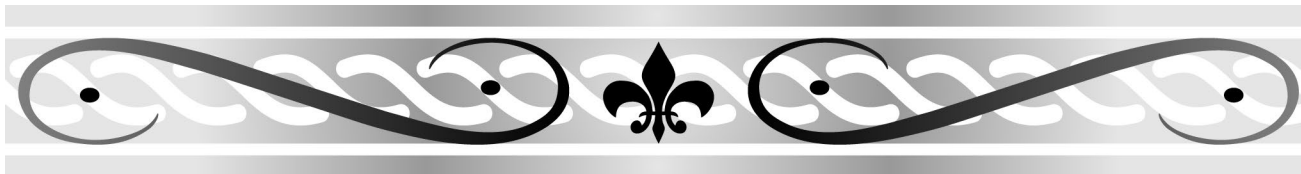


GURPS[®]

Fourth Edition

DUNGEON FANTASY™ 17

GUILDS



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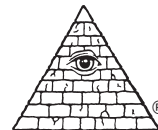
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Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

INTRODUCTION

Adventurers tend to be remarkable, those one-in-a-million, uniquely capable people who can face destiny singlehanded. For everyone else, there's strength in numbers.

– *GURPS Boardroom and Curia*

Most dungeon delvers are vaguely aware that they leave behind a society when they go off in search of peril and treasure. After all, someone in a position of relative safety has to forge the swords, brew the potions, resurrect the dead, and convert loot into ale, big hats with fancy plumes, and more gear. For the most part, though, adventurers don't care. And they're right not to.

Mostly. Because while adventurers devote most of their attention to undertaking dangerous expeditions beyond the reach of civilization, aspects of that civilization can have a significant impact on them. The societies from which dungeon-delving heroes arise, or at least those where they reside between quests, may contain organizations which aren't suited to violent adventuring, but have interests which can only be served by engaging a band of rough-and-ready fighters, spellcasters, and others to head out and do what they do best. These associations may include circles of wizards, criminal syndicates, dark conspiracies, noble families, and, yes, alliances of professional craftsmen. Such groups – we'll call them collectively guilds – become particularly relevant to dungeon delvers when they can say *here's what we want you to do for us* and *here's what we can do for you*.

GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds deals with a variety of organizations which may be the catalysts of adventures.

After all, not everything that happens in a dungeon-fantasy world has to be the result of a meeting an old man in a tavern. Instead of throwing rumors and old maps at adventuring bands and hoping for the best, the GM can use guilds to motivate delvers to go on missions for a variety of reasons. Heroes can undertake dungeoneering expeditions to support their tribe, temple, or league. Even for delvers who aren't members of any kind of association, guilds can hire or offer to reward adventurers who fulfill quests with a variety of currencies: legal protection, unusual training, special gear, supernatural services, and so on. It's not just an adventure; it's a job.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds*. It draws a few rules from *GURPS Social Engineering: Pulling Rank* and *Pyramid #3/58: Urban Fantasy II*, but the vast majority of this material is completely new.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt Riggsby has been playing RPGs since the only game in town came in three poorly typeset tan booklets in a white box, using cheap dice which slowly converted themselves from icosahedrons to spheres. Having been educated in the lore of lost civilizations, he still kills things and takes their stuff while working a day job for loremasters of healing. The marching order for the rest of his party includes a sorceress, a seventh-level rogue, and a pack of dogs.



CHAPTER ONE

GUILD RULES

Guilds are neither monsters nor weapons nor loot, so the rules most beloved of delvers don't cover them. Including them in dungeon-crawling fantasy means considering how they fit into the genre (especially how the GM can use them in the campaign), defining their attributes, and working out how members (and nonmembers temporarily associated with them) can call on them for aid.

WHERE GUILDS FIT

In a campaign where the emphasis is on killing monsters hiding in caves, and where social interactions are something that happens to other people, what is the place of social organizations? As with a great deal else in a *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* campaign, guilds boil down to a potential source of resources (material or otherwise) and a potential threat. Guilds, therefore, are described with three attributes: who they are, what they want, and what they can provide.

Who They Are

This section describes the guild's purpose, its structure, and the nature of its membership. While some guilds may be composed primarily of non-adventurers, most do have some room for at least temporary dungeon-delving employees. For example, merchant houses can hire warriors as guards, mercenary companies can bring along clerics and wizards for support (or innkeepers to provide supplies!), and thieves who keep their activities a secret can find low-level work just about anywhere. For adventures focused on fighting other people rather than monsters, the membership provides an idea of what kind of opposition heroes can face when going up against a guild.

A guild's membership may also include PC dungeon delvers. A number of traits can indicate a delver's relationship with a guild (see *Join The Club*, below), notably Rank and Status. These traits give access to benefits the guilds provide (see *Membership Benefits*, pp. 7-8) beyond what adventurers might get as ordinary hirelings.

What They Want

This part explains the things which motivate the guild to engage the services of heroes, and what those services might entail. These define the kinds of quests which guilds are most likely to send people on. In most cases, guilds which sponsor quests (see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 4) will do so in pursuit of those goals *instead of* a cut of any loot adventurers may win along the way. If, say, the Devotees of the Volcano Temple want to get the Lost Crystal of Extreme Hotness back and are willing to underwrite a party of delvers in pursuit of it, they're not too concerned with mere gold

and silver. This information also indicates the kinds of activities adventurers are likely to disrupt if they set out to oppose a guild.

What They Can Provide

This outlines the nature of rewards the group can hand out, which may be exclusive to them and go well beyond cash. These may include such things as:

- Assistance with adventuring expenses and routine support tasks.
- Supernatural support such as spellcasting and recharging power items at reduced cost.
- Access to information on quest destinations and likely opposition.
- Improved prices for selling loot.
- Discounts on types of gear relevant to the guild's mission.
- Difficult-to-obtain gear.
- Discounts on training provided by the guild (or access to training if not available elsewhere).

See *Sample Assistance* (pp. 8-9) for details on specific types of requests that a group can fulfill.

Naturally, different guilds are better at providing some goods and services than others, so modifiers to skill rolls, variant costs, and differences in overall availability may apply.

*And in the name of the Lollypop Guild,
We wish to welcome you to Munchkinland.*

– Edgar Harburg, “*Munchkinland Operetta*”

JOIN THE CLUB

Dungeon fantasy does not, as a genre, go in for social entanglements and long-lasting relationships. However, a number of traits can suggest connections to a guild, or at least a point of contact whereby a guild can approach an adventurer and start asking for delving-related services, or a prospective hero can approach a guild for aid in undertaking a quest.

Claim to Hospitality

see p. B41

As explained on p. 16 of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*, this advantage allows the adventurer to locate members of his group while in town; doing so calls for a roll of 14 or less on 3d. Success lets him stay with a colleague for up to a week, saving the \$150 cost of living (*Dungeons*, p. 4).

Roll again weekly. Critical failure means the *hero* must provide aid, paying a professional colleague's cost of living for the week as well as his own. The delver may also ask for small favors – being hidden while hunted, a short-term loan of up to \$100, etc. – but this calls for a reaction roll at +3, scoring at least a “Good” reaction. Refusing to reciprocate, causing property damage, or defaulting on loans can cost the adventurer his advantage.

This normally benefits one delver. However, a reaction of “Good” or better – this time *without* the +3 – extends the hospitality to one associate in the same or a similar profession. This means a fellow wizard, or maybe a scholar or an elemental, for a wizard; another cleric or a holy warrior of the same faith for a cleric; and so on.

Claim to Hospitality costs 1 point for a single inn, safe house, temple, etc. in one particular town; 5 points for an entire clan, guild, order, etc. that has tendrils in every town in one kingdom; or 10 points for hospitality that spans kingdoms (e.g., “thieves’ guilds the world over”).

Rank

see p. B29

You hold a privileged position within your guild, order, etc. Each profession has its own variety of Rank, which the GM should rename for flavor; wizards are conservative, and might go with “Wizardly Rank,” but barbarians may literally have a pole with clan totems carved on it, making “Pole Length” entirely sensible (to them). In formal groups, this accompanies a public title. In clans, it's like Status (below) relevant only to kinfolk. In secret scout societies, sinister underground necromancer cults, and so on, it's about being recognized on sight. Whatever it's called, it costs the usual 5 points/level.

When dealing with that group, add Rank to skill rolls to engage them as a sponsor for a quest (*Dungeons*, p. 4), to reaction rolls for *Negotiation* (*Dungeons*, p. 10), and to skill rolls for any ensuing deal-making. Also, increase effective Wealth by steps equal to Rank when fencing loot of interest to that group (*Dungeons*, pp. 14-15). Finally, subtract 10% per

level from the training expenses for acquiring that profession's abilities (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level*, p. 43, and *Power-Ups*, p. 8); 5% per level from the cost of anything the GM deems to be professional goods; and 5% per level from the pay rate of hirelings the GM agrees match the hirer's profession under *Niche Substitution* (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 15: Henchmen*, p. 5). The maximum discount is 80% off.

Example: A Poor thief with Guild Rank 5 would enjoy +5 to persuade the Guild to back a mission or to convince Guild scum not to rob his group; fence goods to thieves as if Very Wealthy; pay 50% tuition for training at thief power-ups; buy thieves' tools at 25% off; and retain cutpurses and burglars (and possibly agents and treasure-hunters) for 25% less.

Reputation

see p. B26

Reputation enhances all reaction rolls for *Negotiation* (*Dungeons*, p. 10), selling loot (*Dungeons*, pp. 14-15), all the purposes described in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 10: Taverns* (learning information, stopping brawls, and so on), and Claim to Hospitality (pp. 4-5). It doesn't influence the reaction rolls noted for conjured or summoned creatures in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies* or *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 9: Summoners*.

Base point cost is unchanged. In one town (a small class), the cost multiplier is 1/3; in an entire kingdom (a large class), it's 1/2; and for everyone you meet, pay full cost. The third and broadest level is identical to the Hero power-up on p. 16 of *Power-Ups*.

Status

see p. B28

Fancy titles are especially tricky to justify for errant delvers. In *Dungeon Fantasy*, the most practical benefits have to do with bearing arms and armor on urban adventures – and the fact that “blood will tell.” Cost is 5 points/level, as usual.

GEOGRAPHY 101

This supplement uses a couple of terms to describe some important places outside of dungeons.

Town means a population center, from the customary outsized fantasy village (the sort with pubs and shops, like a lot of historical market towns) on up to a stinking metropolis (similar to Ankh-Morpork or Lankmar) – what matters most is that it supports a town watch. Delvers of every stripe can find their organizations there, but this doesn't imply distinct facilities. A single “Magic Shoppe” may cater to demonologists, elementalists, necromancers, scholars, and wizards alike. A temple could be consecrated to not one god but an entire pantheon, and welcome most clerics and holy warriors. “Headquarters” for barbarians, druids, and scouts might be a seasonal camp in the old oak grove. Each town is unique, with a name of the GM's choosing. Most contain members of many races but are dominated by a single race. A town collects enough taxes

to reward adventurers who solve local problems, such as basement cults and alligator-infested sewers.

Kingdom refers to a land in which all the towns are ruled by the same sovereign – the king, emperor, sultan, shogun, etc. A formidable force of ex-delvers and professional troubleshooters known colloquially as “the King's men” (who make town watches look namby-pamby) serve this person. Most kingdoms are dominated by one race, although the racial mix in individual towns often diverges (more elves near forests, more dwarves near mountains, etc.). A kingdom is home to many guilds that keep “national” records on who holds what rank and is a member in good standing. It is crisscrossed by trade routes sufficiently robust to keep prices stable, and collects enough taxes to offer lucrative rewards to heroes who rescue princesses, defeat zombie legions, and end evil wizards' dreams of conquest.

A Monster's Life for Me

Most fantasy societies are racist (or to be precise, “speciesist”). Status 1+ is off-limits for the races listed in *A Monster's Life* (**The Next Level**, p. 11): coleopterans, corpse-eaters, gargoyles, goblin-kin, half-ogres, minotaurs, ogres, reptilians, and trolls. The same goes for any Reputation broader than “in one town” – a *town* might appreciate a monster's qualities, but a kingdom won't. The GM can make exceptions for coleopterans in the Hive Lands, goblin-kin in the Orc Khanate, etc.

My Little Town

This supplement assumes that adventurers travel the world, or at least go farther than the next valley over now and again. However, some old styles of play, sometimes still practiced, don't bother with geography. There's *the* dungeon (which may be very, very large) which is next door to or perhaps even immediately beneath *the* town. In such a campaign, where only a single town is ever in play, Reputation receives no discount for scope. So far as the heroes are concerned, the Reputation is, effectively, for the whole world – it's just a very small world.

There is a modest additional advantage to having high Status in a one-town campaign. At Status 2+, the person effectively doesn't pay his weekly cost of living. However, that's hardly better than a 1-point Claim to Hospitality perk. The main benefits of Status are in things like the “blood will tell” bonus, the ability to use princely/kingly items, and (potentially) the ability to get better assistance from certain guilds.

Status 0: Delvers cannot fall below this level – although those with Tribal Rank rarely rise above it, dancing to a different drum as they do. Adventurers may be seen as smelly, ragged menaces to society, but they possess the abilities of potential heroes and thus the physical or magical capacity to escape or strike back if oppressed (this is true even for 125-pointers created using **Henchmen**). They cannot run around town *armed*, though – permitted weapons include daggers, small and large knives, and quarterstaves. Armor is allowed, but metal armor hints that the wearer is looking for trouble and thus is off-limits. Those who break the law by carrying heavier weapons or armor are subject to *Scum and Villainy* (**Dungeons**, p. 4). Most “martial arts” weapons (kusari, nunchaku, tonfa, etc.) aren't recognized as weapons and may be carried freely.

Status 1: An aristocrat of sorts, somebody at this stratum may legally traipse around town with one or two long knives, rapiers, sabers, shortswords, or smallswords hanging off his belt. He can wear metal armor in town, but no heavier than DR 4 mail – and if he goes that far, he'll be mocked unless a war is going on (-2 to all reaction rolls).

Status 2: This level befits a genuine knight. *All* weapons and armor are fine, even in town – but mockery (-2 to all reactions) will ensue for going beyond a gentleman's arms and armor in peacetime. The GM may specify that some magic items require a “knightly” user and work only for people with Status 2+. At this level, ignore the \$150/week to live in one specific town.

Status 3-5: These levels suit nobility. Treat them as Status 2 for bearing arms – but there's no danger of mockery, even

when visiting the pub in plate armor with a halberd in hand. At Status 3+, ignore the \$150/week living expense while in any town in a specified kingdom. Being of truly noble blood has two further benefits. First, potent artifacts that call for a “noble” user will function for you. Second, “blood will tell”; *in any town in your kingdom*, add Status-2 as a bonus in all Quick Contests against living people who are physically in your presence; e.g., a thief who attempts to pick the pocket of a Status 5 emir must beat the emir's Vision+3 with Pickpocket, while an evil wizard would find his Charm spell resisted by the emir's Will+3. There's no effect in wilderness, dungeons, or faraway barbarian lands; against undead, demons, inanimate traps, and similar threats that aren't truly alive; or on uncontested rolls.

Status 6-8: These levels indicate royalty. Treat them as Status 3-5 for bearing arms and ignoring living costs. Status 6+ also lets you wield relics that demand a “princely” user, while Status 7+ lets you use ones that require a “kingly” wielder. And “blood will tell” (as above) *anywhere in one kingdom*, even outside of town. Add Status/2, rounded down, as a bonus in all Quick Contests against living people in royalty's presence there. Thus, a Status 6-7 prince or king has +3 to beat others in his lands – in town or not – and a Status 8 emperor gets +4. This can work on *both* sides of a Contest; a Status 7 wizard-king gets +3 to cast a spell on a Status 5 emir, who gets +3 to resist. This *still* doesn't matter in faraway barbarian lands, though, or against ancient undead, falling rocks, or other impersonal dangers.

Status in **Dungeon Fantasy** isn't boosted by Rank or Wealth, doesn't guarantee fancy duds or digs, and doesn't use the standard rules for cost of living – in fact, ignore *Cost of Living* (pp. B265-266). Holdings aren't liquid assets, and while they pay whatever costs your station might demand, they don't give any cash in excess of that. Anyone who is set on being rich should buy Wealth, too.

Tenure

see p. B93

Spellcasters and sages can belong to obscure academies instead of or as well as their usual guilds. The upshot is a place to stay in the town where the institution is based (yet another way to avoid the \$150/week cost of living, equivalent to a 1-point Claim to Hospitality) *and* the benefit of the doubt. Such people are expected to be little wonky, and until they actually commit a crime involving demons, poison, or the Dark Ritual of Calling and Binding the Squid-Lord, they can learn about and work with such matters freely, up to and including filling their cellar with zombies. In effect, this is 5-point Legal Immunity (p. B65) in one town, specifically for the purpose of occult machinations and, for artificers, mad science.

Other Traits

Other traits may indicate a connection to a guild. They need no special rules treatment, but they can be used as hooks by the GM to provide an excuse for involving heroes in the affairs of a guild to which they don't belong.

Allies: Delvers might not be members of guilds, but their friends could be. Indeed, those friends might *be* a guild. For example, a martial artist might have, as Allies, a small martial-arts school, a knight might have the loyalty of a mercenary company with whom she once served, and so on. While Rank provides a discount for hirelings, Allies are a better (or complementary) choice for heroes who intend to bring a bunch of assistants and retainers on adventures.

Clerical Investment: Someone with Clerical Investment doesn't have to be a member of a hierarchical religious organization, or at least not part of the hierarchy of a specific institution (for example, a roving friar may be part of the hierarchy of a widespread religion, but not in the chain of command at a particular monastery or cathedral). However, he'll at least be in touch with clerics associated with temples or stable congregations.

Code of Honor: Many Codes of Honor come with an obligation to aid certain classes of people or go to great lengths to defend abstract principles, which may lead heroes to take up common cause with a guild or against a guild's enemy.

Fanaticism: A fanatic is happy to help anyone who pursues his cause, even if he's not a member of the organization he's helping. He may even help people more than they want him to.

Sense of Duty: Like Code of Honor, someone with a Sense of Duty may feel the need to assist others, even if he's not actually obligated to do so.

Trained by a Master: Where there is masterful training, there's usually a master. Failing that, other students might think of an old classmate as someone they might call on in times of need. Since martial artists are trained in settings which build long-term bonds between students, this advantage includes the benefits of a 5-point Claim to Hospitality.

Vow: Like other self-imposed disadvantages, a Vow makes an adventurer a natural candidate to be approached by a guild to aid them in some endeavor associated with his promise.

WHO GETS WHAT?

From a character-improvement perspective, not all social traits make equally sensible "power-ups" for all adventurers. Anybody might call upon friends or extended family (Claim to Hospitality), advance in his vocation (Rank), or inspire admiration for his adventures (Reputation). However, the GM may opt to restrict other advantages as follows.

Status: Successful artificers and innkeepers can achieve up to Status 1. Gentlemanly bards and swashbucklers might have up to Status 2. In most fantasy societies, some combination of clerics (or even druids or shamans, where they're the prevailing holy folk), demonologists, elementalists, holy warriors, knights, mentalists, necromancers, scholars, and wizards are the "ruling classes," and can boast any Status, while the others on that list are "trusted advisors" at best, limited to Status 2. This detail is up to the GM, and varies by kingdom (for example, swashbucklers might be the elite in settings which resemble France of *The Three Musketeers* more than a Hyborian kingdom or Middle Earth). Other professions reject froufrou Status in favor of Rank.

Tenure: Artificers, clerics, demonologists, elementalists, mentalists, necromancers, scholars, and wizards often belong

to academies. Some game worlds have academies for bards and druids, too – GM's decision.

*I don't care to belong to any club
that will have me as a member.*

– Groucho Marx

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Members of a guild can petition their organization for assistance on their quests. A wizard can consult with his colleagues for information on the haunted swamps he intends to visit, a knight can make sure he gets the sharpest sword from the castle armory, and so on. Petitioners may make an assistance roll (AR), a roll on 3d with a chance of success depending on Rank; see the *Assistance Table*. In addition, if a guild is sponsoring a quest, members of the adventuring party who *aren't* members of the guild (for example, a barbarian-heavy group hired by the wizards' guild to move some heavy furniture locked in a dusty tomb) may still request assistance as though they were Rank 0.

If several PCs in the same guild request the same help, roll once for the person of highest Rank, adding 1/5 of the total Rank of the others (rounded down) to his Rank. For instance, a Rank 3 underboss in the thieves' guild, two Rank 2 capos, and a Rank 1 footpad would roll as if their Rank were $3 + (2 + 2 + 1)/5 = 4$.

Requests for assistance must be made when a delver is in contact with his guild. Since many dungeon-delving adventures involve tramping through the wilderness and into remote, dangerous places, this usually means seeking assistance before or after an adventure, much like shopping for equipment. Magicians, mentalists, and others with long-distance communication capabilities may be able to "phone home" for information and advice, but the difficulty involved in travel usually means that physical assistance isn't an option for those already in the field.

Modifiers

Odds of assistance are *low* for low-ranking guild members, but an AR is a success roll, subject to Luck, Wish and Lesser Wish spells, and *Buying Success* (p. B347). Several bonuses may apply, too. Of course, there may be *penalties*, and if modified AR falls below 3, there's *no* chance of success!

- Person requesting aid has Smooth Operator: +Talent.*
- Person requesting aid has Charisma: +Charisma.*
- Person requesting aid makes a suitable skill roll for the organization (see individual guild descriptions for specific skills): +2 for critical success, +1 for success, -1 for failure, or -2 for critical failure.
- Previous requests by team this adventure: -1 per AR after first.
- Request especially *appropriate* to situation: +1 to +5.†
- Request especially *inappropriate* to situation: -1 to -10, and failure by 10+ or critical failure means disciplinary action.†

Assistance Table

Rank	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Assistance Roll	3	5	7	9	10	11	12	13	14

• Specific modifiers: See individual guild descriptions for modifiers that apply instead of or as well as those for appropriateness.

* Smooth Operator and Charisma apply only to requests in person, not those made by letter or magical scrying stone.

† The GM judges what's appropriate or inappropriate. A wounded Rank 0 recruit might get +5 when shouting for a cleric to heal him, while even a Rank 8 grand high priest would have -10 to request the unsealing of the ancient demon seals "just because."

Sample Assistance

The players should limit their requests to things that suit the conventions of the dungeon-crawling genre – and the GM should occasionally reward cooperation by awarding +1 to +5 to the AR, or by fudging the roll and having help just show up, if that would be more fun. Effects are usually based on the Rank of the petitioner, or the effective Rank for group requests. This list isn't exhaustive, but it's a good start.

Accommodations: The heroes are given a place to stay for (Rank + 1) weeks, partially defraying their cost of living. Reduce cost of living by (Rank + 2) × 10% for that time.

Artifact: Some guilds have carefully hoarded stores of powerful magical items which they will loan out to adventurers undertaking important tasks. The petitioner is granted the use of a magic item or possibly set of magical items worth at least \$2,000 × (Rank + 1). However, because guilds are limited by what they have on hand and the machinations of the high-level officials who must approve such requests, the requestor has no influence over the specific nature of the item(s) he receives. The GM may make up items on the spur of the moment or construct an item randomly (see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 8: Treasure Tables*).

Augury: Horoscopes, goat entrails, tea leaves, and the like are consulted to ensure the delver a fortunate venture. At some point during the adventure, a number of heroes up to Rank + 1 may reroll one result as if they had the Luck advantage. No more than one reroll per adventurer per adventure is allowed, and they may not be stockpiled between adventures; use it or lose it.

Backup: NPCs equal to the PCs in number are ready to go within the day; treat these as a group of Allies built on 50% of the petitioner's points (or the average points, for a group request). Exactly what kind of NPCs they are depends on the guild summoning them. For example, an army provides a group of warriors, while a school provides the makings of an intellectual debate. They act as porters, guards, skilled advisors, and so on – as suits their capabilities – for up to (Rank × 3) days, but won't go so far as to enter exceptionally dangerous dungeons and areas of wilderness.

Blessings: A one-point Bless spell is cast on a number of adventurers up to Rank + 1.

Favor: The guild owes the petitioner one. Treat this as the Favor advantage (p. B55) with a frequency of appearance of

(Rank + 9) or less and the guild acting as a Patron worth at least 15 points. No one may be owed more than one favor at a time from any one guild. However, subsequent favor ARs increase the frequency of appearance for an unused favor by Rank/2, rounded up and minimum 1.

Hideout: Adventurers are provided with a back room in town, use of a rustic villa, or other secure place to hide for (Rank + 1d) days. If they're being looked for, pursuers are at a penalty of -(Rank + 2) to any rolls to find them.

Immunity: Powerful patrons can get their clients out of legal trouble. This is essentially a single use of the Legal Immunity advantage (p. B65), letting up to (Rank + 1) folks avoid legal problems stemming from a single adventure.

Lore: Adventurers may request information about specific topics: the history of a noted opponent, geography of a particular destination, etc. If the AR succeeds, treat the organization as though it were a Contact Group (p. B44) with effective skill (14 + Rank), and make a skill roll. Success means the PCs get what they need. Reliability is "Somewhat Reliable" – if the skill roll fails, suitable information cannot be found. On a skill roll of 18, someone makes a profound mistake and the heroes are provided with significantly flawed information.

Map: The heroes are given a map of a region they intend to visit. The map is sketchy at Rank 0, average at Rank 2, and annotated at Rank 4 or better; see *Sages*, p. 14, for map quality.

Mounts and Vehicles: Guilds can supply adventurers with loaned transportation: horses, donkeys, carts and wagons, even boats. For the duration of one mission or adventure, delvers may borrow animals and/or vehicles with a value up to \$1,000 × (Rank + 1) × the number of adventurers. The borrowers must pay for animal feed, vehicle maintenance, and crew (if any) on the way, and healing, repair, or replacement as necessary in case of damage or loss.

New Gear: The delvers are supplied with new gear or the cash with which to buy it. Total value is \$100 × (Rank + 1) × the number of adventurers.

Provisions: Petitioners are supplied with basic mundane consumables: rations, fresh water, and oil if they have lanterns or torches if they don't. A generous GM may include items which, in a dungeon context, end up being consumed on a regular basis, like rope and 10' poles. Total value is \$150 × (Rank + 1) × the number of PCs.

Recharge: Adventurers may have power items recharged at a discount of (Rank + 1) × 10%.

Replacement: After an adventure, petitioners may replace previously owned mundane equipment they've lost along the way, to a total value up to \$150 × (Rank + 1) each. Although this will replace an item with another with the same enhancements and modifications (a lost dwarven axe with another dwarven axe, for example), it will not be a close enough match to replace an item with a Weapon Bond.

Special Orders: Some equipment requires special conditions to purchase (see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*, p. 25), but a well-connected organization can use its own contacts to obtain unusual gear. An AR may be used to get one piece of non-customized mundane equipment.

The purchaser pays list price, but it is delivered within three days.

Spellcasting: A guild may arrange for supernatural services, amounting to the casting of a spell or use of a spell-like ability. Delvers may request any one spell which is cast with a skill of Rank + 15 and costs no more than $(\text{Rank} + 1) \times 5$ FP. (Where it matters for spell effects, assume Magery, Power Investiture, etc. equal to the greater of Rank or the minimum necessary to cast the spell.) The spell must be cast at a guild facility, so typically, this can be done only before adventurers set out or after they return.

Training: Petitioners who *don't* have Rank in a guild but are called on to work for one may try to arrange training in abilities offered by that guild at a 5% discount to cost (that's monetary cost for point value, *not* point cost!). This is good for one level in a skill or, if applicable, a single perk or advantage.

Transportation: Adventurers can hitch a ride in the direction of any desired civilized destination. This may be overland (for example, accompanying a caravan) or by water (taking berths on a ship), depending on where they're going. They can travel in company, which provides them with reasonable safety from random banditry and access to provisions for (Rank + 1d) days.

THE LONG ARM

One thing the GM has to decide about guilds is how many there are and how big they can get. Historically, few organizations had more than local authority and membership. A village blacksmith, for example, wouldn't interest the ironworkers' guild of the nearest large city because . . . well, who cares about a half-seared bumpkin mending the occasional pot? No one frequenting the markets in town is going to take a long trip into the rural hinterland in search of barrel hoops, so it's a case of out of sight, out of mind – as long as the village blacksmith doesn't come to town to sell his wares (which are likely too shabby to be a threat to the commerce of more skilled urban craftsmen anyway).

Even widespread religions such as Buddhism or Islam historically operated with very little structure. Consensus and access to secular authorities could be powerful tools to promote and regulate specific strains of a religion, but no universally acknowledged Buddhist Ordnance Survey mapped the pure lands. The few organizations with greater than civic or similarly local reach were mostly national and imperial governments; the Catholic church and some of its components (for example, certain monastic orders with an international presence) were quite exceptional. Even secular international organizations, like medieval trading houses and Renaissance banks, would have agents in no more than a handful of cities, and would rarely employ more than four or five people in any of them. With realistic coverage, adventurers can lose touch with most sponsors after a mere few days of travel.

In a *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign, that rarely holds true. In the genre, folks routinely belong to *the* guild of whatever flavor, which would have an apparent national or even global reach. If adventurers belong to a guild, that membership gives

YOU "CANT" SAY THAT IN DUNGEON FANTASY!

In some games, it isn't just different races and civilizations that have their own languages. Even different professions have them! This allows members of a guild to communicate with one another without giving away anything to outsiders. The interested GM can handle this in a few ways. The most expensive way is to treat them as full-blown languages. Perhaps clerics all speak the local equivalent of Latin, wizards all speak the local equivalent of Esperanto, and so on.

But historical argots, cants, and the like weren't completely separate languages. Rather, they used the dominant tongue of their region, more or less, but incorporated elaborate catalogs of slang and occupation-specific technical jargon, peppering regular speech with unfamiliar words. This normally comes with the territory of belonging to a profession and may be included for free in, for example, Rank in a suitable guild, Trained by a Master, or even a suitable skill at 12+ (such as Streetwise for a thieves' cant). Those without such a trait may still learn a profession's jargon as a perk. This approach doesn't sink a lot of points into non-delving traits and can be a lot of fun at the table if the bard's player speaks Polari, the knight talks in military acronyms, the artificer uses a thick Scottish accent, and so on.

them access to contacts, services, and perhaps even secret handshakes just about anywhere they go. In a fantasy setting, with teleportation gates, messengers riding griffons, and crystal balls to provide effective long-distance communication and transport, this is as plausible as anything else and can be convenient. However, this can complicate relationships. If a group of delvers take out their frustrations for a difficult adventure on the local High Priest of Zorg the Tornado God and accidentally end up with his gold and jeweled panoply, they've made enemies of the Zоргites globally.

One possible middle ground is to have separate but similar organizations informally recognize one another's standing and extend mutual professional courtesies. For example, despite a backdrop of operating within the same broad legal and religious context, medieval Europe's universities answered to no central authority overseeing curriculum or standards. However, a graduate of any one of them could be seriously considered for employment at any other. Fantasy groups which are aware of one another may similarly respect each other's credentials. Though a Confirmed High Wizard of the Eastern Mountain Brethren may not be treated as an equal and paid-up member of the Duly Consecrated Magi of the Hermetically Sealed Circle, the Circle would at least recognize him as a fellow magical professional rather than a layman or apprentice. Depending on relationships between the organizations, this might just mean that the wizard is allowed to practice magic in the Circle's jurisdiction, or it might even allow him member-like privileges to stay at the Circle's guild-hall and rummage through their library (the Confirmed High Wizard would, of course, have a Claim to Hospitality with suitably broad reach).

CHAPTER TWO

THE GUILDS

These are descriptions of some types of associations, companies, covenants, and, yes, guilds one might find in a *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign. Each entry has a quick reference guide, which looks like this:

Rank: Type and range of Rank used in the guild.
In Charge: Professions of the leadership.
In the Ranks: Professions of rank-and-file members.

On Payroll: Most likely professions for people hired from outside the guild.

Influencing the AR: Suitable skill(s) for getting benefits from the guild.

Each section includes information that follows the outline described in *Where Guilds Fit* (p. 4). Details on what kinds of requests a particular group can satisfy can be found under *Sample Assistance* (pp. 8-9).

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

To make character templates easier to find, here's a list of the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* supplements in which they appear.

Template	Supplement and Page	Template	Supplement and Page
Agent	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 4	Knight	<i>Adventurers</i> , p. 8
Apprentice	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 6	Laborer	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 22
Archer	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 8	Martial Artist	<i>Adventurers</i> , p. 9
Artificer	<i>Sages</i> , p. 5	Mentalist	<i>Psi</i> , p. 15
Assassin	<i>Ninja</i> , p. 9	Native Guide	<i>Wilderness Adventures</i> , p. 11
Barbarian	<i>Adventurers</i> , p. 4	Necromancer	<i>Summoners</i> , p. 13
Bard	<i>Adventurers</i> , p. 5	Ninja	<i>Ninja</i> , p. 8
Brute	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 9	Sage	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 15
Cleric	<i>Adventurers</i> , p. 6	Scholar	<i>Sages</i> , p. 8
Cultist	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 18	Scout	<i>Adventurers</i> , p. 10
Cutpurse	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 10	Servant	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 23
Demonologist	<i>Summoners</i> , p. 6	Shaman	<i>Summoners</i> , p. 16
Druid	<i>Adventurers</i> , p. 7	Skirmisher	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 16
Elementalist	<i>Summoners</i> , p. 9	Squire	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 17
Guard	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 21	Swashbuckler	<i>Adventurers</i> , p. 11
Holy Warrior	<i>Adventurers</i> , p. 7	Thief	<i>Adventurers</i> , p. 12
Initiate	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 12	Torch-Bearer	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 25
Innkeeper	<i>Taverns</i> , p. 8	Wizard	<i>Adventurers</i> , p. 13
Killer	<i>Henchmen</i> , p. 14		

CONGREGATION

Rank: Religious Rank 0-8.
In Charge: Clerics or druids.
In the Ranks: Cultists, holy warriors, and initiates.
On Payroll: Almost anyone!
Influencing the AR: Diplomacy.

A congregation is a hierarchically organized religious group, such as a temple, monastery, or church, which may be part of a broad-based organized religion. This includes everything from the canons and parishioners of a grand urban

cathedral to a hive of evil cultists occupying an amphibian-themed temple in the middle of a swamp.

WHO CONGREGATIONS ARE

Clerics typically lead congregations. They're usually supported by any number of initiates and cultists, though some congregations may be able to call on lay congregants, who could be built on just about any template.

Very large temples in polytheistic societies may encompass priests of several different gods, or devotees of different saints or other holy entities, each based on their own templates from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 7: Clerics*. Druids living in rural areas rather than deep in the wilderness (for example, leaders of village temples which subscribe to a harvest god cult) may gather congregations around them, though they tend to go in for spiritual societies (pp. 21-22) more often. Congregations may include holy warriors among their members, typically as guards for facilities and senior clergy. However, organizations which are primarily made up of holy warriors, such as militant monastic orders, generally qualify as military companies (pp. 19-20) rather than congregations.

Even when they belong to religious tendencies without much structure beyond the local level, congregations are inherently top-down organizations. A single person heads most; even congregations with a leadership council are run, for all practical purposes, by the most senior member. Powers and responsibilities descend in a well-defined manner from there, frequently with elaborate titles and vestments to go with the various offices. The Grand Altitudinous Sacred Panjandrum sets policies and issues commands to several Fairly High Holy Semi-Panjandra, and so on down to the Assistant Third Incense Lighter On The Left On Tuesdays. Individual temples see a maximum Rank of 4 or 5, religions limited to a single kingdom have a maximum Rank of 6 or 7, and international religions have a maximum Rank of 8. Given the need for delicate navigation of political and doctrinal considerations, Diplomacy is the suitable skill to influence ARs.

If I had to choose between a wounded church that goes out on to the streets and a sick, withdrawn church, I would definitely choose the first one.

– Pope Francis

WHAT CONGREGATIONS WANT

Congregations are the manifestation of organized religion in *Dungeon Fantasy* worlds. Even if adventurers deal with isolated groups like a single church or temple, those establishments are often part of a larger religious context. They have intense internal political disputes, which may lead to individual clergy engaging agents to attack or embarrass rivals within the congregation. They also keep an eye on their place in the larger world. Many want to grow through finding converts. While typical delvers are poor candidates for missionaries, they're outstanding for recovering lost sacred items which can bring fame and glory to the church. Congregations are also more than happy to take action against rival religions, hiring skilled ruffians to trash other people's temples.

More benignly, heroes might be called on to guard pilgrims or senior officials traveling through dangerous territory, or to fight demons and the minions of evil gods, against whom congregations are the first line of defense. If suitable volunteers

can't be found within a congregation's membership, the congregation takes what personnel it can gather internally (usually headed by a senior member of the clergy) and hires outsiders to fill in any gaps.

Temple of the Fist

In some religious traditions, martial arts have a heavy spiritual component, so martial artists can have monastic temples of their own which function much like other congregations. Indeed, remote temples where spiritually oriented devotees can spend their lives studying both the practice and elaborate esoteric symbolism of unarmed combat are a classic setting for every phase of martial-arts training, from the basics to ultimate techniques. Like standard congregations, martial-arts temples are very hierarchical and can have an interest in both relics (for example, documents written by a legendary founder) and their reputation in the world. They can provide little in the way of professional goods and do not fill ARs for blessings, immunity, recharge, or spellcasting. However, they can offer extensive martial-arts training, and backup in the form of junior monks. See also *Students of the Master* (pp. 22-23).

WHAT CONGREGATIONS CAN PROVIDE

Congregations can usually offer training in abilities on the cleric template, though some churches may use specific templates from *Clerics*. Professional goods for which congregations can grant discounts include holy symbols, holy water, and medical supplies like first-aid kits, healing potions, and anything else with a curative effect.

Assistance which congregations are usually equipped to provide includes:

- Accommodations. Many churches maintain hostels for the poor and for religious pilgrims, so ARs are at +1.
- Artifact. Magical items congregations hand out are frequently divine in nature (see *Treasure Tables*, p. 50).
- Augury.
- Blessings. This is churches' stock in trade; ARs are at +3.
- Hideout. Hideouts provided by congregations are a bit different from the norm. They don't furnish actual concealment, but they *do* extend widely respected sanctuary. Civilized enemies may know where those receiving sanctuary are, but can't or won't touch them, giving those being sheltered time to heal up, regroup, and think of ways of sneaking out.
- Immunity. Congregations are plugged into local power structures and can exert modest influence on secular authorities.
- Lore. Congregations tend to have extensive but focused records. The effective Contact skill is at +2 for religious topics, -3 for all others.
- Recharge. Congregations do a lot of this as well; ARs are at +3.
- Spellcasting. Adventurers may request any spell suitable for the congregation (usually any cleric spells, but sometimes druidic spells are available instead).

Other ARs are at -3 or worse.

CRAFT GUILD

Rank: Craft Rank 0-5.

In Charge: Artificers and similar non-adventuring people.

In the Ranks: More artificers and non-adventuring types.

On Payroll: Almost anyone!

Influencing the AR: Merchant.

The craft guild is an association of independent craftsmen who come together to represent their interests to officials, ensure product quality, provide social services to their members, and train the next generation of skilled workers.

WHO CRAFT GUILDS ARE

Most guild members aren't adventuring types. While a handful of really interesting guilds might be made up of artificers – imagine a professional association of mad scientists – most have the kinds of tedious skills which adventurers don't: weaving, carpentry, pottery, and so on. Each guild member runs a small, independent workshop. Leaders within the guild are typically elected from among senior craftsmen and hold power commensurate with their ability to intimidate or satisfy the concerns of other members. They may argue and bicker, each one making sure that his rights are being respected and that he's not being called on to shoulder more than his fair share of any burden, but when it gets to the point of hiring adventurers, the interests of the guild membership usually run in the same direction.

Craft guilds are bureaucratic, or at least dependent on following proper procedures, but procedures can be short-circuited if it makes monetary sense. Local guild establishments have a maximum Rank of 4, or 5 at national level. The appropriate skill to influence craft-guild ARs is Merchant.

Service and Wizards' Guilds

Groups organized like craft guilds may provide skilled services instead. Such guilds may serve such trades as astrologers and allied fortune tellers, bankers, bards (in the form of theatrical guilds or councils of lore masters), doctors, and, most importantly for adventurers, wizards. Service guilds have similar concerns: protecting their own position and sometimes looking to expand their reach and knowledge. However, the benefits are somewhat different. Such groups produce few physical items, so for the most part, new gear and special orders are out. They can give discounts on whatever services they offer. For a wizards' guild, this puts augury and spellcasting on the list of suitable ARs, both at +2 to the roll. And while wizards' guilds can follow the craft-guild model, see also *Hermetic Cabal* (pp. 15-16), *Spiritual Society* (pp. 21-22), *Students of the Master* (pp. 22-23), and *University* (p. 27).

WHAT CRAFT GUILDS WANT

Craft guilds, like merchant houses (pp. 18-19), are mostly interested in commerce, but are more interested in the production end than eventual distribution. They've got monopolies and trade secrets, and they want to preserve them.

The most likely reason for a craft guild to bring in a group of delvers is enforcement. Low-powered, **Henchmen**-style heroes could be sent to rough up craftsmen who operate outside of the guild's rules, while full-powered ones might be brought in to take more decisive action against, say, a sorcerer-duke who has reproduced the glassblowers' guild's signature shade of deep purple. Conversely, a sneakier group might be used to perform low-tech industrial espionage. They might be sent to steal another guild's secrets directly, or to escort a defector who knows the secrets to a new home, protecting him from the revenge of his old group.

A bit more honestly, parties of adventurers could be sent out under the auspices of the guild to scout out possible sources of raw materials in dangerous territories or to recover ancient relics related to the guild craft. Alchemists in particular are huge consumers of obscure plants and dangerous monster parts. Medieval guilds typically had patron saints; similarly constituted guilds in a *Dungeon Fantasy* setting could have comparable religious commitments, and so sometimes need to send heroes on the same kinds of quests a congregation (pp. 10-11) would.

Guilds of artificers and alchemists may need to test new inventions. This can require adventurers going to unusual locations and securing dangerous sites while guild members prepare explosive compounds for mining, set up esoteric surveying and astronomical equipment, prepare an ornithopter for flight from a mountaintop, and the like.

WHAT CRAFT GUILDS CAN PROVIDE

Craft guilds can supply training in their professional skills which, unfortunately, are rarely particularly useful for adventuring. As a practical matter, a craft guild can provide training in Merchant and one or two craft skills. Guilds that are more experimental can give full access to the artificer template.

Professional goods for craft guilds include tools for the craft skills the guild offers, and anything the guild can produce. That may furnish unremarkable goods if adventurers are hired by, say, the potters' guild, but be more useful if they're brought in by the blacksmiths' or alchemists' guilds. Moreover, craft guilds can grant *deep* discounts on items they produce: double the usual professional discounts on goods to a maximum discount of 80%.

Requests craft guilds are prepared to fulfill include:

- Accommodations. Guild members have large households, so they can usually find places to put people up.
- Lore. For questions within the guild's professional purview (for example, asking an armorers' guild to identify the maker of a distinctive weapon), the AR is at +4.

*Look for the union label
When you are buying that
coat, dress or blouse.*

*– Paula Green, “Look For
The Union Label”*

- New gear. If the gear in question is something the guild produces, the above discounts apply and the AR is at +4.
- Replacement. Replacement gear produced by the guild is at the above discount.
- Special orders. Again, if the special order is for something the guild produces, the item is purchased at a suitable discount, and the AR is at +4.
- Training.
- Transportation.

Other ARs are at -3 or worse.

DELVING COMPANY

Rank: Merchant Rank 0-5.

In Charge: Anyone.

In the Ranks: Anyone.

On Payroll: Anyone.

Influencing the AR: Fast-Talk or Merchant.

Some *Dungeon Fantasy* campaigns feature an ahistorical but genre-appropriate organization, the delving company. These companies raise funds to gather information and hire and to outfit adventurers. The heroes for hire are sent to do what they do best: bash through the wilderness and underground complexes and gather loot. When they return to civilization, they turn over a substantial share of it to their employers. In worlds where vast wealth lies underground, protected by monsters, this makes some sense. In the real world, after all, wealthy investors would similarly outfit caravans and ships full of merchant sailors to brave all kinds of dangers in hopes of returning with a king's ransom in exotic trade goods. This simply monetizes the risky but potentially exceptionally lucrative practice of killing things and taking their stuff.

WHO DELVING COMPANIES ARE

To a band of adventurers, a delving company is easy to describe: it looks like them, only more so. Most people working with a delving company are or were full-time adventurers, familiar with the rigors of the field and the challenges of breaking into haunted tombs and monster-infested caves. Many have retired from active adventuring after one curse too many or taking a projectile to an important joint, or they may have the skills for adventuring but traits unsuited to the rigors of delving (Cowardice, Combat Paralysis, Night Blindness, etc.). However, the need to function as part of a group means they may lack some delvers' more antisocial traits as well. The front-line “employees,” though, are *exactly* the same as any other band of adventurers, with the same abilities and willingness to expose themselves to danger in return for fabulous treasures.

Influencing ARs for a delving company uses either Fast-Talk to convince

the company that providing aid is a good idea or Merchant to convince the company that it's profitable.

WHAT DELVING COMPANIES WANT

Delving companies want exactly what most adventurers want: loot, and lots of it. To get it, they'll send balanced parties of delvers to where the goods are. They can find a use for just about any adventuring type and even locate quests suitable for a group of any given composition. For example, a party heavy on sneaky adventurers like thieves and ninja won't be tasked with killing a rampaging army of trolls, while a team heavy on spellcasters might be sent to infiltrate a dead wizard's tower filled with so many supernatural traps that monsters have been unable to gain a foothold.

The fact that delving companies and typical adventurers are after the same thing can be something of a drawback. Unlike other guilds, who want someone or something killed, a particular unusual item found, or some other quest fulfilled, and are perfectly happy to let the people doing the work keep whatever trinkets they might happen to pick up along the way, delving companies are in it for those trinkets. Delving companies generally want a share of loot (*Dungeons*, p. 5) rather than the accomplishment of a task. On rare occasions, a third party may engage the services of a delving company for some more specific goal (for example, rescue a kidnapped relative from horde of monsters or find a lost artifact), or delving companies may send out parties to do reconnaissance in support of future missions rather than dedicated looting.

Adventurers' Guild

An alternative to the delving company is the equally fictional adventurers' guild, which resembles a service guild (p. 12) more than anything else. A bit like a modern labor union hiring hall, it acts primarily as a clearinghouse to link professional heroes with potential employers. It also provides social functions. For example, members may connect with veterans for training, and guildhalls often are equipped with taverns and overnight accommodations (guild membership is a great justification for Claim to Hospitality). Such a guild rarely needs to send people on quests, but it may need to investigate employers or send rescue missions to endangered posts.

However, at best, the adventurers tasked with the quest can hope that the company will simply want a reduced share of the spoils.

WHAT DELVING COMPANIES CAN PROVIDE

Delving companies offer a broad range of training and gear. They can supply training for all adventuring templates, and anything which might qualify as adventuring equipment (weapons, armor, survival gear, lockpicks, etc.) may be given a discount as professional goods.

Requests delving companies frequently fill include:

- Augury. On-staff spellcasters perform advance planning. +1 to ARs.
- Backup. Delving companies are an excellent source of torch-bearers, native guides, and similar henchmen who are particularly useful in the field.
- Favor.

• Lore. One of the major functions of delving companies is to research targets for looting. +1 to ARs.

- Map.
- Mounts and vehicles.
- Provisions.
- Replacement.
- Special orders.

Other ARs are at -3 or worse.

*This way when I use my powers,
it's gonna seem natural. A little
promotion work an' I'm in business!*

*- Luke Cage, in **Luke Cage,
Hero for Hire #1.1***

EXTENDED FAMILY

Rank: Family Rank 0-5.

In Charge: Anyone, including non-adventurers.

In the Ranks: Predominantly **Henchmen** archetypes and non-adventurers.

On Payroll: Anyone.

Influencing the AR: Carousing.

Everybody's related to somebody. Sometimes it's a lot of somebodies, and that's often a reason for all of them to act in concert. Extended families live together, or at least very close to one another, and act as one when threatened. It may be a fractious, squabbling body where every evening meal resembles somebody's worst-case scenario of Thanksgiving, but at least it's home.

sufficiently diverse that they can pull up one or two of just about any type of adventurer, or at least every type of henchman. For example, any given member of an extended family has a cousin who's a cleric they're all very proud of, a brother-in-law who's a bard, a grandmother who's brewed enough potions to be the next-best thing to a professional alchemist, and so on.

Maximum Rank depends on the size of the family. A relatively poor family of purely local significance has a maximum Rank of 3, while larger and wealthier families whose holdings start to rival those of noble courts may reach up to Rank 5. Gentle cajoling, friendly hectoring, and occasional scolding in informal social contexts usually motivate family members; use Carousing to assist ARs.

WHO EXTENDED FAMILIES ARE

Extended families, sometimes called clans, are large groups of people who primarily feel responsibility toward their many relatives. Although they may tend to be in a certain line of work, individual members often follow their own livelihoods. For example, many members of an extended family may engage in trade but not so many that they qualify as a merchant house (pp. 18-19); many may work in a particular area of manufacturing but not so many as to act as a craft guild (pp. 12-13); or the family may own land but not have the extended holdings and legal authority of a noble court (pp. 21-22). Extended families are usually headed by a strong-willed matriarch or patriarch, who must balance the sensibilities and demands of squabbling family members and plan ahead for the next generation's welfare and leadership. The head of the family is senior, but might be advised by retired-but-still-lucid members of an older generation.

Members of an extended family can fit just about any job description. Most are not adventuring types, but they're

WHAT EXTENDED FAMILIES WANT

While extended families usually have a DIY ethic, taking care of their own problems, they will hire specialists to handle particularly difficult challenges. They'll also happily hand a problem over to one of their members to solve, knowing that he happens to have a lot of adventurer friends.

Extended families are often involved in long-running feuds with other families, taking protracted revenge against those who have offended them. Though adventuring types might not be drawn into everyday brawling in these Montague/Capulet conflicts, they could be engaged to attack the remote stronghold of a particularly noted enemy, either on a mission of pure violence or to rescue a member of the family who has been abducted. Delvers could be sent on more traditional dungeoneering expeditions to recover a long-lost heirloom believed to have been stolen by monsters, or to find a missing family member who delved into the wrong caves himself.

Less romantically, heroes may be needed to fight off hordes of monsters threatening the family's holdings on the edge of the wilderness. The kinfolk also may, depending on the family's major preoccupations, need assistance on the kinds of tasks for which other guilds call in outside aid. For example, a household engaging in small-scale trade might, like a merchant house, want guards to protect its wagons traveling over dangerous roads, while one involved in craft may need protection for its family secrets involving beer brewing or sausage curing.

Particularly heroic figures may find themselves attracting special attention from households they help. Extended families always have members they're eager to marry off, and they'd be happy to get a permanent connection to someone of proven ability. Whether this is something individual extended families want or can offer must be decided on a case-by-case basis.

WHAT EXTENDED FAMILIES CAN PROVIDE

Extended families can furnish broad but not very deep training, and availability is unpredictable. A member of the family (that is, someone with Family Rank; anyone can be a member of *some* family, but being a member of a family extensive and diverse enough to grant adventuring benefits is an advantage) can attempt to find someone to supply training

between adventures, but this is treated as an AR. The family can provide any mundane skill, but only to a maximum skill level of 12, or to the level obtained by spending a single point on the skill if that would be higher.

Professional goods on which members can obtain discounts include clothes, provisions, and domestic items (tableware, pottery, etc.). Given their connections, extended families can give discounts on goods for any other profession, but outside of domestic items, the discount is halved.

Extended families are particularly good at filling these ARs:

- Accommodations. If extended families have anything, it's plenty of living space. +4 to AR
- Backup. Mostly low-powered henchmen like laborers and torchbearers. +2 to AR.
- Favor.
- Hideout. +2 to AR.
- Lore. The full benefit only applies only to topics in the family's home territory and/or primary professions. Otherwise, treat it as a request the family is not usually equipped to fill.
- Map. As with lore, this only applies to the family's home territory.
- Provisions. There's always something to eat. +2 to AR.

With their diversity, a household can usually scare up someone who can do whatever's needed, but not necessarily very well. Extended families can fill any of the other sample AR types at no penalty to the AR, but if the AR is successful, the effect is as if the requestor is Rank 0.

Whenever you're faced with . . . the choice between incompetence and conspiracy, always choose incompetence.

– Charles Krauthammer

HERMETIC CABAL

Rank: Conspiracy Rank 0-8.

In Charge: Demonologists, mentalists, necromancers, scholars, and wizards.

In the Ranks: As above, plus agents, cultists, and sages.

On Payroll: Predominantly physically inclined people: assassins, barbarians, knights, martial artists, ninja, scouts, washbucklers, and thieves.

Influencing the AR: Intimidation.

Somewhere in the territory between obfuscation and lust for power, you'll find hermetic cabals, the master conspirators of the *Dungeon Fantasy* world. More benign hermetic cabals may quietly seek understanding of vast cosmic forces but are willing to leave the day-to-day operation of the universe to its usual devices. Others, though, seek active control. What they're looking for active control of can range from kingdoms to the stars themselves.

But they want to do it *secretly*. They want to work from the shadows, making sure no one suspects them of any involvement in anything. Everything entails obscuring what they're really up to, including speaking in riddles and complicated metaphors, wearing elaborate hooded and masked costumes

during interminable ceremonies so everyone's true identities are hidden, and sometimes just being either vague or silent in response to direct questions.

WHO HERMETIC CABALS ARE

Hermetic cabals are deliberately convoluted conspiracies. Rather than ruling directly, where they can be targeted and overthrown, cabals aspire to be the power behind the throne, or better yet, the power behind the power, where they can quietly manipulate all sides and come out on top no matter who is nominally in charge. Their grandiose ceremonies and heavily coded language not only give them pretensions of deep understanding of hidden knowledge, but also make it exceptionally difficult for outside spies and accidental observers to make any sense of what they're up to.

While a cabal may have a nominal leader, real power tends to be spread out a bit more. There's often a council or at least small group of leaders, each keeping an eye on the others to ensure security and fidelity to the group. Internal spying is common.

Cabals mostly appeal to ambitious intellectual types, notably demonologists, mentalists, necromancers, scholars, and wizards. The sheer volume of symbolic language and the complexity of plots ensure that anyone joining a cabal has to be educated, and dark cosmic secrets often require at least a modicum of magical or psychic talent to take advantage of. Clerics can be cabal members, but their organizational efforts tend to be concentrated on congregations (pp. 10-11).

Even small conspiracies have as much complexity as they can stand, so hermetic cabals can go up to Rank 8. Engaging their paranoia best motivates hermetic cabals; use Intimidation to influence ARs.

WHAT HERMETIC CABALS WANT

Hermetic cabals are concerned foremost with secret knowledge, with power coming a close second. They gather these following elaborate protocols meant to cloak their objectives. Given their fondness for secrecy, hermetic cabals frequently hire others to do their bidding. This allows them to control information and insert multiple layers of cutouts between the plotters and their instruments. If they're not members, delvers approached by cabals are likely to be contacted by someone who has been engaged by the cabal in order to do so rather than by a cabalist directly. If a member of a group of adventurers *is* a member of a cabal, he may be the group's sole point of contact with the cabal, or, confusingly enough, he may be directed to secretly hire someone to make contact with the group.

Hermetic cabals are endlessly fond of lost artifacts and exotic materials, and they are willing to expend a lot of resources sending people to dangerous places to get them. They're also big on retribution and eliminating rivals. Sneaky professions such as thieves, ninja, and assassins are particularly in demand to quietly murder those of whom the cabal disapproves.

Ultimately, though, cabals send delvers on expeditions which make no sense: Burn down the already crumbling ruins of a particular temple, and be sure that an inscription which "looks like this" is destroyed. Break into the tomb

of this long-forgotten king and bring back a vial filled with black dust; none of your *dark gray* dust, mind you, but *black* dust. Climb to the top of this far-off mountain and sing this song. In three-part harmony. At dusk. Some are legitimately in pursuit of their goals. Others are to distract and confuse anyone who might be watching. No explanations will be forthcoming. The cabal will just demand that the adventurers do *exactly* as they're told.

WHAT HERMETIC CABALS CAN PROVIDE

Although hermetic cabals have a lot of intellectual firepower, their habit of making information difficult to get actually makes them lousy at supplying training. They can offer training in appropriate Hidden Lore specialties and abilities for at least one intellectually inclined template. However, even members don't necessarily get that instruction; they must ask for it as if it were an AR.

Hermetic cabals don't use a lot of equipment, but can give professional discounts on books.

Types of assistance hermetic cabals are likely to provide include:

- Artifact.
- Augury. Plotting and subtle advance planning are the name of the game for hermetic cabals. +2 to ARs.
- Hideout. Hermetic cabals are good at hiding. +3 to ARs.
- Immunity. Occasionally, cabals actually can pull strings from behind the scenes.
- Lore. Sometimes, to their credit, hermetic cabals think they know more than everybody else because they actually do know things other people don't; +4 to ARs. The skills available for a lore AR often include Hidden Lore.
- Map.
- Special orders.
- Spellcasting.

Other ARs are at -3 or worse. Hermetic cabals do not provide backup *at all*. The whole point is to stay hidden; having a crowd of members show up somewhere is giving away the game.

MAFIA

Rank: Criminal Rank 0-5.

In Charge: Thieves.

In the Ranks: Agents, assassins, bards, brutes, cutpurses, innkeepers, and killers.

On Payroll: Fighters (barbarians, knights, martial artists, scouts, swashbucklers) and select magic users (clerics, elementalists, wizards).

Influencing the AR: Streetwise.

A mafia is a little like an extended family (pp. 14-15; indeed, it often has an extended family at its core), a little like a merchant house (pp. 18-19; it's focused on money-making, sometimes from trading goods), and a lot like a pit of vipers. But what really distinguishes a mafia is its business: crime.

Mafias engage in structured illegal activities. Where desired goods and services are illegal or just heavily taxed (subversive literature, intoxicating lotus root, etc.), the mafia organizes a black market for them linking – or supplying – producers, smugglers, and distributors. The desperately poor are provided with loans at ruinous interest rates and subjected to great violence if they don't pay up in time. Shops on their turf are charged unofficial "taxes" or "insurance" for protection. Individual thieves are either co-opted by the mafia and forced to pay a substantial cut of their own illegal revenues, or driven out. And despite frequently deadly internal struggles, the mafia usually presents a united front to outsiders. They'll stab one another in the back, but only after they've robbed everyone else blind.

WHO MAFIAS ARE

A mafia can be a diverse though frequently short and hairy-footed collection of lowlifes. Many of its members are related, if only in an extended fashion (“Tsoa the Nose is married to Hrothgar the Weasel’s second cousin”), and where they aren’t, they are often “adopted” into the family with elaborate ceremonies. They use the language of family and other close relations when referring to one another. Immediate superiors may be “big brothers” or “aunties,” while mafia members may be distinguished from nonmember partners and allies in conversation as “family” as opposed to “friends of ours.”

A mafia is typically run by a senior member who has established a reputation for wisdom and foresight in planning criminal ventures, ruthlessness in carrying them out, and diplomacy in addressing the interests of rival underlings. Low-level mafiosi have a high proportion of brutes, cutpurses, and killers. Many of those in higher positions are built on the thief template, with a liberal addition of assassins and agents; innkeepers to keep supply and demand in sync (and to operate the taverns and inns which are frequently fronts for mafia activities); bards who have turned their social skills to con artistry and shaking down merchants; and a few knights and barbarians providing muscle.

Mafias can reliably get up to a Rank of 4 or 5. Now and again, a *capo di tutti capi* can unify enough mafias to justify a Rank of 6 or even 7, but their reigns are typically short and followed by long interregnums. Use Streetwise to influence mafia ARs.

WHAT MAFIAS WANT

Mafias want money and will get it by any means necessary. If a little quiet burglary or swindling will do the trick, that’s fine. However, they find a reputation for violence is useful in discouraging competitors, and individual mafiosi are happy to have obstacles in their way wiped out.

Although mafias have an urban focus, their fondness for contraband can lead them to send people into the wilderness to take care of problems which can’t be resolved with veiled threats or, at worst, a quick knife in the dark. Smuggling routes and sources of illegal materials may need to be cleared of monsters, and particularly persistent menaces may need to be tracked down into dungeons from which they originate. Valuable shipments may need to be recovered or hijacked. It’s even possible for semi-civilized monsters (say, tribes of goblin-kin) to act as rivals for some of the traffic mafias are trying to control and thus need to be put out of the way.

In addition to performing dungeon-delving tasks for which the average mafioso is unprepared, delvers may be hired as muscle in internal squabbles. Those with no apparent ties to the mafia can be hired without too much worry about word of the criminal group’s involvement making it back to rivals, and it provides deniability. Therefore, adventurers might be sent to ambush a problematic capo and his most trusted henchmen on the road or at a remote villa. While the mafia will occasionally provide the same treatment for overzealous

Thieves’ Guild

Countless fantasy games feature criminal organizations which have a more traditional guild structure: young apprentices are recruited and trained by more senior thieves, and very senior criminals set policies (for example, defining territories) and mediate disputes among the membership. In particularly corrupt times, the masters of the thieves’ guild may even represent the guild’s interests in front of civil authorities. Such a thieves’ guild is purely fictional, but it has an impeccable literary pedigree going back to Cervantes. It’s built less like a mafia and more like a service guild (p. 12). However, the benefits they provide, such as training and ARs, are essentially the same as a mafia.

Ninja Clan

Ninja clans, alluded to in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 12: Ninja*, usually resemble mafias more than any other type of guild: they follow a familial structure, and they function by carrying out illegal activities, albeit focused on assassination rather than accumulating wealth. However, they’re also a bit like hermetic cabals (pp. 15-16), in that they take secrecy very, very seriously, and they’re even less likely to bring in outsiders to work for them. In the unlikely event that they do, they communicate indirectly, using several layers of intermediaries or simply pithy haiku in immaculate calligraphy found on one’s pillow in the morning. Although members can receive the full range of benefits for a mafia (with the added benefit of the chance at ninja gear from their guild), about the only currency they traffic in with outsiders is obligation; for nonmembers, ARs are at -5 or worse, *except* for favors, which are at +5.

law-enforcement figures, that tends to cause too much trouble with noble courts (pp. 21-22) and town watches (pp. 24-25).

WHAT MAFIAS CAN PROVIDE

Mafias can offer training for any traits in the thief template. Many also can furnish training in traits on the assassin template.

Professional items on which mafias can grant discounts include poisons, concealable weapons, and the kinds of gear found under *Covert Ops and Security Gear* (*Adventurers*, pp. 25-26) and *Thief/Spy* (*Treasure Tables*, p. 25).

Appeals which mafias are likely to fill include:

- Accommodations.
- Backup.
- Favor.
- Hideout. Mafias do a lot of this. +3 to ARs.
- Immunity. Mafias are used to paying off authorities to keep their own people out of trouble.
- Mounts and vehicles.
- Provisions.
- Special orders. It’s remarkable what will just fall off the back of a wagon. +1 to ARs.
- Transportation.

Other ARs are at -3 or worse.

MERCHANT HOUSE

Rank: Merchant Rank 0-5.

In Charge: Non-adventurers resembling bards and innkeepers.

In the Ranks: As above, with some fighters (barbarians, knights, martial artists, scouts, and swashbucklers).

On Payroll: Anyone except assassins, ninja, and thieves.

Influencing the AR: Merchant.

A merchant house is a straightforward business concern. Everybody involved is in it for the money, made by trading goods. The people in charge are typically negotiators rather than adventurers, but many of their people are familiar with aspects of the adventuring life.



WHO MERCHANT HOUSES ARE

Merchant houses bear a faint resemblance to mafias (pp. 16-17), in that they're often built around a core of relatives but include trusted outsiders as well. In addition to relatives, many of the unrelated members may be coreligionists or members of the same race or ethnicity, since people are more likely to trust siblings, cousins, or people they see at the temple every day rather than strangers, but conditions and responsibilities are still well-defined and agreed upon in advance.

Where they differ from mafias, of course, is that their work is, generally speaking, legal. (As masters of both finance and legalese, merchants excel at tax evasion and striking deals which are more favorable for them than initial appearances, but that's not their core business.) The work is, however, difficult and arduous. A merchant house raises capital to purchase goods locally, and ships them off to distant lands where those wares are much more exotic and expensive. The mercantile concern then trades them for relatively inexpensive local items, and returns the acquisitions for sale at home for a hefty profit. Those distant journeys mean that merchants must be equipped to survive, at least for a while, in dangerous locations far from civilization.

The masters of merchant houses are thoroughly metropolitan and very social. They live in urban palaces to rival those of traditional nobility and may take on similar airs. Although the people in charge of companies are unlikely to correspond to adventuring templates, they can be avid employers of adventurers. They most closely resemble bards and innkeepers, only

with points in performing and bartending skills going toward increased social and logistical skills. They often keep a few knights or other competent fighters on hand to protect their warehouses and homes.

Merchant houses can be quite wealthy, but are no larger than extended families, with a maximum Rank of 5. Use Merchant skill to influence ARs for a merchant house.

WHAT MERCHANT HOUSES WANT

Merchant houses are very big on caravans and shipping. Since long-distance travel is fraught with such difficulties as harsh terrain, lack of proximity to law enforcement, banditry, poor weather, constant need for supplies, sudden wars along the trade route, and the random appearance of monsters, this gives them their primary need to hire adventurers.

Aspects of preparation for a merchant caravan resemble plotting a military campaign, down to gathering a body of people who are good in a fight. Knights are very much in demand, since they can double as strong backs to lift and carry, but anyone who can fight (holy warriors, swashbucklers, etc.) is acceptable in that role. Barbarians and scouts make good wilderness guides and may be hired for short stretches little-known places along the route to cover the terrain they know. A small number of druids, clerics, and wizards are welcome in various supporting roles such as healing, smoothing difficult environments, and buffing various members of the expedition. Mentalists could conceivably fill that slot as well. Bards and innkeepers aren't directly useful, but they can often find accommodation on large mercantile expeditions to provide entertainment and handle provisioning along the way. Scholars can assist with information about little-known places along the way and are in a good position to learn about them quickly, while artificers may be in demand to repair damaged vehicles. Generally, merchants object strenuously to thieves. Any thieves (or their cousins, the ninja) will have to disguise their real skill set.

Merchants also benefit from exploration. Getting goods from point A to point B is expensive, often going through middlemen at points C through Z, at increasing expense every step of the way. It can, therefore, be extremely lucrative to find shortcuts and other ways to avoid those middlemen. The professions preferred for exploration strongly resemble those for a caravan, save that outdoor folk (barbarians, druids, and scouts) become much more important. Caravans typically take known routes, if still sometimes wild and dangerous ones. Explorers go completely off the map; *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures* addresses this kind of work (see *Aerial Mapping*, p. 27, and *Boldly Going*, pp. 49-50).

Sometimes, merchants aren't paid what they're owed. When that happens, they need to employ some muscle to get what's coming to them. Just about every adventuring occupation can be put to use here: fighters for pure physical intimidation, spellcasters and mentalists to overcome extranormal challenges, sneaky ones (thieves and ninja) to quietly obtain payment, and even bards to add a little persuasion to the threat of force.

WHAT MERCHANT HOUSES CAN PROVIDE

Merchants are, above all, rich. They have more cash than just about any other group, and they deal in large quantities of valuable commodities: spices, exotic textiles, jewelry, and so on. If adventurers want straight-up mundane riches, these are the guys to work for. Traders can outfit their employees with more than adequate mundane adventuring gear, including provisions, portable shelter, and transportation. For merchant houses, *all* mundane goods qualify for professional discounts.

However, they're not strong on skills and other capabilities of interest to dungeon delvers. If they were, they wouldn't need to hire them. The knowledge they have is either largely mundane and irrelevant to most adventurers (mastery of accounting practices, calculation of interest on loans, contract law) or proprietary and not something which would be divulged to people who aren't members of the firm (existence

of secret contracts, bribed officials, hidden financial arrangements). They can provide training in traits on the bard and innkeeper templates *excluding* Bardic Talent, artistic skills, and Wild Talent.

Requests a merchant house is likely to fulfill include:

- Accommodations.
- Mounts and vehicles. Merchant houses have very good access to these. +3 to ARs.
- New gear.
- Provisions. Likewise, merchant houses are good at getting supplies. +3 to ARs.
- Replacement.
- Transportation. This is what merchant houses do best. +4 to ARs *and* the effect is as if the requestor's Rank were two levels higher.

Significant financial resources make merchant houses slightly better suited to hire people outside of their own areas of expertise; other ARs are at -2 or worse.

MILITARY COMPANY

Rank: Military Rank 0-8.

In Charge: Knights.

In the Ranks: Barbarians, brutes, guards, holy warriors, knights, martial artists, scouts, skirmishers, squires, and swashbucklers.

On Payroll: Bards, clerics, druids, innkeepers, summoners, and wizards.

Influencing the AR: Leadership.

Both freelance mercenary organizations and standing state armies are commonplace in worlds where dungeon delving is a viable career choice. They provide fighting men, women, and beings with potential employment and a structure to give them contacts and other social support. But their narrow focus can lead them to engage outsiders for specialized work.

WHO MILITARY COMPANIES ARE

Military companies are purveyors of armed, physical force, warriors from top to bottom. Military companies attract a lot of knights and scouts, as well as their *Henchmen*-styled counterparts (archers, squires, skirmishers, and guards) and even a few barbarians, holy warriors, martial artists (particularly the armed varieties), and swashbucklers. They may have a small corps of clerics for healing, wizards for battle magic and miscellaneous supernatural support, and innkeepers to handle provisioning. However, such specialists are typically already working at full capacity to support regular units and can't be spared for special missions. Most other adventuring types must be hired on a mission-by-mission basis as required.

Depending on the history of the company, they may share a common ethnic or racial origin. A number of historical societies were noted for providing specific types of troops (for example, slingers from the Balearic Islands for the Romans, or horse archers from Central Asia for many Asian nations during the Middle Ages). Dwarves may be noted for their sappers and

heavy infantry, while elves may be famous for their scouts and massed archery. However, many military companies have few conditions beyond being able to fight and take orders.

Military companies are strongly hierarchical, with a definite chain of command. Smart commanders listen to their underlings before issuing orders, but then what they say goes. Nevertheless, they have a stake in making sure their subordinates are suitably equipped. Maximum Rank for a single company is 5 or 6, but imperial armies can have Rank as high as 8. Use Leadership to influence ARs.

WHAT MILITARY COMPANIES WANT

Military companies are in the business of killing things, and they're very good at doing it with physical force and pointy objects. Members of military companies can look forward to countless missions of violence, and looting bodies and conquered territories is a time-honored perk of being a soldier. Of course, they do so as part of a broader strategy, so they may not understand why they need to occupy a given hill or attack a given position, and the fog of war may leave them ill-equipped to deal with conditions on the ground or deprive them of expected support.

But there are often gaps in coverage for tasks which involve subtlety, negotiation, and the supernatural, and military companies may require auxiliaries to perform support missions or neutral parties to handle sensitive tasks. One common capacity in which military companies engage outsiders is for mixed strike forces. Any number of missions require a strong presence of spellcasters to handle supernatural threats and defenses, and thieves or similar sneaky folk to circumvent obstacles which cannot be overcome by force of arms alone. These may include decapitation strikes against enemy commanders and attempts to gather intelligence about enemy forces and movements.

A military company stretched thin with front-line fighting duties may need assistance in performing key logistical tasks. Adventurers may be called on to escort payrolls through dangerous territory or important prisoners from the battlefield to secure rear areas. Hired associates may be involved in missions closer to the front lines for which warriors are poorly suited. Thieves, ninja, and assassins may be prized for their

ability to sneak behind enemy lines to gather intelligence, while bards can travel relatively openly, convincingly lying about their true purpose while entertaining opposing forces.

WHAT MILITARY COMPANIES CAN PROVIDE

Military companies can give training for traits on the knight and scout templates. Professional items they can supply discounts on include most weapons (excluding disguised weapons and weapons which have only reach C), any armor, and shields.

Military companies can usually respond to these types of ARs:

- Backup. When a military company sends people around to help, they're trained fighters built on a mix of full knight/holy warrior/scout templates and their closest **Henchmen** equivalents.
- Map.
- Mounts and vehicles.
- New gear.
- Provisions.
- Training.

Other ARs are at -3 or worse.

Military Orders

Religious-oriented military companies, made up of warriors who have taken up a religious lifestyle or are full-fledged fighting priests, are organized much like their secular counterparts and provide many of the same potential benefits. However, their missions are often constrained by the dictates of their faith. For example, they may be forbidden to fight members of their own religion or on holy days. Sufficiently pragmatic military orders might temporarily recruit outsiders as a sort of violent *shabbat goy* to dodge those restrictions! Since their members are clerics and holy warriors (or at least those who aspire to be holy warriors and are constrained by Vows, Disciplines of Faith, and other traits), they add blessings and spellcasting to the assistance they can provide, and can train members in traits from the holy warrior template.

NOBLE COURT

Rank: Status 0-8.

In Charge: Knights.

In the Ranks: Predominantly fighters, but potentially anyone except assassins, ninja, and thieves.

On Payroll: Anyone.

Influencing the AR: Diplomacy or Savoir-Faire (High Society).

Somebody has to be in charge, and the best people for the job are the nobles. That's certainly what they'll tell you. The noble court is the center of political leadership for a region, from a small fief to an empire. It centers on a single leader (such as a baron, prince, emir, voivode, or daimyo) who ultimately makes the final decisions. He's surrounded by circles of lesser retainers who advise him and do his bidding, and various other hangers-on who do the drudgery and vie for official favor.

WHO NOBLE COURTS ARE

Noble courts are where civilized people with Status congregate. Their palaces are both home and workplace for the upper classes. While the aristocracy in a *Dungeon Fantasy* setting has a disproportionate number of knights, it's more than possible, depending on the society in question, for a ruler to be a martial artist, swashbuckler, wizard, or non-adventuring type. Courts usually have a resident spiritual advisor (cleric), a court magician (wizard) or grand vizier (scholar), and at least one jester or other entertainer (bards). Courts also have a lot of servants on hand, including many **Henchmen**

types. Though the nobility frequently make a show of religious devotion, they're functionally very secular; in theocracies, where priests replace princes, noble courts start to look a bit like congregations (pp. 10-11).

The skills to get ARs fulfilled are Diplomacy and Savoir-Faire (High Society). Also, the advantage indicating position is Status, not Rank. For requests made at court, substitute Status for Rank in any formulas for determining the results of success. Maximum Status is *at least* 4 for a rural nobleman of minimal importance; any lower and the "court" is hardly distinguishable from an extended family or other modestly well-to-do household.

WHAT NOBLE COURTS WANT

Law and order is a noble court's first responsibility, and opportunities always arise for a nobleman to take his retainers to fight bandits, clear the roads of wandering monsters, and collect taxes from the reticent. If there aren't enough hangers-on to get the job done, if the court has more important things to do, or if the highest levels of power are occupied by those disinclined to leave the luxuries of the palace and take the field, there's always money to hire on enforcers to do the job for them. Smaller enforcement missions look a lot like the kinds of tasks undertaken by town watches (pp. 24-25), while larger ones look like the kinds undertaken by military companies (pp. 19-20). Even without a specific enforcement goal in mind, noble courts have an interest in knowing what's going on in the realm. They may send parties of heroes to explore ruins, just to see what's there.

Diplomacy is another task which noble courts have to undertake. Certainly, negotiating peace treaties and trade agreements with other noble courts is not in most adventurers' wheelhouse, but getting a clever-and-persuasive but clumsy-and-fragile ambassador or a reluctant prospective spouse through hundreds of miles of wilderness definitely is.

Even a court's recreations can involve adventuring types. Hunting is a popular amusement for the rich and powerful. More important members of the court can participate, while underlings may need to do reconnaissance and act as guards, just to make sure nobody inadvertently stumbles over a sleeping basilisk or hidden patch of exploding fungi. Jousts and similar contests of strength and skill can provide an adventuresome interlude between trips to the dungeon and give even relatively lowly members of the court a chance to stand out. Noblemen with more honor than impulse control can make vows and wagers which send them off to dangerous places to retrieve improbable items ("You said you'd fetch me the moon and stars. I'm *waiting*."), turning a job as a retainer into an adventuring position.

WHAT NOBLE COURTS CAN PROVIDE

While noble courts can supply training in many of the same traits as a military company, they're not strongly inclined to actually perform instruction for extended periods. Even members must track down people willing to teach them and convince them to do so; treat this as an AR. They can also

provide training in anything resembling a social skill, including Dancing, Diplomacy, Heraldry, Leadership, Propaganda, Public Speaking, and Savoir-Faire (High Society).

Professional goods available from a noble court include luxuries (spices, fine wines, decorated items, etc.), arms, and armor.

Appeals which can be made to a noble court include:

- Accommodations.
- Favor. Noble courts can promise much, but deliver poorly. Favors are at +2 to ARs, but effective frequency of appearance is Status + 6.
- Immunity. Noble courts can grant *carte blanche*; that's practically what they're for. +3 to ARs, and treat a successful result as if the requestor were two levels of Status higher.
- Lore. The full benefit applies only to topics in the region under the court's authority. Otherwise, treat it as a request the court is not usually equipped to fill.
- Map. As with lore, the full benefit only applies to the region the court rules.
- Mounts and vehicles. In addition to having power, noble courts have money. On a successful AR, treat the results as though the requestor were two levels of Status higher.
- Provisions. As with mounts and vehicles, treat the results as though the requestor were two levels of Status higher.
- Replacement.
- Special orders. Noble courts have access to the best. +2 to ARs.

What they can't provide, they can usually order someone else to do. Other ARs are at a penalty of -1 or worse.

It's good to be the king.

– *Louis XVI, in History of the World, Part I*

SPIRITUAL SOCIETY

Rank: Spiritual Rank 0-2.

In Charge: Artificers, bards, druids, mentalists, scholars, summoners, and wizards.

In the Ranks: As above.

On Payroll: Anyone.

Influencing the AR: Any social skill; see below.

Some religions are organized around centers of worship and local or regional hierarchies of clerics, while groups of wizards are organized into similarly hierarchical groups resembling craft guilds or teaching institutions. Other spiritually, philosophically, or even aesthetically oriented communities, though, are looser and more egalitarian. These are spiritual societies. Followers of the same deities or intellectual tendencies associate with one another when and if they see fit, and they work out responsibilities and courses of action communally. Whether they consist of circles of druids occasionally meeting in sacred groves and sending messages by

raven or wolf, or groups of wizards communicating by pen and scrying glass, spiritual societies connect isolated people devoted to a common cause across great distances.

WHO SPIRITUAL SOCIETIES ARE

In a way, spiritual societies are organizations for loners. The membership meets rarely. Communication within the group most often goes by relays, with members meeting one on one or by letters or other forms of correspondence. Likewise, while such groups may have at least a nominal ruler or leadership council, the loose organization gives members great day-to-day autonomy. Spiritual societies may come together on a regular-but-infrequent basis to strengthen old ties and on an emergency basis to handle new threats.

Although some clerics go in for this sort of thing, it is more the realm of druids, summoners in general, mentalists, some scholars or mad-scientist artificers, and wizards of an independent turn of mind. Bards, who spend a lot of time on the road and in the company of non-bards, sometimes prefer this kind of organization as well.

Spiritual societies have very flat organizations (maximum Rank 2) and are rarely interacted with as a group. Rather, heroes usually encounter members individually. To influence ARs, roll a Quick Contest between any suitable social skill and Will 12; the AR modifier is half the margin of victory (minimum +1) or loss (but always at least -1).

WHAT SPIRITUAL SOCIETIES WANT

Spiritual societies are concerned with things others are ignorant of or pay no attention to. In addition to maintaining ancient traditions, they're variously preoccupied with disastrous alignments of the stars which happen only once every thousand years, secret conspiracies of the undead, the return of forces generally thought long gone, and so on. They aren't obsessed with secrecy the way hermetic cabals are, but they are low key about their activities. They do, though, need to send people on the same kind of "recover this old/lost/exceptionally dangerous thing" quests as other supernaturally oriented guilds.

With communication magic limited in many ways, spiritual societies are dependent on the mail getting through. While passing merchants and even paid messengers may suffice for routine matters, high-priority correspondence requires special intervention. Adventurers may find themselves engaged to get important dispatches delivered.

A more significant concern for spiritual societies is that if their major worry comes to light (the lost city of the undead

rises from the ocean, the son of the dark lord takes the fallen angel's daughter to the ball, etc.), they are often too few and too scattered to handle the problem themselves. Their primary task, then, is to gather others capable of resistance and set them to work. When things start going wrong unexpectedly, potential heroes may find themselves approached by mysterious-but-knowledgeable strangers.

WHAT SPIRITUAL SOCIETIES CAN PROVIDE

Spiritual societies can grant discounts on books and mystical aids such as potions and magical items, if available. They can supply discounts on training in traits suitable for the primary templates used by members.

Assistance which spiritual societies are likely to provide include:

- Augury.
- Backup. Rather than furnishing a body of assistants, backup is provided by a single (somewhat unreliable) Ally built on 150% of the requestor's points, with a frequency of appearance of Rank + 9. Roll *daily* for appearance. If the roll fails, the Ally vanishes to take care of important tasks elsewhere and reappears the next time the roll succeeds.
- Blessings.
- Favor.
- Lore. As guardians of long-lost information, spiritual societies can often handle Hidden Lore in lore ARs.
- Map.
- Recharge.
- Spellcasting.
- Training.

Other ARs are at -3 or worse.

STUDENTS OF THE MASTER

Rank: Scholarly Rank 0-4.

In Charge: A martial artist, ninja, summoner, swashbuckler, or wizard.

In the Ranks: Same profession as leader.

On Payroll: Anyone else.

Influencing the AR: Carousing, Diplomacy, or Fast-Talk.

In fields which require intense training, it's common to find deep, long-term student-teacher relationships. Indeed, such relationships may last a lifetime, and aspects of it are passed down through generations. Students of the same teacher can find themselves bound together not by direct ties to one another, but through mutual obligation to their school and their common master.

WHO STUDENTS OF THE MASTER ARE

Students fall into two broad categories. The most closely connected are current students. They live near (if not in) the

school and communally take care of cooking, cleaning, and shopping when they're not practicing their skills. They are the most directly loyal to one another and their school, but the least skilled. Then there are the graduates, the students who have learned their skills and moved on into the world. They can be loosely connected, with only sentiment and the old school tie binding them together, but they are often very competent at what they do. Some of them may have founded schools of their own but retain ongoing loyalty to their old teachers.

Where there are students, there are also masters. The school will have at least one master who commands the loyalty everyone beneath him. Larger schools may include other teachers who do more basic and hands-on training under the master's supervision. Masters are, of course, well-known for being a font of secret knowledge and hidden techniques.

Martial artists are frequently devoted students of a master, as are many swashbucklers, who learn from independent fencing teachers, and scholars, who may come from traditions of individual scholarship. Students of the master also include some bards, mentalists, and wizards. Certain ninja "clans" are actually extended lineages of training in ninja skills.

Schools are top-down organizations, typically divided into students, graduates, instructors, and the master (maximum Rank 4); though students may be subdivided by seniority, there's little difference in the resources they can command. The most senior members are the ones to be persuaded to make the students take action. Diplomacy generally works to influence ARs, though some masters may be susceptible to Carousing or Fast-Talk.

WHAT STUDENTS OF THE MASTER WANT

The challenges which motivate students are those which concern the honor and wellbeing of their master and their school. Students getting in trouble and having to be bailed out by classmates and their master is practically a subgenre of martial-arts films and provides the template for dozens of Wong Fei-Hung movies. This can involve conflicts between rival groups of students (either on the street or in organized tournaments), rescuing members who have been kidnapped or otherwise gotten into trouble, taking vengeance for offenses against them, or retrieving lost or stolen relics.

It isn't just low-powered starting heroes based on *Henchmen* templates who enjoy lots of opportunities for action; more mature delvers and their friends might be drawn into such adventures in support of the old school. Unaffiliated adventurers may seek out such work in order to get access to special training. Indeed, they may be sent on quests not because the master wants something in particular, but to prove their worthiness to become students or to work toward enlightenment. These quests, like those provided by hermetic cabals (pp. 15-16), have a strongly enigmatic quality ("We need to find out if the dire wolf has Buddha-nature"), but the

goal here is not necessarily to achieve a specific result so much as to gain vital insights from carrying out the task.

WHAT STUDENTS OF THE MASTER CAN PROVIDE

Professional goods on which requesters can obtain a discount vary by the type of school. For example, these may include musical instruments from a bardic master or fencing weapons from a school for swashbucklers.

Where these guilds excel is in providing training. They offer *double* the usual discounts on training in their area (usually traits for a single template: ninja skills from a ninja master, etc.) to the usual maximum of -80%.

Benefits which students of the master usually can dispense include:

- Accommodations. Schools have dormitories and communal meals where adventurers can find short-term lodging, as long as they don't mind being around a bunch of students.
- Backup.
- Hideout. Sometimes, former students are willing to stash people quietly for a while, or the school may maintain isolated retreats for meditation. -1 to ARs.
- Special orders. Orders are limited to specialized tools suitable to the school's function. For example, a master scholar could help adventurers find an esoteric text, while a fencing master could provide particularly fine blades.
- Training. Students of the master often have access to techniques not available to the public; just about anything in *Power-Ups* can qualify.

Other ARs are at -3 or worse. Magical schools add spell-casting to the list, while schools for scholars add lore.

SWORN SOCIETY

Rank: Conspiratorial Rank 0-3.

In Charge: Barbarians, holy warriors, knights, martial artists, scouts, and swashbucklers.

In the Ranks: As above, plus brutes, guards, skirmishers, and squires.

On Payroll: Anyone else.

Influencing the AR: Carousing or Leadership.

Through long association and shared tribulation, otherwise unrelated individuals may come together to form a single unit. Such groups usually arise spontaneously and continue informally, but last for a lifetime or until a cause is fulfilled. A sworn society can even be found inside another organization, such as a circle of long-surviving veterans who serve together in the same army.

WHO SWORN SOCIETIES ARE

Sworn societies most often attract those in primarily physical occupations. They are most

common among warriors, friendly veterans either supporting one another or pursuing a cause outside of the bounds of an approved organization. Since any purpose they may have is often hidden, sworn societies are the meathead equivalent of a hermetic cabal (pp. 15-16) or spiritual society (pp. 21-22).

Sworn societies are mostly made of very tough individuals. Knights, holy warriors, martial artists, and swashbucklers are often members, with some composed predominantly of barbarians and scouts.

All for one, and one for all!

– Alexandre Dumas,
The Three Musketeers

Leadership combines charismatic appeal with respect for seniority. Founding members are treated with deference, but younger firebrands can win over the good will of the group. Organizations are very informal and often flat; maximum Ranks above 3 are uncommon.

A mix of informal persuasion and vigorous calls to action sways these companionships. Carousing and Leadership are suitable skills to influence ARs.



WHAT SWORN SOCIETIES WANT

Sworn societies have a cause. The cause may be a specific political goal (defend the homeland against the evil ethnic invaders, restore the lost princess to her rightful position) or an ideological position (defend a minority religion, dispense two-fisted justice in the night). It is pursued with enthusiasm more than cold calculation. Members may be called on to fight a duel, intercept a messenger along the road, or join a battle

on a moment's notice, and they are happy to do so. Should that member have friends, he may attempt to bring them along; other members of the society are unlikely to object.

Sworn societies may approach outsiders who can provide capabilities they don't have: thieves to open a troublesome citadel's doors, clerics to give their blessings to the society's endeavors, and so on. As with military companies, they may need to seek out supernatural assistance when going up against particularly magical foes. They do so hesitantly, but with enormous gratitude if they receive the aid they seek.

WHAT SWORN SOCIETIES CAN PROVIDE

Professional goods on which a sworn society can offer discounts include arms and armor suitable to the membership. For example, a sworn society of martial artists could give discounts on nunchaku, shuriken, and the like, while one made up mostly of swashbucklers could provide fencing weapons and flamboyant hats.

Available training is likewise driven by the membership of the society. They can provide training in traits for the guild's most common template.

Common appeals to a sworn society include:

- Backup. When sworn societies turn out for something, they arrive in

force. +3 to ARs, and add Rank \times 2 to the number of people who show up.

- Favor. When sworn societies commit to something, they commit. +3 to effective frequency of appearance.

- Hideout.
- Mounts and vehicles.
- Provisions.
- Special orders.
- Training.

Other ARs are at -4 or worse.

TOWN WATCH AND RANGERS

Rank: Police Rank 0-5.

In Charge: One of holy warriors, knights, martial artists, scouts, or swashbucklers.

In the Ranks: Same profession as leaders.

On Payroll: Anyone else.

Influencing the AR: Leadership.

Someone has to keep civilization safe from crime, banditry, and the occasional raid by monsters. Military

companies (pp. 19-20) can meet large-scale threats, and noble courts (pp. 21-22) are at least nominally in charge of public safety, though their reach and attention can be limited. Most of the time, though, those tasks fall to the town watch and rangers, two groups with similar job descriptions, if somewhat different membership and venues. Theirs is an unglamorous, thankless job, but they are the thin blue (or, in the case of rangers, drab brown with twigs mixed in) line between civilization and savagery.

WHO TOWN WATCH AND RANGERS ARE

The town watch in *Dungeon Fantasy* settings are enforcers of law in and around cities and towns. They act primarily as beat cops and riot control, putting on shows of force to discourage petty crime and stopping bar brawls before they get out of hand. They're sometimes tasked with rooting out secret rebellions and exterminating monsters running around in the sewers. Rangers perform broadly similar tasks in the wilderness, keeping bandits and wandering monsters away from the fields, city walls, and main roads.

Rangers and town-watch soldiers are typically dedicated to their jobs and deeply loyal to one another, but chronically underfunded and held in low regard by their political masters, which leads to a certain cynicism. Some eventually become disenchanted and vulnerable to corruption (individual dishonest town-watch soldiers are a problem to be rooted out; an unscrupulous town watch is effectively a mafia).

Both groups are paramilitary organizations. They're ordered hierarchically, and members can take care of themselves in a fight, but their primary function is law and order, not combat. Members of a town watch are mainly fighters: knights, swashbucklers, martial artists, or holy warriors, depending on local cultural preferences (or, if available, justiciars from *Pyramid #3/10: Crime and Grime*, pp. 4-6). Rangers are overwhelmingly made up of scouts. However, both groups have better social capabilities than the average warrior (notably skills like Area Knowledge, Diplomacy, Intimidation, Leadership, and Streetwise), and while they're certainly competent in combat skills, they rarely develop them to the exclusion of others. Since they have fewer opportunities to gather loot than many other adventuring types, they're often heavy on such traits as Sense of Duty and Code of Honor.

Both groups are strongly local in flavor, so they rarely have a maximum Rank over 5. Command of law enforcement above that level typically falls to noble courts. Leadership is the appropriate skill to influence ARs for town watch and rangers.

And remember, let's be careful out there.

*— Sgt. Phil Esterhaus,
in Hill Street Blues series*

WHAT TOWN WATCH AND RANGERS WANT

Town watch and rangers want to protect the public and eliminate crime and threats to the general welfare. More specifically, they work to suppress violent and street crime (or, in the case of rangers, Ye Kynge's Olde Roade Thru Ye Greenway

crime), riots, and, to some extent, armed revolt. Their interest in the last pursuit is with subversive groups attempting to start revolts or otherwise resist government authority; open rebellion tends to be a matter for noble courts and military companies. Naturally, their duties put them in conflict with other types of guilds. Town watch are frequently opposed to mafia (pp. 16-17), and both town watch and rangers often run up against problems with sworn societies (pp. 23-24) with a beef against the current regime. Ideally, their duty is to apprehend wrongdoers rather than kill them, but it's understood that deadly force is an everyday part of the job.

Furthermore, they don't always work against other humans and human-like members of civilization. Town watch and rangers are the first line of defense against small monstrous threats: sewer monsters coming out into the light of day, ghouls infesting civic cemeteries, cursed zombies erupting from wheat fields which were once battlefields, phantoms in the opera house, and the like. Larger forces and supernatural specialists may be called in eventually, but it's up to the town watch and rangers to face the threats first and try to contain them.

The King's Men

Beyond the town watches and rangers are the King's men, a force which performs essentially the same troubleshooting tasks but dealing with matters of national rather than civic import. Their organization is essentially identical to a town watch, but members are typically better trained and have the king as a Patron.

WHAT TOWN WATCH AND RANGERS CAN PROVIDE

Although the kinds of gear town watch and rangers use overlap somewhat with those of military companies, they usually work with lighter weapons. Swords, axes, and smaller armaments are available at professional discounts through the town watch, as are armor and shields.

Bows and camouflage items get professional discounts from rangers. These organizations can provide training for traits on suitable templates (the predominant type of warrior for town watch, scout for rangers).

Assistance that town watch and rangers can furnish include:

- Backup.
- Favor.
- Hideout.

- Immunity.
- Lore.
- Map.
- Mounts and vehicles.
- Provisions.
- Training.

Other ARs are at -3 or worse.

TRIBE

Rank: Tribal Rank 0-3.

In Charge: Barbarians.

In the Ranks: Barbarians, bards, druids, native guides, scouts, and shamans.

On Payroll: Anyone else.

Influencing the AR: Carousing or Diplomacy.

The wilderness is a tough place to make a living, so it's best to stick together. And that's what tribes are: groups of rough-and-ready outdoors-people who act as one against outside threats. They are generally self-sufficient, but once someone has made friends with them, they're hard to shake.

WHO TRIBES ARE

Tribes are a little like a cross between an extended family (pp. 14-15) and a noble court (pp. 21-22) that spends its entire time outdoors. They're like an extended family in that their members are usually related to one another, at least through marriage, and the chief spends a lot of time mediating private squabbles. They're like a noble court in that they're a political entity as well as a social one.

Tribes have a high proportion of barbarians and scouts. They get magical support from druids and shamans, and bards are held in high esteem. They also specialize in skills for getting around. For example, Viking-like tribesmen have boating and ship-handling skills, Mongol- and Sioux-like tribesmen are excellent with horses and horse archery, and jungle-dwelling tribes tend to get around on foot, possible with Climbing and Acrobatics for swinging on vines.

Most tribes have a very flat organization, usually with a maximum Rank no higher than 2; the only exceptions are high chieftains governing broad alliances of smaller tribes, who may reach Rank 3 or even 4, but not all tribes participate in such alliances, nor are alliances of that sort particularly long-lived. Skills to use to influence tribal ARs include Carousing and Diplomacy.

WHAT TRIBES WANT

The primary adventuring-type activity in which tribes engage is one for which they have little need of the aid of outsiders. Like professional dungeon delvers, tribes raid the apparently wealthy for fun and profit. They do this for their own material benefit and for the glory, so there's little point in inviting others along. However, this means that heroes who are members of tribes have endless opportunities to attack the villages of rival tribes, castles, monster dens, and similar locations, and fellow members are unlikely to object if someone invites a few nonmember friends along, so long as there seems to be enough plunder and prestige to go around. Indeed, the tribe might welcome outsiders who can navigate the civilized world well enough to point out secret doors in city walls or get the guards drunk and unlock the gates after dark, the better to facilitate raids. Adventurers may also be engaged to *stop* other tribal raids.

Tribes are nearly fanatical in pursuing points of honor, carrying on feuds for generations or setting out to fight

those who have done them wrong. These conflicts tend to be personal or kept "in the family," but tribes may be willing to ally themselves with those with whom they have common enemy. Alternatively, engaging outsiders may be a standard way of circumventing codes of honor ("We and our enemies do not fight on the night of the double moon. *You*, on the other hand . . .")

Periodically, tribes must deal with more practical matters for which they're likely to seek or accept outside help. Some tribes migrate from one place to another with the seasons, and they choose to bring in specialists to guide them through unfamiliar territory or help protect them from unusual threats. They also engage in trade expeditions like merchant houses (pp. 18-19) and are willing to have members of more civilized societies on hand to lend assistance.

Finally, tribes are superstitious and take the visions of their shamans seriously. If members of a tribe learn in a dream or spiritual trance that it will be lucky to have a particular sort of person on hand during any given endeavor (an old lady with a fancy hat, a red-headed alchemist, etc.), they will bend heaven and earth to draw the next person they see fitting that description into what they're doing.

The Solarians have given up something mankind has had for a million years; something worth more than atomic power . . .
The tribe, sir. Cooperation between individuals.

– Isaac Asimov,
The Naked Sun

WHAT TRIBES CAN PROVIDE

Tribes are low-tech and not particularly wealthy. They make available as professional items survival gear, plus weapons and armor which are primarily organic (for example, spears and axes, which have significant wooden components, but not swords). They can offer training in traits in the barbarian and scout templates. They might grant training in traits on the bard, druid, and shaman templates as well, but these capabilities are usually closely held secrets. Anyone, including members, must make a successful AR before being accepted for training.

Requests which tribes are likely to fill include:

- Accommodations. This means staying with the tribe, which may involve sharing their nomadic lifestyle, which in turn requires traveling in a direction which may not accord with the adventurers' plans.

- Augury.
- Backup.
- Blessings.
- Favor. Easy to earn, but can be hard to take advantage of, given the tribe's migrations. +3 to ARs, but -1 to frequency of appearance.
- Lore. Lore provided by tribes is limited to legends, woodcraft, and similar issues.

- Mounts and vehicles. These are limited to tribes which use them. For example, a Viking-like tribe could supply boats, but not horses.
- Provisions
- Spellcasting. Tribes can provide druidic and/or shamanic spells.

Other ARs are at -4 or worse.

UNIVERSITY

Rank: Scholarly Rank 0-6.

In Charge: Artificers, clerics, mentalists, scholars, summoners, or wizards.

In the Ranks: As above, plus apprentices, initiates, and sages.

On Payroll: Anyone else.

Influencing the AR: Diplomacy.

Most organizations for the learned, or at least fairly skilled, are about keeping secrets. Craft guilds (pp. 12-13) keep trade secrets, and students of the master (pp. 22-23) keep secret techniques among themselves, while hermetic cabals (pp. 15-16) go so far as to deny their own existence. Universities, however, are all about disseminating knowledge. These are institutions where people who know a great deal assemble to share knowledge with one another and students.

WHO UNIVERSITIES ARE

Universities are structured like craft guilds. They are composed of individual skilled practitioners under the authority of a senior member or council thereof. However, the membership includes intellectuals and teachers, not craft producers.

Just as craft guilds have low-Rank apprentices at the bottom of a hierarchy extending up to a grand master, universities have low-ranking students, through mid-ranking faculty, to a top-ranked administrator. Members of a university are very sensitive to matters of seniority and position, so even small ones go up to Rank 6. Institutions too small to support that many members lean toward being the domain of individual masters (see *Students of the Master*, pp. 22-23).

The population usually consists of scholars of every variety, wizards, and clerics. Most host only a single type. For example, a university may have only clerics or only wizards. Though it's ahistorical for a university to offer a broad range of subjects (most specialized in topics such as medicine, law, or what we'd recognize as "liberal arts"), there's no reason why a large fantasy institution couldn't encompass programs in magic, religion, philosophy, and mechanical arts. Mentalists can have universities, but their tendency to inadvertently attract Things Man Was Not Meant To Know makes it unwise to put too many of them together for too long.

Universities may, but do not necessarily, own imposing facilities with classrooms, dormitories for students, private studies for faculty, common rooms, and libraries. They may employ a modest number of porters, cooks, and other servants for their comfort and convenience.

The leadership is frequently elected from among the members, but at some institutions, they are selected by outside

political leaders, though recommended or confirmed by the faculty. But faculty members are, if anything, a more quarrelsome and fractious lot than craft-guild masters. Rather than uniting in keeping craft secrets from outsiders, they bicker constantly and publicly about the knowledge which they are happy to sell to anyone with ready cash and a willingness to submit to student discipline. Students run a spectrum from acting like customers buying the faculty's services to apprentices doing their masters' bidding. To navigate academia's vicious low-stakes battles, Diplomacy is the suitable skill for influencing university ARs.

WHAT UNIVERSITIES WANT

Eventually, the faculty of a university want some physical evidence related to their intellectual pursuits. Historically oriented scholars may want to seek out archaeological evidence ranging from missing inscriptions to lost cities, while natural philosophers may want specimens of exotic flora and fauna. Clerics want noted relics, while magicians are after powerful and unique artifacts. All of them, if they've got a cushy university post, are happy to send adventurers out to find them. In a way, these expeditions are much like those a party might undertake on behalf of a craft guild or merchant house (pp. 18-19), but the items with which adventurers are to return may be worth something only to the people who asked for them in the first place.

WHAT UNIVERSITIES CAN PROVIDE

A university can furnish books and scribal equipment as professional goods. It can also grant training in any suitable template, depending on the nature of the faculty.

Assistance a university is likely to provide includes:

- Accommodations. Living arrangements are likely to be a few beds in a student dormitory, but it's better than nothing.
- Lore. Universities excel at this. +4 to ARs, and if successful, results are as if the requestor's Rank were two levels higher.
- Map. As with lore, ARs are at +4, and if successful, results are as if the requestor's Rank were two levels higher.
- Training.
- Spellcasting.

Other ARs are at -3 or worse. Universities with a fair number of magic-wielders add artifact, augury, and spellcasting to the list – and also blessings, if those people are clerics.

APPENDIX

RANK TITLES

In the real world as well as fantasy gaming, there's a long history of using titles to indicate increasing rank. Whether spatharokandidatos or subcommander of cloud cavalry, others can usually tell how important someone is by how fancy the appellation is. Here are some suggested titles for ranks within different guilds, along with notes on potential variants. Although Rank titles are optional, players may want to note them on their character sheets. For example, a Rank 2 member of a congregation may be listed as "Religious Rank 2 (Protodeacon)."



CONGREGATION

Officials in a congregation tend to tack on additional identifiers to specify their function. For example, "canon goswami of the sacred font" or "second presbyter on kitchen detail."

Rank	Title
0	Congregant
1	Deacon
2	Protodeacon
3	Mobad
4	Presbyter
5	Imam
6	Lama
7	Goswami
8	Grand High Priest

CRAFT GUILD

Craft-guild titles are straightforward, though they occasionally add their specific profession ("journeyman mason" or "master carpenter").

Rank	Title
0	Apprentice
1	Journeyman
2	Craftsman
3	Master
4	Grand Master
5	Shokunin

DELVING COMPANY

Delving companies hire a sufficiently broad batch of professionals that they use generic job titles. However, they

sometimes include a professional description ("delver-knight" or "senior delver-cleric").

Rank	Title
0	Spear-Carrier
1	Delver
2	Delver Specialist
3	Senior Delver
4	Enterprise Archaeologist
5	Grand Master

EXTENDED FAMILY

Extended families don't use titles to indicate rank. They usually refer to one another by name or relationship (grandmother, cousin, etc.). The head of the family may sometimes be granted additional respect by always being addressed in the most formal terms necessary, but outsiders usually need to observe the family a while before figuring out who really calls the shots.

HERMETIC CABAL

These titles constitute the barest core of names for titles used by hermetic cabals. Honorifics are usually decked with batches of modifiers: Leftmost Truth-Revealed Agent of the Bronze Dagger, Dread Red-Robed High Puppet-Master of the Most Tall Order To Whom All Hidden Things Are Shown.

Rank	Title
0	Lowly Supplicant
1	Unenlightened Striver
2	Lurker in Shadows
3	Truth-Revealed Agent
4	Hidden Instrument of the Verities
5	Right Obscure Warden
6	High Puppet-Master
7	Fully Illuminated Magister
8	Most Secret Master of All Thrones

MAFIA

Mafias don't feel a strong need to get fancy with titles.

Rank	Title
0	Soldier
1	Footpad
2	Capo
3	Underboss
4	Boss
5	Overboss

MERCHANT HOUSE

Some merchant houses use slight variants for some ranks, such as scribe instead of clerk, or trader instead of factor.

Rank	Title
0	Porter
1	Clerk
2	Senior Clerk
3	Factor
4	Partner
5	Magnifico

MILITARY COMPANY

Military companies sometimes specify an operational specialty: Serjeant of Horse, Captain of Infantry.

Rank	Title
0	Recruit
1	Warrior
2	Serjeant
3	Centurion
4	Captain
5	Colonel
6	General
7	Marshal
8	Grand Marshal

NOBLE COURT

Status 0 individuals at a noble court have no title and are usually referred to as "You there!"

Status	Title
1	Squire
2	Cavalier
3	Castellan
4	Baron
5	Emir
6	Prince
7	King
8	Emperor

SPIRITUAL SOCIETY

Spiritual societies rarely use Rank titles. They do, though, sometimes use titles for positions of long standing. A given society may always have masters of the four winds, watchers of night and day, and the like.

STUDENTS OF THE MASTER

These Ranks can also include an indication of a specific school or style (Sensei of the Sixteen Flappy Fists, Top Dan of the Southwestern Swamp School).

Rank	Title
0	First Dan
1	Top Dan
2	Respected Sensei
3	Perfected Sifu
4	Venerable Grand Master

SWORN SOCIETY

In a sworn society, everybody is a brother or sister, as appropriate. More-senior members might be called big brothers, but that's usually an indication of specific relationships, not absolute rank.

TOWN WATCH AND RANGERS

The town watch and rangers use similar though not identical titles.

Rank	Title
0	Provisional Officer
1	Constable/Ranger
2	Sergeant
3	Captain
4	Superintendent/Master Woodsman
5	Prefect of the Watch/Rangers

TRIBE

These are basic titles, but other tribes may come up with their own measurements such as pole length (p. 5) or number of heads taken in a single battle; a three-head man is someone to be reckoned with. Shamans and bards are frequently Rank 1 and use their professions as titles.

Rank	Title
0	Tribesman/Tribeswoman
1	War Chief
2	Hetman
3	High Chief

*In time, every post
tends to be occupied
by an employee who is
incompetent to carry out
its duties.*

— Lawrence J. Peter

UNIVERSITY

Members of universities can have very specific additions to titles indicating their specialty: Pandit of Comparative Thaumatology, Chancellor of the College of Spells and Hexes.

Rank	Title
0	Student
1	Candidate
2	Lecturer
3	Pandit
4	Professor
5	Guru
6	Chancellor

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