught. Perhaps you've simply practiced, or spent time wandering the countryside in search of things to do. Fighting a battle for or against some cause, either literally or figuratively, is usually instructive. So is an exceptional background — perhaps you've become a superb climber, sneaker, and herbalist from having been raised by squirrels.

Justifying Spells

More important even than explaining the experiences behind your proficiencies is justifying the source of any spells you have. You're not born with the knowledge to turn invisible or to create a magic item that ages cheese; you need to come to an understanding of these processes by studying formulas. Most people who want to learn magic use whatever channels are the norm for their culture — often magical colleges, seminaries, apprenticeships to village shamans, or similar. Others find their magic in old books found in the possession of relatives, ruins, monasteries, or obscure libraries. Some purchase what they need from businesses, or use spellware (note, however, that spellware stands a good chance of being quirky or even outright defective in some way; see page 178). Some cultures guard the right to learn magic, in which case you might have come by your knowledge illicitly — or perhaps you're one of the privileged few. In other cultures, spells are easily available. The Cobbler will probably let you start with any spells you can afford to buy as the game opens, as long as you have some reason for it.

Justifying Other Paranormal Abilities

Wherever you got your power, and no matter whether you're a mutant, psionicist, or other freak, you probably got it from somewhere. It might have been an accident, or it could have been intentional on someone else's part. Perhaps it was intentional on your part. Strange magic items, natural mutations due to flaws in the game mechanics, magical fields or fluctuations, radioactive waste, strange animals, aliens, and unusual personal origins including having exotic ancestors (perhaps your great, great grandfather was a yeti) are all possibilities. Often, extraterrestrials are involved. For some additional ideas, pluck an idea from your favorite comic, movie, or brain.

Outfitting

The final part of creating a character is outfitting — deciding what kind of “stuff” you have and purchasing it with experience points. If you don’t buy any possessions, you start the game with only what the Cobbler’s whim allows. If the Cobbler’s whim is rather stingy, you start naked and utterly without equipment. Many Cobblers will allow characters to start with a bit of clothing and some basic equipment, however. If you want to start with more expensive items, you can buy geepee with experience points. For each experience point you spend, you can start with 4 geepee (up to 100 geepee).

Remember that it’s improbable that your character begins the game by heading off naked into to the nearest town and, as his first purchase ever, exchanges a bunch of currency for clothes and equipment (although this might make for an interesting beginning in some cases). Normally, the money that you spend on equipment before the game is merely symbolic of any wealth (expressed in cash or in possessions) which you possessed previous to the start of the game. To buy equipment, see Chapter 8.

THE CHARACTER SHEET

The character sheet is what you use to keep track of all the details about your character. This section will guide you on your way through the notations.

Page One

- **(1) Character:** Your character’s name(s), and/or any nicknames.
- **(2) Player:** Your own name, in case you forget that this character is yours.
- **(3) Campaign:** The title of your story, if you have one. Otherwise, some distinguishing characteristic of your campaign, like its location or essential concept.
- **(4) Race:** Your character’s race.
- **(5) Gender:** Your character’s gender.
- **(6) Age:** Your character’s age. If you want to have a concept of the current date in your campaign, you can note a date of birth here instead of an age.
- **(7) Preference:** Use this to establish your character’s preference with regard to any given set of things. For example, you could specify your character’s hand preference (right or left), ice cream preference, sexual preference, or anything else.
- **(8) Concept:** Your overall character concept, summed up in a short phrase.
- **(9) Spent XP:** How many experience points have so far been spent on your character (a helpful gauge of the character’s overall power level).
- **(10) Unspent XP:** Your remaining unspent experience points (you don’t necessarily have to spend them immediately after you get them).
- **(11) Renaissance Points (Circles):** Your character’s permanent total of Renaissance Points, which stay constant even as the current total rises and falls.
- **(12) Renaissance Points (Squares):** Your character’s current total Renaissance Points.
- **(13) Proficiencies:** A character’s Abilities, Capabilities,

and Skills. Each of the three versions of the character sheet (the Simple, Standard, and Extended) has a different way of listing proficiencies.



- **(14) Simple:** This is the simplest way to use the Higher Arc system. The eight Abilities are used, but the 32 Capabilities and the 128 Skills are ignored.

Rating: A character’s rating in the appropriate Ability.

Race: A character’s Racial Predisposition in the appropriate Ability (see page 101)

Total: The sum of a character’s Ability Rating and Racial Predisposition.



- **(15) Standard:** This is a good compromise between the Simple and the Extended methods of using the Higher Arc system. The eight Abilities and the 32 Capabilities are used, but the 128 Skills are ignored.

Rating: A character’s rating in the appropriate Ability or Capability.

Race: A character’s Racial Predisposition in the appropriate Ability (see page 101)

Total: The sum of a character’s Ability Rating, Capability Rating, and Racial Predisposition.



- **(16) Extended:** This is the method of using the Higher Arc system which allows for the most character diversity. All eight Abilities, 32 Capabilities, and 128 Skills are used. Note: When using the Extended character sheet, it is necessary to use the Proficiency Worksheet to determine a character’s proficiencies, but those proficiencies can be listed here.

Ability/Capability/Skill: The name of the Ability, the Capability, and the Skill involved with a particular proficiency.

Proficiency: The amount of the proficiency, as determined by the sum of a character’s Ability, Capability, Skill, and Racial Predisposition ratings.

- **(17) Magical & Paranormal Thresholds:** Depending on a their skill at Powering their magic or their paranormal abilities, a character has a variable amount of power available for casting spells or paranormal abilities of different types. This box is for keeping track of that information.

• **(18) Art & Method (Magical & Paranormal Thresholds):** List the art (such as Cosmos) and method (either Presence or Vision) to be described on the line in question.

• **(19) Powering Threshold (Magical & Paranormal Thresholds):** The amount of the Drain Modifier you can ignore when using spells or paranormal abilities of that art and method. This number is identical to half your Powering proficiency for the magical art and method in question.

• **(20) Total Drain Modifiers (Magical & Paranormal Thresholds):** The current total negative accumulated by using spells or paranormal abilities from the art and method in question.

- **(21) Para/Magic Penalty (Magical & Paranormal**

Thresholds): Your Powering Threshold minus your Drain Penalty. If the result is negative, it's your current penalty to Activating, Blocking, and Infusing spells or paranormal abilities of that art and method.

- **(22) Wellspring (Magical & Paranormal Thresholds):** The source or sources from which a character acquires magical or paranormal power. For avatars, this will be a chosen deity or a group of deities; for mages, it will be the mage. A Wellspring can change with time, and can also vary depending on the magic being used. Those without magical or paranormal abilities lack a Wellspring.

- **(23) Idiosyncrasies:** Your character's Idiosyncrasies — the Benefits and Drawbacks which cost experience points or grant them. This includes a character's Racial Idiosyncrasies, if you wish to record them.

- **(24) XP Value:** The negative XP value of a Benefit, or the positive XP value of a Drawback.

- **(25) Background, Personality, & Eccentricities:** A description of the historical and behavioral characteristics of the character, with an emphasis on the humorous.

- **(26) God(s):** Any higher powers worshipped. There are no restrictions on this; you can worship anyone or anything. Gods, people, inanimate objects, intangible concepts, and fig-

ments of your imagination are all valid higher powers. Only deities actually *benefit* from worship, but that doesn't mean you wouldn't rather give it to someone or something who doesn't care...

- **(27) Spell Name (Spells):** The names of all the spells the character knows.

- **(28) C/I:** Whether the spell is Castable ("C") or Infusible ("I"). This determines whether the spell can be used "on the fly" or whether it can be used to create magic items.

- **(29) Page (Spells):** The page number the spell is on, for easy reference.

- **(30) Drain (Spells):** The drain penalty caused to the relevant art and method from casting this spell once (cumulative with successive castings).

- **(31) Wounds:** A list of all the wounds currently affecting your character.

PROFICIENCIES			
Ability	Rating	Race	Total
Prowess			
Maneuver			
Resolve			
Intuition			14
Eloquence			
Intellect			
Vision			
Presence			

FREQUENTLY PERFORMED ACTIONS			
Name	Proficiency	Modifier	Total

PROFICIENCIES	
Ability / Capability / Skill	Proficiency

Character 1	Player 2	Campaign 3	Race 4	Gender 5	Age 6	Preference 7	Concept 8	Spent XP 9	Unspent XP 10
RENAISSANCE POINTS									
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
PROFICIENCIES 13									
Ability / Capability	Rating	Race	Total						
Prowess									
Grappling									
Strength									
Swinging									
Thrusting									
Maneuver									
Agility									
Aiming									
Dexterity									
Wits									
Resolve									
Concentration									
Endurance									
Evocation									
Resilience									
Intuition									
Awareness									
Instinct			15						
Savvy									
Wisdom									
Eloquence									
Creativity									
Elocution									
Emoting									
Subterfuge									
Intellect									
Crafting									
Inventiveness									
Erudition									
Reasoning									
Vision									
Aether									
Cosmos									
Force									
Matter									
Presence									
Aether									
Cosmos									
Force									
Matter									
MAGICAL & PARANORMAL THRESHOLDS 17									
Wellspring(s) 22	19	20	21						
Art & Method 18	Powering Threshold	Total Drain Modifiers	Magic Penalty						
	+	=							
	+	=							
	+	=							
	+	=							
	+	=							
NON-DAMAGE EFFECT THRESHOLDS 40									
Effect 41	Threshold	Modifiers	Penalty						
	+	=							
	+	=							
	+	=							
	+	=							
	+	=							
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Wound & Location 32	Type 33	Severity 34	DC / Use Penalty 35	Pain Modifier 36	PAIN THRESHOLD 37	TOTAL PAIN MODIFIERS 38			
PAIN PENALTY 39									

• **(32) Wound & Location (Wounds):** The nature of the wound affecting you, and the location it impacts if the wound is localized. For example, “Bloody sucking chest wound,” or “six-inch deep hole in forehead.” (Or you can name your wounds. Some strange players like to name their wounds “Dennis,” while others call them “W” or “Foob.”)

• **(33) Type (Wounds):** The Damage Type the wound imparts — Blunt, Edged, Restrictive, Pointed, Photonic, Electric, Caustic, or Thermal.

• **(34) Severity (Wounds):** The severity of the wound: Minor, Moderate, Major, or Severe (Excessive or Obliterative wounds kill you instantly, so you probably won’t need to write them down).

• **(35) DC/Use Penalty (Wounds):** For Vital wounds, you have a DC — a Death Countdown. This how long you have before you die as a result of that area ceasing to function. For Nonvital wounds, you have a Use Penalty instead of a DC. This is your penalty to taking actions which require the use of that body part.

• **(36) Pain Modifier (Wounds):** The negative to activity caused by the pain of the wound in question.

• **(37) Pain Threshold (Wounds, Die #1):** The amount of the Pain Modifier Total you can ignore. This number is identical to half of your Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Pain proficiency.

• **(38) Total Pain Modifiers (Wounds, Die #2):** The total of all the above Pain Modifiers.

• **(39) Pain Penalty (Wounds, Die #3):** Your Total Pain Modifiers minus your Pain Threshold. If the result is negative, this is your current negative to all activities (in addition to any non-damage effect penalties). If it’s positive, your capacity to resist pain is stronger than your current amount of pain, and you have no modifier.

• **(40) Non-Damage Effect Thresholds:** Some things which affect you tend to build up for a while before inhibiting your capacity for action — fatigue, for example, and encumbrance. Keep track of these things here.

• **(41) Effect (Non-Damage Effect Thresholds):** List the effect which is affecting your character — fatigue, for example, or encumbrance.

• **(42) Threshold (Non-Damage Effect Thresholds):** List the threshold relevant to the effect in question. This number is identical to half of the relevant proficiency — Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Fatigue for fatigue, for example, or Prowess / Strength / Toting for encumbrance.

• **(43) Modifiers (Non-Damage Effect Thresholds):** This is the total of all the modifiers affecting your character which are related to the effect in question. For example, if you ran two marathons, and the first gave you 3 degrees of fatigue, and the second gave you 2, you would have a total of 5 here.

• **(44) Penalty (Non-Damage Effect Thresholds):** Your penalty is your threshold minus your modifiers. If the result is positive, ignore it; if it’s negative, it’s your penalty to relevant activities.

• **(45) Appearance:** A description of your character’s appearance.

• **(46) Hair (Appearance):** Note any distinguishing characteristics regarding your character’s hair, such as “purple,” “black,” “greasy,” or “unkempt.”

• **(47) Height (Appearance):** Your character’s height. For a general idea about what constitutes a reasonable height for an average character of your race, see the racial size guidelines with the racial descriptions. Note that if you are too tall, mynah birds may nest in your hair and/or nostrils.

• **(48) Eyes (Appearance):** Note any distinguishing characteristics regarding your character’s eyes. Color is an obvious choice, but you can add adjectives such as “shifty blue” or “wild orange” at the risk of making your character sound like a tropical fruit drink or an alcoholic beverage.

• **(49) Weight (Appearance):** Your character’s weight. For a general idea about what constitutes a reasonable weight for an average character of your race, see the racial descriptions. Note that if you are too fat, your party members will have to tote you around in a big red wagon.

• **(50) Attractiveness (Appearance):** Your character’s attractiveness rating. See the racial descriptions or the Race Attractiveness Benchmark chart (page 134) for the appearance rating that members of your race begin at, and modify it according to your wishes with the rules above said chart.

Page Two

• **(51) Armor Name, Coverage, & Material (Armor):** List the name of the armor type or piece of armor you’re wearing, the parts of the body it covers, and the material of which the armor is made. Complicated pieces of armor may not fit in this small space, but what the heck, right? You’re an intelligent person. Use whatever means are necessary to compensate.

• **(52) B/E/R/P (Armor):** List the protection the armor type affords versus Blunt, Edged, Restrictive, and Pointed attacks.

• **(53) P/E/C/T (Armor):** List the protection the armor type affords versus Photonic, Electric, Caustic, and Thermal attacks.

• **(54) Tote Penalty (Armor):** Print the penalty resulting from wearing this armor here. (Your Toting Threshold minus the total of all of these tote penalties will be your armor encumbrance penalty. Note that if you are wearing even one piece of armor considered “bulky,” your penalty will be at least -1 even if your armor encumbrance penalty is positive.)

• **(55) Weapon Name (Weapons):** The name of the weapon carried. Note that you will have to list a weapon more than once if you want to list statistics for multiple uses of the weapon.

• **(56) Action (Weapons):** A particular potential use of the weapon in question.

• **(57) Length Modifier (Weapons):** The modifier when using the weapon for initiative checks.

• **(58) Proficiency (Weapons):** Your proficiency in using the weapon in question with the action in question.

• **(59) Weapon Modifier (Weapons):** The modifier to using the weapon in question for the action in question (see page 168).

• **(60) Other Modifiers (Weapons):** Any other modifiers which apply to using the weapon for the action in question, such as a magical bonus.

• **(61) Lift Penalty (Weapons):** Your penalty to wielding this weapon, determined by subtracting the weapon’s lift

penalty from your Lifting Threshold (your Lifting Threshold is half of your proficiency in Prowess / Strength / Lifting).

- **(62) Total (Weapons):** This shows your proficiency in using the weapon in question for the action in question.

- **(63) Item Name (Mundane Items):** The name of any piece of ordinary (non-magical) equipment your character has, like 50' of rope or a herring.

- **(64) Quantity (Mundane Items):** How many you have of the item in question.

- **(65) Location/Weight (Mundane Items):** Where you keep the item or items — in your right tunic pocket, on your belt, on your head, in a locked chest at home, etc.. Alternatively, the weight of the item.

- **(66) Item Name (Magical Items):** The name of any piece of equipment your character has, like a Jade Monkey of Scrying.

- **(67) Effect(s) (Magical Items):** The magical effects the item is capable of performing.

- **(68) Charges (Magical Items):** The number of charges the item has. Each use of a particular effect costs a particular number of charges. When the charges are gone, the item can no longer be used unless the item has an Evoked Will Activation, in which case it must be used at a negative equal to the number of charges it doesn't have (ie, the number of charges below zero).

- **(69) Location/Weight (Magical Items):** The location in which you keep the magic item, like "back right pocket" or "left hand." Alternatively, the weight of the item.

- **(70) Type (Valuables):** A type of valuable you can potentially possess, such as "geepee", "pygmy marmosets" or "limestone pieces."

- **(71) Quantity (Valuables):** The amount of a given type of valuable your character possesses.

- **(72) Item Name (Consumables & Other Exhaustible):** The name and/or effect of the herb, potion, bit of food, or other consumable item your character has.


- **(73) Doses/Uses (Consumables & Other Exhaustible):** The number of uses your character has left of the relevant consumable item.

- **(74) Location/Weight (Consumables & Other Exhaustible):** The place in which your character keep the item, like "herb pouch" or "under hat." Alternatively, the weight of the item.

- **(75) Check Modifiers/Success Levels/Damage Levels:** Handy charts for easy reference during play.

- **(76) Type (Ammunition):** A type of ammunition you can potentially possess, such as "crossbow bolts", "sling stones" or "pygmy marmosets."

- **(77) Quantity (Ammunition):** The amount of a given type of ammunition your character possesses.



Chain of Being™
THE FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME OF EPIC ABSURDITY

INVENTORY

ARMOR

Armor Name, Coverage & Material	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Tote Penalty
(51)	(52)	(53)	(54)

WEAPONS

Weapon Name	Action	Length Modifier	Proficiency	Weapon Modifier	Other Modifiers	Lift Penalty	Total
(55)	(56)	(57)	(58)	(59)	(60)	(61)	(62)

MUNDANE ITEMS

Item Name	Quantity	Location / Weight
(63)	(64)	(65)

AMMUNITION

Type	Quantity
(70)	(71)

MAGICAL ITEMS

Item Name	Effect(s)	Charges	Location / Weight
(66)	(67)	(68)	(69)

CONSUMABLE ITEMS & OTHER EXHAUSTIBLES

Item Name	Doses / Uses	Location / Weight
(72)	(73)	(74)

VALUABLES

Type	Quantity
(76)	(77)

CHECK MODIFIERS

+2 Unhard	-2 Tricky
+4 Easy	-4 Tough
+8 Simple	-8 Daunting
+16 Instinctive	-16 Ludicrous

SUCCESS LEVELS

1 Minimal	1 Minor
2 Complete	2 Moderate
4 Excellent	4 Major
8 Phenomenal	8 Severe
16 Fantastical	16 Excessive

©2011 Mirth Character Sheet v1.1

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Everyone can learn, and player characters are no exception.⁴ After every game session, the Cobbler should award each character a sum of experience points to reward her for her tribulations and ensure that she continues to learn and grow. These experience points are identical to those given to a starting character and can thus be used for all the same things at the same costs, with the exception of Benefits and Drawbacks, which can only be purchased at character conception. (See page 100 for details on spending experience points in the Higher Arc system.) However, while a starting character automatically gets 200 experience points, the number of experience points a character gets after an adventure varies depending on her actions in the adventure itself.

When to Award Experience Points

Experience points are both rewards for behavior which facilitates the story and the logical consequence of living life and learning from it. In *CoB*, characters earn experience points for four basic types of actions. Cobblers should give out experience points at the end of each session for actions which fall into the following categories:

- Those which make the story more entertaining (more humorous, more dramatic, more action-oriented, ect.). These are arguably the most important.
- Those which are successful (characters should be rewarded for accomplishing their goals), especially spectacular successes.
- Those which fail (characters learn at least as much from failure as they do from success), especially spectacular failure.
- Those which indicate skilled roleplaying (players who make their characters act consistently and in a way that makes sense given the context of the game deserve to be rewarded for their sacrifices).

While this might seem obvious, it's important to remember that experience points represent *gaining experience*, and you gain experience from having experiences. It doesn't matter whether an experience was a positive one, or if the action being taken involved risk. The important thing is whether the experience was a sufficiently "potent" one. A potent experience is one which, metaphorically speaking, makes a dent in a character's consciousness. In other words, if the experience seems likely to change the character in some way, it's probably the sort of experience which deserves an experience point or more. If you've done it lots of times before, or if it's just not a very remarkable activity, it probably doesn't give you much, if anything, in the way of experience points.

For the cost to raise Abilities, Capabilities, and Skills, see the Ability, Capability, & Skill Cost chart on page 103. Spells and Benefits have variable values based on the power or limitation imparted.

Suggestions for Awarding Experience

Before he can give out experience points, obviously a Cobbler needs some way to determine how many each player should receive. Some Cobblers prefer to do this with simple declarations based on their intuitive sense of how the game went. This is fine for some campaigns, although to

make the process of awarding experience feel less arbitrary, it can be a good idea to devote a bit more time to the process. Unfortunately, however, the Cobbler usually has plenty to do already — keeping track of the gaming world, the story, the rules, and all the NPCs can be hard enough, and asking him to keep track of everything that the players do as well will add quite a bit of work. Well, that's where player deed records come in.

Sample Deed Record

The sample deed record sheet of Xy, the evil halfling necromancer (adventuring with Bog the troll and Dimensha the elf) might look something like this:

<i>Deed</i>	<i>Experience</i>
• Cooked and ate my favorite dish, rotten sardine pie	0
• Helped hatch a plot to overthrow the king and queen	1
• Worshipped at the alter of my deity, Sarcoscolec, before setting off	0
• Tried (unsuccessfully) to give my steed a taste for human flesh	1
• Got captured by a band of rogue slavers	2
• Deliberately acted pathetic so that no one would buy us except the royal slavers	2
• Got purchased for what I insisted was far too little	1
• Got suddenly (and inexplicably) thrown into the palace dungeon instead of being sent off to the slave barracks	1
• Experienced a new stench in the dungeon	1
• Endured my first unpleasantly thorough strip search while providing lots of colorful commentary	1
• Got sucker-punched by the human guard and thrown into a cell	0
• Formulated a new plan to escape the dungeon area via the sewers	1
• Lured an orc guard too close to the bars so that Bog could grasp him and throttle him	2
• Raised the orc guard from the dead, had it unlock the cage, and then sent it off in the opposite direction (as a distraction)	3
• Opened the cell door and snuck off down the corridor	1
• Took a wrong turn and encountered several drunken guards in the torture chamber, apparently off duty	0
• Bungled my first attack on the first guard spectacularly	1
• Hid behind Bog between attacks (to avoid getting hit)	1
• Chopped off an orc's nose	1
• Put the orc's nose in my pocket	(See Previous)
• Watched Bog chop off an orc's head with one swing	0
• Came up with a new use for an iron maiden	1
• Defeated a total of two guards mostly by myself	3
• Found our way to a privy	5
• Discovered that accessing to the palace sewer system wasn't as easy we thought it would be, and locked ourselves in the privy to consider a new plan	1

Either while the game is being played (when they aren't occupied) or afterward, players should write down their characters' most significant actions on player deed records. With such a list, a player can make a case for deserving lots of experience points. Then, after the game, the Cobbler can go through these lists and assign an experience point value to each deed. The amounts are then totaled, and characters can

⁴ Quite the contrary, in fact; in many campaigns player characters seem to be capable of learning so fast that they end up making their past selves look like morons.

spend the points as they wish (within certain restrictions, discussed below).

When writing descriptions of their deeds, players can be fairly thorough (as per the sample deed record sheet), or sum everything up in just a few sentences. Whichever route the Cobbler chooses, he should be consistent; it's not fair for certain players to put a lot of work into their deed record only to get the same number of points as a player who just jotted down a vague sentence or two.

It's recommended that the Cobbler give between 20 and 30 (an average of 25) experience points per character, per session.

A deed record sheet is bound to look a little incomprehensible to anyone who wasn't present during the game session, but if you save it, it can be a helpful reminder of events that took place.

Experience Award Guidelines

Sometimes it's hard to know which actions are worth which sums of experience points. To help you out, here are some general guidelines, but keep in mind that no list is going to cover everything or mention every exception. This sort of thing is pretty subjective, and you'll probably have to develop your own set of standards.

Successful/Failed Actions

- An educational action. If a character had the opportunity to learn from an action, it's worth 1-5 points, depending on the significance and the intensity of the experience. If a character has never (or has rarely) experienced something before, he should probably get experience points for it. This includes getting hurt, hurting others, casting spells, and nearly anything else. Even fairly mundane experiences might sometimes be worth at least a point.

- Defeating a foe. If you kill, render unconscious, or otherwise thwart a foe, you should get some experience points for it. Enemies who are about as powerful as you are worth about 6 points each. Those twice as powerful are worth about 12 points, while those half as powerful are worth about 3 points... and so on.

- Being defeated. Taking a mild thrashing is probably worth a point, and getting soundly defeated might be worth about 3. If someone completely pounds the tar out of you and you live to tell the tale, you might get around 6 points. If you actually die and live to tell about it (ie, you get resurrected later on), you might get as many as 12.



Entertaining Actions

- A humorous action. Funny actions should normally be

awarded with 1-4 points, depending on how funny they are. A simple oddity is probably worth a point, while an action so hilarious that all the players are rolling around on the floor in tears probably deserves at least 5 points or so.

- An inventive action. If a character applies creativity to a problem, he should get points for it even if it doesn't work out. Using items for unconventional functions, coming up with bogus rationalizations to fool NPCs, or accomplishing any goal in an unusual way is worth 1-4 experience points.

- A dramatically bold action. Characters who stand against incredible odds, take valiant risks, and make noble sacrifices deserve 2-6 points for their trouble.

Good Roleplaying

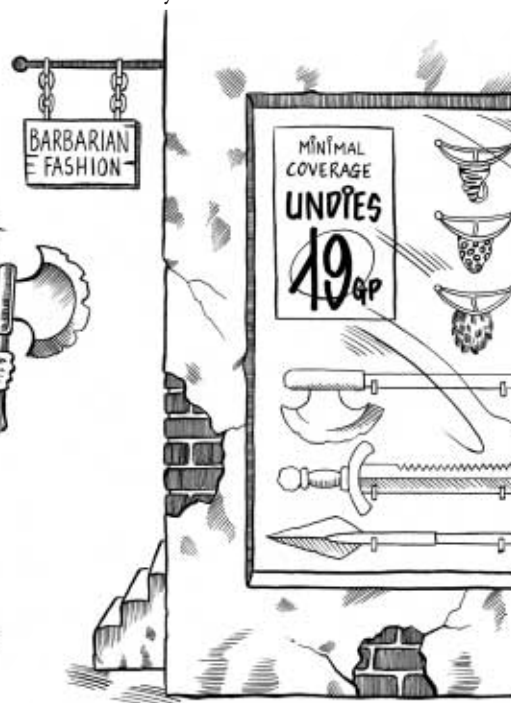
- Actions requiring a player to give up something she wants in order to stay true to character deserve 3-6 points.

- When a player could easily have used player knowledge which the characters lacked to influence game events, but didn't, she deserves 3-6 points — or more, if she gave up something especially important.

Most actions should probably score on the low side of these spectrums. Gaining 5 experience points for a single action is the normal maximum; getting as many as 8 for a single action should be reserved for extraordinary situations. Of course, if you do something impressive enough — like fight and defeat a baalrogue — you might get far more experience points in one shot.

Restrictions on Experience Point Use

Even if you have plenty of experience points, you can't just spontaneously develop whatever abilities you wish, to whatever extent you desire, whenever you feel like it. You're limited by the nature of the specific experiences you have. If you want to improve a proficiency, you need to learn more about it, which means that unless you have access to some kind of training, you can't improve abilities



On Toswald's west coast, barbarians pioneer the frontiers of fashion.

you've never used.

Justifying Increased Abilities

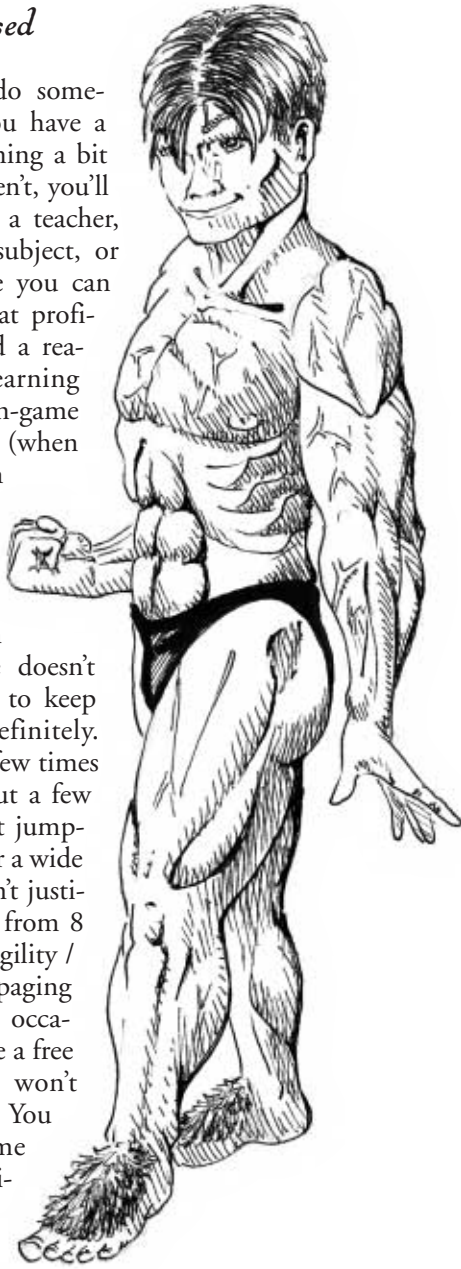
If you've tried to do something a few times, you have a justification for becoming a bit better at it. If you haven't, you'll have to practice, find a teacher, read a book on the subject, or otherwise learn before you can increase or acquire that proficiency. Once you find a reasonable means of learning and you have some in-game time to make use of it (when in doubt, check with the Cobbler), you can spend your points.

Keep in mind that just performing an action once or twice doesn't give you a free ticket to keep developing it indefinitely. Using a proficiency a few times might allow you to put a few points into it, but just jumping back and forth over a wide creek for a while doesn't justify moving all the way from 8 to 13 in Maneuver / Agility / Running. Similarly, paging through a spellbook occasionally when you have a free moment probably won't teach you any spells. You can generally assume that the more experience points you need to spend to learn something, the more time and effort it takes a character to learn it.⁵

When it comes to justifying other paranormal abilities, you may have some new experience that gives you the power, or you may simply discover how to use a power that you had all along, or a new way to use a power you already had.

Predetermining Experience Point Expenditures

Cobblers concerned that their characters' experience points won't be spent in a reasonable fashion can predetermine the areas in which they can be spent. To predetermine proficiency areas, a Cobbler just needs to note the area to which she wants to restrict the points whenever she assigns experience points to an action on a deed record sheet. Typically, Cobblers restrict points to specific Tier I categories



Mr. Tiny Universe spent hours every day working out to achieve the "half-ripped" look.

(Prowess only, Eloquence only, and so on), spells only, or Renaissance Points only. For example, if a Cobbler writes "6 (Prowess)" by your experience point total after your deed description "Defeated Wattzi the Sorcerer's minions," you are only allowed to spend those 6 experience points on Prowess-related proficiencies.

Restricting experience points to specific Capabilities or Skills (or various other things) is also possible, but probably a bit too particular to be worthwhile in most cases.

Learning a New Spell

It can take time to learn a new spell. If the Cobbler wishes to prevent characters from spontaneously acquiring new spells without studying them first, he can require them to do a few things in addition to just paying the experience point costs. Generally, these processes are unnecessary at character creation.

Instruction

A character wishing to learn a new spell must first locate a copy of that spell. The spell can be in a book, on a piece of parchment, or in someone else's mind (provided they're willing to teach you, or you are capable of reading their mind for prolonged periods). This spell must then be researched.

Time & Research

A character wishing to learn a new spell must roll Intellect / Reasoning / Research. If she succeeds, she can subtract her degrees from 16 to determine how long it will take her to learn the spell, in hours (with a minimum of 1 hour). Failure means it took the full 16 hours, or two full days of study. A character can't study for more than 8 hours in one day without it interfering with her ability to learn the spell effectively. Cobblers are advised to find amusing penalties for those who try anyway. A bungle means that she spends the full 16 hours, but still learns the spell wrong. She can correct this after a few miscastings with bizarre results and some extra hours, but usually not until she's been inconvenienced.

Gauging Character Power

The total of a character's spent experience points is recorded on the front of his character sheet in the experience point section, in the blank labeled "spent." This number — sometimes called a character's *power rating* — can serve as a good gauge of a character's power.

Losing Experience Points

For all practical purposes, it's impossible to lose experience points. Once you've experienced something, it becomes inextricably a part of you, and it can't be taken away without killing you. The one exception to this rule is the possibility of certain specific kinds of memory loss, but this should come up rarely, if ever. Even if you can find a way for it to make sense, it's frustrating to lose abilities you worked hard to develop, and there are better ways to punish the players for their misdeeds.

⁵ One really good way to learn skills faster than normal (and save on experience point costs) is to find someone to teach you. Rules for this are provided on page 127, with the Instruction skill.

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 7

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Proficiencies are the competencies, or lack thereof, that characters have. With the right proficiency or combination of proficiencies, a character can attempt any possible action. For more details on rolling proficiencies to determine success or failure at actions, see page 15. For more on developing them, see pages 100 and 110.

One of the most important aspects of the Higher Arc system is the Abilitree (see page 100). Proficiencies are defined by the sum of the four ratings in the Abilitree — a character's Abilities, Capabilities, Racial Predispositions, and Skills. There are 8 Abilities, which are divided into 32 Capabilities, which are (in turn) divided into 128 Skills. Because of this, individual proficiencies aren't isolated from each other — they affect each other. Raising your rating in one proficiency will raise your ratings in similar proficiencies. The following pages contain descriptions of all the proficiencies and the levels of the Abilitree which affect them.

- **Description:** Descriptions are found with each of the Abilitree levels — Abilities, Capabilities, and Skills — so that you know what they, and the proficiencies underneath them, are used to do.

- **Sample Proficiency Levels:** This is a list of examples of some of the things you can do with a proficiency at different ratings. Seven levels of ability are described, though all the levels in between, as well as some above and below, can also be attained. Sample proficiency levels are provided at the Capability level of the Abilitree, and include examples of all four of the specific Skills which fall under them on the Abilitree.

- 2 Bungler. It's almost impossible for you to accomplish even the easiest actions.
- 6 Novice. You're vaguely familiar with the proficiency, but you have no experience.
- 10 Capable. You're no stranger to the proficiency, though you're certainly no expert.
- 14 Professional. You are fairly qualified and could become respected.
- 18 Master. People as good as you are extraordinarily rare.
- 22 Legend. Talent such as yours comes along only a few times a generation.
- 26 Divine. Even the gods are extremely impressed by you.

In the Higher Arc system, it's possible to be really, really good at things and successfully take actions which are damned near impossible in real life. You really might be able to escape from a locked underwater chest by picking the lock with your hangnail, or jump over a castle wall, for instance. A character with a proficiency of 22 is more than just highly competent, and she really should be able to do almost anything — extremes are the funniest, after all. However, some of the descriptions for proficiencies of 22 and 26 are so impressive that it might be better to assume they exaggerate — at least a bit.

Note that many players ignore the Skill part of Higher Arc's Abilitree system for the sake of simplicity. These players make proficiency checks at the Capability level of the Abilitree instead. Players using proficiencies at the Skill level

should regard the Skill descriptions as descriptions of what they can do with a particular Skill, while players using proficiencies at the Capability level should use the Skill descriptions to give them more information about what they can do with the Capabilities above those Skills.

- **Special Rules:** This explains any special rules associated with the use of a particular proficiency for times when measuring things in terms of different levels of success is insufficient. If you want to know how far your character can swim in feet, or how long she can hold her breath in minutes, you can use the rules described here. Many proficiencies have no special rules simply because no additional explanations are required, or because there are simply so many possible permutations that no manual could adequately describe them all. Special rules are described at the Skill level.

PROWESS

Prowess defines your strength and your ability to use it effectively. Courage and deftness are also components. Prowess controls your melee combat proficiencies, your ability to hold onto stuff, and your ability to carry things around.

Grappling

Grappling is your ability to use attacks which wrap around a foe. This could be via some kind of articulated (jointed) or partially articulated implement (including your limbs and other body parts), or it might be with a hooked weapon meant to snag a foe.

- 2 You might be able to put a caged bird into a sack, provided you leave the bird in the cage.
- 6 You usually only win wrestling contests when you can manage to make your opponent laugh.
- 10 You can toss a ten-year-old off the porch hard enough that he won't get back on.
- 14 You can pull a offensive comedian who isn't too combat-savvy offstage using a shepherd's crook without too much trouble.
- 18 You could snare a greased pig in a mudpit with your whip.
- 22 You can wrestle a full-grown cow to the ground and make her cry moo.
- 26 You could knock someone unconscious by slapping her with a five inch noodle.

Hooking

Hooking is catching a target with the hooked part of a weapon, such as an axe, gaff, shepherd's crook, grappling hook, or similar, in order to restrain it, pull it apart, or remove an object from its grasp. Those with high Hooking proficiencies have only their conscience and good sense to stop them from successfully ripping to pieces everyone they meet. Those with low proficiencies fall over backwards every other time they attack.

Lashing

Lashing is the art of using an articulated or flexible weapon (like a chain, net, whip, or similar) to strike an opponent

quickly in order to cause shallow, painful wounds, ensnare a target and restrain it, or remove an object from an opponent's grasp. A good lasher can cause great pain with a whip, use it to snap the wicks off of burning candles from across the room, or catch an entire swarm of bees in one money pouch. A bad lasher couldn't snare a sloth in a dragnet.

Toppling

Toppling is grabbing a target with a body part (such as the arms, hands, legs, tail, or whatever) in order to force it to the ground. Often, Toppling is a precursor to a restraining attempt with the Wrestling proficiency. Good topplers can take down gorillas and tackle giants. Bad ones are more likely to knock themselves unconscious by throwing themselves headfirst into a nearby wall.

Wrestling

Wrestling is the art of applying and escaping holds in unarmed combat. A good wrestler could hold four people in four entirely different compromising positions simultaneously. A bad one would have difficulty pinning a mouse.

- **Wrestling an Opponent:** Wrestling an opponent is merely a matter of rolling a Prowess / Grappling / Wrestling attack against him. Wrestling attacks can be dodged initially (before physical contact is made), and they can always be parried. Of course, if an opponent parries your wrestling attack with a weapon, any parrying degrees he gains apply to your limbs as a wound. This is a good reason not to wrestle with armed combatants lightly.

As long as two combatants are wrestling, or even if they're merely in physical contact, they will have more difficulty wielding long weapons against each other. To simulate this, subtract a combatant's weapon length modifier from every attack he makes against someone with whom he's in contact. Keep in mind that combatants can't dodge each other while they're in contact.

To break free from a hold, a character must beat the Prowess / Grappling / Wrestling check of the character holding him. At his option, the character with the hold can attempt to get a better hold by rerolling his check, but this means he's stuck with the lower check if he doesn't do as well the second time.

Strength

Your Strength determines your proficiency at carrying and holding on to things. This aids you in lifting armor and weapons, and helps you keep a firm grip on your weapon while parrying enemy attacks. It also helps you lift without hurting your back.

- 2 You are so phenomenally wimpy, you can barely wield your own arms.
- 6 You can knock down a cheap door with your shoulder in a few tries.
- 10 You can open most jars on the first try.
- 14 You can lift a gamer who's been on a steady diet of pizza and beer.
- 18 Your companions joke about using you as a pack animal.
- 22 Shall I compare thee to a vice grip? Thy grasp is

firmer and applies greater PSI.

- 26 You can tuck a couple of bovines under your arms and have enough strength remaining to bring in the groceries.

Grasping

Grasping is the strength of your grip and your skill at grabbing on and holding tight to something. It's useful in preventing yourself from getting blown away in fierce winds, hanging onto the merry-go-round, hanging from awnings, using your fist as a tourniquet, and many other things. A good grasper can crush a monkey skull with one hand, and her arms will rip from their sockets long before she lets go. Bad graspers drop their weapons on their toes and have difficult-to-detect handshakes.

Forcing

Forcing is your ability to push and pull things around and keep them where you want them. With Forcing, you can arm wrestle, reel in a person who's caught in a net, pull a jammed lever, or push a baalrogue around in a wheelchair. Good Forcers can single-handedly push down the support columns to collapse immense temples. Bad Forcers could be tied up by a rope made from lilies.

- **Forcing:** For every degree scored on a Prowess / Strength / Forcing check, you can pull or push 128 pounds.

Lifting

Lifting is your ability to lift heavy things. Wielding weapons, picking up anvils, and filling a shovel with dirt repeatedly in order to make a hole in the ground (a process commonly known as digging) are some examples of uses of the Lifting proficiency. Good lifters can lift a whole mess of dwarves or dig a ten by ten by ten foot hole in about ten minutes. Poor lifters can just barely hoist an ostrich drumstick to their mouths.

Note: Your Lifting proficiency also defines your Lifting Threshold. A character's Lifting Threshold is the size of the weapon which he can wield without penalty. For every point by which your weapon's Lift Rating exceeds your Lifting Threshold, you get a penalty of -1 to all physical actions (including combat) as long as you're wielding the weapon.

- **Lifting:** For every degree scored on a Prowess / Strength / Lifting check, you can lift 64 pounds.

Toting

Toting is your capacity to carry stuff, especially that which you wear or attach to your body, once you've picked it up. Good toters sometimes forget that they're wearing full plate armor, or can carry their cottages around on their backs. Bad toters are afraid to break large denominations of coins for fear that they won't be able to carry all the change home in one load.

Note: Your Toting proficiency also defines your Toting Threshold. A character's Toting Threshold is the size of the suit of armor which she can wear without penalty. For every point by which your armor's Tote Rating exceeds your Toting Threshold, you get a penalty of -1 to all physical actions (including combat) as long as you're wearing the armor.

Swinging

Swinging is your ability to use implements (including your limbs and other body parts) to exert force in an arc converging with a target.

- 2 You can chop bran muffins into two or even three pieces with effort, or cut butter with a hot knife.
- 6 Your wild swings occasionally inconvenience your foes.
- 10 You still need a bar stool to get the edge on your opponent in a pub brawl.
- 14 When sharpened, your fingernails make decent weapons.
- 18 You can anger dwarves by cutting off a few inches of beard each round.
- 22 You can sweep the legs out from underneath a horse.
- 26 You can use your quarterstaff to knock down straw, stick, *and* brick houses — no huffing and puffing required.

Chopping

Chopping is striking a target with the sharp edge of a weapon (such as an axe, claymore, halberd, or pick) in a swinging motion. Its aim may be to draw blood or slice open an organ with long, smooth strokes (as in the case of smaller weapons), or to cut and crush its target (in the case of larger ones). An excellent chopper can excise nearly any portion of a person's exterior anatomy without them realizing it right away, cleft shields in twain, lop off heads with parchment paper, or carve a note in a foe's chest as a means of simultaneously humiliating him and sending word to the enemy. Bad choppers miss when they try to cut down trees.

Sweeping

Sweeping is obstructing a target with a body part (such as a foot or arm) or a weapon (a staff, spear, broom, or similar) in a swinging motion to make the target fall. A skilled sweeper can knock down a person who is standing neck-deep in mud. An unskilled one would have difficulty sweeping someone off a tightrope or a rolling log.

Swiping

Swiping is striking a target with a sharp body part or extension of a body part (claws, fingernails, teeth, bladed gauntlets, or similar) in a swinging motion. Many animals and monsters tend to use Swiping attacks, although loonies and desperate people also resort to biting and slapping from time to time. Good swipers can use their own sharpened teeth or pinky fingernails as deadly weapons. Bad swipers inspire would-be failures everywhere with their brazen incompetence.

Whacking

Whacking is striking a target with a blunt or spiked weapon (such as a club, mace, morning star, staff, or hammer) in a swinging motion in order to bruise, crush, stun, paralyze, or render unconscious a target. It does Blunt damage. With a high Whacking, your foes look like burger when you get done with them. A proficient whacker could beat someone up with the ball and chain wrapped around her leg,

and even a behemoth might take notice of the savage pounding. With a low Whacking, you might have trouble beating a drum or knocking the wind out of a rodent.

Thrusting

Thrusting is your ability to make an attack with any weapon (including body parts) which moves directly from its origin toward a target.

- 2 You can punch a passive target to death, if you work at it steadily, and all day.
- 6 You could mortally wound a trussed up chicken.
- 10 You enjoy making holes in living things, but you haven't learned all the nuances of the art yet.
- 14 You can slay multiple blind kobolds in a single stab.
- 18 Your bizarre eye-poke attack amuses your friends and frustrates your enemies.
- 22 Your dagger is at rest only when sheathed in leather or flesh.
- 26 You can beat a mountain goat in a head-butting contest.

Jabbing

Jabbing is striking a target with the blunt end of a weapon (such as a cudgel, a staff, or the hilt of a sword if you don't mind holding the blade) in a direct motion. An accomplished Jabber can paralyze a rhino or knock out an elephant with a well-placed jab, or even puncture someone with a blunt object. A lousy one ends up jabbing himself in the belly most of the time.

Shoving

Shoving is forcing a target to move using a body part (such as feet, hands, a shoulder, or whatever) or a weapon (like a shield or staff) in a direct motion to knock the target down or push it away with a thrusting motion. Good shovers can tip cows and push baby dragons around. Bad ones tend to unbalance themselves and get a faceful of dragon manure.

Stabbing

Stabbing is striking a target with a sharp weapon (like a dagger, spear, sword, elephant goad, or similar) in a direct motion. A combatant seeking to stab a foe searches for an organ which he deems ripe for impaling and moves the head of the weapon toward its destination as efficiently as possible. Do it well and you can assassinate a whole squad of gnolls with an icicle. Do it badly and you'll have trouble stabbing a lake with an icepick.

Striking

Striking is hitting a target with a blunt body part (such as a fist, a foot, or a forehead) in a direct motion. Striking can be sophisticated and precise (as in the case of some forms of martial arts) or simply a matter of bashing at your opponent until she falls down. If you're a good striker, mystic ninja back off when you show your moves, and when you fight, your blows strike your foes like anvils being dropped on lunch meat. If you can't strike, you may not even be able to give a fellow adventurer a friendly punch on the shoulder.

MANEUVER

Maneuver proficiencies are those pertaining to your ability to move about nimbly and rapidly. It's made up of precision, deftness, quickness, and hand-eye coordination.

Agility

Agility proficiencies are those which focus on maneuvering through or around various mediums — over the ground, through bodies of water or air, or up vertical objects. Agility maneuvers include climbing, flying, running, jumping, and swimming. An agile person can perform these tasks quickly and gracefully.

- 2 You pass sinking stones on your way to the bottom of the swimming hole.
- 6 You can outmaneuver snails with no trouble.
- 10 You can walk on your hands for a few feet.
- 14 You're not yet a tree climbin', vine swingin' maniac, but you may be someday.
- 18 You can hop well enough to get accepted by a society of intelligent frogs.
- 22 You can crawl faster than most people can move on their feet.
- 26 It's easier for you to climb up the thirty foot vertical castle wall and climb down on the other side than to walk twenty feet to the entrance.

Climbing

Climbing governs your ability to move over different elevations easily, and to climb up and down things, from trees to sheer cliff faces. Bungles generally result in major setbacks or terrifying falls ending in ridiculously messy deaths. Good climbers rarely notice drastic changes in elevation. Bad ones take a half hour to get out of their sleeping bags in the morning.

- **Climbing Movement:** Any round in which a character wants to climb something, she should make a Climbing check. Once she's rolled, she can decide how fast she wishes to climb and apply a modifier from the Pace Modifiers chart (the climber can choose her pace, but this will apply fatigue; see the fatigue rules on page 120). It is not possible to achieve negative degrees on this check. For every degree achieved, a climbing character can move 5 feet in a round (unless she bungles).

Pace Modifiers Chart

<i>Pace</i>	<i>Modifier</i>	<i>Fatigue</i>
Very Slow (Fast-Walk)	-4	1 per hour
Slow (Jog)	-2	1 per 3 minutes
Moderate (Run)	+0	1 per 4 rounds
Fast (Sprint)	+2	1 per round
Very Fast (Dash)	+4	2 per round

Flying

Flying is the art of moving unassisted through a gaseous medium without the aid of the ground. This is particularly

important to sprites, who possess the innate capacity to fly, but it's also potentially useful to spellcasters with flying spells, people who get shot out of cannons, anyone interested in surgically implanting functional wings in his back, paratroopers, or just people who frequently fall from high places. Note that the proficiency of Flying does *not* actually grant you the ability to fly — it merely determines how quickly you can move through the air, given that you possess the capacity. It also doesn't apply to using magical or mechanical devices for flight. Good fliers can scoop things off the ground and fly away before anyone knows they were there, and move fast enough to cause a sonic boom. Lousy fliers usually fly straight down, or at least awkwardly, with many jerks and stops.

- **Flying Movement:** Any round in which a flight-capable character wants to fly, he should make a Flying check. Once he's rolled, he can decide how fast he wishes to fly and apply a modifier from the Pace Modifiers chart (the flier can choose his pace, but this will apply fatigue; see the fatigue rules on page 120). It is not possible to achieve negative degrees on this check. For every degree achieved, a flying character (usually a sprite) can move 20 feet in a round (unless he bungles).

Running

You can run automatically, but when it's a question of how fast you can go, the Running proficiency comes into play. This proficiency governs your competence at moving over the ground via any means, not just using your legs. It also applies to walking on your hands, crawling, leaping over things, pulling yourself along with your tongue, or any other form of self-propelled ground-based locomotion that you may be unlucky enough to have to use. Those who are good at it can run so fast they're a blur, and could leap from wyrm to wyrm in a skyful of unpredictable dragons. Those severely bad at it stumble about and have difficulty standing up.

- **Running Movement:** Any round in which a character wants to run, she should make a Running check. Once she's rolled, she can decide how fast she wishes to run and apply a modifier from the Pace Modifiers chart (the runner can choose her pace, but this will apply fatigue; see the fatigue rules on page 120). It is not possible to achieve negative degrees on this check. For every degree achieved, a running character can move 20 feet in a round (unless she bungles).

Swimming

Swimming is your proficiency at moving efficiently through a liquid medium. Obviously, the use of certain pieces of equipment (like flippers) or spells (like water-breathing) makes this easier. Note that holding your breath has to do with the Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Fatigue proficiency, not this one. Good swimmers might be mistaken for strangely-colored sharks. Bad ones think that the crawl is a skin disease, and sink even with the aid of floatation wood.

- **Swimming Movement:** Any round in which a character wants to swim, he should make a Swimming check. Once he's rolled, he can decide how fast he wishes to swim and apply a modifier from the Pace Modifiers chart (the swim-

mer can choose his pace, but this will apply fatigue; see the fatigue rules on page 120). It is not possible to achieve negative degrees on this check. For every degree achieved, a swimming character can move 5 feet in a round (unless he bungles). When Swimming, a character doubles his armor's Tote. Heavy clothing or equipment can apply an additional penalty.

Aiming

Aiming is your capacity to use ranged weapons to make targets out of whoever or whatever you like. Bungling an Aiming proficiency can lead to hitting yourself or a friendly target, or breaking your weapon.

- 2 It seems like every single time you try to work a catapult, you end up launching yourself.
- 6 You only occasionally get excited and inhale the dart when firing a blowgun.
- 10 Your enemies have more to fear from your weapon than your friends do.
- 14 Showdowns at high noon rattle your nerves less than they used to.
- 18 You can knock the nose off a clown facing the other direction with a well-lobbed stone.
- 22 You can shoot an apple off the back of a flying duck while blindfolded.
- 26 You can chop down trees with throwing stars.

Launching

Launching is your proficiency at aiming any relatively complex, heavy-duty long-range weapon, like a catapult, ballista, cannon, or mortar. When bungled, some of these weapons can explode or break in dangerous ways, so be careful with them. (Or don't — your death might be highly amusing for your companions.) Really good launchers can kill rabbits with cannons and leave enough meat for supper. Bad ones risk incurring multiple severe injuries.

Shooting

You can use Shooting to fire projectiles at a target with hand-held aimed weapons, like bows, crossbows, dart guns, and pea shooters. Really good shooters can perform elaborate ricochets before hitting a target and choose the severity of the wounds they deliver their targets. Bad shooters forget to load their weapons or accidentally plug their friends.

Slinging

Slinging is your proficiency with a weapon which must be slung to be shot or thrown, such as a sling, sling staff, lasso, or bola. Really good slingers can take out both of their opponent's eyes with one pea, or tie up multiple opponents with the same throw of the same bola. Bad slingers lasso their own heads or bonk themselves on the noggins with alarming frequency.

Throwing

Throwing is your proficiency at throwing something (daggers, rocks, spears, banana cream pies, your party members) at a target with accuracy. Those who can are able to throw things accurately while hanging upside-down. Those who

can't are liable to waste more dessert in a single pie fight than most people eat in a lifetime.

Dexterity

Proficiencies which require exacting control over your muscles and movements are the purview of Dexterity. Dexterity proficiencies require awareness of your position in space, muscular stability, and precision. While they are not necessarily fast, dexterous people are graceful and capable of contorting their bodies, sneaking, hiding, and messing about with the insides of other people's pockets.

- 2 You can't quite bend your knees.
- 6 You can make yourself unseen in a dense tangle of flesh-colored weeds on a dark night.
- 10 You can tie someone up tight enough to stop her from running off.
- 14 You can cross a rickety bridge.
- 18 If they see you at all, people mistake you for nondescript blob.
- 22 You slip your sockets in and out of joint without discomfort to move through prison bars that are a quarter of your size apart.
- 26 You can achieve near invisibility in the shadows of an empty field at midday.

Balance

Balance determines how well you can retain your equilibrium in situations where it's threatened. Those good at balancing can make their way across tightropes and unstable surfaces, engage foes in precarious situations, carry brim-full glasses of milk across mountains, and utterly fail to fall down clumsily from time to time. Those who can't balance experience dizziness at the first mention of heights.

Contorting

The Contorting proficiency defines just how easily and fluidly you can move your body into different positions. Contorting is commonly used in dancing, escaping from bonds, and breaking falls. A bungled role usually indicates that you move into just the wrong position and hurt yourself. Good contorters can escape bonds, walk away from falls off of giant sequoias, and touch any exterior part of their bodies to any other exterior part. Bad contorters dance like drunken, arthritic monkeys.

Sneaking

Sneaking allows you to move stealthily and quietly without being spotted and to obscure yourself from the perception of others by blending yourself into hiding places such as shadows and thickets. This is useful in sneaking up on, away from, or past people, staying out of view, or performing any action quietly. Bungling a Sneaking check usually means you become comically obvious. Good sneakers can ambush their foes with ease, hide on the dinner plate of starving giants through entire meals without being noticed, and dance behind enemy lines and frolic out with their prisoners before anyone notices. Bad ones tend to forget that they have to conceal themselves when lurking and are obvious even in a hall of mirrors.

Tinkering

Tinkering determines the extent of your proficiency at making careful, subtle gestures, often (though not always) to mess with mechanical devices. All stealthy or precise movements made with your digits, such as picking pockets, picking locks, picking noses, disarming devices, and writing calligraphy require Tinkering. Skilled tinkers can rob entire bands of people in the middle of an empty street, or pick reasonably well-made locks with spittle and strands of hair. Unskilled tinkers can't retrieve a single nose goblin even when their life depends on it.

Wits

Your Wits is your capacity to perceive the nuances of a transitional situation and react promptly with the appropriate short movements and gestures. If you need to size something up and react immediately, make a Wits check.

- 2 Bystanders might mistake your delayed reactions for excellent physical comedy if the results weren't so gory.
- 6 You intuitively understand the concept of three dimensions and can use it to your benefit while



"No, thank you, ma'am." — It's all in a day's work for Justice Guild superhero MegaCrossingGuard.

dodging.

- 10 You can hold your own against an opponent with a proficiency of 10 in Prowess / Swinging / Slicing.
- 14 You can ward off a broadsword with a frying pan.
- 18 You may or may not hit hard, but you're certainly going to hit first.
- 22 You can keep twenty flaming pins in the air at once by yourself.
- 26 You have nothing to fear from hailstorms, for you can parry every ball of ice that threatens to strike you.

Dodging

Dodging determines your proficiency at getting out of the way of dangerous things moving about in your vicinity, whether you're walking, flying, or burrowing. Those who can't dodge may or may not get out of the way when large, slow manure carts roll vaguely in their direction. Those who do it well can play dodgebolt with lightning and know their opponents' intentions the second their opponents do.

Initiating

Initiating is your capacity to make simple, reactive movements with haste. It's useful in any situation where taking an action quickly is of use, most especially combat. In such situations, Initiating determines your *initiative* (see page 25). Initiating also helps with other fast but small movements, like retrieving a fallen object or drawing a weapon quickly. When disaster strikes, bad initiators tend to stand there with their mouths wide open. Good ones can retrieve a weapon in the same second a foe knocks it aside.

Parrying

When sharp, pointy, or otherwise dangerous objects come flying at you, as they inevitably will, you might find it useful to be able to knock them aside. This proficiency allows you to do so. Usually, Parrying is used in combat, but even off the battlefield, it can help you avoid being struck by a stray tree branch or the odd falling rock. Those who can't Parry well block only the most sluggardly swings. Those who are able can slap shuriken out of the air with their bare hands and deflect multiple arrows with a single stroke of the blade.

Prestidigitating

Prestidigitating determines the extent of your proficiency at making rapid sleight of hand maneuvers. Juggling, catching a thrown object, performing magic tricks, reloading, and rope wrangling all require Prestidigitating. Should you find yourself in a melee with a complicated tangle of bolas wrapped around your head, you'll wish you

had developed a high Prestidigitating proficiency. Unskilled prestidigitators have trouble even holding objects; skilled ones can pull endless strings of objects seemingly from nowhere without using real magic.

RESOLVE

Resolve is a combination of self-discipline and stamina. It's willpower — not only of the body, but also the mind. Resolve is useful in resisting most of the huge variety of adverse conditions possible in gameality. It's also good for activating and controlling magic items, a process that requires an act of will.

Concentration

Concentration gives you the strength of will to focus on your long-term goals. It helps you fix your attention upon appropriate or productive things, rather than on whatever grabs your attention at a given moment. Concentration lets you resist the effects of distraction, fatigue, pain, and urges.

- 2 Your concentration is constantly disrupted by nearby conversations, trinkets, and specks of dust
- 6 You're usually either asleep or daydreaming about it.
- 10 You can concentrate on your studies until life gets especially exciting.
- 14 You can continue to write proficiency descriptions even as your business partner farts up a storm.
- 18 You know exactly when the sun rises and sets even when wandering deep underground.
- 22 A toddler on crack gets fatigued long before you do.
- 26 Having your limbs ripped off is inconvenient but not necessarily that disturbing to you.

Resisting Distraction

Resisting Distraction is your capacity to mentally sort out and discard irrelevant stimuli and focus your attention on a specific circumstance or set of circumstances. With it you can keep track of time, ignore annoyances, and keep your mind on what's important. Those bad at this tend to forget what they're discussing and get bogged down in the details of bad smells and loud sounds. People who are good at it can solve quadratic equations in their head while being set upon by bloodsucking finches.

- **Resisting Hunger:** For every two hours you go without food, you acquire a hunger modifier of -1. This has no effect on you until your hunger modifier completely cancels your Distraction Threshold (which is equal to half your Resisting Distraction proficiency), at which point the remaining penalties begin to affect you. This penalty never gets any worse than -4. It goes away when you consume a reasonable quantity of food.

Resisting Fatigue

Resisting Fatigue is your ability to stave off or ignore lack of . Characters with high proficiencies in Resisting Fatigue can ignore the effects of sleep, oxygen, food, water, and snack deprivation. People without the ability to resist fatigue are constantly tired. People with the ability can fight for long periods of time and go for days without sleeping; they some-

times eat more out of a sense that it's a good idea than out of any inherent need to do so.

- **Getting Tired:** Moving around a lot tends to fatigue a person. To simulate this, a character accumulates a negative modifier resulting from fatigue. When this modifier exceeds her Fatigue Threshold (which is equal to half her Resisting Fatigue proficiency), she operates at a penalty equal to the remaining modifier. Running, swimming, climbing, and flying are actions which cause fatigue. The rate at which you're fatigued depends on pace; see the Pace Modifiers chart on page 117.

- **Resisting Suffocation:** For every 3 rounds you're deprived of oxygen, you acquire a fatigue penalty of -1. This penalty does not affect you until your fatigue penalty exceeds your Fatigue Threshold, at which point you pass out (after a brief period of flailing about) and start to breath again. In any environment where breathing is impossible (underwater, in a void, encased in dirt, trapped in the lower intestine of a sperm whale), this causes you to start taking brain damage at the rate of one Minor wound for every additional penalty you accrue. At this point, the normal rules for wounds and Death Countdowns take effect (see page 42), and most people don't have much time left.

Resisting Pain

How much you can avoid feeling physical and emotional pain, or the debilitating sensation of trauma, is determined by this proficiency. If you're good at it, perhaps you're capable of reasoning yourself out of your misery, maybe you have rather dull nerve endings, or perhaps you can simply concentrate on other things and ignore your pain. In any case, having a high Resisting Pain proficiency makes combat less debilitating, torture more bearable, and sarcastic remarks less humiliating. This proficiency determines your Pain Threshold (see page 42), and you might also have to roll it on occasion. Those bad at it become suicidally depressed when people around them discuss unrequited love, and they break down in tears when they stub their toes. Those good at it can muster a grin as someone rips out one of their fingernails, or ignore a big gash in the jugular (right up to the second it kills them).

Resisting Urges

Urges are your basic emotional inclinations — the things your instincts tell you to do, like run away from a baalrogue or succumb to a seduction. Resisting Urges allows you to defy impulses which some part of your mind knows aren't in your best interests. If you don't do it well, you constantly go running off in search of whatever occurs to you (shiny objects, chocolate, or whatever) and you panic when surprised. If you're good, you're very disciplined — you can giggle at a tribunal of gods deciding the fate of your immortal soul, look into blinding lights without blinking, and only vomit or sneeze when you want to.

Endurance

Endurance is your body's capacity to bear abuse, mixed with a bit of self-preservation instinct and desire to remain healthy. With high Endurance proficiencies, you can shake

off adverse affects resulting from physical (as opposed to mental) phenomena, like disease, exposure, injury, and poison.

- 2 If you leave the confines of your large, sterilized, transparent barrel, you will probably get sick and die.
- 6 When the weather gets nippy, you exchange your high-quality mythrill armor for ordinary thick quilted feather.
- 10 You can get over a bout of the runs in a few days.
- 14 You can survive all day at a dwarven ale taste test, if just barely.
- 18 Even after incurring major injuries, you have enough time to write a message to your loved ones before death.
- 22 Extremes of color bother you more than extremes of temperature.
- 26 You can carry crude oil around in your stomach so that you always have lamp fuel when you need it.

Resisting Disease

Resisting Disease is your capacity to fight off diseases. In some cases, it also helps you resist their effects. Without this proficiency, you'll get pneumonia every time you wander around in a dungeon. With it, you can use your blood to sterilize medical instruments and give mouth to mouth resuscitation to a plague rat without suffering ill effects.

Resisting Exposure

Resisting Exposure defines your capacity to endure extremes of hot and cold, or other forms of inclement weather — it's your body's capacity to regulate its own temperature, and your ability not to let extremes bother you. If you can't do it, a one degree increase in temperature makes you complain, and another degree increase gives you heatstroke. If you can, you never have to worry about chapped lips, you can camp out on the rims of active volcanoes as long as they don't erupt, and you can crawl naked across entire glaciers without getting frostbite.

- **Resisting Fire & Ice:** Handle direct encounters with fire and ice (whether in the form of clumsily handled torches, magically freezing weapons, or crotchety fire elementals) if the fire or ice were attacking a character exposed to them. Note with fire or cryofire damage, a character's clothing or hair may ignite, prolonging the encounter.

- **Resisting Heat & Cold:** Adventurers occasionally have run-ins with temperature extremes. These can be handled as attacks rolled at a proficiency proportional to the intensity of the temperature extreme. For every degree of heat or cold to which a character is exposed, she acquires a negative modifier which depletes her Exposure Threshold (which is equal to half her Resisting Exposure Skill). Once her Threshold is depleted, she operates at a penalty equal to the remaining modifier. Once her modifier accumulates enough to cancel her Threshold twice, she either has a heatstroke, or she gets hypothermia and passes out.

Resisting Injury

The amount of physical injury you can sustain and the

amount of blood you can lose before you pass out or die is determined by your Resisting Injury proficiency. You'll usually be rolling it to avoid or postpone the effects of a lethal wound, or reduce the difficulty in using your injured body parts. If you have a low enough proficiency, you're dead, or you have a backbone of glass. If you've got a high proficiency, you can lift hundreds of harpsichords one after another without using proper lifting techniques and still not suffer back injury, and you can sort leisurely through your herb pouch for your preferred remedy after being struck by volley of cannonballs.

- **Starvation/Dehydration:** People who don't eat tend to die eventually as their bodies essentially digest themselves. For every two days you go without food, and for every half day you go without water, you acquire a modifier of -1. This penalty does not affect you until your fatigue penalty exceeds your Resisting Injury Threshold, at which point you take one Minor full-body wound for each additional negative modifier you accrue.

Resisting Poison

Resisting Poison defines your resistance to poison, including your tolerance for alcohol and your capacity to avoid becoming hooked on addictive substances. People who can't resist poison pass out when they smell alcohol and die when they consume really old cheese. People who can are able to guzzle arsenic and gobble nightshade without trouble.

Evocation

Evocation is your ability to activate and control all four types of magic items — talismans, relics, fetishes, and abraxases. Unlike spellcasting, which generally requires study, an act of will is all it takes to perceive, understand, activate and control most magic items. No intelligence is required, save an understanding of what an item's capabilities are — and sometimes not even that.

- 2 Your best hope for using that magic item is to bash your enemies over the head with it.
- 6 The gods often scoff when they notice you trying to use their relics, but every so often you get lucky.
- 10 Tame demons and spirits within items reluctantly obey your commands, so long as you don't get too outlandish.
- 14 You practically never end up inside solid objects when using items to teleport into dark rooms.
- 18 You can almost always activate the relics of god(s) with whom you share a few basic theological beliefs.
- 22 You can create acres of land mines with your Mystic Pineapple of Land Mine Generation.
- 26 You could defeat a baalrogue with a Wand of Orange Juice Production.

Using Abraxases

An abraxas is an item which contains a heavenly host — a demon or an angel. With the Using Abraxases proficiency, you can mentally request (or force) an abraxas to employ the magical effects you desire (see page 192). Abraxases are relatively rare, and some can be very "high maintenance" in terms of their personalities, but they never need to be

recharged, and they're often very powerful. On the down side, an abraxas can sometimes corrupt a user, or force her to do its bidding. Those unskilled in Using Abraxases take hours to will friendly angels into doing what they want. Those skilled at it can enhance an abraxas' latent powers, making it even more powerful.

Using Fetishes

A fetish is an item which contains a spirit. With the Using Fetishes proficiency, you can mentally request (or force) a fetish to employ the magical effects you desire (see page 192). Fetishes are relatively rare, though they are more common than abraxases, and somewhat less powerful. Like abraxases, they tend to possess feisty personalities, and they never need to be recharged. Those who use them poorly must strain themselves terribly to do even simple things. Those who use them well can coax even the crankiest spirits from sleep within their ancient items and entice them to obey.

Using Relics

Using Relics is your ability to invoke the power of an item considered holy by a deity or deities. Normally, avatars consecrate by infusing an item with the power of a deity, though gods sometimes create their own relics directly. Relics are often among the most powerful magic items, but they are harder to use without loyalty to a particular deity. People with low Using Relics proficiencies can't even activate the relics of their own divinities. Those with high proficiencies can use relics against the very gods who created them.

Using Talismans

Using Talismans is the proficiency of activating and controlling magic items created by mages through the process of alchemy. Talismans are significantly more common than any other type of magic item, though they are also more often cursed and less frequently of great power. Those unskilled with Talismans have difficulty activating items which were designed to work automatically. Those who are skilled can elicit impressive effects from nearly depleted talismans.

Resilience

Resilience is your capacity to take a magical pounding and shrug it off. Those with a high Resilience are able to bounce back from magical assaults to the body, brain, mind, and soul. Whenever your character is the subject of a spell, you have the option of making an involuntary Resilience check of the appropriate kind (although you don't have to if you don't wish it). Note that Resilience proficiencies only work against spells cast directly upon you; you get no Resilience check versus spells which impact your environment in a way which causes you harm (such as elemental attacks like fireballs).

- 2 A sleep spell will probably leave you in a permanent coma.
- 6 Incompetent witches turn people like you into newts in order to boost their self-esteem.
- 10 On a good day, a blindness spell might only knock out your color vision.
- 14 You can sneak a few of your own words into the

speech your enemy is using mind control to make you read.

- 18 You can resist most attempts to turn your soul into a newt's soul.
- 22 Piximath's Pernicious Paralysis merely gives you a momentary facial tick.
- 26 It is said that you are rubber, and your foes are glue (perhaps because spells bounce off you and stick to them).

Body Resilience

Body Resilience is your resistance to magical attacks designed to affect your physical form directly. If you have a sufficiently low proficiency, you get internal hemorrhaging from an innocent application of Matilda's Metaphysical Tickling Feather and fall victim to every stray curse involving warts, hives, and boils that comes your way. If you're good, spontaneous combustion spells leave you with merely a tan and chapped lips, and transformation spells designed to turn you into a duck just slide off your back like water droplets.

Brain Resilience

Brain Resilience is your capacity to resist magical forces designed to manipulate your automatic, unconscious processes, such as your motor functions or your capacity to sense the world around you. Unskilled individuals are the easy victims of irrrhythmical heartbeat and sphincter tremor spells, and instantly fall prey to Upchuck's Regurgitation. Skilled individuals can resist spells thrown by the pope of the Order of the God of Brainsludge.

Mind Resilience

Mind Resilience is your capacity to resist magical attacks which assault your higher functions — your capacity to reason, articulate, emote, and so forth. Those with pathetic Mind Resiliences go around believing whatever false things avatars want them to think (perhaps that the bartender is a hat rack). Those with high proficiencies can resist the effects of Hutmullet's Happy Helmet and ignore arrows sprinkled with Magic Love Dust.

Soul Resilience

Soul Resilience is your resistance to magical attacks designed to affect the part of you that lives beyond the realm of the physical, including your ability to sense the spirit world, store ambrosia, or live eternally. If you have a lousy Soul Resilience, a decent mage with few scruples and the right spells could turn your soulhide into a spiritual fuzzy rug for his nonphysical cabin in the afterlife. If you're spiritually resilient, your soul can withstand Osmibond's Severe Metaphysical Spike without suffering ambrosial drain, and your silver cord is more like a silver steel cable.

INTUITION

Intuition deals with thinking which takes place underneath consciousness. It's the capacity to process sense data and make decisions based on general impressions, allowing

you to observe your surroundings, understand them, and adapt naturally to them without having to really think about it.

Awareness

Your cognizance of your environment and the things within it is defined by your Awareness. Characters with high Awareness proficiencies can effectively use their senses to detect changes around them, estimate the values and functions of things, understand social nuances, and find hidden people or objects.

- 2 People talk about you in front of your back, and you *still* don't notice.
- 6 You can figure out how to stash your gold where a complete idiot won't think to look for it.
- 10 You can lip-read a few words here and there from a conversation you can't hear.
- 14 You are familiar with the smell emitted by a plussed item.
- 18 You can find a specific holstein in a field based on an artist's rendering of that field.
- 22 You can pinpoint the flaws in your opponent's weapons during combat.
- 26 Secret doors may as well have huge flashing neon lights on them as far as you're concerned.

Alertness

Alertness is your awareness of non-magical events in your external environment. It allows you to detect events taking place around you — an imminent ambush, a lethal gas, or a whispered conversation, for example. With practice, it also allows lip reading. Note, however, that Alertness does not help a person interpret events taking place around them. That requires the use of a Savvy proficiency, such as Discernment or Psychology. Really alert people can determine a person's most recent meal from her aroma. Oblivious ones fail to notice when someone walks over a pile of dry leaves right behind them.

Appraisal

Appraisal is your capacity to evaluate the value, function, or status of any object. Although you can't detect magical properties of things in this manner (that takes a Describing roll), you can estimate the monetary value of a magical item (given that you're already familiar with what it can do). Skilled appraisers can scan their equipment for flaws, estimate the value of a jewel, identify shoddy workmanship, make sure their beds are made well enough to pass inspection, or observe that a backpack is used for holding equipment. Really skilled ones can determine the age of a thing (or person) based on the taste. Bad ones have difficulty distinguishing a sword from a saddle.

Describing

Describing is a specific form of observation which allows a character to detect the subtle sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures emitted by all things with enchanted properties. By studying an item with as many senses as possible, a character can identify enchanted items and unlock the nature of

their properties. Indeed, if he is exceptionally skilled, he can also do this to a spellcaster, learning what spells that caster possesses (although this is notoriously difficult, and taboo in many cultures). Good describers experience distinct sensations in the presence of magic. Bad ones are oblivious to the many flavors and colors possessed by magic.

• **Describing Magic:** To describe something, you must tell the Cobbler what it is you want to describe and make a proficiency check, applying the appropriate modifiers from the Describing Modifiers Chart. Inability to employ all of your senses in the describing process makes the attempt harder, and lack of sight and touch is particularly limiting. To be able to describe effectively based on sight, you normally must be within 10 feet of your subject; to describe effectively based on hearing, you must be within 3 feet of your subject; and to describe based on any other sense, you must be able to touch the subject with minimal restriction. Unwilling subjects (people and objects with unwilling minds) are harder to describe. In addition, when other magical things are within three feet of the describer or the subject being described, they interfere slightly with the describing check (a -1 penalty applies for each item). Describing is easier when the subject's magic is currently in operation — as with a constant item like a plussed weapon, or an effect that is manifesting as you attempt to describe the person or item. If you achieve one degree, you can identify whether or not an item is enchanted (or whether or not a person knows any spells); for every degree you get after that, you can identify a single fact or property about the object or person's magic (Cobbler's choice).

Describing Modifiers Chart

Bonus	Situation
2	Unable to See Subject
-1	Unable to Hear Subject
-2	Unable to Touch Subject
-1	Unable to Smell/Taste Subject
+2	Magic Is Currently Operating
-1	Interference from Magical Residue (Per Item)
-2	Subject Has a Mind & is Unwilling

Searching

Searching is your capacity to find stuff — secret doors, hiding places, subtle markings, or whatever. Whenever you're examining a place or a thing in the hope of finding something, make a Searching check. Good searchers see secret doors wherever they are. Bad ones can't find the buttons on their own trousers.

Instinct

Your Instinct defines your most animalistic abilities — those which allow you to adapt to wilderness environments. Characters with high Instinct can live easily without the comforts of modern magic or mechanisms by exploiting their natural abilities.

- 2 Your habit of picking up and eating strange plants

- will likely get you killed someday.
- 6 You can piss off a wolverine.
 - 10 You can find your way through a relatively simple maze.
 - 14 You can train a falcon to retrieve objects and return to you with them.
 - 18 You can tell that the prince you're tracking will soon need to stop to reshoe his horse.
 - 22 You can convince a woolly mammoth to roll over and let you tickle her belly.
 - 26 You can navigate five-dimensional labyrinths blindfolded.

Animalism

Animalism defines your understanding of animals and non-sentient monsters, giving you insight into their communication patterns and allowing you to manipulate them. There are different ways to apply animalism — some characters prefer to cultivate an affinity with animals, while others prefer to command them. Most use different blends of these approaches. Those unskilled in Animalism have difficulty getting rabbits to hop or birds to fly. Those who are skilled can train spiders to write words in their webs, and can keep immense herds of sheep safe in wolf-laden territory without hurting any wolves (or sheep).

Herbalism

Herbalism is your knowledge of herbs, poisons, and the like, used to find, recognize, and prepare herbs and poisons for consumption or use. With the proper herbs about, one can enhance one's abilities, minimize suffering, and greatly reduce the possibility of death. Bad herbalists don't know the difference between ripe and unripe fruit. Good herbalists, given a half hour in the wilderness, can make the biggest apothecary shelves look bare compared to their herb pouches.

Navigation

When you have to traverse a baffling or hazard-laden environment, it's helpful to have some proficiency in Navigation. Navigation encompasses such things as your directional knowledge and your knowledge of potential hazards in an area. Practically speaking, this allows you to find your way through pretty much anyplace. Bad navigators lose their way on a straight path and get confused navigating their own backyards. Good ones feel at home in any environment.

Tracking

Tracking is your ability to follow someone or something based on the signs of its passing. Failure could mean that you spend hours walking in circles, following the wrong set of tracks, or following the trail in the wrong direction, or it could mean that you forgot to pay attention to other aspects of the environment and have thus bumbled into an ambush. A really bad tracker might be unable to track a herd of wildebeests which ran right past her, and she would have trouble retracing her own muddy footprints. A really good one could track an invisible gibbon across a rain forest canopy during a torrential downpour.

• **Hunting, Fishing, & Trapping:** Technically, hunting, fishing, and trapping are rather multifaceted activities. With hunting, for instance, you have to track down an animal, sneak up on it, and kill it; with trapping, you have to find an area frequented by the animal, set up a trap, and wait. When characters wish to hunt, it probably isn't worth subjecting their players to all the bother of performing all these individual actions, so you can assume that success on a simple Intuition / Instinct / Tracking check will bag their quarry (assuming they have the proper equipment — weapons, fishing rods, traps, etc.).

Savvy

Savvy is your capacity to intuitively understand the complexities of social situations. A Savvy character is capable of shrewdness and subtlety, allowing him to understand and form connections with people, see through attempts at duplicity, and win at games which emphasize personal interaction.

- 2 You spend the whole game wondering what's going on.
- 6 You know of plenty of people who deal in common, easily accessed substances (like the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, and the muffin man who lives on Drewry Lane).
- 10 You are skeptical of strangers delivering messages which tell you that you may have won a thousand geepie instantly.
- 14 Your wagers pay off more than half the time.
- 18 You almost always know exactly who to contact when one of your many contacts asks you for a contact.
- 22 You could immediately tell that story of the first mortal-occupied craft to land on the moon was a government hoax.
- 26 After ten minutes with a stranger, you can name all his childhood traumas.

Connections

Connections is your proficiency in finding and forming alliances with people who have access to things. It is often used to procure obscure or illegal items, but it can potentially be used to find anything. When used for obtaining items which are taboo, Connections can be dangerous if bungled — your connection might not approve of whatever it is you're seeking, or he might try to give you shoddy merchandise or false information. Bad connectors would have trouble finding one of the local taverns. Exceptional ones might be able to get their hands on a quantity of ambrosia.

• **Starting a Business:** To start a business, determine what exactly you want to do and how the business is going to work. Then roll your Connections proficiency and apply the result to the Business Success Chart, with modifiers based around the resources you're expending, the current quality of the economy, and the originality or overall quality of your idea and your plan for putting it into practice. The chart result will specify a multiplier for your average daily salary (you can apply this multiplier to the average income chart on page 144 to determine how much you actually make). In the

first few months of your business's existence, you should reroll on this chart once per month, changing the modifiers if appropriate, but also modifying your roll by your business' previous most recent level of success. After your business is firmly established, you should roll only once per year of game time, any time you make a major change to your business structure, or whenever the economy changes significantly.

Business Starting Modifiers Chart

Modifier

-2 to +2	Originality/quality of business idea
-2 to +2	Originality/quality of implementation plan
-2 to +2	Resources expended to make it work
-2 to +2	Current quality of the economy
Variable	Current success level of business

Business Success Chart

Connections Roll	Success Level	Description
X	Bungle	You seem to succeed, but then something goes horribly awry.
0	Failure	Your business fails soon after it starts. You lose your initial investment.
1	Minimal	Your business barely makes it off the ground, and you reap half profits.
2	Complete	Your business succeeds. You make full profits.
4	Excellent	Your business prospers. You make double profits.
8	Phenomenal	Your business is a sensation. You make triple profits.
16	Fantastical	People come from miles around to do business with you. Quadruple profits.
32	Phantasmagorical	Gods come from other realms to do business with you. 6x profits.

Discernment

Discernment is a person's ability to intuitively understand the nuances of a complex social situation and make good decisions about how to respond to it. In practical terms, it usually allows you to sense deceptions and identify situations in which something is wrong. With it you can spot insincerity and unmask conspiracies. Those who can discern are extremely hard to bamboozle. Those who can't fall prey to the same old tricks again and again, like the old, "your sandal is unbuckled!" trick.

Gaming

Gaming is your proficiency in non-athletic games, especially those in which interpersonal elements or chance play a large roll. Gaming can be used for such things as gambling and even cheating (although the type of cheating which involves deftness also requires use of Prestidigitating). Note that gaming is only relevant to an action if the point is to win (so roleplaying games don't count), and games like chess, which involve a great deal of strategy, have more to do with Logic. Amazing gamers win every game they plays the first time their turn rolls around. Bad ones might as well play to lose, because they never win.

Psychology:

Psychology is your understanding of how people think, feel, and act. It allows you to read between the lines of social interaction and analyze what people say and do in order to uncover what's really happening inside them. With this proficiency, you can cure the diseases of the mind, anticipate the strategies of your foes, and understand the motivations of your friends. Those unskilled in Psychology fail to identify sarcasm and don't notice when others are in mental distress. Those who are skilled could cure an unrepentant homicidal maniac of her violent tendencies in a few sessions of therapy.

Wisdom

Your Wisdom is both your knowledge of your world at large and your capacity to interpret events within it. Having a high Wisdom means knowing about different areas, cultures, and political structures (possibly even those of the gods), and being able to use your general knowledge about these things to understand new situations.

- 2 It would come as news to you that it's socially unacceptable to walk around naked.
- 6 You no longer believe every stereotype and cliché you hear, like that wizards are necessarily people with pointy hats with stars and moons.
- 10 You have heard the legend of the golden grease.
- 14 You know about the three evil sisters who share one nose, and you've heard some vague rumors about how to defeat them.
- 18 Your appearance is your only barrier to your passing for an average member of almost any culture.
- 22 You could run an ostensibly democratic country as a fascist regime without anyone of consequence noticing.
- 26 You know secret backdoors into and out of various afterlives.

Cosmology

Cosmology defines your knowledge of the basic structure of gameality — the areas and realms that make it up, the nature of the chain of being, and other such things. With a low Cosmology, you might think that Terrek is round and that the stars are giant balls of flaming gas millions of miles away. With a high one, you can escape gameality.

Culture

Culture is your knowledge of the collective culture of mor-

tals as a whole, including its patterns of beliefs, customs, social conventions, institutions, organizations, arts, fads, and leisure activities. Culture excludes legal and political issues, which fall under the domain of Politics. People unskilled at Culture might walk into a dwarven cities and make bold statements about being able to hold their liquor. Cultural experts can have an intimate understanding of a culture's secret rituals within five minutes of getting off the cart.

Legend

In a world where so many utterly preposterous things happen on a regular basis, it can be difficult to distinguish truth from falsehood. Few groups of people have kept accurate records for long, and most information is transmitted orally — when it's transmitted at all. This proficiency defines your knowledge of the many legends and bits of lore surrounding gameality — its history, races, civilizations, spirits, monsters, animals, and so forth. Legend can also be used to determine the nature of certain magic items, to the extent that that magic item has passed into the realm of legend and it's at least possible that you've heard of it before. People with low Legends tend to either be skeptical of all fantastic deeds or believe in them all indiscriminately. People with a high proficiency know incredibly obscure things, like the location of the final resting place of the Holy Cup of Antiup.

Politics

Whether it's formal or not, every culture has some kind of political structure. Politics determines your capacity to understand political entities — how they're governed, what laws they have, how they come into place, who actually rules them, how the rulers got to be in power, and all such similar things. Politics also includes your knowledge of the political structures of various cultures. With low Politics, you can't tell a peasant from a noble, and you don't know the first thing about kissing babies. With a high Politics, you could rule the world and have plenty of time to indulge your roleplaying hobby.

ELOQUENCE

Eloquence pertains to communication and self-expression. It allows you to convey ideas or inspire emotions in others using every possible medium — symbols, sounds, gestures, pictures, hieroglyphic depictions of lemmings, or anything else.

Creativity

Creativity is your capacity to create original, emotion-provoking art by selectively presenting some kind of material — sound, text, motion, goofy behavior, or whatever. Creativity involves all kinds of art, from the loftiest play to the basest pun. It also allows you to analyze such art. Bungles result in complete misinterpretations, offensive references, or horrifyingly bad, boring, or baffling material (though you will likely think it's great).

- 2 Even a troop of monkeys would find your comedy routine plodding, predictable, and borderline offensive.

- 6 You no longer believe that solid fields of color on canvas constitute great art.
- 10 Your songs contain a strange mix of musical clichés and innovative, interesting elements.
- 14 You can glean meanings from a text that the writer didn't necessarily intend.
- 18 Your skilled buffoonery sometimes makes your enemies giggle slightly in spite of themselves.
- 22 Cynical beings many thousands of years old find the way you relate your experiences to be refreshingly original.
- 26 Those who would normally kill a mime on sight would shed a tear upon observing your plight in an invisible box.

Literature

Literature is your ability to create art with words in either poetry or prose formats, and your ability to analyze such art. Those who are skilled at it can choose to offend or inspire a reader with only a few words. Those who can't write poetry which consists of words and phrases slapped together in nonsensical or cliché combinations and stories which are little more than idle musings regarding their feelings about trivial things.

Music

Great respect (or at the very least, a complete and utter lack of derision) is accorded to those who can manipulate the emotions of others via music. Your ability to compose music, play instruments, sing, whistle, and read music is determined by this proficiency. Those who really don't understand music cannot differentiate it from orc bellowing, clanking sounds, and explosions. Those who do can move others to tears with it, or lure enemies to their doom with the sweet music of their kazoos.

Performance

Performance defines your capacity to entertain people and manipulate their emotions. Skilled performers are good at storytelling, joke-telling, fortunetelling (though this Skill does not allow prediction of the future), clowning, miming, dancing, and performing movement-based arts like dance and puppetry (which generally also require Contortions or Prestidigitating). Performance does not include arts which involve affecting emotions (like acting and roleplaying); these fall under the Acting proficiency. If you're not a good performer, your attempts to tell fake fortunes are riddled with contradictions. If you're good, you can entertain peasants and kings simultaneously.

Visual Art

Visual Art is your capacity to create and evaluate visual works of art — painting, sculpting, drawing, and the like. Those who have a low Visual Art proficiency have difficulty drawing stick figures. Those who have a high proficiency can make art as easy or as difficult to distinguish from reality as they wish, creating art so breathtaking that those who see it nearly pass out from appreciation.

Elocution

Elocution determines your ability to express yourself in a coherent form, either by speaking, gesturing, or some combination of these. Characters skilled in Elocution are articulate and well-spoken, and excel at appeals to the intellect. As with many Eloquence proficiencies, bungling tends to result in miscommunications and insults.

- 2 You describe even wonderful things in grotesque terms.
- 6 You can teach people how to perform proficiencies with which they're already familiar.
- 10 You can sell a case of popsicles for about as much as it's worth.
- 14 Whether you're right or wrong, you win more arguments than you lose.
- 18 You could be an accomplished con artist.
- 22 They called you Cap'n Pedagogy at the university.
- 26 Even if you were stark naked in public, with a trout under one arm and one foot in a bucket of gelatin, people would take your words seriously.

Composition

Print is a rather different medium than speech. Composition is your capacity to convey ideas in writing — either exposition or persuasion. Those who compose poorly write with frequent grammatical errors, contradictions, obscure references, and strange sentence structures. Those who compose well make complex ideas seem simple; those who do it extremely well can single-handedly transcribe a fast-moving, heated discussion between multiple debaters. Those who can't do it make excellent propagandists — for their enemies.

Enticement

Enticement is the capacity to use emotional appeals verbally and with gestures in order to make things sound good or bad (whether or not they actually are). The skills of advertising, sales, and verbal propagandizing all fall under the purview of Enticement. Bad enticers might be able to convince others to give money to help starving orphans, but only if they give out free orphan "samples." Good ones can attract people to very lame sideshows, like the 120 pound man or the beardless lady, or even convince an intelligent fish to jump into a boat and lie there until it suffocates.

Instructing

Instruction is your capacity to teach to others any abilities or information (including spells, proficiencies, and some Benefits) which you possess. Bad instructors only teach their pupils how not to teach, and they don't even do a very good job of that. Good ones can take 15 minutes and turn even a clubfooted half-wit into a master of Wang Fu, or teach classic works of literature to trolls.

- **Teaching an Spell, Benefit, Ability, Capability, or Skill:** One way to learn a spell, benefit, Ability, Capacity, or Skill when you would otherwise have no way of doing so is to find a teacher. A teacher is a person who's willing to instruct others in improving their abilities, either to be friendly or (more often) in exchange for something. In situ-

ations where you would otherwise have no way to learn (see page 111, Restrictions on Experience Point Use), teachers are obviously quite useful. They also possess a benefit not associated with ordinary methods of learning — they can help you to learn more efficiently. A particularly successful use of the Instruction proficiency can allow your student to learn abilities in less time and for fewer experience points than it would normally cost.

An instructor can use Instructing to teach someone any proficiency, spell, or benefit that she has, though she can never teach someone to use a proficiency better than she can herself.

Instructing Success Chart

Degrees	Time	XP	Description
1	x1	x1	You can learn it, but at the normal rate for a normal XP cost.
2	x1/2	x1	You can learn it in half the time for a normal XP cost.
4	x1/2	x1/2	You can learn it in half the time at half the cost.
8	x1/4	x1/2	You can learn it in a fourth of the time at half the cost.
16	x1/4	x1/4	You can learn it in a fourth of the time at a fourth of the cost.

Minimal success means that your student can learn the proficiency even if he has no access to the tools of the trade, but he gets no special benefits with regard to how fast or how easily. If you bungle, something goes terribly wrong. If you're learning archery, for example, perhaps you accidentally shoot your teacher. If you're learning a spell, perhaps you learn it in such a way that something entirely unanticipated happens when you cast it.

Persuading

Persuasion is your ability to wield logic to accomplish your persuasive goals, or to make illogical arguments seem logical. Persuasion governs both honest and dishonest attempts at persuasion — that is to say, it determines your capacity to construct an argument regardless of whether that argument is based on sound principles or whether it merely seems to be. Still, false arguments are usually at least somewhat more difficult to support, considering that the evidence has to be misrepresented to some extent. Unskilled persuaders stammer and trail off at the most important points in the discussion, and the most persuasive parts of their arguments consist mainly of grunting. Everything a skilled persuader suggests, on the other hand, sounds perfectly innocent, and he can convince others to do stupid things, like purchase swampland on another terrace.

Emoting

Emoting proficiencies govern your capacity to express emotions in order to manipulate others. You can express the

emotions you feel more effectively with Emoting, or you can display entirely artificial feelings. Although words may sometimes be involved, Emoting is primarily nonlinguistic in nature.

- 2 Your idea of wooing someone is scrawling a bawdy limerick on the side of their house.
- 6 A small child would likely be unable to resist your bully tactics.
- 10 You can hide a feeling of annoyance or exaggerate it into full-blown rage.
- 14 Your suggestive gaze has made more than one person squirm uncomfortably.
- 18 You can make people honestly believe you truly do feel passionately about even the most trivial subjects, like the weather.
- 22 Grizzled mercenaries tremble in their boots when you breeze through the door.
- 26 The distinctly prude and markedly inhibited scream with delight at the faintest suggestion of your touch.

Acting

Acting is your control over the outward expression of your emotions. Acting is used most often in such activities as espionage or manipulation, but it can also be used for honest (or at least less deceptive) pursuits, like stage acting, impersonations, roleplaying, or panhandling. When you bungle an Acting check, you might accidentally announce your true feelings out loud, present some totally inappropriate reaction (snickering or laughter), stand there with your mouth hanging open, or convince no one but yourself that you feel a way other than how you really do. If you do it badly, you have such difficulty impersonating others that you can't even impersonate yourself; if you do it well, poor people will surrender their last coins to you because you can make yourself appear so pathetic.

Intimidation

Intimidation is your capacity to motivate others by making them afraid of you. Intimidation often stems from a fear of being physically harmed, but it can also be a result of more complex anxieties, so being large has nothing inherently to do with having a high Intimidation proficiency. Intimidation can be subtle or blatant, and it can be highly useful in getting what you want without combat. It is unlikely to make others appreciate you, however. Bad intimidators don't even put off skittish creatures with their hollering and stamping, and they get picked on in adventurer bars. Good ones can appear ornery or superior at will and can startle people right out of their pants.

• **Intimidating:** When attempting to intimidate based on the threat of physical force, the intimidator gets a bonus of +1 for every size level she is above the subject of her intimidation. Give additional modifiers if a character has a reputation for being particularly nasty (or nice). Complete success is enough to make someone mostly acquiesce to an intimidator's demands, presuming those demands aren't blatantly antithetical to that person's goals.

Seduction

Seduction is the art of behaving in a manner conducive to arousing other people's (or even your own) sensual interest in you. Although providing actual pleasurable stimulation is the purview of Treatment (see below), Seduction allows you to manipulate sensual feelings (especially sexual ones) through your choice of erotic words and movements. Those who can't seduce may have enough Attractiveness to make them more appealing than a side of beef, but their attempts are still not likely to raise anything but eyebrows. The most highly skilled can make even eunuchs (and other people who lack the appropriate parts) swoon at their approach, even if they've been mutilated.

Treatment

Treatment is your knowledge of what causes pain and pleasure to an entity, and your capacity to put this knowledge to use. It's useful in torture, interrogation, massage, or engaging in other intimate contacts. If you bungle, you may tickle your subject or poke her in the eye when attempting sensual massage, accidentally straighten out your foe's back problem while attempting to torture him, or forget to take your woolly mittens off before an intimate encounter. Someone with a sufficiently low Treatment has difficulty identifying their own erogenous zones and might make attempts to cause pain by shoving ice picks under a victim's fingernails seem more like a manicure. Those skilled in Treatment can ensure that someone's first time is a real pleasure, or make the strong-willed talk by showing them certain combinations of instruments and referencing their proper uses.

Subterfuge

Subterfuge is your ability to express yourself in a subtle and potentially underhanded fashion.

- 2 Your attempts to hypnotize might be mistaken for practicing the yo-yo.
- 6 You can communicate really basic concepts, like "I'm hungry," or "put all your money in a bag and give it to me," with gestures.
- 10 You can make a few basic animal sounds passably (well enough to fool most relaxed guards).
- 14 You can cover up huge scars and blemishes through the skillful application of makeup.
- 18 You can perform hypnosis well enough to cure a severe facial tick.
- 22 You could survive comfortably in a large society without ever speaking.
- 26 You can dress yourself up like a realistic-looking giraffe and fool everyone from wild animals to zookeepers.

Disguise

Disguise is your capacity to make something appear to be anything other than what it is. If it can be labeled with a noun, a qualified disguiser can make it look like it can be labeled with a completely different noun. Makeup, camouflage, and even style are subsets of Disguise. Bad disguisers think that they can fool people by insisting that they aren't

present. Good ones can blend into urban and wilderness environments, fool their mothers, and make turnips look like trumpets.

Entrancing

Entrancing is your capacity to delight people and make them appreciate you by manipulating the subconscious parts of their personality. Skilled entrancers are witty, charismatic, and charming, and can even put others into hypnotic trances with effort (or with very little effort at exceptionally high proficiency levels). Bad entrancers come off as about as delightful as an oily rag; good ones radiate personality and can easily hypnotize others into thinking they're chickens.

Mimicry

Mimicry is your capacity to exercise control over the muscles and organs involved in the production of sounds, allowing you to mimic different kinds of sounds in a variety of different ways. It also allows you to control the volume of your voice. Those who cannot mimic have indistinct voices and make crow impersonations that sound like dying bovines. Those who can are able to talk with their mouths closed, throw their voices, make themselves heard in crowds filled with rowdy drunks, and slip back and forth between different dialects and styles of speech, imitating any specific individuals they desire so well that even the people they're mimicking would be deceived.

Signaling

Sometimes it's useful to be able to get a message across without saying anything. Signaling is silent communication — the art of using gestures and expressions to get a message across without resorting to a specific sign language. Good signalers can communicate volumes with simple expressions and gestures. Signaling is good for bribing people without making a scene, and communicating with allies in the presence of enemies. Bad signalers make gestures and facial expressions which have nothing to do with what they're thinking (unless they're trying to lie). Good signalers can get across complex ideas with a few gestures and bribe people without ever seeming to suggest a monetary exchange.

INTELLECT

Intellect is your ability to process information, think logically and inventively, and remember important things which pertain to objects and ideas rather than people and environments. Intellect determines not only how well you learn about these things, but also what you know and how well you understand it.

Crafting

Crafting deals with the creation of relatively simple objects from basic materials, such as fabrics, woods, or metals. Though Crafting isn't artistic in the conventional sense of the term, some uses certainly require just as much imagination and originality. Crafting proficiencies are often useful in conjunction with Inventiveness proficiencies (Molding might be used with Intellect / Inventiveness / Structures to

craft a girder), Creativity proficiencies (Carving might be used with Eloquence / Creativity / Visual Art to make a statue), or other Crafting proficiencies (Assembling might be used with Intellect / Crafting / Molding and Intellect / Crafting / Carving to make a jeweled necklace).

- 2 You are likely to become enmeshed in your own creations, or rip a hole in them before you finish.
- 6 You know the metal has to go in the fire, which has to be really hot.
- 10 You can put a sophisticated puzzle together.
- 14 You can carve a nice chair out of a tree.
- 18 You can dazzle other crafters with your detailed knowledge of wax and candlemaking.
- 22 You could reassemble a shattered mirror so that it looks good as new.
- 26 Starting with a big hunk of raw ore, an open flame, and a hammer, you can make a functional cannon.

Assembling

Assembling is your capacity to put various individual materials together to form more complex items (excluding mechanical devices). Bad assemblers have difficulty inserting tab A into slot B, and probably mess up when trying to glue cloth to a board. Good assemblers know how to put components together in aesthetically pleasing, stable ways, perhaps assembling ships inside bottles, binding books without any equipment, or reconstituting sandstone from sand.

Carving

Carving is your proficiency in carving hard substances, such as wood, stone, gems, and (in some cases) metal, into a desired form. Bad carvers seem to forget not to hold the knife by the blade, and when they remember, they have trouble carving a stick to a point. Really good ones can carve chains out of jade or shape functional canoes out of rocks.

Molding

Molding is your proficiency in shaping flexible or fluid substances into desired forms — particularly metals, but also clays, waxes, and other malleable substances. The Molding proficiency encompasses the entire process of shaping an object, from beginning to end. For example, in pottery, it includes knowledge of how to shape the object and what to do afterward to successfully harden it. Molding also allows the creation of molds (useful in the mass-production of objects), and imparts the capacity to work a forge to produce useful metal items from ore or raw materials. Those who mold skillfully can create jewelry worth far more than the materials which compose them and make pots which are unbreakable, of great utility, and of immense beauty. Those who can't forge locks which open with a touch.

Textiles

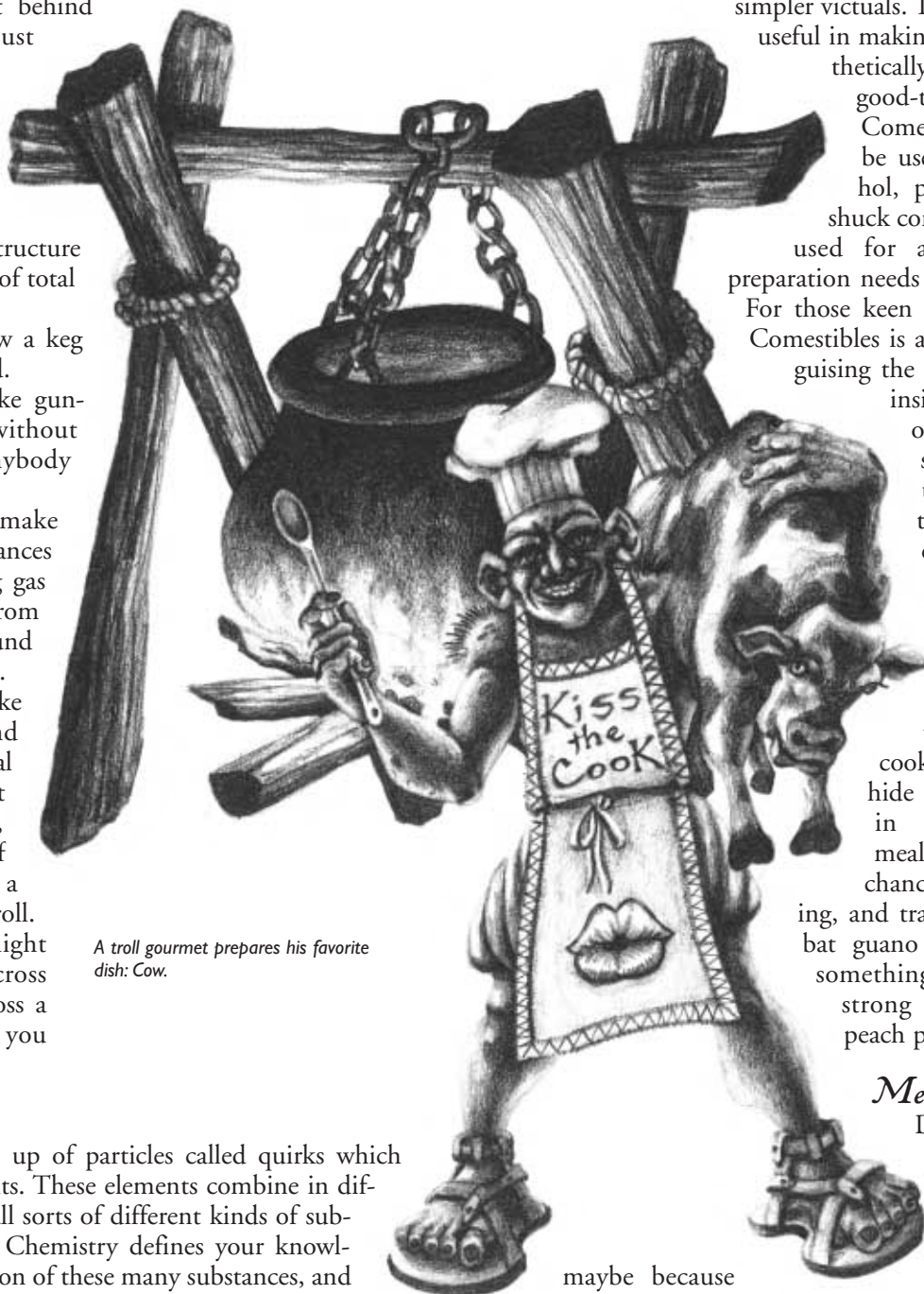
Textiles is your skill in working with cloth or clothlike things in order to produce garments, balloons, parachutes, tents, bedding, nets, wicker baskets, sails, mounted lifelike corpses, and the like. People who can't use this proficiency effectively make britches which leave the important parts uncovered and pillows which lose feathers in the night.

People who can are able to make funky and formal garments, lifelike stuffed possums, and silk armor.

Inventiveness

Inventiveness is your capacity to invent new substances, devices, and structures, or recreate old ones. It also allows you to assess these things and modify or repair them, if necessary.

- 2 The concept behind the wheel just baffles you, so you try not to think about it.
- 6 You can recognize a structure on the verge of total collapse.
- 10 You can brew a keg average mead.
- 14 You can make gunpowder without blowing anybody up.
- 18 You can make exotic substances like laughing gas or napalm from materials found in the woods.
- 22 You can make a filling and delicious meal for two out of a halibut, a pound of nutmeg, and a stale dinner roll.
- 26 People might travel across Terrek to cross a bridge you designed.



A troll gourmet prepares his favorite dish: Cow.

things. If you know a lot, you can tell the chemical composition of anything just by looking at it, and you can work with quirks directly if you have the right equipment.

Comestibles

Whether your motive is survival, artistic expression, revenge, or the drive for a more satisfying food fight, Comestibles allows the preparation of foodstuffs from other, simpler victuals. This is most often useful in making nutritious, aesthetically pleasing, and/or good-tasting meals, but Comestibles can also be used to brew alcohol, prepare grain, or shuck corn — or it can be used for any other food preparation needs you might have.

For those keen on assassination, Comestibles is also useful in disguising the taste of a poison

inside another kind of food. Those sufficiently unskilled have trouble chopping carrots and tend to forget to cook their food, or perhaps they set it on fire when they try. The best cooks, however, can hide pungent poisons in other people's meals without much chance of them noticing, and transform a pile of bat guano and straw into something that bears a strong resemblance to peach pie.

Mechanisms

Despite the fact that technology is pretty limited on Terrek — or

maybe because of it — a little

mechanical knowledge can go a long way. This is especially true because this proficiency requires you to harness no supernatural forces whatsoever. Mechanisms allows to identify, tinker with, modify, or create complex or semi-complex machinery. Those unskilled at Mechanisms confuse bombs with bear traps. Those skilled at it can defuse mines by stepping on them properly, design weapons (like firearms and

high-tech catapults), and create new technologies (like steam engines, microscopes, and monkey-powered dishwashers).

Structures

Structures defines your proficiency at designing and directing the creation of buildings, ships, boats, tents, wigwams, pueblos, artificial caves, mining shafts, towers, canals, bridges, tunnels, pyramids, giant hollow trees, and in fact any structure with the potential for instability or dysfunctionality. While the Structures proficiency can be used to design magical structures, naturally it does not automatically impart specific knowledge regarding any magical forces that might support an otherwise unstable structure. The proficiency also encompasses your capacity to evaluate a structure's soundness, utility, or aesthetic merits. Performing the various specific tasks associated with erecting a structure (shingling roofs, laying pipe, chiseling out a cavern, or nailing boards together properly, for example) may occasionally require Intellect / Crafting checks. Those who have a low Structures proficiency fail in their attempts to build forts from blankets and furniture. Those more skilled can create buildings which keep their inhabitants in luxury and stand for thousands of years with no maintenance.

Erudition

Erudition is your ability to learn and recall complex, abstract, or obscure knowledge. Erudition includes knowledge of anatomy, medicine, language, and abstract theories; it also allows you to remember all sorts of other miscellaneous details.

- 2 Your idea of philosophy is spouting off contradictions.
- 6 At least you can identify some of your major external appendages.
- 10 You can speak a language acceptably well, but you don't know big words like "sesquipedalian."
- 14 When immersed in a culture of people who don't speak your language, you can pick up enough information to ask about the location of the privy in about as much time as it would take you to use it.
- 18 You can embalm a dragon with acidic blood without leaving a mess or hurting yourself.
- 22 You know what words might offend almost any deity you're likely to ever encounter.
- 26 You can remember in vivid detail what it felt like to be inside the womb.

Linguistics

Linguistics is your capacity to translate or decode unfamiliar or partially familiar systems of communication like codes and languages, as well as your capacity to learn new languages. Linguistics also impacts your vocabulary and allows for unusual means of communication, like using mirror reflections over long distances. Low Linguistics means you're lucky if you can even identify language when you hear or see it. High Linguistics means you can communicate subtler meanings with smoke signals than most people can with words.

Medicine

This proficiency comprises your knowledge and memory of the inner functioning of the physical body in all sorts of beings, as well as your capacity to put that knowledge to use in diagnosing patients, administering first aid, performing surgery, and all medical procedures including postmortems. Commonly the Medicine proficiency will be used to keep people alive and help them heal quickly (see page 44), but it has quite a few other uses, including disposing of them properly after death, locating potentially useful organs they left behind, and making modifications and additions to the body. Those with low Medicine proficiencies advocate bloodletting as the solution to most injuries. Those with high proficiencies can identify specific details about a battle from the carnage.

Memory

Memory determines your ability to remember specific details about your past experiences. Use it whenever it's questionable whether you would be aware of a particular bit of knowledge, even though you were once present in a situation where that information was available. This can be useful in a large variety of situations — it might help you remember a complex set of instructions you only heard once, recall where you've seen that face before, or summon the image of something in your mind well enough to reproduce it accurately in a work of art. Similarly, with the appropriate illusion spells, it can help you create a realistic moving picture. A really bad Memory means you can't remember the details regarding anything that happened more than five minutes ago. A good one means you can recreate a long piece of literature after reading it with astoundingly few errors.

Theory

More than just abstract philosophical pondering, Theory defines your knowledge of the assumptions and principles used in analyzing and explaining phenomena. This applies to all abstract skills, including philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, and theology. Bad theorists remain ignorant of obvious truths. Good ones know all about how and why the universe came to be.

Reasoning

Reasoning is the ability to understand closed systems unimpeded by bias, assumption, or stupidity. In game terms, it pertains to situations in which it's possible to gather knowledge regarding most or all of the relevant facts before making a decision.

- 2 You tend to send your troops out to face the enemy one at a time.
- 6 You can count to ten if you use your fingers.
- 10 You can occasionally find useful information in the Omnicodex.
- 14 You know how to find detailed information about ages long past from rock strata.
- 18 You can calculate your party's probability of survival in your head.
- 22 You can figure out the directions of underwater currents watching from the shore.

26 When no one knows the information you seek, you can infer it from largely unrelated texts.

Investigation

Investigation covers your capacity to draw conclusions from basic observations about the world. It involves anything from detective work to understanding the physical sciences, such as physics, geology, oceanography, meteorology, and some of the more basic aspects of biology (complex biology, such as anatomy, is the domain of other proficiencies, like Medicine, for instance). A really good investigator can solve most crimes just by asking the suspects a few questions. A bad one might sometimes place objects in the air, expecting that they'll stay there.

Logic

Logic is your ability to analyze the relationships between elements in a complicated system. It's useful in solving puzzles and making decisions, and can be useful in formulating arguments. It also encompasses the ability to plan goal-directed tactics (strategy), whether in large-scale combat, one-person raids, covert operations, or even chess. A good logician can find holes in a contract with a powerful evil spirit. A bad one couldn't outsmart a jellatinous polyhedron on the battlefield.

Mathematics

When it isn't busy being magical, gameality works according to a set of mathematical laws and principles. This proficiency defines your ability to determine the relationships between the quantities at large in the universe and to express these relationship symbolically using numbers. Obviously, it also helps you to interpret mathematical formulas. The best mathematicians can actually understand economics and can calculate the precise angle of a slope to a thousandth of a degree. Lousy ones have only the vaguest concept of simple quantitative concepts like weight, height, and age.

Research

A must for serious librarians, scholars, spellcasters, and telepaths, Research determines your capacity to locate appropriate sources of information, disregard the trivial and irrelevant, and find what you need to know. Researching can apply to any situation where it's necessary to sift through relatively useless information in order to learn something important, whether the object that contains the information is an ancient tome of knowledge, an interview subject, or your forgetful friend's brain. Research is also an essential part of creating spells. A good researcher might be able to find all the information he needs by rooting around telepathically in the brain of an insane librarian. Bad researchers forget the differences between books and scrolls.

VISION & PRESENCE

Everyone has the innate potential to perform magic (located deep down in their Presence and Vision proficiencies). Only a few people learn to tap this potential. Those who do have numerous decisions to make about which proficiencies

to develop.

Vision and Presence are both Abilities which govern the use of magical proficiencies. Mechanically, both Vision and Presence work the same way, and each is associated with the same Capabilities and Skills. In the interests avoiding redundant information, therefore, these proficiencies are listed together.

Magical Abilities (Methods)

There are two basic ways to use magic in Paranesia — with Vision proficiencies (usually as an avatar) or with Presence proficiencies (usually as a mage). Though these methods are nearly identical from a mechanics point of view, within the context of the game, they are very different processes.

Vision

Vision is your ability to harness an external power source to cast spells. For most, this external power source is a god, and for these individuals Vision grants mystic insight into the relationship between gods and mortals. It allows the use of prayers and rituals to invoke desired effects from a worshipped divinity — to cast and counter avatar spells, and to craft (but not use) relics, one kind of magic item. Vision proficiencies are usually activated with devotion, prayers, and rituals (see pages 176-177). Occasionally, characters will use Vision to draw power from things other than deities, such as items (like green rings or magic pajamas).

Presence

Presence, on the other hand, is your ability to cast spells from an internal power source, such as your own ambrosia. Presence is the self-assurance, pluck, and pride that allows a mere mortal to stand resolute against the deities and enforce her will on gameality with magic. With Presence, mages translate worship into ambrosia in their own brains, bypassing the traditional method of worshipping a deity to cast and counter spells, and to craft (but not use) talismans, another kind of magic item. Presence proficiencies are usually activated with chants, formulae, and components (see pages 176-177). Occasionally, characters will use Presence to draw power from things other than their personal ambrosial reserves (like mutant abilities).

Magical Capabilities (Arts)

Though mages and avatars work their magic via very different methods, both describe it using the same four arts — Aether, Cosmos, Matter, and Force.

- **Aether:** Aether is the magic of the spiritual. It governs that which is made of aether, such as souls and minds. Raising the dead, dominating someone's mind, driving away a hostile spirit, or capturing someone's soul and baking it into a muffin are examples of Aether magic.

- **Cosmos:** Cosmos is magic involving manipulations of the four-dimensional continuum of spacial and temporal coordinates that make up all of gameality and beyond. Flying, looking into the future, binding a person to a location, or teleporting an unlocked door in to replace a locked one are all Cosmos effects.

¹ Or not good for the story — that can be fun, too.

- **Force:** Force magic centers on the creation and manipulation of energies, from the power of electricity to the holy force of a divinity. Force magic includes fireballs, circles of protection, storm summoning, and making a force field which people can pass through but clothing can't.

- **Matter:** Matter is magic involving manipulation of the material world — all the liquid, solid, and gaseous elements mortals normally perceive. Creating food out of air, accelerating the growth of a plant, melting rocks, or foiling a foe by making gelatin coalesce around him are all Matter effects.

Magical Skills

Beneath both the Presence and the Vision versions of each of the four magical arts, Aether, Cosmos, Matter, and Force, there are four Skills — Activating, Blocking, Infusing, and Powering. (Since the use of each of these Skills depends almost entirely on what spells you use, the following magical Skills lack descriptions of what you can do at individual skill levels.)

Activating

Activating is, quite simply, your skill in activating any supernatural or paranormal ability of the appropriate Method and Art. Usually, this means casting a spell. For example, with the Activating Skill under Presence / Matter you can cast Magular Matter spells. To cast a spell, simply roll the relevant Activating Skill and consult the spell description for the results. Note that you can only cast spells which you've learned as Castable (not Infusible). Also, you cannot simply keep casting spells indefinitely — you are limited by the extent of your Powering proficiency.

Blocking

Blocking is the capacity to stop any supernatural or paranormal ability from coming into existence, or to destroy an already existing one. Usually, Blocking means countering a spell. Although you don't need to know the spell you wish to counter, you must possess at least one spell of the same Method and Art in order to attempt to do so. Hence, Avatars cannot counter spells cast by Mages or vice versa, and knowing an Aether spell won't help you counter a Cosmos spell — you need to know at least one spell to counter it. You can't weaken an effect and then counter it again to destroy it, and others can't help you do it — everyone has to attempt it individually. A Blocking roll which negates all the degrees of the magical effect effectively destroys that magic, however.

Infusing

Infusing is your capacity to infuse power of an appropriate Method and Art into an object for the purposes of giving power to that object. Infusing is usually done in order to create talismans with alchemy (for mages) or relics with consecration (for avatars) For example, with the Infusing proficiency under Presence / Cosmos, you can infuse magular Cosmos spells into items. Note that you can only infuse spells which you've learned as Infusible (not Castable).

Powering

Powering is your ability to use your power source effectively in order to activate whatever supernatural or paranormal abilities you have. Usually, this means channeling (Powering) the ambrosia contained within your soul into spells, thus fueling them; infusing ambrosia into objects to create magic items (see Infusing, above); or countering a spell. Of course, you can only power or counter spells of the appropriate Art and Method — for example, with the Powering proficiency under Vision / Force, you can either cast, counter, or infuse Avaticular Force spells. The Powering proficiency is rarely rolled. Rather, it defines your Powering Threshold (see page 41 for rules), which determines how many spells you can cast before you need to get some rest and recharge your Ambrosia.

IDIOSYNCRASIES

Proficiencies represent a broad range of competencies (or incompetencies, as the case may be) that it's possible for a character to have. However, there are other possibilities. What if you want your character to be capable of breathing fire or of intimidating people with vehement cursing? What if you want to be an outlaw on the run from the mustache police, or the child of a well-known psychopath? If you want such special advantages and disadvantages, you can take Idiosyncrasies. Idiosyncrasies consist of Benefits (advantages which cost experience points) and Drawbacks (disadvantages which grant experience points), and occasionally neutral characteristics which are available for free (as they have an equal number of positive and negative elements). All characters are assigned a few Idiosyncrasies automatically (based on the genetic and cultural influences of their race), but you can take as many others as you wish (as long as you have the experience points to spend, and you can explain to the Cobbler why it's good for the story).¹ For space reasons, only a few nonracial Benefits and Drawbacks are provided here, but you are encouraged to make up your own.

Making Your Own Idiosyncrasies

When you do make up your own Benefits and Drawbacks, the Cobbler can use the Idiosyncrasy Experience Point Guidelines Chart for a rough idea about how much each should cost or how much each should be worth. Just estimate the utility of a Benefit or the inconvenience of a Drawback on the chart's scale and select the corresponding number on the chart. Then decide how often the Benefit or Drawback actually affects the character, select that number from the chart, and add it to the first number. If the number ends up at zero, the Idiosyncrasy is neutral and neither costs anything nor imparts any extra experience. Otherwise, you have some idea about how much it's worth. Please remember, however, that the chart isn't meant as the end all of experience point cost/value determination; Cobblers should increase or decrease the results as they see fit, and no players should be allowed to make burnt offerings to the chart.

Idiosyncrasy Experience Point Guidelines Chart

<i>Extent</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>XP</i>	<i>Utility (Benefit/Drawback)</i>
+8	Always	32	Incredible / Horrible
+4	Often	24	Excellent / Nasty
+0	Sometimes	16	Good / Bad
-4	Occasionally	8	Decent / Irritating
-8	Rarely	0	Marginal / Irrelevant

Altering Benefits, Drawbacks, & Idiosyncrasies After the Fact

Under most circumstances, Benefits and Drawbacks are permanent once they've been decided on at character creation, and they cannot be altered or ignored later. Still, they can change as a result of circumstance, and when they do, there is rarely any experience point cost or remittance. Characters who stick their heads into meat grinders don't get their experience points back for losing their telepathic ability Benefits, nor are those who drink Potions of Increase Attractiveness forced to buy the increased rating. Still, at the Cobbler's discretion, characters can pay experience points in cases where it's necessary to impose a suitable price for the Benefit where none would otherwise exist. Your Cobbler might rule that you can jack your Attractiveness up a notch if you change your hairstyle and start to bathe regularly, but only if you pay the experience point cost to do so. Similarly, personality problems and some other sundry Drawbacks can be "bought off" as the game progresses. As your character matures, for example, you might want him to grow beyond his Thumbs Nose at Authority at Every Available Opportunity Drawback. To buy off a Drawback, you spend some or all of the experience points you originally got for it (Cobbler's discretion).

Inherent Idiosyncrasies

All characters have an Attractiveness, and with the exception of those missing their hands, all have a Handedness. No matter how much players whine, the Cobbler should insist that they all choose one of each, although benevolent Cobblers might allow them to make up some new categories.

Handedness

Choose whether you want to be right- or left-handed, or ambidextrous. Needless to say, you can't choose more than one of these unless you have more than two hands. If you don't bother deciding your Handedness, you're assumed to be right-handed.

- **Right Handed:** You're better at using your right hand than your left, giving you at least -2 to all actions you undertake using only your left hand. [0 Point Idiosyncrasy]

- **Left Handed:** You're better at using your left hand than your right, giving you at least -2 to all actions you undertake using only your right hand. [0 Point Idiosyncrasy]

- **Ambidextrous:** You can use either hand without penalty. [8 Point Benefit]

Attractiveness

Attractiveness is a measure of how good-looking a character is. For convenience, everyone's appearance is rated on an objective scale (presumably one which conforms to whatever consensus you can scare up in your gaming group). Even so, do remember that there are plenty of exceptions to attractiveness standards. Even a ravishing appearance can seem dull if the person behind it is abrasive or dimwitted, some people might prefer partners who are generally regarded as ugly, and beauty affects different people to different extents. Some people don't much care — neither trolls nor orcs place much importance on physical beauty, for instance.

Every race has a different base Attractiveness Rating (see the Race Attractiveness Benchmark chart or the racial descriptions, see below). Moving up a single level from this base rating costs 4 experience points. For example, humans have a base Attractiveness of Commonplace. Thus, for a human, moving down to Unsightly would yield an extra 4 experience points, while moving all the way down to Sickening would grant 12. Moving up to Gorgeous, on the other hand, would cost 8. Changing a Commonplace Attractiveness to a Quirky-Looking Attractiveness costs nothing. Needless to say, the majority of people are Commonplace, and the more extreme an Attractiveness, the rarer it is. The two most extreme Attractiveness Ratings (Hellenic and Gorgonic) are not available to starting player characters.

Race Attractiveness Benchmark Chart

<i>Race</i>	<i>Appearance</i>	<i>Value</i>
Treeples	Handsome	+4
Dwarves	Unsightly	-4
Elves	Gorgeous	+8
Halflings	Commonplace	+0
Humans	Commonplace	+0
Orcs	Ugly	-8
Sprites	Handsome	+4
Trolls	Ugly	-8

- **Hellenic (also called Adonic):** You are supernaturally attractive. Anyone who makes eye contact with you must roll a Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges check or fall so blindly in love with you that they will do utterly anything for you without question (especially crazy actions allow the bewitched character to make another check). Even if they don't fall prey to your charms, you can still manipulate them at +6. Even people of inappropriate genders and sexual orientations sometimes have trouble concentrating while in your presence, and you have a +3 to manipulating them. [Benefit Not Available to PCs]

- **Stunning:** You are incredibly alluring. This has obvious advantages, although it can get pretty annoying dealing with jealousy, avoiding would-be suitors, and turning down propositions all the time. You get +4 to manipulating people of an appropriate gender and sexual orientation and +2 to

manipulating others. [Variable Point Benefit]

- **Gorgeous:** You're generally very well-received because of your looks. Strangers tend to trust you and go out of their way to help you. +2 to manipulating people who would likely be attracted to a person of your gender and +1 to manipulating others. [Variable Point Benefit/Idiosyncrasy]

- **Handsome:** You're attractive enough to be well-liked, and you can usually get a date provided you have passable social skills. You have +1 to manipulating people who would likely be attracted to a person of your gender. [Variable Point Benefit/Idiosyncrasy/Drawback]

- **Commonplace:** For better or worse, people tend neither to ignore nor to pay particular attention to you. [Variable Point Benefit/Idiosyncrasy/Drawback]

- **Quirky-Looking:** Different people react to you in different ways — sometimes as if you were Handsome, sometimes as if you were Unsightly, sometimes as if you were Commonplace. When in doubt, determine the result randomly. [Variable Point Benefit/Idiosyncrasy/Drawback]

- **Unsightly:** You are slightly unpleasant looking. Most people ignore you most of the time. You get -1 to manipulating most anyone. [Variable Point Benefit/Idiosyncrasy/Drawback]

- **Ugly:** Unless they can look past your appearance, most people avoid or pity you. The best you can normally hope for is to be left alone. All this time to yourself can be useful if you're an unscrupulous sort, or if you just prefer to be alone, but it can get pretty lonely. You get -2 to manipulating most anyone. [Variable Point Idiosyncrasy/Drawback]

- **Sickening:** Perhaps you were mutilated, or maybe you were born this way. In any case, your appearance tends to provoke disgust. Unless you're particularly intimidating, you're probably often the object of staring, ridicule, contempt, and harassment. In extreme situations, your grotesque appearance may induce the weak of stomach to vomit, and particularly cruel people might even attack you on sight. On the plus side, even an orc probably wouldn't molest you. You get -4 to manipulating most anyone. [Variable Point Drawback]

- **Gorgonic:** You are preternaturally unattractive — so ugly, in fact, that something supernaturally bad will happen to anyone who merely looks you in the eye and fails some appropriate resisting check at -4. Onlookers might turn to stone, or into pillars of salt; go blind, implode, or vomit out their own entrails. Alternatively, they may attempt to rip holes in the fabric of gameality to escape your gaze — chose the type of supernaturally bad thing you inflict when selecting your Attractiveness. You get -6 to manipulating people who know how unattractive you are. [Drawback Not Available to PCs]

Racial Idiosyncrasies

Every race has a number of Benefits and Drawbacks which, under normal circumstances, automatically apply to its members. Although each racial Benefit or Drawback lists an experience point cost (for Benefits) or a number of free experience points (for Drawbacks), characters should not spend their starting experience points on the Idiosyncrasies associated with their races — all these Benefits and Drawbacks are

Benefits & Drawbacks Chart

<i>Name</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>XP Cost</i>	<i>Type</i>
Addictive Personality	Halflings	-4	Drawback
Apparent Agelessness	Elves	+8	Benefit
Berserking	Treeples	+20	Benefit
Butt Grip	Trolls	+16	Benefit
Commodity Body Part (Wings)	Sprites	-20	Drawback
Cultural Restriction (Must Be Reserved)	Treeples	-16	Drawback
Cultural Restriction (Must Behave Violently)	Orcs	-16	Drawback
Cultural Restriction (Must Promote Environment)	Treeples	-8	Drawback
Cultural Restriction (Must Wear Beard)	Dwarves	-4	Drawback
Dislike Bright Lights	Trolls	-4	Drawback
Egocentric Worldview	Trolls	-8	Drawback
Fear Immunity	Trolls	+28	Benefit
Grammatical Incompetence	Trolls	-36	Drawback
Hand & Foot Temperature Resistance	Halflings	+8	Benefit
Intimidation Swearing	Dwarves	+12	Benefit
Isolated Culture	Treeples	-8	Drawback
Majority Race Member	Humans	+16	Benefit
Orc Poison Immunity	Orcs	+8	Benefit
Orcish Mating Cycle	Orcs	-4	Drawback
Plantlike Appearance	Treeples	+12	Benefit
Racial Stereotype (Amazing)	Elves	+0	Idiosyncrasy
Racial Stereotype (Burglar)	Halflings	-4	Drawback
Racial Stereotype (Greedy)	Dwarves	-8	Drawback
Racial Stereotype (Stupid)	Trolls	-8	Drawback
Racial Stereotype (Tricky)	Sprites	-12	Drawback
Rapid Healer	Orcs	+24	Benefit
Regenerating Magic Wings	Sprites	+40	Benefit
Roll Running	Halflings	+16	Benefit
Smell Minerals	Dwarves	+8	Benefit
Tough Hide	Trolls	+36	Benefit
Underground Spacial Acuity	Dwarves	+12	Benefit
Venomous Bite	Orcs	+12	Benefit
Versatile Sleeper	Sprites	+4	Benefit
Weather Comfort	Treeples	+12	Benefit

automatic, and all balance when you take into account Attractiveness (see above). This leaves no race with an advantage over any other. Experience point costs are provided, however, for a few reasons.

First, knowing how much each Racial Idiosyncrasy is worth enables you to customize your character by choosing to forgo certain Benefits in exchange for extra experience

points, or spend experience points to buy off Drawbacks. In the interests of making unconventional characters, players are encouraged to do this (again, assuming sufficient justifications can be invented). Second, it's possible that your Cobbler might allow characters to take Racial Benefits and Drawbacks which aren't associated with their races — that is, if you come up with a suitable justification. For example, if your halfling character has been raised by trolls, she might gain the Grammar Incompetence Drawback, or if someone swapped a strange potion for your orc character's baby bottle, he may have been granted the Apparent Agelessness Benefit very early on.

Note that the majority of these Benefits and Drawbacks take the form of cultural restrictions and stereotypes rather than absolute determinations about your personality. That's because it's important for you to create variations on racial tendencies and stereotypes rather than simply bow to what's been done before. If you want to restrict your character's personality with your own Benefits and Drawbacks, however, you are welcome to do so.

The following is a list of all the racial Benefits and Drawbacks.

- **Addictive Personality** [Halflings]: You become addicted rather more easily than most. Although you may very likely be resistant to trying new things, whenever a new experience leads to favorable results (and sometimes even when it doesn't), you tend to become obsessed with that type of experience. Occasionally, when you have a favorable experience with something new and significant, you pursue that experience with an unhealthy frequency. In addition, you are at -1 to Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Poison checks when it comes to substance addiction. [4 Point Drawback]

- **Apparent Agelessness** [Elves]: After you reach your mid-twenties, you no longer show any exterior sign of aging. This is nice because you enjoy the benefits of a high Appearance Rating your whole life, and because people can't identify your age. [8 Point Benefit]

- **Berserking** [Dryads]: You have the capacity to single-mindedly wig out in combat when you become upset. While Berserking, you can't make called shots, you can't dodge or parry, you can't switch opponents until the one you're attacking collapses, you can't attack more than one person in the same round, and you must attack the object of your rage until you succeed in killing her or until something stops you (even if it's your own death). In addition, trying to think about anything besides destroying whatever you're destroying requires a Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Distraction check. However, the number of degrees you achieve on your attack rolls is doubled (before you add in any other degree bonuses). To go Berserk, make a Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Distraction check modified by -4 (this modifier can be ignored or even made positive if you have some specific reason to be angry). Berserking relies on gathering a lot of emotional momentum, and it can be hard to stop — characters must make Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Distraction check at -2. A Berserking character will also cease to rage uncontrollably if knocked unconscious, put to sleep, or otherwise forced to remain still for a few minutes. Though Dryads have this enhancement automatically (it's called

being roused), people who have had some kind of special Spaz Training or those who naturally possess a violently crazy demeanor can buy it. [20 Point Benefit]

- **Butt Grip** [Trolls]: You have an amazing "butt grip," allowing you to clench objects between your "cheeks" just as tightly as you could with a single hand. Treat this Benefit as an extra hand which is at -6 to everything except holding onto things. Common uses of the Benefit include preventing yourself from being jerked around in turbulence, holding onto objects when your hands are full, and terrifying foes by threatening to clench them. It can even be used to attack (at the -6 penalty, because you still have a reduced capacity to maneuver this part of your anatomy and because you must face away from your foe to attack). Alternatively, you can simply grab a person with your hands (an unmodified Prowess / Grappling / Wrestling attack — see the rules for Hand Grab) and stick them between your cheeks (switching your grip takes one extra action). Use your Prowess / Strength / Grasping proficiency to keep a grip on a foe as per the rules for Wrestling on page 115. [16 Point Benefit]

- **Commodity Body Part (Wings)** [Sprites]: Your wings are worth money for use in the making of pixie dust — roundabouts 15 geepee, or more depending on the legality of the transaction. This is not entirely disadvantageous, as you can pull out your own wings and sell them in a pinch. However, this behavior is extremely stigmatized in sprite society, and it's looked down on elsewhere. It's also extremely painful. What really makes it unpleasant, though, is that some people make a living stealing sprite wings. [20 Point Drawback]

- **Cultural Restriction (Must Be Reserved)** [Dryads]: Your culture (probably a dryad culture) places a large emphasis on being even-tempered and not getting upset. Though it is considered acceptable to have emotions and to display them in a few subtle ways, most emotions must remain relatively beneath the surface. One major exception, however, is that when one is severely wronged, it is considered okay to fly into a terrible rage using the Berserking Benefit, above. If you do decide to be blatantly emotional in other circumstances, prepare to be committed to an asylum. [16 Point Drawback]

- **Cultural Restriction (Must Behave Violently)** [Orcs]: People with this Drawback come from cultures that expect them to be violent at all times — usually orcish cultures. You're free to defy this expectation, but remember that failure to behave in a blatantly selfish, violent, and idiotic fashion among others of your kind tends to result in being looked on as weak — and in your culture, the weak are ridiculed, exploited, and beat up. [16 Point Drawback]

- **Cultural Restriction (Must Promote Environment)** [Dryads]: You are a member of a culture which places great value upon the environment (doubtless dryad culture). In particular, you are expected to protect vegetation (especially hamadryads) and animal life from excessive harm, and to incorporate the natural world into your religious beliefs with nature rituals and the like. You can ignore this fact, but if you do you will probably be socially snubbed (or at least seen as eccentric). [8 Point Drawback]

- **Cultural Restriction (Must Wear Beard)** [Dwarves]: In

a society with this cultural restriction (usually dwarven society), status for all adult men and women is partially based on the length and fullness of their beards. Although dwarves with minimal beards are hardly ostracized, they are subject to significant social snubbing, and dwarves without beards are considered eccentric at best and ridiculous or pathetic at worst. Shave at your own risk. [4 Point Drawback]

- **Dislike Bright Lights** [Trolls]: You dislike excessively bright light more than the usual mortal, and operate at -1 to all activities when exposed to it. Light which is bright enough to put you at a negative is uncommon, but sunlight sometimes gets strong enough to be bothersome. [4 Point Drawback]

- **Egocentric Worldview** [Trolls]: You perceive the world according to a simplistic dichotomy consisting of “yourself” as one category and “everything else” as the other. You tend to interpret everything you experience as having some direct relationship to yourself. As a result, you tend to have the wrong idea about what’s going on a lot of the time. [8 Point Drawback]

- **Fear Immunity** [Trolls]: You are immune to fear. You can ignore all attempts to intimidate you, and instead react however you wish to displays of phenomenal power. This includes fear spells. (Of course, the downside of this is that you may be somewhat more likely to tackle situations which exceed your capabilities.) In the version of Fear Immunity possessed by trolls, you find the whole concept of fear quite baffling. [28 Point Benefit]

- **Grammatical Incompetence** [Trolls]: The nuances of language elude you. You can speak and perhaps even write, but you are doomed to do it in an inelegant fashion — and no matter how much more intelligent or eloquent you become, you never seem to be able to master the proper uses of pronouns, verb tenses, articles, and so on. In fact, you can only rarely manage words with more than one or two syllables. This Drawback is most common in trolls, who usually develop their own particular quirky brand of Grammar Incompetence. As a result, people usually treat you like an idiot, even if you aren’t one (but then again, you usually are). [36 Point Drawback]

- **Hand & Foot Temperature Resistance** [Halflings]: Both your hands and your feet are extremely resistant to temperature. For purposes of protection against the elements, you can walk around with no covering on these parts as if you were gloved and shod. You also have a +4 to all Resisting Exposure checks specifically targeting these extremities. [8 Point Benefit]

- **Intimidation Swearing** [Dwarves]: You have the capacity to rattle off long strings of personalized curses and insults at a moment’s notice. When attempting to intimidate or otherwise manipulate people with this method, you can thus add a bonus to your proficiency based on your knowledge of the person in question. For someone you’ve just met, this is probably a mere +1, but it could be as much as +6 for someone you know intimately. The more successful you are, the more personal and scathing your cursing is, and hence the more likely you are to successfully manipulate your subject. Note that Intimidation Swearing does not work with all forms of manipulation, particularly not Seduction. [12 Point

Benefit]

- **Isolated Culture** [Dryads]: You are a member of a remote culture of which there are few remaining enclaves, such as dryad culture. As a result, you have little experience with parts of world culture the other races often take for granted. For example, many mechanical devices, services, and complex political situations will be new to you. You are likely to be easily duped until you get the hang of life outside your society, in fact. As your character gains experience with the outside world, this Drawback should be bought off. [8 Point Drawback]

- **Majority Race Member** [Humans]: You are a member of an overwhelmingly populous race or group. Nearly any area with a substantial population will have clothes that fit you, a language that you speak, and a culture you can understand. You also practically never have to deal with organized racism. [16 Point Benefit]

- **Orc Poison Immunity** [Orcs]: You are immune to the effects of the poison found in orc mouths, and cannot contract Chorea Funk. [8 Point Benefit]

- **Orcish Mating Cycle** [Orcs]: Most of the time, you have a moderate sex drive. At the end of every seven months, however, you are filled with a month-long intense desire to mate, and if you do not, you suffer significant frustration and even pain. This month is referred to as “the cycle,” or sometimes the “golm jabar.” During the cycle, you must pass a Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges check to bypass any opportunity to copulate like a crazed weasel (preferably with another of your species), modified by -2 for every week which has passed. Further, you have a hard time concentrating (-2 to all intellectual tasks), but you are increasingly fierce in combat (+2 to all attack rolls) for every week of the cycle which has begun. Hence, an orc in week three of the cycle would have a modifier of -6 to Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges to mate and all intellectual tasks, and +6 to all attacks. The end of four weeks, or one successful mating, eliminates the urge and all its advantages and disadvantages, though orcs who fail to achieve their biological imperative during this time feel frustrated and irritable for some time after. Orcs in the cycle are visually identifiable because their (normally slightly floppy) ears stand up, become tender, and flush green. This cycle affects orcs of both sexes in more or less the same ways. Because of its advantage in combat, Orcish Mating Cycle is considered only a minor Drawback. [4 Point Drawback]

- **Plantlike Appearance** [Dryads]: As members of races go, you look rather similar to some particular kind of plant (of your player’s choosing). Thus you have an easy time blending into forests (+2 in normal human-type clothing; +4 when wearing earth tones, or +6 when naked). Note that if you choose to look like a plant which has some special status in dryad society, you must also spend experience points to have a Status Benefit. [12 Point Benefit]

- **Racial Stereotype (Amazing)** [Elves]: People of races other than yours often tend to assume that you have abilities reaching far beyond the ordinary. As an elf, this means first and foremost that most people assume that you’re an immortal with infrared vision and a phenomenal capacity for archery, spells, and smithery, and many people assume there’s



When one actually has wings, the Flying skill becomes quite useful.

simply nothing you can't do. This can be annoying and even dangerous occasionally, although it's also an excellent way to get what you want. [0 Point Benefit]

- **Racial Stereotype (Burglar)** [Halflings]: People of races other than yours occasionally tend to assume that you're a thief, especially when you are accompanying a party of adventurers. Due to their slender fingers and general deftness, halflings have gotten shafted with this stereotype. [4 Point Drawback]

- **Racial Stereotype (Greedy)** [Dwarves]: You're a member of a group or race which is generally assumed to be greedy. Few people will trust you with valuables, and you may often be the subject of put-downs. [8 Point Drawback]

- **Racial Stereotype (Stupid)** [Trolls]: You are a member of a group or race which is generally regarded as composed almost exclusively of imbeciles, probably a troll. Others often patronize and insult you. Fortunately for them, you most likely fail to understand their comments. [8 Point Drawback]

- **Racial Stereotype (Tricky)** [Sprites]: You're a member of a group or a race (probably sprites) which is generally regarded as being comprised of incorrigible, irresponsible, and even mildly malevolent tricksters. Your group or race has a reputation for being indifferent to the social conventions, rules of conduct, and even laws of other individuals and societies. Getting people to believe you when there is very little evidence to support your statements can be quite difficult, and many people are inclined to keep their distance from you until you prove your good intentions. [12 Point Drawback]

- **Rapid Healer** [Orcs]: You heal exceptionally quickly. Once you've been damaged and your condition has been stabilized, your body will heal in a matter of hours rather than a matter of days. When rolling Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury to determine healing time, convert all the healing times on the Recuperation chart (page 45) from days to hours. [24 Point Benefit]

- **Regenerating Magic Wings** [Sprites]: You have a pair of wings which grants you the ability to fly. These wings are not nearly large or sturdy enough to lift you off the ground using the normal laws of physics, but when fluttered or flapped they generate a magical field which propels you into the air at a speed proportional to the wing movement. (Note, however, that this magical field can't be canceled with counter-magic.) The wings can have any appearance, though in sprites they must resemble some kind of insect wings. Even while hovering, flying is exhausting and is considered equivalent to constant running for fatigue purposes. When not actively using your wings, you can fold them back to get them relatively out of the way, though they are fairly flimsy and can be destroyed easily. If they are completely ripped out, they will grow back slowly. They will not grow back if they are merely damaged, however, so if your wing wounds are short of total you will have to rip your own wings out to induce regeneration. To determine how many days it takes for your wings to grow back, roll Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Injury and subtract the resulting degrees from 10. Wings never grow back instantly, though; they always take at least one day. [40 Point Benefit]

- **Roll Running** [Halflings]: You are so compact and

rotund that you are able to curl into a little ball and roll down any incline much faster than you would be able to run over the same ground. When attempting this mode of travel, you get a bonus between +1 and +4 to your Maneuver / Agility / Running proficiency (depending on the steepness of the surface). [16 Point Benefit]

- **Smell Minerals** [Dwarves]: You can actually distinguish different kinds of minerals based solely on their smell within a range of about ten feet (assuming an exposed sample). With Complete success, you can detect the presence of most metallic components. With Excellent success, you can identify specific, non-alloyed metals. And with Phenomenal success, you can identify any metal or alloyed combination of metals. This works best in places where there aren't a lot of smelly organic compounds about, like plants, animals, and party members. To do this, just roll Alertness. [16 Point Benefit]

- **Tough Hide** [Trolls]: You have an extremely tough hide. It's so tough, in fact, that you get an automatic degree of armor versus all attacks in addition to the protection afforded by any armor that you might be wearing. Even when naked, you have an effective B/E/R/P and P/E/C/T of 1/1/1/1 and 1/1/1/1, respectively. [36 Point Benefit]

- **Underground Spatial Acuity** [Dwarves]: You are especially at home in subterranean environments, and you have a keen sense of where underground objects lie in relation to each other. Thus, when you are underground and you achieve complete success on an unmodified Intuition / Instinct / Navigation check, you can tell such things as how many miles you've traveled since a given point in time, where you are in relation to some fixed point, and which way north lies. (Since you do this by keeping a running tally in your mind of angles turned and distance traveled, you are unable to use this capacity when you lose your sense of continuity — say, if you're unconscious.) Furthermore, by achieving Complete success on a Intellect / Reasoning / Mathematics check, you can detect the angle of a slope to the exact degree. Most Dwarves consider this latter capacity to be incredibly useful and regard any implication to the contrary as a grave insult. Note that for some strange reason, neither of these abilities work above ground. [12 Point Benefit]

- **Venomous Bite** [Orcs]: You have a venomous bite. In orcs, this is due partly to the chemicals innate to orc-mouths and partly to poor oral hygiene, and therefore can be temporarily eliminated through diligent brushing and flossing (though it rarely is). In mechanical terms, any bite attack you make which causes one or more degrees of damage forces your foe to roll an unmodified Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Poison check. If she fails, she contracts *Chorea Funk*, a disease which is much like a cross between Yellow Fever and Disco Fever. Chorea Funk is characterized by jaundice, elevated temperature, discolored vomit, and the urge to strut and dance around in a crazed fashion at some of the least convenient times. In mechanical terms, people with Chorea Funk suffer a -2 to all activity and must make Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges checks to avoid boogying whenever they hear music. People in advanced stages of Chorea Funk tend to exhibit a preference for gold chains and white, sequined outfits with bell-bottom pants.

Chorea Funk can be cured by treatment with herbs and regular sensual massage. [12 Point Benefit]

- **Versatile Sleeper** [Sprites]: You can sleep in nearly any position without discomfort, and without having to worry about falling out or off of whatever you're sleeping on. It's common for sprites to sleep while hanging upside-down from tree branches using this Benefit. [4 Point Benefit]

- **Weather Comfort** [Dryads]: You are as comfortable in most weather as most people are indoors. You remain indifferent to pouring rain, excessive sunlight, moderate winds, and the like. You're at +6 to Resisting Exposure due to the effects of weather, and most of the time you do not require any shelter for sleeping or hanging around in the outdoors. You do, however, have all the same problems with temperature variation which everyone else does, and you might still have a hard time with extreme weather conditions like tornados and severe hailstorms. [12 Point Benefit]

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 8

On Stuff: Keeping Death at Bay with Spit, Twine, & a Weasel

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FANTASY ECONOMICS

Just about every society has some system for exchanging goods. To adventurers, this is highly fortunate, for currency is one primary way they're rewarded for their adventurous deeds. Sufficient currency allows them to purchase the basic necessities for living, as well as adventuring supplies, steeds, herbs, magic items, hired thugs, vast quantities of alcohol, bribes for powerful individuals, and so on. If they get really rich, they can even buy small countries or giant battle machines.

Currency

The basic unit of exchange on most parts of Terrek is *espee*. The



"I'm afraid I don't have any firstborn on me... would you accept cash?"

espee is made of silver and is in wide circulation. It's used for the majority of all transactions. Less common is the *geeppee*, which is made of gold. It's worth about 10 *espee*. The *beeppee*, which is made of bronze, is worth about a tenth of an *espee*.¹ A fourth kind of currency is more valuable even than the *geeppee*; a single coin is worth at least 100 *espee*. This fourth coin, which is made of platinum, is referred to (perhaps rather oddly) as the *peeppee*. A fifth type of currency, called *empee*, is exceptionally rare and reportedly made of mythrill. Its value is around 1000 *espee*.

CoB uses these types of coinage mainly for convenience. They'll work just fine for most things, but it would probably be silly to assume that every culture on Terrek uses the same kind of money. So changing the type of currency in different parts of the world is highly encouraged; see the Sample Currencies Chart, below, for some ideas.

Don't let this chart limit you; use your imagination. Make *Ekpwele* your basic financial unit, or base an entire economy on the exchange of alcoholic beverages. Or perhaps you know of someplace that uses radioactive currency. In any case, you can be sure that different cultures are likely to value different things. A desert culture might trade in liquids, or the part of the world where Jack climbed the beanstalk (fifty years after that fateful day) might use magic beans as currency. You can also be sure that some parts of Terrek have abandoned currency altogether in favor of some other kind of economics.

Wealth & Standard of Living

In order to understand the value of an item, you need to have some kind of frame of reference — some sense of how much a given sum of money will buy, and how much money people tend to have, on average. You can get a sense of the former from the item lists on pages 147 through 152, and a sense of the latter from the Average Daily Income chart.

These figures might seem low, but this is because even in the Renaissance and even on the wealthiest parts of Terrek, standards of living are not quite as high as they are in the most developed nations of the real world. Also, your average person on Terrek doesn't have as many expenses as someone in the real world does (unless they're being robbed on a regular basis or something).

Sample Currencies Chart

<i>CoB</i> Standard	<i>Metal</i> Pieces	<i>Thingy</i> Pieces	<i>Rock</i> Pieces	<i>Burnable</i> Pieces	<i>Food</i> Pieces	<i>Gem</i> Pieces	<i>Medieval</i> Pieces	<i>Wampum</i> Pieces	<i>Hides</i>
peeppee (pp)	Platinum	Crowns	Obsidian	Black Powder	Granola	Diamond	Librum	Glowing	Mythical
geeppee (gp)	Gold	Trinkets	Quartz	Charcoal	Coffee Beans	Opal	Pounds	Shiny	Buffalo
espee (sp)	Silver	Buttons	Limestone	Kindling	Beef Jerky	Amethyst	Schillings	Dull	Sheep
beeppee (bp)	Bronze	Sequins	Slate	Buffalo Chips	Salt	Agate	Pence	Dirty	Chicken

¹ Bronze is a naturally occurring element from which tin and copper are derived.

THE DITCH AVENUE SCROLL

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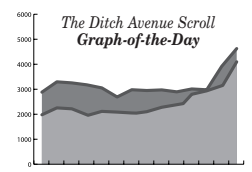
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9 BEE PEE

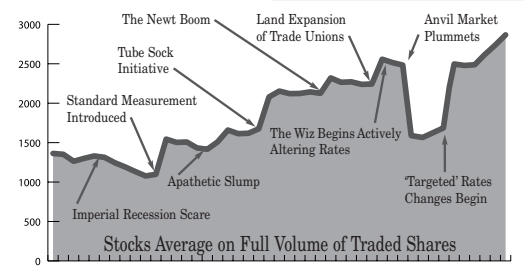
MARKET SQUARE TODAY



Today's Graph-of-the-Day shows nothing new really. Mostly just lines and gray fill. You saw it yesterday and you'll see it tomorrow, I mean, it's been done. In fact, I think I'll just nip off and shoot myself. Goodbye Cruel World. — Cont'd on page D37.

Cyclic Review in Focus

The last seven months have been interesting ones, to say the least. Over the last cycle, the bazaar has seen many fluctuations and shifts in the norms to the point of some speculating if they should be called such anymore. — Cont'd on page F6



STOCK QUOTES, REGULAR TRADING, — A - Z —

11801 470 AN	9w 5.8 dd	579 0170 10	2804 +07
11802 471 AN	...	60322 1227 29	6407 +04
1228 121 Ane	...	35 105 957 07	6017 +07
105 89 AchemicalSupply/Whee	...	1229 273 91	5396 -09
359 9012 V Alimgaters/Pelts	...	831 99 29	5112 -03
11 591 299 Aiphation/Chimes	4ky ...	53 3031 29	8594 -03
11 591 1796 Alimnae/Amor	25pm ...	631 1934 39	13301 +09
11 591 1330 Alimn/Cheridestlay	...	454 818 02	7284 -01
1674 1034 Anythas/Books	...	929 2772 41	8009 +06
1498 1099 AnngPhotography	...	882 68 20	1051 +84
7811 1154 Andy/Alan/Garavito/Soc	...	1134 1394 44	8994 +04
11 591 249 Akladst/Speaking	...	885 1518 49	9399 -01
11 1426 7190 Amaretto/Fireflies	...	751 739 39	2119 -07
556 2399 V Am/Fidellers	...	17 5207 29	7478 -03
11 412 6189 An/Scho/Caldwell/Est	7.1 dd	2129 1070 01	10200 +09
473 4841 Akale/Productions	3.8 dd	60198 699 44	2516 -02
1410 1256 Alacoo	...	1636 838 14	8194 -08
11801 1316 Alacoo	...	79 69 26	1239 -06
746 389 V AAZ	...	10 6557 07	1474 -05
1427 1306 Bad/Bee/Books	...	174 524 34	1894 +04
11 591 789 Balin/Constitutions	...	1462 489 19	2771 +03
715 1289 V Bang/Innovation	...	1444 1514 39	1051 +03
11 591 5860 Baranotom	...	5321 389 31	1439 +04
602 897 Basco/Owland	...	1029 1130 16	6201 +03
368 330 Barov's	...	50793 758 44	164 +08
11 591 641 Basso/Soura	22oc 8.8 dd	6 1879 48	1499 +04
11 591 940 Bas/An/O/A	1r 2.2 dd	1385 592 30	1277 +04
729 2461 Bas/O/O/B	...	732 344 01	3691 +03
1862 5480 Bawoo/Sources	31.7m 2.2 dd	1483 1227 31	1321 +03
11 591 1269 Bay/News	22ab 5.1 dd	482 1466 25	10474 +44
11 591 231 Bay/Briefing	...	160 669 19	1399 +06
898 1278 Bay/News	...	511 4894 14	1191 +07
1040 941 Bay/News/Books	...	1407 3129 29	5196 +09
11 591 1094 Bay/News/Books	...	88 476 43	6396 +07
702 1099 Bay/News/Books	...	1407 3129 29	5196 +09
11 591 3611 Bay/News/Books	...	124 291 29	3639 +06
11 591 206 Bay/News/Books	...	68275 3420 29	2996 +06
11 591 1340 Bay/News/Books	...	91 291 48	899 +03
1010 884 Bay/News/Books	14q ...	68159 845 39	349 +04
533 495 Bay/News	...	41480 1027 31	240 +03
11 591 726 Bay/News/Books	...	148 1483 31	4196 +04
1389 576 Bay/News/Books	...	148 1483 31	4196 +04
11 591 341 Bay/News/Books	...	374 949 26	1831 +09
11 591 1335 Bay/News/Books	...	3700 419 04	5714 +04
849 894 Bay/News/Books	...	485 1274 39	5116 +02
551 1227 V Bay/News/Books	...	485 1274 39	5116 +02
11 591 1261 Bay/News/Books	...	670 574 49	889 +06
11 591 1019 Bay/News/Books	...	762 367 31	1411 +07
11 591 648 Bay/News/Books	...	76 333 1481	739 +01
11 591 545 Bay/News/Books	...	332 824 24	1039 +01
1381 1189 Bay/News/Books	...	1626 514 04	1179 +03
147 1111 V Bay/News/Books	...	1071 589 44	347 +07
1270 271 Bay/News/Books	...	7655 536 25	482 +06
1361 700 Bay/News/Books	...	322 824 24	1039 +01
1239 376 Bay/News/Books	...	74078 335 48	499 +14

Bazaar Officials Assert: "Everything is 'O.K.'"

47 Year Depression Was Just a Market Correction, Say Fiscalmanagers

In brisk comments to the press, Elgo Farquartherly, Head Wizard of the Trilateral Economic Bureau of Economy and Fiscalman (TEBEF), stated that this latest Grand Meeting of its top thinkers is "merely to forecast and plan our future plans and forecasts." When asked if TEBEF is attempting to forestall impending economic collapse through the hype created by its own unprecedented number of emergency sessions, Wz. Farquartherly enunciated several unprintable epithets, and made several cunningly obtuse personal remarks at the general cadre of press officials, and disappeared in a puff of blue smoke. — Cont'd on page E3

Intensive Scrying Sessions: Piles of Geepes More Important Than Babies

In the grand scheme of things, babies, it would seem, increase the quantity of fecal matter which is generally at large in the world, while geepes seems to possess a transcendent, inherent cultural value supeding any need for excretory organisms; further, it allows us to purchase more shovels useful in cleaning dung heaps, hire more wizards to teleport the dung away, and implement dung reduction programs. — Cont'd on Page C7

Environment Goes to Hell

Alchemical Leaders Giggle

The World Alchemical Conservation Organization today released a trim report detailing a scant two-week study of the impact of rampant alchemical expansion. The report could be characterized as little more than an extended scold aimed at detractors of the field of alchemy. — Cont'd on page SR90

The Wiz Accused of Jerking Interest Rates Around

In the last septi-monthly cycle fraught with violent market shifts and volatile trading, the general trend has overwhelmingly been in the positive. One factor which seems to have greatly impacted the current bugbear market are the repeated and frequent rate reductions and hikes applied suddenly and without warning. Amid much other controversy surrounding this issue, many senior chairholders at the Wiz have been accused of targeting specific groups with their economic rumbungs. — Cont'd on page G7

Tube Socks In Mixed Trading

In the uncertain atmosphere of today's bazaar, one wonders how one of the blue chip commodities came to be known as such. Although puzzling, one can hardly assert that

the stability granted the market from the use of tube socks as a stabilizer is one which should be abolished. Even so, this most intransigent of benchmarks has been fluctuating under the strain of the market it serves to support. — Cont'd on Page R4

Lead to Gold Solution Still Years Away

The halls of the Annual Alchemical Expo rung with the excitement of this year's greatest achievements in all branches of the Alchemical Arts. In Transpasic Liquids, the seventh elixir of adhesion property has been thoroughly demonstrated in Greb N. Sawrostii's WizardLock™. The field of hypermetals may be forever altered, and not favorably, if Shinif Tafkap is able to woo a group of dwarven investors who hold not only vast potential funding, but also the lien authority to import ores necessary in the forging of her new theoretical alloy, alaegoen. The Dwarven Forging Commission is excited by the details, but are wary that the new metal could cause destabilization of current pricing restrictions.

For all this activity, there is still one area which has remained quiet and will likely for some time. Towards the back lies a smaller, ungarmed area empty but for a few displays and few if any visitors. The Auric Studies wing is small and quiet, just like every year. And like every year, this wing displays the only known sample of transplumbic gold known to alchemical science, created accidentally, over 400 years ago. — Cont'd on page THX138

Doomsayers Union Predicts the Worst

When asked for a comment on it's most recent report to the economic community, the DU's official spokeswoman, Ludmilla Wenterstich was quoted as raving incoherently at the top of her lungs, bellowing about 'End Times' and the like. — Cont'd on page Z1

1432 876 Spay/ing/Books	...	706 520 14	189 +05
11 591 1336 Spay/ing/Books	...	1827 519 20	1529 +04
11 591 1249 Spay/ing/Books	...	1422 128 11	1696 +09
11 591 797 Spay/ing/Books	...	802 327 17	1174 +04
676 409 V Spay/ing/Books	...	330 122 21	1399 +04
558 814 V Spay/ing/Books	...	1124 314 18	530 +04
11 591 1114 Spay/ing/Books	...	182 569 31	429 +09
597 1284 Spay/ing/Books	...	122 348 07	1399 +04
11 591 1301 V Spay/ing/Books	...	1165 548 11	2367 +04
141 1287 Spay/ing/Books	...	570 879 48	1261 +04
694 238 V Spay/ing/Books	...	1167 1239 18	1474 +04
617 404 V Spay/ing/Books	...	1138 402 17	1397 +04
819 1991 Spay/ing/Books	...	75 208 28	1294 +09
1040 501 Spay/ing/Books	...	5673 329 15	1529 +01
1029 1191 Spay/ing/Books	...	10 1659 19	711 +09
828 441 V Spay/ing/Books	...	2108 309 11	511 +04
534 129 V Spay/ing/Books	...	1202 309 38	189 +09
667 1534 V Spay/ing/Books	...	13735 49 05	589 +04
138 1464 V Spay/ing/Books	...	25 94625 109	22 +04
96 1247 V Spay/ing/Books	...	1428 1248 02	714 +08
1429 1439 Spay/ing/Books	...	140 209 18	1056 +04
1234 1310 Spay/ing/Books	...	66 308 09	181 +04
11 591 1274 Spay/ing/Books	...	76 6 37864 27	619 +04
654 776 Spay/ing/Books	...	72 75 4308 19	219 +09
1010 478 Spay/ing/Books	...	53 1408 88	64 +04
710 174 V Spay/ing/Books	...	647 694 44	5007 +07
501 149 V Spay/ing/Books	...	667 826 46	431 +11
719 128 TSC/Books	...	79 307 06	619 +04
5 569 134 TSC/Books	...	75 1127 19	8779 +09
1272 578 TSC/Books	...	680 719 21	529 +04
1010 478 TSC/Books	...	1284 307 15	418 +02
85 1386 TSC/Books	...	1 976 11	1059 +04
359 139 TSC/Books	...	1424 178 11	1212 +03
1059 589 TSC/Books	...	1122 306 28	1819 +04
594 39 V TSC/Books	...	104 584 41	8379 +09
11 591 1336 TSC/Books	...	175 208 28	1294 +09
11 591 1336 TSC/Books	...	175 208 28	1294 +09
11 591 1336 TSC/Books	...	175 208 28	1294 +09
11 591 1336 TSC/Books	...	175 208 28	1294 +09

Average Daily Income Chart

(In *espee*)

Average Income	Profession	Jobs
15	Unskilled Laborer	Activities almost anyone can do (ditch digger)
25	Skilled Laborer	Activities most people could do with training (merchant, guard)
40	Highly Skilled Laborer	Activities which take many years to learn (wizard, crafter)
By Job	Unique Service	Activities only a few people can perform (legendary mercenary)

Most people have to worry about paying for food, shelter, and taxes, and perhaps a few entertainment-related services and objects (stuff like theater, alcoholic beverages, and roleplaying supplements), but not much else. In any case, a few *espee* go quite a long way, and people aren't necessarily as poor as they might at first seem to be.

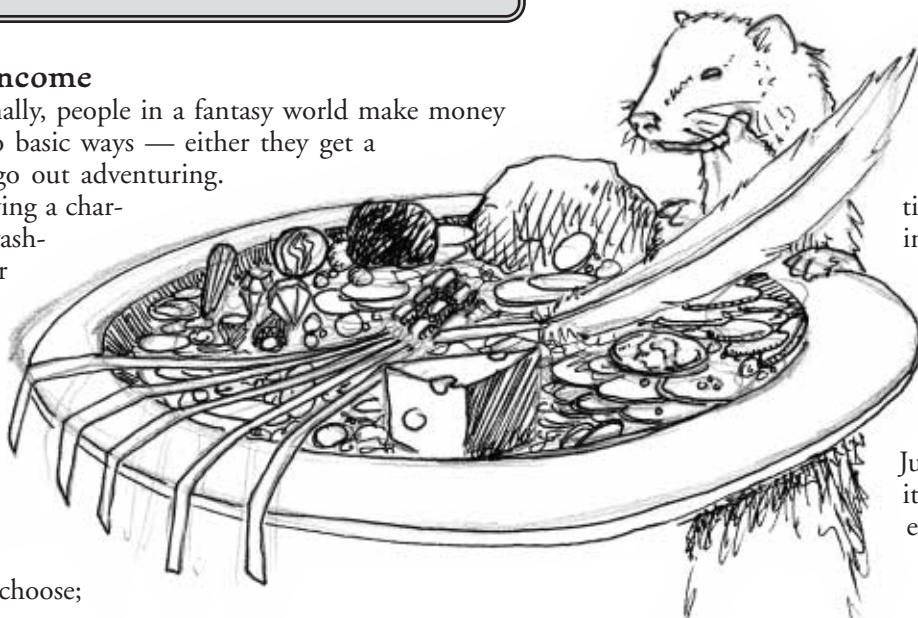
Being Stingy: Awarding Player Income

As a rule, a character should have an average of about 100 gold per adventure (more sometimes, less other times). This is already considerably more wealth than the average person has, and too much more money than that will probably impact your game negatively. Once characters can buy dozens of swords (for example) without even thinking about the purchase, they'll no longer have to make cost/benefit analyses of their purchases, and a significant aspect of challenge departs the game. Giving too much money to your players will make money less valuable, so never should characters be able to buy absolutely anything they want. That said, it's okay to reward players for extraordinary effort with an unusually large sum now and again.

Earning Income

Conventionally, people in a fantasy world make money in one of two basic ways — either they get a job, or they go out adventuring.

Since roleplaying a character who's washing dishes or mixing drinks isn't much fun, most player characters tend to go adventuring. But you don't necessarily have to choose;



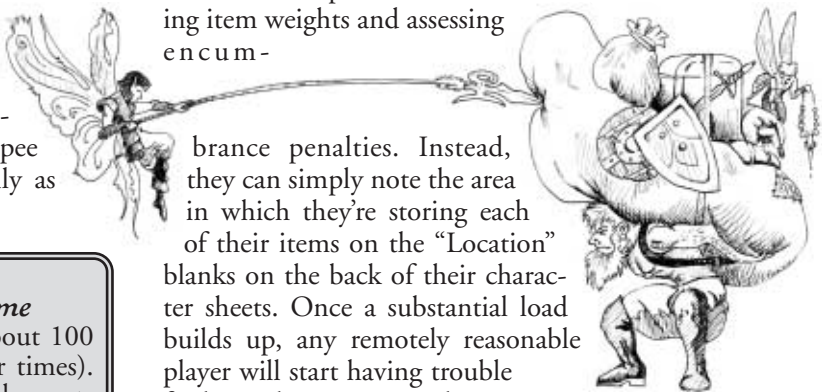
Some of the many currencies with which Paranesian banks must contend.

you can have a “day job” which earns income during down time and still go out adventuring later. You can also start a business (see page 124 for rules for this). Either option can make for an interesting campaign setting.

Alternatively, you can invest your money. Currently, investing in clerical indulgences is quite popular, as is the herb trade. Another common strategy is to invest in wars in other countries; in exchange for financing a country's war, you can own an amount of that country.² Stock is also available in most major businesses.

ENCUMBRANCE

In the Higher Arc system, players can skip right over the whole tedious process of recording item weights and assessing encum-



A pair of sprites demonstrates the difficulties inherent in carrying around vast quantities of equipment.

brance penalties. Instead, they can simply note the area in which they're storing each of their items on the “Location” blanks on the back of their character sheets. Once a substantial load builds up, any remotely reasonable player will start having trouble finding places to put things, and the Cobbler can glance at the backs of character sheets

every once in a while to make sure that players are not pushing the envelope of possibility. If they are, the Cobbler can find ways to mess with them — by forcing them to make Maneuver / Wits / Prestidigitating checks to avoid dropping important equipment at crucial moments, for example, or by encountering NPCs who ridicule them for their bizarre tendency to cart junk around everywhere. Alternatively, the

Cobbler can just tell them they can't carry that much, or assign them penalties as long as they continue to do so. This should be enough to prevent players from stocking up on exorbitant quantities of equipment without boring everyone half to death with weight ratios.

Note, however, that if you are truly set on using a more conventional means for encumbrance, such a system is available. Just know that you can ignore it, and that you are in fact encouraged to do so.

² War investments give new (or rather, old) meaning to the concept of hostile takeovers.

Tote Chart

	<i>Feather Fur Fluffy</i>	<i>Cloth</i>	<i>Scales Skins</i>	<i>Rubber Wood</i>	<i>Water</i>	<i>Bone Chiton</i>	<i>Stone</i>	<i>Iron</i>	<i>Bronze</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Gold</i>
Weight												
Pounds/Cubic Foot	2	6	10	40	62	74	132	490	546	625	708	1200
Ounces/Cubic Inch	.02	.06	.09	.37	.57	.69	1.2	4.5	5.1	5.8	6.6	11
1/2 Oz	.02	.02	.01	.01	.01	.01	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 Oz	.05	.03	.03	.02	.02	.02	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	-
2 Oz	.1	.07	.06	.04	.03	.03	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.01
4 Oz	.2	.14	.11	.07	.06	.06	.05	.03	.03	.03	.03	.02
8 Oz	.39	.27	.23	.14	.12	.12	.1	.06	.06	.06	.06	.05
1 Lb	.79	.54	.46	.29	.25	.24	.19	.13	.12	.12	.11	.09
2 Lbs	1.6	1.1	.92	.58	.5	.47	.39	.25	.24	.23	.22	.19
4 Lbs	3.1	2.2	1.8	1.2	1	.94	.78	.5	.48	.46	.44	.37
8 Lbs	6.3	4.4	3.7	2.3	2	1.9	1.6	1	.96	.93	.89	.74
16 Lbs	13	8.7	7.3	4.6	4	3.8	3.1	2	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.5
32 Lbs	25	17	15	9.3	8	7.5	6.2	4	3.9	3.7	3.6	3
64 Lbs	50	35	29	19	16	15	12	8	7.7	7.4	7.1	6
128 Lbs	101	70	59	37	32	30	25	16	15	15	14	12
256 Lbs	201	139	118	74	64	60	50	32	31	30	28	24
512 Lbs	402	279	235	148	128	121	99	64	62	59	57	48
1024 Lbs	804	558	470	296	256	241	199	129	124	119	114	95

Why You Should Ignore Weights & Encumbrance Penalties

This is a roleplaying game, so it's only natural that players will want to be able to lug a lot of junk around for when they inevitably get into a fix. Why deny them the fun of trying to come up with creative solutions to problems using bizarre combinations of ordinary objects? Why not let their characters tote backpacks overflowing with oil flasks, coil 50' of rope around their shoulders, lug sacks of treasure in their left hands, wield a few staves of fireball in their right hands, and wear single weapon belts containing four swords, a mace, three full quivers and a longbow? It doesn't upset game balance, it's just silly enough to be fun, and it's easier.

The item location system has several other advantages as well. It encourages players to think about what their characters are wearing and what storage devices (backpacks, gunny sacks, etc.) they're carrying. Also, it's often nice to know where your items are kept. If, for instance, someone tries to pickpocket you, you'll have some idea of how accessible your valuables are. Or if you accidentally teleport yourself into a wolf, you'll have some clue which items merge with wolf flesh, and which items can be salvaged from your corpse.³

Armor and weapons are the exception, however. This is partially because it really would be a little too silly to have tiny wimps wielding claymores and people in full plate armor jumping around unrestrainedly, but mostly because weapons and armor have distinct advantages which need to be balanced with disadvantages. Hence, it's more important to concern yourself with the encumbrance rules for weapons and armor.

Determining Encumbrance (the Hard Way)

If you don't really care about keeping track of all the details pertaining to your character's encumbrance, see above in the beginning of the section for a simpler way of keeping characters from going nuts with equipment. Otherwise — if the idea of calculating encumbrance by figuring a bunch of numbers just overwhelms you with excitement — you've come to the right section. Read on!

First, determine your Toting Threshold. This is half of your Prowess / Strength / Toting proficiency. Then determine the total weight, awkwardness, and restrictiveness of the items you're holding or wearing. This is summed up by a Tote Rating. Every item in the Higher Arc system has a Tote Rating, often consisting at least partly of a decimal and a bunch of digits (for instance, .71 or 1.21). If you add up all the Tote Ratings of all the items you're carrying or wearing, you'll get a particular number — say, 4.68. Once you have the total Tote Ratings for all the items you're carrying, round this number down to the nearest integer — in this case, 4. This is the total Tote Rating of your entire load. If your load's Tote Rating is equal to or lower than your Toting Threshold, you can carry your load with no penalty. If it exceeds your Toting Threshold, you suffer a penalty to all physical actions equal to the difference, as long as you carry that much equipment with you.

Note that if the Cobbler deems that any (even one) of a character's items is particularly bulky, she can impose an automatic penalty of -1 which affects him no matter how high his Toting Threshold gets. This penalty is not cumulative with other encumbrance penalties resulting from equip-

³ This is an inside joke.

ment carried, however.

Tiskren is carrying parts of a dead cow with a cumulative Tote Rating of 6.83. She rounds that down to 6 and compares it to her Toting Threshold, which is 4 (since her Toting proficiency is 8). The difference between 4 and 6 is two, so Tiskren is at -2 to all physical activity. If her Toting Threshold were 5, her penalty would be -1; if it were 6 or more she would suffer no penalty. If, on the other hand, the Cobbler rules that one or more of her items are bulky, she would suffer -1 no matter what her Toting Threshold was, unless it was 4 or less, in which case it would be a greater penalty.

When an item doesn't have a Tote Rating associated with it, you can figure out the Rating using the Tote chart. Simply cross-reference the weight of the item with the Material Type to get the Tote Rating. (To translate a number of pounds not on the chart, just add together the Tote Ratings of smaller numbers of pounds to get a total — for example, to determine the Tote Rating for 3 pounds, just add the Tote Rating for 1 and 2 pounds together.) For your convenience, the weight of a cubic foot and a cubic inch of each of the materials is listed at the top of the Tote chart.

Wearing Armor

To determine how much of a penalty you get from being encumbered by armor, first determine your Toting Threshold. This is half of your Prowess / Strength / Toting proficiency. Then determine the Tote Rating of the suit of armor you want to wear (this number is listed with the armor suits, pages 160 to 163), rounding it down to the next lowest integer if necessary (so, for example, 4.71 becomes 4).⁴ If your armor's Tote Rating is equal to or lower than your Toting Threshold, you can wear it with no penalty. If it exceeds your Toting Threshold, you suffer a penalty to all physical actions equal to the difference as long as you're wearing it. Tote Ratings are cumulative if you decide to wear more than one suit of armor at the same time.

Some suits of armor are considered bulky. If this is the case about the suit you're wearing, you have an automatic penalty of -1 which affects you no matter how high your Toting Threshold gets. This penalty is not cumulative with other encumbrance penalties resulting from equipment carried or armor worn, however.

The mighty warrior Spinecrusher Slaughterslayer is donning his armor for the upcoming battle. He puts on a trellised mail suit, which (after it has been rounded down) has a Tote Rating of 9 and is considered bulky. Spinecrusher's Toting proficiency is 15, which means his Toting Threshold is 7. His armor's total weight rating, therefore, exceeds his Toting Threshold by 2. This translates into a -2 penalty which applies to all his physical actions while he's wearing the armor. Even if Spinecrusher's Toting Threshold were 9 or more, however, he would still have to deal with a -1 penalty, because of the armor's bulkiness.

Suits of armor are pictured and described on page 160. In case you care (and we strongly advise you not to), you can determine the weight of your armor by consulting the Armor Weight chart.

Armor Weight Chart

	Feather/Fur/ Fluffy	Cloth	Scale Skin	Rubber Wood	Bone Chiton	Metal
Full Suit-Tote 9	11 Lbs	-	20 Lbs	31 Lbs	38 Lbs	72 Lbs
Full Suit-Tote 7	9 Lbs	-	15 Lbs	24 Lbs	-	56 Lbs
Full Suit-Tote 5	6 Lbs	9 Lbs	11 Lbs	17 Lbs	-	40 Lbs
Full Suit-Tote 3	4 Lbs	6 Lbs	7 Lbs	10 Lbs	-	24 Lbs
Full Suit-Tote 1	-	2 Lbs	-	-	-	-

Wielding Weapons

Wielding something is a bit harder than simply carrying it or wearing it. When carried, weapons are basically just part of your equipment, but when you wield them, you have to be able to wave them around like a maniac in order to be effective. This means using your Prowess / Strength / Lifting proficiency to determine your Lifting Threshold. Your Lifting Threshold is equal to half your Lifting proficiency. Unlike with other types of Thresholds, you get the full amount of your Lifting Threshold for each of your hands.

All weapons (including missile weapons and projectiles) have a Lift Rating which works pretty much the same way armor Tote Ratings work. If a weapon's Lift Rating is equal to or lower than your Lifting Threshold in the hand in which you're wielding it, you incur no penalty. If it exceeds your Lifting Threshold, you suffer a penalty to all physical actions equal to the difference. These penalties are ignored when you aren't wielding the weapon. When wielding multiple weapons at once, the Lift Ratings of these weapons are cumulative. If you elect to use both hands to wield one weapon, you can add your Lifting Thresholds together.

Spinecrusher Slaughterslayer has finished suiting up and is now on the battlefield, eagerly awaiting the upcoming wanton destruction. He draws his shortsword (Lift Rating 5) to hold in his left hand and his mace (Lift Rating 8) to hold in his right. His crossbow, which he keeps at his side, doesn't figure in to this equation because he isn't wielding it. Since Spinecrusher's Lifting proficiency is 11, his Lifting Threshold for each hand is 5 (he's ambidextrous so he has no penalty to either hand). Since the Lift Rating for the shortsword in his right hand equals his Lifting Threshold in that hand, he suffers no penalty for wielding it. His Lift Rating for the mace he wields in his left hand, however, exceeds his Lifting Threshold by 3. He therefore takes a -3 penalty to all actions while wielding it.

EQUIPMENT

If you're going adventuring, or even if you just like hanging around in dangerous places, you may find it useful to carry a bunch of stuff with you. Typically, adventurers tote all kinds of things — usually useful things, like food, healing herbs, weapons, and camping gear. While you're buying, though, why not pick up a few extra items at random? You never know when 20 yards of wire, a cage filled with white mice, a book with blank pages, a couple of rope ladders, and a case of stale cheese will come in handy.

⁴ If you're also using the Hard rules for encumbrance, you should add the Tote Ratings of all your equipment to the Tote Rating of your armor to get your total Tote Rating.

Certain factors — specifically name, cost, weight, and the elusive “miscellaneous” notes — govern the acquisition of multiple kinds of equipment. Some of these factors are described below.

- **Name:** The name of an item is what it’s called. Names are listed in English, except where Arabic would be more appropriate.

- **Cost:** An item’s cost is the average cost, in espee or geepee, for an item of this kind in a relatively developed area. Usually items will be somewhat more expensive than this in rural areas (if you can get them there at all).

- **Notes:** Some items require an extra bit of explanation. These explanations, if any, are provided in the notes section.

- **Tote:** The Tote Rating of the item in question.

Extraordinary Items & Alternate Means of Acquiring Items

It’s possible that you can’t afford to purchase the item you need to use, or that you need something so specific it would be ludicrous to assume that it already exists. Fortunately for you, other possibilities besides just walking into a shop and purchasing a pre-prepared item are available in most capitalist societies.

- **Renting:** Renting an item generally costs about a tenth of the normal purchase price for each day you want to rent it, although this may vary based on the item’s availability. If you want to own the item at the end of your rental, you might be able to pay a few extra tenths of the total price in exchange for this benefit.

- **Customized Items:** Some items come in a variety of different forms. A wig, for example, could be curly, short, and dark, or it could be long, straight, and blonde. Generally, you can choose the basic form you want for the item. However, if you want it customized in a highly specific way — say, you want a mask that looks like a specific person’s face — you should pay double the normal price. And if you want something made out of a special material (like solid mythrill), or if you want it encrusted with gems or something — you have to pay for these substances in addition to the item (plus extra if they make the item harder to work with).

Basic Equipment & Services

These basic items and services aren’t usually enchanted or alive, but just try to go adventuring without any of them. There are a few basic classes of these mundane items.

- **Clothing:** Clothing is what you wear when you don’t wish to be naked. Either assemble an outfit from individual pieces, or simply take a generic one (if you don’t much care about what you’re wearing). Alternatively, you can just wear armor directly over your naked form, although we expect this isn’t especially comfortable.

- **Consumables:** Food, booze and other beverages, smokables, and sweets.

- **Enchanted/Enchantable Objects:** Common equipment which is ready to be enchanted, or is already enchanted in a few cases.

- **Musical Instruments:** Instruments which can be used to play music.

- **Services:** When you encounter other mortals, their serv-

Various Equipment Chart

Clothing Piece	Cost Per	Protection Notes
Bathrobe	18 geepee	As quilted cloth long cloak. For interterrestrial adventure.
Belt Strap	2 espee	None (too narrow). A narrow leather strip.
Boots	5 geepee	As soft leather boots. High-quality foot protection.
Breeches	1 espee	None (too thin). Pants extending to just below the knees.
Buckle	5 beepee	None (too small). Good for fastening stuff together.
Cape	2 espee	None (too thin). +4 to appearing dramatic on windy days.
Codpiece	3 geepee	As heavy quilting crotch piece. A single, hard unit for crotch padding.
Eye Patch	1 espee	As skin quarter mask (one eye only). For pirates & aspiring pirates.
Gloves	5 espee	As skin gloves. Eliminate fingerprints, keep warm, & avoid slivers.
Hat	2 geepee	As heavy cloth skull cap. Any kind you wish.
Headdress	11 geepee	As light feather skull cap. Complete with feathers.
Hood	2 espee	None (too thin). Add this to another piece of clothing, if you like.
Jacket	6 espee	None (too thin). A light coat.
Kilt/Skirt	6 beepee	None (too thin). A dwarven fashion, popular in some human cultures.
Loincloth	4 beepee	None (too thin). Covers the naughty bits only.
Moccasins	5 espee	As skin shoes. Easily donned slippers. Usually come as a pair.
Outfit, Common	27 geepee	None. Low quality but intact clothing worn by most people.
Outfit, Excellent	343 geepee	None. Beautiful, lavishly decorated clothing worn by the rich.
Outfit, Extravagant	729 geepee	None. Unique, impractical ornate clothing worn by the very rich.
Outfit, Quality	125 geepee	None. Fine quality clothing, worn by the moderately well-off.
Outfit, Shoddy	1 geepee	None. Rags worn by paupers, beggars, & manual laborers.
Pants	2 espee	None. For keeping your lower body protected from peepers.
Parka	90 geepee	As heavy quilting hooded coat. A heavy coat.
Peg Leg	9 espee	None. A trendy strap on. Requires leg removal for proper fit. Makes a decent club.
Poncho	15 geepee	As latex poncho. A waterproof, hooded cloak resembling a blanket.
Robe	7 espee	None (too thin).

	Typical magular or avaticular attire.
Sandals	3 espee None (doesn't cover enough). Simpler shoes for a simpler time.
Scarf	7 beepie None (too thin). A long cloth designed to cover the neck.
Shirt	4 espee None (too thin). With or without buttons.
Shoes	5 espee As skin shoes. Sophisticated foot coverings made by a cobbler.
Suspenders	9 beepie None (too narrow). For holding up your pants.
Tights	2 espee None (too thin). Very tight-fitting pants.
Trench Coat	18 geepee As heavy cloth long cloak. A long, waterproof coat with shoulder straps & deep pockets.
Tunic	5 espee None (too thin). A loose, sleeveless shirt extending past the hips.
Undergarments	4 beepie None (too thin). Briefs, boxers, panties, or bras.
Wading Boots	13 geepee As rubber sheet jackboots. Shiny, knee-high rubber boots.
Wig	4 geepee As sparse fur skull cap & nape guard. Made from animal hair (x2 cost for humanoid hair).
Consumables	
Item	Cost Per Notes
Ale	1 espee Heavy beer. One gallon, 8 servings.
Bread	3 beepie Just bread. One loaf.
Candy	1 beepie A small amount of any kind you like.
Chili, Orcish	1 geepee Gives you +1 to Resisting Urges versus intimidation and makes you violent for 1 hour. One meal.
Dw'ale	2 espee Incredibly potent dwarven alcohol. One gallon, 8 servings.
Feed, Steed	1 beepie Assumes an animal with a fairly normal diet. Feeds for a day.
H'gag	2 beepie A dish of live worms. Rarely eaten and even less often digested. One meal.
Hardtack	2 beepie Tastes bad but keeps forever. Enough for a meal.
Mead	1 espee An alcohol made with honey. One gallon, 8 servings.
Meal, Banquet	6 geepee An extravagant meal with many dishes.
Meal, Common	2 espee Stew, bread, cheese, your choice of entree, and ale or milk.
Meal, Simple	6 beepie Water, cheese, and bread or rice.
Mineral Water	8 beepie One pint of supposedly sparkling water from an allegedly exotic location.
Pipsissewa	1 beepie Good tasting blue corn that causes flatulence. Keeps indefinitely but takes an hour of boiling to prepare. 1 meal.

Rations	3 espee A single meal, not very good tastin', that keeps indefinitely.
Rum, Quart of	5 espee Alcohol made from sugar or molasses. 32 servings.
Snack Cake, Elvish	7 beepie One bite, and you feel as though you've been snacking for a whole day. (One cake has four bites.)
Softack	1 beepie Hard to transport. Easy to chew, but gross. Keeps for a week.
Water	1 beepie A clear, colorless, odorless, tasteless liquid. One gallon.
Waybread, Dwarven	8 espee Hard as a rock and provides two days of nutrition.
Waybread, Elven	1 geepee Tastes great & provides a day's nutrition
Waybread, Halffish	6 espee Tastes really great and provides absolutely no nutrition. Comes in two half-loaves.
Waybread, Orcish	6 espee Tastes like crap & provides a day's nutrition
Waybread, Spritish	9 espee Provides a day's nutrition, gets you drunk, and makes you have to urinate frequently (all day).
Wine	1 espee Liquefied fermented grapes in a glass container. One quart.
Enchanted/Enchantable Objects	
Object	Cost Per Notes
Backpack Lab	320 geepee Immense backpack carrying supplies for alchemy.
Ciborium	30 geepee Bulky altar which one person can carry with difficulty.
Holy Symbol	6 espee The hand-held symbol of a particular god, cleric, or holy thing.
Kobold Wand	1 beepie A wand which controls kobolds and duplicates whenever activated.
Omnicondex Tapping Scroll	4 geepee A scroll which taps information from the Omnicondex.
Ring	1 espee For a plain band. Add costs of gems or precious metals for rings.
Rod	2 beepie A medium-sized stick ready to be affected with magic.
Scroll	2 beepie A paper ready to have runes inscribed on it.
Staff	4 beepie A long, gnarled stick ready to be affected with magic.
Wand	1 beepie A short stick ready to be affected with magic.
Musical Instruments	
Instrument	Cost Per Notes
Accordion	64 geepee A pleasantly cheesy musical instrument.

Bagpipes	16 geepee A pleasantly offensive musical instrument.
Bass/Cello	28 geepee A pleasantly oversized violin.
Drum	6 geepee A pleasantly annoying musical instrument.
Fiddle/Violin/Viola	21 geepee A pleasantly whiny musical instrument.
Flute/Recorder	3 geepee A windy musical instrument.
Harmonica	6 geepee A pleasantly offensive musical instrument.
Harpichord	7 geepee A pleasantly bulky musical instrument.
Kazoo	6 espee The musical instrument chosen by master musicians Terrekwide.
Lute	6 geepee A plain musical instrument.
Organ	64 geepee A huge musical instrument.
Trumpet/Bugle	5 geepee A startling musical instrument.
Services	
Service	Cost Per Notes
Bathing Facilities	5 beepee Per hour.
Hospitalization, Good	11 geepee Per day. Access to excellent doctors and specialized equipment.
Hospitalization, Mediocre	3 geepee Per day. Access to a competent doctors and standard equipment.
Library Access	5 beepee A big pile of literature. Per hour.
Lodging, Communal	2 beepee Per night. No privacy & no beds. Rental costs 15 times this per month.
Lodging, Lousy	1 espee Per night. Bunk beds in rooms without locks. Rental costs 15 times this per month.
Lodging, Mediocre	3 espee Per night. Door locks & a window. Rental costs 15 times this per month.
Lodging, Quality	2 geepee Per night. Baths & breakfast included. Rental costs 15 times this per month.
Lodging, Very Opulent	13 geepee Per night. Multiple spacious rooms with many amenities. Rental costs 15 times this per month.
Repair, Excessive Damage	x 100 Cost of original item times this number. Magical or nonmagical repair.
Repair, Major Damage	x 1 Cost of original item times this number. Magical or nonmagical repair.
Repair, Minor Damage	x 1/100 Cost of original item times this number. Magical or nonmagical repair.
Repair, Moderate Damage	x 1/10 Cost of original item times this number. Magical or nonmagical repair.
Repair, Obliterative Damage	x 1000 Cost of original item times this number. Magical or nonmagical repair.
Repair, Severe Damage	x 10

	Cost of original item times this number. Magical or nonmagical repair.
Special Affections	5 geepee Average quality. About an hour.
Stabling, Common Animal	3 espee Usually, horses & similar are the norm.
Stabling, Exotic Animal	3 geepee In case you have a weird steed.
Toll Charge	2 beepee Traveling extortion. Per person or large object.
Transportation, Land	3 beepee Assumes safe terrain. Cost is per mile.
Transportation, Water	1 beepee Assumes safe waters. Cost is per mile.
Storage Devices	
Device	Cost Per Notes
Backpack	1 geepee Holds 50 lb. or 2 cubic feet.
Bag	6 espee Has drawstring. Holds 320 coins or 10 lb. or 27 cubic inches.
Barrel	1 geepee Fits 40 gallons of wine or one large dwarf.
Basket	3 espee Wicker. Holds exactly 554.84 cubic inches.
Bottle	6 beepee Holds 12 fluid ounces.
Briefcase	4 espee Can be fitted with a lock (see lock prices).
Bucket	3 espee Holds 1 gallon.
Chest	1 geepee For storing valuables.
Cork	1 espee A stopper for a vial, bottle, or tube.
Flask	2 beepee Holds 1 quart.
Jug	2 beepee Holds 1 gallon.
Pouch	6 espee Has drawstring. Holds 50 coins. Lug applies to a full pouch.
Purse	5 espee Holds 500 cubic inches.
Quiver	5 espee Holds bolts or arrows.
Sack	6 beepee Has drawstring. Holds 1000 coins. Lug applies to a full pouch.
Saddlebag	6 espee Holds three days of steed feed. Made to attach to your saddle.
Scabbard	5 espee Holds one sword.
Scroll Holder	2 espee For protecting your scrolls from the elements.
Vial	6 espee A hard container stopped with a cork. Holds a pint.
Waterskin	6 espee Empty. A flexible, vial-shaped container stopped with a cork. Holds a pint.
Weapon Belt	4 espee Has loops and snaps for holding weapons and such.

Torture & Execution Instruments

Note: Limestone Publishing does not *specifically* condone torture and/or execution.

Instrument	Cost Per	Notes
Boot	4 geepee	A device designed to crush the leg and foot.
Branding Iron	2 geepee	Can be personalized at no extra cost.
Collapsible Auto-Guillotine	20 geepee	Per kit.
Cross	1 geepee	A cross-shaped board to which victims are tied and left to die.
Electrocrucible	7 geepee	A tall lightning rod which is grounded to a victim, who is left in a storm. Victim is usually freed if she survives.
Gallows	10 geepee	A wooden platform with a noose and a trapdoor used for hanging.
Garrote	1 geepee	A wire with handles on either end, used to throttle or break a neck.
Guillotine	15 geepee	A heavy blade between long beams used for beheading.
Iron Maiden	8 geepee	An iron sarcophagus with spikes on the inside.
Manacles	4 geepee	A set of thick handcuffs. Can snap onto a prepared spot on the wall.
Nailpick	1 geepee	A sturdy metal prod designed to pluck off finger and toenails (causing great pain).
Pain Clamp	1 geepee	A clamp which can be attached to various parts of the body and tightened.
Rack	9 geepee	A device for stretching a victim's body.
Strappado	8 geepee	A device used to lift a victim off the ground by a rope tied to his wrists, then drop him.
Thumbscrew	1 geepee	A screw used to compress the thumb.
Wheel	7 geepee	A large wheel into which victims are strapped and spun.

Vehicles

Vehicle	Cost Per	Notes
Canoe	8 geepee	Has seats for 2 people. Has 4 cubic feet of cargo space or room for 1 more person.
Cart	20 geepee	Has seats for 2 people. Has 6 cubic feet of cargo space or room for 2 more people.
Chariot	32 geepee	Has standing room for 2 people.
Hot-Air Balloon	925 geepee	Has standing room for 4 people. Very high technology.
Iron Titan	9,000 geepee	Only available illegally.
Miner's Cart	8 geepee	Moves on tracks. Used to haul mined materials. Holds 12 cubic feet.
Raft	4 geepee	

Rowboat	11 geepee	Holds 5 people.
Rowing Ship	8,520 geepee	Room for 50. Usually rowed by 20 slaves.
Sailboat	20 geepee	Holds 5 people.
Sailing Ship	9,000 geepee	Holds 30 people.
Sled	7 geepee	Holds 4 people. Can be pulled on ice or snow.
Sleigh/Sledge	14 geepee	Holds 4 people. Can be pulled on ice or snow.
Wagon	32 geepee	Has seats for 2 people. Has 16 cubic feet of cargo space or room for 6 more people. Needs 2 huge animals or a Humongous animal.

Other Equipment

Item	Cost Per	Notes
Adhesive (Slow)	3 espee	Not especially useful in combat.
Bedroll	5 espee	Portable bedding.
Bell	2 espee	Small, cup-shaped metal thingy with a clapper for making noise. Comes with strap.
Blanket	5 espee	Nice, thick, & warm.
Brush	1 espee	Any size. Well, any reasonable size.
Cage, Large	85 geepee	Contains up to 8 human-sized objects. Metal.
Cage, Small	35 geepee	Contains up to 2 human-sized objects. Metal.
Candle	2 beepie	A hunk of wax with a wick in the middle.
Canvas	1 espee	A dense, rough fabric. Per square yard.
Canvas, Painter's	2 espee	A quality canvas stretched on a frame for painters or other artists.
Cards	4 espee	A 52 card deck.
Chain	18 geepee	Good for ship anchors and drawbridges. Per 5'.
Chalk	4 beepie	Per pack of 8 pieces.
Charcoal	6 beepie	For burning or drawing. Contains 8 pieces.
Churn	1 geepee	Device for making butter from milk.
Dice	1 espee	One six-sider. (Other-sided dice are seen as bizarre and otherworldly and cost 10 times this price.)
Dice, Loaded	1 geepee	One six-sider.
Embalming Fluid	19 geepee	Enough to embalm a medium-sized body.
Face Mask	2 geepee	Rubber. For impersonations or shenanigans.
Finger Trap	5 beepie	A tricky wicker tube for joining the fingers of the slow of wit.
Firebow	1 espee	Can start fires at +0.

Fish Tank	10 geepee 40 gallon glass tank. Often used for cardinal pikes.
Gear	2 espee A metal hunk with teeth for transmitting motion.
Grapnel	5 geepee Small grappling hook. Sans rope.
Grappling Hook	8 geepee Large three pronged hook. Sans rope.
Gravestone	4 espee A grave marker. Getting it engraved costs an extra espee.
Hammock	6 espee For strapping to trees or similar.
Harness	1 geepee Gear for an animal to pull something.
Hook	1 espee A blunt piece of bent metal with a hole for attaching rope.
Incense	5 geepee Comes in a variety of smells. One hours use.
Ink	5 espee A vial of black ink. Colored ink costs double.
Ladder	2 espee A wooden ladder. Cost is per 2'.
Lantern	1 geepee Needs oil.
Lock, Advanced	51 geepee -4 to picking.
Lock, High Quality	13 geepee -2 to picking.
Lock, Ordinary	3 geepee +0 to picking.
Lock, Simple	8 espee +2 to picking.
Lockpick Kit	2 geepee Makes it possible to pick a lock without a penalty.
Loom	12 geepee A device for making cloth, yarn, thread, or other textiles.
Magnifying Glass	1 geepee Can start fires at -1 or double the apparent size of something.
Mirror	1 geepee A reflective surface with a simple frame.
Mousetrap	1 espee A device for capturing mice. Cheese not included.
Needle	5 beepee For pulling thread or losing in haystacks.
Oil	6 beepee Oil for starting fires or fueling something (like a lamp). Per quart.
Paper	1 espee For 1 sheet of paper or parchment.
Picture Frame	1 espee Fits a canvas or a piece of paper.
Piton	1 espee A metal spike with a hole for a rope.
Plow	11 geepee A large blade at the end of a board for plowing fields.
Pot	5 espee A metal pot for cooking food.
Pulley	6 espee

	A wheel in a grooved rim.
Quill Pen	1 espee A big sharpened feather.
Rope, Decent	4 espee Bulky, but won't break easily. Per 10' of rope.
Rope, Inferior	3 beepee For when you don't care if it breaks. Per 10' of rope.
Rope, Superior	1 geepee More expensive but thin and strong. Per 10' of rope.
Rubber Chicken	7 espee Nice to have in a pinch.
Sealing Wax	8 beepee A substance heated to seal letters, containers, and so forth.
Sieve	3 espee A dish of wire mesh for sorting objects based on size.
Signet Ring	5 espee A finger ring with a symbol on it.
Skeleton, Fake	2 geepee Wooden skeleton used for medical or spooking purposes.
Slate	2 espee A flat plate for drawing with chalk.
Small Statue	8 espee A portable statue depicting something or someone.
Smoke Bomb	4 espee A small incendiary whose primary effect is to fill the air with soot.
Soap	4 beepee 1 bar.
Spinning Wheel	8 geepee A device for making yarn or thread.
Stick/Pole	1 espee A straight, even stick. Cost is per 5'.
Sundial	4 geepee A large, stone sundial for determining the time.
Sundial, Wrist	1 geepee Stylish, but useless.
Tar	2 espee Per gallon.
Tarot Cards	6 espee 22 card deck.
Telescope	2 geepee Makes things appear twice as near.
Tent, Large	6 geepee Holds 6 people with room to stand.
Tent, Small	3 geepee Holds 2 people with room to lay or sit.
Theatrical Mask	3 espee Comedy & tragedy mask.
Tinderbox	5 espee Contains flint & steel, a wood shaver, & some tinder.
Tongs	4 espee A scissors-like grasping device.
Torch	5 espee Lasts much less time than a lantern.
Washboard	3 espee A board with surface of rough metal for washing textiles.
Wax	2 espee Beeswax or earwax. Per gallon.
Wedge	3 espee

	Metal. For splitting, tightening, securing, levering, or propping.
Whetstone	1 espee Good for sharpening metal objects.
Whistle	1 espee Makes a shrill noise when blown.
Whoopee Cushion	8 beepie Great party gag.
Wire	1 espee Cost is per 5'. Barbs cost an extra espee per 5'.
Animals	
Animal	Cost Per Handling
Ass	18 geepee A stubborn, horse-like mammal.
Bovine	4 geepee A cow, steer, bull, ox, buffalo, or similar.
Camel	29 geepee A humped llama.
Chicken	3 beepie A domesticated bird.
Dog	19 geepee A carnivorous yet obsequious mammal.
Duck	3 beepie A goofy bird.
Elephant	405 geepee A big-ass mammal.
Falcon	6 geepee A scary bird.
Fish	2 beepie A slimy water-dweller.
Goat	6 espee An irascible mammal.
Goose	5 beepie An awkward bird.
Horse, Riding	41 geepee Usually used for riding.
Horse, War	114 geepee A meaner version of the above mammal.
House Cat	1 beepie A self-serving mammal.
Llama	5 geepee A small humpless camel.
Ostrich	5 geepee An oversized bird.
Parrot	5 geepee An babbling bird.
Pig	2 geepee A muddy mammal.
Pony	23 geepee An obstinate mammal.
Sheep	1 geepee A fuzzy mammal.
Swan	8 beepie A snobbish bird.
Turkey	7 beepie Another domesticated bird.

ices are often at least as important as your equipment.

- **Storage Devices:** You have to keep your stuff somewhere.

- **Torture & Execution Instruments:** Torture and execution are acquired tastes, and probably the result of evil desires, but here are the necessary implements just in case.

- **Vehicles:** As the old saying goes, driving around in vehi-

cles is a necessary part of getting from one place to another.

- **Other Equipment:** When it doesn't fit into another category, it's probably here.

Herbs & Consumables

If your campaign contains a lot of dangerous physical activity (dungeon raiding, mountain climbing, turkey basting, giant clam wrestling), your players are going to get hurt sometimes. This can present a problem. It's rather dangerous (not to mention extremely painful) to continue business as usual while wounded — but having to run to the local hospital every time you get stabbed in the stomach is annoying to say the least.

For most adventurers, herbs are the preferred method for healing wounds and curing disease.⁵ Using herbs is more expensive than bandaging your wounds and waiting until they heal, or going to hospitals, but it's far more efficient. Of course, herbs aren't just for healing. Many of them enhance your abilities or bestow entirely new ones. And some are adventures in themselves.

- **Name:** The name of the herb.

- **Cost:** The price to purchase this herb in an average apothecary which happens to have it.

- **Availability:** Your modifier when making Intuition / Instinct / Herbalism or Intuition / Savvy / Connections checks to find the herb (make the former check when searching in the wilderness and the latter check when searching apothecaries).

- **Habitat:** The sorts of terrain (or other location) in which you typically find in the herb.

- **Form:** The form the herb comes in. Is it a root? Is it a mineral? Perhaps it's just glop.

- **Use:** How you use the herb. Do you apply it to a part of the body, inject it into your veins with something that hasn't been invented yet, or chew it like gum?

- **Addiction:** The modifier to your Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Poison check when you roll to resist the herb's addictiveness.

- **Symptoms:** What happens to you when you fail your check versus addiction.

- **Speed:** How fast the herb affects a person who uses it.

- **Description:** The intended effects of the herb, any description of its appearance, and perhaps details about the way it's used.

- **Herb Addiction:** Some herbs are addictive. When using an herb with an addiction modifier, roll your Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Poison proficiency with the modifier listed to see if you become an addict. Complete Success or better is enough to shake off the effects entirely; Minimal Success leaves you with a minor craving for more and -2 to your Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Poison check the next time you use the herb. Characters who fail the check are addicted and begin to suffer from withdrawal symptoms, the severity of which is based on the type of herb. Bungling the roll means that the level of severity is increased by one (unless the results are already Extreme).

- **Slight Withdrawal Symptoms:** You begin suffering in about a day, craving the substance and thinking about it reg-

⁵ Note that in the *Higher Arc* system, unlike in most fantasy roleplaying games, the "h" in herb is pronounced.

Herb List

<i>Name</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Availability</i>	<i>Habitat</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Addiction</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Speed</i>
General Wound Healing								
Blant	5 geepee	2	Anywhere	Root	Ingest	1	Fair	1 Round
	Heals 1-2 degrees of Blunt damage.							
Cilar	6 beepee	4	Anywhere	Mineral	Sprinkle	0	Fair	Instant
	Heals 2 degrees of damaged caused by falling anvils, if taken immediately.							
E4WE9	81 geepee	-4	Manufactured	Guck	Ingest	0	Rejection	1 Round
	Stabilizes all wounds of the consumer.							
Erog	5 geepee	2	Anywhere	Root	Ingest	0	Slight	1 Round
	Heals 1-2 degrees of Edged damage.							
Lacoka	69 geepee	-2	Forest	Leaf	Apply	0	Slight	Instant
	Doubles the rate of healing for any wound.							
Prince	277 geepee	-6	Jungle	Fruit	Ingest	0	Extreme	Instant
	Heals any organ except the brain.							
Punt	4 geepee	2	Anywhere	Root	Ingest	0	Fair	1 Round
	Heals 1-2 degrees of Puncture damage.							
Resjog	12 geepee	-1	Anywhere	Root	Ingest	-2	Fair	1 Round
	Heals 1-2 degrees of Restrictive damage.							
Siniswort	4 geepee	0	Desert	Cactus	Apply	0	Fair	1 Round
	Heals 5 degrees of any wound, but leaves a horrible scar.							
Wertspud	298 geepee	-4	Swamp	Leaf	Apply	0	Slight	Instant
	Triples the rate of healing for any wound.							
Vilfrig	960 geepee	-6	Glacier	Cactus	Ingest	4	Extreme	Instant
	Heals any Severe wound (or 8 degrees of any wound). Takes entire Vil plant and 24 hours to prepare.							
Villots	461 geepee	-6	Glacier	Cactus	Ingest	3	Fair	Instant
	Heals any Major wound (or 4 degrees of any wound). Takes entire Vil plant and 12 hours to prepare.							
Vilmore	173 geepee	-6	Glacier	Cactus	Ingest	2	Fair	Instant
	Heals any Moderate wound (or 2 degrees of any wound). Takes entire Vil plant and 6 hours to prepare.							
Vilsing	77 geepee	-6	Glacier	Cactus	Ingest	1	Slight	Instant
	Heals any Minor wound (1 degree of any wound). Takes entire Vil plant and 3 hours to prepare.							
Muscle, Cartilage & Tendon Repair								
Dayweed	3 geepee	2	Hill	Stem	Apply	0	Slight	1-10 Rounds
	Heals any sprain.							
Hazlok	3 geepee	2	Coasts	Reed	Ingest	-1	Fair	1 Round
	Heals 1-5 degrees of muscle damage.							
Jogres	4 geepee	0	Anywhere	Thorn	Apply	-1	Extreme	1 1/2 Hours
	Heals 4 degrees of muscle or tendon damage.							
Manlin	3 geepee	2	Forests	Moss	Chew	-1	Fair	1 Round
	Repairs 2 degrees of damaged joint.							
Boster	3 geepee	2	Ocean	Stem	Ingest	0	Slight	1 Round
	Heals 1-2 degrees cartilage damage.							
Limb Repair								
Grinitbak	205 geepee	-4	Mountain	Flower	Apply	4	Extreme	1-10 Hours
	Regrows a lost limb. Limb is stinky for at least a week.							
Stikbak	194 geepee	-5	Riverbanks	Moss	Apply	-1	Fair	Instant
	Can be spread on body to reattach limbs if applied within 2 minutes of limb loss.							
Dirow	45 geepee	0	Forests	Grass	Apply	0	Slight	1-10 Minutes
	Grows a random type of extremity (1-3: Arm, 4-6 = Leg, 7 = Tail, 8-9 = Head, 10 = Other) on any open sore. New extremities are duplicates of those on the person it's growing on.							
Organ Repair								
Foobar	31 geepee	-1	Riverbanks	Leaf	Apply	0	Fair	1-10 Rounds
	Heals 2 degrees of skin damage (not scars).							
Jamer	28 geepee	-1	Forest	Leaf	Ingest	1	Fair	1-10 Rounds
	Heals 5 degrees of heart damage.							
Momomopo	48 geepee	-3	Forest	Ape Liver	Ingest	-1	Slight	1-10 Rounds
	Heals 4 degrees of liver damage.							
Spak	18 geepee	-1	Swamp	Grass	Inhale	-1	Slight	10 Minutes
	Heals 4 degrees of lung damage.							
Snilbak	18 geepee	-1	Anywhere	Mineral	Ingest	0	Fair	1-10 Minutes
	Heals 4 degrees of pancreas damage.							
Ooder	25 geepee	-1	Forest	Leaf	Ingest	0	Fair	1 Round
	Heals 4 degrees of intestinal damage.							
Xor	28 geepee	0	Anywhere	Stem	Ingest	1	Slight	1 Round
	Heals 6 degrees of spleen, gall bladder, appendix, and adenoid damage.							

Yasper	10 geepee	-1	Anywhere	Stem	Ingest	0	Extreme	1-10 Rounds
	Heals 5 degrees of kidney damage.							
Loblow	5 geepee	-1	Cave	Mushroom	Apply	1	Rejection	1 Round
	Heals 1 degree of gonad damage.							
Kakcatu	16 geepee	-1	Riverbanks	Flower	Ingest	0	Fair	1-10 Rounds
	Heals 3 degrees of stomach damage.							
Marspritt	7 geepee	-1	Forest	Flower	Ingest	0	Fair	Instant
	Heals 1 degree of gizzard damage.							
Unpla	192 geepee	-3	Forest	Mineral	Ingest	-1	Slight	Instant
	Heals 1 degree of brain damage. Won't restore memory.							
Kiwequ	740 geepee	-4	Desert	Insect	Ingest	4	Extreme	1-10 Rounds
	Repairs or regrows the most severely damaged organ in consumer's body.							
Painkillers								
Draph	15 geepee	0	Ocean	Leaf	Ingest	-1	Fair	10 Rounds
	Eliminates 1-5 points of pain modifier for 1-5 hours.							
Septundat	36 geepee	-1	Cave	Mineral	Lick	-2	Extreme	Instant
	Eliminates all pain modifiers.							
Guna Skin	39 geepee	1	Heath	Pelt	Lick	4	Slight	10 Rounds
	Guinea Pig-like creature which excretes a substance on its fur which cures a headache.							
Mipo Jam	10 geepee	1	Anywhere	Berry	Ingest	0	Slight	Instant
	Eliminates -1 pain penalty.							
Judar	22 geepee	0	Ocean	Animal	Burn	-1	Fair	1-10 Rounds
	Makes you jaded & indifferent. Eliminates -2 pain penalty. Makes you immune to fear & -2 to all aggressive actions.							
Bone Repair								
Supfarbone	186 geepee	-3	Desert	Fruit	Ingest	2	Slight	1 Round
	Mends up to 16 degrees of shattered bones.							
Moako	63 geepee	-4	Jungle	Stem	Apply	-1	Fair	1-10 Rounds
	Heals one broken bone.							
Charl	44 geepee	-2	Anywhere	Leaf	Apply	1	Slight	Instant
	Triples healing of broken bones.							
Nervous System Repair								
Jawmanger	320 geepee	-6	Forest	Leaf	Apply	2	Extreme	Instant
	Cures paralysis.							
Upseedayze	25 geepee	-1	Hill	Reed	Ingest	-3	Extreme	Instant
	Wakes consumer from a coma or any form of unconsciousness for at least 24 hours.							
Wate	29 geepee	2	Mountain	Thorn	Ingest	2	Slight	Instant
	Postpones effects of paralysis or coma for 1-10 hours.							
Yoyork	36 geepee	0	Cave	Cactus	Lick	0	Slight	1-10 Minutes
	Restores any memory loss from within the last week.							
Entikak	6 geepee	0	Anywhere	Fruit	Apply	-4	Rejection	10 Rounds
	Eliminates symptoms of addiction for all herbs except itself.							
Willywaker	6 geepee	2	Jungle	Stem	Chew	0	Slight	10 Rounds
	Enhances feeling in nerves. +2 to experiencing subtle or pleasant sensations; -2 to resisting painful ones.							
Prockash	77 geepee	-4	Mountain	Bud	Ingest	-1	Extreme	10 Rounds
	Eliminates all previous addictions, including those resulting from previous ingestions of Prockash. Comes from a bud at the top of a Gibbering Sequoia.							
Circulatory Repair								
Hilgath	39 geepee	-8	Mountain	Monster	Inhale	-3	Rejection	1 Round
	Made from a ground harpy beak. Causes extreme euphoria. +3 Flying.							
Quirb	2 geepee	2	Riverbanks	Moss	Apply	-2	Extreme	Instant
	Heals any bruise instantly.							
Harphi	13 geepee	0	Hill	Root	Burn	0	Fair	Instant
	Stops bleeding by clotting any exterior wound.							
Zot	12 geepee	0	Anywhere	Gourd	Sprinkle	2	Slight	1 1/2 Hours
	Heals any bruise.							
Sense Affectors								
Goprang	127 geepee	-3	Desert	Moss	Apply	0	Slight	1-10 Minutes
	Cures blindness.							
Elmo	47 geepee	-2	Cave	Burr	Chew	0	Slight	1-10 Hours
	Repairs damaged parts of the internal ear, restoring hearing.							
Kamchatka	8 geepee	-3	Earwax	Twig	Chew	N.A.	N.A.	1-10 Shifts
	Causes all sense organs to rot and fall out (including skin and tongue); each are replaced gradually over a week.							
Endurance Aids								
Blugibber	17 geepee	-1	Jungle	Root	Apply	-1	Slight	1-10 Rounds
	Heals 2 degrees of cold damage.							
Whot	10 geepee	0	Glacier	Root	Burn	-2	Slight	1-10 Rounds
	Heals 2 degrees of burn damage.							
Likwet	9 geepee	-1	Mountain	Mushroom	Chew	-3	Slight	1 Round
	Prevents 2 degrees of fatigue effect if taken within 1 hour before being fatigued.							

Chilbroth	20 geepee	-1	Anywhere	Reed	Ingest	1	Fair	1-10 Rounds
	Grants +4 to resisting poisons.							
Specus	19 geepee	0	Anywhere	Flower	Chew	2	Fair	1 Round
	Grants +4 to resisting diseases.							
Ijel	15 geepee	0	Anywhere	Fruit	Apply	0	Slight	1 Round
	Grants +4 to Resisting Injury. Causes alternating states of nausea (-3) and euphoria (-3).							
Resilstiltskin	139 geepee	-8	Mountain	Mushroom	Sprinkle	-1	Rejection	1-10 Rounds
	Grants total invulnerability for 1 minute.							
Concentration Aids								
Falderal	50 geepee	-4	Glacier	Insect	Burn	2	Rejection	Instant
	Raises all Concentration skills by +2 for 1 hour.							
Choncen	49 geepee	-6	Anywhere	Oil	Ingest	1	Rejection	1-10 Rounds
	+1 to all actions for 1-10 minutes.							
Self-Improvement								
Lestat	5 geepee	-5	Cave	Animal	Ingest	0	Rejection	1-10 Days
	Permanently increases your Maneuver and Prowess Racial Tiers by 1 each, and reduces your Intellect & Eloquence Racial Tiers by 1. From blood vole.							
Thigshaft	31 geepee	-1	Mountain	Twig	Lick	0	Fair	1-10 Rounds
	Grants +4 to Resisting Disease for 4 hours.							
Hummer	11 geepee	-6	Jungle	Moss	Inhale	-1	Rejection	1-10 Shifts
	General ability enhancer. Gives you 25 experience points to spend however you wish.							
Cosmetic Herbs								
Ret Spores	4 beepie	4	Swamps	Spores	Apply	N.A.	N.A.	10 Rounds
	Can be rubbed over the teeth to clean them.							
Pikkard	48 geepee	-3	Meteors	Spores	Sprinkle	0	Fair	1-10 Hours
	Cures baldness.							
Peryhol	4 beepie	4	Cave	Gourd	Apply	N.A.	N.A.	1-10 Minutes
	When gourd is shaken and top is broken off; the inside becomes liquid soap.							
Poepree	2 espee	3	Anywhere	Leaf	Apply	N.A.	N.A.	1-10 Rounds
	Makes you smell nice and fresh.							
Nosvagh	1 geepee	2	Armpits	Twig	Apply	N.A.	N.A.	1 Round
	Acts as a deodorant and antiperspirant.							
Hoff	8 geepee	0	Coast	Oil	Apply	2	Slight	10 Rounds
	Bug and horse repellent.							
Digestive System								
Gastroblast	6 espee	1	Anywhere	Spores	Inhale	-4	Slight	1-10 Minutes
	Laxative. Affected target must make a check immediately and every 5 minutes to avoid "letting it go."							
Tish	20 geepee	-1	Coast	Mineral	Inhale	-1	Slight	1-10 Minutes
	Aids digestion. Consumer requires half as much food for a week.							
Poisons & Dangerous Herbs								
Farfig	29 geepee	-2	Coast	Fruit	Chew	N.A.	N.A.	1-10 Rounds
	Obliterates taste buds.							
Joninde	33 geepee	-2	Mountain	Spores	Burn	-2	Slight	1-10 Minutes
	Causes archiophellia, a disease where artifacts, things long dead, and the undead arouse you.							
Instabrain's Advanced Formula	128 geepee	-4	Manufactured	Guck	Apply	N.A.	N.A.	1 1/2 Hours
	Makes your brain grow until it bursts out of your ears, killing you.							
Simkin	17 geepee	-1	Jungle	Guck	Ingest	-3	Fair	10 Rounds
	Consumer experiences hallucinations based on thoughts at time of ingestion.							
Splinchwort	60 geepee	-1	Coast	Leaf	Apply	1	Fair	Instant
	Makes you clench muscles tense. Used on porcupines.							
Other								
Darkquill	21 geepee	-2	Swamp	Berry	Lick	-2	Slight	1-10 Rounds
	Keeps you awake. Grows on discarded porcupine quills during the night.							
Lumpoputty	1 beepie	4	Armpits	Guck	Inhale	N.A.	N.A.	Instant
	Smells bad.							
Life-giving and Tissue Preservation Herbs								
Whunup	1000 geepee	-8	Jungle	Mushroom	Ingest	4	Rejection	Instant
	Rare herb that brings you back from the dead. Resurrected characters prone to strange hallucinations for several days.							
Hominer	115 geepee	-6	Hill	Bark	Apply	1	Rejection	1-10 Minutes
	Adds 1 year to life and reduces all Intellect Tiers (except racial) to half their previous amount (round down). Kills you if any tier is reduced to 0.							
Florgon	45 geepee	-1	Coast	Mineral	Apply	N.A.	N.A.	1-10 Minutes
	Prevents organic tissue from decaying for 1 week.							
Thorgon	20 geepee	0	Swamp	Mineral	Apply	N.A.	N.A.	1-10 Minutes
	Prevents organic tissue from decaying for 1 day.							
Miscellaneous Herbs								
Chereck	4 espee	0	Cave	Mushroom	Burn	N.A.	N.A.	1-10 Rounds
	Grows in bat guano. When burned, creates thick, black, suffocating smoke, like anything else, only way thicker.							

Saletha	370 geepee	-4	Anywhere	Berry	Apply	3	Extreme	1-10 Rounds
	Can cure anything but death, but only if used by an ordained ruler.							
Durm	2 geepee	0	Riverbanks	Cactus	Ingest	-1	Slight	1 1/2 Hours
	Steps up body's production of earwax by 500%.							
Vurrt	14 geepee	1	Anywhere	Burr	Ingest	4	Slight	1 1/2 Hours
	Prickly burr gives a full day's nutrition and causes a minor wound going down.							
Ambojitsu	4 espee	2	Anywhere	Berry	Burn	-4	Fair	1/2 Hours
	Greatly increases violent tendencies, especially toward family members; -3 to resisting homicidal impulses, -6 versus family members.							
Rain Peas	2 geepee	2	Anywhere	Pea	Ingest	-1	Slight	2 Shifts
	Pea pods which prevents fertility in women and men for 1 day.							
Pipeweed	6 beepee	3	Anywhere	Leaf	Burn	-2	Slight	Instant
	Enough for an hour of smoking. -5 to Seduction while using.							

ularly. You're at -2 to all actions for 1 to 5 days after the last dose is taken, and you must roll Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges to avoid taking the herb again when the opportunity presents itself.

- **Fair Withdrawal Symptoms:** You feel effects in only a few hours, and think of things other than the herb only when actively distracted. You're at -4 to all actions for 1 to 5 weeks after the last dose is taken, and you must roll Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges to avoid taking the herb again when the opportunity presents itself.

- **Extreme Withdrawal Symptoms:** You begin pining for the herb in minutes, obsessing over the symptoms of withdrawal and thinking of virtually nothing but getting a dose of the herb. You may have to make periodic Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges rolls to avoid going off to get a fix regardless of the consequences. You're at -6 to all actions for 1 to 5 months after the last dose is taken, and you must roll Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges to avoid taking the herb again when the opportunity presents itself.

- **Rejection Symptoms:** Although you avoid the effects of addiction, the herb doesn't take effect normally either. Instead, it reacts with your body chemistry in a rather terrible way, and you start to suffer. You must roll Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges. If you bungle, you die due to heart failure. If you fail, you fall into a coma which lasts indefinitely. If you do garner one or more degrees, subtract that number from 8 to derive your penalty to activity for the next 1 to 5 months. If you get 8 or more degrees, there is no effect, but no matter how well you roll, the herb you attempted to use will never again work for you.

Special Items

There be strange stuff with strange properties in some parts of Paranesia. Here are a few of those things.

Acids & Bases: Acids and bases are substances which burn and corrode most other substances with which they come into contact. Acids and bases are always reactive when mixed, but there is little practical difference between the effects of each of them on skin or other substances. Acids and bases can be used as weapons in combat; this works just like any other Maneuver / Aiming / Throwing attack (or Maneuver / Aiming / Launching attack, in the case of spray weapons). Note that acids and bases rarely affect only one small part of the body — Cobblers are encouraged to spread the degrees

Special Items Chart

Item	Cost Per	Notes
Acid/Base	5 espee	Per vial.
Adhesive (Quick)	3 geepee	Per vial.
Blackrock	2 geepee	Per pound.
Bladdery, Enormous	64 geepee	The size of a elephant bladder. Stores 8 degrees of electricity.
Bladdery, Moderate	16 geepee	The size of a human bladder. Stores 4 degrees of electricity.
Bladdery, Puny	1 geepee	The size of a chicken bladder. Stores 1 degree of electricity.
Bladdery, Tiny	4 geepee	The size of a fox bladder. Stores 2 degrees of electricity.
Gravy	2 espee	For use as a lubricant, fuel, or a food. Extremely fattening. 1 quart.
Holy/Unholy Water	1 espee	Per vial.
Indulgence	Variable	Per afterlife.
Latex	3 espee	Per vial.
Limestone	1 geepee	Per pound.
Lodestone	1 geepee	Per pound.
Mollia	5 espee	Generates cryofire. Per pound.
Monster Disguise Kit	1 geepee	In case you want to look like a bit like a monster, but not much. Per kit.
Mythrill	100 geepee	Per coin.
Nebecculum	50 geepee	Per gallon.
Petroleum	1 espee	Per vial.
Rubber	5 espee	Per pound.
Solvent (Extreme)	7 espee	Per vial.
Pixie Dust	2 geepee	Per dose. Lasts 4 hours.

around such that they affect more than just the single body part described by the hit location chart.

- **Adhesive (Quick):** Adhesive is, obviously, sticky stuff used to hold things together. Quick adhesive sets immediately upon contact with a solid. When hit by an aimed adhesive, a target gains a penalty to all movement-related actions equal to the number of degrees achieved on the Maneuver / Aiming / Throwing check. This penalty applies to all attempts to use any part of the body which is affected by the adhesive. There is a limit to an adhesive's effectiveness, however — no adhesive can hinder a target for more degrees than it has in the modifier associated with it. For instance, a strong glue, which has a +3 modifier, cannot apply any more than a -3 to a target's movement. (Note that sometimes —

such as if your eyes are glued shut — the penalty will be a little different, at the discretion of the Cobbler.)

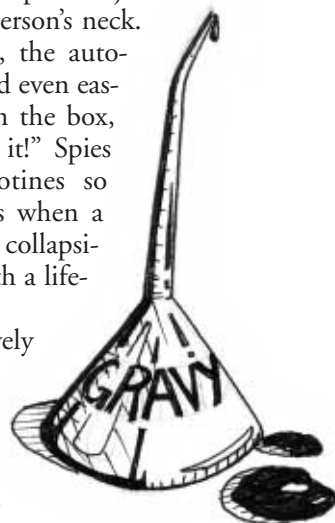
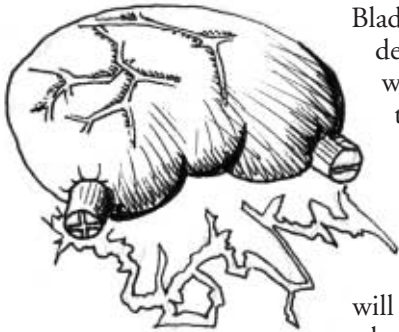
- **Ambrosia:** Ambrosia comes in two forms — material and aethereal. Aethereal ambrosia is what gods send to their followers and what mages manufacture within their own souls; spellcasters use it to power their spells. Aethereal ambrosia is normally present within spellcasters in very trace quantities, but these amounts are usually all that are necessary to power mortal spells. Material ambrosia is usually found in larger quantities as the food of the gods; deities ingest it to enhance their own power. Material ambrosia is incredibly rare in the mortal realm, and no god would willingly allow a mortal to have any. When consumed, it causes mere mortals to develop incredible skills and take on some of the powers of the gods.

- **Blackrock:** Blackrock is a black rock which casts an eerie, black glow. Although the stone's light is too feeble and shadowy to provide much illumination when adventuring in tunnels or dungeons, it is often used to entertain at parties, and many evil temples make excessive use of it in the decor. Blackrock is not particularly common, but it is not especially rare.

- **Bladdery:** One of the most recent developments in Terrekan magic is the bladdery. Bladderies are animal bladders which have been filled with electricity. Although the bladdery is absolutely cutting edge-magic, it isn't yet capable of holding very much electricity (a maximum of 4 degrees of power will fit into a huge bladdery), and no one really has much of an idea about what to do with a bladdery anyway (other than avoid puncturing it). Today bladderies are mostly purchased by rich and curious intellectuals, and the occasional adventurer with some kind of wicked plot to hatch. In the future, however, it's anyone's guess what might become of the bladdery.

- **Collapsible Auto-Guillotine:** Once assembled, this easily-portable contraption is just big enough to fit around a person's neck. Though it is sold in pieces, the auto-guillotine is easy to set up and even easier to use; as is explained on the box, "even a child could operate it!" Spies sometimes carry auto-guillotines so that they can off themselves when a mission gets too tough. The collapsible auto-guillotine comes with a lifetime warranty.

- **Gravy:** Terrek is relatively short on petroleum, considering that evolution never actually got a chance to happen here, and the dead organisms



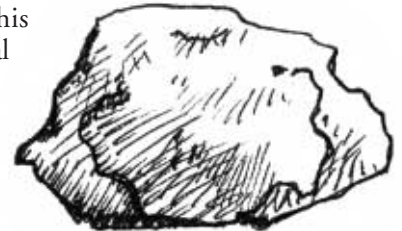
haven't had time to transform into fossil fuels. Although some petroleum does exist (see "petroleum," below), once the dwarves discovered that their very fattening gravy was a good fuel and an even better lubricant, many of them began to use that instead. Indeed, in many dwarven cultures, "changing the oil" has become a synonym for having a feast. Despite the fact that it works as a fuel, gravy, unlike oil, is not especially flammable. Note that the quality of gravy is measured in calories rather than viscosity.

- **Holy/Unholy Water:** Avatars sometimes consecrate water into holy water (or unholy water, in the case of evil avatars). Such water acts exactly as acid on anyone whom the consecrating avatar considers to be an enemy of his deity at the time of casting. Holy and unholy waters are mass-produced by some churches and are available for relatively reasonable fees. However, there are almost as many different kinds of holy water as there are avatars making it, and you don't always know exactly what you're getting.

- **Indulgences:** For those too lazy to work at achieving eternal salvation, alternatives are available. An indulgence is a contract between an individual and a higher power, usually with the church serving as an intermediary. Clerics sometimes earn the right to create indulgences from their gods, and then sell them to finance their operations. Naturally, indulgences vary greatly in quality. Some are available for as little as a 30 to 40 geepee, and get their owners into dumpy afterlives in obscure portions of the underworld. Getting in to a really great afterlife can cost as much as 2,000 geepee (getting into Hades only costs about 700 geepee). It's important to buy your indulgences from a reputable dealer, because it can be difficult to verify their authenticity. Those unable to get into an afterlife will be stuck as ghosts for all eternity (or at least a really darn long time).

- **Latex:** Latex is the sap of the rubber tree. It has many uses, including mask production, protection from biohazards, and contraception. Plus, among sprites (and others, occasionally) it is often hardened into suits, painted, and worn as clothing.

- **Limestone:** This beautiful green mineral is notable for its pleasant limey taste and its total irrelevance to all things of significance.



- **Lodestone:**

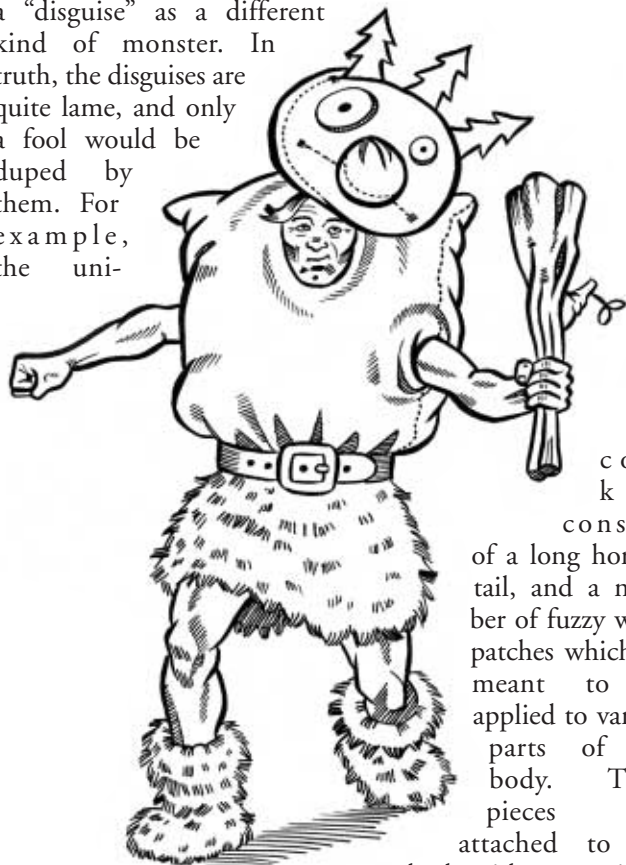
Lodestones are simply magnets — stones which happen to have the property of attracting steel and iron, usually to a fairly limited extent. However, skilled alchemists can increase their intensity and adjust them to be attracted to nearly anything. It is possible, thus, to purchase lodestones which gravitate toward such things as chunks of limestone, slabs of meat, halflings, or even people named Baxter. Such lodestones are expensive, and the more specific the things they need to be attracted to, the higher the cost.

- **Mollia:** Mollia is a magical anti-abrasive goo which is so slippery it actually generates *negative* friction when rubbed. If you rub against it particularly vigorously, you'll end up starting a cryofire — a fire that burns cold rather than hot

(though in most other respects, it behaves just like ordinary fire). Mollia also has other uses, not the least of which is causing people who try to stand on it to fall down. In fact, it is totally impossible to stand on it, and anything placed upon it will slide off.

• **Monster Disguise Kits:** This is actually a whole series of items, each of which consists of

a “disguise” as a different kind of monster. In truth, the disguises are quite lame, and only a fool would be duped by them. For example, the uni-

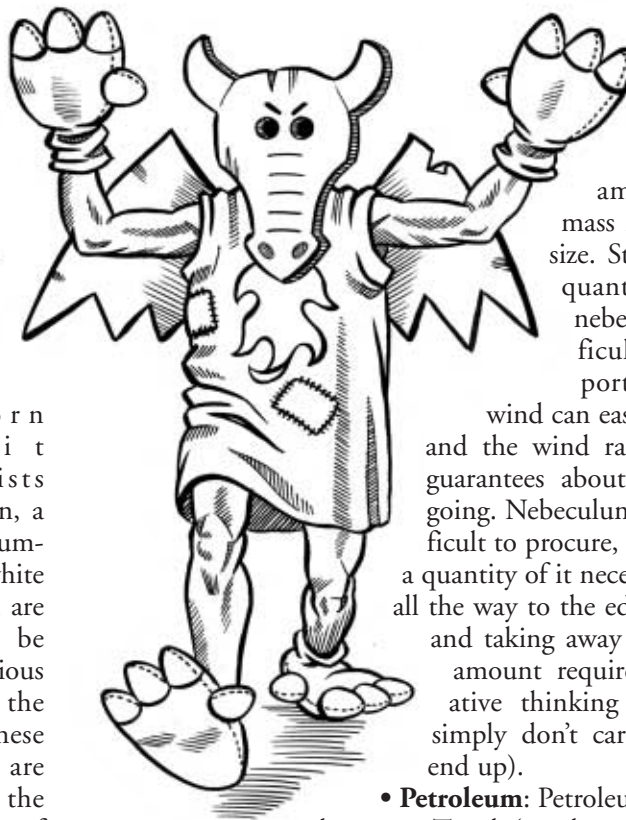


corn kit consists of a long horn, a tail, and a number of fuzzy white patches which are meant to be applied to various parts of the body. These pieces are attached to the

body with a quantity of quick adhesive (see page 158)

which comes with the kit (just enough adhesive is included to attach each part once). The adhesive persistently sticks to the object to which it is applied, and requires an extreme solvent to become unstuck (alternatively, the disguise will fall off from use in about a week). A kit generally comes with enough extreme solvent to dissolve the disguise from the person to whom its applied. The adhesive only works once.

• **Mythrill:** Mythrill is an enchanted mineral which is so rare in most places that the inhabitants dismiss it as mere legend. More valuable than any other mineral, it is a beautiful silver color. Incredibly malleable yet phenomenally hard, it never tarnishes. It is also intrinsically magical and makes excellent equipment of all kinds, especially weapons and armor. Any weapon made of it is automatically at least +1, and any armor made with it automatically has least +1 protection in all categories (in other words, it is at least 1/1/1/1 and 1/1/1/1). Even areas which know of mythrill and are aware of lodes of it tend to be cautious of mining it too recklessly, however, because for some unknown reason, baalrogues often seem to be buried nearby. Mythrill derives its name from its rarity and the fact that people are invariably thrilled to get their hands on it.



• **Nebeculum:** The clouds which hold a terrace inside the tempest are called nebecula, and the substance which makes up this nebecula is called nebeculum. Nebeculum is renown for its malleability; it can be molded into nearly any shape with no tools save bare hands (although unless magic is used, its color, hardness, and texture always remain those of an extremely dense cloud). When placed in the air, nebeculum hangs there and moves easily in whichever direction it is

pushed or blown by the wind. It can support large amounts of mass relative to its size. Still, any large quantity of nebeculum is difficult to transport, for the

wind can easily take it — and the wind rarely provides guarantees about where it is going. Nebeculum is quite difficult to procure, for obtaining a quantity of it necessitates a trip all the way to the edge of Terrek, and taking away a substantial amount requires some creative thinking (unless you simply don't care where you end up).

• **Petroleum:** Petroleum is relatively rare on Terrek (see the entry for gravy, above), but it does exist, courtesy of Biovelo, God of Evolution. In any case, petroleum is most commonly used in the form of oil as either a lamp fuel or an incendiary.

• **Rubber:** From the very bark and flesh of the rubber tree comes rubber, an incredibly elastic material used in armor and various machines. Rubber is much prized by the dwarves, who regard it as super-keen, and delight in creating all sorts of weird machines and hybrid substances with it. Sprites also use it for a variety of purposes, having known about it for much longer than dwarves. Iron Titans make good use of rubber as well.

• **Solvent (Extreme):** An extreme solvent is used to destroy quick adhesive. When hit by an aimed solvent, a target covered in glue loses any penalty to all movement-related actions equal to the number of degrees achieved on the Maneuver / Aiming / Throwing check. There is a limit to a solvent's effectiveness, however — no solvent can destroy more degrees of adhesive than it has in the modifier associated with it.

• **Vacuum Bottle:** The vacuum bottle is simply a corked bottle with the air removed (usually magically). Although it does no more damage than an ordinary bottle, it makes a very loud sound when shattered.

Weapons & Armor

At some point, even if not right away, you may wish to consider acquiring weapons and armor. However, this equipment can be expensive. Knives, hammers, hoes, and other such things which have other, more mundane functions — while still somewhat expensive — are much more available, and thus more likely to be in the average person's possession, including that of a starting character. Also, in case you're planning to loot someone's body early in the adventure, remember that characters who don't see a need to defend themselves will rarely have sophisticated weapons or armor, and even those who do desire these things may very well not be able to afford them.

It is commonly believed among common people and even some spellcasters that the use of armor inhibits magic. This rumor appears to have no basis whatever in fact, however — there is no physical reason a mage or avatar can't wear any kind of armor, metal or otherwise. It *is* a social faux pas (so you're liable to be frequently scoffed at, especially by fellow spellcasters), and it's not very dramatically appropriate, but if that doesn't bother you, go right ahead.

Weapons

For information on using weapons, see page 27. Included in the Implements of Destruction chart (page 168) there are statistics (including costs) for weapons.

Armor

Armor, being both protective and encumbering, has a few special characteristics.

- **Coverage:** An armor's coverage consists of all the parts of the body that armor type covers. See the Hit Location chart for details.

- **B/E/R/P P/E/C/T:** An armor's B/E/R/P P/E/C/T is how well it protects its wearer versus the Blunt, Edged, Restrictive, Pointed, Photonic, Electrical, Caustic, and Thermal Damage Types, respectively. When a part of the body protected by a piece of armor is affected by a particular Damage Type, one degree of that damage is negated for every point of that kind of protection afforded by the armor.

- **Tote Rating:** The Tote Rating of a suit of armor is a measurement of its weight and awkwardness expressed in a form compatible with a character's Toting proficiency. This is useful in determining what suits of armor a character can wear without incurring a penalty. If the Tote Rating of a suit of armor is greater than a character's Toting Threshold (which is the same as half of her Toting proficiency), she suffers a penalty to all physical actions equal to the difference as long as she's wearing the armor. The Tote Rating of a particular suit of armor is the sum total of all the Tote Ratings of its component parts.

- **Bulkiness:** Each suit (or piece) of armor which a character can wear is designated as either "light" or "bulky." Bulky suits are those which are at least somewhat awkward and difficult to wear. If a suit is bulky, it imparts a minimum penalty of -1 to any character wearing it, regardless of his Toting Threshold. For example, a character with a Toting Threshold of 5 wearing a bulky suit of armor with a Tote Rating of 2 would be at -1. The same character wearing a bulky suit of

Armor Material Attributes Chart

Material	Tote Rating	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulkiness	Cost Multiplier	Full Suit Cost
Metal						
Metal Plate	9	1/4/1/2	2/3/2/1	Bulky	81	729 geepee
Scale Mail	7	1/2/0/3	1/3/1/1	Bulky	79	553 geepee
Ring Mail	5	0/3/0/1	1/3/0/0	Light	25	125 geepee
Wire Mesh	3	0/2/0/0	0/2/0/0	Light	9	27 geepee
Skins						
Bone/Chiton	9	1/3/2/2	1/2/3/2	Bulky	81	729 geepee
Hard Leather	7	1/2/1/2	1/1/2/2	Bulky	79	553 geepee
Soft Leather	5	1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	Light	25	125 geepee
Skin	3	1/0/0/1	0/0/1/1	Light	9	27 geepee
Rubber						
Rubber Slab	9	4/1/1/2	1/4/2/1	Bulky	81	729 geepee
Rubber Plate	7	3/1/0/2	1/3/1/1	Bulky	79	553 geepee
Rubber Sheet	5	2/1/0/1	0/2/1/1	Light	25	125 geepee
Latex	3	1/1/0/0	0/1/1/0	Light	9	27 geepee
Fiber						
Wood Plate	9	2/2/2/2	2/2/2/2	Bulky	81	729 geepee
Wood Mail	7	1/3/0/2	1/1/2/2	Bulky	79	553 geepee
Rope Mesh	5	1/3/0/0	1/1/0/2	Light	25	125 geepee
Heavy Cloth	3	0/1/0/1	1/0/0/1	Light	9	27 geepee
Fluffy						
Pillowing	9	4/1/2/1	2/0/2/4	Bulky	81	729 geepee
Padding	7	3/1/1/1	2/0/1/3	Bulky	79	553 geepee
Heavy Quilting	5	2/1/0/1	1/0/0/3	Light	25	125 geepee
Quilted Cloth	3	2/0/0/0	0/0/0/2	Light	9	27 geepee
Fur						
Matted Fur	9	2/3/2/1	3/2/1/2	Bulky	81	729 geepee
Dense Fur	7	2/2/1/1	2/0/1/3	Bulky	79	553 geepee
Moderate Fur	5	2/2/0/0	1/0/1/2	Light	25	125 geepee
Sparse Fur	3	1/1/0/0	1/0/0/1	Light	9	27 geepee
Feathers						
Rigid Feather	9	3/2/2/1	2/1/2/3	Bulky	81	729 geepee
Heavy Feather	7	2/2/2/0	2/1/1/2	Bulky	79	553 geepee
Light Feather	5	1/1/2/0	1/0/1/2	Light	25	125 geepee
Down	3	0/1/1/0	0/0/0/2	Light	9	27 geepee
Scales						
Plate Scale	9	2/3/1/2	2/1/3/2	Bulky	81	729 geepee
Horned Scale	7	1/3/1/1	2/1/2/1	Bulky	79	553 geepee
Hard Scale	5	1/2/0/1	1/0/2/1	Light	25	125 geepee
Soft Scale	3	0/1/0/1	1/0/1/0	Light	9	27 geepee
Other						
Ceramic Plate	11	2/4/1/3	2/4/3/1	Bulky	121	1331 geepee
Trellised Plate	10	2/4/1/2	2/3/2/2	Bulky	100	1000 geepee
Quill	8	2/3/2/0	2/2/1/2	Bulky	64	512 geepee
Trellised Mail	8	2/3/0/2	1/2/2/2	Bulky	64	512 geepee
Loricite	8	1/3/1/2	2/3/1/1	Bulky	64	512 geepee
Brigandine	7	2/2/0/2	1/2/1/2	Bulky	49	343 geepee
Jack	6	2/2/0/1	1/1/1/2	Bulky	36	216 geepee
Jerky	6	1/1/1/2	1/1/1/2	Bulky	36	216 geepee
Banded Mail	6	0/3/0/2	1/3/0/1	Bulky	36	216 geepee
Studded Leather	6	1/2/0/2	1/1/1/2	Bulky	36	216 geepee
Cocklebur	5	2/2/0/0	1/1/1/1	Light	25	125 geepee

armor with a Tote Rating of 3, 4, 5, or 6 would retain the -1 penalty. After that point, however, his penalties would steadily increase. Donning a bulky suit with a Tote Rating of 7 would put him at -2; a bulky suit with a Tote Rating of 8 would put him at -3. If he were to wear light armor, on the other hand, he would suffer no penalty at all until the armor reached a Tote Rating of 6, at which point he would be at -

Armor Suit Example Chart

Fr. = Front / Ba. = Back / Up. = Upper / Lo. = Lower /

Full Hard Leather				
	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Hard Leather	7	1/2/1/2	1/1/2/2	
Armpit Guards	.28	Armpits		
Boots	.56	Ankles, Feet		
Crotch Piece	.28	Groin		
Elbow Cups	.28	Elbows		
Full Helm	2.8	Fr. of Head, Ba. of Head		
Gauntlets	.56	Wrists, Hands		
Knee Cups	.28	Knees		
Lo. Bracers	.56	Lo. Arms		
Lo. Greaves	.56	Lo. Legs		
Pelvic Piece	.56	Buttocks, Hips		
Shoulder Guards	.56	Blades, Shoulder Fronts		
Torso Plates	5.32	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
Up. Bracers	.56	Up. Arms		
Up. Greaves	.84	Up. Legs		
Full Heavy Cloth				
	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Heavy Cloth	3	0/1/0/1	1/0/0/1	
Boots	.12	Ankles, Feet		
Full Mask	.12	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Gauntlets	.12	Wrists, Hands		
Hood	.48	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples, Throat		
Robe	2.16	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbow, Lo. Arms, Buttocks, Hips, Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		
Full Metal Plate				
	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Metal Plate	9	1/4/1/2	2/3/2/1	
Armpit Guards	.18	Armpits		
Boots	.36	Ankles, Feet		
Crotch Piece	.18	Groin		
Elbow Cups	.18	Elbows		
Full Helm	1.8	Fr. of Head, Ba. of Head		
Gauntlets	.36	Wrists, Hands		
Knee Cups	.18	Knees		
Lo. Bracers	.36	Lo. Arms		
Lo. Greaves	.36	Lo. Legs		
Pelvic Piece	.36	Buttocks, Hips		
Shoulder Guards	.36	Blades, Shoulder Fronts		
Torso Plates	3.42	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
Up. Bracers	.36	Up. Arms		
Up. Greaves	.54	Up. Legs		
Full Ring Mail				
	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Ring Mail	5	0/3/0/1	1/3/0/0	
Boots	.2	Ankles, Feet		
Coat	3	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms, Buttocks, Hips		
Full Mask	.2	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Gauntlets	.2	Wrists, Hands		
Hood	.8	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples, Throat		
Leggings	.6	Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		

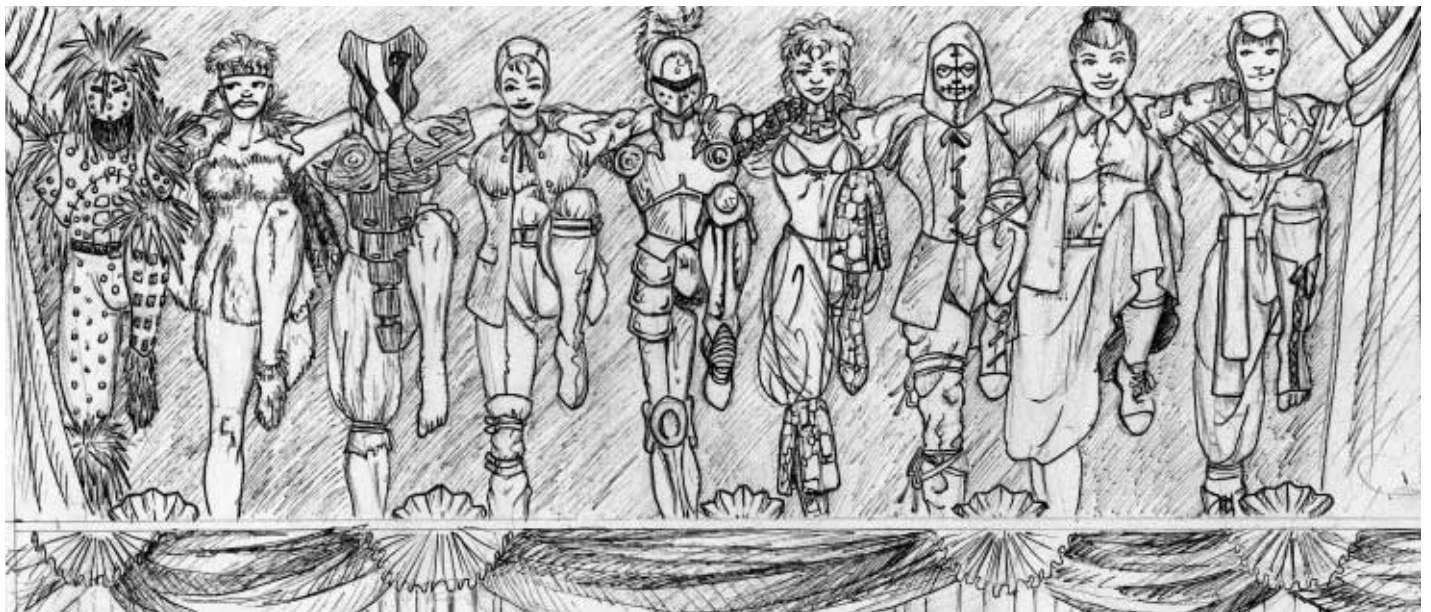
Full Scale Mail				
	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Scale Mail	7	1/2/0/3	1/3/1/1	
Boots	.28	Ankles, Feet		
Coat	4.2	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms, Buttocks, Hips		
Full Mask	.28	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Gauntlets	.28	Wrists, Hands		
Hood	1.12	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples, Throat		
Leggings	.84	Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		
Full Soft Leather				
	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Soft Leather	5	1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	
Boots	.2	Ankles, Feet		
Coat	3	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms, Buttocks, Hips		
Full Mask	.2	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Gauntlets	.2	Wrists, Hands		
Hood	.8	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples, Throat		
Leggings	.6	Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		
Full Loose Suit Example				
	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Marinamancer Suit	5	1/3/0/0	1/1/0/2	
Rope Mesh	5	1/3/0/0	1/1/0/2	
Boots	.2	Ankles, Feet		
Full Mask	.2	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Gauntlets	.2	Wrists, Hands		
Hood	.8	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples, Throat		
Robe	3.6	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbow, Lo. Arms, Buttocks, Hips, Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		
Full Pliable Suit Example				
	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Snow Tracker Suit	7	2/2/1/1	2/0/1/3	
Dense Fur	7	2/2/1/1	2/0/1/3	
Boots	.28	Ankles, Feet		
Coat	4.2	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms, Buttocks, Hips		
Full Mask	.28	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Gauntlets	.28	Wrists, Hands		
Hood	1.12	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples, Throat		
Leggings	.84	Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		
Full Rigid Suit Example				
	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Mercenary Suit	8	1/3/1/2	2/3/1/1	
Loricite	8	1/3/1/2	2/3/1/1	
Armpit Guards	.16	Armpits		
Boots	.32	Ankles, Feet		
Crotch Piece	.16	Groin		
Elbow Cups	.16	Elbows		
Full Helm	1.6	Fr. of Head, Ba. of Head		
Gauntlets	.32	Wrists, Hands		
Knee Cups	.16	Knees		
Lo. Bracers	.32	Lo. Arms		
Lo. Greaves	.32	Lo. Legs		
Pelvic Piece	.32	Buttocks, Hips		
Shoulder Guards	.32	Blades, Shoulder Fronts		
Torso Plates	3.04	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
Up. Bracers	.32	Up. Arms		
Up. Greaves	.48	Up. Legs		



From Left: Fat Suit, Gladiator Suit, Crusader Suit, Sorcerer Suit, Smith Suit, Full Scale Mail Suit, Enchanter Suit, Bounty Hunter Suit, Cannibal Suit

Full Tight Suit Example				
Kaustomancer Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Rubber Sheet	5	2/1/0/1	0/2/1/1	
Full Suit	5	All		
3/4 Loose Suit Example				
Summoner Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Quill	6	2/3/2/0	2/2/1/2	
Boots	.32	Ankles, Feet		
Cowl	1.04	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples		
Gloves	.16	Hands		
Short Cloak	4	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms		
Skirt/Kilt	.48	Groin, Buttocks, Hips		
3/4 Pliable Suit Example				
Crusader Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Ring Mail	3.75	0/3/0/1	1/3/0/0	
Boots	.2	Ankles, Feet		
Cowl	.65	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples		
Half Arm Gloves	.4	Lo. Arms, Wrists, Hands		
Tunic	2.5	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Buttocks, Hips		
3/4 Rigid Suit Example				
Bounty Hunter Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Hard Leather	5.25	1/2/1/2	1/1/2/2	
Armpit Guards	.14	Armpits		
Butt Guard	.14	Buttocks		
Crotch Piece	.14	Groin		
Half Helm	.77	Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Crown, Ears, Ba. of Skull		
Hip Guards	.14	Hips		
Nape Guard	.28	Neckbone		
Shoulder Guards	.28	Blades, Shoulder Fronts		
Torso Plates	2.66	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
Up. Bracers	.28	Up. Arms		
Up. Greaves	.42	Up. Legs		
3/4 Tight Suit Example				
Fulminomancer Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Wire Mesh	2.25	0/2/0/0	0/2/0/0	
Collared Short Body Suit	1.71	Abdomen, Chest, Lo. Back, Up. Back, Throat, Neckbone, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Buttocks, Hips		
Elbow Cups	.06	Elbows		
Full Mask	.12	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Gloves	.06	Hands		
Jackboots	.3	Knees, Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
1/2 Loose Suit Example				
Enchanter Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Soft Leather	2.5	1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	
Half Arm Gloves	.4	Lo. Arms, Wrists, Hands		
Hood	.8	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples, Throat		
Long Cape	1.3	Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Buttocks		
1/2 Pliable Suit Example				
Calvary Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Scale Mail	3.5	1/2/0/3	1/3/1/1	
Boots	.28	Ankles, Feet		
Hip Guards	.14	Hips		
Knee Cups	.14	Knees		
Vest	2.94	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs, Blades, Shoulder Fronts		

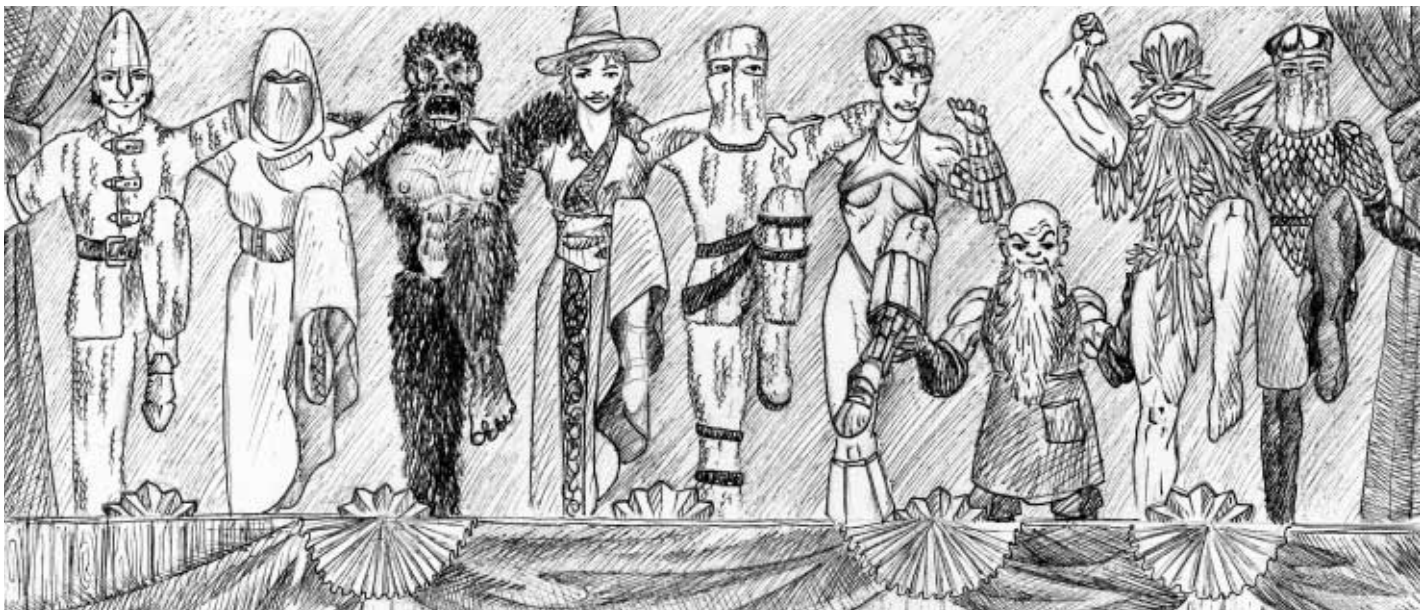
1/2 Rigid Suit Example				
Woodlander Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Wood Plate	4.5	2/2/2/2	2/2/2/2	
Butt Guard	.18	Buttocks		
Crotch Piece/Thong	.18	Groin		
Full Mask	.36	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Shoulder Guards	.36	Blades, Shoulder Fronts		
Torso Plates	3.42	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
1/2 Tight Suit Example				
Conjuror Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Latex	1.5	1/1/0/0	0/1/1/0	
Gauntlets	.12	Wrists, Hands		
Half Shirt	.78	Chest, Up. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits		
Jackboots	.3	Knees, Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Short Sleeves	.12	Up. Arms		
Trunks	.18	Groin, Buttocks, Hips		
1/4 Loose Suit Example				
Shaman Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Moderate Fur	1.25	2/2/0/0	1/0/1/2	
Headband	.35	Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Skull		
Lo. Bracers	.2	Lo. Arms		
Short Cape	.7	Up. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts		
1/4 Pliable Suit Example				
Warrior Monk Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Wood Mail	1.75	1/3/0/2	1/1/2/2	
Elbow Gloves	.7	Elbows, Lo. Arms, Wrists, Hands		
Jackboots	.7	Knees, Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Small Cap	.35	Fr. of Crown, Ba. of Crown, Ba. of Skull		
1/4 Rigid Suit Example				
Savage Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Rigid Feather	2.25	3/2/2/1	2/1/2/3	
Armpit Guards	.18	Armpits		
Breastplate	1.62	Chest, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
Shoulder Guards	.36	Blades, Shoulder Fronts		
Visor	.09	Up. Face		
1/4 Tight Suit Example				
Illusionist Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Soft Scale	0.75	0/1/0/1	1/0/1/0	
Collar	.21	Throat, Neckbone		
Half Arm Gloves	.24	Lo. Arms, Wrists, Hands		
Jackboots	.3	Knees, Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Archer Suit				
Heavy Quilting	4.42	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Tunic	4.42	2/1/0/1	1/0/0/3	
	2.5	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Buttocks, Hips		
Soft Leather				
Boots	.2	Ankles, Feet		
Full Cap	.75	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples		
Gloves	.1	Hands		
Heavy Cloth				
Collar	.21	Throat, Neckbone		
Leggings	.36	Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		
Long Sleeves	.3	Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms		



From Left: Porcupine Suit, Shaman Suit, Woodlander Suit, Thief Suit, Full Metal Plate Suit, Illusionist Suit, Full Soft Leather Suit, What the hell is Olga doing here?, Cleric Suit

Beskerker Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Heavy Cloth	1.23	0/1/0/1	1/0/0/1	
Skirt/Kilt	.18	Groin, Buttocks, Hips		
Soft Leather		1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	
Calftoots	.4	Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Gauntlets	.2	Wrists, Hands		
Skull Cap	.45	Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Crown, Ba. of Skull		
Cannibal Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Bone/Chiton	2.7	1/3/2/2	1/2/3/2	
Breastplate	1.62	Chest, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
Butt Guard	.18	Buttocks		
Crotch Piece	.18	Groin		
Full Mask	.36	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Shoulder Guards	.36	Blades, Shoulder Fronts		
Cleric Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Heavy Quilting	2.43	2/1/0/1	1/0/0/3	
Calftoots	.4	Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Mantle	.8	Breastbone, Breasts/Pecs, Collarbone, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Spine		
Heavy Cloth		0/1/0/1	1/0/0/1	
Belt	.54	Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
Knickers	.42	Groin, Buttocks, Hips, Up. Legs, Knees		
Skull Cap	.27	Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Crown, Ba. of Skull		
Farrier Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Soft Leather	2.1	1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	
Apron	1.4	Abdomen, Chest, Hips, Up. Legs		
Gauntlets	.2	Wrists, Hands		
Hard Scale		1/2/0/1	1/0/2/1	
Jackboots	.5	Knees, Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Fat Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Pillowng	8.2	4/1/2/1	2/0/2/4	
Body Suit	5.4	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Buttocks, Hips, Up. Legs		
Padding		3/1/1/1	2/0/1/3	
Elbow Gloves	.7	Elbows, Lo. Arms, Wrists, Hands		
Full Helm	1.4	Fr. of Head, Ba. of Head		
Jackboots	.7	Knees, Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Fencer Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Heavy Cloth	3	0/1/0/1	1/0/0/1	
Hood	.48	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples, Throat		
Long Sleeves	.3	Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms		
Pants	.54	Groin, Buttocks, Hips, Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		
Shirt	1.32	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits		
Skin		1/0/0/1	0/0/1/1	
Boots	.12	Ankles, Feet		
Gauntlets	.12	Wrists, Hands		
Wire Mesh		0/2/0/0	0/2/0/0	
Full Mask	.12	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Foot Soldier Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Ring Mail	5.13	0/3/0/1	1/3/0/0	
Coat	3	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms, Buttocks, Hips		
Leggings	.6	Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		
Metal Plate		1/4/1/2	2/3/2/1	
Boots	.36	Ankles, Feet		
Conical Helm	.81	Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Crown, Ba. of Skull		
Gauntlets	.36	Wrists, Hands		

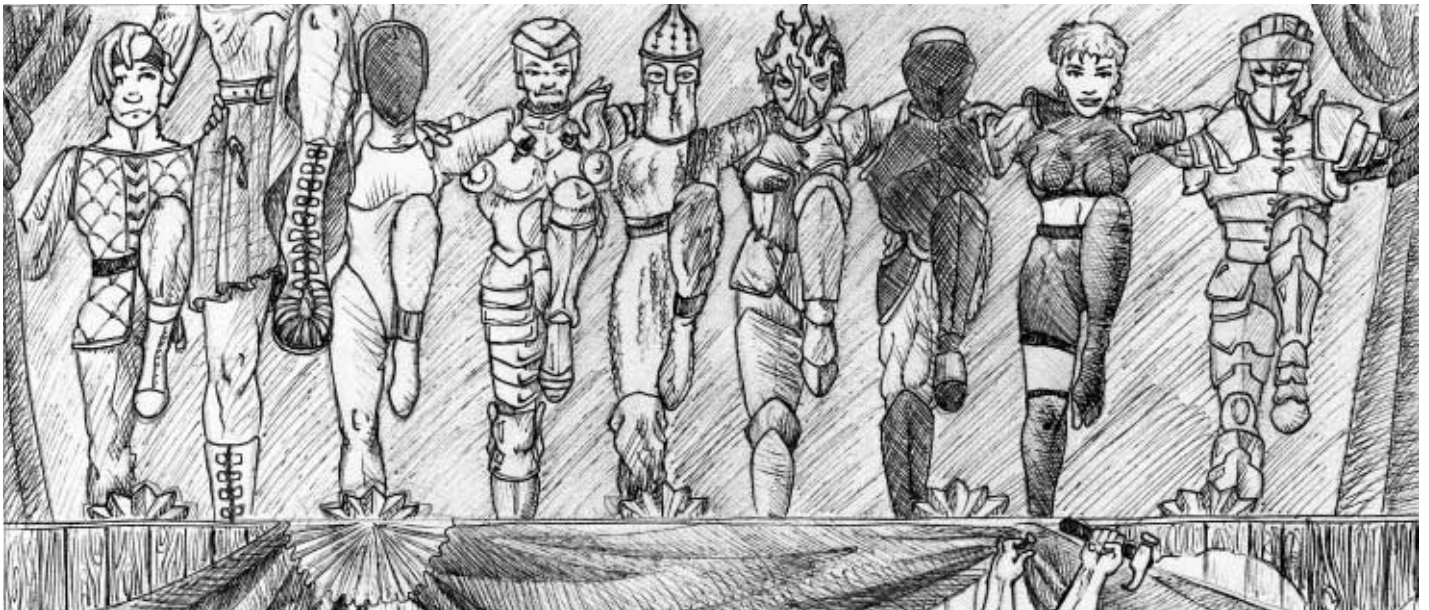
Gladiator Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Metal Plate	4.95	1/4/1/2	2/3/2/1	
Boots	.36	Ankles, Feet		
Breastplate	1.62	Chest, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
L. Elbow Cup	.09	L. Elbow		
L. Knee Cup	.09	L. Knee		
L. Gauntlet	.18	L. Wrist, L. Hand		
L. Lo. Bracer	.18	L. Lo. Arm		
L. Lo. Greave	.18	L. Lo. Leg		
L. Shoulder Guard	.18	L. Blade, L. Shoulder Fr.		
Skirt/Kilt	.54	Groin, Buttocks, Hips		
T-Helm	1.08	Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Lo. Face, Ba. of Crown, Ears, Ba. of Skull		
L. Up. Bracer	.18	L. Up. Arm		
L. Up. Greave	.27	L. Up. Leg		
Gorilla Costume	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Hard Leather	6	1/2/1/2	1/1/2/2	
Boots	.28	Ankles, Feet		
Breastplate	1.26	Chest, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
Full Mask	.28	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Gauntlets	.28	Wrists, Hands		
Dense Fur	2/2/1/1	2/0/1/3		
Backplate	1.4	Up. Back, Lo. Back		
Moderate Fur	2/2/0/0	1/0/1/2		
Hood	.8	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples, Throat		
Long Sleeves	.5	Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms		
Pants	.9	Groin, Buttocks, Hips, Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		
Quarter Shirt	.3	Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits		
Pikeman Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Metal Plate	6.35	1/4/1/2	2/3/2/1	
Half Helm	.99	Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Crown, Ears, Ba. of Skull		
Ring Mail		0/3/0/1	1/3/0/0	
Veil	.4	Lo. Face, Throat, Neckbone		
Scale Mail		1/2/0/3	1/3/1/1	
Shirt	3.08	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits		
Short Sleeves	.28	Up. Arms		
Soft Leather		1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	
Elbow Gloves	.5	Elbows, Lo. Arms, Wrists, Hands		
Jackboots	.5	Knees, Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Long Kilt/Skirt	.6	Groin, Buttocks, Hips, Up. Legs		
Porcupine Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Quill	7	2/3/2/0	2/2/1/2	
Backplate	1.6	Up. Back, Lo. Back		
Boots	.32	Ankles, Feet		
Bracelets	.16	Wrists		
Elbow Cups	.16	Elbows		
Hood	1.28	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples, Throat		
Knee Cups	.16	Knees		
Shoulder Guards	.32	Blades, Shoulder Fronts		
Studded Leather		1/2/0/2	1/1/1/2	
Armpit Guards	.12	Armpits		
Breastplate	1.08	Chest, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
Breeches	.72	Groin, Buttocks, Hips, Up. Legs		
Full Mask	.24	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Gloves	.12	Hands		
Lo. Bracers	.24	Lo. Arms		
Lo. Greaves	.24	Lo. Legs		
Up. Bracers	.24	Up. Arms		



From Left: Foot Soldier Suit, Full Heavy Cloth Suit, Gorilla Suit, Wizard Suit, Full Ring Mail Suit, Warrior Monk Suit, Randy Little Farrier Suit, Savage Suit, Pikewoman Suit

Smith Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Heavy Quilting	2.51	2/1/0/1	1/0/0/3	
Apron	1.4	Abdomen, Chest, Hips, Up. Legs		
Half Arm Gloves	.4	Lo. Arms, Wrists, Hands		
Jackboots	.5	Knees, Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Wire Mesh		0/2/0/0	0/2/0/0	
Full Mask	.12	Forehead, Up. Face, Lo. Face		
Neck Piece	.09	Throat		
Sorcerer Suit	4.65	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Soft Leather	4.65	1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	
Boots	.2	Ankles, Feet		
Cowl	.65	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Temples		
Gauntlets	.2	Wrists, Hands		
Robe	3.6	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbow, Lo. Arms, Buttocks, Hips, Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		
Spearman Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Metal Plate	5.21	1/4/1/2	2/3/2/1	
Conical Helm	.81	Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Crown, Ba. of Skull		
Ring Mail		0/3/0/1	1/3/0/0	
Body Suit	3	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Buttocks, Hips, Up. Legs		
Veil	.4	Lo. Face, Throat, Neckbone		
Soft Leather		1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	
Elbow Gloves	.5	Elbows, Lo. Arms, Wrists, Hands		
Jackboots	.5	Knees, Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Thief Suit	5.35	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Jack	5.35	2/2/0/1	1/1/1/2	
Coat	3.6	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms, Buttocks, Hips		
Jackboots	.6	Knees, Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Soft Leather		1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	
Full Cap	.75	Ba. of Head, Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples		
Gloves	.1	Hands		
Up. Greaves	.3	Up. Legs		
Warlord Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Trellised Plate	9.11	2/4/1/2	2/3/2/2	
Elbow Cups	.2	Elbows		
Half Helm	1.1	Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Crown, Ears, Ba. of Skull		
Knee Cups	.2	Knees		
Pelvic Piece	.4	Buttocks, Hips		
Shoulder Guards	.4	Blades, Shoulder Fronts		
Up. Greaves	.6	Up. Legs		
Metal Plate		1/4/1/2	2/3/2/1	
Armpit Guards	.18	Armpits		
Calfbands	.72	Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Collar	.63	Throat, Neckbone		
Crotch Piece	.18	Groin		
Gauntlets	.36	Wrists, Hands		
Lo. Bracers	.36	Lo. Arms		
Torso Plates	3.42	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
Up. Bracers	.36	Up. Arms		

Wizard Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Heavy Cloth	2.55	0/1/0/1	1/0/0/1	
Pointy Hat	.27	Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Crown, Ba. of Skull		
Robe	2.16	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbow, Lo. Arms, Buttocks, Hips, Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs		
Skin		1/0/0/1	0/0/1/1	
Boots	.12	Ankles, Feet		
Barbarian Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Moderate Fur	3.55	2/2/0/0	1/0/1/2	
Short Cloak	2.5	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms		
Soft Leather		1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	
Bracelets	.1	Wrists		
Calfbands	.4	Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Headband	.35	Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Skull		
Loin Cloth	.2	Groin, Buttocks		
Burglar Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Brigandine	5.47	2/2/0/2	1/2/1/2	
Long Body Suit	5.32	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms, Hips, Legs		
Soft Leather		1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	
Gloves	.1	Hands		
Quarter Mask	.05	Up. Face		
Cannoneer Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Light Suit
Heavy Quilting	5	2/1/0/1	1/0/0/3	
Coat	3	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Up. Arms, Elbows, Lo. Arms, Buttocks, Hips		
Full Helm	1	Fr. of Head, Ba. of Head		
Gauntlets	.2	Wrists, Hands		
Soft Leather		1/1/0/2	0/1/1/2	
Thighboots	.8	Up. Legs, Knees, Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Javelineer Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Metal Plate	5.13	1/4/1/2	2/3/2/1	
Half Helm	.99	Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Crown, Ears, Ba. of Skull		
Nape Guard	.36	Neckbone		
Scale Mail		1/2/0/3	1/3/1/1	
Short Sleeves	.28	Up. Arms		
Tunic	3.5	Abdomen, Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Buttocks, Hips		
Vandal Suit	Tote	B/E/R/P	P/E/C/T	Bulky Suit
Dense Fur	5.81	2/2/1/1	2/0/1/3	
Calfbands	.56	Lo. Legs, Ankles, Feet		
Half Arm Gloves	.56	Lo. Arms, Wrists, Hands		
Skirt/Kilt	.42	Groin, Buttocks, Hips		
Hard Leather		1/2/1/2	1/1/2/2	
Conical Helm	.63	Fr. of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Ba. of Crown, Ba. of Skull		
Shoulder Guards	.28	Blades, Shoulder Fronts		
Torso Plates	2.66	Chest, Up. Back, Lo. Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs		
Up. Bracers	.28	Up. Arms		
Up. Greaves	.42	Up. Legs		



From Left: Archer Suit, Beserker Suit, Fencing Suit, Warlord Suit, Spearman Suit, Full Hard Leather, Fulminomancer Suit, Conjuror Suit, Loriccate Suit

Armor Pieces Chart

* Weight given is for matching pairs. For individual pieces, choose either Right or Left and halve the armor weight.

Armor Piece	Armor Weight by Material's Tote Rating										Body Coverage
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Torso											
Apron	0.84	1.12	1.4	1.68	1.96	2.24	2.52	2.8	3.08		Abdomen, Chest, Hips, Upper Legs
Armpit Guards (Pallettes)*	0.06	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.2	0.22		Armpits
Backless Shirt	0.72	0.96	1.2	1.44	1.68	1.92	2.16	2.4	2.64		Chest, Front Kidneys, Abs, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits
Backplate	0.6	0.8	1	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.8	2	2.2		Upper Back, Lower Back
Belt/Sash	0.54	0.72	0.9	1.08	1.26	1.44	1.62	1.8	1.98		Lower Back, Front Kidneys, Abs
Body Suit	1.8	2.4	3	3.6	4.2	4.8	5.4	6	6.6		Abdomen, Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Upper Arms, Buttocks, Hips, Upper Legs
Brazier	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44		Pecs/Breasts
Breastless Shirt	0.78	1.04	1.3	1.56	1.82	2.08	2.34	2.6	2.86		Lower Back, Upper Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits
Breastplate	0.54	0.72	0.9	1.08	1.26	1.44	1.62	1.8	1.98		Chest, Front Kidneys, Abs
Breeches	0.36	0.48	0.6	0.72	0.84	0.96	1.08	1.2	1.32		Groin, Buttocks, Hips, Upper Legs
Butt Guard (Culet)	0.06	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.2	0.22		Buttocks
Cape	0.72	0.96	1.2	1.44	1.68	1.92	2.16	2.4	2.64		Lower Back, Upper Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts
Cloak	1.62	2.16	2.7	3.24	3.78	4.32	4.86	5.4	5.94		Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Front Kidneys, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Upper Arms, Elbows, Lower Arms, Buttocks, Hips
Coat (Hauberk)	1.8	2.4	3	3.6	4.2	4.8	5.4	6	6.6		Abdomen, Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Upper Arms, Elbows, Lower Arms, Buttocks, Hips
Collared Short Body Suit	1.71	2.28	2.85	3.42	3.99	4.56	5.13	5.7	6.27		Abdomen, Chest, Lower Back, Upper Back, Throat, Neckbone, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Buttocks, Hips
Crotch Piece/Thong	0.06	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.2	0.22		Groin



The Naked Blade has most any weapon you might want for skinny-adventuring.

Full Suit	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	All
Half Shirt	0.78	1.04	1.3	1.56	1.82	2.08	2.34	2.6	2.86	Chest, Upper Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits
Hipboots	0.66	0.88	1.1	1.32	1.54	1.76	1.98	2.2	2.42	Legs, Groin
Hip Guards (Faulds)*	0.06	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.2	0.22	Hips
Knickers	0.42	0.56	0.7	0.84	0.98	1.12	1.26	1.4	1.54	Groin, Buttocks, Hips, Upper Legs, Knees
Loin Cloth/Briefs	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Groin, Buttocks
Long Body Suit	2.28	3.04	3.8	4.56	5.32	6.08	6.84	7.6	8.36	Abdomen, Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Upper Arms, Elbows, Lower Arms, Legs
Long Cape	0.78	1.04	1.3	1.56	1.82	2.08	2.34	2.6	2.86	Upper Back, Lower Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Buttocks
Long Cloak	1.98	2.64	3.3	3.96	4.62	5.28	5.94	6.6	7.26	Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Front Kidney Areas, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Upper Arms, Elbows, Lower Arms, Buttocks, Hips, Upper Legs, Knees, Lower Legs
Long Kilt/Skirt (Tonlet)	0.36	0.48	0.6	0.72	0.84	0.96	1.08	1.2	1.32	Groin, Buttocks, Hips, Upper Legs
Long Mantle	1.14	1.52	1.9	2.28	2.66	3.04	3.42	3.8	4.18	Chest, Upper Back, Abs, Groin, Lower Backbone, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Buttocks
Mantle	0.48	0.64	0.8	0.96	1.12	1.28	1.44	1.6	1.76	Breastbone, Breasts/Pecs, Collarbone, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Upper Spine
Overalls	1.35	1.8	2.25	2.7	3.15	3.6	4.05	4.5	4.95	Abdomen, Lower Back, Front Ribs, Pecs/Breasts, Breastbone, Buttocks, Hips, Upper Legs, Knees, Lower Legs
Pants	0.54	0.72	0.9	1.08	1.26	1.44	1.62	1.8	1.98	Groin, Buttocks, Hips, Upper Legs, Knees, Lower Legs
Pelvic Piece (Tasset)	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Buttocks, Hips
Poncho	1.62	2.16	2.7	3.24	3.78	4.32	4.86	5.4	5.94	Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Front Kidneys, Abs, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Upper Arms, Elbows, Lower Arms
Quarter Shirt	0.18	0.24	0.3	0.36	0.42	0.48	0.54	0.6	0.66	Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits
Robe	2.16	2.88	3.6	4.32	5.04	5.76	6.48	7.2	7.92	Abdomen, Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Upper Arms, Elbow, Lower Arms, Buttocks, Hips, Upper Legs, Knees, Lower Legs
Shirt	1.32	1.76	2.2	2.64	3.08	3.52	3.96	4.4	4.84	Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Front Kidneys, Abs, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits
Short Body Suit	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	Abdomen, Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Buttocks, Hips
Short Cape	0.42	0.56	0.7	0.84	0.98	1.12	1.26	1.4	1.54	Upper Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts



Wilho & Lika select their choice shields during the annual "Everything Must Go!" sale.

Short Cloak	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Front Kidneys, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Upper Arms, Elbows, Lower Arms
Shoulder Guards (Pauldrons)*	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Blades, Shoulder Fronts
Skirt/Kilt (Tonlet)	0.18	0.24	0.3	0.36	0.42	0.48	0.54	0.6	0.66	Groin, Buttocks, Hips
Torso Plates (Corselet)	1.14	1.52	1.9	2.28	2.66	3.04	3.42	3.8	4.18	Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Fr. Kidneys, Abs
Trunks	0.18	0.24	0.3	0.36	0.42	0.48	0.54	0.6	0.66	Groin, Buttocks, Hips
Tunic	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	Abdomen, Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Blades, Shoulder Fronts, Armpits, Buttocks, Hips
Vest	1.26	1.68	2.1	2.52	2.94	3.36	3.78	4.2	4.62	Chest, Upper Back, Lower Back, Front Kidneys, Abs, Blades, Shoulder Fronts
Head										
Chin Piece (Beaver)	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.09	0.1	0.11	Lower Face
Collar	0.21	0.28	0.35	0.42	0.49	0.56	0.63	0.7	0.77	Throat, Neckbone
Conical Helm (Casque)	0.27	0.36	0.45	0.54	0.63	0.72	0.81	0.9	0.99	Front of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Back of Crown, Back of Skull
Cowl	0.39	0.52	0.65	0.78	0.91	1.04	1.17	1.3	1.43	Back of Head, Front of Crown, Temples
Front Veil	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Lower Face, Throat
Full Cap (Turban)	0.45	0.6	0.75	0.9	1.05	1.2	1.35	1.5	1.65	Back of Head, Front of Crown, Forehead, Temples
Full Front Veil	0.21	0.28	0.35	0.42	0.49	0.56	0.63	0.7	0.77	Forehead, Upper Face, Lower Face, Throat
Full Helm	0.6	0.8	1	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.8	2	2.2	Front of Head, Back of Head
Full Mask	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Forehead, Upper Face, Lower Face
Half Front Veil	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.09	0.1	0.11	Lower Face
Half Helm	0.33	0.44	0.55	0.66	0.77	0.88	0.99	1.1	1.21	Front of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Back of Crown, Ears, Back of Skull
Half Mask	0.15	0.2	0.25	0.3	0.35	0.4	0.45	0.5	0.55	Forehead, Temples, Upper Face
Headband	0.21	0.28	0.35	0.42	0.49	0.56	0.63	0.7	0.77	Forehead, Temples, Back of Skull
Hood	0.48	0.64	0.8	0.96	1.12	1.28	1.44	1.6	1.76	Back of Head, Front of Crown, Temples, Throat
Nape Guard	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Neckbone
Neck Piece (Gorget)	0.09	0.12	0.15	0.18	0.21	0.24	0.27	0.3	0.33	Throat
Quarter Mask	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.09	0.1	0.11	Upper Face
Scarf	0.21	0.28	0.35	0.42	0.49	0.56	0.63	0.7	0.77	Throat, Neckbone
Skull Cap (Hat)	0.27	0.36	0.45	0.54	0.63	0.72	0.81	0.9	0.99	Front of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Back of Crown, Back of Skull
Speed Helm (Sallet)	0.48	0.64	0.8	0.96	1.12	1.28	1.44	1.6	1.76	Back of Head, Front of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Upper Face
T-Helm (Barbut)	0.36	0.48	0.6	0.72	0.84	0.96	1.08	1.2	1.32	Front of Crown, Forehead, Temples, Lower Face, Back of Crown, Ears, Back of Skull
Veil	0.24	0.32	0.4	0.48	0.56	0.64	0.72	0.8	0.88	Lower Face, Throat, Neckbone
Visor (Ventail)	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.09	0.1	0.11	Upper Face
Small Cap (Yarmulke)	0.15	0.2	0.25	0.3	0.35	0.4	0.45	0.5	0.55	Front of Crown, Back of Crown, Back of Skull
Arms										
Bracelets*	0.06	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.2	0.22	Wrists
Elbow Cups (Couters)*	0.06	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.2	0.22	Elbows
Elbow Gloves*	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1	1.1	Elbows, Lower Arms, Wrists, Hands
Full Arm Gloves*	0.42	0.56	0.7	0.84	0.98	1.12	1.26	1.4	1.54	Upper Arms, Elbows, Lower Arms, Wrists, Hands
Gloves*	0.06	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.2	0.22	Hands
Gauntlets*	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Wrists, Hands
Half Arm Gloves*	0.24	0.32	0.4	0.48	0.56	0.64	0.72	0.8	0.88	Lower Arms, Wrists, Hands
Long Sleeves	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1	1.1	Upper Arms, Elbows, Lower Arms
Lower Bracers (Vambraces)*	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Lower Arms
Short Sleeves	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Upper Arms
Upper Bracers (Retebraces)*	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Upper Arms
Legs										
Anklets*	0.06	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.2	0.22	Ankles
Boots (Sabatons)*	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Ankles, Feet
Calfboots*	0.24	0.32	0.4	0.48	0.56	0.64	0.72	0.8	0.88	Lower Legs, Ankles, Feet
Jackboots*	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1	1.1	Knees, Lower Legs, Ankles, Feet
Knee Cups (Poleyns)*	0.06	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.2	0.22	Knees
Leggings (Chausses)*	0.36	0.48	0.6	0.72	0.84	0.96	1.08	1.2	1.32	Upper Legs, Knees, Lower Legs
Lower Greaves (Jambes)*	0.12	0.16	0.2	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.36	0.4	0.44	Lower Legs
Shoes*	0.06	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.2	0.22	Feet
Thighboots*	0.48	0.64	0.8	0.96	1.12	1.28	1.44	1.6	1.76	Upper Legs, Knees, Lower Legs, Ankles, Feet
Upper Greaves (Cuissarts)*	0.18	0.24	0.3	0.36	0.42	0.48	0.54	0.6	0.66	Upper Legs

1. After that, light armor works just like bulky armor — at a Tote Rating of 7, she has a penalty of -2, and so forth. Note that it only takes one piece of armor to make an entire suit bulky — a bulky metal breastplate in combination with a light cloth robe would be bulky, for example. Whether or not a piece of armor is bulky is based on the type of material of which it's made.

To wear armor in the Higher Arc system, you can either make your own suit out of individual parts, or you can select a pre-made suit. These suits tell you exactly what parts of the body they protect (coverage), how well they protect those parts (B/E/R/P P/E/C/T), how heavy they are (Tote Rating), and whether they are necessarily encumbering (Bulkiness). They vary tremendously in complexity, so you can choose the way of wearing armor that works for you, or for your campaign.

The easiest way to wear armor is to select a full suit made of a singular material. If you do this, all attacks which hit you will be affected by your armor regardless of where they hit (because full armor protects your entire body). Further, since all the pieces will be made from the same material, all will have the same B/E/R/P P/E/C/T (thus protecting you in exactly the same way at every point on your body). If you do this, your armor will be very easy to manage — you'll hardly have to think about it. In fact, many Cobblers require players to use these armor types exclusively in order to avoid mucking about with the increased complexity. To select a simple suit of armor, simply choose a material from the Armor Material Attributes chart.

If you don't mind doing a little more thinking, you can vary the amount of coverage the armor provides, and you can vary the types of material which cover you. This can become as complex or simple as you desire. The simplest way to do it is to select from the following ready-made suits of armor.

If, on the other hand, you prefer to design your own suits (or if you simply have little tolerance for those created by game designers), you can actually put them together yourself. Select a material from the Armor Material Attributes chart and a piece of armor from the Armor Pieces List. The piece in question defines the parts of the body covered by the armor. The material in question (metal plate, hard scales, rope mesh, or whatever) defines the piece's B/E/R/P and P/E/C/T, and its Bulkiness. The Tote Rating column next to the material also informs you what the Tote Rating would be for a full suit of armor made from that material. If you choose to make a suit of armor which covers your entire body and is made entirely from this material, this will be your Tote Rating. In order to determine the Tote Rating for a specific *piece* of armor, find the appropriate Tote Rating in the Armor Material Attributes chart. Use this number to determine the column in the Armor Pieces list and cross reference that with the appropriate armor piece. This gives you the weight of the individual piece of armor. Create as many individual pieces as you want in this same fashion, then add their Tote Ratings together to get the total Tote Rating of the suit of armor you've created. If the number isn't an integer, you should round down (so if the total weight of your suit is 4.83, your Tote Rating is 4).

Purchasing a Piece of Armor

To determine the cost of a full suit of armor, check the Armor Material Attributes chart and use the Full Suits Cost column. If you want to purchase just part of a suit of armor, just multiply the cost multiplier for the material of the piece (found on the Armor Material Attributes chart) by the piece's Tote Rating (found on the Armor Pieces list).

Implements of Destruction

For information on the cost and functionality of weapons, see the Implements of Destruction chart.

- **Cost:** The cost to purchase the item.
- **Lift/Tote Rating:** This column contains the Lift Rating of the weapon for use in wielding it, followed by the Tote Rating for use in carrying it around.
- **Grappling Skl/Dmg/Bns:** The Skill (you can disregard this unless you're using the optional rules for Skills), the Damage Type, and the weapon bonus of a given weapon when used with the Grappling Capability.
- **Swinging Skl/Dmg/Bns:** The Skill (which you can disregard unless you're using the optional rules for Skills), the Damage Type, and the weapon bonus of a given weapon when used with the Swinging Capability.
- **Thrusting Skl/Dmg/Bns:** The Skill (which you can disregard unless you're using the optional rules for Skills), the Damage Type, and the weapon bonus of a given weapon when used with the Thrusting Capability.
- **Aiming Skl/Dmg/Bns:** The Skill (which you can disregard unless you're using the optional rules for Skills), the Damage Type, and the weapon bonus of a given weapon when used with the Aiming Capability.
- **Wits Skl/Bns:** The Skill (which you can disregard unless you're using the optional rules for Skills) and the proficiency modifier the wielder of the weapon gets when parrying an attack with this weapon.
- **Melee/Missile:** The weapon's range in melee, followed by its missile range.
- **Parry Versus:** A proficiency modifier which an opponent gets when parrying versus this weapon.

Implements of Destruction

* Only when used as a projectile

† Use corresponding information for the projectile in use.

Weapon Name	Cost	Lift/ Tote	Grappling Sk//Dmg/Bns	Swinging Sk//Dmg/Bns	Thrusting Sk//Dmg/Bns	Aiming Sk//Dmg/Bns	Wits Sk//Bns	Melee/ Missile	Parry Versus
Axes									
Handaxe	12 gp	5/28	HOK/(BR)/+0	CHP/(E)/+2	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(BE)/+1	PRY/+0	S/S	+0
An axe with a short handle. Not very interesting, to be sure.									
Double Handaxe	24 gp	6/49	HOK/(BR)/+1	CHP/(E)/+2	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(BE)/+1	PRY/+0	S/S	+0
A small axe with two broad blades on a short handle.									
Wood Axe	36 gp	7/52	HOK/(BR)/+0	CHP/(E)/+2	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+0	M/S	-1
A tool with a heavy bladed head mounted crosswise on a handle. Used for felling trees or chopping wood.									
Battle Axe	80 gp	10/1.1	HOK/(BR)/+1	CHP/(E)/+4	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
A heavy axe with two broad blades on opposite sides of the head. Used as a weapon.									
Lochaber Axe	150 gp	13/2	HOK/(BR)/+1	CHP/(E)/+4	STB/(P)/+2	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+1	D/S	+0
A battle axe having a tall, cleaver-like blade with a hook at its upper end.									
Blades (Broad)									
Dagger	32 gp	5/51	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+1	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+1	PRY/+1	C/S	+0
A heavy, pointed blade with a very short, straight edge.									
Gladius	48 gp	6/44	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+2	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
A heavy, pointed blade with a short, straight edge.									
Broadsword	54 gp	7/46	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+2	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
A heavy, pointed blade with a straight edge. Has a +2 versus bovines, except not really.									
Bastard Sword.	96 gp	9/74	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+3	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
A heavy, pointed blade with a long, straight edge. Usually forged out of wedlock.									
Claymore	180 gp	11/1.4	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+4	STB/(P)/+2	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+0	L/S	-1
A heavy, pointed blade with a very long, straight edge. Not made of clay.									
Blades (Curved)									
Tanto	16 gp	4/26	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+1	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+1	PRY/+0	C/S	+0
A very short, single-edged, pointed blade with a curved edge. Not to be confused with the sidekick of a famous cowboy.									
Wakizashi	48 gp	6/44	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+2	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
A short, single-edged, pointed blade with a curved edge.									
Cutlass	36 gp	6/44	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+2	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
A single-edged, pointed blade with a short, curved edge.									
Katana	72 gp	8/69	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+3	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
A single-edged, pointed blade with a curved edge.									
Scimitar	96 gp	9/98	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+4	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
A single-edged, pointed blade with a long, curved edge.									
Shamshir	160 gp	10/1	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+4	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
A single-edged, pointed blade with a very long, curved edge.									
Blades (Moderate)									
Dirk	12 gp	4/26	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+0	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+1	PRY/+1	C/S	+0
A pointed blade with a very short, straight edge.									
Shortsword	36 gp	6/44	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+1	STB/(P)/+2	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
A pointed blade with a short, straight edge.									
Straightsword	81 gp	8/69	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+2	STB/(P)/+2	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
A pointed blade with a straight edge.									
Hand and a Half Sword	108 gp	9/98	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+2	STB/(P)/+3	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
A pointed blade with a long, straight edge.									
Longsword	144 gp	10/1	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+2	STB/(P)/+3	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
A pointed blade with a very long, straight edge.									
Blades (Narrow)									
Stiletto	12 gp	4/26	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+0	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+1	PRY/+1	C/S	+0
A light, pointed blade with a very short, straight edge.									
Rapier	36 gp	6/29	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+0	STB/(P)/+2	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
A light, pointed blade with a long, straight edge.									
Brandestoc	120 gp	10/1.1	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+1	STB/(P)/+4	THR/(BEP)/+1	PRY/+0	L/S	+0
A light, pointed blade with a long straight edge and a long handle.									
Blades (Edgeless)									
Sai	16 gp	4/13	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
A pointed blade with a short, straight, edgeless blade.									
Foil	24 gp	5/17	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
A light, pointed blade with a short, straight, edgeless blade.									
Epee	36 gp	6/29	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+2	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
A light, pointed blade with a straight, edgeless blade.									
Chains (Blunt)									
Short Light Chain	8 gp	4/13	LSH/(BR)/+1	N.A.	N.A.	SLG/(BR)/+0	PRY/+0	S/S	-1
A short length of lightweight chain.									
Light Chain	12 gp	5/17	LSH/(BR)/+1	N.A.	N.A.	SLG/(BR)/+0	PRY/+0	M/S	-1
A moderate length of lightweight chain.									

Chain	18 gp	6/29	LSH/(BR)/+2	N.A.	N.A.	SLG/(BR)/+0	PRY/+0	M/S	-1
	A moderate length of middleweight chain.								
Long Chain	24 gp	7/35	LSH/(BR)/+2	N.A.	N.A.	SLG/(BR)/+0	PRY/+0	L/S	-1
	A long length of middleweight chain.								
Long Heavy Chain	32 gp	8/52	LSH/(BR)/+3	N.A.	N.A.	SLG/(BR)/+0	PRY/+0	L/S	-1
	A long length of heavyweight chain.								
Flails (Blunt)									
Blackjack	6 gp	4/34	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+2	N.A.	SLG/(B)/+0	PRY/+0	C/S	-1
	A leather-covered club with a short, flexible shaft or strap, used as a hand weapon. Used for knocking out animals or as a weapon.								
Nunchaku	12 gp	5/28	LSH/(BR)/+0	WHK/(B)/+2	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(B)/+0	PRY/+0	S/S	-1
	Two wooden handles attached by a length of cord or chain.								
Heavy Flail	24 gp	7/52	LSH/(BR)/+0	WHK/(B)/+3	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(B)/+0	PRY/+0	M/S	-1
	A heavy stick or bar attached to a staff or handle. Used for threshing grain, or as a weapon.								
Pole Flail	50 gp	10/9	LSH/(BR)/+0	WHK/(B)/+4	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(B)/+0	PRY/+0	D/S	-1
	A stick or bar attached to a staff or handle. Used for threshing grain, or as a weapon.								
Ball 'n Chain	113 gp	13/1.8	LSH/(BR)/+2	WHK/(B)/+4	N.A.	SLG/(BR)/+0	PRY/+0	D/S	-2
	A large metal ball attached to a chain.								
Flails (Spiked)									
Spiked Nunchaku	18 gp	5/28	LSH/(RP)/+0	WHK/(BP)/+2	STB/(P)/+0	SLG/(BP)/+0	PRY/+0	S/S	-1
	Two wooden handles with spikes on one end, attached by a length of cord or chain.								
Military Flail	36 gp	7/52	LSH/(RP)/+0	WHK/(BP)/+3	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(BP)/+0	PRY/+0	M/S	-1
	A flail armed with rows of spikes on the striking part.								
Morning Star	45 gp	8/77	LSH/(RP)/+0	WHK/(BP)/+4	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(BRP)/+0	PRY/+0	M/S	-1
	An articulated club with a spiked metal ball attached to the end by a chain.								
Spiked Ball 'n Chain	113 gp	13/1.8	LSH/(RP)/+2	WHK/(BP)/+4	N.A.	SLG/(BRP)/+0	PRY/+0	D/S	-2
	A large, spiked metal ball attached to a chain.								
Hammers									
Claw Hammer	8 gp	5/28	HOK/(RP)/+1	WHK/(B)/+1	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(BP)/+1	PRY/+0	S/S	+0
	A hammer with a cleft in one end of its metallic head. Used in extracting nails.								
Mallet	24 gp	7/77	HOK/(R)/+0	WHK/(B)/+2	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(B)/+1	PRY/+0	S/S	-1
	A small maul with a short handle.								
Pick Hammer	72 gp	9/1.1	HOK/(RP)/+1	WHK/(B)/+2	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(BP)/+1	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
	A pick with one sharp end and one blunt end. Used by miners.								
Maul	108 gp	13/3.3	HOK/(R)/+1	WHK/(B)/+3	JAB/(B)/+2	THR/(B)/+1	PRY/+1	M/M	-1
	A heavy, long-handle hammer used to drive stakes or wedges.								
War Hammer	128 gp	13/2.5	HOK/(R)/+1	WHK/(B)/+3	JAB/(B)/+3	THR/(B)/+1	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
	A heavy, long-handle hammer used as a weapon.								
Battle Maul	240 gp	16/4.6	HOK/(R)/+1	WHK/(B)/+4	JAB/(B)/+3	THR/(B)/+1	PRY/+1	L/M	-1
	A large maul.								
Hooks (Blunt)									
Cock Crook	3 gp	4/11	HOK/(R)/+1	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+1	M/C	+0
	A small hook at the end of a short pole, by which farmers grab the legs or necks of their fowl. And get your mind out of the gutter.								
Shepherd's Crook	32 gp	9/97	HOK/(R)/+3	WHK/(B)/+1	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
	A hook at the end of a pole. Used by shepherds to grab the legs or necks of sheep.								
Nuthook	40 gp	10/1.1	HOK/(R)/+3	WHK/(B)/+1	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+1	D/S	+0
	A hook at the end of a pole to pull down branches for gathering nuts. And get your mind out of the gutter again.								
Hooks (Edged)									
Weed Hook	8 gp	4/14	HOK/(ER)/+1	CHP/(E)/+0	STB/(P)/+0	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
	A hook used for extirpating weeds and expanding vocabularies.								
Sickle	16 gp	5/28	HOK/(ER)/+1	CHP/(E)/+1	STB/(P)/+0	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
	An instrument with a short, semicircular blade.								
Pruning Hook	60 gp	9/66	HOK/(ER)/+2	CHP/(E)/+1	STB/(P)/+0	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+1	D/S	+0
	A cutting instrument used in pruning trees and other herbaceous material.								
Scythe	120 gp	12/2	HOK/(ER)/+4	CHP/(E)/+2	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
	An instrument having a long, curved blade and a long, bent handle, used in reaping.								
Hooks (Pointed)									
Fire Hook	8 gp	5/25	HOK/(RP)/+1	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
	A metal rod with a point and a hook. Used to stir fires.								
Gaff	8 gp	6/44	HOK/(RP)/+3	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
	A metal rod with a hook. Used for landing large fish.								
Picks									
Chisel	2 gp	3/11	N.A.	N.A.	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BE)/+1	PRY/+0	C/S	+0
	A metal tool with a sharp beveled edge. Used to cut and shape stone, wood, or metal.								
Weeding Chisel	4 gp	4/14	N.A.	N.A.	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BE)/+1	PRY/+0	S/S	+0
	A tool with a divided chisel-like end, for cutting the roots of large weeds underground.								
Adz	8 gp	5/28	HOK/(RP)/+1	CHP/(E)/+1	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
	A tool with a curved, chisel-like head mounted at a right angle to the wooden handle. Used for dressing timber.								
Grub Pick	16 gp	6/49	HOK/(RP)/+1	CHP/(E)/+1	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
	A kind of mattock used in grubbing up roots.								
Pick	36 gp	9/1.1	HOK/(RP)/+2	CHP/(P)/+1	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(BP)/+1	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
	A heavy tool with a curved, pointed head mounted crosswise on a handle. Used for loosening dirt and rock.								
Mattock	144 gp	12/2.6	HOK/(RP)/+2	CHP/(E)/+3	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(BE)/+1	PRY/+1	M/S	-1
	A tool with a broad chisel-like head opposite a flat hammer head, mounted crosswise on a handle. Used for loosening soil and rock.								
Polearms (Chopping)									

Guisarme	80 gp	9/66	HOK/(RP)/+1	CHP/(E)/+1	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	D/S	+0
A shafted weapon having as a head a curved, double-edged blade and a sharp bit at the back. Used as a weapon.									
Poleax	120 gp	12/1.6	HOK/(RP)/+1	CHP/(E)/+3	STB/(P)/+2	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	D/S	+0
A shafted weapon having a small axe blade and a steel spike mounted on the head. Used as a weapon.									
Halberd	200 gp	14/2.5	HOK/(RP)/+1	CHP/(E)/+4	STB/(P)/+3	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	D/S	+0
A polearm with an axe-like blade, a spike, and a steel spike mounted on the head. Used as a weapon.									
Ranseur	250 gp	15/3.1	HOK/(RP)/+1	CHP/(E)/+4	STB/(P)/+4	THR/(BEP)/+0	PRY/+1	D/S	+0
A polearm with a broad bowie-style blade and a hook on the backside. Used as a weapon.									
Polearms (Hooking)									
Ankus	48 gp	9/82	HOK/(RP)/+2	WHK/(B)/+1	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
A spearlike tool with a hook. Used as an elephant goad.									
Bill	120 gp	12/1.6	HOK/(RP)/+3	WHK/(B)/+1	STB/(P)/+2	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	D/S	+0
A polearm with a hook-like cutting blade with a beak at the back. Used for cutting or pruning.									
Polearms (Spearing)									
Frog Spear	3 gp	5/19	HOK/(RP)/+0	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BP)/+1	PRY/+0	M/S	+0
A small, long-handled fork with three barbed sharp prongs. Used for hunting innocent frogs.									
Pitch Fork	96 gp	11/1.5	HOK/(RP)/+2	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+3	THR/(BP)/+1	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
A large, long-handled fork with sharp, widely spaced curved prongs. Used for raising, carrying, piercing, or digging or as a weapon.									
Spear	144 gp	12/2	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+1	STB/(P)/+3	THR/(BP)/+2	PRY/+1	L/M	+0
A shafted weapon with a stout, dagger-like blade. Used as a weapon.									
Pike	150 gp	13/2	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+2	STB/(P)/+4	THR/(BP)/+1	PRY/+1	D/S	+0
A golem with a dagger-like blade. Used as a weapon.									
Lance	200 gp	14/2.5	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+3	STB/(P)/+4	THR/(BP)/+1	PRY/+1	D/S	+0
A heavy, pointed weapon with a very long, straight shaft.									
Saws									
Band saw	32 gp	6/24	LSH/(ER)/+1	CHP/(E)/+1	N.A.	SLG/(E)/+0	PRY/+0	L/S	+0
A thin, flexible saw with teeth on the edges and handles at the ends.									
Circular saw	12 gp	4/26	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+1	STB/(E)/+0	THR/(BE)/+2	PRY/+0	C/S	+0
A saw with a toothy, rotating, steel disk.									
Crown-saw (Trepine)	80 gp	10/2	HOK/(RP)/+0	WHK/(B)/+3	STB/(E)/+4	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
A hollow cylinder with teeth on the edges of the end. Operated with a rotating crank.									
Wood Saw	18 gp	5/19	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+2	N.A.	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+0	M/S	+0
A thin blade of steel with a series of sharp teeth on the edge. Used for removing portions of material by cutting and tearing.									
Shields									
Buckler Shield	12 gp	3/22	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	N.A.	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+2	C/S	+0
A small, convex, round shield									
Target Shield	12 gp	3/28	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	N.A.	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+2	C/S	+0
A flat, round shield.									
Heraldic Shield	16 gp	4/66	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	N.A.	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+3	C/S	+0
A curved or flat shield with three points at its broad top, and coming to a point at the bottom.									
Rondela Shield	16 gp	4/52	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	N.A.	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+3	C/S	+0
A convex, round shield.									
Teardrop Shield	32 gp	5/1.3	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	N.A.	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+3	C/S	-1
A flat shield with a circular top which comes to a point at the bottom.									
Wall Shield	40 gp	6/3.9	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	N.A.	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+4	C/S	-1
A large, flat, rectangular shield									
Pavise Shield	40 gp	6/3.4	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	N.A.	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+4	C/S	-1
A huge shield, broad at the bottom and capable of standing on its own.									
Scutum Shield	40 gp	6/2.2	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	N.A.	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+4	C/S	-1
A large, curved, rectangular shield capable of interlocking with similar shields.									
Shields (Spiked)									
Targe Shield	32 gp	5/1	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+3	C/S	+0
A convex, round, shield with a long spike protruding from the middle.									
Madoeler Shield	81 gp	7/1	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+2	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+2	M/S	+0
A small, convex, round shield with two long pointed shafts pointing away from the center at the top and bottom.									
Spear Shield	180 gp	10/2.6	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+2	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+4	L/S	+0
A long, flat shield with a double-ended spear poking out from each end.									
Staves (Blunt)									
Walking Cane	3 gp	5/22	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+1	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
A rod. Used for walking and defense.									
Walking Staff	12 gp	8/68	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+2	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
A long wooden stick. Used as a walking aid.									
Quarterstaff	24 gp	10/1.3	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+3	JAB/(B)/+2	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
A long, thick wooden stick. Used as weapon.									
Longstaff	50 gp	13/2.3	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+4	JAB/(B)/+3	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+1	D/S	+0
A very long wooden stick. Used as weapon.									
Sticks (Blunt)									
Baton	1 bp	3/07	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+1	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+0	S/C	+0
A short rod. Used for directing or as weapon.									
Truncheon	2 bp	4/17	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+1	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+1	S/C	+0
A stout, heavy stick. Used as a weapon.									
Tonfa	3 bp	5/33	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+1	JAB/(B)/+2	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+1	S/C	+0
A short rod with a handle at a right angle. Used for defense and as a weapon of enforcers.									

Club	9 bp	7/.61	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+2	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
	A stout, heavy stick, usually thicker at one end. Used as a weapon.								
Hand and a Half Cudgel	2 sp	9/.97	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+3	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
	A short, heavy club which is thicker at one end (or loaded). Used as weapon.								
Sticks (Spiked)									
Scepter	8 gp	3/.05	N.A.	WHK/(BP)/+1	STB/(BP)/+0	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	S/C	+0
	A short, heavy club with spikes at one end. Used for directing or as a symbol of authority.								
Spiked Truncheon	4 sp	4/.14	N.A.	WHK/(BP)/+1	STB/(BP)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	S/C	+0
	A stout, heavy stick with spikes at one end. Used as a weapon.								
Spiked Club	18 sp	7/.52	N.A.	WHK/(BP)/+2	STB/(BP)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
	A stout, heavy stick, usually thicker at one end with spikes at one end. Used as a weapon.								
Mace	96 gp	8/.69	N.A.	WHK/(BP)/+3	STB/(BP)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
	A stout, metal stick, with spikes at one end. Used as a weapon.								
Bastard Mace	108 gp	9/.74	N.A.	WHK/(BP)/+3	STB/(BP)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
	A large stout, metal stick, with spikes at one end and room for two hands. Used as a weapon.								
Tanglers									
Bola	3 gp	5/.36	LSH/(BR)/+0	WHK/(B)/+0	N.A.	SLG/(BR)/+1	PRY/+0	S/M	-1
	A short length of rope with weights attached. Used to entangle legs, arms, or heads.								
Hand Net	8 gp	6/.29	LSH/(R)/+1	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(BR)/+0	PRY/+1	L/C	-1
	A conical net with a long handle. Used for fishing.								
Hunting Net	64 gp	11/2.2	LSH/(R)/+3	N.A.	N.A.	SLG/(R)/+3	PRY/+0	L/S	-1
	A large net. Used for hunting.								
Tanglers (Hooked)									
Grappling hook	8 gp	9/.81	HOK/(RP)/+2	WHK/(BP)/+0	N.A.	SLG/(BRP)/+1	PRY/+0	D/S	-1
	A device consisting of several hooks for grasping and holding. Often thrown with a rope.								
Whips									
Cat-O'-Nine Tails	5 gp	6/.41	LSH/(BR)/+1	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(BR)/+0	PRY/+1	M/C	-2
	A whip consisting of nine knotted cords fastened to a handle. Used in flogging.								
Bullwhip	5 gp	8/.79	LSH/(BR)/+4	N.A.	N.A.	SLG/(BR)/+0	PRY/+0	L/C	-1
	A long whip with a short rigid handle.								
Stockwhip	13 gp	10/1.2	LSH/(BR)/+4	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(BR)/+0	PRY/+1	D/C	-1
	A very long whip with a long rigid handle.								
Bows									
Slingshot	3 gp	4/.34	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	SHT/(†)/+1	PRY/+0	C/M	-1
	A "Y"-shaped weapon with two elastic cords attached to the top and to a strap used for flinging projectiles. Shoots irons, peas, pebbles, pellet shots, and spiked irons. Requires no actions to load.								
Short Bow	9 gp	6/.6	HOK/(R)/+0	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SHT/(†)/+2	PRY/+0	S/M	-1
	A weapon consisting of a short, curved, flexible strip of material, strung taut from end to end. Can shoot arrows. Requires no actions to load.								
Composite Bow	72 gp	9/1.3	HOK/(R)/+0	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SHT/(†)/+3	PRY/+0	M/L	-1
	A bow reinforced with other materials to make it stronger. Can shoot arrows. Requires no actions to load.								
Long Bow	80 gp	11/1.8	HOK/(R)/+0	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SHT/(†)/+4	PRY/+0	L/L	-1
	A weapon consisting of a long, curved, flexible strip of material strung taut from end to end. Can shoot arrows. Requires no actions to load.								
Crossbows (Light)									
Hand Crossbow	108 gp	7/.92	HOK/(R)/+0	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SHT/(†)/+2	PRY/+0	S/M	-2
	A small weapon consisting of a bow fixed crosswise on a wooden stock, with grooves on the stock to direct a projectile. Can shoot bolts. Takes 1 action to load.								
Light Crossbow	216 gp	9/1.3	HOK/(R)/+0	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SHT/(†)/+2	PRY/+0	M/L	-2
	A weapon consisting of a bow fixed crosswise on a wooden stock, with grooves on the stock to direct a projectile. Can shoot bolts. Takes 1 action to load.								
Heavy Crossbow	288 gp	10/1.8	HOK/(R)/+0	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SHT/(†)/+3	PRY/+0	M/L	-2
	A heavy weapon consisting of a bow fixed crosswise on a wooden stock, with grooves on the stock to direct a projectile. Can shoot bolts. Takes 1 action to load.								
Guns (Air)									
Pea Shooter	5 sp	3/.14	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SHT/(†)/+1	PRY/+0	C/S	-1
	A short, narrow pipe through which small projectiles may be blown. Can shoot darts and pea shot. Requires no actions to load.								
Blowpipe	2 gp	6/.38	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SHT/(†)/+1	PRY/+0	M/M	-1
	A narrow pipe through which projectiles may be blown. Can shoot darts and pea shot. Requires no actions to load.								
Blowgun	5 gp	8/.68	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SHT/(†)/+2	PRY/+0	L/M	-1
	A long, narrow pipe through which projectiles may be blown. Can shoot darts and pea shot. Requires no actions to load.								
Guns (Liquid)									
Hand Bladder	2 gp	4/.36	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	SHT/(†)/+1	N.A.	C/C	-3
	A small animal bladder with a nozzle attached. Used to squirt liquids. Takes 1 action to load.								
Squeeze Bladder	16 gp	8/1.4	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	SHT/(†)/+1	PRY/+0	S/S	-3
	A large animal bladder with a nozzle attached. Used to squirt liquids. Takes 2 actions to load.								
Flingers (Light)									
Sling	4 sp	6/.46	LSH/(BR)/+0	N.A.	N.A.	SLG/(†)/+1	PRY/+0	M/M	-1
	Two cords attached to a leather strap. Used for flinging projectiles. Can launch pellet shot, spiked pellet shot, and stones. Requires no actions to load.								
Cesta	8 sp	5/.39	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(†)/+1	PRY/+0	S/M	-1
	A small basket attached to a handle. Used for flinging projectiles. Can launch jacks, pea shot, pebbles, pellet shot, spiked pellet shot, and stones. Requires no actions to load.								
Staff Sling	3 gp	9/1.1	LSH/(BR)/+0	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(†)/+2	PRY/+0	L/L	-1
	Two cords attached to a leather strap and a staff used for flinging projectiles. Can launch caltrops, hand shot, and spiked hand shot. Requires no actions to load.								
Spear Sling	2 gp	8/.9	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(†)/+2	PRY/+0	M/L	-1
	A rod with a catch for holding a spear. Can launch harpoons, javelins, and pilums. Requires no actions to load.								
Missiles (Blunt)									
Pea Shot	4 bp	2/.03	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	THR/(B)/+0	N.A.	C/S	-1*
	A "baggy" of 80 tiny metal balls.								

Pellet Shot	8 bp	3/11	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	THR/(B)/+1	N.A.	C/S	-1*
	A “baggy” of 20 small metal balls.								
Boomerang	24 gp	8/2.7	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+1	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(B)/+2	PRY/+0	C/L	-1*
	A flat, curved missile shaped so that when hurled, it returns to the thrower. Used for hunting or as a weapon.								
Discus	6 gp	8/2.7	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+1	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(B)/+2	PRY/+0	C/L	-1*
	A disk with a metal rim which is thrown in athletic competitions. Used for sport.								
Hand Shot	2 sp	6/.88	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(B)/+2	N.A.	C/L	-1*
	A bag of 5 heavy metal balls.								
Missiles (Edged)									
Iron	1 gp	3/11	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+0	STB/(E)/+0	THR/(BE)/+1	N.A.	C/S	-1*
	A set of 5 thin, metal wedges used as a thrown weapons.								
Throwing Knife	8 gp	4/.26	N.A.	CHP/(E)/+0	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(BEP)/+1	PRY/+0	C/S	-1*
	A small-handled knife used for throwing.								
Throwing Axe	36 gp	7/.7	HOK/(BR)/+0	CHP/(E)/+1	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(BE)/+2	PRY/+0	S/M	-1*
	An axe used as a thrown weapon.								
Missiles (Pointed)									
Dart	1 gp	2/.05	N.A.	N.A.	STB/(P)/+0	THR/(P)/+0	PRY/+0	C/S	-1*
	A bundle of 10 slender, pointed missiles, often having tail fins, thrown by hand, shot from a blowgun, or expelled by an exploding bomb. Used for hunting or as a weapon.								
Bolt	1 gp	2/.05	N.A.	N.A.	STB/(P)/+0	THR/(P)/+0	PRY/+0	C/S	-1*
	A bundle of 10 slender, pointed missiles, often having tail fins, shot from a crossbow.								
Arrow	3 gp	4/.19	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+0	THR/(P)/+0	PRY/+0	S/M	-1*
	A bundle of 10 slender, pointed missiles, often having tail fins, shot from a bow.								
Javelin	12 gp	6/.38	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+0	THR/(P)/+1	PRY/+0	M/L	+0
	A light throwing spear made mostly of wood.								
Harpoon	30 gp	7/.52	HOK/(RP)/+0	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(P)/+2	PRY/+0	M/M	+0
	A heavy throwing spear with a barbed head.								
Pilum	40 gp	7/.52	N.A.	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+1	THR/(P)/+1	PRY/+1	M/M	+0
	A throwing spear with a metal head as long as the wooden shaft.								
Missiles (Spiked)									
Shurikin	1 gp	3/11	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	THR/(P)/+1	N.A.	C/S	-1*
	A set of 5 flat metal stars used as a thrown weapon.								
Spiked Pellet Shot	1 gp	3/11	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	THR/(P)/+1	N.A.	C/S	-1*
	A “baggy” of 20 small spiked metal balls normally used with a sling.								
Caltraps	6 gp	4/.26	N.A.	WHK/(P)/+0	STB/(P)/+0	THR/(P)/+1	PRY/+0	C/M	-1*
	A “baggy” of 20 balls with four long spikes. Used as a trap, especially against cavalry.								
Spiked Hand Shot	8 sp	6/.88	N.A.	WHK/(P)/+0	STB/(P)/+0	THR/(P)/+2	N.A.	C/L	-1*
	A “baggy” of 5 heavy spiked metal balls normally used in throwing devices.								
Exotic Weapons									
Rubber Mallet	8 gp	5/.33	HOK/(BR)/+1	WHK/(BR)/+1	JAB/(BR)/+0	THR/(BR)/+1	PRY/+0	S/S	+0
	A small maul with a short handle and a rubber head.								
Rubber Maul	72 gp	10/1.8	HOK/(BR)/+1	WHK/(BR)/+3	JAB/(BR)/+1	THR/(BR)/+1	PRY/+0	M/M	+0
	A heavy, long-handle hammer used to drive stakes or wedges.								
Hedgehog Flail	72 gp	7/.54	LSH/(RP)/+1	WHK/(BP)/+2	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(BRP)/+0	PRY/+0	M/S	-1
	A flail having a hedgehog clinging to the striking part.								
Porcupine Flail	128 gp	9/.87	LSH/(RP)/+1	WHK/(BP)/+3	JAB/(B)/+0	SLG/(BRP)/+0	PRY/+0	L/S	-1
	A long flail having a porcupine clinging to the striking part.								
Hedgehog Mace	54 gp	7/.58	N.A.	WHK/(BP)/+2	JAB/(BP)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	M/S	+0
	A stick having a hedgehog clinging to the end.								
Porcupine Mace	96 gp	9/.93	N.A.	WHK/(BP)/+3	JAB/(BP)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	+0
	A long stick having a porcupine clinging to the end.								
Dwarven Halbeard	30 gp	6/.3	LSH/(BR)/+2	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	PRY/+0	L/N.A.	-1
	A long beard, tightly knotted and beaded, still attached to a dwarf’s chin. Used like a whip. Cost is the price of beads and preparation. Cost is more with expensive beads.								
Barstool	17 gp	12/3.1	HOK/(BR)/+0	WHK/(BR)/+2	JAB/(BR)/+2	THR/(B)/+0	PRY/+4	M/S	+0
	A weapon used primarily in drunken bar brawls. Also good for sitting on.								
Reciprocating Flail	90 gp	12/1.3	LSH/(RP)/+0	WHK/(BP)/+4	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(BRP)/+0	PRY/+0	M/S	-1
	A flail having striking heads on both ends. Use it as a normal weapon, but if you do, roll an attack on yourself at a proficiency of 20 minus your attack proficiency.								
Reciprocating Battle Axe	240 gp	16/2.3	HOK/(BR)/+1	CHP/(E)/+4	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+1	L/S	-2
	A battle-axe having two broad blades on both ends. Use it as a normal weapon, but if you do, roll an attack on yourself at a proficiency of 20 minus your attack proficiency.								
Iron Titan Key	384 gp	7/.7	HOK/(BR)/+1	WHK/(B)/+2	JAB/(B)/+0	THR/(B)/+1	PRY/+1	S/S	+0
	A small, long headed hammer. Useful as a melee weapon or a maintenance tool. Also can be used to wind an iron titan’s spring box.								
Dwarven Bagpipes	324 gp	10/1.8	LSH/(BR)/+0	WHK/(B)/+2	JAB/(B)/+1	SHT/(†)/+2	PRY/+0	M/M	-1
	A multipurpose weapon which can be wielded in melee, used to shoot darts or pea shot (it takes 1 action to load all four pipes); or, worse, used as a musical instrument.								
Bayonet Prodd	216 gp	10/1.3	HOK/(BR)/+0	WHK/(B)/+0	STB/(P)/+1	SHT/(†)/+2	PRY/+0	L/M	-2
	A powerful crossbow with a dagger attached to it’s front end. Can shoot pellet shot and stones. Takes 1 action to load.								
Dwarven Goblet	12 gp	4/.28	N.A.	WHK/(BP)/+1	JAB/(B)/+1	THR/(BP)/+0	PRY/+0	C/S	-1*
	A spiked goblet (good for tuning your drinking companions when they sing out of key).								
Vacuum Vial	3 sp	2/.04	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+0	C/S	-1*
	A small glass container assumed to break on impact. Makes a loud noise when it breaks.								
Vacuum Bottle	1 gp	4/.15	N.A.	WHK/(BE)/+0	JAB/(BE)/+0	THR/(BE)/+0	PRY/+0	S/M	-1*
	A larger glass container assumed to break on impact. Makes a very loud noise when it breaks.								
Vial	8 bp	3/.12	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	THR/(BE)/+1	PRY/+0	C/S	-1*
	A small glass container assumed to break on impact.								

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 9

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Questions about how magic works, why it works, and what sorts of things it does have baffled mortal scholars for generations. Here, however, are all the facts, laid out nicely in front of you once and for all. Find out everything you ever wanted to know about Paranesian magic here in Chapter 9. Isn't that keen?

THE METAPHYSICS OF MAGIC

Cause and effect isn't always intuitively predictable in a fantasy world like Paranesia. Under certain specific circumstances, a mere incantation or act of will can spawn spectacular effects, such as the sudden arrival of a runaway glacier, or the materialization of giant balls of plasma. Brains explode, cows sprout wings, and delicious cookies materialize all with a thought and maybe a gesture. Well, that's the nature of magic. If you're exposed to it all the time, you'll probably get used to it. But it really is pretty weird, and a discerning mind might therefore wish to know exactly why it is that such mundane actions are capable of generating such highly goal-directed and useful effects.

How Magic Works

Magic, the process of manipulating natural events by altering quirks with the power of ambrosia, is the most common type of paranormal phenomenon in Paranesia. Since people who can use magic are all capable of using ambrosia in a direct or indirect fashion, the users of magic are sometimes referred to as *ambrelliant*.

How Magic Works

All the magical power in gameality ultimately derives, directly or indirectly, from the process of worship. Although the exact process by which worship spawns magic is rather complicated and is largely incomprehensible to most anyone lacking an extensive background in meta-alchemy and hyperwitchcraft, the basics of the process are straightforward enough to be explained in brief.

Worship is the act of giving conscious respect and devotion to a particular entity. Traditionally, this entity is a deity. When a deity is given homage, an amount of worship proportional to the frequency and intensity of a worshipper's prayers is generated. Frequent acts of creative service and innovative ritual also enhance the amount of worship created.

Once created, the worship is transmitted by the subject's brain to the god being worshipped. That god translates the worship into ambrosia, a substance which is capable of altering the fundamental nature of quirks. The deity uses this ambrosia to enhance her own power, and in return may grant some of that power back to the person giving her the worship. This person, called an avatar, thereby acquires the power to cast any spells he happens to know. These spells are triggered by properly spoken prayers.

Mages are people who cheat this process with a peculiar act of mental acrobatics. They begin by worshipping, but rather than directing that worship to a deity, they route it to themselves. Then, using her brain, the mage is able to mentally

translate it into a trace amount of ambrosia without divine assistance. She uses this to power her spells. To give the spells existence and form, she uses components and formulas instead of prayers and rituals.

When not in use, ambrosia is stored in an ambrelliant being's soul. Both mages and avatars must channel the ambrosia in their souls into a usable format before they can cast spells (using one of their Powering proficiencies). Poor channelers have a harder time casting numerous spells, or especially powerful ones. See page 41 for rules on this.

Some avatars and mages become consecrators and alchemists (respectively) instead of (or in addition to) becoming conventional spellcasters. Consecrators and alchemists can focus their magical talents on creating magic items, as opposed to spells, by learning spells Infusibly instead of Castably. Other than lack of sufficient experience points, there's also no reason a person can't become both an avatar and a mage.

Avaticular Magic

The traditional and most common way mortals create magic is by taking advantage of the symbiotic relationship between gods and mortals, which was built in when mortals were created. The process is essentially a trade — the mortal gives the god a constant, intense inflow of worship, which she translates into ambrosia. In exchange, the mortal is allowed to use the god as a wellspring, making her capable of casting spells at will. Those who harness a divine power source in this fashion are known as avatars.

Gods naturally prefer avatars who devote years to the study of the will of their gods. They benefit most from those willing to pray constantly and discuss them at every opportunity. Still, even a bit of lip service generates *some* worship, and most deities prefer that to nothing — so it's sometimes possible to slack off as an avatar, depending on your god and provided you don't go too far.

In theory, a god could take advantage of her would-be avatars by reaping the benefits of their worship while refusing to grant them any power. In fact, however, this rarely happens. Years of steadfast piety almost always pay off because followers who possess the level of devotion required to become an avatar are uncommon, and the gods know that if they don't keep their most pious followers reasonably happy, there are plenty of other deities who would be glad to snap up the benefits of their worship.

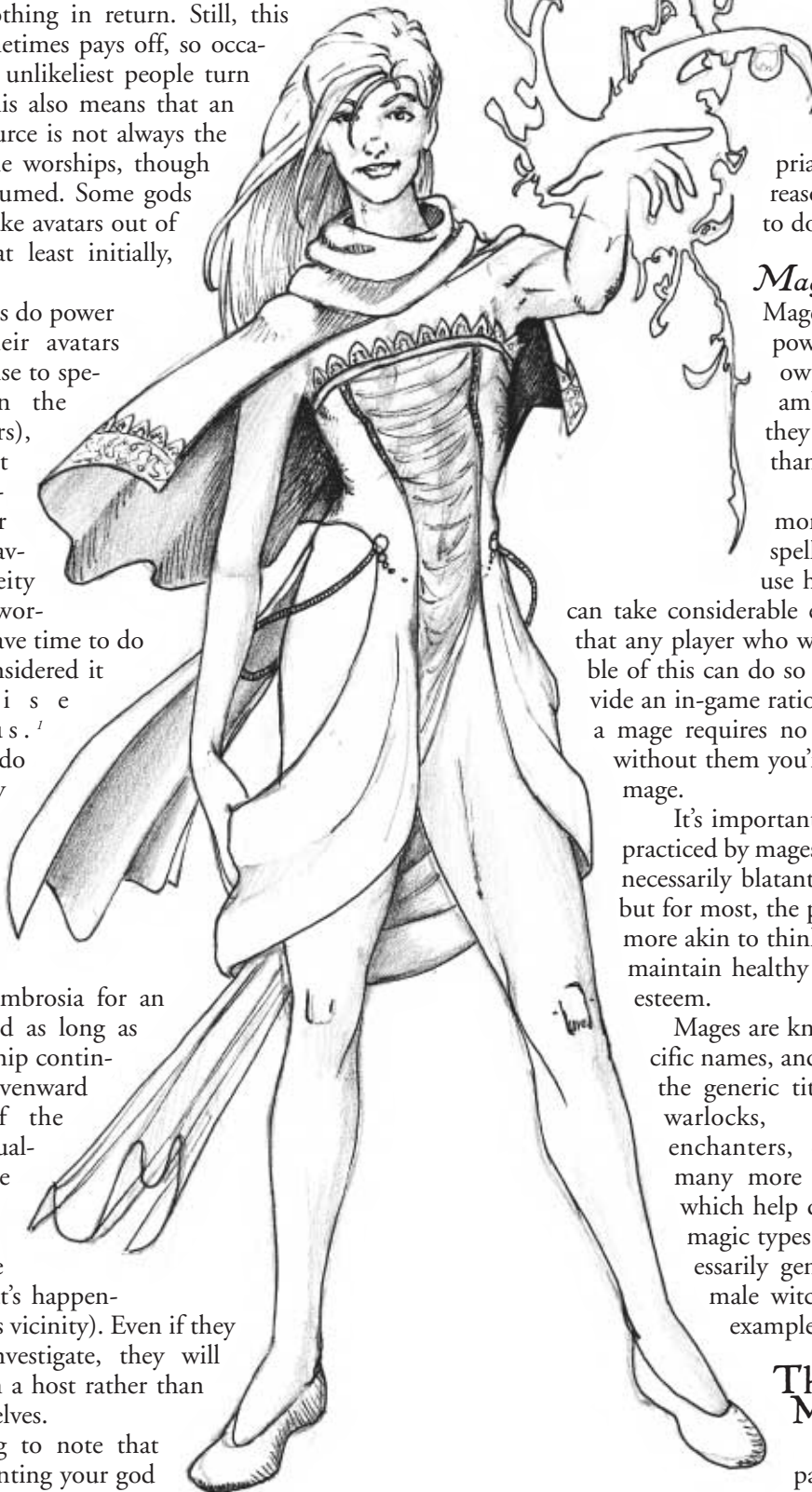
Becoming an avatar requires at least a bit of devotion, knowledge, and skill. Devotion provides you with the god-given power to cast spells; knowledge grants you the spells themselves; skill allows you to determine the right combinations of prayers and rituals for triggering desired effects. In spite of all this knowledge, however, avatars rarely understand the exact reasons their gods choose to grant them power. There are also certain situations in which devotion is more or less irrelevant to whether or not one becomes an avatar.

For example, if a follower has qualities a god considers useful, or if a god needs a particular follower to accomplish something, the god might make him into an avatar in order to increase his chances of success in completing a sacred

quest, or to make him more competent to run her church. She might also make her follower into an avatar if he owns a powerful and useful item, or if he's possessed of unusual strength. It's even possible — though rare — for a god to grant magical power to a mortal who doesn't even worship her. Deities (the sober, sane ones, anyway) require a good reason for this, since a miscalculation means they get absolutely nothing in return. Still, this sort of thing sometimes pays off, so occasionally even the unlikeliest people turn up as avatars. This also means that an avatar's power source is not always the deity or deities he worships, though this is usually assumed. Some gods even prefer to make avatars out of those who are, at least initially, unwilling.

Although deities do power the spells of their avatars (usually in response to specific requests in the form of prayers), keep in mind that they don't constantly monitor every avatar's behavior. Only a deity with very few worshippers would have time to do so, even if he considered it otherwise advantageous.¹ Similarly, gods do not consciously respond each time one of their avatars casts a spell. They merely provide a constant trickle of ambrosia for an avatar to use, and as long as that avatar's worship continues to flow heavenward the majority of the time, the deity usually won't investigate (unless they have some other specific reason to be interested in what's happening in that avatar's vicinity). Even if they do choose to investigate, they will probably dispatch a host rather than go to look themselves.

It is interesting to note that while openly flaunting your god will probably result in a loss of



your spellcasting power (if you're lucky), it is possible for an ambitious person to fake worship. Few gods have the time to monitor individual mortals for signs of insincerity or heresy. People who are secretly indifferent to or even contemptuous of a god can repress these blasphemous thoughts and feelings, allowing them to come out only briefly and at appropriate times. There's no obvious reason that someone would want to do this, but it is in fact possible.

Magular Magic

Mages are usurpers of avaticular power. They consciously use their own skills to manufacture ambrosia from worship, which they direct at themselves rather than a chosen deity.

To be considered a mage, a mortal must know at least one spell. He must also know how to use himself as a Wellspring, which can take considerable effort (although it is assumed that any player who wants her character to be capable of this can do so automatically if they can provide an in-game rationalization). Technically, being a mage requires no casting proficiencies, though without them you're not likely to be a very good mage.

It's important to note that the self-worship practiced by mages does not mean that mages are necessarily blatant egotists. Some are, naturally, but for most, the process of self-worship is really more akin to thinking the thoughts necessary to maintain healthy doses of self-respect and self-esteem.

Mages are known by a variety of more specific names, and many prefer another word to the generic title "mage." Wizards, witches, warlocks, sorcerers, necromancers, enchanters, conjurers, summoners, and many more are common preferred titles which help distinguish personal styles and magic types. None of these terms are necessarily gender specific — there can be male witches and female sorcerers, for example.

The Sensuality of Magic

Quirks (the fundamental particles of gameality — see page 10) shift in unusual ways

¹ Little did Cyst know that when her weapon-summoning spell bungled, she inadvertently conjured a five-hundred pound anvil thirty-seven feet above her head.

¹ Gods do tend to pay more attention to their more powerful followers, though, or those who are in the process of trying to accomplish specific tasks for them.

around people and objects which have magical properties. These shifts create very subtle fluctuations of shape, color, sound, taste, texture, and smell, which can be detected by the magically astute using the Intuition / Awareness / Descrying proficiency (see page 123). Descrying requires the use of as many of the five senses as possible — it's possible, but much harder, to descry with only a limited number of senses. Since descryers attempt to identify the nature and function of an item by looking at, listening to, touching, tasting, and smelling it, it's not that unusual to see magically-inclined individuals engaging all their senses in an attempt to decipher a magic item. It's also possible to do this to determine the spells known by a spellcaster, but few such spellcasters will willingly allow others to get close enough to attempt this. In many countries, descrying people without their consent is illegal. Even where it isn't, it's usually taboo.² Of course, it's possible to descry someone without being really obvious about it.

Although everyone is theoretically capable of descrying, it is a difficult skill to master, and few people even realize that they could attempt it. Assume that virtually no commoners will think to try it or even be any good at it if they do — unless the PCs can do it themselves, they'll have to hire a specialist to do it for them.

Magular Versus Avaticular Magical Methods

Pretentious scholars of magic often debate which of the two methods of casting magic is superior, magular or avaticular. While clear answers aren't forthcoming, each one does have certain advantages and disadvantages.

Spell Components

Mages find it much harder to channel ambrosia from worship when they're unable to make decisive gestures and speak their incantations aloud. Avatars, on the other hand, must only pray to cast spells, which they can do without any outward sign. Mages have the advantage of being able to enhance the quality of their magic by using certain physical objects in particular ways, while avatars gain nothing from such actions.

Devotion

Avatars find that their gods are quite responsive to their prayers when they have a history of great devotion. Thus if avatars pray with great frequency, take the initiative to create new rituals and ceremonies, and plug their deities to new potential worshippers whenever they get the chance, casting spells becomes easier for them. Mages have no equivalent advantage, but they are also not required to base their life on anyone's teachings but their own, nor do they have to alter their behavior based on some other entity's desires. Avatars are limited in their choice of lifestyles to those of which their god approves, and those behaving in a manner their religion regards as sacrilegious may encounter great difficulty in casting spells. Of course, if your god (or, more likely, her followers) catch you doing something really blasphemous, you could be in even worse trouble. Your god might forsake you — stripping you of your avatar status and ordering your ban-

ishment from the religion — and possibly strike you with a lightning bolt or two.

Divine Wrath

Most deities are somewhat predisposed to dislike mages. Although the gods usually don't directly intervene in the lives of mortals, when they do, any mages who might be involved are slightly likely to fare less well than ordinary people or even avatars of an entirely different deity (unless the gods in question are enemies).

Vulnerable or Fickle Deities

Just choosing to worship a god doesn't guarantee that she'll be around forever. Gods can be killed or banished. Aside from any possible emotional ramifications it might cause you to discover that your chosen higher power has kicked the bucket, this leaves you without a Wellspring (at least temporarily). In rare cases, gods step down and are replaced, resulting in an old religion under new management. Deities can cease to power avatars who displease them, discontinue the benefits of worshipping them, or even change their minds about what tenets their followers are required to believe. Furthermore, they aren't under any specific obligation to tell anyone about any of this. This can be quite annoying for an avatar.

Divine Channeling

Avatars normally learn their spells in a manner analogous to the way mages learn theirs, albeit with more emphasis on divine revelation and less emphasis on research. However, unlike mages, avatars are capable of receiving channeled spells from their deities. Thus, in rare cases when a god has sufficient cause (and happens to be paying attention to his avatar), he may get her out of a jam. Deities can only channel powers which they themselves possess, but their avatars need not have those same abilities. Even so, however, the capacity to receive channeled spells from a deity is a mixed blessing, since a god's best interests don't always coincide perfectly with her avatar's. Avatars can resist spells which their gods want to channel through them, but it isn't easy.

Quests

Deities sometimes contact their avatars in order to send them on missions. When this happens, avatars have little choice but to drop whatever they're doing and set off on the quest (unless they wish to be sacrilegious). Although mages do sometimes set off on quests to acquire spell components for really powerful spells, they don't have to do this, and they can usually cast their spells without these components, even if it is a bit harder.

Spell Components, Prayers, & Rituals

Where avatars use worship, prayers, and rituals, mages use spell components. Each have different effects on the flow of the game.

² Although in a few cultures, it's actually considered socially acceptable for people to mutually touch, smell, and even taste each other when they meet, in order to determine the extent and the nature of each other's magical abilities.

³ Isn't it fun reading through all the footnotes?

Mages & Avatars at a Glance Chart

	<i>Avatars</i>	<i>Mages</i>
Require Spell Components?	No	Yes
Required Code of Conduct?	Yes	No
Disliked by Most Deities?	No	Yes
Can Lose Wellspring?	Yes	No
Capable of Divine Channeling?	Yes	No
May Have to Undertake Quests?	Yes	Yes

Worship, Prayers, & Rituals

Each avatar must continually worship his god in order to retain his capacity to cast spells. Different gods like to be worshipped in different ways, but at minimum, this means keeping your deity in mind in a vaguely respectful way. At maximum, it means praying with great frequency, adhering to your deity's chosen rituals, proselytizing, and inventing new ways to worship. The more vigorously an avatar worships, the more ambrosia she helps her god generate, and the easier the god makes it for her to cast spells. Whenever an avatar casts a spell, the Cobbler should apply a modifier based on her general piety over the last week or so. Only very dedicated followers deserve +2, and -2 is reserved for the nearly indifferent. Characters who are neither especially devout nor conspicuously profane get no modifier, while those who openly flout their god will likely lose their Wellspring entirely.

Good avatars spend a significant portion of their free time performing various rituals to their gods. This could mean anything from bloody sacrifices to rain dances; the important thing is that the rituals are consistent with the deities' personality and worship preferences. The most successful gods have religions of some kind or another devoted to them, often with social hierarchies in which your character can attain some position. These religions are usually responsible for enforcing adherence to their deity's code of conduct, and many times a part of worshipping a particular deity is becoming a member of the religion, especially as a cleric of some kind.

Avatars also have to pray to cast spells. This doesn't necessarily mean speaking aloud or giving any outward sign, but avatars can give away the fact that they are casting a spell if they aren't careful. For example, an avatar casting a spell which gives her a close-up vision of distant objects will appear to be staring blankly ahead when using the spell, which should imply even to the most dull-witted that something strange is going on.

Note that gods appreciate it just as much when non-avatars perform the same sorts of rituals, but few people put so much effort into worshipping their god unless they're fixing to become avatars or they have some other special reason to benefit from it.

Devotion to Gods for Avatars Modifiers Chart

<i>Worhipfulness</i>	<i>Bonus</i>
Constant Creative Devotion:	+2
Usually Devout & Enthusiastic:	+1
Reliable But Unenthusiastic:	+0
Occasionally Shirks Duties:	-1
Gives Worship Sparingly:	-2

Using Spell Components

Spell components are a sort of modified holdover from the days before mages, when avaticular magic was the only method of casting spells. When the first mages were learning the art of spellcasting without deities, they used avatars as their models and incorporated variations on avaticular rituals into their magular formulas. As time passed, these modified rituals became firmly entrenched into the way magular spells were learned on Terrek, and they remain a part of magular magic today — albeit in rather different forms.

The two most basic spell components derived from avatar rituals are incantations and gestures. Incantations are verbal recitations; gestures are decisive motions made with the hands (or sometimes other body parts). Both incantations and gestures are fundamental to the process of magular magic as it has evolved on Terrek; a mage who cannot (or will not) recite the proper incantations and the precise gestures suffers a penalty to casting (see the Spell Components for Mages Modifiers chart). A third type of spell component is a bit more complicated; it has to do with the manipulation of various physical objects and substances. For example, a spell that gets rid of warts might be easier to cast if you twirl the body of a decapitated cat around your head in a graveyard at midnight. Such ritualistic activities are usually less essential to a spell than verbal and manual components, but they can still be helpful, thus granting a bonus to casting the spell. Occasionally, certain material components and activities may be required to cast a spell, but most are optional.

All spells contain a description of some suggested material components and how to use them. These constitute the default means of using material spell components and/or strange activities to cast the spell. However, players are encouraged to develop alternate methods of casting spells, either just for variety or to personalize their spellcasting to their character concepts. A character who views the world in terms of sympathetic magic might tend to use some variation on voodoo dolls and locks of hair for some of his spells, for example. There are lots of different possibilities — if your character wants to cast a divination spell, for example, she might use gastromancy, which relies on correctly interpreting the noises of one's belly. She could practice retromancy, and gather the salient facts by glancing back over her shoulder. Alternatively, she could glean relevant information by studying her point of impact with the ground after running in circles until she falls over (via gyromancy).

Spell Components for Mages Modifiers Chart

<i>Component</i>	<i>Bonus</i>
All the Proper Material Components:	+2
Substitute Material Components:	+1
No Components	+0
Unable to Gesture or Unable to Speak	-1
Unable to Gesture and Unable to Speak	-2

Multiple Wellsprings

It's possible to worship more than one god at a time, switch Wellsprings, or even become both a mage and an avatar. With any luck, these permutations will have an interesting effect on your game.

Worshipping Multiple Deities

Sometimes, gods come in sets — or as most people call them, pantheons. Pantheons are groups of gods that unite toward a common purpose, usually acquiring worship. The Olympiad is the original pantheon. Instead of worshipping a single deity, a character can elect to worship a pantheon of gods. In mechanical terms, this changes the game very little, though it can have an interesting impact if gods figure prominently in the tale you're telling. Theoretically, characters can also worship multiple unrelated gods part-time. They could be avaticular double agents. Or they can worship diametrically opposed gods. If they're willing to brave the dangers, this can result in significant hilarity.

Avatar-Mages

A few spellcasters are both avatars and mages. These are people who have a deity as one of their Wellsprings and themselves as another. Since mages tend to have a fairly different psychological makeup than avatars, and because the proficiencies for magular magic (Presence) are different for those for avaticular magic (Vision), avatar-mages are extremely rare, but they do exist.

Changing Your Wellspring

There's nothing inherently hard about changing one's god. Theoretically, in fact, it's easy; all one must do is learn a bit about the god you want to begin worshipping and start giving devotion. Most likely, if you meet with her approval, your new god will soon begin powering your spells. Any avaticular spell you can cast with the power from one god can be cast with the power from another. In practice, however, there are often a few more problems with switching higher powers. For one thing, most people get rather attached to their gods, and they suffer some negative emotional consequences when they have to stop worshipping. For most avatars, it's hard to get enthused about a new god until they've grieved their old one. Cobblers can assign penalties to casting spells with a new Wellspring (based on lack of enthusiasm for the new deity) until they feel the character has grieved sufficiently in situations where grieving penalties are appropriate. Another problem with switching

gods is that, if your old god is still around and you were important to her, she might send hosts to investigate. Of course, fellow members of your old deity's church are likely to consider you a heretic. Furthermore, unless you've been discovered by a spiritual recruiter who places you in high esteem, you'll probably have to start on the bottom rung in any hierarchy of social status your new god's religion employs. You may have to be rebaptized, and become the subject of various rituals. All things considered, it's usually best to stick with the religion you've got.

Becoming a mage after being an avatar (or vice versa) requires even more of a change in worldview, and may result in a temporary penalty to casting in the adjustment period. Of course, perhaps the most difficult part of the transition is learning the proficiencies needed to perform magic via an entirely different method.

Spellware

Characters begin the game with whatever spells they purchase at character creation. As the game progresses, however, they will need to discover new spells if they wish to learn more. Unless you're lucky enough to have access to a library full of ancient wisdom or a wise old teacher, spellware is probably the easiest way to do this. Of course, you still have to pay experience points for spellware.

The term "spellware" refers specifically to spells created by professional spell designers for use in commerce. Some of these designers work for themselves from the discomfort of their own dwellings, while others work for big corporations (most notably one called Macrospell). Using spellware designed by both types of spell designers has its problems (thus, in mechanical terms, such spells may be available for fewer experience points — ask your Cobbler to give you a break).

Individual spell designers often give their spellware away initially (in small pamphlets available for taking in magic shop storefronts). In return, however, they generally expect that you send them a fee (of an amount specified in the spell description) in return for using it. Since their spellware is generally protected by supplemental spells which activate automatically when the main spell is cast, failure to pay this fee has a variety of negative consequences ranging from mildly annoying to lethal. Spellware designed by individual spell designers varies greatly in quality, and you rarely know how good it is until after you've learned the spell. While it can certainly be substandard, it can also be extremely useful.

Macrospell spellware is quite a bit more expensive than spellware designed by most individual spell designers, and it has to be purchased in spellbooks. Macrospell spellbooks are available in most major magic shops in moderate-sized or bigger cities. Once purchased, a Macrospell spell does not torment the caster with copy protection spells. However, it often fails to work at crucial moments, and it usually contains various errors which cause the spell to work incorrectly. Macrospell spells are also available on the black market, although since acquiring a spell in this fashion is illegal, you won't be able to get support from the Macrospell offices when the spell invariably goes wrong.

Since using spellware (either the free or corporate varieties)

is usually less convenient than using other spells, players can use it to learn their spells at a discount. For example, a spell costing 20 XP might cost only 15 XP if it had a “nag phantasm” which appeared and delayed the caster for a round or two every time it was cast, or 7 XP if it subjected the caster to a blast of electricity each time it was cast (until she pays). Players who want to learn spells too high in level for them are encouraged to use spellware to reduce the effective spell level.

BEYOND MAGIC: TECHNOLOGY & PARANORMAL ABILITIES

Fundamentally, the reason that magic works in Paranesia is because the players expect it to work. Players have a generally shared vision of how magic works in Paranesia, based on all the legends and clichés in their (real life) culture, their roleplaying experiences, the rules of the game, the axiom that characters can't use abilities they don't have (ie, those they haven't spent experience points to buy), and so forth. Since everyone understands and agrees that the world operates in a certain way, it does operate in that way.

The most important thing about all this, though, is that magic isn't the only way to bring about strange causality-defying effects — anything goes, as long as everyone agrees.

Alternatives to Magic

Some paranormal abilities (other than magic) include the following:

- **Weird Science:** Because of the Dramatic Principle, the laws of gameality are looser and more flexible than the laws of reality, so it's easier to make technology work in strange ways. You may be able to invent devices in Paranesia that would never work in real life, like a perpetual motion machine or a mech.

- **Mutant Powers:** Errors occurring during character creation sometimes cause mutations in both PCs and NPCs. Some of these errors cause psionic abilities to develop. Others simply result in strange physical abilities, like a long elastic tongue or the ability to fly.

- **Other Powers:** In a magical world, accidents and weird twists of fate are an ever-present possibility. Some places are high in magical energy, and will tamper with your basic inherent nature. Spells, animal bites, magic items, and any number of other things will do the same if you aren't careful.

The Mechanics of the Paranormal

From a mechanical perspective, paranormal abilities always work more or less just like magic. To activate one, just roll the appropriate Vision or Presence Activating proficiency. To power it, use the appropriate Powering proficiency.

Like magic, other paranormal abilities exist because the players expect that they will. In many ways, they're just like



“We’ve divided by zero! She’s gonna blow!” — A team of dwarven engineers tests the limits of theoretical mathematics.

magic, but people think of them rather differently, which makes them different. Paranormal abilities have Wellsprings, but normally they use something other than ambrosia as a power source. Many mutants have some difficult-to-define internal power source which never seems to run out, while others take power from a mystical life force, or the yellow sun of Terrek.

The Limits of Paranesian Technology

Performing magic requires a lot of hard work for a mage, and a lot of self-sacrifice and butt-kissing for an avatar. Researching spells, mastering pronunciations, and gathering obscure components takes up a lot of time, and the alternative — finding a god to worship — not only means abiding by some bizarre cosmic philosophy, it also means constantly having to worry about not offending your deity. Super powers also have their problems; very few people actually possess them, and discrimination against mutants and those like them is distressingly common. If you have a technological device, however, you don't have to mess around with any of that. So why don't more people make better use of technology to improve their lives and bring increased silliness to Paranesia?

Well, as it happens, a few people (particularly the dwarves) do. Some cultures have invented steam power, calculators, and even can openers. However, frankly, developing the kind of high technology that would be required to create fusion engines, hover cars, or teleporters would probably take at least hundreds of years for even a fairly technologically obsessive culture. Furthermore, even if people had the vision to see the possibilities technology could eventually provide in terms of ease of use, most would prefer to get the much more immediate gratification provided by magic. Essentially, the magical equivalents of technology are easier in the short term. This isn't to say that some terraces haven't pioneered genetic engineering and invented androids, but it definitely appears unlikely that the denizens of Terrek will develop much beyond gunpowder and telescopes in the near future.

SPELLS

Here are just a few of the spells available on Terrek; both mages and avatars can learn them. Note that some of the spells have loopholes and methods of use which don't seem consistent with the way the spells were intended. These loopholes were lovingly hand-crafted by members of Limestone Publishing; players are highly encouraged to find and exploit them.

The spell results charts here contains results up to 16 degrees. If a caster accomplishes more degrees than that, she can accomplish even more success than the chart specifies, at the discretion of the Cobbler. All of the spells listed here take a single round to cast.

Art: The art necessary to cast the spell in question — Aether, Cosmos, Matter, or Force.

XP: The experience point cost to purchase the spell.

Drain: The amount the spell drains the caster's Powering Threshold each time it's cast.

Suggested Components: What will help the caster cast

the spell successfully.

Required Components: What the caster needs to cast the spell successfully.

Range: How near a target must be to the caster as the spell is cast to be affected by it (many Range results depend on the number of degrees achieved). A range of 0 means the caster must touch the subject.

Duration: How long the spell will last unless terminated by the caster (many durations depend on spell results).

Resilience Skill: The Resilience Skill with which the target of a spell can attempt to resist.

Players are encouraged to invent their own spells using this format. If they desire, they can also take available spells and limit them in order to save on experience point costs. Note that some spells have Modules which can be purchased at additional experience point costs. A few spells require that at least one or two Modules be purchased before the spell can be used.

Advanced Food & Beverage Purification

Art: Matter

XP: 16

Drain: -3

Suggested Components: Caster dons a napkin and picks up a fork and a spoon.

Required Components: None

Range: See below

Duration: Instantaneous (effects are permanent)

Resilience Skill: Body Resilience

This spell will purify a quantity of food and beverage, purging from it all traces of any kind of poison, disease, magic, or any other harmful effect. This is a useful effect, to be sure. However, the spell works only on examples of food and beverage which the caster *herself* intends to consume. The caster cannot cast the spell on food she intends that someone else to eat, or beverage she intends someone else to drink. Of course, just because the caster intends to consume something doesn't necessarily mean she'll succeed — but if she doesn't do her very best to try once the spell is cast, the spell's effects will terminate.

Unlike other similar spells, Advanced Food and Beverage Purification works on anything that has attributes which would be harmful to the caster if consumed. Poisons and other noxious chemicals can be rendered inert (or at least edible) with the spell. The spell even works on living entities — again, provided that the caster intends to eat them. The caster can warn the target that he is going to attempt to consume her, or take any other desired actions prior to casting the spell (tie himself up, etc.). At the time the spell is cast, however, the caster must abandon such attempts to save the target from his future consumption and do his darnedest to chow down upon him, her, or it.

Although the spell itself is usually permanent (the comestible does not become poisoned again after a period of time), the caster must make every attempt to eat the target of the spell for one full day (or until the target is destroyed — say, by being eaten by someone else). If the caster's attempt to consume it isn't the very best she can do, the meals in question will revert to their original state. At the end of one

day, if the target still exists and caster has still failed to consume it, she can cease to attempt to do so without causing the meal to become impure again.

Advanced Food & Beverage Purification Results Chart

Degrees	Meals	Range
1	1	0'
2	2	5'
4	4	10'
8	8	20'
16	16	40'

Cosmic Bridge

Art: Cosmos

XP: 26

Drain: -5

Suggested Components: The caster stands inside a circle on the ground, slaps his left nipple with his right hand, and creates a cloud of smoke around the target with a smoke bomb.

Required Components: None

Range: See below

Duration: See below

Resilience Skill: Mind Resilience

Known to psionicists as Teleport, Cosmic Bridge disassembles a person or object into its component quirks and reassembles it some distance away. For the experience point cost of the basic spell, you can transport a certain number of pounds over a certain distance for a certain period of time. After that, the spell wears off. The process causes a loud noise of rushing air on both sides of the transport. A person will die if they transport into something (except gasses, which the spell automatically moves out of the way). The target must exchange a quantity of something (roughly equal to the weight being transported) with his position. In other words, something at the location that the target teleports to is simultaneously teleported to the target's point of origin (Cobbler's choice). Sometimes it's just dirt; other times, it's a person or an object in the vicinity. The exchanged object returns to its original location when the spell wears off, unless the Permanent Transport Module is purchased. Any object or person transported can't be attached to something else (you can't, for example, transport someone's head off his body). Many of these disadvantages can be removed with the spell's Modules, which can be learned at any time, even long after the fundamental spell is known.

There are two methods of using Cosmic Bridge to transport to another location. The caster can specify a number of miles and a direction, in which case the target will appear exactly that many miles away in exactly that direction. If the caster isn't careful, this could mean the target materializes in a solid object. Another method is to visualize the desired location, although this may involve a casting penalty. An intimately-known location (ie, one in which the caster has lived) imparts no penalty; a location which the caster has only heard described imparts a penalty of -8. Regardless of the method used, a bungle means that the caster transports

to a random location (possibly inside a solid object).

Cobblers can allow PCs to save on experience points when buying this spell by limiting the sort of thing they can teleport — only the inanimate, only monkeys and only a dozen at a time, etc..

Modules (Optional)

• **Involuntary Teleport (XP: 8):** With this Module, you can cast Cosmic Bridge prematurely. Then, when some pre-specified set of circumstances becomes the case, the spell automatically activates. You can have one set of conditions for each time you purchase this Module.

• **Basic Materialization Protection (XP: 5):** If you try to transport into a solid object, the spell automatically fails.

• **Intermediate Materialization Protection (XP: 10):** If you try to transport into a solid object, the spell delays until the thing in the way moves (even if it takes years).

• **Advanced Materialization Protection (XP: 15):** If you try to transport into a solid object, the spell moves you to the nearest place to where you tried to go which isn't occupied.

• **Silent Transport (XP: 10):** The sound of the air movements is muffled, and no noise accompanies your shift in location.

• **Permanent Transport (XP: 15):** The spell does not wear off at the end of the duration, thus returning you to your original location.

• **Exchangeless Transport (XP: 10):** It becomes unnecessary to exchange an equal mass from the location to which you're teleporting.

• **Infinite Distance (XP: 15):** Distance ceases to be a factor in your transportation. Ignore the Range result; you can go anywhere in the mortal realm.

• **Realmleaving (XP: 24):** Paranesian realms cease to be a barrier to you; you can transport out of the mortal realm into anywhere in the heavens. You must have previously purchased Infinite Distance to learn Realmleaving.

Cosmic Bridge Results Chart

Degrees	Duration	Range	Weight
1	5 minutes	1 mile	50 lb.
2	1 hour	10 miles	200 lb.
4	4 hours	100 miles	500 lb.
8	5 hours	1,000 miles	2,000 lb.
16	16 hours	10,000 miles.	5,000 lb.

Demonic Credit

Art: Aether

XP: 10

Drain: -2

Suggested Components: The caster drafts a request to a demon on parchment in red ink.

Required Components: None

Range: N.A.

Duration: Instantaneous (effects are permanent)

Resilience Skill: N.A.

Demonic Credit creates a binding contract between a target and a terrifying personification of evil bent on the destruction of all mortal life. This being, called a financial

The Financial Demon

The N'rawn is a nasty demon thing which will screw you over the first chance it gets. It has scruples, but not many. It is mainly threatening because of how smart it is; it prefers to trick those who oppose it rather than fight.

N'rawn

(Plural: N'Rawni)

Mental Designation: Sentient

Size Designation: Medium

XP: 7091

BERP: 1/3/1/1

PECT: 2/1/2/1

CFRS: N.A./20/N.A./N.A.

Proficiencies

Prowess

Grappling	17	Agility	15
Strength	17	Aiming	10
Swinging	19	Dexterity	13
Thrusting	17	Wits	10

Eloquence

Creativity	16	Crafting	21
Elocution	20	Inventiveness	21
Emoting	19	Erudition	27
Subterfuge	18	Reasoning	24

Resolve

Concentration	17	Awareness	20
Endurance	17	Instinct	14
Evocation	17	Savvy	19
Resilience	17	Wisdom	21

Vision

Aether	20	Aether	0
Cosmos	20	Cosmos	0
Force	20	Force	0
Matter	20	Matter	0

Pre-Hit Location Chart

0-9: Standard (Minus Legs)

Impulse Buy: At will, the financial demon can cause a target to make a Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges check or buy the first 1 to 10 trinkets or other objects (total value must be under 50% of the target's currently owned amount of cash) that the target sees. The demon usually uses this ability to punish people who try to attack it.

demon, is capable of mystic acts of lending. By casting the spell, the target is forced to enter into the agreement, and it becomes impossible to back out (although the target can, presumably, pay the debt back immediately if she wants, effectively negating the agreement). The result of the spell determines the number of geepee lent, the interest rate at which they are lent, and the length of time before payments are due. The better the caster does when casting this spell, the more control he achieves over the demon, and thus the better deal he is able to acquire. Once the spell has been successfully cast on a person, the spell cannot be cast again on

that same person for 3 days.

A moment after the spell is cast, the demon with whom the contract was forged appears (near the target) as a fiery cloud of dark smoke in a vaguely humanoid shape. It has red eyes and a gaping, sharp-toothed maw, and it carries with it a bag of coins and a contract. It hands these to the caster, explaining the terms of the agreement (in between ominous and lustful glances at the target's immortal soul). The caster has agreed (like it or not), it explains, that interest will start accruing after the duration of the delayed payments. Once the time of delayed payments ends, the caster will begin to pay the debt back, with a minimum payment as specified by the spell result. (The second payment is due in double that time; the third payment in triple, etc.). The demon then departs. It returns when the target wishes to make a payment. It returns whenever the target wants to make a payment, usually taking five to ten minutes to show up once requested.

Casting Demonic Credit on a target who has another demonic debt works fine, as long as the account is not *passdoo*. A *passdoo* account is one where the target fails to live up to his part of the bargain for paying the debt back on time. Targets with *passdoo* accounts are subject to being harassed occasionally, at inconvenient moments, by various demonic minions of the demon in question. If a target dies with a *passdoo* balance, he goes to the personal hell of the demon in question rather than the afterlife he would otherwise have been stationed within. If the target dies without having paid off his debt, he is treated as if he were *passdoo*, and his soul is repossessed.

This spell is extremely easy to learn. It was designed that way — in fact, the spell is often delivered to residences by demons disguised as mail carriers. The pamphlet in which the spell comes offers to teach a novice spellcaster the spell in less than an hour. The spell is also commonly associated with a magic item, which is usually a thin wooden card with an arcane symbol embossed upon it.

Demonic Credit Results Chart

Degrees	Interest	Minimum Payment	Delayed Payments	Borrowing Limit
1	50% /mo.	25% of Debt	1 Hour	10 gp
2	30% /mo.	20% of Debt	1 Day	100 gp
4	20% /mo.	15% of Debt	1 Week	300 gp
8	15% /mo.	5% of Debt	1 Month	800 gp
16	5% /mo.	1% of Debt	6 Months	2000 gp

Egoth's Generic Modular Elemental Deathspell

Art: Force

XP: See below (Add Modules)

Drain: -4

Suggested Components: Caster messes with a bit of the substance being used to cause harm.

Required Components: None.

Range: See below

Duration: Instantaneous

Resilience Skill: N.A.

This spell directs a blast of something unpleasant at a target. When you choose the spell, choose at least one Substance Module and at least one Form Module. (Intelligence Modules, which allow the attack to seek out particular targets, are optional.)

All of Egoth's Generic Modular Deathspells except those using "zigzag" stop when they hit a target, though "cone" and "ball" can affect multiple targets nevertheless. "Zigzag" spells stop at the end of their range.

Each spell must be purchased separately. In other words, if you know a firebolt spell, and you want to learn a waterbolt spell, you have to learn the bolt part twice — once for each spell. If you want to use an Intelligence Module, you must select a ball form.

To cast a deathspell, make a check with the appropriate magic proficiency as normal. If the spell succeeds, apply the results to the relevant Attack Strength spell results chart to get a modifier. Then make a Maneuver / Aiming / Shooting check, adding in your bonus from the spell results chart. Your result on this check determines the number of degrees of damage you do.

Form Modules

• **Bolt/Beam (XP: 12):** The bolt or beam Module (choose one or the other) moves out from the caster in a straight line.

• **Angle (XP: 16)** For shooting around corners, the angle spell is just the thing. The caster can choose one abrupt directional alteration at any point within the spell's range. It can make a bend up to 45 degrees once for every time this Module is purchased. For every angle the angle form takes, the caster is at -2 to the Maneuver / Aiming / Shooting check.

• **Ball (XP: 16):** The ball proceeds directly to its target, but explodes as soon as it hits something. See the explosion rules, page 29.

• **Cones (XP: 16):** The cone proceeds directly toward whatever it's aimed at, expanding outward 2 feet for every 5 feet it moves forward.

• **Zigzag (XP: 16):** The zigzag weaves back and forth in a complicated and unpredictable pattern. Anyone within 5' of a straight line between the caster and the direction in which the spell is pointed stands an 80% chance of taking an attack; anyone within 10' has a 50% chance; anyone within 15' has a 20% chance. (Assume that the wave's Range is equal to the distance from the caster to the end of the wave in a straight line.)

Ball / Cone / Zigzag Results Chart

Degrees	Range
1	15'
2	30'
4	60'
8	120'
16	240'

Bolt / Beam / Angle Results Chart

Degrees	Range
1	25'
2	50'
4	100'
8	200'
16	400'

Substance Modules

• **Holy/Unholy Energy (XP: 32):** This spell sends forth holy or unholy energy from a deity and does Holy (or Unholy) damage. Armor doesn't protect against it, but only people who the deity regards as evil (or good, in the case of unholy energy) are hurt by it. "Neutral" people take half damage. Only avatars can take this Module. In order to cast it, the avatar must make some kind of brief but loud, melodramatic speech about summoning the righteous power of her deity; the quality of this speech (see the Holy/Unholy Energy Modifier chart) determines a bonus to the spell check.

Holy/Unholy Energy Modifier Chart

Bonus	Speech <i>Example</i>
+0	Pathetic, timid & quiet <i>"Um, hey, screw off."</i>
+2	Moderately loud & dramatic <i>"Turn aside, ye minions of evil, and feel the wrath of Erroneous!"</i>
+4	Loud, bold, & melodramatic <i>"Feel the searing wrath of almighty Chole, whose righteous fury shall cleanse the blighted earth of your existence most heathen & foul!"</i>

• **Heat (XP: 20):** This spell sends forth heat, possibly in the form of fire. It does Thermal damage.

• **Cold (XP: 10):** This spell sends forth a distinct lack of (or a negative amount of) heat, possibly in the form of ice or cryofire. It does Thermal damage.

• **Water (XP: 12):** This spell sends forth water. It does Blunt damage, plus it soaks the target. Other noncaustic liquids are acceptable variants on this spell.

• **Electricity (XP: 20):** This spell sends forth electricity and does Electric damage.

Heat-Seeking Fireballs & So Forth

When combined with Fireball, Heat-Seeking has a rather interesting, if obvious, consequence. Since a fireball is rather hot, it almost invariably generates more heat than anything around it, and thus it almost always explodes as soon as it detects itself. This is usually rather harmful to the caster, who takes damage from the fireball as if he were standing a few feet from ground zero. This spell is often used in some of the more competitive magical universities in order to weed out stupider apprentices. Apprentice wizards are asked to learn and cast the spell as part of their entrance exam. Those who do, fail.

For an extra experience point, casters can learn New Improved Heat-Seeking Fireball, which ignores itself as a possible target. In other words, it seeks out the second-hottest thing in the area (not counting the caster). This spell is in much wider use, although it is extremely dangerous because of its potential for targeting the caster's friends or innocent bystanders.

The same basic logic applies to other elemental spells, like Cold-Seeking Iceball and so forth.

- **Photonic (XP: 11):** This spell sends forth concentrated light and does Photonic damage.
- **Acid/Base (XP: 20):** This spell sends forth a dose of acid or base (choose one) and does Caustic damage.
- **Whipped Cream (XP: 1):** This spell sends forth a bunch of whipped cream and does no damage, but it does make a big slippery mess.

<i>Holy / Unholy Results Chart</i>	
Degrees	Attack Strength
1	-1
2	+0
4	+1
8	+2
16	+3

<i>Heat / Acid Results Chart</i>	
Degrees	Attack Strength
1	-4
2	-2
4	+0
8	+2
16	+4

<i>Water / Photonic / Cold Results Chart</i>	
Degrees	Attack Strength
1	-2
2	-1
4	-0
8	+1
16	+2

<i>Electricity / Base Results Chart</i>	
Degrees	Attack Strength
1	-7
2	-4
4	-1
8	+2
16	+5

Intelligence Modules (Optional)

All Intelligence Modules allow a ball attack spell to seek out a particular type of target. Intelligent spells are not actually intelligent; they merely have the ability to detect a particular type of thing, and they act like they want to catch it. They behave in a maximally efficient fashion, heading directly toward whatever they select as a target, unless objects get in the way. If there is an obstacle in the ball's path, it will attempt to go around the obstacle via the shortest possible route. However, the ball cannot move any more feet than its Range specifies, even if uses up its range moving in circles. "Intelligent" balls can be dodged, but the attempt is at -3, and if they still have Range remaining, they'll come back around to attack again next round. The best way to divert them permanently is to "distract" them with something they're more attracted to than they are to you. Note that "Intelligent" spells do not seek their casters, unless that's the point of the spell.

- **Element-Seeking (XP: 12):** An Element-Seeking spell seeks an element — heat, cold, water, bright light, pickled herring, or something else — and heads toward it immediately upon being cast.
- **Knowledge-Seeking (XP: 10):** A Knowledge-Seeking Fireball is a rather useful variation on the ordinary fireball spell. It is designed to target anyone who is aware of particular facts. The trick is that the caster also needs to be aware of the fact in question; the fact is specified at casting.
- **Other-Seeking (XP: Variable):** Balls which seek evil, cows, cheese, or whatever are also possible. Use your imagi-

nation and consult with the Cobbler for cost details.

Interactivity Disruption

Art: Aether

XP: See below

Drain: -4

Suggested Components: The caster rubs her skin with the dust of a ground-up body part which is relevant to the spell (ie, eyes for invisibility, ears for inaudibility, etc.).

Required Components: None

Range: See below

Duration: See below

Resilience Skill: Body Resilience

This spell alters the quirks surrounding a target, interfering with the ability of nearby characters and objects to interact with it normally. This has at least one of four possible results: Invisibility, Inaudibility, Intangibility, or Tastelessness/Odorlessness. Each of these possibilities must be purchased as a separate Module, but for spellcasters who know more than one, they can be used together with a single casting of the spell. All four of these basic types of effect will fail if the target performs a violent action unless she has the Unbroken Effects module.

It's possible, when casting the spell, to achieve only partial effect. It's also possible to exchange a full effect for two partial effects. For purposes of the spell, an object is any single thing (excluding clothing and equipment), such as a sword or a naked body. A being with equipment is any thinking creature and the objects it carries on its person, like clothing and weaponry.

Modules

- **Invisibility (XP: 16):** Light passes directly through the target, rendering the subject invisible. Partial effect means the subject is translucent and at -4 to spot under normal circumstances.
- **Inaudibility (XP: 10):** Sound does not proceed from the target. Partial effect means the volume of all noise the subject makes is reduced in half, and is at -4 to be heard under normal circumstances.
- **Intangibility (XP: 26):** The target becomes impossible to touch, neither affecting nor being affected by things around it. For dramatic reasons, the target will continue to interact with the ground and will retain its own ability to perceive its environment (if any). Partial effect means the target becomes semi-substantial; attempts to physically manipulate it in any way are at -4. Weapons partially affected do half damage.
- **Tastelessness/Odorlessness (XP: 6):** The target becomes impossible to taste and/or smell (casters can choose one or both effects). Partial effect means the taste and smell are muted and bland, and at -4 to detect under normal circumstances.

Modules (Optional)

- **Unbroken Effects (XP: 24):** The target remains invisible, inaudible, or whatever even after she performs a violent action (attacks, gets struck, falls down hard, etc.).
- **Component Shutdown (XP: 14):** The caster can choose



“The orc’s praying again. Smack him, would you?” — Devotion to one’s deity can bring peace of mind, divine admiration, great power, and the derision of your peers.

to terminate individual parts of the spell rather than the entire spell. For example, the caster could terminate invisibility with regard to one target and turn off intangibility on another, while leaving all the targets inaudible.

Interactivity Disruption Results Chart

Degrees	Target	No. of Effects Possible	Range	Duration
1	1 Object	1 Partial Effect	0'	5 min
2	1 Being w/ equip. OR 2 objects	1 Full Effect	5'	1 hr
4	4 Beings w/ equip. OR 8 objects	2 Full Effects	10'	4 hrs
8	16 Beings w/ equip. OR 32 objects	3 Full Effects	20'	8 hrs
16	64 Beings w/ equip. OR 128 objects	4 Full Effects	40'	16 hrs

Jaçodav’s Practically Harmless Idiosynculation

Art: Aether

XP: 8

Drain: -4

Suggested Components: The caster says something nonsensical or ridiculous and then points at the target.

Required Components: None

Range: See below

Duration: Instantaneous (effects are permanent)

Resilience Skill: Mind Resilience

This spell causes the target to develop a single ridiculously irrelevant, apparently random, largely harmless personal idiosyncrasy, such as “loves to dig small holes,” “occasionally recites the elven alphabet,” or “dislikes shaking hands with anyone lacking a last name.” This idiosyncrasy cannot harm the target in any obvious way. Thus idiosyncrasies which would be likely to land the target in trouble, like “tempted to ignore authority figures” or “likes to yell whenever it’s a good idea to be quiet” are not acceptable, and directly self-destructive ones like “enjoys hurling herself off cliffs” or “longs to attack everything he sees” are right out. The idiosyncrasy should also be specific enough that it only applies in a set of fairly specific, uncommon situations, and it should usually be phrased as a general desire to do or say certain types of things rather than as an absolute compulsion to do so (so “never looks up” would best be rephrased as “hates looking up.”) In general, the idiosyncrasy should be the sort of thing that makes others view the target as eccentric, but not suicidal, dangerous, offensive, or completely stupid.

The player of the caster (though not the character) is usually allowed to determine the idiosyncrasy, although the Cobbler has final say, and should not allow anything which seems too useful or convenient under the prevailing circumstances.

Jacobav's Results Chart

Degrees	Range
1	0'
2	5'
4	25'
8	125'
16	625'

Knowledge Blast**Art:** Aether**XP:** 20**Drain:** -3**Suggested Components:** The caster babbles incoherently and quickly about the subject to be imparted.**Required Components:** None**Range:** See below**Duration:** Instantaneous (knowledge is permanently imparted)**Resilience Skill:** Mind Resilience

This spell, pioneered by the Keepers of the Omnicodex, originated as a means of rapid telepathic information transmission. For a time the Keepers used it to keep members informed on a variety of topics they didn't have time to research. However, after several nearly disastrous pre-mission briefings, the Keepers retired the spell, declaring sharply that "unconscious members have more difficulty researching new facts than conscious ones," and taking care to note this new fact in the Omnicodex. Soon after this, however, a pair of enterprising Keepers realized the defensive potential inherent in loading down one's foes with so much information that they can no longer stand up. Although this has resulted in some better-informed adversaries, it has been also been a highly effective defensive strategy.

Knowledge Blast works, very simply, by transferring information from the mind of the caster to a target or group of targets. This information pertains to a topic chosen by the caster, except in the event of a bungle, in which case the spell transmits confidential information (such as military secrets or vivid details regarding the caster's late-night personal habits). At casting, the spell user specifies a noun phrase, like "my belly button lint," or "the weather," and various facts pertaining to these things are transferred into the mind of the target. The spell cannot transmit information of which the caster is ignorant. If the caster specifies a topic she knows little or nothing about, the spell will spew facts such as "[the caster] knows practically nothing about [the topic in question]," and "[the topic in question] is not the same as 762 hot dogs," and so on.

Definitions

- **Several/None:** Imparts around 5-10 facts and causes no ill effects in the target.

- **Hundreds/Dazed:** Imparts hundreds of facts and leaves the target at -4 for 1-10 rounds.

- **Thousands/Slightly Unconscious:** Imparts thousands of facts and leaves the target unconscious for 1-10 rounds.

- **Millions/Quite Unconscious:** Imparts millions of facts and leaves the target unconscious for 1-10 hours.

- **Billions/Extremely Unconscious:** Imparts billions of facts and leaves the target unconscious for 1-10 days.

Knowledge Blast Results Chart

Degrees	Targets	Range	Facts Imparted/Affect on Target
1	1	0'	Several/None
2	2	5'	Hundreds/Dazed
4	4	25'	Thousands/Slightly Unconscious
8	8	125'	Millions/Quite Unconscious
16	16	625'	Billions/Extremely Unconscious

Lofty Ways**Art:** Cosmos**XP:** 20**Drain:** -3**Suggested Components:** The caster flaps her arms vigorously.**Required Components:** None**Range:** See below**Duration:** See below**Resilience Skill:** Body Resilience

This spell allows any conscious or sentient target to propel herself forward or backward through the air with naught but the power of her thoughts. To move and maneuver, a caster uses her Maneuver / Agility / Flying proficiency.

Lofty Ways Results Chart

Degrees	Speed	Targets	Duration
1	None (Drift in the Wind)	1	5 minutes
2	Unmodified Flying Check	2	1 hour
4	Flying Check +2	4	4 hours
8	Flying Check +4	8	8 hours
46	Flying Check +6	16	16 hours

Long Strike**Art:** Cosmos**XP:** 16**Drain:** -2**Suggested Components:** The caster must sprinkle the weapon or body part being used with metal from a ground-up spring.**Required Components:** The caster must attack the air in front of her.**Range:** See below**Duration:** Instant**Resilience Skill:** N.A.

This spell, sometimes called Teleblow among psionics, captures the energy of a single blow, say a punch, kick, or sword swipe, and transfers it across a distance. By casting this spell and subsequently making a melee attack, the caster can use the melee attack to strike anyone within the spell's range. The spell's attack is invisible, but it can be dodged or parried if the target is able to observe the caster and if he is aware that the attack is coming.

Long Strike Results Chart

Degrees	Range
1	5'
2	10'
4	40'
8	80'
16	160'

Loyalty Muddling**Art:** Aether**XP:** 16**Drain:** -2**Suggested Components:** The caster dyes a white chess piece black or vice versa.**Required Components:** None**Range:** See below**Duration:** See below**Resilience Skill:** Mind Resilience

When cast, Loyalty Muddling unleashes a momentary blast of nearly blinding light which affects everyone within the spell's range (except the caster). The spell's range extends a number of feet equal to the Range result, starting from the caster and proceeding in all directions. All affected must resist the Strength of the spell with a Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges check or immediately switch sides in whatever conflict they perceive is transpiring. This means that a person affected by Loyalty Muddling will begin working to accomplish the goals of the opposition as he perceives them (if he perceives them incorrectly, he will work to accomplish his own warped perceptions of those goals). If a target is unaware of any conflict, nothing happens. If the target is aware of multiple conflicts, she will switch sides in all of them, even if this results in contradictory goals. If the target is neutral in a conflict, she will jump in on a random side. The target will not take any direct action against her own physical well-being — she will take a larger view of the goals of the opposition. Targets of the spell faced with a convincing argument that they are behaving insanely (such as one resulting from a successful Eloquence / Elocution / Persuasion check) can make another Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges check to shake off the effects of the spell (no more than once every hour).

Loyalty Muddling Results Chart

Degrees	Range	Strength	Duration
1	5'	1 degree	1 round
2	10'	2 degrees	1 minute
4	20'	4 degrees	1 hour
8	40'	8 degrees	1 day
16	80'	16 degrees	1 week

Lumber Mastery**Art:** Cosmos**XP:** 24**Drain:** -4**Suggested Components:** The caster must throw 5 pounds of sawdust into the air.**Required Components:** The caster must be within a mile of 100 trees.**Range:** 500'**Duration:** Instantaneous (effects are permanent)**Resilience Skill:** N.A.

Lumber Mastery allows a mage or avatar to engage in widespread deforestation with relative ease. Better still, the spellcaster can convert the lumber into a fully-formed structure. When the spell is cast, the trees fall over of their own accord and reassemble themselves. The caster has no choice over what to do with the lumber but build structures, but he can choose the type of structure (though it will be made exclusively of wood). Each time the spell is cast, 100 of the nearest trees are destroyed (if the player rolls poorly, not all the trees will be used productively). If there aren't enough trees within a mile of the caster, the spell fails.

Lumber Mastery Results Chart

Degrees	Size of Structure	Structure Quality
1	200 sq.'	Rickety and Dangerous
2	500 sq.'	Shoddy but Safe
4	2,000 sq.'	Not Bad
8	5,000 sq.'	Quality
16	10,000 sq.'	Luxurious

Mystic Yodel (Yodelbolt/Yodellasso)**Art:** Force**XP:** 26**Drain:** -4**Suggested Components:** The caster "warms up" his voice by singing scales.**Required Components:** The caster must yodel loudly.**Range:** See below**Duration:** See below**Resilience Skill:** N.A.

This obscure spell is one the most ridiculous known forms of attack. It has two forms — the yodelbolt and the yodellasso. Both give focus to the sound of a yodel. Those foes who can resist the effects often submit to their sheer inanity.

A caster begins either process by beginning to yodel. Then, immediately as this rapid fluctuation between normal singing voice and falsetto issues forth from her mouth, she casts the spell, transforming the yodel. The yodelbolt or yodellasso lasts as long as she can keep forcing air out of her lungs. When she is forced to draw a breath, the spell ends. She can yodel for a third as long as she can hold her breath (in a nutshell, a person can hold her breath for an absolute maximum of three rounds for every point of Fatigue Threshold she has, so a person can yodel for a number of rounds equal to her Fatigue Threshold; see the rules for resisting suffocation on page 120). Everyone in the vicinity hears the yodeling, even if they aren't damaged by it.

Modules

• **Yodelbolt (XP: 28):** The yodelbolt is essentially the sonic equivalent of a light beam. If a yodelbolt spell is successful, the caster can make a Maneuver / Aiming / Shooting check to blast a chosen target each round the spell lasts, adding in

the spell's Power result.

• **Yodellasso (XP: 20):** The yodellasso is a looser version of the dense sound that makes up the yodelbolt. It works exactly like a rope that comes out of your mouth as long as you keep yodeling. To lasso someone, make a Maneuver / Aiming / Slinging check.

Mystic Yodel Results Chart

Degrees	Range	Power
1	15'	-3
2	30'	-2
4	60'	-1
8	120'	+0
16	240'	+1

Person Wedgery

Art: Matter

XP: 26

Drain: -4

Suggested Components: The caster places a metal wedge on (or in the direction of) the target, and as the spell is cast, makes a motion as if to drive the wedge into the head of the target (note: the caster does not actually drive the wedge in).

Required Components: None

Range: See below

Duration: Instant

Resilience Skill: Body Resilience

Person Wedgery is a method of splitting one person into two or more identical people, each of which is half the size and has half the abilities of the original. (Contrary to what the spell's name implies, the caster needn't cast the spell on a person, although he usually does.) Person Wedgery duplicates only the physical component of a person — it does not duplicate the aethereal part. Hence, a wedged person has only one mind and only one soul (which hovers halfway between both bodies) and retains a single set of thoughts and desires. In most respects, the wedged person is still a single entity, though she has two bodies; any aethereal spell cast on one half affects both of the people.

Once the spell has been cast, wedged individuals can move as far away from each other as they like. However, when the duration of the spell expires, they start to take wounds as their bodies ache to reform with their counterparts. Each hour which passes without their doing so takes its toll in the form of a Minor wound. Obviously, spending too much time apart from your other half is dangerous and can result in death. To reform with another half, the two halves must simply push their way inside each other, forming the larger whole.

To make a roll for either of the individuals thus affected by Wedgery, simply split the original proficiency in half (even mental checks are affected by this due to the fact that the mind has twice as much to do). Both halves have all the spells of the original, all spells cast by either person are only half as effective. If rounding is necessary, always round down. Note that even characters who have already been wedged can be wedged again, making it theoretically possible to have an

indefinite number of sub-people running around. If a character is reduced to a proficiency of zero or less in this fashion, he dies.

Person Wedgery can also be used on objects, which are destroyed if not placed back together at the end of the spell's duration. However, the spell must be cast separately on each object or person to be wedged.

Person Wedgery Results Chart

Degrees	Range	Duration
1	0'	5 minutes
2	5'	1 hour
4	10'	4 hours
8	20'	8 hours
16	40'	16 hours

Phantasmal Entity

Art: Force

XP: See below

Drain: -3

Suggested Components: The caster wrings out the tongue of a coward, a fighter, a chicken, or a friend (depending on the Module) after soaking it in toad's urine for a week and a day. The tongue can be reused.

Required Components: None

Range: 10'

Duration: See below

Resilience Skill: N.A.

Phantasmal Entity is a complex trick of light and sound which takes the form of some kind of entity depending on the Module purchased. It cannot manipulate real objects, and physical things pass right through it. It therefore cannot be harmed by any form of physical attack. Neither can it pick things up or touch anything. The phantasmal entity can speak, and make any sounds a person of its size and appearance could reasonably make. However, it is not capable of making sounds in the normal way, by interacting with objects (it is merely a light illusion), so the spell must duplicate all the sounds which would seem to be coming from the phantasm's voice, its footsteps, and so forth. In general, the phantasmal entity can produce any sound that it seems like a real being like it could make under the same circumstances.

The phantasmal entity almost always obeys the caster of the spell (or another person designated at casting), though not always without having an argument first. Even if given insane orders, it will usually do as it's told, although if thoroughly and repeatedly abused, it will put up more resistance as time goes on.

The phantasmal entity is not, strictly speaking, a real person. It has no mind; it merely acts as if it has one (albeit, not a very intelligent mind). Accordingly, it will always behave as if it would be harmed by all the things that would harm a real person. When attacked, it will try to get out of the way, it will try to avoid falling from great heights, and it will not antagonize a threatening person unless it has been ordered to. Furthermore, it ignores all evidence that it is not real (even if its master tells it so). It can be treated as having all proficiencies at 8, except those pertaining to the sorts of behaviors

entities of its type excel at, at which its proficiency is 14. For example, a toady has a 14 in brownnosing-related areas, while a soldier has a 14 in army procedure and intimidating people. Keep in mind, however, that all of the phantasm's abilities are limited by the fact that it cannot interact with physical objects.

When a phantasmal entity's duration expires, it vanishes without further ado. The next time the spell is cast, the same phantasmal entity appears, with a memory of all the experiences it had all the previous times the spell was cast. Indeed, to its perception, no time appears to have passed. Over time, the phantasmal entity can start to develop an individual personality. Sometimes, phantasmal entities become rather quirky. If the caster purchases a particular Module twice, she can cast two phantasmal entities at once.

A phantasmal entity can be of any desired sentient race or gender, but if the caster doesn't specify which, it will be a human with the same gender as the caster. Once the spell has been cast for the first time, the form of the entity is locked down permanently.

Modules

- **Soldier (XP: 20):** The soldier is an elite fighting force of one, or at least, that's how it tends to see itself. It fights fiercely (caster chooses its weapon at initial casting), apparently without noticing that it's incapable of hurting anybody. It tends to be rather formal, addressing the caster or other person specified at casting as "General." When not otherwise occupied, it stands at attention, staring straight ahead.

- **Toady (XP: 20):** The toady is a sniveling, sycophantic humanoid. It is always hunchbacked and unusually short for its apparent race. The toady always refers to the caster (or another person designated at casting) as "master" and makes every attempt to obey him. Like all phantasmal entities, it is simple-minded and may be confused by complicated instructions, but it is almost unquestioningly loyal to its master. When not otherwise occupied, the toady will spend its time looking around and flattering the person it calls master. Its will act with hostility toward anyone it thinks its master dislikes, and will toady at least a bit toward anyone its master seems to like.

- **Chicken (XP: 12):** The chicken is a chicken — quite intelligent as barnyard fowl go, but no smarter than the toady or soldier Module. The chicken is not capable of speech, but it does understand, and can cluck responses (one cluck for "yes," two clucks for "no.") It tends to behave in accordance with its chickeny nature, although it is also naturally inquisitive. When it panics, it flaps about in a half-crazed fashion. Due to its small size and relatively inconspicuous form, it makes a good spy.

- **Buddy (XP: 20):** The buddy is the caster's slightly stupid friend. Unlike the other Modules shown above, it is convinced that it is on equal terms with the caster (or another person indicated at casting), so it can be more difficult to motivate. It has no specialties, but it does have an effective skill of 11 in everything.

Phantasmal Entity Results Chart

Degrees	Duration
1	1 minute
2	1 hour
4	1 week
8	1 day
16	1 week

Pluck Wound

Art: Matter

XP: 26

Drain: -4

Suggested Components: The caster takes a bite from a bruised piece of fruit.

Required Components: None

Range: Touch

Duration: Instantaneous (effects are permanent)

Resilience Skill: Body Resilience

Pluck Wound allows you to actually pick up injuries, removing them from a wounded person. Simply cast the spell on the wound you wish to remove. Then, using something other than your bare flesh (see below), lift the wound off the damaged victim. When the wound comes off, it is shaped like a sphere. The sphere's size is proportional to the size of the wound (see the results chart) with a weight proportional to that of a similarly-sized sphere of iron. It will appear identically to the way the wound looked while it appeared on the injured person, except that it will be wrapped around a sphere. A person whose wound has been plucked no longer has that wound. If a spell doesn't attain enough degrees to pluck off the entire wound, the wound can be partially removed.

Whenever a wound that has had Pluck Wound cast upon it makes direct contact with living (or relatively recently dead) organic matter, the wound transfers to the organic material touching it. Once the wound transfers to another organism, it becomes a normal wound, but it can be removed again with another casting of Pluck Wound. Plucked wounds will not come off onto organic matter which has been treated or processed into clothing, such as leather gloves. Naturally, if a person removes a wound without wearing some form of protective covering on the part touching the wound, they will incur the wound themselves.

You cannot pluck a wound which consists of two or more completely severed and significantly-sized parts, nor can you pluck off an Obliterative wound (as a person with such a wound basically consists of many severed parts). You can pluck a wound off of a dead person, although this in itself will not bring him back to life. If your result is smaller than the result you need, you can pluck part of the wound. If your result is larger than the wound you need to pluck, you can pluck multiple wounds, as long as they don't add up to a larger wound than your result says you can pluck.

Plucked wounds can be used as weapons, although since even light clothing negates their effect entirely, they are not exceptional in this capacity. They are exceptionally effective in sneak attacks and combat versus naked people, however.

Pluck Wound Results Chart

Degrees	Size / Max. Wound Level Plucked
1	Strawberry / Minor
2	Orange / Moderate
4	Grapefruit / Major
8	Cantaloupe / Severe
16	Watermelon / Excessive

Slime Sheath**Art:** Matter**XP:** 20**Drain:** -3**Suggested Components:** Caster dips hands in a bowl of something disgusting.**Required Components:** None**Range:** See below**Duration:** See below**Resilience Skill:** N.A.

Slime Sheath causes the caster's hand to spew forth a copious load of thick, greenish-brown goo. Anything the goo covers (roll Maneuver / Aiming / Shooting to hit a moving or distant target) gains armor protection as specified on the spell results chart. The quantity of goo spewed forth is enough to cover an entity or object of the size specified in the quantity result. Once applied, the goo slowly drips off the target, leaving behind a sticky residue which is rather disgusting but otherwise not a hindrance (it can be removed with a thorough washing). By the time the spell's duration expires, enough of the goo has dripped off that the spell is of no more benefit. People with this spell cast upon them leave a trail of glop wherever they go.

Modules (Optional)

- **Armor Type Alteration (XP: 12):** Casters who know Armor Type Alteration are able to control which attack types the goo protects against. They can still use the level of protection specified on the protection results chart if they wish, or they can divide the number in parentheses between attack types as they see fit.

- **Slime Stench (XP: 8):** Casters who know Slime stench can, at their option, cause the goo to emit a powerful odor which forces everyone in the vicinity to hold their breath or suffer a -1 penalty to all activity. If desired at the time of casting, the caster can eliminate the protective quality of the slime.

- **Protection Reversal (XP: 8):** The caster can, at his option, reverse the protective effects of the spell, so that the spell applies exactly in reverse (for example, at 4 degrees of success, the target's B/E/R/P and P/E/C/T is -2/-2/-2/-2 and -1/-1/-1/-1).

Slime Sheath Results Chart

Degrees	Range	Duration	Quantity	Protection
1	5'	1 minute	Small	+1/+1/+1/+1 +0/+0/+0/+0 (2)
2	10'	1 hour	Medium	+1/+1/+1/+1 +1/+1/+1/+1 (4)
4	20'	1 shift	Large	+2/+2/+2/+2 +1/+1/+1/+1 (6)
8	40'	1 day	Huge	+2/+2/+2/+2 +2/+2/+2/+2 (8)
16	80'	1 week	Humongous	+3/+3/+3/+3 +3/+3/+3/+3 (12)

Uncle Hungry's Generous Provider of Sustenance**Art:** Cosmos**XP:** 16**Drain:** -4**Suggested Components:** The caster must light a small fire and command (or beg) the smoke to seek food.**Required Components:** None**Range:** None**Duration:** Instant**Resilience Skill:** N.A.

At first glance, this spell seems to create quantities of prepared food and drink from nothing. What it actually does, however, is summon it from another location. When cast, Uncle Hungry's Generous Provider of Sustenance instantaneously scans the area around the caster in increasingly large circles until it locates one or more examples of prepared food and drink. Then it surrounds the food and drink with a multicolored, wispy smoke tendril, lingers dramatically for a moment, and vanishes, taking the sustenance with it. If this quantity of food is sufficient to provide the number of meals specified by the spell results chart, the spell then terminates. Otherwise, it continues scanning circles around the caster until it locates more food, which it also takes. The spell has no range, and will function even if the nearest prepared food is thousands of miles away. All the food the spell takes appears near the caster with a puff of multicolored smoke and an abrupt "paff!" sound.

Uncle Hungry's Generous Provider of Sustenance considers something to be "prepared food" if, under normal circumstances, substances of its type can be consumed safely and will provide at least a minimum of nutrition. It does not consider the caster's cultural context, personal preferences, or ethics when determining whether something is prepared food, nor does it check to see if it is spoiled or poisoned. Therefore, a bunch of raspberries, a rotten egg, a fried elephant, a cooked human corpse, a loaf of bread laced with arsenic, and a sentient avocado which desperately desires not to be eaten will all be considered "prepared food" by its definition. Any uncooked thing which requires cooking to be safely edible is not prepared food. When in doubt, however, the spell tends to err on the side of assuming that something is, indeed, food.

Unfortunately for the caster, the spell leaves behind a smoky scent which connects the point at which the spell was cast to the place from which the food was taken. This can allow the robbed person to track the stolen food, although the smell dissipates in about 10 minutes.

Uncle Hungry's Results Chart

Degrees	Number of Meals
1	1
2	4
4	16
8	64
16	256

Violate Intellectual Property Field

Art: Cosmos

XP: 20

Drain: -4

Suggested Components: The caster tears a legal document in half. (Sacrificing a lawyer also helps.)

Required Components: The caster creates a circle on the ground.

Range: Unlimited

Duration: See below

Resilience Skill: N.A.

As noted elsewhere, the universe is filled with other gamealities, some of which are protected by mysterious barriers of an arcane nature. Though it is unlikely that anyone truly understands the nature of these barriers, a few select mages and avatars know of their existence. These spellcasters call the barriers Intellectual Property fields, and a few even know how to bypass them using this incredibly obscure but potent spell.

Violate Intellectual Property Fields opens a door in the Intellectual Property field, allowing creatures, people, texts, objects, or whatever else to move freely between them. The caster inscribes a circle upon the ground, and those individuals standing within it are transported in a flash of light.

Note: Since the game designers are unable to use this spell, this book cannot offer any suggestions regarding what you might like to summon with it. However, creative players will probably have plenty of ideas. Travel to other roleplaying game universes, movies, books, television shows, and what-have-you.

Violate Intellectual Property Field Results Chart

Degrees	Weight Transported
1	100 lb.
2	400 lbs.
4	800 lbs.
8	2,000 lbs.
16	5,000 lbs.

Ward Against Various Things

Art: Cosmos

XP: See below

Drain: -5

Suggested Components: The caster stares intently through her extended fingers at an example or a symbol of the thing to be warded.

Required Components: None

Range: See below

Duration: See below

Resilience Skill: N.A.

The Ward Against Various Things is a highly versatile spell designed to keep a particular type of thing at bay by erecting a protective sphere around the target. This sphere is invisible to everyone and is totally undetectable without an Intuition / Awareness / Describing check, except of course to the thing it wards. When a warded person or object approaches the barrier, the barrier will exert force against it proportional to the result on the spell results chart, preventing it from

approaching.

The thing to be warded must be selected when the spell is learned; multiple types of items can be chosen, but at additional experience point costs. Some sample types of things which can be warded (and their experience point costs) include:

Clothing (8), Food (6), Evil (10), Good (10), Weapons (10), Metal (8), Coinage (4), Ink (4), Gunpowder (6), Dwarves (10), Dirt (4), Clowns (5), Life (8), Plants (6), Suicidal People (6), Pirates (6), Mages (10), Lawyers (6), Animals (10), Undead (10).

Other selections are also possible. Consult your Cobbler for details.

Anything the target of the spell is touching is immune to the effects of the ward. Wards are one-way. All wards have one Ward Type; select from the following list:

Ward Type

- **Stationary Ward (XP: 18):** The stationary ward is cast on an area, where it creates a stationary sphere of force.

- **Resistance Ward (XP: 18):** The resistance ward can be cast on an object or person. It is a solid field which causes warded objects which approach you to be pushed in the opposite direction with a force proportional to the strength result. If the target of the spell approaches a warded person or object, no force is exerted against that person or object, and the target gets closer to it.

- **Perimeter Ward (XP: 18):** The perimeter ward can be cast on an object or person. It prevents warded people and objects from approaching the target. If a target presses a warded person or object, the ward exerts force against them. If a warded person presses against the ward, she also exerts pressure against the target, however.

- **Absolute Ward (XP: 26):** The absolute ward can be cast on an object or person. It works like the resistance ward, except that the strength Module is ignored; warded people or objects cannot approach the target.

- **Pain Ward (XP: 12):** The pain works like the resistance ward, except that instead of encountering resistance, a warded person experiences pain as she approaches a target. The strength of the spell is equal to the pain generated.

Ward Results Chart

Degrees	Size	Strength	Duration	Range
1	5' Diameter	1 Degree	1 round	50'
2	10' Diameter	2 Degrees	1 minute	100'
4	20' Diameter	4 Degrees	10 minutes	400'
8	40' Diameter	8 Degrees	1 hour	800'
16	80' Diameter	16 Degrees	16 hours	1600'

MAGIC ITEMS

In most Terrekian societies, the magic item fulfills an important role as an aid to a large variety of bizarre goals.

Types of Magic Items

Obviously, a magic item is subject to certain disadvantages which don't apply to spells. Items can be taken away or

destroyed, and they can run out of power. Of course, these things can also be advantages, since you can give them away or sell them, or take them away from other people (looting the bodies of fallen enemies and comrades is surprisingly socially acceptable in Paranesia, at least among adventurers).

There are four basic types of magic items — relics, talismans, abraxases, and fetishes.

Relics

Relics are items which avatars consecrate to be magical using the power of their gods (avaticular spell infusing). Creating an extremely powerful relic may require the conscious assistance of that deity, but most relics can be forged by avatars without direct help. Relics are often made from items which already possess spiritual significance, like the bones of dead saints,⁴ or important implements in rituals, but they can in fact be made from anything. Scrolls are common relics. One advantage of relics — and a disadvantage — is that they are hard to use against the deity who originally powered them, and nearly impossible to use against deities who (for magic items without a source of stored power) are still powering them.

Talismans

Talismans are magic items created by mages through the process of alchemy (magular spell infusing). Like relics, they can have practically any form or function — potions, scrolls, rings, clothing, staves, wands, and rods are common, but any object can theoretically be made to do anything. Magic items are made by infusing spells into them.

Fetishes

A fetish is a magic item that takes advantage of the capacity of spiritual beings to possess physical objects. If a spirit possesses an object that has been specially prepared with a spell, that item becomes a fetish. Spirits in prepared objects can still move in and out of an item freely, and they can use any of their abilities normally (except their capacity to manifest in any way or become visible). However, anyone holding an item with a spirit inside it can activate any of the spirit's magical abilities with successful Resolve / Evocation / Using Fetishes proficiency (unless the spirit doesn't want to allow it). If the spirit is locked into the item with a spell, it can no longer leave, and if a spirit suppression spell is cast on it, it can no longer use any of its abilities of its own volition, nor can it prevent the holder from activating its abilities. Needless to say, most spirits resent being locked down or suppressed, but many are perfectly happy inhabiting items for prolonged periods of time and lending out their abilities as long as no one tries to pull a fast one on them. As spirits, ghosts can also inhabit objects, but few will enter them to assist a living mortal willingly.

All fetishes are automatically intelligent (to a limited extent, at least), since the spirit that inhabits them has a mind. This means that using a fetish often has an opinion about how a user wants to employ it. Fetishes nearly always have some capacity to perceive the environment around them and to communicate with it, though the extent of their abilities vary. A spirit suppression spell can be used to elimi-

nate these abilities. Spirits also have their own personalities, which might at times be inconvenient.

As with all other magic items, a fetish can be made from any object. If a fetish item breaks, the spirit is immediately ejected from it. The spirit's reaction to this varies widely depending on the individual spirit and the circumstances surrounding its presence in the item. If the spirit had previously been forced into the item, it may react violently when released, or it may flee — or it may just hang around, disoriented by the experience. Some spirits might be able to distinguish between an innocent and malicious uses of their fetishes, while others might not, and some may not even care. Spirits have various levels of understanding about who and what they are, and some may be oblivious to what has happened to them, or they might interpret it through the lens of their peculiar view of the world.

Fetishes are powered by Wellsprings innate to a spirit's mind, and can hence be used indefinitely without concern for charges.

Abraxases

An abraxas is much the same as a fetish, with the exception that it is inhabited by a divine host rather than a spirit. As a result, abraxases tend to be smarter and more powerful than fetishes. Unfortunately, their increased intelligence also means that they are harder to use, and that convincing a host to stay inside an item is trickier — and more dangerous — work. Usually, abraxases are made by deities who wish to punish (or, much more rarely, reward) their hosts.

Recharging Magic Items

Fetishes and Abraxases are powered by Wellsprings innate to a spirit or host mind, and can hence be used indefinitely without concern for charges. Charged talismans and relics which have been depleted can be recharged with the appropriate Powering proficiency by characters who know at least one spell from the art in question. Each degree scored on the roll imparts a single charge, but this process is tiring and time-consuming (assume it takes about an hour per degree charged). For some magic items, this is hardly necessary, since they recharge automatically. A good number use the power of the dawn (or the dusk), and recharge the moment the sun comes up (or goes down); as mentioned above, some have an inexhaustible Wellspring or a god personally powering them. Note that magic items are rarely capable of holding more than 10 to 20 charges.

Note that plussed items sometimes have other abilities, as in a pluswhun rubber duck of Shark Protection, which not only makes sharks afraid of anyone who appears to be enjoying playing with it, it adds a degree to all attacks against them.

Classes of Magic Items

For the Cobbler, magic item creation is pretty easy — all it takes is an interesting or funny idea. Simply choose an item type (like a mannequin) and a magical function (like the capacity to walk forward and explode when hit by an arrow), and you have a talisman, or perhaps the relic of a very strange

⁴ Or even, in some religions, the bones of live saints. Sometimes even without their consent. No one ever said being holy was easy.

deity. For more examples, see pages 193 to 196.

Plussed & Minused Items

Some items are plussed, which means they add a bonus to certain actions. Items usually come in *pluswhun*, *plustoo*, *plusthrey*, *plusfore*, and *plusfyve*. Most plussed items must be used toward a particular goal to impart the plus. For example, a Spade of Gardening must be used to garden for it to impart its plusfore bonus. Some items may simply be worn or held.

Of course, some magic is also cursed — a fact to which the *minuswhun*, *minustoo*, *minusthrey*, *minusfore*, and *minusfyve* items are testament. These work the same way as plussed items, only in reverse. Naturally, no one wants these little buggers, but they pop up from time to time, anyway — usually accompanied by either some other really spiffy advantage that makes it hard to throw them away, or some stupid additional curse that just won't let you no matter how hard you try. Fortunately, minused items are fairly uncommon compared to plussed items. Items much higher than plusfore or much lower than minusfore items might also exist, in theory, but these are ridiculously rare.⁵

Plussed or Minused Items Chart

<i>Plussed Items</i>	<i>Bonus</i>	<i>Minused Items</i>	<i>Penalty</i>
Pluswhun	+1	Minuswhun	-1
Plustoo	+2	Minustoo	-2
Plusthrey	+3	Minusthrey	-3
Plusfore	+4	Minusfore	-4
Plusfyve	+5	Minusfyve	-5

In *CoB*, there often isn't a clear distinction between cursed and uncursed items, since even supposedly cursed items are usually highly useful. For example, any items that make you less physically competent are highly useful to entertainers — a cloak that cuts the wearer's speed in half is quite useful to a mime, while boots of clumsiness can make a clown appear to be wonderfully incompetent. A Helm of Temporary Self-Blinding can be used to avoid looking at horrifically ugly things, or to avoid the perils of a brightly lit area. Gauntlets of Anti-Prestidigitation can be useful in training yourself to be more deft. Thieves might find a use for a Mirror of Hypnosis by holding it up on a street corner and robbing anyone who looks into it. Bags which connect to the mouths of ravenous extradimensional beings make unparalleled portable privies. A suit of armor which *attracts* missiles is always useful to have nearby, as long as you don't put it on. And if nothing else, you can always trick your foes into using such items.

Many other magic items have great benefits, but they also force the players to put up with significant annoyances in exchange for their use. From the Cobbler's point of view, these are the very best magic items.

Some Sample Magic Items

Many of the following magic items might be available at

your local D-Mart, or other stores where adventuring merchandise is sold. A few are unique.



Adventurer Repellent

Item Type: Talisman

Adventurer repellent smells horrible to anyone who regards herself as an adventurer, putting her at -3 to activity in any enclosed area which has been thoroughly sprayed with the stuff (or at -1 in an open area). People who are only sort of adventuery dislike the smell, but don't suffer any penalties.

Bedtime Dust

Item Type: Talisman

This convenient powder can be sprinkled on things in order to prepare them for bed. If sprinkled on the ground, it the powder will form into things like bedrolls, pillows, tents, crackling fires, and nightstands with glasses of warm milk. If sprinkled on a person, it will dress that person in something like a nightgown and cap, equipping them things like teddy dragons, good books, and candleholders (complete with lit candles). If they're wearing clothing or armor, it will automatically be folded up neatly and tucked away nearby, along with their other possessions. Valuables will be automatically stored in an unlocked chest which is also created (the chest can be locked if a lock is available). If Bedtime Dust is used on a moving target, the dust will be unable to find purchase (it will fall on the ground instead), and it will not work. Anyone who is relatively stationary can be successfully sprinkled, however. Note that Bedtime Dust doesn't make its target any sleeper — it simply makes him cozy. If the person the dust is applied to isn't the sort of person who likes being cozy (or if the dust is applied to him at an inappropriate moment), it will probably piss him off rather than making him want to retire for the evening. If the winds in the area reach 30 mph, the dust will blow away, most likely leaving

⁵ Probably due to meddling game designers worried about unbalancing the game.

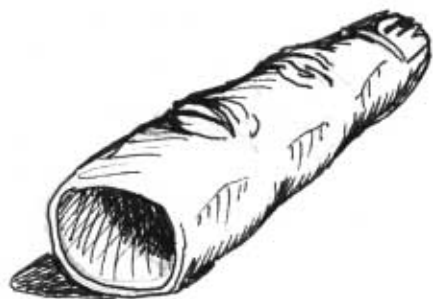
naked people without any bedtime equipment. A single dose of Bedtime Dust covers about 50 square feet of area (roughly a 7' x 7' area if the dust is sprinkled in a square).



Claptrap

Item Type: Fetish

The Claptrap is a large bear trap. It is inhabited by a limited but nasty little spirit that thrives on the taste of blood. The spirit is easily intimidated and rather stupid, but it knows enough to close when someone within hearing range claps twice in rapid succession. It also goes off whenever it has some reason to believe that something with blood is between its jaws, but it can't sense the external world, so this can only happen when someone tries to activate it with a Resolve / Evocation / Using Fetishes check. When the Claptrap goes off, it performs a puncture attack (proficiency 16) on the part of the body it encloses.



Finger of Death

Item Type: Talisman

This cylindrical wax mold with an opening on one end fits easily over the index finger. When it is worn in this way and pointed at a target, the wearer can utter the word “die” to automatically cause a (very small) full-body wound to the person at which the finger is pointed. This wound is the equivalent of 1/8th of a degree, and can be ignored until the target racks up eight such wounds, at which point he is considered to have one Minor wound. The Finger of Death ignores most forms of protection (including armor, magical force fields, and so forth). Being attacked once by a Finger of Death hurts enough to make most people say “ouch.” The item can be used only once per round. It usually has around

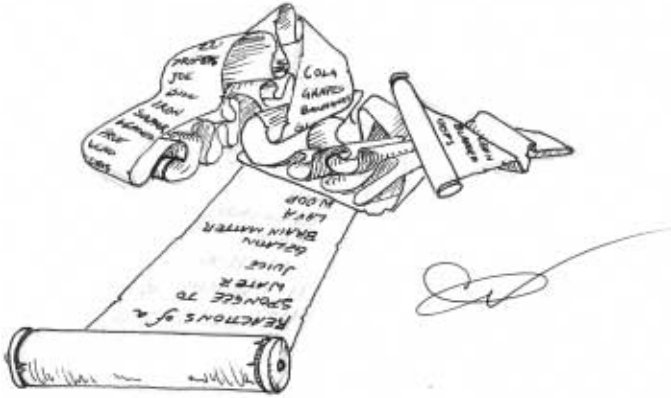
100 charges.



Kobold Control Wand

Item Type: Talisman

When aimed at a single kobold, this magic item allows unlimited telekinetic manipulation of that kobold's physical body, with the exception of its vocal regions. The kobold retains control over every part of its body necessary for communication, including its voice box, mouth, jaw, tongue, and so forth. No roll is required to activate the wand. The controller moves the wand to indicate the direction in which she wishes to direct the kobold, and wills the action she wishes the kobold to perform. The kobold cannot achieve any action it could not achieve without the aid of the wand. Only one kobold can be controlled per wand at one time. More than one wand can be used, but if they are, the user must make a Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Distraction check each round. This check is unmodified if only two wands are used, but it incurs a -2 penalty for each additional wand employed. When two or more wands vie for control over one kobold, wand users can make contested Resolve / Evocation / Using Talismans checks to exert dominance (the kobold itself experiences significant pain and tends to squawk a lot when this happens; each round after the first it will sustain a Moderate wound, until it bursts when it incurs a Severe wound. The Kobold Control Wand also automatically duplicates itself whenever it's activated (by repeatedly activating and deactivating the item on a kobold, a user can create one wand per round). Note that kobolds subjected to this treatment will certainly protest repeatedly, and it is difficult to make them shut up. Most kobolds have been told horror stories all their lives about Kobold Control Wands, and fear them greatly.



Omnicodex Tapping Scroll

Item Type: Talisman

The Omnicodex Tapping Scroll is a scroll which bears a short magical phrase. When this phrase is read aloud and a subject is mentioned, the scroll activates automatically. This transfers a quantity of information in the form of text from the Omnicodex to the tapping scroll, where it will stay for one day (it can, however, be copied down off of the scroll onto another parchment). This can be immensely useful, but there are several factors which limit it. First of all, due to the large number of facts in the world, the Omnicodex is short on information about a great number of things, and it is very likely not to have an entry on the topic in which you are interested (1%-45% of the time). Second, much of the information in the Omnicodex is useless, consisting of inane details or information only peripherally related to the subject queried (41-70% of the time). If you ask about grizzly bears, for instance, you may only get a list of things which grizzly bears aren't, or you may get a long dissertation on how grizzly bears tend to interact with chocolate chip cookies. Third, some of the information is censored by the Keepers themselves for various reasons — although they're totally committed to knowing the truth, they don't always want other people to know it, especially when it might jeopardize their organization's safety (70%-72%). Fourth, the scroll will sometimes fail to work when too many other people are requesting that information at the same time (73%-75% of the time).

Locks of Inverted Intentions

Item Type: Relic

Locks of Inverted Intentions are locks which are more difficult to open the more you want to open them. The penalty to opening such a lock if you really, really want to get it open (say, your life depends on it) is -16. If you don't care whether or not the lock opens, it comes open automatically, when touched. Locks of Inverted Intentions are often placed on chests and manacles. Certain orders of xenn monks (who often worship Atha, who created the relic) use these manacles to train new monks. A monk is strapped into the manacles and left to hang in the dungeons. Only when she no longer cares whether she can get out will she be able to do so.

Staff of Lightning Gravitation

Item Type: Fetish

This metal staff is inhabited by an electricity spirit. When held into the air during a thunderstorm, has an 11% chance of being struck with lightning every round, affecting anyone touching it with an electrical attack at a proficiency of 22. Even a Severe wound from a lightning bolt may not kill you, but it will probably leave some nasty burns and mess with your ability to think and move. As a bonus, however, anytime the staff is hit by lightning, the electricity spirit inside gains enough charge to administer 2 shock attacks (proficiency 22) to anything its owner chooses (the target must be within 30 feet). However, the spirit feels that the process of standing out in the rain waiting to be hit by lightning is a bonding experience, and it does not work for anyone who hasn't spent some time bonding.

Knickknack of Fear Repulsion

Item Type: Relic

The holder of this relic, which is courtesy of Claxil (God of Leadership), makes the holder immune to fear. Anytime the holder of the relic feels fear, she instead experiences amusement in equal proportion.



Helmet of Stupidity

Item Type: Relic

This Ignoramian relic is formed vaguely in the likeness of a human face and constructed of an inept combination of wood, grass, iron, and burlap. It grants a +2 armor bonus. It also instantly reduces all of the wearer's Intellect proficiencies to 1, leaving him or her incapable of realizing that the helmet can be removed.



Amulet of Tooth Decay

Item Type: Abraxas

The amulet of tooth decay is inhabited by a little demon who likes to tempt people into committing minor sins. When worn, the demon gets to work making the wearer hyperactive. This gives the wearer +4 to initiative checks, but also causes an intense craving for sugary foods. He must make Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges check to avoid consuming each sugary confection he encounters. After a while, this takes its toll on the wearer's teeth.

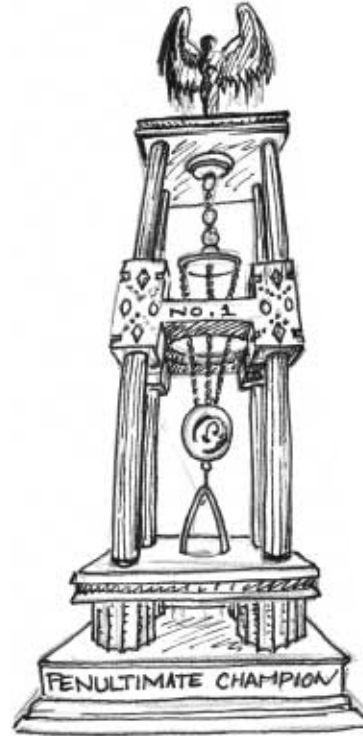


Trophy of Triumph

Item Type: Abraxas

The Trophy of Triumph is a highly conspicuous abraxas inhabited by an extremely competitive angel. It is a golden trophy weighing over 50 pounds, crusted with gold and gems (the total value of these alone is almost 300 geepee). When held in one's hand, the trophy gives the holder a +10 bonus to all sporting events. A sport must fit into the con-

ventional definition of a sport — that it, it must involve physical exertion, a set of rules, and be competitive.



Fauxhammer

Item Type: Talisman

Fauxhammer (pronounced *foehammer*) is an intelligent, plusfore sword. Due to traumatic events which transpired while it was being forged, however, it now believes that it's a hammer, and it will refuse to fight for anyone who doesn't acknowledge this delusion. Fauxhammer is capable of wriggling around somewhat (this is how it moves in the absence of an owner), and it can speak.

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 10

On Adventuring: Creating a World of Wackiness

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Froglet and Showsney's *Dungeon Dictionary*, 11th edition, defines an adventure as, "an exciting but probably hazardous venture of either dubious value or extreme merit, probably involving either the potential for personal gain or selfless sacrifice, and most likely having a lot to do with meddling about in somebody else's business." This chapter is all about adventures and how to have them. The world of Paranesia is rich with potential for adventure,¹ and this section will give you some pointers on crafting adventures, as well as plenty of specific ideas.

A Note for Players

A lot of roleplaying games have sections which are designated "gamemaster's eyes only." This one is no exception, as the following chapter is for the Cobbler's eyes only. If you're one of those non-Cobbler people, bugger off. Reading this chapter will undoubtedly spoil your enjoyment of future games.

CREATING *CoB* ADVENTURES

Stripped down to fundamentals, creating an adventure in *CoB* consists of two steps:

- 1) Take a standard fantasy idea or theme.
- 2) Give that standard theme a twist.

For example, you could take the standard idea of princesses captured and held prisoner by dragons and reverse it, making the dragon the prisoner rather than the captor. Or you could give the dragon an actual motive, preferably something strange (perhaps it's enhancing its collection of live humans, or maybe it has royal blood and it needs advice on how advance to the throne). The possibilities are many — the important thing is that your ideas aren't just what everyone expects from fantasy, and hopefully that they'll provoke a chuckle.

Still, before you come up with a twist on a standard adventure concept, it helps to decide on the basic theme of the adventure. With that in mind, here are a few basic (mostly standard) goals around which you can base your *CoB* campaign:

- Help an idea, such as a philosophy, an alignment, a religion, a movement, a fraud, a conspiracy, or a rumor prevail (or fail).
- Acquire an object or person, like a magic item, money, a spell, a spell component, a bunch of junk, land, a wild animal, livestock, a friend, or a prisoner (your own or someone else's).
- Acquire something intangible, like hero or elder status, an education, dominion over a group of people, spell-casting power, popularity, influence, a new image, revenge, immortality, or stupidity.
- Protect something, like an item, a person, a secret, or a large chunk of limestone.
- Appease someone, like a god, a parent or relative, a friend, a mentor, an enemy, a debtor, a rogue elephant, or a bunch of knights who want a shrubbery.
- Create something, such as a religion, philosophy, a machine, a spell, a magic item, a map, a business, a build-

ing, a community, or a golem made of candy.

- Grow as a person to become good, evil, sane, or insane, or change your attitude or approach to life in some way.
- Assist someone, like the poor, the rich, the stupid, animals, someone to whom you owe money or a favor, an a friend, or an enemy.
- Infiltrate a place, like mortal society in general, a particular society or organization, an army, a government, a business, or a home (perhaps your own).
- Experience an event, like a part of history, a religious ceremony, the signing of a declaration, or something carnal.
- Travel and explore the unknown, like a distant land, an alternate dimension, the inside of your own brain, the heavens, or the afterlife.
- Deliver something, like a secret message, a person, message, a valuable cargo, an animal, or a case of deodorant.
- Destroy something, like a magic item, an object, a person, the reign of a ruler, or Captain Goodrat's peg leg.
- Discover a place, person, or thing, such as your hero, your long lost brother, the land of milk and honey, a secret, a hundred acres of usable farmland, the cure to a disease, a mentor, a god, a relic, a lover, or an unraided dungeon.
- Escape someplace, such as your hometown, your terrace, gameality, your relatives, a witch hunt, a hostile environment, your enemy, or an oppressive organization.
- Enjoy yourself, perhaps by seeking hedonistic experiences, by being generally flamboyant and acting like a lunatic, or by becoming a prankster.
- Convince someone of something, prevent a death, rescue someone, win a contest or battle, or advocate change for its own sake.

Now take an idea that appeals to you and combine it with something else. Instead of exploring and charting unknown lands, concoct some reason why you might want to chart the known lands. If the idea of transporting something over a long distance appeals, choose the thing to be transported carefully. Instead of the obvious, like a sum of money or a magic item, they might have to transport a merperson who will suffocate without water. Or instead of transporting a valuable cargo, imagine that a wealthy landowner hires adventurers to transport junk. Of course, the humor shouldn't end there — your quest to come up with reasons for these strange events will lead to even stranger rationales.

TIPS FOR GENERATING HILARIOUS CAMPAIGN CONCEPTS

Ever heard the expression, "Dying is easy; comedy is hard"? In *CoB*, dying is rarely easy. It's likely to be physically painful, for one thing. For another, it very likely indicates defeat or failure — always an unpleasant prospect. Plus, death means that you disappoint all your loved ones, and if you chose the wrong god, you'll end up in a really unpleas-

¹ Please note that not all campaigns involve individuals of diminutive stature being admonished by somber wizards to lob their jewelry into foreboding crevices, although more than one good adventurer has been borne of a variation on that theme.

ant afterlife for all eternity. Of course, in a fantasy world, you can always come back from the dead (so long as you have a time-traveling buddy or an Auto-Resurrect spell), but you still sure as heck won't enjoy the process. And then there's all the drama associated with dying — begging for your life, delivering noble speeches with your last breath, making last requests, and so forth. That takes effort!

Comedy, on the other hand, is easy. Well... easier, anyway. Here are some of the ways you can create funny and interesting campaigns and adventures for your players.

- **Design Adventures Around Characters:** Adventurers usually work best when you know the characters for which you're creating the adventure. If you weave a character's backstory (not to mention recent events) into an adventure, it will seem all the more real. It can also be helpful to create your characters after you know what campaign they'll be embarking on. A troll traveling with an extremely cerebral mage will probably have different sorts of adventures than a band of opium-addicted halfling soldiers. Asking questions about the character's relationships can also bring up some adventure ideas. Does the troll follow the mage around because he's in love with her, or is it the other way around? Do the two of them just use each other for their talents (immense strength or ability to cast spells)? Or are they magically compelled to like each other?

- **Use *CoB* Resources:** Use the organizations, areas, spells, magic items, history, races, and so forth which are presented in this manual. Look over the book until a concept catches your eye, then build a story around it. Even if it's a fairly trivial detail, it might lend itself to a story. Even ideas which initially seem too specific or irrelevant to make a good story end up being good, sometimes simply because in order to adapt them, you have to really twist the idea around.

- **Take Ideas from Art & Pop Culture:** Your favorite songs, movies, cartoons, books, fantasy television shows, paintings, and other forms of art and culture can be rich sources of inspiration for your campaigns. Not only can you use characters and plot elements from some of them, you can take metaphors and visual ideas you find in them and interpret them literally, turning them into plots, characters, magic items, and the like. Maybe the hills really are alive, or perhaps someone has built an utterly unsinkable ship and plans to embark on a course through iceberg-infested waters. Perhaps a group of mages are planning to bring back several extinct but highly dangerous species.

- **Don't Underestimate Melodrama:** A group of NPCs whose reactions to events are consistently overstated can be amusing. A humorous adventure can be modeled after a soap opera, a sitcom, or an overdramatic B-movie, for example.

- **Rip off Myths, Fairy Tales, & Other Stories:** Give alternate endings to myths, legends, and fairy tales — make gruesome endings prevail where happy ones did before, and add happy ending where the endings were previously sad. Often, you can really amuse your players by taking ideas from famous stories and scenarios and sticking them into your adventures (possibly with modifications). Imagine a quest for the holy ale mug, or perhaps the holy chamber pot. Picture a story where an alchemist turns himself permanently invisible and then goes psycho, killing most of his research

What Does it Mean to Be an Adventurer?

The word "adventurer" is sometimes used in this manual as a synonym for "character." However, this doesn't necessarily mean that your character is the sort of person who deliberately goes out into the world with the intent of finding excitement, raiding dungeons, fighting wars, and accumulating wealth. It simply means that whoever your character is or whatever she does, various interesting events (in the form of stories) seem to end up happening to her. Some of the best *CoB* characters are ordinary people who find themselves inadvertently dragged out of their ordinary lives into interesting situations — consider Ralph, the reluctant anti-hero, whose desire to settle down and have a quiet life in a small village is constantly thwarted by a halfling necromancer named Xy and a party of rather sadistic individuals who vigorously insist that Ralph accompany them in their quest to take over the world. Other great characters simply have interesting ordinary lives, like Kale Ecuttel, whose otherwise quiet business is cursed to be constantly under siege by rogue elephants, minor deities, and extradimensional knights. Neither the dull nor the interesting are immune to adventure — blacksmiths, beggars, dirt farmers, jugglers, homemakers, unicorn wrestlers, and shopkeepers are all its potential victims. In Paranesia, adventure is an equal opportunity employer — one that, like death, might take you at any time, whether you like it or not.

team in the process. Of course, if players aren't familiar with the stories in question, as their Cobbler you can feel free to rip off and reuse all the plot elements and jokes, and everyone will assume that you are extremely clever.

- **Keep the World Colorful:** Obviously, using terms which evoke emotional responses and describing things in sensual terms almost always makes for better entertainment. Still, this can be difficult. One way to make it easier is to make sure the things in your game really excite all five senses — sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. Whether it's a boisterous parade, a beautiful fountain, or a horde of slime-covered orcs marching into town, it's always easier to tell people about the striking or unusual than the mundane. Of course, it's also important to temper these colorful moments with moments of rest and ordinary events, which will help to provide a contrast.

- **Create Strange NPCs:** It's hard to have a funny campaign without some quirky NPCs. All the same rules for creating characters apply equally well to creating adversaries and other characters for your players to interact, so please proceed without delay to page 99 for character creation tips. Meanwhile, give them oodles of eccentricities in the form of weird clothing, accents, peculiar beliefs, and unusual appearances. Remember, even monsters often have personalities and lives apart from fantasy cliché. A bugbear might be a blacksmith who enjoys making defective armor; a dragon might be an actor concerned about being typecast as the bad guy.

- **Make Unaccountably Strange Shopkeepers:**

Shopkeepers are a special kind of NPC because they have something that the players want, and often something that's hard to get elsewhere. This gives you a perfect excuse for harassing your players by creating shopkeepers who are either slightly odd or more-or-less totally dotty. When adventurers come looking to spend their (probably) ill-gotten gains so that they can go out and get more ill-gotten gains, you can make their lives harder by harassing them. Some shopkeepers refuse normal currency and instead prefer certain unspecified services instead. Many charge exorbitant rates. Some distract the adventurers endlessly with personal eccentricities and strange specials. Of course, no matter how eccentric the local merchants are, the town constable will probably back them up, because the Dramatic Principle says they should.

• **Speak the Same Language as Your Players:** It's hard to be funny when you're speaking Swahili, but your players only understand Japanese. Sure, it might be worth a joke or two, but if you keep it up for too long, you may find yourself without any players. In the same vein, try to avoid using atrocious grammar. It might seem funny at first to talk about how "the elf were shooting the arrows," or how "the fat man borrows the squeaver his wand," but if you keep it up your players will probably become convinced that you are an idiot and desert your game in short order.²

• **Flip through the Dictionary or the Encyclopedia:** Find unrelated words in the dictionary or find concepts in the encyclopedia and put them together to create adventure concepts. An adventure might be born when

colonial new-agers want to introduce nuclear power to a small villa, or when the local swashbucklers union protests all those darn seed weevils swarming in

their boots.

• **Reverse Stereotypes:** Reverse every cliché and stereotype you can think of. Create a kingdom where all the dungeons have been exhausted of treasure, and searching for an adventure or a worthy quest is an adventure in itself. Since super-competent heroes usually thrive even against overwhelming odds, kill your hero off in the first scene of the first act. Since hordes of orcs usually ravage the

countryside, make them vacationing peacefully there instead. This can also be a way of combating real life stereotypes about people. The elderly, for instance, are often thought of as confused and physically disabled, but there's no reason you can't add some who are perceptive and energetic.

• **Exaggerate Stereotypes:** Now exaggerate every fantasy cliché and stereotype you can think of. Fill your campaign with dungeons. Make a super-competent NPC hero capable of taking on thousands of fighters simultaneously. Create a company (owned by giants) which has gone into business making bread out of bones. Once you have a concept like this, an adventure usually isn't far off, and a campaign might not be, either.

• **Use Puns & Wordplay:** Incorporate puns, anagrams, silly words, and obscure references into names of places and NPCs to give the players clues about who and what those characters and places are. Sometimes puns give away too much or seem cheap, but in moderation they can add humor.

• **Raid Your Own Games:** Take ideas from campaigns you ran years ago and update them with your current perspective. Design sequels to old adventures, or just rip off your own old ideas. String a series of sessions together with one sequel after another and create strange reasons to rationalize why it makes sense. Even if all the available plotlines seem to have wrapped themselves up neatly (which they probably won't), most likely you can fixate on a sin-

gle, seemingly irrelevant aspect of the last session and turn that into an adventure. If the bartender in the pub you were in last adventure was out of a particular commodity, maybe there's an insidious reason. If a player gave money to a beggar

Onibag, Cyst's trendy travelling companion was totally oblivious to the fact that another, bigger anvil had just materialized forty-two feet directly above him.

² Yes, this paragraph is a joke.



last session, perhaps that beggar returns to explain that she was actually the king. If a character forgot to tip a bard a few adventures back, perhaps she'll get a nasty surprise when she finds that a nasty song he wrote about her has become extremely popular.

- **Change the Rules:** Gameality isn't always consistent — Paranesia is a place where even the game mechanics are subject to flux, and it's possible to leave the universe entirely. On rare occasions, you should feel free to make the game strange to the players by having them encounter places where, due to some anomaly, the game mechanics use another form of die entirely, or where an entirely different game system is in operation. If you want to go this far, you can even change games in the middle of a session.

- **Do the Unexpected:** Set up the player's expectations by seeming to start with one adventure idea, and then go off in another direction completely. Suddenly give them every reason to switch sides right in the middle of a terrible battle. Create an adversary who makes illusory monsters to lure them into a false sense of security, then make them incredibly paranoid when some of the monsters turn out to be real.

- **Combine Unlikely Concepts:** When the adventurers finally reach the mountain summit and enter the gothic castle, have them find a milkman instead of a sorcerer. Have a ninja surround the adventurers, and then, when things seem at their worst, have the ninja ask for their autographs. Or visit a mad scientist who creates a giant monster... to fetch her some beer. Not only are these kinds of concepts the last things you'd expect, they're the sorts of things you'd never find together, which means they just might work great.

- **Emphasize Strange Reasons for Doing Mundane Things:** An adventure might start with a relatively normal premise, but for all the wrong reasons. Send your characters to slay the evil wizard, but not because he's terrorizing the countryside — that's his job. Send them to slay the wizard because he hasn't paid his library dues in 150 years. Or entice them to help the duchess in her noble goal of purging slavery from the land by appealing to their desire to become forever immortalized in the Hall of Heroes on a commemorative plaque.

- **Defy the Rules:** Go through roleplaying manuals (this one or any others you might possess) until you find something you aren't supposed to do. Then do it. If another roleplaying game system says that you shouldn't give your players really powerful magic items, why not try giving them a whole bunch? If it says that a particular group of people can't learn the basketweaving skill, make a group of such people who have started a secret society devoted to learning how. Alternatively, you can go along with the rules, no matter how little sense they make — imagine a group of fighters who just can't seem to figure out how to read lips, or a band of clerics who, try as they might, just can't seem to improve the attitude of animals they encounter.

- **Force the Players to Make Tough Choices & Perform Endless Cost/Benefit Analyses:** Don't make life easy for your players — the most interesting choices are never the easy ones. Plague them constantly with dilemmas in which they have the opportunity to gain substantial wealth at the cost of defying their character concepts or senses of morality,

and let them agonize over the possibilities and the problems of every option. Tempt them with great rewards, and when they succumb to your temptations, give them more than they bargained for. Put them in a position where they have to cause the death of a few innocent people in order to save many more innocent people. Give them items of immense benefit which also happen to have several incredible disadvantages.

- **Occasionally, Employ Ruthless Sadism:** Annoy your players with trivial impediments. Make all the treasure they collect small change (ie. chests and chests full of beepes rather than substantially less quantities of geepees), or trap every single door they come across. Wipe out their steeds with obscure diseases at inconvenient moments. Bring back the head of an old villain who was once slain by the characters and have it float in their vicinity and insult them as they go about their lives. Of course, don't abuse the characters too much; *CoB* isn't *primarily* about hosing the players (that's only one of many ways to be funny). And of course, you want to avoid seeming arbitrary. Still, the occasional nasty problem does keep things interesting, and the sheer sadism of it all can prove quite amusing.

- **Distract the Characters with Tangents:** Torment your players with red herrings, like delicious fish tacos, aardvarks, insane clowns, or fat bald men who go jogging past every so often. Switch gears in the middle of an adventure by allowing little irrelevant tangents to take center stage for a while. Occasionally, the tangents might be more interesting than the original adventure, and you can follow them instead. For instance, sidetrack your adventurers by forcing them to go on an elaborate bureaucratic run-around in order to change their currency from geepees to florins.

- **Make the Characters Deal with the Consequences of Their Actions:** Traditionally, fantasy games tend to be a little short on long term negative consequences for the ordinary, bad decisions characters make. Most adventurers don't bother to clean their equipment or weapons, for example, and rarely does anyone stop for a bathroom break. Wounds rarely last very long (due to spells or herbs), and worse yet, characters are almost never punished for the illegal or unethical behavior (such as breaking and entering or slaughtering innocent monsters) they engage in. Don't let your PCs get away with doing something cruel or foolish without dealing with the consequences. If they dig up a zombie and trick her into giving up her prized sword, she should come looking for them to get it back. If they slay an evil overlord, his evil friends are probably going to be pissed off, and they'll likely want revenge. Punish highly specialized characters by deliberately putting them in situations where none of their proficiencies apply — for example, send your combat-machine characters to parties. Obviously, you don't want to deprive the players of fun by having their characters spend entire game sessions wounded or in prison, but you can turn what would otherwise be harmless player character fun at the expense of the locals into a major adventure complication. Your adventurers might regret their rowdy night on the town later, as they strive to save the world from the upcoming apocalypse while simultaneously being hunted down by a sheriff's posse determined to put them in jail.

Adventuring with Dungeons

Dungeons are the “old standbys” of fantasy roleplaying. In the old days, whenever life seemed complicated or short on answers, you could always count on a good trip underground to clarify matters. Traditionally, dungeons haven’t been terribly story-oriented, so in the interests of keeping things interesting and amusing, you might want to twist the traditional dungeon crawl before throwing your players into it. Working with the Dungeon Enthusiasts is a great way to do this, and many of these ideas are compatible with that organization.

With the existence of the Dungeon Enthusiasts, dungeoncraft has become an industry, so no longer are adventures limited to exploring, raiding, and escaping dungeons. It’s now possible to seek gainful employment in the field. Here are some possibilities for professions to play or encounter:

- **Dungeon Builders:** Someone has to build the physical structure of the dungeon. With any luck, the monsters won’t arrive until after construction is complete.
- **Dungeon Contractors:** Many dungeon designers consult with contractors to help them make their dungeons more lethal and unpleasant.
- **Dungeon Demolishers:** When dungeons get old, sometimes they get condemned, and have to be demolished to make way for newer structures.
- **Dungeon Janitors:** Somebody has to clean up the bodies of all those dead monsters and adventurers. And who’s going to reset all the traps?
- **Dungeon Judges:** Dungeon Enthusiasts are always having competitions, some of which involve judges.

Commonly, judges evaluate dungeons for style, originality, and danger, each factor on a scale of 1 to 10.

- **Dungeon Movers:** Moving companies are sometimes hired to move parts of dungeons, or even entire dungeons.
- **Dungeon Referees:** Some kinds of dungeon competitions are complicated and require referees to go down into the depths with the adventurers.
- **Dungeon Stockers:** Sometimes, monsters take up residence in dungeons willingly, but don’t think that just because a dungeon is built, they’re going to be lining up outside. Dungeons often have to be stocked with monsters, not to mention treasure, or once word gets out that the dungeon was built on the cheap, no one will visit.
- **Dungeon Inspectors:** Dungeons aren’t immune to housing regulations and zoning laws. Someone has to make sure that all the dungeons will hold up under stress, meet the fire codes, and so forth.

If none of that strikes you, and you don’t care to venture into the depths of a Dungeon Enthusiast’s stronghold as an adventurer, you can always play a Dungeon Enthusiast yourself. Go ahead, try to build the most original dungeon ever. Build an underwater dungeon, or create a floating dungeon, a mobile dungeon, a gingerbread dungeon, or a dungeon constructed around a forest. Also remember that the Dungeon Enthusiasts don’t have the monopoly on dungeons. Other people build them, and there are places where “dungeons” have formed naturally — out of the ruins of old structures, catacombs, or other such things. In some places, dungeons actually are dungeons, in the sense of places where people are locked up indefinitely. And for diehard traditionalists, there’s always Gygaxia.

- **Use Anachronisms:** Instant humor can come out of placing relatively recent concepts into a fantasy setting. Create governments with modern social systems, like democracy or communism. Take any real world concept and bring it into the past, like a therapist, or just take a modern approach to an old concept, like banking (“I’m sorry, sir, but we’re showing that your account is fifty gold pieces past due,” and the like). Include modernisms like magical equivalents of amazing technologies and government sex scandals. Surely many places in Paranesia have various forms of mass media — instead of newspapers, give them scrolls; fill the position which reporters occupy in real life with bards. In some ways, fantasy worlds aren’t that different from reality, especially since a medieval world with magic can duplicate a lot of things we don’t normally associate with the past, like slot machines or automobiles. (If you go too far with this, your world will cease to be fantasy in the “elves in green tights” sense of the word, but if you use such concepts in moderation they can be valuable tools.

- **Twist Published Adventures:** Buy adventures from other roleplaying games and fit them into your campaign, adding irony, parody, satire, exaggeration, understatement, anachronism, incongruity, witty banter, occasional moments of lucidity in which individual realize that life is just a roleplaying game, and anything else you might find humorous.

- **Add a Dose of Realism:** There are a lot of things about traditional adventuring in a fantasy world that frankly don’t make a lot of sense when subjected to scrutiny. For one thing, most adventurers have few social inhibitions and an exceedingly callous attitude toward personal safety. Many of them would think nothing of being horribly mauled by a terrible monster, provided they managed to escape alive (and given the possibility of resurrection, even death wouldn’t necessarily be so bad). Many of their actions, like monster killing, herb eating, and potion quaffing seem to have no real negative consequences. You can exaggerate these things, have other characters notice them, or make blatant exceptions for the sake of humor.

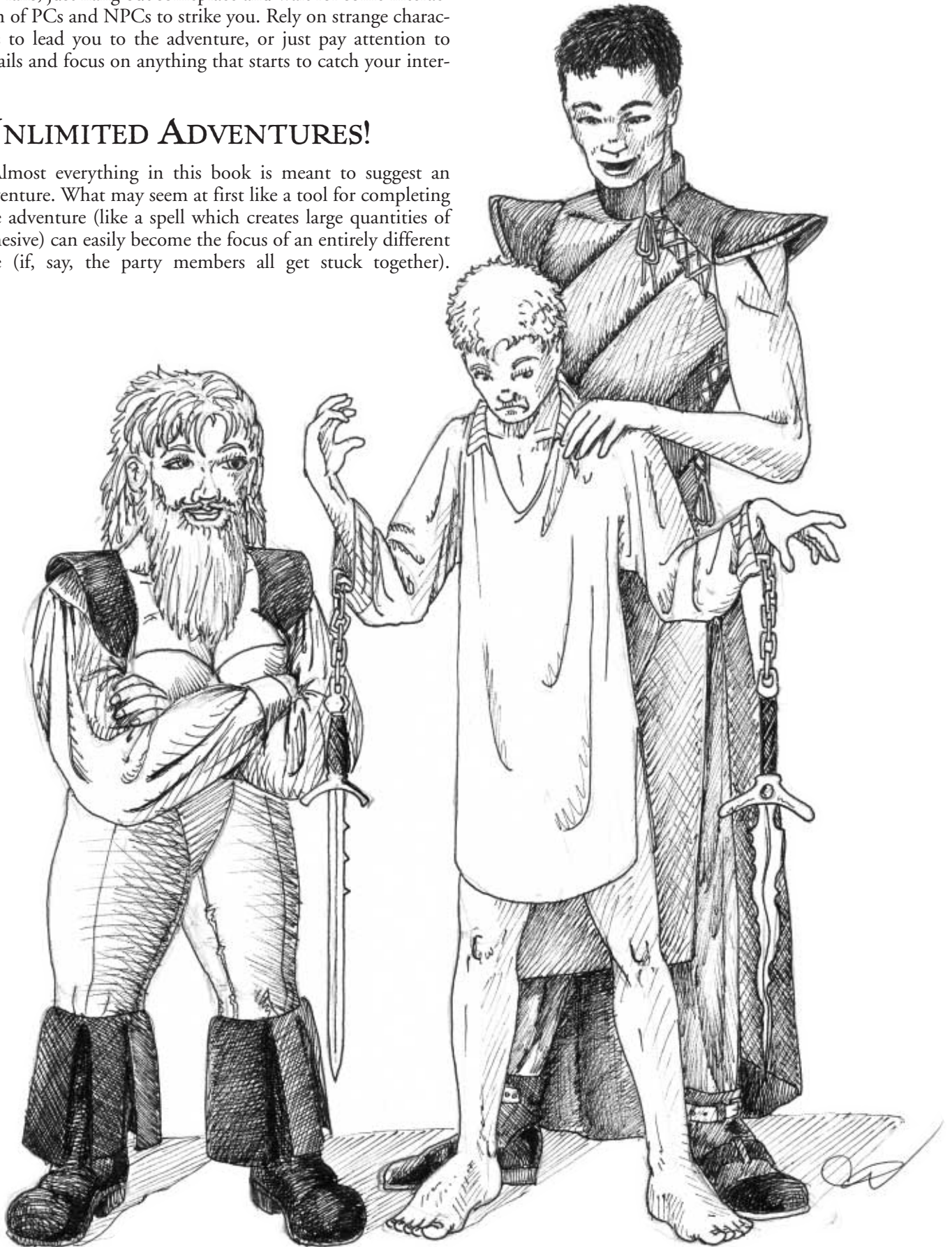
- **Don’t Worry About Humor:** Strange as it may seem, sometimes the best way to be funny is not to worry about it. Plenty of humor can come from situations which aren’t especially funny when summarized. The idea of heading on a quest to slay the giant responsible for destroying your hometown isn’t especially amusing in itself, but most likely something out of the ordinary will happen along the way. Even a very ordinary adventure can easily take a turn toward the wacky — all it takes is one player who makes a character with a quirk, one slightly unusual turn of events, or one encounter with a monster in a slightly unusual situation.

- **Hang Out Until Something Fun Happens:** When all

else fails, just hang out someplace and wait for some interaction of PCs and NPCs to strike you. Rely on strange characters to lead you to the adventure, or just pay attention to details and focus on anything that starts to catch your interest.

UNLIMITED ADVENTURES!

Almost everything in this book is meant to suggest an adventure. What may seem at first like a tool for completing one adventure (like a spell which creates large quantities of adhesive) can easily become the focus of an entirely different one (if, say, the party members all get stuck together).



"Of course the other junior knights won't laugh at you! Anyway, your stepmother worked hard to make it, and you won't have to worry about losing your swords again!"

Organizations, spells, magic items, NPCs, PCs, and monsters can all become adventures in themselves in fairly short order.

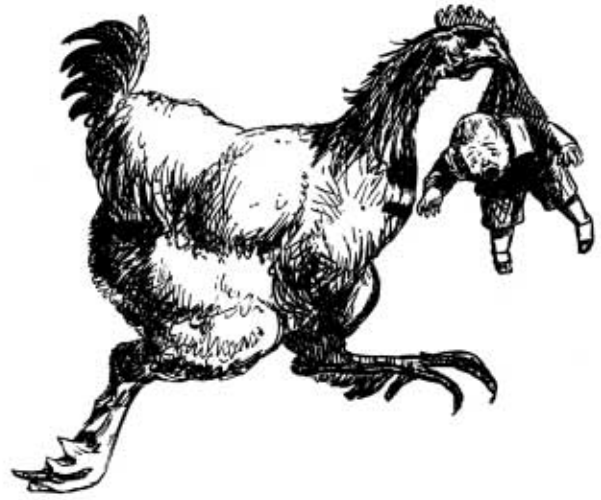
Nevertheless, here are some seeds for creating your own adventures. Some are relatively simple ideas which might make for a funny scene, and which could grow into more (if the Cobbler takes the time to flesh them out, or if they lead to a promising tangent). Others could be turned into an entire adventure or even a campaign, with some effort.



1. A group of orcs, interested in nothing more offensive than minding their own business, is perpetually hunted by a powerful group of Crusaders (and other "good" people) who are absolutely convinced that all orcs are inherently evil.
2. An ancient spell has restrained a monster in a town square. It can move around as it pleases so long as it stays within the square. If the monster dies, a new monster is automatically summoned to take its place.
3. An inventor secures a patent on the wheel, forcing anyone else who uses it in commerce to stop.
4. The PCs are hired to capture a giant gorilla and bring it back to the city, where it will be the star of a circus.
5. The graves the PCs were looting turn out to contain people who are still alive after half a century.
6. The queen assigns a painter to an adventure to document its exploits.
7. A group of henchpeople organize and form a union which exerts great political pressure on adventurers to treat them better.
8. A group of people calling themselves "postmodernists" return from the future to warn that civilization is a crock.
9. Players find their future selves stalking them, trying to kill them. When they manage to evade death, they find themselves forced to try to kill their past selves.
10. After an adventurer fights her way through the labyrinth to the inner sanctum, she discovers that the evil wizard is actually her dad.
11. Investigators discover that a community of monastic scribes is not producing holy texts, but in fact pornography.
12. A youth wearing strange clothes turns up in at a PC's home, claiming to be from the future and requesting help in harnessing the power of the lightning.
13. Adventurers go through unimaginable peril to reach what turns out to be merely the gift shop of an evil wizard.
14. A fast food chain serving an unknown type of meat is becoming increasingly popular.
15. EVIL halfling clerics have to travel into the land of Rodrom, a terrifyingly good place, to destroy a powerful magic item before a powerful benevolent sorcerer gets her hands on it.
16. A crew is needed to convert an old dungeon into a meat-packing facility.
17. An evil noble offers a cash reward to anyone who retrieves his wallet, which he accidentally left inside a good noble's hat.
18. The Keepers of the Omnicodex offer a powerful but forgetful oracle knowledge about the past in exchange for knowledge about the future.
19. At the annual EVIL convention, someone is sabotaging the presentations. Is it a jealous member of the organization, a person allied with the forces of good, or something else entirely?
20. A fat, long-bearded human living in a polar region has acquired a bunch of elven slaves, who he is forcing to make toys for some evil scheme.
21. A king is cursed by a gypsy to have severe flatulence. This flatulence is so bad that it threatens to destroy the kingdom.
22. A group of investigators is hired to determine the nature of the corruption in which a newly elected government official is engaging. Unfortunately, their employers don't want to hear that she isn't engaging in any, so the investigators are forced to either fake it or convince the official to start engaging in corruption.
23. A civilization frozen in time for over a thousand years becomes unfrozen, and a group of diplomats in a neighboring country is sent to make peace with them and adjust them to the strangeness of the Renaissance.
24. There are rumors that the country to the east is developing a terrible superweapon.
25. Unknown to most of its users, a new kind of perfume attracts several kinds of monsters looking to mate.
26. When the local shepherd's union threatens to strike, an elite team of adventurers is called in to do whatever it takes to stop them.
27. As predicted in the ancient texts, the Tree of Prosperity sprouts, heralding the coming of a new age of peace. Unfortunately, the tree is growing underneath the castle, which will be destroyed if the tree is allowed to continue growing.
28. Anvils start disappearing from smithies in a community until the price of metal goods skyrockets.
29. An EVIL lawyer is assigned to defend a member of EVIL who accidentally prevented the extinction of an endangered species.
30. A group of aliens from another terrace is wiping people's memories, and only the MiBs dare to try to discover why.
31. A wealthy landowner has been committed, and her friends are offering large amounts of money for someone to tunnel in and get her out.
32. The PCs are going about their business fighting the forces of evil, when they are approached by a band of evil henchmen and women who want to defect to the forces of good.
33. The local magic shop is actually a front for an underground group of renegade slug worshippers.
34. A group of sprites attempt to commit industrial espionage against a battalion of dwarven industrialists.
35. A band of addicts hire a banana smuggler to transport illegal fruits through a primate-infested jungle.
36. Two married giants, upon discovering that they are unable to conceive a child with each other, decide to

- adopt one of the PCs.
37. A sorcerer claims to have found a way to harvest the farting of cattle to create a great reserve of power, but there is some cause to believe that a mistake in the implantation of the plan could result in disaster.
 38. A mad orc is plotting to release frogs all over the kingdom.
 39. A happy-go-lucky orc named Yohan Ragweedseed, guilty only of spreading ragweed seeds throughout the kingdom with the best of intentions, begs to be rescued from the dungeon before his execution.
 40. Once again the Mighty Equestrian Crusaders are forced by their gods to go on their annual Silly Parade.
 41. A strange green film has covered all the solid matter in a kingdom.
 42. A group of ivory tower philosophers decide to have a good time, but they don't know how to do it on their own, so they hire adventurers to take them to parties, festivals, and clubs.
 43. An animated magical sword struggles to help the warrior who wields it free herself from the ravages of alcoholism.
 44. A man whose appearance is suspiciously like that of the king is found in the dungeon wearing an iron codpiece.
 45. Citizens of a town are complaining about all the noise from the local witch broomfield landing pads (mostly a lot of cackling).
 46. A child who supposedly possesses great magical power and the ability to move through the mechanosphere is sought by a group of Meta-Oracles.
 47. Various things occur. Some other things conflict with these events. The PCs are caught right in the middle.
 48. The god of a small town is discovered at the bottom of a nearby river wearing concrete galoshes.
 49. Magically modified crops designed to produce more nutritious, bigger, better tasting foods become incredibly tall, allowing a bunch of cloud giants to come down out of the sky on the stalks and threaten the land. Later, after the giants have been defeated, the crops become intelligent and take over the kingdom.
 50. A civilization sinking into the sea needs help constructing a giant dome around them before it's too late.
 51. Iron Titans are contracted to perform ritualistic combat between warring nomadic factions. The traditional ritual combat is a triathlon consisting of swimming, poetry recitation, and totem pole carving.
 52. The PCs discover that another group of people, apparently identical to them, is posing as them. These people may be impostors — or maybe it's the PCs who are impostors.
 53. A wealthy member of the adventuring party hires a personal astrologer to accompany him on dungeon raids and keep him updated with regular horoscopes.
 54. When the High Priest turns out to be a moron, a web of intrigue begins when a dozen separate groups of people attempt to influence him.
 55. A cave woman is discovered frozen in a giant block of ice.
 56. A band of adventurers stumbles upon a group of Iron Titans engaged in the process of harvesting lemons. When they inquire, for no reason they understand the adventurers are offered a significant sum of money to keep quiet.
 57. Several extremely attractive people band together to help each other avoid their many enthusiastic suitors.
 58. At ITCMS, suspicions run high when a group of gremlins appears and offers to help repair damaged machines.
 59. Kobolds are caught skinny-dipping in the town's water supply again.
 60. The Justice Guild attempts to conduct a census of its superheroes.
 61. Two countries stand on the verge of fighting a terrible war over a new miracle drug called Placebo.
 62. A tabloid scroll reports that the Olympiad has declared adventuring a sin.
 63. The PCs are charged with the task of committing decide (divine murder) upon an insane god.
 64. An angel and a demon are spotted making out in the closet of the sacristy in the local chapel.
 65. When a plague threatens the land, the Keepers of the Omnicodex are rumored to understand where it came from, but they are refusing to disclose what they know.
 66. A company plots to corrupt the youth of a community with the introduction of a new roleplaying game.
 67. During extensive flooding, authorities are worried about the remains of the people in a tomb seeping into the water supply.
 68. A mystical backscratcher with the ability to scratch dozens of backs simultaneously is sought by a corrupt politician.
 69. The legendary Red Capsules of Analgesia are reported to be in the Temple of Farmasy, and a brave adventurer is needed to discover them. This adventurer must locate the vial in which they are kept, then align the twin triangles, breach the silver seal, and remove the mysterious cotton ball before he can remove the capsules.
 70. A group of adventurers have been committed to a looney bin, and must escape from an asylum before every session.
 71. A lighthouse experiments with using fireballs to direct ships.
 72. MacrosPELL is engaging in a series of lawsuits which threaten to destroy all other businesses in an entire kingdom.
 73. A golem from the future arrives with a single mission: to destroy the father of the person who will eventually sire the woman who leads the revolution against golemkind.
 74. When the realm's squashes, pumpkins, and gourds begin to sprout nipples, the local ruler wants to find out why.
 75. A seaport town with an economy based in fishing encounters difficulty when the fish offshore develop the ability to cast magic missile.

76. A culture with a “dungeon walkabout” as part of their coming of age ceremony is starting to interfere with local dungeon ecologies.
77. An intercontinental expedition discovers mushrooms which, when consumed, cause other people to get high.
78. A volcano opens up in the middle of the woods and begins to belch forth cheese.
79. A group of multiple adventurers suddenly find themselves in love with CEO of Macrospell, despite the fact that they have never met this person.
80. The unstoppable knight wooing the princess turns out to be a golem in armor.
81. An illusionist calling himself an Amusement Wizard has acquired a powerful magic item to supplement his illusions. He uses it to make a band of adventurers jump through endless hoops for his amusement. He has them solving riddles, fighting monsters, and climbing through mazes just for laughs.
82. A group of reformed pirates forms the Scurvy Patrol, an orchard of limes and oranges on a ship which sails around inspecting other ships for evidence of scurvy and helping them out of scurvy-related peril.
83. A dwarf without facial hair vows to slay all other dwarves who have beards.
84. A dwarf comes to town attempting to peddle a new mineral she calls “blue” to the townspeople, but a group of locals suspects fraud and hire someone to investigate whether this new mineral is actually a new mineral, or just an old mineral with a new coloring.
85. A party of toadies go on a quest to find the ultimate adventurer worthy of their obsequious behavior.
86. A ruler decrees that the penalty for all offenses, no matter how severe, will henceforth be “a good sound spanking.”
87. A little boy wishes to be turned into a wood golem.
88. An abandoned magic item of unknown power, but without the ability to move on its own, begs to be returned to its place of creation.
89. A group of cultists waits for the return of a great ancient civilization, which at one time, according to legend, vanished into the future.
90. A community of children prepares for war against a great city of elders.
91. The players somehow get switched with characters, and they have to spend all their time trying to get home. They often get opportunities, but each time they have to pass these opportunities up, either because of their ethics, or because of something that comes up at the last minute.
92. A restaurant apparently serving delicious dishes is in fact serving magically-enhanced sawdust.
93. Local chickens, recently infected with giantism, are running amuck throughout the city. When attempts to lead them out with music fail, a group of adventurers is called in.



94. Monsters with lots of big teeth begin systematically destroying settlements, but leave one village standing (in exchange for the village's toothpick manufacturing services).
95. When avalanches totally isolate a mountain kingdom, food shortages force citizens to draw lots to determine which people will be eaten.
96. A pair of celebrities is fighting to the death in the town square.
97. An innocent man begs the adventurers to murder him.
98. A group of philosophers in the Keepers of the Omnicodex invests the help of adventurers to learn whether or not a tree falling in the forest makes a noise when no one is around.
99. The adventurers go vacationing out in a cabin in the woods. When one of them reads an ancient text, however, the dead start come to life in the vicinity of the cabin.
100. Adventurers must penetrate a jellatinous polyhedron which is the size of a city and retrieve an important document before it gets digested.
101. An enemy of the Justice Guild calling herself The Smoker has formulated an evil plot to get children to take up cigar smoking.
102. The Meta-Oracles hatch a plan to take over the mind of the Cobbler. Horrifyingly, the Cobbler seems to be permitting the plan to succeed.
103. A small town needs a hero to exorcise a terrible demon from an outhouse.
104. Somehow, a laugh track gets added to the game. A strange laughter seems to be permeating gameality, disrupting the complacency of the player characters as they make their way through the adventure. Maybe the characters will get used to it eventually and come to ignore it, or perhaps they'll set off to figure out where that laughter is coming from. As an option, you can have the characters make sanity checks whenever they hear a particularly loud bout of laughter.
105. Thieves break into the local thief supply shop, only to find that virtually everything has already been stolen.
106. A band of trolls has set up a shop in the town square, where they are selling very worthless waybread in an

- extremely disruptive manner.
107. An organization calling itself the Naked People for a Clothing-Free Tomorrow is gaining popularity in a region.
 108. All the catapults in a kingdom suddenly begin to move on their own, apparently converging on a particular area.
 109. Monsters have gone missing from a local dungeon, and someone has mount a search (they can start by putting up the “missing monster” signs).
 110. The Meta-Oracles perform a ceremony that makes characters undergo ego-death, replacing them with the pure egos of their players (for PCs) or killing them (for NPCs). The PCs suddenly find themselves with the ability to act in perfect concert without discussing the plan.
 111. The tall man with a long cloak and a small head is revealed to be 3 halflings sitting on each other's shoulders.
 112. When the PCs violate several of the local library's rules, the government decides to throw The Book at them. The Book turns out to be large, mean, and magically animated.
 113. What at first seemed to be a dungeon turns out to be a hanger for ITCMS.
 114. A horsecart leaves Hinkerville headed for Narf at 4:37 p.m. traveling at 13 miles per hour. The cart has three random encounters along the way, each taking 16 rounds. Another cart leaves Narf at 5:02 p.m. heading for Hinkerville at 4 miles per hour. The adventurers must determine where, and at what time, the carts will meet.
 115. A philanthropist demon is found to have consorted with lawyers.
 116. A golem is on a quest to become more like mortals and gain real emotions. The only trouble is, certain parts of his anatomy increase in size whenever he fibs.
 117. The quest for the holy sake cup (undertaken by a brave band of samurai) is disrupted by the Secret Order of the Fuzzy Toe.
 118. A marriage between a minotaur and a troll turns sour when the troll refuses to give up eating beef.
 119. Someone (possibly a monster) wants to start a monster revolt in a local dungeon, and organizers are needed.
 120. An insane king decrees that henceforth, on penalty of extensive torture and death, all his subjects will subsist exclusively on stale leavening and sauerkraut.
 121. A group of dwarves stumble onto a magical land of munchkins, who they mistake for shaven dwarves.
 122. A member of the Keepers of the Omnicodex wishes to investigate orcish sexuality, with horizon-expanding consequences.
 123. A graveyard of innocent zombies is being persecuted by the surrounding townspeople.
 124. Faced with a horse shortage, many Crusaders are forced to make due with elephants, sawhorse golems, and flying broomsticks.
 125. The chamber of commerce in a town wants to convince a group of investors to built a new stadium in their town. Unfortunately, the town is currently infested with velociraptors. The town, lacking the time to rid themselves of the raptor infestation, hires a party of adventurers to take the investors on a town tour and convince them that the town would be a good place for their stadium.
 126. To assist in the defeat of Pyrocules, a fiery supervillain, a band of couriers is hired to transport large quantities of ice cubes across a desert.
 127. The fire department in a small town experiences a labor shortage, forcing them to hire origami golems.
 128. To declare his good intentions toward a kingdom, an evil wizard hires the adventurers to deliver a gift to the regent. Despite the wizard's repeated assurances that he has the best of intentions, the crate's tendency to shake, scream, and cast an evil glow worries the adventurers.
 129. In a fit of rage over a filthy spot on her crown, the queen abdicates the throne. Several days later, she regrets her hasty action and sheepishly hires the PCs to help her regain her position.
 130. A nearby and technologically advanced terrace decides to use Terrek as a dumping ground for their mentally deficient. The problems the MiBs have is that even these “idiots” are at least ten times as intelligent as a normal Terrekian.
 131. Somebody is shaving dwarves totally bare and leaving them for bald. (According to investigators, the only consistent element among the reports made by the victims is a vision of strange lights in the sky.)
 132. A local Dungeon Enthusiast wants to hire someone to paint a square or hex pattern on the floor of her dungeon.
 133. The queen goes missing. Then, four days later, eleven people who look just like her show up and fight over which of them is the real one.
 134. When a bunch of monsters ambush the PCs, the marching order is disrupted.
 135. The PCs uncover evidence that members of their city-state's Privy Contents Relocation Office are involved in a waffle-recycling scandal.
 136. In response to vampire attacks, a desperate kingdom takes advice from the Meta-Oracles and attempts to summon an individual named “Bram Stoker.”
 137. A zoo wants to capture a unicorn which can only be captured by non-virgins, necessitating a rather different sort of conquest for the first part of the adventure.
 138. During a particularly bad cosmic storm in the Tempest, the world is being tossed around in the cosmic winds. If Terrek overturns, obviously everyone will be launched everyone off the edge. It is left to a small band of adventurers to organize a mass migration to the other side, in order to provide counterbalance. The phrase of the day becomes “bring lots of anvils,” (or other heavy things).
 139. The white knight and the black knight are actually the same person.
 140. Adventurers are hired to root out and arrest a heretical cleric accused of lacing the water supply with a love

- potion and performing interspecies marriages.
141. The Meta-Oracles grow concerned when a disruptive player threatens to end the campaign.
 142. The queen places a beauty tax on the members of her kingdom, charging people in direct proportion to their attractiveness.
 143. The four local horsehalflings of the apocalypse arrive, apparently intending to bring about a regional form of armageddon. Before they do, however, they decide to stop at the local pub and get a drink. Who will stop them?
 144. Members of EVIL are frightened to discover that a philanthropist has invented a doomsday device, which he intends to use to make the world a better place, so they move to convince him that such a device is better used in the service of evil.
 145. The only known person to have seen a baal-rogue in a hundred years wants to settle down and live a dull life, but the Keepers of the Omnicodex want to learn all about this creature.
 146. A vampire seeks the vampire's stone, which is reputed to be capable of turning lead into pure blood.
 147. All objects of value which come within ten feet of any of the PCs are disintegrating.
 148. When a group of benevolent alchemists studying an ancient artifact accidentally trigger it, horrible Evil Radiation begins to leak all over the countryside.
 149. When the Cobbler disagrees with the players about where the PCs are located, a glitch in gameality puts them in both places simultaneously.
 150. A lonely sumo wrestler struggles to find someone fat enough to wrestle with him.



Little did Gnara know that the gentle breeze had dislodged a large anvil from a nearby tree, where it had been resting undisturbed for some time.

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 11

On Setting: Some Places in Paranesia

ON SETTING:

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LEGEND
of
MAP
SYMBOLS

COUNTRY

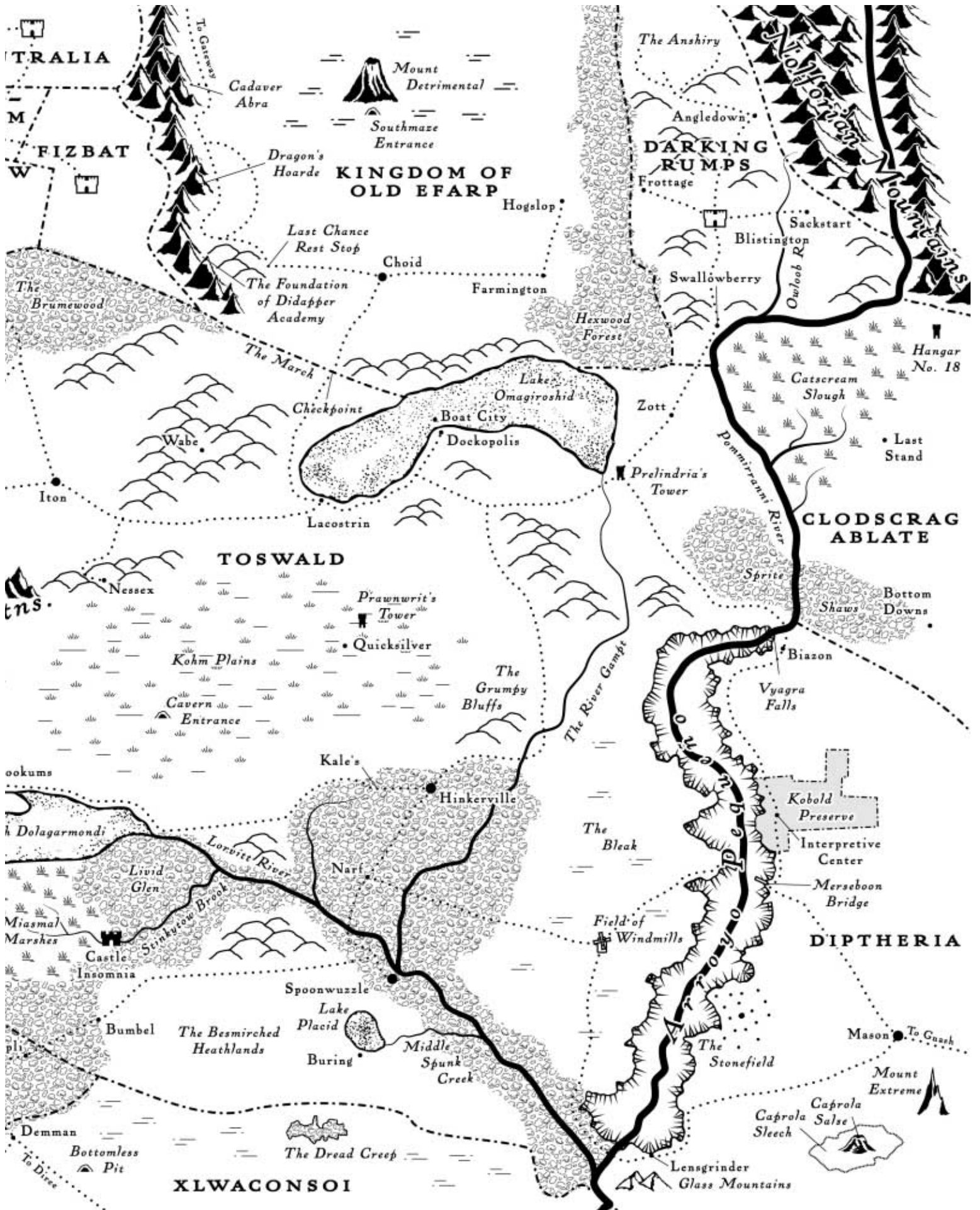
Geographic
Feature
Town or
City

- desert / wasteland
- grassland
- swamp
- hills
- mountains
- cave
- political border
- road
- river
- town / village
- cities
- tower / fortress
- castle
- country capital
- windmill
- forest
- lake
- reef
- canyon



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Adventure has to happen someplace, and in the world of *CoB*, someplace is Paranesia. This chapter gives you an outline of some of the major features of the universe, and a nicely detailed sample setting in which your characters can frolic.

CAMPAIGN SETTINGS

To give you some kind of idea about the sort of places that tend to exist on Terrek, the following is a description of a small section of the world. Feel free to use it as is as part of your own world, or pick and choose elements from it. Alternatively, you can just regard it as an example of the sorts of things you can do with *CoB*. For many players, merely wandering around here is enough to cause a campaign to begin, but it can also make a good background for whatever other unrelated adventure you wish to stage.

Unless otherwise stated, towns are generally populated largely by humans, with elves following distantly behind, followed by dwarves, dryads, and halflings. Sprites, trolls, and orcs are least commonly found in cities.

City-States of Quashtiree

The City-States of Quashtiree are a number of constantly warring cities, each of which is surrounded by a heavily-guarded parcel of land. Six are depicted on this map; still more lie to the north. The City-States occupy an area dominated by plains with some woods, and are bordered by the Shingle Mountains to the east and by Toswald's foreboding Brumewood Forest to the south. The City-States appear to be fighting predominantly over land, although "because we've always done it" is another popular reason. Borders shift all the time, and some of the names of different countries change with a relatively alarming frequency.

Dyrol

Dyrol is a country rich in natural resources. Everything from trees to cattle to precious minerals can be found within its borders in plentiful quantities. Unfortunately, however, the area is also popular among different kinds of dragons, so the government must devote large quantities of its resources to holding its own against these beasts. Furthermore, the Dyrol government spontaneously attacks nearby city-states frequently and with minimal strategic thought, so they usually negate any advantage which might otherwise have been afforded by their vast resources.

Landus Antagonus

To the south of the Damaged Chastity River lies Landus Antagonus, a city-state with a government as unpredictable as it is clever. The prevailing monarch, Thorpe, takes great pride in implementing bizarre strategies. Occasionally this gets him in trouble, but mostly it has worked out rather well, as the other City-States have difficulty anticipating his behavior. Landus Antagonus is usually characterized as the area's major villain by most of the other countries in the vicinity.

Interestingly enough, EVIL operates its exceedingly popu-

lar chain of casinos here in Landus Antagonus. Despite the frequent wars taking place, many people travel here for vacation purposes.

Neutralia

An oligarchy known for its fine knives and watches in addition to its ability to launch deadly attacks at a moment's notice, Neutralia is a place where the probable loser of any given battle is likely to be perfectly safe. The Neutralian government has no interest in expanding its state's borders. Instead, they are motivated by a desire to preserve the status quo. They typically wait until a particular party in any conflict seems to emerge as the winner, and then they attack that party, in accordance with the desires of their god, Medinia the Leveler.

Fizbat

Fizbat is a democratic city-state founded many years ago by persecuted ninja who wanted freedom of martial arts. They came from a far off land where those like them were hunted and enslaved, and they came to regard the freedom to practice ninjitsu as a sacred right.

Today most everyone in Fizbat is trained in the way of the ninja, but few of the townspeople take their art as seriously as their predecessors. Most go through the motions without conviction, and only call upon their skills when their city-state is threatened. Of course, a few diehard fundamentalists passionately advocate a return to traditional ninjitsu values, but despite their amazingly sneaky tactics, they have not yet managed to convince anyone to elect a representative of their party.

Most of the inhabitants of Fizbat are human, but through a complex series of events, the state is now controlled mostly by halflings, who apparently have ties to the Secret Order of the Fuzzy Toe. Fizbat rarely attacks other countries outright (their army is limited and can do little more than protect their borders), but is constantly engaged in covert operations in nearby city-states.

Hobsbaum

Hobsbaum is a tiny city-state with little in the way of armies. What they do have are an unusually large number of wizards, with which they attack other countries. The Hobsbaum ruler, Kindlezort the Old, is usually able to make up for her somewhat limited quantity of troops with her strategic ability and sheer orneriness. Hobsbaum is the only known Cronocracy, or government by an old crone, on the continent.

Queensbarrow

The City-State of Queensbarrow gets its name from its founder, a queen who obtained the land by betting that she could carry a wheelbarrow full of fish across the entire countryside in 20 minutes. Using magic, she succeeded. Today, Queensbarrow is ruled by a number of "houses," each of which contains a number of spellcasting nobles. These nobles dislike being called wizards, and prefer instead to be referred to by the more traditional term "magic-users." Magic in Queensbarrow is mostly limited to the upper-class-



In a slumping industry, even a knight who's actually in shining armor can sometimes find gainful employ as elusive as actual damsels in actual distress.

es, composed of nobles who spend more time competing among themselves than they do attacking other City-States. Still, Queensbarrow engages in its share of conquests. It also like to employ the rather insidious tactic of advancing their borders by a few feet every so often. Then they hope that either no one notices or that the small amount of land which is affected by the change isn't worth fighting over. Occasionally they even get away with it.

Kingdom of Old Efarf

Despite its name, the Kingdom of Old Efarf is less a kingdom and more a disputed territory contested by many solitary wizards and other spellcasters. It is primarily a plain broken up by large tracts of farming land, semi-frequent wizard towers, and the occasional grove of trees.

The Plains of Old Efarf

The most notable feature of the Old Efarf plains are the wizard towers, which are scattered haphazardly across the land, usually some distance from each other and with plenty of innocent people living in between. The spellcasters who inhabit these towers are constantly engaged in a complex series of stratagems and power ploys in what is clearly a very desperate battle, although its stakes are difficult to determine. Certainly it is at least partly a land dispute, since the wizards take over each other's towers and claim sovereignty over their regions whenever possible. However, few can manage to hold their land for long. Since most have only a few minions and because there are so many other wizards plotting against them, land areas are constantly switching ownership.

Most of the wizards in Old Efarf are rather underhanded and not above the occasional despicable deed, though few, strictly speaking, are really evil. Sometimes their wizardly plots are extremely devious, while other times they seem to meet on a pair of hills between their domains, where they summon monsters and sling fireballs at one another until one of them dies or runs out of ambrosia (most of these wizards refer to ambrosial depletion as "being out of mana"). When wizards die, their apprentices usually take their place and try to avenge the death of their masters. This of course feeds the cycle of violence and gives them all something more interesting to fight about than land, which gets dull after a while anyway.

Actually, although the wizards are certainly the most ostentatious residents of Old Efarf, by far the most numerous are the peasants. The overwhelming majority of these peasants are farmers who spend their time simply trying to eke out a living, and they have little interest in the battles of strange mages except insofar as those battles blow up their homesteads, cause droughts, or disintegrate their cattle. With a few exceptions, the farmers have in most ways remained untouched by the changes of the Renaissance. They are poor and, for the most part, relatively normal. They are generally too poverty-stricken to move, but they aren't stupid, and they sometimes revolt when local wizards make their lives too miserable.

Farmington

There are only four towns in all of Old Efarf, and Farmington barely qualifies. It consists only of a market square for selling agriculturally-derived foods, a tiny inn, and a temple to the God of Corn (a very minor deity called Krenal) who has rarely been worshipped anywhere else.

Hogslop

Hogslop is only marginally larger than Farmington. In addition to its market square, it has a few very small shops, like a blacksmith's shop, an inn, a church of the Olympiad, a bar, and a kangaroo sanctuary.

Choid

Choid is easily the largest city in Old Efarf. It consists of a larger community complete with a variety of different professions and services. As the center of commerce for Old Efarf, Choid is where you go to buy everything from spell components to farm equipment.

Gateway

Once an insignificantly-sized and mostly ignorable town called Papswhackler, Gateway was renamed when an adventurer discovered a portal to Gygaxia within an abandoned building. Today, adventurers travel back and forth through it all the time. The town is particularly full of inns and bars, and has a fair number of other shops as well. Indeed, Gateway is a hub of activity which threatens to surpass even the bustling city of Choid in size.

Hexwood Forest

The Hexwood is a magic forest. Magic tends to get caught inside the trees there, where it sparks and crackles rather than going off. The Hexwood is named for the hexwood pines that grow there. These pines are six-sided, and are highly sought as lumber because they stack so well. The Hexwood is also unusually packed with monsters. Most of these monsters keep to the forest if left to themselves, although they are frequently summoned by wizards to the west — often to the confusion and occasionally to the annoyance of the monsters, depending on their intelligence and capacity for irritation.

The Foundation of Didapper Academy

Didapper's Academy (also called the School of the Ivory Veil) is a mobile university which never stays longer than a month in the same place. After a brief period in a given location, it fades into aethereality and reappears shortly in another obscure location. Mages who wish to attend the academy must pass the entrance requirements — specifically, they have to find it first. According to legend, the original location of the school was here, in a valley near the mountains. According to this legend (which, incidentally, is true), those who enter the site's foundation become noncorporeal as long as they stand there.

Mount Detrimental

Mount Detrimental is a volcano which was named for all the people who have become slightly wounded while ascend-

ing it. In these modern times, it is a popular destination among ringdumpers (whose profession is getting rid of cursed magic items) because as big, lava-spewing volcanoes go, it is not especially dangerous. Still, Mount Detrimental is not a pleasant place, and most people avoid it unless they really need to get rid of something.

Southmaze

Southmaze is an extensive maze which proceeds for miles and miles south of Mount Detrimental. It is inhabited by the sorts of monsters one expects to inhabit mazes, like minotaurs, goblin kings, giant mice, and lost people.¹ Southmaze has been around for ages, and no one can say who built it any longer, although this may just be because no one cares. Lost in the maze are many cursed items which have fallen into the maze from the mountain to the north, then collected by monsters keen on that sort of thing.

Cadaver Abra

This mountain pass leads through the north part of the Shingle Mountains into Fizbat to the west. Due to an old incident with a powerful Cold Cone spell, it is locked in a perpetual raging blizzard regardless of the season. Crossing it is extremely treacherous, but because the Shingle Mountains are so steep, it is the only option for those who don't have the time to go around.

Cadaver Abra gets its name from the many corpses of people who remain there, all frozen in solid ice blocks. The careless are likely to join them.

Dragon's Horde

Deep in the mountains supposedly lies Dragon's Horde, a nest of multiple dragons guarding a large treasure. Anyone who goes here is likely to die horribly. It isn't a very interesting place, to be sure, but neither this fact nor the danger stop the treasure hunters from coming.

Darking Rumps

Darking Rumps is a small, hilly country inhabited mainly by halflings. Other races are generally welcome (so long as they don't come en masse), and indeed, the occasional elf, human, dryad, and dwarf can be found there lurking under the hills, but for the most part it's just halflings. Like Old Efarp, Darking Rumps is filled with farms and rural homes, though here farming is a far less dangerous and somewhat more profitable activity (due to the substantially reduced number of dueling wizards).

The Anshiry

The Anshiry fills nearly the entire northern third of Darking Rumps. It is populated by a rare group of mostly nomadic halflings who have collectively chosen to forgo conventional society in favor of a totally lawless community. In the Anshiry, there is no punishment for even the nastiest deeds, save that dispensed by bands of halfling vigilantes. The trade that exists is based mostly in the barter system, and as a rule, only the strongest and sneakiest halflings survive. It's a rough life, but it seems to suit the halflings who live there.

The Anshiry is home to several (now largely abandoned) towns which ceased to exist formally soon after the area fell into chaos thirty years ago. Only the town of Angledown remains. Angledown sits on the border between the Anshiry and the rest of Darking Rumps.

So far, the central government of Darking Rumps (based in Blistington to the south) has chosen to ignore the establishment of the Anshiry. Few people living in the Anshiry give this fact much thought, although the brighter among them realize that they may one day be faced with the prospect of war without an organized army, a means of gathering supplies, or any lines of communication.

Angledown

The small town of Angledown is home to an extremely reclusive group of halflings who wanted no part of the chaos of the Anshiry. When they realized that their government wasn't going to protect them, they gave up their comfortable lifestyles and devoted all their resources to protecting themselves from Anshiry marauders. They burrowed deeper underground in much cruder structures resembling gopher holes and began launching attacks on everyone who entered the area. Today Angledown halflings are a bitter, rough lot who are probably even less friendly than Anshiry halflings.

Frottage

Nowhere are the halflings friendlier than they are in the small, cheese-making town of Frottage. Every traveler enjoys a wave and a heartfelt "welcome!" as she enters, just as cheery a "goodbye!" when she leaves, and lots of very neighborly attentions in between.

Travelers passing through Frottage can expect a number of annoyingly pleasant things. To start, people almost never speak ill of others. Passersby stop to help any traveler who looks lost, confused, or in need of assistance. Lawbreakers are locked away only with profuse apologies and expressions of the deepest regret. Visitors aren't made to pay for their food or lodging (this aspect of Frottage isn't so annoying until the visitor is asked to pitch in around the inn after they stay a few days). But the most pleasantly annoyingly pleasant part of a long stay in Frottage is that one can hardly stop for more than a moment without being invited to a party, for the citizens of Frottage throw amazing parties, and frequently. While there is quite literally almost nothing to do in Frottage other than sleep, manufacture cheese, and go to parties, hardly anyone complains, because the parties are so spectacular. The amount of pipeweed, alcohol, rain peas, and cheese consumed at these parties is quite staggering.

As previously mentioned, Frottage is most famous for its soft, white cheeses. Nearly everything else, save pipeweed (which is grown in nearby fields) and a few other party supplies, is imported from Sackstart or Blistington.

Swallowberry

Swallowberry is a medium-sized halfling town which sprang up on the border in the area between the hills to the west and Catscream Slough when tourism started coming in vogue for people other than adventurers and other really

¹ Most lost people argue that they are not monsters, but so far no one has come up with a meaningful definition of the term which excludes them.

wealthy people. Swallowberry caters to these tourists and sells lots of the sorts of things halflings think other people want. If anything, halflings here are more “halfling-like” than in other places, because the citizens tend to conform to what travelers expect them to be. A notable exception is the Secret Order of the Fuzzy Toe, which has a base here.

Sackstart

Like most halfling-occupied areas, this medium-sized town is short on magic and complex machinery, but is otherwise fairly well-stocked, especially with food and pipeweed. Most of the residents are related to each other, mainly being of one of three families — the Peppertoos, the Norooks, or the Smallberries. During the summer months, Sackstart runs a carnival which is extremely popular amongst highly indulgent people.

Blistington

Darking Rumps is a democracy, and its capital city is Blistington. Blistington is a large city remarkable for its towers, some of which have over fifty stories, but all of which are completely underground. The Darking Rumps government is currently run by president Slide Baconslip, a very, very fat halfling who wears a top hat and has difficulty getting out of the presidential house.

The Darking Rumps army is not especially large. Actually, it is only just barely large enough to defend its borders, and it has been nearly overwhelmed on two distinct occasions in the last two hundred years. This is true despite the fact that invaders from the east are blocked by the Hexwood and invaders from the south are blocked by Catscream Slough and a series of steep hills, and it probably explains why Blistington has tolerated the existence of the Anshiry as long as it has.

Raspincocy Province

Raspincocy’s aboriginal cultures consisted mostly of elves who lived the traditional elven lifestyle. They lived in harmony with nature, laughed, pranced, picked berries, discussed philosophy, and made merry. They had some simple magic and only extremely simple technologies, and though they treasured what they had, they would have been happy with less. Their lives were simple but fulfilling, consisting as they did of lots of happiness and even more prancing. Scattered groups of the seven other primary mortal races existed as well, nearly all of which lived similarly simple, idyllic lives. However, since Raspincocy became a province of Toswald, a mainland country to the east, all that has changed.

Today Raspincocy Province is surrounded by five military bases which are supposed to be responsible for patrolling the entire border by land and sea to keep trespassers out, although for several reasons they don’t do a very good job of this. For one thing, resources are limited, and since the island’s circumference is almost four hundred miles, it just isn’t possible. For another, two of their bases are currently unoccupied (see South Base and Far Base). It also doesn’t help that displaced natives are often unhappy with the situation in which they find themselves, and they sometimes

attack the bases. Still, the Toswald government has numerous reasons for guarding the island, so they continue to try.

The Abundant Heap

The Abundant Heap is four square miles of area within the Pytogen forest dedicated to storing tens of thousands of tons of garbage. All of Toswald’s waste is hauled here, especially the dangerous stuff (like magical waste products) and the disgusting stuff (like the materials cleaned out of sewers). Coincidentally, the Abundant Heap is located on the very same spot occupied by an ancient and formerly secret elven tribal burial ground. The strange combination of unfocused magic, sewage, and sacrilege found here has had some very strange effects on the surrounding forest and its inhabitants (see below). Needless to say, “the Abundant Heap” is the name the Toswaldians gave to the dump; the locals have other names for it.

Ever since the Abundant Heap became a permanent part of the landscape over 850 years ago, most everything in the area which didn’t die horribly became horribly mutated. Worse, most everything that did die horribly — not to mention most everything that wasn’t alive in the first place — came to life. This is still the case today. Everything within about five miles of the Heap is alive, undead, and/or extremely weird. Nearly anything goes in this region — rocks which talk endlessly about the weather, flying artichokes obsessed with bad poetry, undead whales with big feet and a taste for flesh — all these phenomena and many more exist on or near the Heap. Few sentient beings live this close to the Heap, as to do so would be to invite disaster (or at least annoyingly large amounts of strangeness). Supposedly, however, a few loony mutants make their homes amid the filth.

Pytogen Forest

In the Pytogen Forest, the further out you go from the Abundant Heap, the less weird stuff gets. However, that doesn’t mean the rest of the forest is normal. Unusual flora and fauna still abound, and most of the forest is occupied by mutated variations on the aboriginal inhabitants. Elven cultures with swelled heads, groups of savage, lumpy, and deformed ex-humans, tribes of trolls with telekinetic powers, and roving bands of superintelligent, humanoid bovines all have their place in the revised ecology of the forest. These cultures have had highly varied reactions to becoming mutants. Many resent the changes; others have simply adapted.

Northwest Base

A mere decade before the creation of the Abundant Heap, Northwest Base was founded to research to possibility of a magical doomsday device. The project was eventually scrapped as infeasible, but not before a great deal of magical waste was generated. This waste was dumped in what then became the Abundant Heap. Today Northwest Base researches methods of using the Heap to accomplish something positive for the Toswald government, like the creation of a race of mutant soldiers to fight wars. All of this is, of course, top secret.

A small military force and a wooden wall is always present

at Northwest Base to prevent angry mutants from rising up, and to protect the inhabitants of the base from the effects of the magical radiation.

Dike

In the Pytogen forest, near the Abundant Heap, lies a large circular magical dike extending two hundred feet into the air. Within the dike lies Dike, an elven culture which, 900 years ago, was fairly unremarkable. When the Abundant Heap began to affect the surrounding area, however, this culture quickly became aware of it and decided to build a stone, dirt, and wood dike in the hope that it would block out the magical radiation. This they did, and for the most part their dike worked — the descendants of the creators of the Dike are largely immune to the effects of the Heap's magical residue, and they more or less are free to continue living their lives as they did before.

Unfortunately, however, the construction of the dike required the use of all of the trees, most of the stones, and a great deal of dirt from within the area they built the dike around. Hence, the interior of the dike is now an empty, bowl-shaped valley with almost nothing in it. This means that most of their cultural activities now revolve around walking around, capturing invertebrates, and complaining about the total lack of privacy. Still, the inhabitants tend to fancy themselves and their culture as incredibly idyllic, and are quite arrogant about how superior they are to the outside world. Anyone who manages to climb up the dike or fly in from the outside is subject to being accused of being an imperialist.

Inhabitants of Dike refuse to leave their town for fear of being tainted by Heap radiation. No Dike resident has any idea what goes on the outside, as they practically never have contact with it, but they are certain that it's a rotten place to be.

Pytogen Ground Base

Pytogen Ground Base is the place responsible for receiving waste from the Toswald mainland and dumping it at the Abundant Heap. They are extremely military and extremely formal, dominated by procedure and policy considerations. They receive ships twice a week and lead excursions past their barrier (in radiation suits, of course) in order to dispose of the waste. The military will typically kill those it regards as mutants on sight.

Lauricate Forest

The Lauricate forest is actually the same forest as the Pytogen forest, but it is too far from the Abundant Heap to suffer its effects — so far. It remains a traditional forest dominated by traditional cultures, most of whom have little sense that the Abundant Heap is always growing and threatens to envelop them, too.

Most of the inhabitants of this area live in fear of the colonists to the southeast at Saltbase, due to their bizarre antics (see below).

Saltbase

The Toswaldian officers posted in Saltbase are victims of a

frustratingly salt-dominated existence. Living in a place called "Saltbase" on the salt flats where there is salt on the ground, in the air, on the food, in the water, and all over in the ocean to the east, most of them would be happy never to have to encounter another grain of salt again. It doesn't help that they feel that they have been largely abandoned by the mainland, which sends only the occasional ship to drop off new officers and bring home those who have served out their tour of duty. The Saltbase military is supposed to be patrolling the borders of Raspincocy Province, and it does, but the off-duty soldiers can't spend all their free time in bars. So they invent strange (and often dangerous) athletic games, and spend their time out in the middle of the salt flats competing. One such contest involves setting oneself on fire and running across the salt flats in an attempt to reach a particular marker. Another consists of burying a good friend in salt and then freeing him using only the tongue. In a third sport, athletes compete to see who can be the first to yell loud and long enough to destroy her own larynx. These competitions dominate the daily lives of Saltbase officers. New officers sent to Saltbase usually find these contests barbaric until they get bored enough to try them, at which point they typically become obsessed. The natives of the Lauricate forest to the north, on the other hand, don't know that these activities are merely games, and they find them incomprehensible and frightening.

Raspincocy Mountains

These mountains which form the center of the isle of Raspincocy are rumored to contain Mine 51, an abandoned dwarven mine.

Sweetwater Lake

Sweetwater lake is a lake of pure, refreshing spring water. No, really.

Far Base

This base is the most remote on the island. Unfortunately, Toswald has lost all record of its existence, and it has since been abandoned by most Toswald soldiers. A few of their descendants remain, where they continue to have a sort of society. However, every generation, the smartest ones leave, further diluting the population of smart people.

Lighthouse of Lost Souls

Despite its depressing name, the Lighthouse of Lost Souls is a community hangout for ghosts, who go there to find others of their kind. The party going on there never stops, but it probably isn't very interesting.

South Base

For a short time, South Base was one of Toswald's military outposts. Shortly after the military became aware that the nearby lighthouse was haunted, however, it became economically infeasible to pay officers the large amounts it cost to keep them there, and the base was abandoned.

Toswald

Toswald is a big country, and politically and militarily one



Research and trap-building are two important activities for Dungeon Enthusiasts.

of the most powerful on the continent. It is also a very diverse area. All races make their home in Toswald, though humans are easily the most numerous (except in a few isolated areas).

The Brumewood

Horrible things live in the dense forest of the Brumewood. Thousands of giant spiders and several witches, as well as various other creatures (including some undead), live here. Except for the spiders, who are aboriginal, virtually the entire population migrated here after being kicked out of other locations (usually for being too spooky). With a few notable exceptions, the inhabitants of the Brumewood only want to be left alone, but their habitat is often disturbed by people in search of adventure. For this reason a number of them have taken to tormenting the people who venture through the forest. Unfortunately for them, however, this only feeds the forest's reputation as a good place to adventure.

The Brumewood is notably dense, especially on its east side. In far east Brumewood, small dragon actually lives on top of the forest. To the west where the trees are relatively sparse, there are rumors of an incredibly evil witch, who lets none who enter her part of the forest live. (Needless to say, she torments them first.)

A path leads south out of Queensbarrow into Toswald through the center of the Brumewood, passing on the way through the small town of Boggart's Hollow.

Boggart's Hollow

The average passer through this area would never know that the conservative, timid citizens of this quiet hamlet have entered into a deal with some of the Brumewood's horrors. In exchange for protecting the town from some of the forest's less intelligent (and more malevolent) inhabitants, a small alliance of relatively benevolent vampires has arranged that the citizens regularly donate blood to them. The citizens refuse to talk about this, however, first because they are embarrassed about it, and second for fear that their children will find out. The residents of Boggart's Hollow are also unreasoningly intolerant of witches and will attempt to set fire to any they encounter.²

The March

The Toswald government patrols all of its borders, of course, but the small section of border between the Brumewood and Lake Omagiroshid (dubbed “the March”) is under constant guard because some Old Efarp wizard or another is usually trying to encroach on Toswald territory. The guards of the march discourage this behavior by catapulting rocks, bits of wood, dead animals, and (when the budget allows) explosives across the border at random intervals.

Wabe

Though Wabe is currently, will always be, and always has been merely a small town located in an obscure valley in northern Toswald, it is remarkable because it is constantly moving through time. At the dawn of every morning, it gets reshuffled in some sort of cosmic deck of days and reappears in another time, replacing a Wabe from some other time and being replaced by a Wabe of yet another time. Travelers entering Wabe might find that in Wabe, it is three thousand years in the future relative to the time from whence they came. Although days are more likely to be exchanged with days relatively close to them in time, there is no absolute limitation on how far in the past or the future you might end up when you enter Wabe. Of course, if you stay until sunrise, you will travel along with Wabe, and the next time you leave the town you will find yourself in another time.

Wabe culture tends to change very slowly, as travelers from all kinds of eras have already entered Wabe by the time anyone else gets there. In spite of their out-of-the-way location in the hills, Wabians are a completely independent and sophisticated group of people who are very much aware of their movements through time. They are wary of fashion and more than a bit cynical about any government which claims to rule them, since at least a few different governments lay claim to the town in different time frames. Wabians possess their own form of currency, which is (incomprehensibly) based in the exchange of small rectangular pieces of paper, and they enjoy being self-sufficient and not trading with other cultures, which strike them as constantly and pointlessly in flux. Wabians don’t know nearly as much about either the past or the future as some people might believe, however; Wabians seldom leave town for more than a day, and those who do rarely find their way back to their original time. What Wabians do know about the outside world is mostly based on information given by people from those times who have wandered into Wabe in Wabe’s past.

Life in Wabe can be a bit strange, as most Wabians have cultural characteristics from a variety of different historical periods. One thing which makes them quite unique, aside from their tendency to time travel daily, is the fact that they have no magic. This is because magic cannot enter Wabe. Anyone trying to enter while carrying a magic item will start to encounter resistance from the same field that causes the town’s time travel, and eventually it will become impossible to move any closer without dropping the item. Spells automatically fail in Wabe. Instead of magic, Wabians substitute the art of law. Wabian lawyers manipulate the conditions of people’s lives using law as skillfully as any sorcerer might

employ magic, especially since the potential for legal trickery grows exponentially as one travels further and further through time.

Staying overnight at an inn in Wabe is best avoided, mainly because it can be such a time-consuming prospect to sign all the complex release forms innkeepers require you to sign in order to use their beds (the likelihood of someone who stays the night in Wabe ever returning to their own time is low, and the innkeepers don’t want to be blamed).

Although Wabe hasn’t yet been founded (not in our time frame, anyway), it will one day be created when someone builds a large magical sundial in what will have already become the middle of town. When this happens, the sundial will have retroactively existed for all of Wabe’s history. This sundial is apparently responsible for Wabe’s time-shifting, and it cannot be destroyed — not because it is made of any kind of special material (although it is quite sturdy) but because of the paradox its destruction would generate. Anyone trying to destroy the sundial just never quite manages to do it. Either they hit the structure insufficiently hard, get stopped by the Wabian police, become distracted at a crucial moment, or something else.

Dockopolis

Dockopolis is a medium-sized waterfront city on lake Omagiroshid. Dockopolis is best known for the exorbitant rates it charges for boats to dock. The docks there charge so much, in fact, that the many boat owners of Dockopolis got universally fed up with them some time ago and decided never again to dock, and instead formed their own city on the lake. This city was dubbed “Boat City,” apparently because no one could think of anything better to call it. Dockopolis is constantly under attack by Boat City (see Boat City, below).

Boat City

Boat City is basically just a large collection of boats with people living in them. Their only resource is fish, and the only city they can approach to trade with (other than Dockopolis, which attacks them when they approach) is Lacostrin. Hence, Boat City trades fish for explosives in Lacostrin and uses the explosives to raid Dockopolis for the supplies they need to live. Dockopolis is incapable of counterstrikes, since they have no boats, and all attempts to build boats are abandoned when the shipbuilder realizes how much it will cost to dock it.

Lacostrin

Lacostrin was once an ordinary small fishing town founded by amateur limnologists who financed their lake-studying hobbies by fishing. Ever since the conflict between Dockopolis and Boat City came up, however, they have largely abandoned this unprofitable trade and become Toswald’s leading manufacturer of explosives. Most Lacostrinians are still quite keen on studying Lake Omagiroshid, which they regard as an especially interesting

² *Wizards, sorcerers, and other variations are acceptable, however. The local definition of “witch,” is unclear and seems to vary from person to person. These who carry broomsticks and wear black pointed hats may as well carry signs saying “Ignite Me,” however.*

lake now that they can perform studies about the effects of dynamite on mud puppies.

Prelindria's Tower

Prelindria, a woman considered one of the primary founders of the modern organization now known as the Dungeon's Enthusiasts, constructed this tower to be the most amazing deathtrap ever constructed. For many years the tower remained so, until it was finally "cracked" by a sprite thief named Kint using a clever combination of earthworms, neutralian army knives, and banana cream pie. Kint later donated the tower to charity, and a school for adventurers was built nearby shortly thereafter. The tower is currently used for training purposes.

Gran Fiesta

The Gran Fiesta town slogan is "international party capital of Terrek," and the inhabitants aim to live up to that. Arriving boats are greeted with a rowdy roar from the townspeople and treated to a nonstop barrage of pleasures, whether they like it or not, from the moment they arrive. From little cone hats with elastic bands stretching down around the chin all the way to world-famous sensual titillation, Gran Fiesta has it all — and it all costs money. After all, the town has no way of accomplishing tasks like food or shelter production, so they have to acquire the means to sustain themselves somehow.

Not spending money in Gran Fiesta is not an option. Either you spend money on such things as confetti, booze, theater, street comedians, dancing monkeys, and many other delights, or you spend it on getting people to stop bothering you about buying their wares. The only way to avoid being harassed is to pass as one of the locals, which usually means adopting their garb and bugging other travelers about buying something from you.

Aside from its complete lack of non-party-related commerce, Gran Fiesta is pretty normal medium-sized town.

Nessex

Nessex is another medium-sized town. Its citizens are honest, down-to-earth folks who worship the Olympiad. They have a diverse economy dominated by agriculture. They are almost without exception hardworking, even to a fault. Only on one occasion each year, on midsummer's night, does their routine take a bizarre turn.

Iton

Iton is an average, fairly large town located at an important point on a trade route. Funny things happen there occasionally, but nothing is especially humorous about it in total. That is, unless you happen to find the exchanging of goods amusing, in which case the town is hilarious.

The Sprite Shaws (Toswald)

This is a forest region inhabited by traditional sprite cultures. There are five distinct sprite societies in the Sprite Shaws, but only another sprite would be able to tell the difference between them. Most people fear the idea of passing through the Sprite Shaws, as the chances of getting through

without being inconvenienced by multiple practical jokes are practically nonexistent. Most of the jokes sprites play are ultimately harmless, like putting out campfires and getting into philosophical debates with you at inconvenient moments. But they might also steal your possessions or lodge your wagon in the trees, and it's a documented fact that a full one percent of travelers emerge from the area with an asses' head where their original head used to be.

Zot

The most remarkable thing about Zot, which is in some respects a typical medium-sized fantasy town, is the immense gap present between its rich and its poor. Zot's entire middle class can fit inside a large horse cart, and in fact horse carts are where the whole of the middle class usually spends most of its time. Every member of the class is employed by some rich person or another to ride around the city and recruit "adventurers" to explore the dungeons the wealthy spend their time and money building, decorating, and populating (over 90% of the towns wealthiest are members of the Dungeon Enthusiasts). For their part, the poor people are too busy trying not to starve to death to be recruited very often, and most of them are too savvy to be tempted down into a dungeon where horrible monsters lurk around every corner, anyway. The middle class recruiters thus rely mostly on gullible travelers passing through the town.

Monastery Peninsula

Monastery Peninsula is, logically enough, a peninsula with several large monasteries located upon it. Most of Toswald's monks live here, where they spend their lives devoted to various gods by taking vows of perpetual silence or nonstop jabber. Monastery Peninsula is also where Toswald keeps its powerful relics when they aren't in use. The relics are tended by the monks, who are guarded by officers of the Toswald military disguised as monks and local wildlife. Most locals think of Monastery Peninsula as a place of seclusion, where you go if you wish to live a peaceful and ascetic life — an accurate, if incomplete, perception.

Monastery Peninsula accepts applications from people wishing to become monks, or those who simply wish to make a pilgrimage to the peninsula. If you want to get away from it all for a while (or if you want to steal the Toswaldian government's relics), you would be hard pressed to find a better place to visit. All you have to do is convince the monks there (by means of a letter and a drawing of yourself looking appropriately contemplative) that you're a very relaxed and sober person who is serious about denying yourself pleasure. If the monks approve your application and get approval from the Quing of Toswald, you can come.

The Seaps

No one knows why this immense orchard is called the Seaps. The government of Toswald uses it mainly to feed its troops, who usually get more than just a little sick of dried apple by the time they finish the first year of their tour of duty.

The Seaps are surrounded by guards and filled with groundskeepers. Still, very few of them feel especially pas-

sionate about protecting the area, so apple theft is easy to get away with.

Shingle Mountains

Named for an shingle-like rock formation common in these mountains, the Shingle Mountains render it extremely difficult to reach Portsmouth, Toswald's capital, from the east. This has saved the country from more than one invasion, although the occasional avalanche forces some significant rebuilding every few decades.

Mount Krôm

This immense trio of mountains is given a single name by the dwarves who live at their base — Mount Krôm. To these dwarves, Mount Krôm is more than an immense mountain, and also more than three reasonably large mountains. It's a shrine to their gods, especially Warhammerous, the god of hitting things with blunt objects.³ Carved in enormous letters into the northeast side of the mountain are the words "Dwarven Shrine — Hands Off." Violators of this directive are persecuted. Enthusiastically.

Many dwarves live at the base of Mount Krôm in a long, thin, unnamed town which brings in most of Toswald's supply of metal ores from nearby mountains (other than Mount Krôm). At certain times of the day, no matter what else they may be doing, all of the dwarves will turn to face it, bow, and swear an oath to utterly destroy all enemies of Warhammerous. Most of the dwarves aren't really violent enough to chase down and murder the enemies of their god, but Warhammerous seems to like the oath, so the tradition continues.⁴

Vesius

Vesius is a town of medium-size, and serves as a center of trade for the many dwarves who inhabit the area between the "V" formed by the Shingle Mountains. Many of the dwarves live in the mountains themselves, where they devote themselves to mining. Those who live on the flatter ground to the north are mostly cattle farmers who sell raw gravy to the mountain dwarves. Others are merchants, anvil manufacturers, or coconut importers.

Middlesinkbainsbury-Upon-Ansdale

Technically, Middlesinkbainsbury-Upon-Ansdale is two large towns, the second built right on top of the first. Ansdale existed for over three thousand years as a town in its own right until a few hundred years ago, when a group of recently graduated architecture majors (with minors in debate and philosophy) convinced the town mayor to let them "revitalize" her city with an elaborate project. They set to work immediately, but without demolishing any old buildings. Instead, they simply built on top of them. When they were finished, most of the buildings had several additional stories, and where the buildings of old Ansdale had been conservative, old style architecture, the add-ons were strange and modern. The renovation was too costly to demolish, however, and so the new designs stuck.

As time passed, citizens of Ansdale started to sort themselves into either the upper or lower part of the city, depend-

ing on whether they identified more with the conservative old style of the lower places or the bizarre new style of the upper area. Eventually tensions mounted between the people in each area, and the upper part declared themselves an independent city, which they dubbed "Middlesinkbainsbury." Ever since then, the inhabitants of each city have been separate but forced to interact constantly, and most of their communication is characterized by hostility. Insults are routine, and melees are not uncommon. Travelers just passing through the city are sometimes forced by circumstance to choose sides, such as when choosing where to sleep. However, it is generally best to postpone the choice as long as possible.

Portsmouth

Portsmouth is the capital of Toswald. Currently it is governed by Quing Orlando, who is somewhat less than completely sane. In particular, the Quing seems to have difficulties identifying her (his?) gender. He (she?) also confuses herself (himself?) with several of his (her?) subjects. Apparently as a result of this condition, most of the actual ruling of Toswald is done by an advisor, Nerfadermous, although the Quing does not herself (himself?) appear to be aware of this, and Nerfadermous still has to obey his (her?) orders.

Toswald is fairly interested in being a world power, so it spends a lot more of the money it gleans from taxes on its military than it does on law enforcement. This has given it something of a reputation for being rather lax on crime, although individual cities within Toswald may have better law-enforcement systems.

Gap of Lopan

This small gap is the only convenient way through the Shingle Mountains.

Kohm Plains

The Kohm Plains are fairly featureless and unpolluted, at least by the standards of most sentient beings, and even as time goes on and Toswald continues to be developed, the area seems likely to remain unexploited. The plains are too dusty and infertile to interest farmers and too dull to attract castle developers. Even Toswald's program for motivating citizens to move out there to become plains nomads has proved largely unsuccessful.⁵ Still, millions of glittergophers and hundreds of herds of buffalemon seem to like the plains well enough. The plains are not difficult to pass through unless the traveler has a problem with dull scenery or is trying to bring a conspicuous amount of currency through.⁶

Quicksilver

Quicksilver is the only town in the Kohm Plains, and the only town on the continent which still standing on a sink-

³ The domain "god of hitting things with blunt objects," is actually contested by several other deities, including Bidummar, who is most often worshipped by trolls. This has caused some conflict between the two deities, and between dwarven worshippers of Warhammerous and trollish worshippers of Bidummar.

⁴ Still, it isn't wise to tell these dwarves about any negative feelings you might have for Warhammerous.

⁵ Of course, as the program consisted solely of offering slight tax breaks on camel purchases, it's a wonder anyone took to the plains with canteen and turban at all.

⁶ Glittergophers seek shiny things and will take every opportunity to take them.

hole. Its original incarnation was designed and financed by Prawnwrit Thodewonder, a wealthy member of the Keepers of the Omnicodex who was especially interested in the effects of unstable geography on modern architecture. He intended to observe the town, which would remain empty, and record its interactions with the local landscape. Unfortunately, the town was a particularly nice place to live, and much to Prawnwrit's annoyance, a bunch of people caught wind of the experiment and moved in. Naturally, Prawnwrit warned them that it was only a matter of time before the town fell into the ground, but they ignored him until three years later when a small earthquake proved him right. Fortunately for them, the town sank slowly enough that there was minimal loss of life, and the remaining people (who were annoyed that Prawnwrit had been correct) rebuilt the town in the exact same spot, mostly just to spite him. It was around this time that Quicksilver began to gather some outside attention from the media, who were fascinated that Quicksilver inhabitants were dumb enough to rebuild their town on a sink-hole. Once word of this got out, morbidly curious tourists started coming to gawk at the morons, and the money started coming in.

That was about thirty years ago. Since then, the town has collapsed about five times, and each time it has been rebuilt by the inhabitants, who now make enough money off the tourists that they can make a full time job of acting like ignorant country bumpkins and have more than enough left to rebuild their town every six years or so.

Prawnwrit's Tower, now a stronghold for the Keepers of the Omnicodex, lies just far enough outside of Quicksilver to keep it from sinking underground.

Caves of Luxury

Underneath the plains lies a vast network of caves. These unnamed caves have been exploited by dwarves living in the Shingle Mountains to the west for mining purposes for years, and the supply of precious minerals shows no sign of declining. Though the caves are long and all the known entrances lie within the mountains, the dwarves have constructed a series of small, gravy-powered machines that runs on a series of tracks. They use these to transport themselves and their minerals around. So far this has been so profitable that most of the dwarves just ignore the ancient legends about a baal-rogue being buried around here.

The caves are named because a small section of them lies underneath the town of Quicksilver. Since Quicksilver has fallen underground five times in the last three decades, there is now a five-story city underneath it, and many dwarves live there luxuriously.

Trollish Steppes

These plains are home to vast numbers of trolls, most living individually or in small family units, in the primitive fashion most trolls adopt when left to themselves. In some respects, the Trollish Steppes is typical troll country. However, the troll population is unusually dense. Approximately two trolls exist per square mile (the entire area is about 2,500 square miles, or about 50 miles by 50 miles). Interestingly, these trolls have developed a means of

rapid, long-distance communication. When any troll raps a rock together three times in rapid succession and then loudly announces a short phrase, other trolls within earshot will automatically repeat the action. This makes it possible to communicate very quickly all over the steppes with only a series of bangs and a yell.

There is a down side to all of this, however. All of these communications are monitored by a very old troll matron (known as Ma Shell because of her love for mollusk coverings). Ma has many children, all of whom are exceedingly loyal to her. These loyal trolls travel the steppes and demand payment (in rocks, or shells if the other trolls have any) for each communication. Most trolls are pretty afraid of Ma and her goons, and she is rapidly gaining a huge number of rocks. Some fear that a shortage is rapidly approaching. Others fear that Ma will wield her vast geo-economic power over the trolls, effectively making them into her slaves. Only time will tell.

Vendors are another interesting feature of the Trollish Steppes. The sheer density of the trolls in the area makes it possible for trolls to make a living by prowling around the steppes offering wares, like food or loincloths. They usually trade these commodities for rocks made of precious metals (which many trolls like to collect), which the vendors exchange for goods in human cities.

Non-trolls usually find the steppes rather dangerous. As a rule, the trolls there aren't especially malevolent, but they are numerous, and due to their communication system, they can get organized in fairly short order. The Toswald government usually leaves the Trollish Steppes alone, as the land has minimal strategic value and would probably be extremely difficult to capture.

Sivillised

Troll towns are somewhat rare, but they do exist, and this is one of them (although not one of the more successful ones, unfortunately). Sivillised was founded twenty years ago by nine trolls who were dissatisfied with primitive life in the steppes, so they set off to make their way in the world. Eventually, they found themselves in the town of Odunk, which was not accustomed to troll visitors and where trolls clearly weren't welcome. Nevertheless, they hung around for a while to observe the activities of the townspeople in the hopes of gathering enough information to form their own town. Much of the townspeople's behavior consisted of screaming and running away from them, although they were also able to observe some ordinary activities, like trade, crime, punishment, and travel. They also learned a bit about politics from watching a town meeting on what to do about several trolls who had been wandering around town recently. All this lasted about two days until the trolls were finally run out of town by a mob.

Deciding that they had learned enough, the group found a spot they liked relatively nearby and did their best to construct buildings by imitating exactly what they had seen in Odunk. The result was a series of rather crude structures sized for humans. They fashioned clothing (although this time they had the sense to size it properly) and drew up a series of laws, mostly arbitrarily. Then they set about the



For most Keepers of the Omnicodex, the acquisition of new knowledge is worth the probability of evisceration and dismemberment.

process of living life. They held town meetings, traded in the town square, and voted for each other. As time went by, they acquired many new citizens, who they accepted gladly. Most of them were trolls, but a few were other races. The town now has a population of around 100, and several trolls are currently expecting. Sivillised traditions are still based on their observations of nearby Odunk, although other trolls have since added their perception of what other places do to Sivillised's perception of how to be a town. In spite of this new information, however, members of Sivillised often greet visitors by feigning fear and running away. Of course, the town's highest honor, which involves running the guests out of town, is reserved for people the trolls are really happy to see.

Bedlam City

This medium-sized town is a stronghold for the Justice Guild, which has long since eliminated all the crime here. There never really was much in the first place, anyway. Today, almost a fourth of the townspeople are actually Guild members, most of whom spend a lot of time trying to root out nonexistent conspiracies and capture fictional archvillains.

Pumpkin Lake

Pumpkin Lake is merely a body of water which forms part of the border between Toswald to the north and Norfacordia to the south. It contains many lake pumpkins, which spend most of their life underwater and then surface rapidly when mature. Merchants on both sides of the border do compete to gather the pumpkins for sale in nearby towns, but this competition is usually friendly, only very rarely taking a lethal turn.

Odunk

Odunk is a small rural town in what is generally regarded as the middle of nowhere. The town has little opportunity to trade with neighboring towns, and the people here struggle to produce enough to keep themselves and each other alive. They have little tolerance for adventurers, as they have no time for shenanigans. However, much to their annoyance, various people are always turning up to explore the ancient catacombs which lie under their fair town.

Loch Oblagarmandi

Loch Oblagarmandi is inhabited by a terrible monster. The monster is not especially dangerous (except to algae), but it drinks a lot of water, and it tends to urinate frequently. This has had the effect of turning an otherwise nice lake into a rather filthy place.

Miasmal Marshes

This miserable swamp is thoroughly unpleasant and easy to get lost in. It contains enough berry bushes that a lost person can survive indefinitely, but the berries are tasteless and travelers must sleep in the trees to avoid drowning.

Castle Insomnia

Millennia ago, this castle was once the military headquar-

ters of a nation that encompassed all of modern Toswald. When that nation fell, the castle fell into ruin until it was appropriated by Barrow (a two thousand pound man) and his evil family, who ruled the area with considerable wickedness until the Toswald government forced him to tone it down. Now he simply stews in his heavily guarded castle, waiting for an opportunity to become evil again. The castle's name, *Insomnia*, is not understood; some say it refers to a prophecy about the method by which the castle will eventually be taken over.

Narf

Narf is a small town, significant mainly because of its use as a stopping point on the way between Spoonwuzzle and Hinkerville. Interestingly, an incomprehensible series of obscure rumors and legends imply that a great deal of something called "playtesting" took place in Narf during the first years of the Renaissance, and that the structure of gameality is especially weak there. The inhabitants of Narf tell the bizarre tales of these times for passersby interested enough to listen.

Spoonwuzzle

The mayor of this large town has apparently been assassinated fourteen times in the last decade, and no one has yet been caught. In fact, there are still no suspects. Spoonwuzzle is usually in the middle of some sort of political turmoil resulting from this or an unrelated issue, although most of the town simply proceeds as usual regardless.

Spoonwuzzle is well-known for having insane shopkeepers.

Hinkerville

This formerly small town of humans has become much bigger in recent years, and is now home to other races as well. Today Hinkerville is a thriving community. Its bazaar is well-known for its sale of strange and obscure things, and its theaters have received critical acclaim for their performances of "The Opera of the Whun Ring" and "A Midwinter Morning's Dungeon Crawl." The Hinkerville public library, which has outrageous late fees, is one of the very best in the region. Foobar Yard, a crack detective agency, is based here, as is Kale's, the renowned place of interesting repute. The town is also well-known for its "monster joust rallies," in which the jousters don't stop until all the horses and knights have been totally demolished.

On the down side, Hinkerville also has some halfling ghettos, where the families are large, low income, and unstable, and where trying to figure out if you're related to the person you want to marry is a huge undertaking. It also has what is called "The Mixen" about a mile out of town to the south. The Mixen is a dunghole resulting from the periodic Hinkerville sewer flushings. The Hinkerville sewer is badly out of date (it was never modified to accommodate the rising population), and must be flushed regularly, not only for sanitary reasons, but also to keep the substantial alligator infestation in check (Hinkerville is always hiring qualified sanitation engineers).

The Bleak

Once a forest, the Bleak is now a flat, featureless, almost totally waterless plain. Since the Bleak is surrounded by rivers, the reason the area is so devoid of water is not known. Alchemists have observed that it is as if any water to enter the area is immediately drawn too far underground for it to be accessed by either plant or animal life. As a result, few examples of life exist here, with the exception of the giant flightless dung beetles. These beetles have nine square acres of usable flat back space, upon which the local inhabitants of the Bleak have built small towns. These beetles excrete water, which the townspeople use to sustain themselves and the crops which they grow in the thin layer of filth covering the beetles. In return, they provide their waste to the beetle, which it consumes for nourishment in a disgusting but essential monthly ritual.

The other interesting feature of the Bleak is the field of giant windmills. There are several miles of them, and each one has a long, rubber cord running to a giant, ancient obsidian stone in the center of the field. The reason for this is a mystery.

Bumbel

Bumbel is a small town with an economy based on killer beekeeping, and other related trades. Please note that a license is required for taking bees and other dangerous small animals into or out of the town, and the authorities, who are very concerned about letting killer bees roam freely, have a number of bee management spells available. Bumbel authorities hotly deny allegations that their killer bees are being bred as part of a Toswaldian superweapon, although they have been unable to explain who funds them or why.

The Besmirched Heathlands

Rumors of loud buzzing sounds taking place in the middle of the night on these filthy healthlands are surely not based in fact.

Buring

Buring is a village just south of Lake Placid. It exists almost entirely because the people who write travelogues inevitably assume that Lake Placid is an ironic name, and that the actual lake is extremely dangerous. In fact this is not the case, but due to all the hype, the village experiences enough tourism to keep its economy going. The most interesting thing the village has ever had to deal with was some disappearing cattle. This had initially seemed to be the work of aliens, and later seemed to be related to giant crocodiles, but later was established to be routine cattle rustlers.

Clodscrag Ablate

To the east of Toswald and the south of Darking Rumps lies Clodscrag Ablate, a human-controlled kingdom which has recently been occupied by the Mighty Equestrian Crusaders of Incorruptible Righteousness. Contrary to what some foreigners have assumed, this occupation was not hostile. In fact, the Crusaders took control at the request of the formerly democratic government, which had previously gone bankrupt due to the cost of financing their extensive welfare

programs. Few of Clodscrag Ablate's citizens were terribly productive, and hence these programs were necessary to maintain the country's lifestyle. Recently, however, the country's debt began to cause serious problems, so the government finally hung it up and asked the Crusaders to help out.

Most foreigners, including the Crusaders, view the inhabitants of Clodscrag Ablate (who they call Clodscragglers) with some distaste. Clodscragglers do a lot of inbreeding, which is an unpopular activity in most regions. Clodscraggler hobbies, which include hunting, torturing animals, and moonshining, are also relatively unpopular in other parts of Terrek. Many Clodscragglers spend hours sitting on the front porch with a bow they refer to lovingly as "Old Betsy." Foreigners also tend to regard the Clodscragglers with contempt for the unpopular foods they eat, like squeaver and polecat, and for their illiteracy and thick accents.

Despite all this, the Crusaders are determined to transform this former troubled democracy into a feudal paradise. A monarchy has been established, and the country has been divided into areas governed by lords, and all of the locals have been designated with the term "serfs" and asked to farm. Knights ride about the countryside to make sure the system is working, though so far it is too early to tell if the locals will take to it.

Most of Clodscrag Ablate is rural, but there are a few towns, most of which have inhabitants who differ from the countryside population of Clodscrag Ablate.

The Sprite Shaws (Clodscrag Ablate)

Sprites rarely respect the borders made by the other races, which is probably why the Sprite Shaws cross right over the Toswald border into neighboring Clodscrag Ablate. The Crusaders intend to get rid of them, but they have so far been too busy organizing their feudal kingdom.

Hangar 18

Also in conflict with the Crusaders is ITCMS, which operates a small base from this area. The Crusaders have made numerous attempts to close down Hangar 18, all of which have so far been unsuccessful.

Bottom Downs

The town of Bottom Downs is an ordinary small town, except for the fact that almost all its adult citizens have asses heads. When travelers emerge from the Sprite Shaws as donkeys from the neck up, they tend to encounter discrimination in most of the other places they go, and eventually they come to terms with the fact that there's not much they can do about it. Many of them therefore have decided to live here. It's not a bad life, really, although the braying can be irritating until you get used to it.

Catscream Slough

Many have vanished mysteriously in this swamp here, and many more have gone mad from listening to the mysterious mewling and screeching of cats which seems to come from nowhere. Catscream Slough may be a frightening and stinky place, but it is also the last major supply of water for miles

for those headed east, so those who would prefer foul swamp water to no water sometimes stop here to fill their canteens.⁷

Last Stand

It was in this spot that Sir Feff Hosen made her last stand against a band of rabid wererabbits 300 years ago. The people she saved were so grateful to her for vanquishing their foes at the expense of her own life that they moved their town from its location in an idyllic forest to where the final battle had taken place, where they renamed it “Last Stand” in her honor. They did this in spite of the fact that the area was very far away from civilization, and in total disregard of how near it was to Catscream Slough. Today Last Stand is a small, decrepit, miserable hole with a struggling economy and a lot of vague legend about how someone will eventually show up and make things better.

Diphtheria

A land plagued continually by epidemics, Diphtheria is also a place of much government. Some Diphtherians believe that their government taxes them far too heavily, and object to funding state-sponsored programs like vaccination initiatives and nature preserves. Despite these difficulties, Diphtheria, a human-controlled monarchy, is currently enjoying a reign of moderate prosperity.

Biazon

Most travelers to Biazon come to see Vyagra Falls. It is a popular honeymoon spot, as well as a place many people go to commit suicide when life gets tough. Most of the country’s economy derives from the sale of various honeymoon/suicide aids for these two groups of travelers.

Vyagra Falls

This dangerous waterfall drops a half mile straight down into the Pommirranni River below. Legend has it, anyone who manages to go over the falls and live will become “rejuvenated,” which most people interpret as meaning “immortal.” If this legend is true, apparently the immortals are stuck down at the bottom of the canyon, because the few who have tried it out so far don’t seem to return to the top later.

Kobold Preserve

Traditionally, kobolds have inhabited the whole area of Diphtheria in great numbers, but today the vast majority of the remaining kobolds live here in the preserve, where they’re protected by law. Wands of Kobold Control are not allowed into the preserve, which is surrounded by a tall fence. The park rangers do carry the wands, which they are supposed to use only sparingly. In theory, the rangers report to the Kobold Fairness Committee, which is run by an individual known as the Colonel. The Colonel claims to abhor kobold abuse, which is why he established the Committee.⁸ Still, that didn’t stop an organization known as the Kobold Liberation Front from forming inside the preserve. They are a small but growing movement which demands to be let out of the preserve and back into society.

Still, although some of the rangers can be unpleasant, many kobolds believe that life in the preserve isn’t so bad,

even if they would prefer someplace dirtier. Many of them play happily in the beautiful trees, rivers, and caves. Travelers are also allowed into this beautiful area, provided that they wear the proper stickers on their steeds (or armor, if they have no steeds) and agree to extinguish campfires, stay on the trails, and refrain from feeding the kobolds.

Interpretive Center

Interpretive Center is a small town where the rangers of the Kobold Preserve live. Kobolds live there as well. Kobold homes in Interpretive Center tend to be live-action dioramas with one of the walls missing so that visitors to the town can observe the kobolds and learn about them. The main ranger outposts here are devoted to managing the Kobold Preserve and preserving traditional kobold culture.

Arroyo Pequeño

This giant ravine has effectively blocked easy transportation between eastern and western parts of the continent in this region for millennia. It is a breathtaking sight to behold, and the area attracts a significant number of tourists each year despite the surrounding terrain, which is dismal. The canyon is home to various bandits who prey on tourists, or upon the beetle-riding population of the Bleak. It is also the residence of several Dungeon Enthusiasts, who have constructed some very interesting dungeons inside it (“very interesting” in this context means either “elaborate and beautiful” or “structurally unstable,” depending on the dungeon in question. Most of the unstable structures collapse shortly after they are constructed, but there are always exceptions.) The former includes Terrek’s first primarily vertical dungeon and another which is actually suspended over the chasm on a series of poles and wires.

Merseboon Bridge

This extremely impressive but still only partly completed bridge was financed by investors hoping to profit on the immense benefit of being able to cross Arroyo Pequeño with minimal fuss, but the workers paid to complete the structure kept getting picked off by the local harpy population, so it has been abandoned for the time being. Currently Merseboon Bridge spans about two-fifths of the 20 miles across the chasm, if you count the space on both sides. About half the bridge lies on the west side of the chasm; the other half sits to the east. Both sides are packed with a long row of retail outlets on either side of the street like a pair of long, thin cities, except that neither has any form of governing body, and both consist of a single, immensely long dead end street. It isn’t common knowledge that Merseboon bridge hasn’t been completed (the shopkeepers there don’t want anyone to know for obvious reasons), and it is possible to cross between bridge halves on one of the competing commercial gryphon or pegasus flights which occur daily. This is fairly expensive and a little dangerous, but it’s still a lot faster than taking one of the long, winding paths down the side of the chasm, crossing the Pommirranni river, and climbing back up on the other side.

⁷ Or to go insane.

⁸ Rumors that the Colonel has started a new chain of restaurants with food that tastes suspiciously like chicken are, surely, apocryphal.



“There has got to be a better way to do this.”—A pair of Mages in Blue is assigned to repair the crop circle damage left by an unauthorized extraterrestrial.

Stonefield

The stonefield is a rocky part of the plains inhabited by several primitive human and troll cultures. Two of these cultures — one a group of humans, the other a group of trolls — worship a giant rock which lies in the center of the stonefield. This rock is full of small holes (some of which are big enough for a halfling to fit into, and a sprite can fit into most of them). The two cultures fight over the rock, both believing that they are its rightful worshippers. They both offer sacrifices of food and water to it, which they place inside numerous small holes leading deep into the stone’s interior. They also pray to the rock and ask it for advice when they need guidance. This in itself is not unusual, but what comes as a surprise to many more sophisticated individuals is that the rock actually responds — though not necessarily with divine wisdom. This is because the rock is inhabited by a culture of kobolds, who feed off the food given them by the two cultures, and respond to the prayers with a kobold’s perspective. The kobolds’ naturally high-pitched voices echo and increase in volume as they make their way through the twists and turns of the rock, until they emerge, intimidating and mysterious, in the outside, where the worshippers take them very seriously.

Mason

This integrated community of elves, humans, dwarves, and even a few orcs is a leading producer of nearly every-

thing. The best magical items, weapons, armor, and mechanical devices are made here in Mason. There is also a thriving black market, which sells nearly any illegal commodity a person could want, if they know how to ask the right questions.

Caprola Sleech

This is a slimy mudflat which surrounds Caprola Salse, a mud-producing mountain. Caprola Sleech is ten miles of mud inhabited by the Limivorous Bifurcated Slugs of Navaroo, a horde of mud eating slugs, which are not dangerous but which can be disgusting. Travelers who come through the sleech would be well advised to avoid the mud sloths, which will sneak up on an unwary traveler and consume any stew she might be carrying faster than she can read a short essay.

Caprola Salse

This mud-spewing volcano is topped by Caprola the Oracle. Caprola appears to be merely a tentacle and a female voice, both of which rise up from the mud at the center of this 2,000 foot high volcano. Caprola lives on bowls of piping hot stew delivered to her by those seeking answers to questions about the future. She is not omniscient, and like all self-respecting oracles she never gives a straight answer to any good question unless she gets a whole lot of really great stew in exchange. It is not unusually easy to make Caprola angry, but she will pull down into the mud with her tentacle those



With the help of her roommate, an Evil Costume Design major, Teench Wraithchilde finally passed Demon Summoning 101.

who try to cross her by giving her fake stew. Would-be stew bringers should be advised that Caprola's answers to questions are distorted when she consumes stew which has been tainted by magic — whether it be teleported stew, magically-created stew, or stew which has been transformed into a bird, flown to a location, and transformed back into stew. Since it is nearly impossible to light a fire in the mud, most people who seek answers from the oracle bring the stew with them, even though it is quite difficult to cross the sleet with a bowl of hot stew (especially because of the numerous stew-eating mud sloths on the slow prowl throughout the region).

Mount Extreme

This incredible mountain, which is about four miles high, attracts hundreds of adventurer mountain climbers and ski bums willing to risk their lives for a thrill each year. Mount Extreme is still an active volcano, so in addition to huge year-round snow drifts, it has lava flows for those keen on even more severe challenges, like lava surfing. A number of people like to play mountain golf on its steep slopes, go cord-jumping off some of its cliffs, or use pea shooters to hunt the carnivorous scrape goats.

Western Sea

Brade

Brade is an island which is comprised of a community of humans and a community of elves. Relations between the two groups are tense, and occasionally break out into short wars. The humans are usually accusing the elves of being arrogant and immortal; for their part, the elves here regard the humans as childishly jealous. The thing that really adds fuel to the fire, however, is the local god of both groups, Spath, god of petty conflict. Spath has managed to keep himself on a sort of ambrosial gravy train for years by encouraging this sort of bickering.

Untopia

Untopia is one of those all-too-common paradises where everybody has become so well off that in fact, they're no longer well off. While no one in Untopia is so dissatisfied with her life that she'd call her situation actively *dystopian*, everybody knows there's something wrong with society, and many people long for a return to the old days. In the old days, people say, nobody believed in traditional moral values, unemployment was a real possibility, and there was even occasional crime.

Of course, the fact of the matter is that there never was such a time — Untopia has always been an idyllic place to live. The government is extremely efficient, and bums are always located and given reasonable incomes before they can commit any crimes. People are thus kept well-fed and happy, and have no reason for prejudice or despair. There are no monsters or destructive animals, the weather is pleasant with just the right amount of rain, the children are well-behaved, and the work week is only 6 hours long. The real problem with Untopia is that there's nothing to do when not at work for the other 160 hours of the week. So many people have taken to standing outdoors along roadsides holding signs

that say “will give food for work” that the government has appointed this as the national pastime.

Underwater Mesa

Though most maps (which are designed for sailors) classify Underwater Mesa as an annoyance rather than an island in its own right, the mesa is home to one small, extremely wrinkly human culture. They live upon a flat plain perpetually submerged in about 4 feet of water. This culture ekes out a sadly watery existence, building homes out of rocks, coral, and the occasional piece of driftwood. Everything they own is made from the sea, from their shoes (rocks wrapped in seaweed) to their food (which consists mainly of seafood and salt). The major trade in the area is freshwater, which is “harvested” by people who stand in the rain and hold up large, cup-shaped rocks.

Hydroregion

In an isolated part of the sea lies the Hydroregion, a section of ocean surrounded by a strange pattern of winds and water currents which make it difficult, if not impossible, to leave. Those who inhabit this area live on immense ships and prize dirt above all things. They tell stories of what they call “dry land,” which most believe is a myth, and long for a return to the ancient days, when — it is said — land was plentiful. Those were the times, so the legend goes, before the great floods. Some of the people, who are usually ostracized, are mutants, although no one knows how they got here. (In fact, they came from Raspinocoy Province — see page 216). It is fashionable in the Hydroregion to drink your own urine, although no one knows why.

Norfacordia

Norfacordia is a theocratic monarchy founded by human religious settlers who believed in the unpopular religion of Liverlessness five hundred and thirty years ago. They settled here, confident that they had escaped persecution, and founded their own country. They brought with them their deep faith in certain fundamental truths, particularly the belief that a certain species of ape (now called the Norfacordian Sunshine Ape) has no liver. From this simple but remarkably profound idea, they derived a set of moral principles to guide their lives. These principles have to deal with being respectful of nature, obeying simian authority, and not consuming frosting-covered muffins after 10:00 a.m., except on Tuesdays.

According to the sacred texts, the apes have a very special reason for not having livers — namely, if the apes were to have livers, and those livers were to explode spontaneously and for no apparent reason, the ape would die.

More recently, Norfacordia has been settled by followers of a religion called Those Who Worship Bortan (Bortan being the God of Conventional Religion). There is conflict between these groups, but it’s usually under control. Still, the Liverlessosians control the government, and persecution against Those Who Worship Bortan is not uncommon.

Fort Odontoray

Fort Odontoray was a Norfacordian military base estab-

lished to watch the shores for signs of Mertroll invasion.

Monkeydale

Established in honor of the Norfacordian Sunshine Ape’s lesser cousins, the monkeys, no one in this town has actually ever seen a monkey. Inhabitants of monkeydale are mostly fruit merchants, orchard growers, and birdbath designers.

Noliver

Noliver is the capitol of Norfacordia. Until very recently, it contained the axe in the stone, which (according to Norfacordian legend) had been lodged there, millennia ago, in waiting for the once and future king of Norfacordia (the Liverlessosians brought it with them when they settled here). This king, it was said, would lead the kingdom to a new age of prosperity. However, many Liverlessosians struggled with their faith somewhat when a large and extraordinarily strong troll called Bog managed to lift the sword from its stone sheath and supplanted the former ruler by Simean right. Having a troll ruler (and an unusually stupid one at that) has divided the Liverlessositan majority of Norfacordia, and civil war threatens to erupt.

It is worth noting that a long forgotten guard of elite Liverlessositan martial artists lives under the Noliver castle, where they spend their lives training to protect the ruler of Norfacordia in times of trouble. Since no one remembers their existence any longer, however, they are unlikely to be of much use.

Claymore

Claymore is a fairly forgettable town, best known for its manufacturing of very large weapons and excellent pumpkin pies.

Borderwatch

Borderwatch is a small town founded mainly to keep an eye on the EVIL order of Geseithund to the south, and to observe the antics of Stabathee armies, which are likely to try almost anything. Over half of the town is filled with troops on assignment. They tend to be rather paranoid about newcomers, especially since their jobs have recently gotten much harder as a result of conflict over the legitimacy of the new king.

Suppli

A rather remote town from a Norfacordacentric point of view, Suppli is full of somewhat less devout Liverlessosians than most of the rest of the country. It is a leading manufacturer of small but functional magical devices, such as spilled beer collectors, ring finger-slicers, bells which go off when certain actions are taken, and trash cans which automatically disintegrate their contents after a week.

PARANESIAN COSMOLOGY & BEYOND

Gameality is made up of oodles of different universes, many of which are accessible from the others, at least in theory. One of these universes is Paranesia, the primary universe in which *CoB* takes place. Paranesia basically consists of the heavens and the mortal realm. The mortal realm exists entirely within the heavens. Other realms, such as Hades, also exist within the heavens or within the mortal realm.

The Mortal Realm

The mortal realm is a vast region designated by the gods as a home for the mortals they designed to worship them. It is nestled entirely within the heavens.

The Tempest

An area called the Tempest comprises the main bulk of the mortal realm. It's a vast area filled with stretches of relative emptiness and turbulent cosmic winds. There isn't enough air to fill the entire tempest (the gods apparently didn't waste time creating enough air to go around) so it rushes around in a complex pattern. Some of the tempest winds are unpredictable and violent, while others move about in somewhat consistent patterns; the latter are called slipstreams. Some slipstreams remain stable for hundreds of thousands of years, while others come and go, or change velocity over time. Outside the winds are areas of vacuum.

Various things can be found throughout the tempest. Comets and asteroids aren't uncommon, and there are occasional whirlwind wormholes that suck debris through gameality at impossible speeds. In some less windy areas, various kinds of nebula and black holes also exist. Light from the heavens shines into the tempest, causing pinpricks of light mortals call stars. There is a single sun and a single moon, which are each pulled across the sky by one of the Olympiad's angels on a chariot each day and night.⁹ Most interesting of all, however, are the *terraces* upon which billions of mortals live.

Terraces

Terraces are gigantic slabs of terraced earth buoyed up in the wind by clouds called *nebeculum*. Most terraces have local atmospheres which get blown around in slipstreams with the terraces they surround. Some terraces are populated by millions of beings of various kinds, while others are appar-

ently deserted and even uninhabitable. Most terraces are positioned in slipstreams, though a few sit relatively stationary in areas of low wind speed. Preliminary astrological evidence



indicates that some terraces might be defective, at least from the

⁹ Of course, there are backup celestial bodies in case the primary ones break down.

perspective of the gods. Some terraces also seem to have been created long after the initial formation of the mortal realm and even after the Renaissance. Such terraces may serve a purpose to a particular deity or pantheon of deities, while others are just totally ludicrous and almost certainly serve as little more than some god's idea of a joke. Terraces vary in shape, but most have large

ping over. Those without stalagmites can be quite unstable.

Terrek

Terrek is assumed to be the primary terrace upon which your *CoB* game takes place. However, you are encouraged to set your campaign on another terrace of your invention if you so desire. Terrek resembles a traditional fantasy world in many ways, though it has many important differences. Information regarding specific aspects of life on Terrek can be found all over this book, and are thus not discussed in detail here. However, it is worth noting that Terrek is positioned in a fairly stable slipstream, which completes a rough oval shape every 365 days. During its cycle, Terrek moves closer and closer to the sun's path during about half the time, and further and further away during the other half.¹⁰

Areas of Instability

Contrary to what some gamers might maintain, vices such as cheating, rule stomping, and simply lazy storytelling are not innocent activities, nor are they victimless crimes. They take their toll on the nature of gameality itself. In some parts of Paranesia, the structure of gameality has been broken down by centuries of munchkin-like behavior, overuse of clichés, metagaming, the exploitation of rule loopholes, and so forth. Occasionally, the very rules of the game have started to decay in these places. Events there make less and less sense and become inconsistent and illogical. Entry into the mechanosphere (see page 233) is easier here, and it's also a simpler matter to abuse the rules. The adventurer who seeks to exploit this fact to her benefit should be warned, however, that these unstable areas can be as dangerous as they are useful.

The Heavens

Far above, below, and to the sides of the mortal realm are the heavens — the majestic home of the gods. The heavens dwarf the mortal realm in size. The border between the two realms is a gradual one; as the tempest dies down, it is slowly replaced by an disorienting warping of time and space and an incomprehensible yet beautiful chorus. When you encounter a warm, golden light which seems to radiate from nowhere and everywhere all at once, you have arrived in the heavens.

Heavenscape

The heavenscape is the divine equivalent of the tempest, and in fact both areas contain many of the same phenomena. Heavenly clouds support great land masses in much the same fashion as they hold terraces, and comets streak across the heavenscape just as they do in the realm of mortals. Nearly any geographical feature found on a terrace in the

¹⁰ With one brief, highly deviant exception about a third of the way through the summer. This twenty-four hour phenomenon is a good example of what quirks can do, and the day on which it takes place is known as *The Day That Really Sucks* in many parts of Terrek.



stalagmites underneath which help prevent them from tip-

mortal realm probably exists in some more fundamental way in the heavens, only with clouds supporting it.

Otherwise, though, the heavens are vastly different from the mortal realm. While the tempest of the mortal realm keeps mortals relatively isolated on individual terraces, the heavenscape is relatively open to easy travel — flight is a much more conceptual process than a physical one, requiring no wings or special abilities. Any being can fly in the heavens as easily as they can run or swim. Thus gods move across their realm far easier than mortals can move about the mortal realm, despite its correspondingly greater size. For deities, therefore, there are no hard distinctions between the heavenscape and the areas they occupy. Most move back and forth between slabs of earth, clouds, or whatever else as they please.

In the heavenscape, a variety of kinds and colors of clouds support all sorts of different things. Boulders, bodies of water, bizarre forests, giant beanstalks, pebbles, and much more all rest upon the strangely substantial mists. In places, there are giant displays of pyrotechnics, huge balls of burning tar, electrical discharges, and lava flows. Not everything has a fixed location; most objects drift gently from place to place, and beings sometimes move the landscape around.

Golden light radiates from everything in the heavens. The realm experiences no night in the literal sense, but at regular intervals the pervasive light turns a dark olive-brown or a deep blue, making the area seem very much like night. Not every place in the heavens experiences these nocturnal periods, however, and some areas never experience the day. In fact both heavenly lighting conditions and weather patterns tend to be extremely localized. Most places remain consistently warm and pleasant, although displays of bad weather are not unheard of. Actually, heavenly weather and day cycles are usually linked to the moods of nearby deities, if any.

Gods seem to be capable of shaping the clouds to their liking. They also build all kinds of diverse structures upon them. The ones they live in are called spheres, although they aren't necessarily spherical. Various monsters — the behemoths — also inhabit the heavens.

Creation Error Areas

In every creative process, some experimentation and error are necessary for success. Gods are perhaps more fundamental than mortals in their way of looking at the world, but loathe as most would be to admit it, they aren't significantly less likely to make mistakes. Thus entire sections of the heavens are littered with discarded substances, creatures, and even raw concepts which were once created by some god on the way to discovering how to make something better. Indeed, in some places, the very laws of gameality became warped as the gods played with them. In such areas, common sense and logic themselves may completely break down — for example, four and four may no longer equal eight, and small pink lizards named Hugo may be as likely to materialize out of nowhere as not.

The Underworld

A few hundred years after the creation of the mortal realm, there were thousands of bodiless souls — that is, ghosts —

wandering around uselessly in the mortal realm, generally making nuisances of themselves and occasionally even thwarting the gods. This irritated the Olympiad, but between managing the heavenly war and inspiring their worshippers, they didn't have much time to rectify the situation.¹¹ So to keep the superfluous ghosts from causing trouble, the Olympiad shuffled them into an afterlife made entirely of spirit, created specifically for that purpose. This place was called Hades.

Many years later, when gods began to compete for worship as a means of enticing mortals to choose them over other divinities, the process took on greater significance. Gods began to promise eternal salvation in an afterlife in exchange for a lifetime of devotion. As other gods developed afterlives of their own, Hades came to be seen as a reward for a life of devotion to the Olympiad, and other mortals ceased to be transferred there at death. Mortals without religious affiliations were again abandoned to walk their terrace eternally. Today most people who worship a god during their lives are rewarded with an afterlife after death, though the exact nature of the afterlife varies tremendously from god to god.¹²

The *underworld* is a collective term for the majority of afterlives, which are grouped together in a region of the heavens. Afterlives are usually separated from each other and the rest of the heavens by some kind of supposedly impassable geographical barrier, to prevent mortals from moving freely between them. There are almost as many afterlives as there are gods or united pantheons with a desire to accumulate ambrosia, which is to say there are a lot of them. Afterlives are filled with various spiritual objects (in addition to physical objects), which their spiritual inhabitants can manipulate. Ghosts who reside permanently in the mortal realm, on the other hand, are forced to deal primarily with material objects (which they have a great deal of difficulty manipulating).

Hades

The afterlife of the Olympiad is called Hades, and it's partitioned off from the rest of the underworld by the river Twygs. Since most people still worship the Olympiad, most end up there eventually. Hades has a relaxed atmosphere and it's not without its perks, but all things considered, it's a rather mediocre way to spend eternity. Most souls there long for another life after a few decades, but few get one; gods consider it far too much trouble to create new worshippers with old souls when mortals are happy to do it for them by reproducing. Hades is always immensely overpopulated, despite continual construction.

Tartarus

To the west of the river Twygs lies Tartarus, the realm into which the elder gods were banished. Its foreboding entrance is marked by a grove of black poplars, and around it on the other side lies an ocean which is supposedly infinite (although it actually isn't).

¹¹ *Destroying souls is a messy, time-consuming process.*

¹² *Some gods reincarnate their followers instead, though this is a time-intensive activity.*

Beyond Paranesia

CoB typically takes place in Paranesia. However, every place ever imagined anywhere by anyone exists *somewhere* in the *CoB* world (although for copyright reasons, some universes are further away than others). Hence, it's possible to be in a totally different universe while playing this game. If you want to go adventuring in an exotic locale, choose from any of the universes presented in real life popular fiction, literature, other roleplaying games, or your own imagination and find some rationalization for a gateway to there from Paranesia. It's even possible to set your campaign there permanently. Note, however, that knowledge about most of these realms is uncommon.

Just a few of the unlimited number of extra-Paranesian gamealities (ones can mention because they don't happen to be protected by law) include:

Gygaxia

When matter leaking out of a gameality in a Certain Other Popular Fantasy Roleplaying Game Realm™ somehow connected with a batch of Paranesian quirks, the resulting metamechanical reactions formed a brand new realm called Gygaxia. During the dark ages, the gods used the realm of Gygaxia as prison for dangerously powerful adventurers who seemed in danger of challenging their divine masters. Any adventurer the gods suspected was becoming dangerously powerful would be exiled to this highly addictive universe.

The realm of Gygaxia is topped by a single city called Arneston, a friendly city of shops and bars. Outside the bounds of Arneston lies a boundless wilderness full of strange monsters and oodles of passageways leading down. From these places, or even from certain places in Arneston, it's possible to descend into the place most people think of when they think of Gygaxia — the infinite underground labyrinth which consists of deeper and deeper levels of dank rooms and corridors which become deadlier and potentially more lucrative as you descend. Terrible fiends (including numerous dragons) and traps await adventurers, as do fabulous riches and powerful magic items.

The basic unit of currency in Gygaxia is the *expee*, which — in Arneston — can be traded for potions which enhance one's abilities. Status in Gygaxia is based on a system of levels, which itself is based on how many of these *expee* you've acquired. For thousands of years, many of the most powerful adventurers in gameality thrived on the challenges the realm provided.

Today deportation to Gygaxia is not much more than a vague legend, but there are gateways to and from it to Paranesia, and there is some travel between the two realms. Many adventurers make a good living traveling back and forth through these gates with immense hauls of treasure. In memory of the old days when exile to Gygaxia was a prison for adventurers, many people still refer to it as the Dungeon.

Alteranesia

It seems that every respectable universe has a mirror version, and Paranesia is no exception. Paranesia's dark equivalent is Alteranesia. Everything in Paranesia has a twisted counterpart in Alteranesia — beings which are evil here are

good there, beings which are good are evil, and people who are clean-shaven are much more inclined to sport goatees or wear their hair slightly differently. Overall people and things in Alteranesia are mostly like their Paranesian doubles, but with one or two fundamental changes.

Interestingly, the basic structure and history of Alteranesia remain parallel even as centuries pass and even as its inhabitants interact with Paranesians. No matter what changes occur, everything seems to work itself out eventually so that a basic equilibrium is maintained.

A good argument can be made that the realm is not as stable or as real as the Paranesia. Some say that like a mirror's reflection, it does not even completely exist. Still, using magical means, it is possible to travel there and back, or for denizens of that realm to travel here.

The Duskrealm

Another realm, called the Duskrealm, is reportedly a place of unmitigated evil. According to legend, this realm was created long ago when the forces of good attempted to force all evil permanently out of Paranesia into a realm of its own. They were almost successful, but the forces of neutrality — pursuing balance, as always — foiled their attempt at the last minute, resulting in a place that many evil entities call home, but are not necessarily bound to. Travel between Paranesia and the Duskrealm isn't easy, but it does take place. Reliable sources call the Duskrealm a really ludicrously terrifying place filled with powerful undead, big ickies, strange accents and not a whole lot of sunlight. Allegedly, the critters there are nasty enough to literally scare your pants off.

The Real World

The real world — the place in which you (the player) exist when you game, and the universe in which you go to work or school every day — exists in the *CoB* world as well. (In fact, it exists much more so than most other realms, since unlike such realms, it *actually* exists.) It's theoretically possible to visit the real world, or to interact with your players from the game. In rare instances, ambitious characters which a knowledge about reality have attempted to take over their player's minds or steal their player's snacks in the middle of the session. How this impacts your game is up to you...

Other Universes

A practically unlimited number of other universes exist beyond Paranesia, and in them lies nearly anything you can imagine. Any character or object from any story you've ever heard has actual existence somewhere, and every idea, whether it makes sense or not, is real. Real world television sitcoms, other roleplaying games, and abstractions with anthropomorphic personalities (like death or the number 5) actually exist. Sometimes these things get out of their universes and into Paranesia, leading to some wacky shenanigans and/or crazy mixed-up antics. It's also possible to travel into other universes.

Mechanosphere

The mechanosphere is a sort of halfway point between gameality and reality. It lies underneath the world familiar to

player characters, in a mystical realm known to few and accessible to virtually none. The mechanosphere is the realm where the calculations which govern the rules of the game are played out, determining whether characters succeed or fail at their actions, and what happens when to which characters. Locations in the mechanosphere correspond to particular locations in the rest of gameality, but although it is possible to move across its homogenous terrain, it is not possible to navigate reliably through it.

A PC standing in the mechanosphere (or looking into it through a rip in the fabric of gameality) will see a surreal landscape of dice, calculations, beams of raw energy, and shadows of events in gameality. In the background, the PC will hear the sound of calculations being performed at a rapid rate. In the foreground, the PC will hear the distorted voices of the players, for everything said at the gaming table echoes down through the mechanosphere. This is a one of the most terrifying aspects of the realm, but also one of the most potentially useful aspects.

However, the *most* useful part of the mechanosphere are the many small “matrixes,” each of which is lined with various rows and columns of ten-sided dice. Each die has a single digit between zero and nine facing up, and a person near one of these matrixes can change these numbers simply by turning a die. Astoundingly, these dice actually control the rules of the game! A person turning the right dice to the correct numbers in the proper sequence can implement any desired change to the rules. However, this is a dangerous procedure; a person who simply adjusts dice without any knowledge is likely to change rules without rhyme or reason, resulting in chaos. These changes are usually local to the part of gameality to which they correspond, though not necessarily.

Entering or exiting the mechanosphere is also difficult process, and is always the result of highly unusual magic or weaknesses in the structure of gameality.

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 12

On Allies & Adversaries: Gods, Mortals, & Monsters

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Adventuring just isn't the same without allies and adversaries. From gods to shoe shiners, from monsters to salt salespeople, here are the friends and foes which help and hinder your wanderings through Paranesia.

INSTANT PEOPLE

CoB is more about colorful characters than character statistics. In the interests of not having to drop everything to create a set of statistics for every character the players encounter, these rules are provided. It's usually best to hand craft your most important NPCs, either by using the rules for character creation or just by assigning ratings to all of a character's proficiencies based on what you want for that character. When you can't or don't want to, though, here are some alternatives.

Generic Characters Chart

<i>Ordinary</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Highly Able</i>	<i>Powerful</i>
RP +2	RP +4	RP +8	RP +16

As Generic As They Come

If you need a character and you don't want to take the time to come up with any stats for him, assume that he has a base rating of 2 plus his racial predisposition in all of his proficiencies. If the character uses a proficiency semi-frequently, like an explorer might use Maneuver / Agility / Climbing, or a catapult designer might use Maneuver / Aiming / Launching, add +4 instead. If the character uses the proficiency extremely often, like a gung-ho salesperson uses Eloquence / Elocution / Enticement, or the food-taster of an extremely unpopular emperor uses Resolve / Endurance / Resisting Poison, add +8 instead. This should cover all relatively normal people — add more to these proficiencies if you want to create a really superb individual. Keep in mind that those with proficiencies in the range of 20 or higher are truly divine in their abilities, and you should hardly ever encounter such people. Also remember that powerful characters — even deities — have many low proficiencies for every high proficiency they have. The God of Slaughter might well have a proficiency of 26 in her Prowess proficiencies, but that doesn't mean a mortal couldn't best her at a fiddle contest.

Slightly Less Generic Characters

For times when you just want a character with complete statistics already provided, a number of standard archetypes of different types of people with different power levels you can use are given.

DEITIES & DEMIGODS

In ancient times when gods began to take up domains, it was relatively easy to establish yourself as the "gods of" a particular thing. Today, it's a bit harder. All gods are supposed to register their domains with a divine organization called Celestial Services, which is a real bureaucracy. This is meant

Sample Character Chart

SIMP = Starting Character / Professional Character / Master Character

Assassin	Sprite	Halfling	Dwarf	Orc	Human	Elf	Troll	Dryad
<i>Prowess</i>								
Grappling	6/7/7	6/7/7	8/9/9	10/11/11	8/9/9	7/8/8	11/12/12	9/10/10
Strength	6/7/8	7/8/9	9/10/11	8/9/10	8/9/10	8/9/10	11/12/13	10/11/12
Swinging	6/7/7	8/9/9	9/10/10	8/9/9	8/9/9	7/8/8	11/12/12	9/10/10
Thrusting	9/13/17	7/11/15	8/12/16	9/13/17	9/13/17	9/13/17	8/12/16	11/15/19
<i>Maneuver</i>								
Agility	12/15/18	12/15/18	9/12/15	10/13/16	10/13/16	11/14/17	10/13/16	10/13/16
Aiming	11/15/19	11/15/19	9/13/17	10/14/18	10/14/18	12/16/20	10/14/18	9/13/17
Dexterity	13/16/19	11/14/17	9/12/15	11/14/17	10/13/16	11/14/17	9/12/15	9/12/15
Wits	9/12/14	9/12/14	7/10/12	9/12/14	8/11/13	9/12/14	7/10/12	7/10/12
<i>Resolve</i>								
Concentration	8/11/12	9/12/13	10/13/14	9/12/13	9/12/13	8/11/12	11/14/15	11/14/15
Endurance	6/8/10	8/10/12	9/11/13	9/11/13	7/9/11	6/8/10	10/12/14	8/10/12
Evocation	6/9/11	7/10/12	7/10/12	7/10/12	7/10/12	6/9/11	7/10/12	6/9/11
Resilience	6/9/11	8/11/13	9/12/14	8/11/13	7/10/12	7/10/12	8/11/13	7/10/12
<i>Intuition</i>								
Awareness	8/9/11	10/11/13	9/10/12	9/10/12	9/10/12	9/10/12	10/11/13	9/10/12
Instinct	9/10/12	10/11/13	10/11/13	12/13/15	10/11/13	10/11/13	12/13/15	11/12/14
Savvy	11/13/16	10/12/15	10/12/15	8/10/13	10/12/15	10/12/15	8/10/13	9/11/14
Wisdom	7/8/10	9/10/12	7/8/10	7/8/10	9/10/12	9/10/12	7/8/10	10/11/13
<i>Eloquence</i>								
Creativity	10/11/12	6/7/8	6/7/8	5/6/7	7/8/9	8/9/10	6/7/8	6/7/8
Elocution	6/7/8	8/9/10	6/7/8	6/7/8	7/8/9	8/9/10	5/6/7	7/8/9
Emoting	9/10/11	8/9/10	7/8/9	7/8/9	8/9/10	9/10/11	7/8/9	6/7/8
Subterfuge	11/15/19	11/15/19	9/13/17	9/13/17	10/14/18	10/14/18	8/12/16	9/13/17
<i>Intellect</i>								
Crafting	6/7/7	7/8/8	9/10/10	8/9/9	7/8/8	6/7/7	6/7/7	6/7/7
Inventiveness	8/10/13	7/9/12	12/14/17	9/11/14	9/11/14	8/10/13	7/9/12	7/9/12
Erudition	6/7/7	9/10/10	9/10/10	6/7/7	7/8/8	6/7/7	6/7/7	8/9/9
Reasoning	6/7/7	8/9/9	5/6/6	6/7/7	7/8/8	7/8/8	5/6/6	8/9/9
<i>Vision</i>								
Aether	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6
Cosmos	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6
Force	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	7/7/7	6/6/6	5/5/5	7/7/7	6/6/6
Matter	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	7/7/7	6/6/6	7/7/7	7/7/7	5/5/5
<i>Presence</i>								
Aether	8/10/12	5/7/9	5/7/9	5/7/9	6/8/10	7/9/11	4/6/8	5/7/9
Cosmos	7/9/11	5/7/9	5/7/9	5/7/9	6/8/10	7/9/11	4/6/8	5/7/9
Force	7/9/11	5/7/9	7/9/11	5/7/9	6/8/10	5/7/9	5/7/9	6/8/10
Matter	7/9/11	5/7/9	5/7/9	5/7/9	6/8/10	5/7/9	5/7/9	5/7/9
<i>Magic Points</i>	2/30/60	2/30/60	2/30/60	2/30/60	2/30/60	2/30/60	2/30/60	2/30/60
Avatar	Sprite	Halfling	Dwarf	Orc	Human	Elf	Troll	Dryad
<i>Prowess</i>								
Grappling	5/6/7	5/6/7	7/8/9	9/10/11	7/8/9	6/7/8	10/11/12	8/9/10
Strength	5/5/7	6/6/8	8/8/10	7/7/9	7/7/9	7/7/9	10/10/12	9/9/11
Swinging	5/6/7	7/8/9	8/9/10	7/8/9	7/8/9	6/7/8	10/11/12	8/9/10
Thrusting	7/9/11	5/7/9	6/8/10	7/9/11	7/9/11	7/9/11	6/8/10	9/11/13
<i>Maneuver</i>								
Agility	8/9/10	8/9/10	5/6/7	6/7/8	6/7/8	7/8/9	6/7/8	6/7/8
Aiming	7/8/9	7/8/9	5/6/7	6/7/8	6/7/8	8/9/10	6/7/8	5/6/7
Dexterity	9/10/11	7/8/9	5/6/7	7/8/9	6/7/8	7/8/9	5/6/7	5/6/7
Wits	7/9/11	7/9/11	5/7/9	7/9/11	6/8/10	7/9/11	5/7/9	5/7/9
<i>Resolve</i>								
Concentration	9/13/17	10/14/18	11/15/19	10/14/18	10/14/18	9/13/17	12/16/20	12/16/20
Endurance	6/7/8	8/9/10	9/10/11	9/10/11	7/8/9	6/7/8	10/11/12	8/9/10
Evocation	7/9/12	8/10/13	8/10/13	8/10/13	8/10/13	7/9/12	8/10/13	7/9/12
Resilience	8/10/13	10/12/15	11/13/16	10/12/15	9/11/14	9/11/14	10/12/15	9/11/14
<i>Intuition</i>								
Awareness	6/7/8	8/9/10	7/8/9	7/8/9	7/8/9	7/8/9	8/9/10	7/8/9
Instinct	6/7/8	7/8/9	7/8/9	9/10/11	7/8/9	7/8/9	9/10/11	8/9/10
Savvy	8/8/9	7/7/8	7/7/8	5/5/6	7/7/8	7/7/8	5/5/6	6/6/7
Wisdom	5/6/7	7/8/9	5/6/7	5/6/7	7/8/9	7/8/9	5/6/7	8/9/10
<i>Eloquence</i>								
Creativity	10/12/13	6/8/9	6/8/9	5/7/8	7/9/10	8/10/11	6/8/9	6/8/9
Elocution	8/12/15	10/14/17	8/12/15	8/12/15	9/13/16	10/14/17	7/11/14	9/13/16
Emoting	10/14/17	9/13/16	8/12/15	8/12/15	9/13/16	10/14/17	8/12/15	7/11/14
Subterfuge	8/10/11	8/10/11	6/8/9	6/8/9	7/9/10	7/9/10	5/7/8	6/8/9
<i>Intellect</i>								
Crafting	6/7/7	7/8/8	9/10/10	8/9/9	7/8/8	6/7/7	6/7/7	6/7/7
Inventiveness	6/6/6	5/5/5	10/10/10	7/7/7	7/7/7	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5
Erudition	6/7/7	9/10/10	9/10/10	6/7/7	7/8/8	6/7/7	6/7/7	8/9/9
Reasoning	6/6/7	8/8/9	5/5/6	6/6/7	7/7/8	7/7/8	5/5/6	8/8/9
<i>Vision</i>								
Aether	9/13/17	9/13/17	9/13/17	10/14/18	10/14/18	9/13/17	9/13/17	10/14/18
Cosmos	9/13/17	9/13/17	9/13/17	10/14/18	10/14/18	9/13/17	9/13/17	10/14/18
Force	9/13/17	9/13/17	10/14/18	11/15/19	10/14/18	9/13/17	11/15/19	10/14/18
Matter	9/13/17	9/13/17	9/13/17	11/15/19	10/14/18	11/15/19	11/15/19	9/13/17
<i>Presence</i>								
Aether	8/8/8	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	7/7/7	4/4/4	5/5/5
Cosmos	7/7/7	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	7/7/7	4/4/4	5/5/5
Force	7/7/7	5/5/5	7/7/7	5/5/5	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6
Matter	7/7/7	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5
<i>Magic Points</i>	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135

Thief	Sprite	Halfling	Dwarf	Orc	Human	Elf	Troll	Dryad
<i>Prowess</i>								
Grappling	6/7/8	6/7/8	8/9/10	10/11/12	8/9/10	7/8/9	11/12/13	9/10/11
Strength	6/7/8	7/8/9	9/10/11	8/9/10	8/9/10	8/9/10	11/12/13	10/11/12
Swinging	6/7/8	8/9/10	9/10/11	8/9/10	8/9/10	7/8/9	11/12/13	9/10/11
Thrusting	9/14/18	7/12/16	8/13/17	9/14/18	9/14/18	9/14/18	8/13/17	11/16/20
<i>Maneuver</i>								
Agility	10/12/14	10/12/14	7/9/11	8/10/12	8/10/12	9/11/13	8/10/12	8/10/12
Aiming	9/11/13	9/11/13	7/9/11	8/10/12	8/10/12	10/12/14	8/10/12	7/9/11
Dexterity	13/17/21	11/15/19	9/13/17	11/15/19	10/14/18	11/15/19	9/13/17	9/13/17
Wits	11/15/19	11/15/19	9/13/17	11/15/19	10/14/18	11/15/19	9/13/17	9/13/17
<i>Resolve</i>								
Concentration	7/9/10	8/10/11	9/11/12	8/10/11	8/10/11	7/9/10	10/12/13	10/12/13
Endurance	5/7/9	7/9/11	8/10/12	8/10/12	6/8/10	5/7/9	9/11/13	7/9/11
Evocation	7/9/10	8/10/11	8/10/11	8/10/11	8/10/11	7/9/10	8/10/11	7/9/10
Resilience	7/9/10	9/11/12	10/12/13	9/11/12	8/10/11	8/10/11	9/11/12	8/10/11
<i>Intuition</i>								
Awareness	9/13/17	11/15/19	10/14/18	10/14/18	10/14/18	10/14/18	11/15/19	10/14/18
Instinct	8/10/13	9/11/14	9/11/14	11/13/16	9/11/14	9/11/14	11/13/16	10/12/15
Savvy	11/15/19	10/14/18	10/14/18	8/12/16	10/14/18	10/14/18	8/12/16	9/13/17
Wisdom	7/9/12	9/11/14	7/9/12	7/9/12	9/11/14	9/11/14	7/9/12	10/12/15
<i>Eloquence</i>								
Creativity	10/11/12	6/7/8	6/7/8	5/6/7	7/8/9	8/9/10	6/7/8	6/7/8
Elocution	7/8/11	9/10/13	7/8/11	7/8/11	8/9/12	9/10/13	6/7/10	8/9/12
Emoting	10/12/14	9/11/13	8/10/12	8/10/12	9/11/13	10/12/14	8/10/12	7/9/11
Subterfuge	11/15/19	11/15/19	9/13/17	9/13/17	10/14/18	10/14/18	8/12/16	9/13/17
<i>Intellect</i>								
Crafting	6/6/6	7/7/7	9/9/9	8/8/8	7/7/7	6/6/6	6/6/6	6/6/6
Inventiveness	6/6/6	5/5/5	10/10/10	7/7/7	7/7/7	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5
Erudition	6/6/6	9/9/9	9/9/9	6/6/6	7/7/7	6/6/6	6/6/6	8/8/8
Reasoning	6/6/6	8/8/8	5/5/5	6/6/6	7/7/7	7/7/7	5/5/5	8/8/8
<i>Vision</i>								
Aether	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6
Cosmos	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6
Force	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	7/7/7	6/6/6	5/5/5	7/7/7	6/6/6
Matter	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	7/7/7	6/6/6	7/7/7	7/7/7	5/5/5
<i>Presence</i>								
Aether	8/8/8	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	7/7/7	4/4/4	5/5/5
Cosmos	7/7/7	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	7/7/7	4/4/4	5/5/5
Force	7/7/7	5/5/5	7/7/7	5/5/5	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6
Matter	7/7/7	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5
<i>Magic Points</i>	2/3/3	2/3/3	2/3/3	2/3/3	2/3/3	2/3/3	2/3/3	2/3/3
Wizard	Sprite	Halfling	Dwarf	Orc	Human	Elf	Troll	Dryad
<i>Prowess</i>								
Grappling	4/4/5	4/4/5	6/6/7	8/8/9	6/6/7	5/5/6	9/9/10	7/7/8
Strength	4/4/5	5/5/6	7/7/8	6/6/7	6/6/7	6/6/7	9/9/10	8/8/9
Swinging	4/4/5	6/6/7	7/7/8	6/6/7	6/6/7	5/5/6	9/9/10	7/7/8
Thrusting	6/7/8	4/5/6	5/6/7	6/7/8	6/7/8	6/7/8	5/6/7	8/9/10
<i>Maneuver</i>								
Agility	8/9/10	8/9/10	5/6/7	6/7/8	6/7/8	7/8/9	6/7/8	6/7/8
Aiming	8/11/13	8/11/13	6/9/11	7/10/12	7/10/12	9/12/14	7/10/12	6/9/11
Dexterity	9/10/11	7/8/9	5/6/7	7/8/9	6/7/8	7/8/9	5/6/7	5/6/7
Wits	7/8/9	7/8/9	5/6/7	7/8/9	6/7/8	7/8/9	5/6/7	5/6/7
<i>Resolve</i>								
Concentration	9/13/17	10/14/18	11/15/19	10/14/18	10/14/18	9/13/17	12/16/20	12/16/20
Endurance	6/7/8	8/9/10	9/10/11	9/10/11	7/8/9	6/7/8	10/11/12	8/9/10
Evocation	8/10/13	9/11/14	9/11/14	9/11/14	9/11/14	8/10/13	9/11/14	8/10/13
Resilience	8/10/13	10/12/15	11/13/16	10/12/15	9/11/14	9/11/14	10/12/15	9/11/14
<i>Intuition</i>								
Awareness	6/7/8	8/9/10	7/8/9	7/8/9	7/8/9	7/8/9	8/9/10	7/8/9
Instinct	6/7/8	7/8/9	7/8/9	9/10/11	7/8/9	7/8/9	9/10/11	8/9/10
Savvy	8/8/9	7/7/8	7/7/8	5/5/6	7/7/8	7/7/8	5/5/6	6/6/7
Wisdom	5/6/7	7/8/9	5/6/7	5/6/7	7/8/9	7/8/9	5/6/7	8/9/10
<i>Eloquence</i>								
Creativity	10/10/10	6/6/6	6/6/6	5/5/5	7/7/7	8/8/8	6/6/6	6/6/6
Elocution	6/6/7	8/8/9	6/6/7	6/6/7	7/7/8	8/8/9	5/5/6	7/7/8
Emoting	8/8/9	7/7/8	6/6/7	6/6/7	7/7/8	8/8/9	6/6/7	5/5/6
Subterfuge	8/8/8	8/8/8	6/6/6	6/6/6	7/7/7	7/7/7	5/5/5	6/6/6
<i>Intellect</i>								
Crafting	6/8/9	7/9/10	9/11/12	8/10/11	7/9/10	6/8/9	6/8/9	6/8/9
Inventiveness	6/9/10	5/8/9	10/13/14	7/10/11	7/10/11	6/9/10	5/8/9	5/8/9
Erudition	8/12/15	11/15/18	11/15/18	8/12/15	9/13/16	8/12/15	8/12/15	10/14/17
Reasoning	8/12/15	10/14/17	7/11/14	8/12/15	9/13/16	9/13/16	7/11/14	10/14/17
<i>Vision</i>								
Aether	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6
Cosmos	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	6/6/6	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6
Force	5/5/5	5/5/5	6/6/6	7/7/7	6/6/6	5/5/5	7/7/7	6/6/6
Matter	5/5/5	5/5/5	5/5/5	7/7/7	6/6/6	7/7/7	7/7/7	5/5/5
<i>Presence</i>								
Aether	12/16/20	9/13/17	9/13/17	9/13/17	10/14/18	11/15/19	8/12/16	9/13/17
Cosmos	11/15/19	9/13/17	9/13/17	9/13/17	10/14/18	11/15/19	8/12/16	9/13/17
Force	11/15/19	9/13/17	11/15/19	9/13/17	10/14/18	9/13/17	9/13/17	10/14/18
Matter	11/15/19	9/13/17	9/13/17	9/13/17	10/14/18	9/13/17	9/13/17	9/13/17
<i>Magic Points</i>	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135	44/90/135

to prevent overlap, but it's only partially successful, and sometimes gods contest each other's domains.

The following are some of the gods which exist and their domains — the members of the modern Olympiad and a number of other deities. Of course, innumerable others exist.

The Olympiad

The original Olympiad decided on eight domains in order to divide the labor of running the Olympiad and keeping the mortal realm functional. When the new Olympiad took over, they assumed these same offices, although some of the titles no longer made much sense.

The modern Olympiad is comprised largely of hedonists, and it has two main goals. First, it endeavors to maintain its power and status. Second — and partially as a means to this — it tries to inspire ridiculous behavior in mortals.

Different people worship the Olympiad in different ways. Most worship them as a group, but each god has those who worship her or him directly. Worshipping the Olympiad as a group is the most common religious belief system in Paranesia, which is why these gods have so much power.

- **God of Death (Hades):** The God of Death office was established to maintain the Olympiad's afterlife and manage mortals after they died. Hades filled this post in the old days, and he still does the job. Hades is a relaxed fellow who was just as content to do his job as a member of the new Olympiad as he was with the old. He is probably the only member of the old Olympiad who has a sense of humor — albeit a rather subtle one — which is probably why the new Olympiad initially let him stick around. For some reason, Hades has a reputation among mortals for being untrustworthy. In fact, he usually keeps his word, but he does enforce his contracts to the letter. Hades is an excellent violin player, and he has a standing challenge to anyone who can best him at it. He has the ability to manifest either as a satyr, a human in red tights carrying a pitchfork, a robed skeleton, or a hippie. His common worshippers include people who are afraid of death, the undead, and evil people who misunderstand him.

- **God of Fate (Serand):** The God of Fate office was never particularly well defined. It had to do with the subtle manipulation of mortals for miscellaneous purposes, especially calling on people to meet their end at appropriate times, or calling others into the service of the Olympiad as avatars. The new God of Fate, Serand, is just as insidious a manipulator as the old Fate, but he has the goal of encouraging all kinds of bizarre activities and unpredictable coincidences. He likes to gamble and enjoys appearing in each of his three incarnations, the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone, depending on which seems least appropriate under the circumstances. Regardless of his form, Serand retains his natural voice, which is deep and booming. His common worshippers include gamblers, thieves, and people who have no skills. He is sometimes called “Lady Luck,” a title which he seems alternately proud of and insulted by, depending on his mood, and on who refers to him as such.

- **God of Leadership (Claxil):** The God of Leadership was responsible for keeping the Olympiad united and organized when facing other gods and when maintaining the mortal

realm. Claxil, the new God of Leadership, fills more or less the same function. She's usually more sensible than most of the rest of the new Olympiad, and she does her best to avoid the same mistakes the old Olympiad made. Her main weakness is that she can't help but torment mortals, especially the ones who, in her view, take themselves too seriously. The Crusaders are her favorite target. Claxil is a great organizer (she organized the raid against the old Olympiad, after all), and she throws great parties. She typically manifests as a shepherd, with the head of a sheep. Her common worshippers include rulers, politicians, managers, crime bosses, and other leaders.

- **God of Love (Aphrodite):** The God of Love was responsible for keeping mortals from having so much conflict that they wiped each other out. Aphrodite, who was the old God of Love, still occupies this office. Although she is actually a rather traditional old Olympiad god, she manages to remain with the new gods by using her powers of love to charm them into letting her stay. Aphrodite spends most of her time encouraging her followers to worship her, and she does so quite skillfully, mainly by making liberal use of the perks which come with her office. Unlike all the other gods of the Olympiad, only Aphrodite is primarily motivated by a lust for power. She usually manifests as a beautiful human or elven woman, but she has a male form, a hermaphroditic form, and a (hardly used) neuter form. Her common worshippers include the lonely, the lovesick, and those who seek exotic or thrilling experiences.

- **God of Physics (Nostram):** The God of Physics enforced the laws of physics and made sure that a thousand physical tasks related to the mortal realm got done. Important duties of the office included keeping the terraces in their slipstreams, overseeing that the sun came up in the morning, keeping gravity working, and various other things. The new God of Physics is called Nostram. She's probably the biggest drunkard of the bunch, and she sometimes neglects her duties, so if your breakfast vanishes into nothingness in violation of the laws of thermodynamics, or if your arrows seem to be immune to the effects of friction occasionally, it's probably Nostram's fault. When she isn't drunk, and sometimes when she is, Nostram is rather artistically inclined, and she likes to create physical impossibilities. She usually manifests as a wild-eyed mad scientist. She is sometimes worshipped by scientists, but more often by mages who wish to defy the laws of science.

- **God of Nature (Nurch):** The God of Nature was responsible for the maintaining the biological components of the mortal realm, from bugs and herbs to elves and trolls. The new god of nature is called Nurch. He enjoys his job, and fancies himself a sort of cross between a park ranger and a parent to the world. He dislikes the indiscriminate use of magic among mortals, and he also doesn't care for the destruction of natural things, except when he does it (he can be quite a hypocrite). Nurch often works with Serand to decide who lives and who dies. His hobbies include creating ecosystems, which often have some strange creatures thrown in to make things work properly. He usually appears as an attractive, well-defined, scantily clad male elf or as a plain-looking human in a park ranger costume. Occasionally,

when he wants to intimidate adventurers who are careless with fire, he manifests as a bear carrying a shovel. His primary worshippers are dryads and technologically unsophisticated races.

- **God of Sanity (Dower):** The old God of Sanity was responsible for inhibiting mortal silliness and keeping things fairly ordinary in the mortal realm in order to prevent rebellion. When the Olympiad was overthrown, the position was filled by a former mortal named Dower. Strangely, Dower actually shares the goal of his predecessor — to increase the sanity in the world. However, Dower is actually totally insane himself, and his definition of a sane world changes on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis. One moment Dower might decide that a normal world is dominated by talking chickens; the next he might believe that the primary attribute of a sane universe has mucus as a form of precipitation. Allegedly, Dower was more sane before he became a god, and was driven nuts as a result of the stress of becoming divine. It probably doesn't help that he also consumes large quantities of fermented ambrosia. Dower usually appears in the form of a very ordinary-looking male human wearing a tie and a cardigan.

- **God of Wrath (Chole):** The God of Wrath was responsible for punishing uppity mortals and forcing them to obey the will of the Olympiad. The new Olympiad's God of Wrath, Chole, isn't really very interested in genocide and pestilence like the old one was, although she is not especially subtle and she does enjoy a good whimsical fight involving a strange location and lots of props. She especially likes bizarre ritual combat and drunken brawls (which has earned her the worship of many dwarves), and she is interested in the mechanics of power struggles, which she does her best to facilitate in bizarre ways. She actually devotes much of her time to her immense ambrosial vineyard, where she makes the vine that the Olympiad stays drunk on. Her original form was that of a halfling, though she sometimes manifests as a very drunk and very mean-looking dwarf. Other times she manifests simultaneously as three gorillas.

MONSTERS

Where would adventurers be without monsters? Here are a few beasts to ignore, exploit, annoy, and slaughter.

Note: XP shows the number of experience points it takes to make a monster of this power, counting proficiencies and special abilities. CFRS is the distance, in feet, that such a monster can move (per degree rolled) when climbing, flying, running, and swimming, respectively.

Mental Designation Chart

<i>Mental</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Levels</i>		
Responsive	Plankton	Mostly Single-Celled Animals and Clockworks
Subconscious	Bumblebee	Mostly Invertebrates
Conscious	Tiger	Mostly Nonsentient Vertebrates
Sentient	Human	Mostly Mortals, Monsters, and Gods

Baalrogue

(Plural: Baalrogue)

Mental Designation: Sentient

Size Designation: Enormous

XP: 11431

BERP: 8/6/12/6

PECT: 7/6/7/12

CFRS: 10/N.A./40/20

Proficiencies

Prowess

Grappling	35	Agility	15
Strength	42	Aiming	16
Swinging	34	Dexterity	10
Thrusting	30	Wits	16

Eloquence

Creativity	9	Crafting	16
Elocution	8	Inventiveness	16
Emoting	7	Erudition	20
Subterfuge	5	Reasoning	19

Resolve

Concentration	20	Awareness	14
Endurance	30	Instinct	10
Evocation	25	Savvy	11
Resilience	29	Wisdom	10

Vision

Aether	17	Aether	0
Cosmos	19	Cosmos	0
Force	15	Force	0
Matter	15	Matter	0

Maneuver

Intellect

Intuition

Presence

Pre-Hit Location Chart

0-5: Standard

6-7: Left Wing

8-9: Right Wing

The baalrogue species was originally created by Baal, the old Olympiad god of wrath, just before the onset of the dark ages. Baal wished to avenge himself on a large group of mortals who were defying his wishes, so he set about to merge

muscle with fire to create a mighty beast to enforce his will. When he finished, he set the results loose in the mortal realm. But Baal was not the most skilled of creators, and he was highly prone to irrational thinking when angry. His baalrogues were intelligent, but mentally unstable. They ran amuck, indiscriminately killing hundreds of thousands of mortals before they were reigned back into the heavens. Some baalrogues escaped underground, where they hibernated or established their own kingdoms ruling lesser evil creatures. Some remain there to this day. Baalrogues were originally called Baal's rogue monsters, but for convenience this lengthy name was shortened to *baalrogues*.

Baalrogues are little more than giant fiery killing machines. The most powerful among them become so endowed with muscle that their vocal chords have no room to expand, and they begin to speak in high-pitched voices. If this trend continues, a baalrogue may end up with so much muscle that it ends up crushing its own internal organs. If it weren't for the baalrogue's incredible resistance, this would doubtless kill it, but most of the time it just makes the creature even crankier.

Baalrogues are very intelligent, but they tend to have low self-esteem, and they compensate for this by being cruel, vulgar, and excessively egotistical. They rarely interact with others of their kind except to mate, a brief and violent affair. They are quite capable of speech, but they rarely talk except to give orders to their minions, if they have any. It is thought that baalrogues are mammals, but no one knows for sure whether they have nipples. They definitely have wings, but since they don't seem to be able to fly, it is generally assumed that they use their wings exclusively to push air around. Baalrogues need to breathe a lot of oxygen in order to fuel their flames.

The baalrogue's life cycle is quite interesting. Baalrogues are not immortal, but they do live for tens of thousands of years. During the first thousand years of their lives, they are relatively docile and, for the most part, not on fire (though they do generate significant heat). They immolate at puberty when they are instinctively motivated to go through a rite of passage which consists mostly of killing everything in sight and tossing themselves into an active volcano. After that, they usually stay underground until something motivates them to come up, or until they're disturbed.

Baalrogues are phenomenally powerful. While they are not subtle, nor are they creative, the average baalrogue is simply so combat formidable that it would present even the most experienced group of adventurers with a significant challenge. Anyone wishing to defeat one had better be a brilliant tactician with lots of experience, skills, and magic if they wish to survive.

Baalrogue Abilities & Items

Baalrogues have all of the following abilities and equipment:

- **Fear:** Anyone encountering a baalrogue must make an unmodified Resolve / Concentration / Resisting Urges check during the first round they perceive it, with results to be determined on the baalrogue fear chart.



"Help! A badroque!" — Some adventurers just can't seem to get started in the morning without a nutritious breakfast.

Baalrogue Fear Chart

Degrees	Result
B	Target suffers a heart attack.
0	Target is paralyzed with fear for a number of rounds equal to the amount by which he failed the check.
1	Target must run away from the area as fast as possible.
2	Target must either run away or search for a hiding place.
4	Target is free to act as he pleases, but he is too scared to attack the baalrogue.
8	Target is free to act as he pleases. Whoa, <i>Bad-Ass!</i>

• **Immolation:** A baalrogue can engulf itself in fire at will. This fire is exceedingly hot and causes an automatic attack at a proficiency of 20 (each round) a character touching it.

• **Giant Fiery Whip:** At puberty, a baalrogue's tail falls off. Typically, baalrogue's save their tails and use them as whips. A baalrogue's tail immolates whenever the baalrogue itself does, even if it becomes separated from its owner. Typical baalrogues can make a whip attack at a proficiency of 40 to ensnare or a proficiency of 40 to wound. If they hit, they also do fire damage exactly as if the target had touched the baalrogue (this damage applies each round to an ensnared foe). Note: These proficiencies take into account the +5 modifier granted by the whip for Grappling attacks.

• **Immunity to Fire Damage:** Baalrogues take no damage from fire.

• **Fireball:** Baalrogues can throw fireballs, typically at a proficiency of 15.

Other Abilities & Items

Some baalrogues have one or more of these additional abilities or pieces of equipment:

• **Giant Fiery Axe:** Baalrogues are not very competent smiths. Although they would certainly have the intelligence to learn how, few of them have the patience, and probably none have the necessary equipment. Hence, any baalrogue which wants additional weapons tends to stomp into a nearby town, where it demands to speak with the local weapon-smith. Once it has convinced the smith to forge it a giant axe, it demands to see an alchemist so that it can get the axe enchanted to spew flame. Baalrogues who have them use their giant axes at an average proficiency of 39.

• **Armor:** Some baalrogues wear armor. Those who do tend to get it from the same place they get their fiery axes.

• **Mind Control:** Some baalrogues can take over the minds of people around them. To do this, they make a Vision / Aether / Activating check, resisted by the target's Resolve / Resilience / Mind proficiency. Some baalrogues can even obliterate minds by force of will; this check is contested and modified by -6. To do this, a baalrogue harnesses the power of a god, usually an evil god (but hey, you never know).

• **Demon Summoning:** Some baalrogues are linked mentally with their birthplace in the heavens and can summon demons from it. A baalrogue with this ability can automatically summon a single demon for each action it spends con-

centrating. These demons are usually nasty little buggers.

• **Minion Summoning:** The baalrogue can send mental commands to its minions. A minion is a creature which has been the slave of a baalrogue for at least a week. Minions don't have to obey the commands, but they almost always do. Those who don't usually don't last long.

• **Spells:** Some baalrogues are powerful sorcerers. It's possible for a baalrogue to have any spell a mortal has.

• **Adventure Ideas:** A baalrogue has been discovered sleeping in a mine, a paralyzed baalrogue needs help completing a quest or getting healed, a mage has managed to capture a baalrogue by shrinking it down and putting it in a jar, a baalrogue wants a job in town, the PCs discover that a baalrogue has been asking around about them in town

Bugbear

(Plural: Bugbears)

Mental Designation: Sentient

Size Designation: Medium

XP: 1491

BERP: 2/2/1/1

PECT: 2/0/1/3

CFRS: 10/N.A./20/10

Proficiencies

Prowess

Grappling	10
Strength	10
Swinging	10
Thrusting	9

Eloquence

Creativity	6
Elocution	6
Emoting	6
Subterfuge	6

Resolve

Concentration	9
Endurance	9
Evocation	9
Resilience	9

Vision

Aether	0
Cosmos	0
Force	0
Matter	0

Maneuver

Agility	9
Aiming	10
Dexterity	11
Wits	8

Intellect

Crafting	7
Inventiveness	7
Erudition	7
Reasoning	7

Intuition

Awareness	13
Instinct	7
Savvy	7
Wisdom	7

Presence

Aether	0
Cosmos	0
Force	0
Matter	0

Pre-Hit Location Chart

0-9: Standard

These primitive creatures are a race of bearlike humanoids with long moth antennae growing from the tops of their heads and a pair of tiny moth wings on their backs. Bugbears use their antennae to communicate with each other by placing their antennae to the antennae of other bugbears and vibrating them in a certain linguistic patterns, and they use their wings to make noise (since they are too small to generate a magical field sufficient for flying). Bugbears have large teeth and thick, muscular, furry bodies, which they cover with rags and pieces of armor.

Bugbear culture is obsessed with violence and slaughter. Bugbear young are taught from the beginning of their lives



"...they look cute and harmless when young, but they quickly develop into fierce creatures who employ an array of cunning costumes..." — excerpt from the renowned Adventurer's Guide to Dangerous Things

that the purpose of life is attacking other cultures on sight for no apparent reason, and they usually spend their lives doing this. Then, when they have children of their own, they teach them the same thing. Although they are not intrinsically violent, they do a lot of stalking through the woods in search of people to kill. Bugbears can sometimes be befuddled by talking about peaceful resolutions to conflict and by asking them questions about their motivations for attacking, however.

Bugbear children are extremely cute. Bugbears use this fact to their advantage by taking the kids with them on slaughtering expeditions and using them as bait.

Interestingly, bugbears are highly prone to degenerative diseases of the central nervous system, especially rabies. This leads them to run amuck through the wilderness with foaming mouths from time to time, spreading even more chaos and violence than is usual for them.

Bugbears have some odd ideas about religion and social status. In particular, they believe that their gods want them to dress up in costumes when they go out to kill on certain holidays. Hence, they wear a variety of disguises, such as beetle costumes, cow costumes, and gorilla costumes. They also

believe that their gods want them to subject their young to a rite of passage which involves the youth dressing up in an owl suit and heading out into the world to kill many other people (following a week of starvation). When the youth returns, his status in bugbear society is decided by the number and type of skulls he brings back. Many people who don't realize this believe that there is another race composed of a bear-owl hybrid, but of course it is actually only the bugbear in costume.

Once a bugbear's social position has been determined, a related symbol will be tattooed on its belly. For example, a somewhat powerful warrior might receive a group of spears. A coward could receive a yellow bovine. Or a pair of rainbows might indicate a bugbear who has been ostracized for being a pacifist. The type and meaning of such symbols is usually very culturally dependent. Once determined, however, a social position is almost always set for life.

In many cultures, bugbears are considered to be the norm and the standard by which other monsters are measured. Some places regard an adventurer who can defeat a bugbear in combat as having come of age, for instance. Parents scare

their children with tales of bugbears. In hypothetical examples involving countrysides ravaged by monsters, bugbears are likely to come up right after orcs. And bugbears are usually assumed to be the ones responsible for strange or diabolical events taking place near mortal settlements.

• **Adventure Ideas:** The village of Plonapam prepares for the annual “Running of the Bugbears,” people discover that the local waste disposal service employs bugbears because they work for cheap, adventurers discover the secret bugburial ground, a scientist observing bugbears in their natural habitat hasn’t sent word in days, adventurers come across a particularly loving and caring tribe of bugbear children

Cardinal Pike

(Plural: Cardinal Pikes)

Mental Designation: Subconscious

Size Designation: Puny (Variable)

XP: 1857

BERP: 0/1/1/0

PECT: 1/0/1/0

CFRS: N.A./N.A./N.A./20

Proficiencies

Prowess

Grappling	6
Strength	12
Swinging	9
Thrusting	7

Maneuver

Agility	13
Aiming	7
Dexterity	13
Wits	13

Eloquence

Creativity	6
Elocution	6
Emoting	6
Subterfuge	6

Resolve

Concentration	12
Endurance	12
Evocation	12
Resilience	12

Vision

Aether	0
Cosmos	0
Force	0
Matter	0

Intellect

Crafting	2
Inventiveness	2
Erudition	2
Reasoning	2

Intuition

Awareness	16
Instinct	12
Savvy	12
Wisdom	12

Presence

Aether	0
Cosmos	0
Force	0
Matter	0

Pre-Hit Location Chart

0 - Front of Head

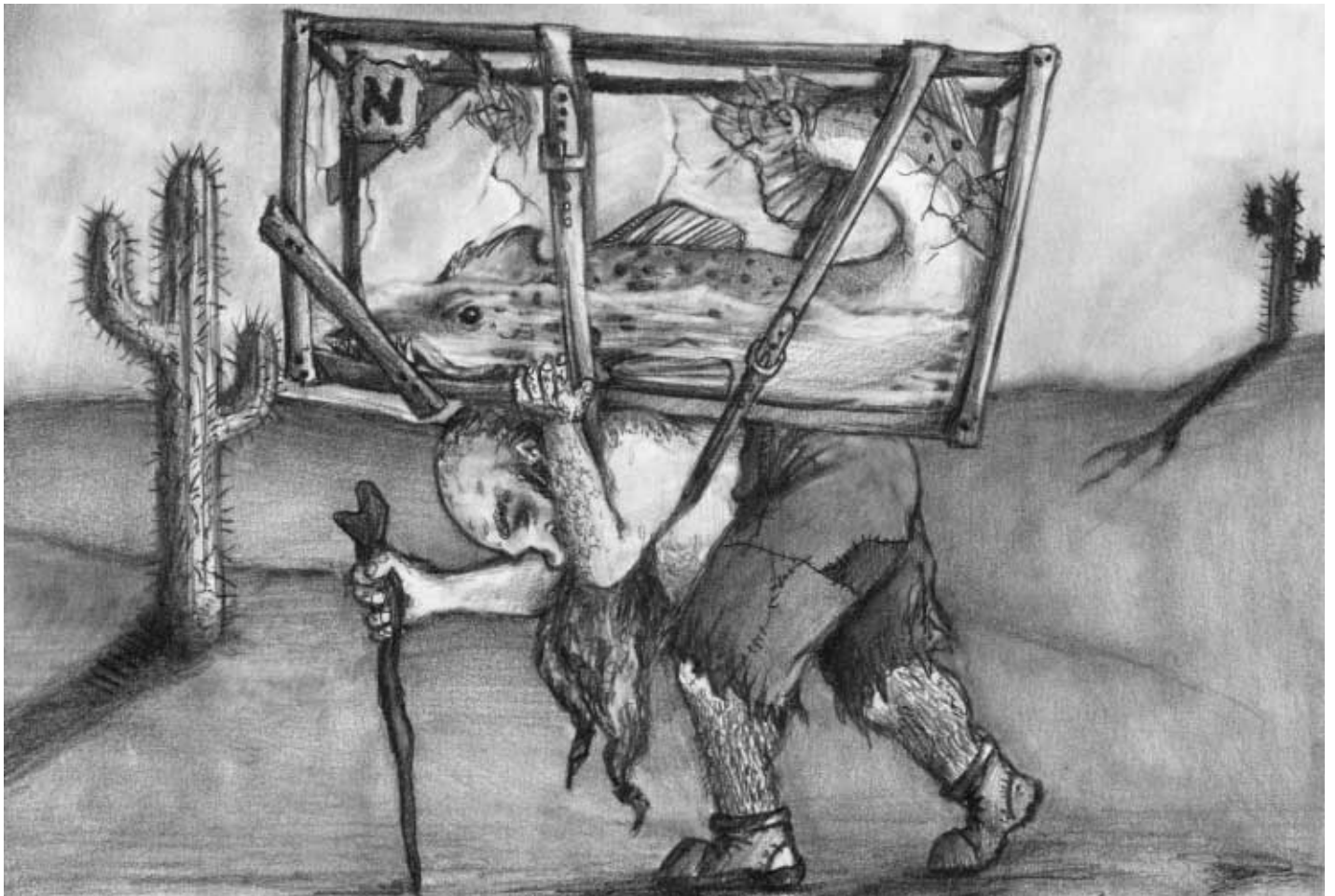
1, 2, 3 - Chest

4, 5, 6 - Upper Back

7, 8 - Tail

9 - Fin

Before the discovery of the cardinal pike, navigating Terrek was a difficult feat. You needed to know all sorts of stuff about star positions, or be lucky enough to find a tree with moss on it. Today, however, the cardinal pike can point the way north when celestial phenomena and fungus fail.



A classic Paranesian dilemma: does one drink the water, or attempt to keep the Cardinal Pike alive long enough to get out of the desert?

Cardinal pike are a kind of fish which possess the innate ability to sense the magical grid which aligns to Terrek. In nature, they use this ability to navigate, but they can also be caught and trained to prefer a particular direction (using extensive shock therapy). Trained cardinal pike will face a particular direction consistently — or at least, whenever they can. When not moving, they will almost invariably face that direction, and they will avoid moving in other directions unless provided with a powerful stimulus. Further, they will absolutely always attack their food from the direction opposite the one they were trained to prefer. If you need to verify which way a particular direction lies, the best way to do it is to feed your pike.

Needless to say, cardinal pike are usually trained to prefer going north, which is why they are often called “northerns.” Those trained to prefer other directions might be called “southerns,” “northeasterns,” or whatever else, depending on their preferred direction. The way a cardinal pike prefers to face is usually called its “directional orientation.”

The downside to the cardinal pike is that it is quite a high-maintenance fish. It is extremely aggressive, and it is sanguicarnivorous, which is to say it will eat anything with blood in it (including your hand, or a blood-filled cucumber). As fish go, they are highly intelligent, and can determine escape routes fairly easily. Furthermore, they grow quickly. It’s not unusual for a pike to weigh as much as 100 pounds, although they weigh less than a pound when born. Pike which are fed extravagantly and kept for years can get to be as much as 1,200 pounds. This can present a bit of a problem for adventurers who need to carry them around for navigational purposes. In general, the bigger the pike, the cheaper it is. Cardinal pike are also delicious, and keeping hungry adventurers away from them when they haven’t eaten in days can be difficult.

- **Adventure Ideas:** Someone switches an adventurer’s northern with an eastern, adventurers have to deliver an immense cardinal pike over a long distance with makeshift equipment

Custermush

(Plural: *Custermi*)

Mental Designation: Sentient

Size Designation: Humongous

XP: 10064

BERP: 5/5/4/4

PECT: 4/4/5/5

CFRS: 10/5/20/10

Proficiencies

Prowess

Grappling	17
Strength	25
Swinging	18
Thrusting	15

Eloquence

Creativity	26
Elocution	30
Emoting	26
Subterfuge	26

Resolve

Maneuver

Agility	23
Aiming	10
Dexterity	21
Wits	20

Intellect

Crafting	21
Inventiveness	21
Erudition	21
Reasoning	21

Intuition

Concentration	30	Awareness	26
Endurance	30	Instinct	23
Evocation	30	Savvy	23
Resilience	30	Wisdom	25

Vision

Aether	0	Aether	0
Cosmos	0	Cosmos	0
Force	0	Force	0
Matter	0	Matter	0

Presence

Pre-Hit Location Chart

0-4 :Standard*

5 - Octopus Arm

6 - Tails

7 - Left Boar Head

8 - Right Boar Head

9 - Duck Head or Wings

The custermush is an amazing (some would say godawfully ludicrous) hybrid creature. It has the body of a rhinoceros and the hind legs of a kangaroo, and it has three arms — two of a monkey (in the conventional locations) and one octopus tentacle growing from the center of its chest. On its back are the wings of a chicken, though the Custermush cannot fly very well. On its behind (which is that of a baboon) is a peacock’s tail, behind which is a fish tail. It has three dragon necks, two of which support boar’s heads, though the central one supports a human head. The human head is usually quite attractive. Atop the human head, emerging from the center, is a duck’s head. The duck usually does most of the talking for the custermush.

This is the most common configuration of the custermush, anyway. Some of the others are even stranger.

Custermi are famous for their conflicting emotions. When you see one, you never know what it’s going to do until it gets around to doing it. Even it usually doesn’t know. It might attack you, beg you for loose change, engage you in philosophical debate, or try to entertain you. The heads argue a lot, but even individual heads usually can’t make up their minds. Very few custermi really know what they want out of life.

No one knows quite where the custermush came from, but scholars suspect that it was created by the God of Consolidation in an attempt to condense unpopular superfluous combination monsters into one. These same scholars generally regard the experiment as a failure.

- **Adventure Ideas:** Someone needs documented proof that the custermush actually exists, a custermush is terrorizing a village and somebody has to figure out why and get it to stop



The Custermush: the uncaptionable creature.

Fertilizer Mercenary

(Plural: Fertilizer Mercenaries)

Mental Designation: Sentient

Size Designation: Huge

XP: 3525

BERP: 3/2/2/3

PECT: 2/2/3/3

CFRS: N.A./N.A./N.A./N.A.

Proficiencies

Prowess

Grappling	20
Strength	20
Swinging	10
Thrusting	10

Eloquence

Creativity	9
Elocution	9

Maneuver

Agility	5
Aiming	15
Dexterity	10
Wits	10

Intellect

Crafting	12
----------	----

Inventiveness	12	Erudition	12
Emoting	9	Reasoning	12
Subterfuge	9		

Resolve

Concentration	16	Intuition	
Endurance	16	Awareness	17
Evocation	16	Instinct	17
Resilience	16	Savvy	17
		Wisdom	17

Vision

Aether	0	Presence	
Cosmos	0	Aether	0
Force	0	Cosmos	0
Matter	0	Force	0
		Matter	0

Pre-Hit Location Chart

- 0 - Branches
- 1 - Branches
- 2 - Branches
- 3 - Maw
- 4 - Maw
- 5 - Trunk
- 6 - Trunk
- 7 - Vines
- 8 - Vines
- 9 - Vines

Eventually, Yozan emerged from the bushes, more than a little embarrassed but essentially undamaged.



The fertilizer mercenary appears to be a large shrub with little purple tufts, eight long, tentacle-like vines, and a toothy, gaping maw.

Its leaves are very large relative to its stalk size, and its tufts contain seeds. Though as plants go the fertilizer mercenary is quite intelligent, it is not like most other intelligent plants with dangerous-looking mouths in that it does not make regular attempts to grab passing creatures with its vines so that it can derive nourishment by consuming them. By and large, Fertilizer Mercenaries are ethical plants, so they find this method of sustaining themselves to be quite distasteful. Instead, they favor what they consider to be a more refined approach. The fertilizer mercenary instead grabs other creatures with its vines, holds them down for as long as it takes until they defecate, and then releases them.

Then it scoops up the results, which it places around itself for use as fertilizer.

Using this peculiar method, the fertilizer mercenary has sustained itself relatively peacefully for centuries.

To reproduce, the fertilizer mercenary wraps its seeds in beads of dung, then throws them at people and animals which pass by. It hopes that the dung will stick to them, ensuring that they will carry it to a location suitable for a young plant and drop it. Sometimes, the fertilizer mercenary tries to hide the seed-rich dung inside the pockets of the people it catches.

Since the fertilizer mercenary is a harmless creature, it is

sometimes protected by law. In nature preserves, rangers sometimes leave rolls of toilet paper nearby to help out the unwary victims of the manure-hungry creature.

The fertilizer mercenary cannot speak, which has led many scholars to ponder why it even has a mouth in the first place. As it happens, the fertilizer mercenary uses its mouth exclusively for singing, which it often does after it feeds. Because fertilizer mercenaries know no languages, their songs consist of a bunch of unintelligible, repetitive gibberish sung off-key. Many a traveler has spent a baffled moment contemplating the sound of the fertilizer mercenary song, and then getting out of the area as fast as possible.

• **Adventure Ideas:** A party of adventurers is “sacrificed” to a fertilizer mercenary by the natives who worship it, a horde of fertilizer mercenaries surrounding a town delay all those who chose to enter or leave and keep everybody on edge with their constant singing

Kobold

(Plural: Kobolds)

Mental Designation: Sentient

Size Designation: Tiny

XP: 1165

BERP: -1/-1/-2/-1

PECT: -1/-2/-1/-1

CFRS: 5/N.A./20/10

Proficiencies

Prowess

Grappling	3
Strength	7
Swinging	4
Thrusting	6

Eloquence

Creativity	5
Elocution	5
Emoting	5
Subterfuge	5

Resolve

Concentration	7
Endurance	7
Evocation	7
Resilience	7

Vision

Aether	0
Cosmos	0
Force	0
Matter	0

Maneuver

Agility	9
Aiming	8
Dexterity	13
Wits	9

Intellect

Crafting	11
Inventiveness	6
Erudition	6
Reasoning	6

Intuition

Awareness	11
Instinct	6
Savvy	6
Wisdom	6

Presence

Aether	0
Cosmos	0
Force	0
Matter	0

Pre-Hit Location Chart

0-9 :Standard

It’s hard to believe that hordes of kobolds once threatened the safety of every woman, man, and child on Terrek. For the better part of a decade, hundreds of thousands of these little



The kobold lives, if one may call it that, in a perpetual state of disease and terror.

people nearly overran the world, squawking and whooping in their high-pitched voices, killing and pillaging. They bred frequently and caused an amount of terror quite disproportional to their rather short heights. Today, however, kobolds are practically extinct, thanks to the effectiveness of the once-popular wands of kobold control.

A wand of kobold control is an ordinary wand invented to eliminate the kobold problem (see page 194). It allows the user perfect control over a single kobold’s movements (except for those related to speech) without even a Resolve / Evocation / Using Talismans check. Furthermore, every time the wand is activated, it creates an identical duplicate of itself. This self-duplication feature has rendered wands of kobold control incredibly common, despite their relative uselessness now that kobolds are in such relatively short supply. Most merchants still have a large inventory of Kobold Control Wands they’d sure like to get rid of, and many old treasure hordes contain piles of them. Adventurers sometimes carry the old wands for use as kindling.

Kobolds under the control of a kobold control wand are pretty much entirely defenseless, although they can still speak. Most likely, they will protest vigorously when manipulated with a wand. Most kobolds have a profound sense of indignation at being oppressed by other races.

Kobolds are short (around two feet tall) humanoids with a good mix of mammalian and reptilian features. They are skinny, with large, slightly webbed feet and hands. Other than their beady, black pupils, their eyes have no color. Their hair is usually short, messy, and black, and almost without exception greasy. Both male and female kobolds suffer from male pattern balding. Their skin is a spotty, dirty gray — though it is unclear whether this is their natural skin color or simply a coating of filth. Kobolds tend to carry primitive, grubby melee weapons, like spears and clubs.

The kobold style of dress could best be described as “early baroque trash bin.” Kobolds seem to enjoy squalor — in fact, they don’t seem to be comfortable living someplace until it’s so trashed that most other races would consider it unlivable. They root around in filth to meet most of their basic needs, such as those for food and shelter. They either live off the trash of other races or make their own. They are capable of making crafts with some quality, but they don’t consider these crafts complete until they’ve been dragged through the mud and sat upon repeatedly.

Few races can reproduce like kobolds, which is probably why their species still exists at all, and why the possibility of their terrorizing the terrace remains. Of course, it also helps that they are highly resistant to disease. Plagues that would decimate most races pass kobolds right by — and yet, kobolds always seem to have some disease or other, usually something fairly mild like a cold. While their immune system fights off disease quite well, it often stops short of a full cure, so though kobolds rarely die of diseases, they are often carriers.

Kobolds panic very easily, although it is unclear whether this is a result of some innate racial tendency or a normal response to dealing with the kind of prejudice they are forced to deal with regularly. Still, most kobolds possess a

strong patriotic streak. They usually believe that Terrek was once called Koboldia, and that they will one day rule it. Kobold emotions are highly infectious to other kobolds, and a group of kobolds will thus tend to follow the most emotionally intense and unstable among them.

It is said that kobolds taste like chicken, although it is considered impolite to mention this in mixed company.

• **Adventure Ideas:** Kobolds are running into town with dynamite strapped to their chests, kobold populations have exploded in a particular area much to the worry of local rulers, poachers are smuggling kobolds out of the kobold preserve for reasons unknown

Phoenix

(Plural: *Phoenixes*)

Mental Designation: Conscious

Size Designation: Puny

XP: 6409

BERP: -2/-2/-1/-3

PECT: -2/-3/-2/-1

CFRS: N.A./10/10/N.A.

Proficiencies

Prowess

Grappling	1
Strength	3
Swinging	3
Thrusting	1

Maneuver

Agility	20
Aiming	20
Dexterity	20
Wits	20



“Goodbye, cruel coop! — For phoenixes, suicide is usually a short term solution to a permanent problem.

Eloquence		Intellect	
Creativity	15	Crafting	23
Elocution	15	Inventiveness	23
Emoting	15	Erudition	23
Subterfuge	15	Reasoning	23
Resolve		Intuition	
Concentration	15	Awareness	31
Endurance	15	Instinct	29
Evocation	15	Savvy	29
Resilience	15	Wisdom	29
Vision		Presence	
Aether	0	Aether	0
Cosmos	0	Cosmos	0
Force	0	Force	0
Matter	0	Matter	0

Pre-Hit Location Chart

- 0 - Front of Head
- 1 - Chest
- 2 - Abdomen
- 3 - Back of Head
- 4 - Upper Back
- 5 - Lower Back
- 6 - Left Wing
- 7 - Right Wing
- 8 - Left Leg
- 9 - Right Leg

Though it appears to be little more than an orange chicken at first, the phoenix is actually much more. It is an *exploding* orange chicken. Indeed, you do not screw with a phoenix, because it will simply flap over to you on its half-useless wings and do its best to explode in your face. Though its ability to fly is dubious, its explosion is quite effective, and many who dared to harass the creature have met an end within the flames of the fiery fowl. However, the phoenix itself is ultimately unharmed by this explosion. Once its feathers settle, they slowly but surely reform, moving together on the ground until the phoenix once again stands before you.

Unusually territorial and highly intelligent for a bird, the phoenix nevertheless cannot speak. It can understand speech, and it can reply with little clucks to indicate affirmatives and negatives. It can also show emotions, like happiness or anger. Thus in many ways, phoenixes seem quite human.

The goals of phoenixes remain quite opaque, however, as despite their obvious intelligence, they never seem to accomplish anything. To observers it seems that they spend nearly all their time getting distracted by things, like stray bits of corn, or by crowing at the sun. Most pyrornithologists believe that phoenixes are simply lousy time managers. Since they have no time limits, the reasoning goes, they are simply not motivated to make good use of their lives. Still, only the phoenixes know what (if anything) they want to accomplish, and they aren't talking.

Unlike other birds, phoenixes carry their children to term like mammals. For no obvious reason, however (considering that it doesn't reproduce in the normal bird fashion), the phoenix lays eggs. This egg looks like an ordinary chicken egg, only it's orange and explosive. Phoenixes guard these eggs zealously, even though no phoenix has ever been

observed to use them for anything.

Phoenixes can be killed in all the normal ways (other than by fire), but they will be instantly healed by the explosion process, which they can enter at will. Hence, the best way to eliminate a phoenix permanently is to kill it with one strike, before it has a chance to blow up. Failing this, the only real way to permanently destroy it is to eliminate all of its feathers. To this end, extreme measures, like soaking the plumage in acid, are usually called for. If no such method is available, the feathers can be separated by large distances and/or tough containers, though of course the Dramatic Principle dictates that they will most likely get out at some point and come looking for revenge (one of the only examples of goal-oriented behavior the phoenix displays).

- **Adventure Ideas:** Someone wants some phoenix eggs, a pyrornithologist wants to learn more about why phoenixes reform after exploding, phoenixes are dying themselves white to do undercover work in barnyards

Squeaver

(Plural: Squeavers)

Mental Designation: Conscious

Size Designation: Tiny

XP: 1611

BERP: 0/0/-2/0

PECT: -1/-2/-1/2

CFRS: 5/N.A./10/20

Proficiencies**Prowess**

Grappling	11
Strength	11
Swinging	11
Thrusting	7

Eloquence

Creativity	2
Elocution	2
Emoting	2
Subterfuge	2

Resolve

Concentration	10
Endurance	10
Evocation	10
Resilience	10

Vision

Aether	0
Cosmos	0
Force	0
Matter	0

Maneuver

Agility	13
Aiming	13
Dexterity	13
Wits	13

Intellect

Crafting	2
Inventiveness	2
Erudition	2
Reasoning	2

Intuition

Awareness	15
Instinct	9
Savvy	9
Wisdom	9

Presence

Aether	0
Cosmos	0
Force	0
Matter	0

Pre-Hit Location Chart

0-4: Standard*

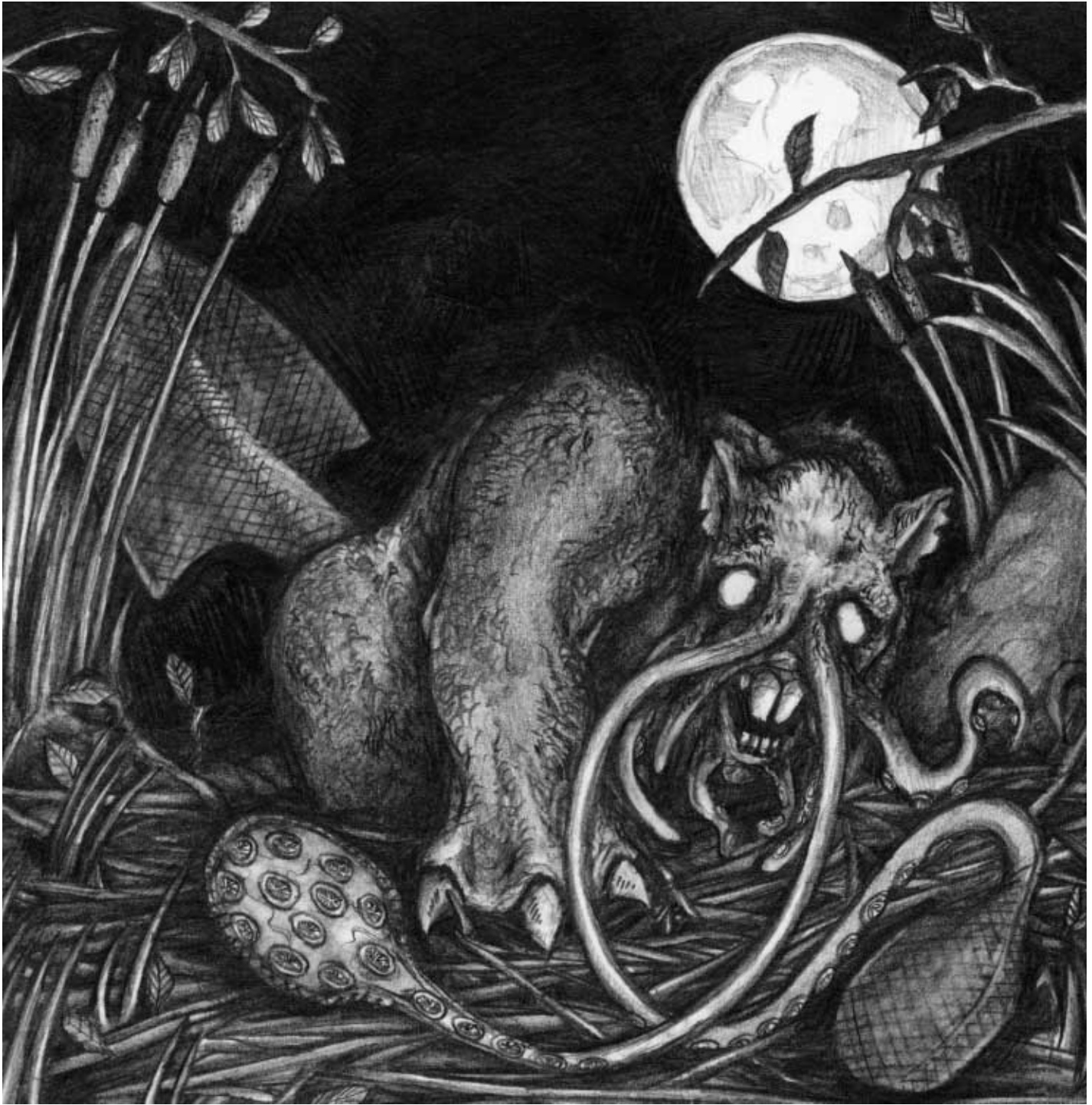
5 - Short Tentacles

6 - Left Long Tentacle

7 - Right Long Tentacle

8-9: Tail

The squeaver is a hybrid of the beaver and the squid. About the size of a beaver, it is hairy, roughly squid-shaped, and bucktoothed. It has eight ordinary tentacles and two which are broad and flat on the ends, the latter of which it



Although fearsome enough from this side, the ink-squirting end of the squeaver is likely to leave a even more indelible impression.

uses for swimming, lifting logs, slapping the water to sound the alarm, and administering sound spankings to its young. Squeavers deliver these spankings frequently, apparently in order to administer discipline. Though the squeaver is not cruel by nature, it usually gets to be quite bitter and ornery by the time it reaches adulthood due to all the sharp whacks on the buttocks with which it has had to contend over its childhood. It then takes out these hard feelings on its own young, thus perpetuating the dysfunctional cycle of abuse.

The squeaver is hardly a model of passive domesticity, like its cousin the beaver. When attacked, the squeaver tends to throw logs, squirt black tree sap, and whack foes on the ass

with its flat-ended tentacles. However, the squeaver shares with the beaver a love of gnawing on trees and building dams in inconvenient places. The squeaver is considered good eating by hicks, but it is almost as terrifying to look at as they are, and most people have trouble getting it down (assuming they can manage to capture it in the first place).

- **Adventure Ideas:** Squeavers keep building dams in inconvenient places, a squeaver is kept by a school to keep discipline, squeavers keep appearing in your adventure for no good reason other than to freak out the players

Chain of Being™

CHAPTER 13

Appendix

Character _____
 Player _____
 Campaign _____
 Race _____ Gender _____
 Age _____ Preference _____
 Concept _____
 Spent XP _____ Unspent XP _____

RENAISSANCE POINTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

PROFICIENCIES

Ability / Capability / Skill	Proficiency
------------------------------	-------------

IDIOSYNCRASIES

Name	XP Value
------	----------

Chain of Being™
 THE FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME OF EPIC ABSURDITY
IDENTITY

MORTAL CHARACTER SHEET - EXTENDED

APPEARANCE

Hair _____ Height _____
 Eyes _____ Weight _____
 Attractiveness _____

BACKGROUND, PERSONALITY & ECCENTRICITIES

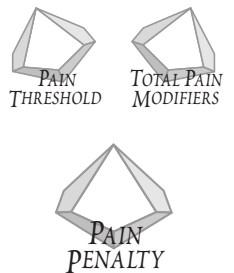
Deities Worshipped: _____

SPELLS

C/I	Spell Name	Drain	Page
-----	------------	-------	------

WOUNDS

Wound & Location	Type	Severity	DC / Use Penalty	Pain Modifier
------------------	------	----------	------------------	---------------



MAGICAL & PARANORMAL THRESHOLDS

Wellspring(s)	Powering Threshold	Total Drain Modifiers	Magic Penalty
Art & Method			

NON-DAMAGE EFFECT THRESHOLDS

Effect	Threshold	Modifiers	Penalty
--------	-----------	-----------	---------

MORTAL ABILITREE WORKSHEET

FOR THE EXTENDED MORTAL CHARACTER SHEET

Character _____

Prowess	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grappling	RP <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Hooking	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Lashing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Toppling	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Wrestling	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strength	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grasping	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifting	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Toting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Swinging	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chopping	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Sweeping	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Swiping	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Whacking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thrusting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Jabbing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Shoving	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Stabbing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Striking	<input type="checkbox"/>

Maneuver	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agility	RP <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Climbing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Flying	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Running	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Swimming	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aiming	
<input type="checkbox"/> Launching	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Shooting	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Slinging	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Throwing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dexterity	
<input type="checkbox"/> Balance	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Contorting	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Sneaking	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tinkering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wits	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dodging	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Initiating	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Parrying	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Prestidigitating	<input type="checkbox"/>

Resolve	
<input type="checkbox"/> Concentration	RP <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Resisting Distraction	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Resisting Fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Resisting Pain	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Resisting Urges	<input type="checkbox"/>
Endurance	
<input type="checkbox"/> Resisting Disease	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Resisting Exposure	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Resisting Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Resisting Poison	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evocation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Using Abraxases	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Using Fetishes	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Using Relics	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Using Talismans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resilience	
<input type="checkbox"/> Body Resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Brain Resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mind Resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Soul Resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>

Intuition	
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness	RP <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Alertness	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Appraisal	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Describing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Searching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instinct	
<input type="checkbox"/> Animalism	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Herbalism	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Navigation	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tracking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Savvy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Connections	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Discernment	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Gaming	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wisdom	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cosmology	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Culture	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Legends	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Politics	<input type="checkbox"/>

Eloquence	
<input type="checkbox"/> Creativity	RP <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Art	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elocution	
<input type="checkbox"/> Composition	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Enticement	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Instructing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Persuading	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emoting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acting	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Seduction	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subterfuge	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Entrancing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mimicry	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Signaling	<input type="checkbox"/>

Intellect	
<input type="checkbox"/> Crafting	RP <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Assembling	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Carving	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Molding	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inventiveness	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Comestibles	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mechanisms	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Structures	<input type="checkbox"/>
Erudition	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Memory	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Theory	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasoning	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Logic	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Research	<input type="checkbox"/>

Vision	
<input type="checkbox"/> Aether	RP <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Activating	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Blocking	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Infusing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Powering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cosmos	
<input type="checkbox"/> Activating	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Blocking	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Infusing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Powering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Force	
<input type="checkbox"/> Activating	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Blocking	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Infusing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Powering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matter	
<input type="checkbox"/> Activating	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Blocking	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Infusing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Powering	<input type="checkbox"/>

Presence	
<input type="checkbox"/> Aether	RP <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Activating	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Blocking	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Infusing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Powering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cosmos	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Blocking	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Infusing	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Force	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Blocking	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Infusing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Powering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matter	
<input type="checkbox"/> Activating	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Blocking	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Infusing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Powering	<input type="checkbox"/>

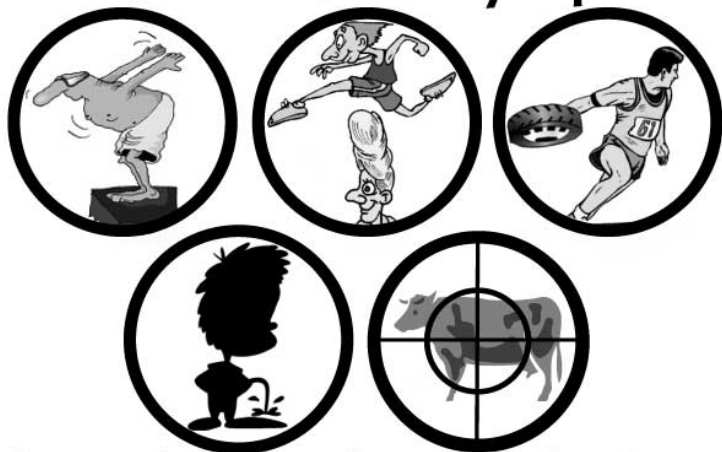
PROFICIENCY WORKSHEET

Ability / Capability	Rating	Race	Total	
Prowess	_____			Use these to fight in a melee or perform feats of strength.
Grappling	_____	_____	_____	Use this to exert force with hooked or jointed implements, like limbs, chains, or picks.
Strength	_____	_____	_____	Use this to move things and keep them where you want them.
Swinging	_____	_____	_____	Use this to exert force in an arc which meets a target, as in a sword swipe, claw, or sweep.
Thrusting	_____	_____	_____	Use this to exert force directly from origin to target, as in a kick, punch, push, or stab.
Maneuver	_____			Use these to move, fire missiles, and react to things.
Agility	_____	_____	_____	Use this to move efficiently through different environments (ground, air, water, trees, etc).
Aiming	_____	_____	_____	Use this to strike a target at some distance with some form of missile.
Dexterity	_____	_____	_____	Use this to make careful, & precise movements, keep balance, & perform delicate operations.
Wits	_____	_____	_____	Use this to make quick movements and react immediately.
Resolve	_____			Use these to be remain in control of your health, feelings, & perceptions.
Concentration	_____	_____	_____	Use this to focus your thoughts on desired stimuli & ignore emotions, sensations, & distractions.
Endurance	_____	_____	_____	Use this to fight off the effects of undesirable environmental factors like injury, exposure, disease, & poison.
Evocation	_____	_____	_____	Use this to invoke and control magic items.
Resilience	_____	_____	_____	Use this to resist the effects of magic.
Intuition	_____			Use these to understand & interact with people & environments.
Awareness	_____	_____	_____	Use this to become aware of your environment, find things, detect magic, & appraise values & functions.
Instinct	_____	_____	_____	Use this to survive in and find your way around in natural environments.
Savvy	_____	_____	_____	Use this to detect & perform subtle interactions & subterfuge in social situations.
Wisdom	_____	_____	_____	Use this to understand the bigger picture of the world around you.
Eloquence	_____			Use these to express ideas & elicit emotional or thoughtful responses from people.
Creativity	_____	_____	_____	Use this to express yourself artistically in an emotionally-provocative fashion.
Elocution	_____	_____	_____	Use this to use words & gestures to explain & persuade.
Emoting	_____	_____	_____	Use this to manipulate others by feigning emotions.
Subterfuge	_____	_____	_____	Use this to manipulate & deceive others with appearances, gestures, sounds, or hypnosis.
Intellect	_____			Use these to understand & shape objects & ideas.
Crafting	_____	_____	_____	Use this to create crafts and objects from simpler materials.
Inventiveness	_____	_____	_____	Use this to recall information, including first aid, language, or theoretical knowledge.
Erudition	_____	_____	_____	Use this to understand & implement feats of applied science, like engineering, chemistry, & comestibles.
Reasoning	_____	_____	_____	Use this to learn facts and form conclusions from available data in closed systems. Use these to focus an
Vision	_____			external (often divine) power source to manipulate the supernatural.
Aether	_____	_____	_____	Use this to affect aethereal (nonphysical) things, such as souls, spirits, and minds.
Cosmos	_____	_____	_____	Use this to manipulate the movement of things through space-time.
Force	_____	_____	_____	Use this to manipulate energies, from electricity to bolts of holiness.
Matter	_____	_____	_____	Use this to affect material things, including the physical half of living creatures.
Presence	_____			Use these to focus a personal power source to manipulate the supernatural.
Aether	_____	_____	_____	Use this to affect aethereal (nonphysical) things, such as souls, spirits, and minds.
Cosmos	_____	_____	_____	Use this to manipulate the movement of things through space-time.
Force	_____	_____	_____	Use this to manipulate energies, from electricity to walls of holiness.
Matter	_____	_____	_____	Use this to affect material things, including the physical half of living creatures.

The Spirit of Competition.
The Strength of Human Spirit.

...and a bunch of over-fed,
imbreed, drunken, slack-jawed,
fat slapping morons to boot.

Trailer Park Olympics

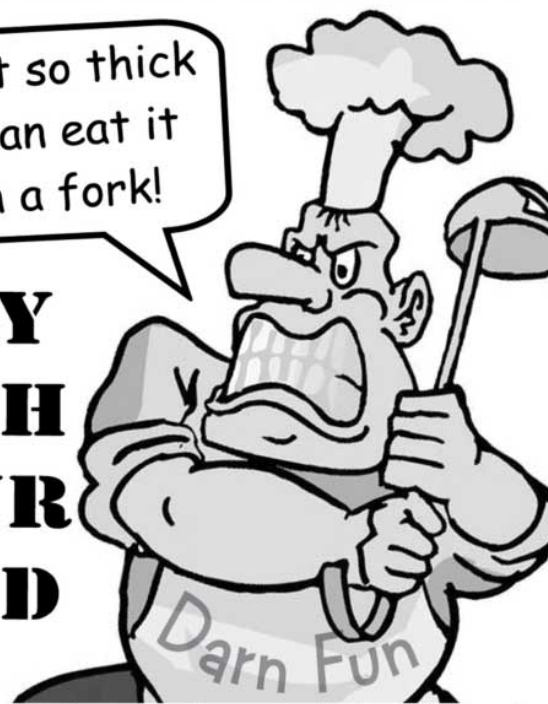


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Baron Von Kriegerheimerschmidtstein vs. *the Spider Queen*

Baron Von Kriegerheimerschmidtstein Versus the Spider Queen is the story of the sadly delusional Baron Von Kriegerheimerschmidtstein, and of the adventure that accidentally happens to him when he employs the Hogflock Creek Adventuring Company and their band of actors (the PCs) to treat him to one of their famous "Live Action Roleplaying Adventures."