

# Sacred Steel

Milestone 1+ release

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## Free Role Playing Game

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Projects like this depend on people getting involved. If you have ideas about what would make Sacred Steel better, or if you've written something for your campaign, then bring it back to the community: come to the website, chat, discuss, contribute:

<http://sacredsteel.org/>

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# Part the Zeroth: Start Here

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This is a Free fantasy roleplaying game. It's not just free like a free leaflet, it's Free, with a capital F, as in liberated. You can do anything with it. While the original authors and artists hold the copyright, we give you or anyone else permission to do absolutely anything you like with it, as long as you give people the same permission on anything you make with it.

We can do that because it's a non-profit project. We're not trying to make a profit, except maybe a warm glow of satisfaction from having made something good.

But this isn't just another homebrew system shoved on the web. We want quality here: good writing, imagination and artwork. This is a professionally executed project, but all done for Free.

And you can be part of it. Can you write? Can you draw? Can you have a good idea occasionally, even if you can't write it up nicely? This is the game where your work doesn't have to be just "fan material": bring it over to our forums and share it. Get it polished up and when it's ready, it'll go into the next version of this book. That's how Sacred Steel works.

What you are holding in your hands (or reading on a screen) right now is our "Milestone 1" release, which means we have rules for tasks, combat, magic and character generation, along with scene-setting fiction and a little bit of background info. Our next big push is for "Milestone 2" which will include a fully-fleshed out setting. The next leg is "Milestone 3", where we fill in things for GMs, like GMing advice, magic items to give the players, monsters and NPCs.

All this isn't going to happen on its own, so if you haven't already visited the website, go there now:

<http://sacredsteel.org/>

And join in the discussion. See you there!

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## Obligatory Introduction to Roleplaying

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Not many cookery books start by explaining what cookery is, but it seems like most role-playing game books start by explaining what role-play is.

It works like this: you and a bunch of friends sit round a table with some paper and some snacks, and in the case of this game, some cards. Each player has a "character" - a fictitious person that they play. One of the players is nominated "Game Master", and it's his job to tell the others about the fictitious world that their characters live in. Then they respond by telling the GM what their characters are doing. And it goes back and forth for a few hours, with the "Player Characters" interacting with the "Non-Player Characters" (the other people living in the fantasy world, played by the GM) and doing all sorts of crazy stuff, and a story is told.

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### Example

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Here's an example. Germaine, Alf, Bob, Celia and Dave are the five players. Germaine is the GM. The others are playing characters called (in order) Arathorn, Basher, Cloud and D'zyrkol. Notice how their character's names

are conveniently letter-coded to their own names. You don't have to do that yourself. The four Player Characters (PCs) are various types of hero, in a fantasy setting a bit like those books by J. R. R. Tolkien.

**Germaine:** You've just arrived outside the town of Torbuna, where you hope to find clues about the legendary Dragon Sword. It's dusk, nearly night, and you can see the light of a few flickering fires over the wooden town walls. A lone guard is standing next to a blazing torch, but the gates aren't closed.

**Alf:** We're not expecting trouble here, are we?

**Germaine:** No. It's a peaceful town, mostly crop farming.

**Bob:** Let's head in, then.

**Celia:** Yep.

**Dave:** 'Kay.

**Germaine:** The guard hears you tramping along the road...

**Dave:** I was sneaking! D'zyrkol always sneaks!

**Germaine:** Your flat-footed friends gave away your location. The Guard holds his torch over his head and shouts, "Who goes there?"

**Alf:** (In character) "Four travellers! Is there an inn here?"

**Bob:** Ask him about the sword.

**Alf:** He's a guard, what's he going to know about legendary artefacts?

**Dave:** Plus it would look well dodgy. Let's just get some kip.

**Germaine:** "Aye, ask at the tavern. They have a couple of rooms. What's your business in Torbuna?"

**Bob:** "We're looking for a..."

**Celia:** "Place to stay!" Stow it, Bob, you'll make us look dead suspect.

**Bob:** It's my character. He does that.

**Germaine:** The guard looks at you strangely but stands aside to let you pass.

That completes a little story, the tale of how four people approached and entered a town. But now this happens:

**Dave:** As we bustle past him, I'm going to see if he's got anything worth lifting.

**Alf:** Aw, don't get us in trouble.

**Germaine:** There's a small pouch on his belt, might have some coins in it. You want to try it?

**Dave:** Yes.

What's this? D'zyrkol is trying something a bit risky, a bit difficult. If he isn't a good enough pickpocket, this whole tale will change direction dramatically. This is where rules come in. The game is governed not only by the GM and the player's will, but also by some numbers and some cards.

**Germaine:** (*Draws some cards out of sight of the players*) You need two successes.

**Dave:** (*Draws some cards and inspects the results*) Oops. Sorry guys.

Using the rules, Germaine has told Dave how hard it's going to be to successfully pick the guard's pocket. Dave's character D'zyrkol is a pretty good thief but this time he's muffed it.

**Alf, Bob and Celia:** (*Together*) Bugger bugger bugger

**Germaine:** "Oi!" shouts the guard, grabbing your hand.

**Alf:** I'll punch him out. Quickly.

**Bob:** And me.

And indeed, the story has changed direction. Now the players have a small fight on their hands, and getting information about the sword could be much harder. On the other hand, if D'zyrkol had succeeded, they'd be on their way to the tavern a few coins richer.

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## About These Rules

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Everything here is meant to give you a fast game, with only simple maths needed, and good ol' fluke-laden skill resolution system. These rules are set up for a swords & sorcery type of game, but they could be made to work with just about anything.

All you need is some printed and cut out cards, a pencil and paper and some snack food (optional).

# Part the first: The Basics

## The Deck of Cards

The only extra thing you need apart from these rules is a set of cards. A printable sheet of 12 cards is available as a separate PDF download from the website. Each sheet is “balanced”, i.e. there’s the same number of each type of card on it. You’ll probably want a bit more than twelve cards to play, so remember to add the same number of red cards and green cards.

## The Basic Draw to See How Well You Did

This is how you determine whether your character succeeds when he tries something difficult:

**Shuffle your deck of Sacred Steel cards. Put it face down on the table and draw a card off the top. If it’s a happy face with a big green tick, you’ve succeeded. Hooray. If it’s a sad face with a big red cross, you’ve failed. Boo.**

Bit simple, eh? Frankly, that’s enough to start a game. Just start telling the epic tale, and any time your character tries

something hard, a green tick is success and red cross is failure. Right now, off with you. Get playing.

## Epic Feats and Mighty Heroes

Still here?

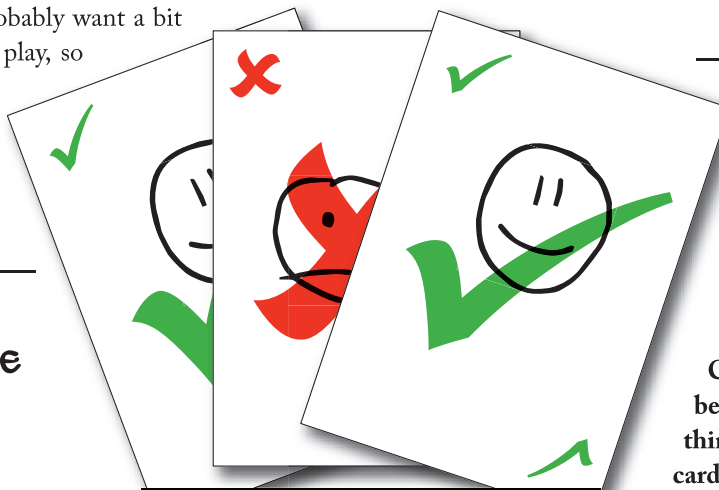
Okay, there’s a few more things you can do. For one thing, drawing just one card means your character isn’t very good at whatever it is he’s trying.

**Characters who are better at doing certain things get to draw more cards. If *any* of them are a green tick, it’s a success.**

So a particularly strong, well-built chap trying to climb a rock face might get to draw five cards. There’s a very good chance that at least one of them will be a green tick. But there is still that outside chance of a failure, and that’s where the fun is.

The flip side of being good at something is trying even harder tasks.

**Harder tasks require two or more green ticks in the draw.**



A three-card draw, getting two successes

Tasks which demand just one tick are “easy”. A more challenging job may demand two ticks. Our nominal five-card rock climber might try an even harder rock face, one that requires three successes, and still have a chance of succeeding.

**Congratulations. You’ve just learnt all the basics.**

## Measuring how Good You are at things

So how do you tell how many cards you get to draw? That’s the job of skills.

**All characters have five skills, called Awareness, Physique, Combat, Learning and Interaction.**

In our slightly cartoonish world, these five skills determine almost everything about what sort of talents a character has. Yes, there are other things, but we’ll get to them later. These are the important ones.

Okay, so how does this tell you how many cards to draw? Well:

**Each character has a score, usually between 2 and 6, for each skill. And that’s how many cards you draw when you use that skill.**

Having just one point in a particular skill means you’re fairly useless at it. Three points is deemed “average”, and anything above three is talented. Six points is an elite example, among the best.

Those skills again:

**The Awareness skill represents a character’s ability to understand the immediate world around them.**

Spotting traps before you place your size twelve in them, noticing hidden rooms, and being able to hide well are all aspects of the Awareness skill.

**The Physique skill is used for anything purely physical.**

Like lifting treasure chests, playing darts and climbing walls. Not simultaneously.

**The Combat skill represents experience of fighting.**

It often goes hand-in-hand with Physique, but is also used alone. For example evaluating opponents or choosing weapons.

**Learning is general knowledge and book-learning.**

How good a character is at stuffing information into his head is represented by Learning. Any time that a character wants to try and remember something that he might know, a Learning check is called for.

**Interaction is used for dealing with other people.**

This skill says nothing about what type of personality you have, just how good you are at using it. Characters with low Interaction scores are bad at gauging reaction, making friends or impressing people. It doesn’t matter if you’re eight feet tall and built like a brick commode, if your Interaction score is low, you’ll look like a thick lunkhead.

		Number of successes needed (Difficulty)									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of cards (Skill)	1	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	2	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	3	87%	50%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	4	93%	68%	31%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	5	96%	81%	50%	18%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	6	98%	89%	65%	34%	10%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	7	99%	93%	77%	50%	22%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	8	99%	96%	85%	63%	36%	14%	3%	0%	0%	0%
	9	99%	98%	91%	74%	50%	25%	8%	1%	0%	0%
	10	99%	98%	94%	82%	62%	37%	17%	5%	1%	0%

You don’t need to know this: the rough percentage chances of making a roll based on skill and difficulty

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## Magic

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There is a sixth skill: Depth.

**Depth is a measure of how deeply a character has become involved in a magical art, and thus how much power they have with it.**

Most characters will have no magical ability, so their Depth remains at zero. Unlike the other skills, it is not crippling to have no magic—it just means you don't do spells. Magic is covered fully later on.

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## Opposed Checks

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There's also a way for two characters to test their skills directly against each other. This is called an Opposed Check.

**In an opposed check, a player and the GM (or two players) both draw cards according to their skill. Whoever gets the most green ticks wins.**

This would happen in cases like arm wrestling (opposed Physique checks) or two people trying to persuade a third one to do totally opposite things (opposed Interaction checks).

**Opposed checks that tie keep the status quo as far as possible.**

That is, the task probably fails, but no negative consequences occur either. It's as if the attempt never happened, although "target" characters for theft, stealth etc. may become cautious.

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## Delayed Checks

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Sometimes a character will want to use a skill, the results of which will only be known later. Examples include setting a trap (you won't know how well you hid it until someone

approaches it) or barricading a door (you won't know if it's strong enough until someone tries to break it down).

**In a delayed check, the draw is made as normal but the result is noted and not used. It can then be used as the difficulty for future counter-checks, a bit like an opposed check.**

In other words, if you're trying to hide something, you make the draw, note down how well you did, and then when a NPC comes looking for it, that's his difficulty in finding it.

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## Hidden Difficulty

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The GM doesn't always need to tell the players a specific difficulty for a task. Sometimes there's no particular "failure", just varying degrees of success, and sometimes the character wouldn't know if they've succeeded or not.

**When a character is dealing with an unknown quantity, the GM may opt to simply hear the result of a draw and tell the player an outcome, rather than whether it worked or not.**



The classic example is when a player asks to look round the area for something. It may be there, it may be not. The check goes ahead as normal, the GM will decide ahead of time whether there's anything to be found, and will say, based on the result, "You didn't find anything" or "You found something".

You can't "fail" to look round a room. You might fail to find something hidden in it, but you couldn't possibly be aware that it was there and you failed to find it.

Players should role-play hidden checks as best they can. Remember that RPGs are for fun, not for victory.



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## Waiving Checks

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You don't need to draw cards for every little thing. Sometimes it just makes sense that a character can complete a certain action without risk of failure, especially if they're not rushed or stressed while trying.

**The GM can waive a check in cases where failure would make no sense.**

Note that it's not compulsory - the luck of the cards can also be used to represent the hidden difficulty of a task, e.g. a character failing something that they would expect to be able to do simply means that something made it harder right at that moment.

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## Bonuses & Penalties

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Often, circumstances will make things easier for a character.

**Circumstantial bonuses mean a player may be allowed to draw extra cards for a particular task. This may be a fixed bonus number of cards, or the player may be allowed to draw double or triple his normal amount.**

How do bonuses play against difficulty—wouldn't it be simpler to just reduce the difficulty? Play it by ear, but as a rule of thumb you should change the difficulty only when the task has fundamentally changed—in other cases, the GM should just award bonus cards. Also bear in mind that bonus cards are the only way to modify the odds in an opposed check.

Characters can also have penalties on their actions. The most common type is wounding, which we'll get to in the next chapter, but the GM may enforce any others he feels are appropriate.

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## Bonuses for Inventive Play

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The GM can encourage the players to really describe what they're doing, using the scenery and being inventive, by awarding bonus cards. The bonus should not throw the draw completely—one or two cards is good. It adds immersion because the rules bend toward a good story.

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## Helping

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Two or more people can work on one task. As a rule of thumb, the most highly skilled person should make the draw, and they get one extra card per helper. The GM should use discretion in how many characters can usefully "help".

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## Example

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Let's carry on the example from the introduction. It's a few minutes later. The four characters have just punched out a guard and are standing next to a town gate as dusk turns into night.

**Germaine:** The guard collapses.

**Celia:** What a great start. I'll tie the guard up. I've got some rope. And I'll drag him out of view.

**Germaine:** Physique check, please. One success.

**Celia:** *(Has three cards in Physique, and they come up ✓✓✕)*  
Two. I did it.

**Alf:** Did anyone hear the fight?

**Germaine:** *(Decides that Arathorn couldn't be totally sure whether they were heard, so this will be a Hidden Difficulty check. In fact, she's already decided that there was another guard in a hut just inside the gate, but it would be really difficult to notice him - maybe a shadow cast by a dim candle)* Awareness check.

**Alf:** *(Has three cards in awareness, but they come up ✕✕✓)*  
Um. Only one.

**Germaine:** You don't think anyone heard. In fact, you can't see anyone at all.

**Bob:** Let's keep moving. Head for the tavern. See if we can get some info there before someone finds the guard.

**Dave:** Better idea - we wake the guard up and give him a few coins to keep his mouth shut.

**Alf:** Your coins, I assume.

**Dave:** Whatever. I'll go and shake the guard to wake him up.

**Germaine:** He wakes up and groans, then focuses on you and yells.

**Dave:** "Shh! Shh! Look, we don't want any trouble. I'm really sorry about what happened before, would you

take some coins to keep quiet about it? Look, a gold coin!"

**Celia:** I'll go and smile sweetly at him too.

**Germaine:** The guy is not only scared stiff of you lot, but now also totally confused. I'd like a two-plus Interaction check to convince him. You can have a bonus card because Cloud is helping.

**Dave:** *(Has two cards in Interaction, and with his bonus card draws ✕✓✓).* Hooray! I'll give him the coin.

**Germaine:** The guy is clearly not happy but greed gets the better of him. "Alright, I haven't seen you. Just get into the town."

**D'zyrkol:** We fluked that nicely. Don't worry, I'll do better on the next one.

**Alf:** *Next* one?

**Celia:** Let's get to that tavern.

**Germaine:** You walk up the main track, heading for the small church steeple.

**Bob:** Steeple?

**Germaine:** The pub is always next to the church in this sort of town. Your characters would have known that so I waived the check. The buildings are mostly low wooden huts with thatched rooves, and occasional bits of stone work. The tavern and the church, almost next door to each other, are the only all-stone buildings you can see. You see the tavern's sign, a crossed sickle and sword, and push the door open. The air smells of stale rough beer, and most of the tables are occupied with locals drinking and relaxing.

**Celia:** Cloud feels so out of place here.

**Dave:** Pfft. So does my character, but what are these yokels going to do about it? Actually, I know, they're going to give me some money.

**Bob:** You are joking, right?

**Dave:** No.

**Alf:** Wait outside. Don't start anything. I'm going to head for the bar.

**Germaine:** *(Knows that another group of out-of-towners have just turned up. They've given the barman a coin to keep quiet about them, but when a second group shows up, he starts to wonder what's going on. Arathorn will be given an awareness check to spot two members of the other group still standing near the bar. It's an opposed check, against the other group's ability to blend in (they*

*don't want to be spotted).* This is their Interaction skill, averaged at 3 for simplicity, plus a bonus card for being in a crowd. Germaine draws four cards and gets ✕✕✓✓, so Alf needs to beat 2 successes to spot them.) The barman is sharing some hilarious joke with a local, and looks at you sideways as you approach. Awareness check.

**Alf:** Umm... okay *(Draws his three cards for ✓✓✓)* Three!

**Germaine:** Standing over at the other end of the bar are two other people who obviously aren't local. There's an older woman, wearing a tattered but expensive-looking robe, and a well-built man, probably a fighter, next to her.

**Alf:** Okay... I'll ignore them for the minute and try to get the barman's attention.

**Germaine:** He comes over. "Yes sir, what can I do for you?"

**Alf:** "Four pints, please. And we need a room for the night."

**Germaine:** He starts drawing the pints from a keg. "Ah... we can't do you a room at the moment. All full."

**Alf:** "Come on... how many travellers do you get in a place like this?"

**Germaine:** "Bit of a rush at the moment, see, sir, some locals out of their homes. Sir. Flooding, see?"

**Alf:** "Hmm." I'll pay for the pints and hand them round. And tell the others about the two strangers.

**Celia:** There might be a hayloft or something. I'll go and ask.

**Dave:** I am so not outside. I'm going to shadow Celia to the bar and wait till I see someone checking her out, and go for their purse.

**Germaine:** Yep, there's a dupe eyeing her.

**Dave:** I wait till he checks out Celia's arse as she passes and then cut his purse (✕✕✓✓) 2 successes...

**Germaine:** (✓✓✕ – tied!) Okay, he leans back for a better view as you get close and bumps into you. He turns around and looks down at his purse, then back up to you.

**Dave:** Does he see my knife?

**Germaine:** No, you palmed it as he looked down. He is watching you though.

**Dave:** I'll leave it.

**Germaine:** Celia, the barman is talking to the older woman



as you approach. She glances in your direction and then moves back into the crowd. “Yes ma’am?”

**Celia:** “Look, we know your rooms are all full, but is there a hayloft or something we could stay in?”

**Germaine:** “I’m sorry ma’am, we’re all out. Nothing at all. You could try one of the farms. But you’ll need to start out now, because they won’t open their doors late at night.”

**Bob:** He’s really trying to get rid of us, isn’t he?

**Dave:** I don’t like this pair at all. I’m going to saunter over their way and see what I can overhear.

**Germaine:** Staying out of their sight, or just trying to blend in?

**Dave:** Avoiding their line of sight (*Knows it’s going to be an Awareness check, so draws his four cards, getting \*\*\*✓*). Um. One.

**Germaine:** (*Feeling generous, gives only the woman a check, on the grounds that they’re facing opposite directions. She has three cards in Awareness, and gets ✓\*\**, so D’zyrkol is okay). You maneuver within range of them, and start listening. Meanwhile, what’s Cloud doing?

**Celia:** I’ll try a bit of good old flattery.

**Bob:** I think flirty would work better.

**Celia:** “Please, I’ve been walking all day – surely a large tavern like this would have somewhere for me to sleep?”

**Germaine:** Normally he’d be no match for you. But it looks like his conscience is struggling with something. Interaction check, with a bonus card, and I want two successes.

**Celia:** (*Her normal interaction is four cards, so she draws five and gets ✓✓✓\*\*✓*) Four.

**Germaine:** He’s taken a real shine to you. “Well... there is the stores I suppose. No rats. But you’d have to be gone by dawn.”

**Celia:** “Oh, thank you! Thank you so much!”

**Bob:** See? I was right.

**Dave:** So, what am I hearing from our two friends?

**Germaine:** (*Adopts a stage whisper*) The old woman is saying, “I should have known they’d be here too. We’ll have to start early to get to Makravon first.” Then the man says, “We could just get rid of them. You know, find out where they’re staying and...”. The woman

hisses, “No! You and your bloodshed. They might not even know about Makravon. We’ll just be quicker than them.” The man seems to acquiesce. “Okay. We should turn in then. You’ll be safe overnight with the worg.” Then they move towards the stairs.

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## DOUBLING

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Occasionally, an awesome set of bonuses and skills will mean you find yourself drawing a huge number of cards at once. Feel free. That’s the idea behind using cards, that you can have epic skill checks fairly easily. On the other hand, you might find that you’re getting clumsy and drawing eighteen cards is becoming awkward.

**For large draws, you can use doubling - draw half the number of cards, and double the number of successes.**

Probability-wise, extreme results are more likely when you double. So if you want to work the system, use doubling when you’re trying something hard, and avoid it on easy tasks.

It’s up to GMs when doubling can and can’t be used, but as a guide, it shouldn’t be allowed unless a player is drawing eight or more cards.

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## Using Dice or Coins or whatever

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The Sacred Steel cards are not the only option. All they do is present a 50-50 chance on each draw of success or failure. If you can’t be bothered printing and cutting out cards, you can use dice, and treat high rolls (4–6) as successes and low rolls (1–3) as failures. The results have the same range probability.

Likewise, anything that can come up “true” or “false”, like flipping coins, or two-sided counters can be used.

The only thing that won’t work is collapsing the whole draw down into one die roll and applying arithmetic to it—the value of the Sacred Steel system is that no matter how good you are, there is always the possibility of drawing nothing but \*’s.

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## Shuffling

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The great thing about cards, as opposed to dice, is that if you work your way through the deck discarding drawn cards until you run out, your luck is pretty much guaranteed to average out. That is, if you get halfway through the deck having nothing but bad draws, you know that there will be lots of nice green cards waiting for you in the other half.

To prevent people abusing the numbers, you should stick to these two guidelines:

**Always draw the full number of cards off the deck, even if you can see from the first few that you can't succeed.**

**Always work your way through the entire deck before shuffling.**

Decks with 40+ cards work best to prevent "card counting". But don't worry about letting your knowledge of the deck affect your actions. If you've had several bad draws and you know the rest of the deck should be quite good, go for it. Be confident. It'll be that much funnier when you pull out the last five crosses.

# Part the Second:

# COMBAT

## the flow

Here's roughly how fighting works:

- 1 Something starts a fight - a weapon gets drawn, a command is issued, a fist is swung or an ambush is triggered.
- 2 The side starting the fight may get a Surprise Attack if they're quick or well-prepared enough.
- 3 The participants may (optionally) manoeuvre and "team off", to form smaller melee groups.
- 4 Once the fight is underway, you deal with time in five-second chunks called "rounds". All the events of a round are played out fully before moving on to the next one.
- 5 Everybody taking part in melee keeps track of a "combat score" against each of the people they're directly fighting.
- 6 Each round, people taking part in melee make a draw, and divide the number of successes as they see fit between all the combat scores they're tracking.
- 7 At the end of a turn, you can choose to make a strike if your combat score against an enemy is higher than the enemy's against you. Making a strike cancels out the combat scores so far, so it's worth doing when a decent advantage has been built up.
- 8 Ranged weapons can aim, fire or fire several times per round depending on the firer's luck and skill.
- 9 Combatants may also attempt other actions during the round, incurring various penalties on their combat scores.
- 10 Combat ends when one side surrenders or gets wiped off the face of the land.

Being a big old fantasy game, Sacred Steel has special rules for dealing with moments of combat.

## the trigger

The first thing that happens in a fight is the trigger. The first punch thrown in anger is the classic trigger for most pub fights. In military actions, it might be the moment when one guy spots an enemy and the commander issues the order to fire.

If the other side wants to avoid combat at this point, they may, at the GM's discretion, have an opportunity to duck out. For example, the guy getting a bunch of fives in the bar fight might manage to say something to calm things down. On the other hand, the victims may be completely unprepared.

**The aggressors may try get to a surprise attack by making an opposed Combat Training draw against the defenders.**

The Combat Leader of each side may draw on behalf of his entire side. If the defenders were armed, ready and aware of the aggressors, there is no chance of a surprise attack. Bonuses apply as follows:

Situation	Bonus
Defenders were unaware of aggressors before the trigger, i.e. ambush	Aggressors draw double
Aggressors need to manoeuvre to start fight	Defenders get +1 or more cards depending on distance

The defenders never get a surprise attack, obviously - their draw is to avoid allowing the enemy one.

Creatures which rely on animal cunning may be permitted to use their Physique for surprise rolls.

## Teaming

Teaming is where individual melees form, as fighters move toe-to-toe with their chosen opponent. It's worth keeping a diagram on the table showing who is fighting what.

There's a convenient printable/photocopiable form in the back of the book, and also available as a separate PDF from the website, for GMs to keep track of combat. It's rather enigmatically called the Combat Tracker.

## Cut'n'Thrust

Once combat teams are sorted, time is dealt with in five-second "rounds".

**Each round, every character involved in melee makes a Combat Draw based on the average of their Physique and Combat Training, plus any special weapon bonuses or specialities (covered later).**

Make the draws in a clockwise direction round the table starting with the player on the GM's left. The GM goes last.

In the case of a surprise attack, the aggressors get to draw twice in the first round.

**Your score in this draw gets added on to the "Combat Score", which is a running tally of how well you're doing in the fight.**

You will also be aware of the enemy's Combat Score against you. The relative values of combat scores show which side is doing better in the fight: the difference between the Combat Scores is called the Combat Advantage, so

whoever has the higher Combat Score is the one winning the fight. A character's combat advantage cannot normally exceed their Combat Draw.

## Multiple Opponents

The chances of a clean fight, where both sides have the same numbers, is pretty slim. More often you'll find yourself outnumbered by, or outnumbering, the enemy.

**When a fight is unbalanced, the outnumbered side must divide their cards between all the opponents and keep a separate Combat Score for each one.**

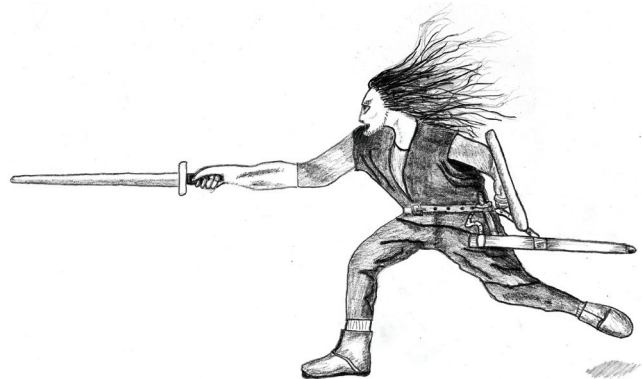
You can split the cards how you like. You could overpower one enemy while leaving yourself vulnerable to the others, or keep them all occupied and hope for a fluke.

## Other Actions

A combatant may move a short distance during fighting with no penalties. Other actions incur a certainly penalty on the number of cards drawn. If the penalty is higher than the number of cards the character draws, they draw no cards. Well, you wouldn't change weapon mid-fight unless you were really good, would you?

## The Strike

After all the Combat Draws for a the round are done, you can look at the advantage you have over an enemy - it's called the "Combat Advantage". If your combat score is



one point higher than the enemy's, you have a one point Combat Advantage. If his Combat Score is two points higher he has a two point Combat Advantage. If you have a high enough Combat Advantage, you can make a Strike, i.e., convert your advantage in the fight into an actual connecting hit. The size of Advantage you need to make a strike is based on your weapon, and is often (but not always) the same as the Strike Bonus. See the equipment chapter for more details.

**You draw as many cards as the advantage you have, plus the Strike Bonus for the type of weapon you are using. This is your Strike Draw. Then the target gets to draw a certain number of cards based on the armour they are wearing, if any. This is called their Armour Save Draw.**

It's like an opposed check. If the your draw wins, the amount you win by is the size of wound you have scored on the target. Extra gory details are available in the "Strike draw versus Armour Defense draw results" table.

Attempting a strike resets the combat scores of each side to zero.

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## Armour

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You can mix and match the armour your character wears by choosing one type of armour for the body, one for the limbs, a helmet and a shield. Add up all the Armour Defense bonuses of all the parts of your armour to find out your final Armour Save.

For example, a character wearing a chainmail vest (+2) with leather greaves (+1) and a small shield (+1) has an Armour Save of 4.

The heavier your armour, the harder it is to be subtle in your actions. The GM may enforce the use of the Stealth Penalty for various armour types, which is a penalty applied to all attempts to be stealthy or quiet.

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## Defensive Fighting (Optional)

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**A character can surrender the right to strike, but draw double the normal number of cards.**

This is called "defensive fighting" and is only a good idea if you have some fantastic follow-up plan.

Defensive fighting must be declared before making your combat draw and is assumed to continue until you declare otherwise. If you decide to revert to normal fighting, you lose any advantage you had.

Maths-wise, the doubling is applied before any injury or action penalties. Wouldn't be fair otherwise.

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## Special Move: Heroic Attack

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Because Combat Advantage cannot normally exceed Combat Draw, there's a limit on how devastating one single strike can be. The Heroic Attack special move allows a character to temporarily raise that ceiling.

To make a heroic Attack, a character must spend one round "winding up". He does not get to make any combat draw during this round, and if anyone else strikes him and causes a wound, the Heroic Attack is over.

In the next round, he can draw double his normal Combat Draw, plus one card per rank of Heroic Attack special move. Assuming he ends the round with the advantage, he can strike without limitation on Combat Advantage.

In the round following the attack, the character must recover his composure and makes no Combat Draw.

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## Special Move: Left- Handed Backstab

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The left-handed backstab relies on turning an opponent's attack against them. You can only attempt a Left-Handed Backstab when another character is about to strike you, i.e. at the end of the round when they have the Combat Advantage and have announced a Strike.

At this moment, both characters make opposed Combat Training Draws. the character attempting the LHBS get 1 extra card per rank in the LHBS special move.

If the original striker wins, then the amount he wins by is added on to his Combat Advantage and the strike goes ahead as normal. If the character attempting the LHBS



Weapon	Strike bonus / Minimum advantage needed
Dagger	+1
Shortsword, handaxe	+2
Longsword, battleaxe	+3
Greatsword, Kerg Axe	+4

Example strike bonuses — see Equipment chapter

Action	Draw penalty
Dropping a weapon and drawing a different one	-4
Moving at a walking speed	-1
Turning and running	-2, and no strike allowed. Cannot be combined with defensive fighting.

Actions in Combat

Strike Draw minus Armour Defense Draw	Wound
0 or less	No wound. The strike bounces off the target's armour.
1	Flesh wound. Hurts, bleeds, probably not life-threatening
2	Bad flesh wound. Hurts a lot, may cause eventual death through blood loss
3	Serious injury. Massive pain, will need professional treatment.
4	Major injury. Unbelievable pain. Parts are on show that should not be visible.
5	Critical injury. Transcends pain and enters a new realm of suffering. Internal organs fly away from body in surprise.
6 or more	Devastating blow. A shower of red bits decorate the area to mark the event.

Strike Draw vs. Armour Defense draw results

## attack tables

Armour	Armour Defense bonus	Stealth Penalty	Awareness Penalty
Leather vest	+1	-1	0
Leather arms & legs	+1	-1	0
Chainmail vest	+2	-2	0
Chainmail arms & legs	+2	-2	0
Chest plate	+3	-3	0
Arm & leg plates	+3	-3	0
Small shield	+1 against one enemy	-1	0
Medium shield	+2 against one enemy	-2	0
Large shield	+3 against one enemy	-3	0
Half helmet	+1	0	-1
Full helmet	+2	0	-3

Bonuses and penalties for various armour types

wins, then he can make a strike with a Combat Advantage equal to the amount he won by, and the original strike misses.

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## Charging

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**If a character charges into combat (yelling, running etc.), he can add his Combat Training to his Combat Draw in the first round of combat. The downside is, so can the person being charged.**

So the first round of combat after a charge will be fairly high-stakes, and it's quite likely that either the charger will get an advantage and cause some major injury, or the person receiving the charge will manage to deflect it and use the charger's own momentum against them.

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## Mounted Combat

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For added blood and guts when charging, there are some modifiers you can apply:

**Characters charging on horse (Ta-ra ta-ra!) get two extra cards on their Combat Draw** because horses are big and heavy and fast.

**Characters using a Polearm to receive a charge get one extra card on their Combat Draw** because polearms are long and pointy and a bad thing to charge into.

**Characters who spend the round before the charge "setting" their weapon get one extra card on their Combat Draw** because they can aim right for the other guy's heart.

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## Wounds

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After a strike has landed and any armour save has been drawn, a wound may have been scored. The severity of the wound acts as a penalty on all skill checks and Combat Draws by the victim. In other words, if you take a three-point wound ("Serious Injury" on the table), the shock and pain mean that you lose three cards from every draw you make.

Wounds do not apply to Strike Draws.

When you lose more cards due to injury than you were drawing to begin with, you are Out Of Action. That's right—if you were only drawing three cards and you take a three point injury, you stop fighting. You don't get to draw any more. The agony lancing through your nerves has fried your coordination. You'd better hope your opponent is happy to see you collapse rather than wanting to put another blow in. You may be able to use Defensive Fighting (see above) to stay vertical for a bit longer.

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## Death

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In this game death is a plot device, not a random result.

As a rule of thumb, nameless bad guys can be considered dead forever when they take a single wound that is worse than their Physique score. If they simply take more injuries than they can cope with, they may be healed and live to tell tales.

Player characters and important non-player characters have a bit more leeway. Permanent physical death occurs when the story dictates that the character has no chance of survival, e.g. a massive wound and left outside in the snow with a pack of hungry dogs. As a guideline, any wound that is worse than the character's Physique score is considered terminal and will eventually cause the character to snuff it unless they receive expert healing. If the only wounds taken are less than the character's Physique, they will eventually heal naturally.

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## Healing

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Characters heal one point of injury every time they sleep.

Characters can also attempt to heal each other by making a Learning draw: the target difficulty is the amount of wound points the patient has, and every point over that amount that you draw means that one wound point is healed. Two people can collaborate on a healing attempt.

Example: I have a Learning skill of 5. The fighter in our group has taken 3 wound points, which means he really can't fight very well at the moment. During a break in the action, I try to bandage up his wounds. A 3 point wound is really nasty, so I rope in some help from another guy in the group so I get a bonus card. Between us, we make an 6-card Learning draw, and get 5 successes. This means that we've

healed 2 of the fighter's wound points (5 successes minus 3 wounds), so now he only has 1 wound point. Hooray, he's almost good as new.

## Coup de Grace

When a character is "Out Of Action" or otherwise stationary, it is easy for other characters to deliver fatal blows. Outside combat, this is an automatic success. When the fight is still raging, attackers may double any points they apply to the Combat Score against an Out Of Action target. Armour Defense still applies in this case.

## Example

Lets put all this together. Following on from the previous example, our heroes have bedded down for the night in the tavern's store room. Arathorn has decided to sit watch, and D'zyrkol has snuck off to spy on the tavern's other guests. He has tiptoed up to the first floor and is listening at doors. Behind the door he is currently listening at the old woman from downstairs is sleeping, protected by a type of trained wolf called a worg.

**Dave:** Do I hear anything?

**Germaine:** Some quiet breathing... make an awareness check.

**Dave:** (Draws ✓✓×××) Two?

**Germaine:** You reckon there are probably two people asleep in there.

**Dave:** I'll get my dagger out—just in case—and try to open the door. Quietly.

**Germaine:** Awareness, again. No hearing bonus.

**Dave:** (Draws ✓×××) One?

**Germaine:** (Draws for the worg, gets ×✓✓×✓. Worgs are handy pets.) The door moves open, but just as you're able to peer into the room there's a vicious snarl and something leaps at you. (This is a Combat Trigger)

**Dave:** Slam the door!

**Germaine:** Physique roll. (Draws for the worg: ✓✓✓××.)

**Dave:** (Draws ✓××✓) Bugger.

**Germaine:** He's on you. Combat draws for round one. (Draws for the worg: ✓×✓×✓) The worg gets three.

**Dave:** (Draws ✓×✓×) Aww... two.

**Germaine:** Three plays two. Round two. (Draws for worg: ×✓×✓✓) Worg is up to six.

**Dave:** (Draws ×✓××) Gnngh... one!

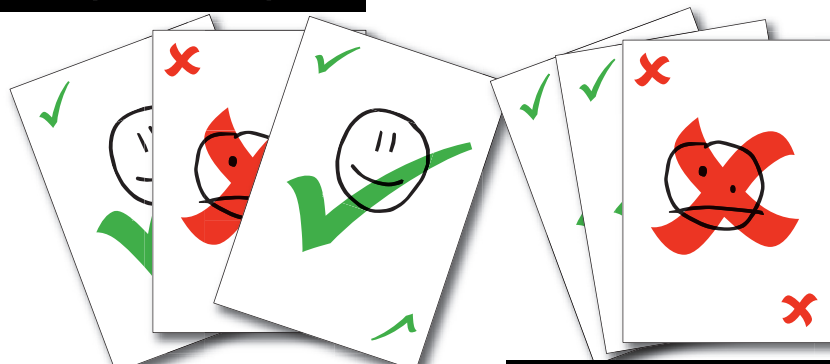
**Germaine:** Six plays three. The worg strikes. It's teeth count as a plus-one weapon, so... (draws four cards, which is the sum of the worg's 3-point advantage plus one for its teeth, and gets ××✓✓). Armour defense?

**Dave:** Leather bloody jerkin. (Draws one armour defense card: ×) Owwy.

**Germaine:** That's a two point injury.

**Dave:** I want to scream and run away. Um... defensive fighting. Should have done that sooner.

Strike draw example: Arathorn's killing blow on the worg:



Three-point Advantage...

Plus three bonus cards for using a longsword...

...equals a four point wound

**Germaine:** Round three. The worg gets... (*draws x✓xxx*) one.

**Dave:** Okay. I'd normally draw four, but I'm defensive, so I double it to eight. But I have a two point injury so it drops to six. And I'm trying to move for the stairs, so it drops to five. (*Draws x✓xxx and starts to suspect someone had diddle his deck of cards*) One... same as wolfie.

**Germaine:** You're at the stairs. One plays one. Round four. The worg gets... (*draws ✓✓✓xx*) three.

**Dave:** Still defensive, but I'll stop moving and shout my head off. So... um... four, times two... minus two... I get to draw six. (*draws x✓xxx✓*) two.

**Germaine:** Four plays three. The worg doesn't strike. Alf, Arathorn can hear D'zyrkol yelling.

**Alf:** Ha ha. I suppose I'd better start running. Longsword ready.

**Germaine:** It'll take you three rounds to sprint along the corridor and up the stairs.

**Alf:** Stick to that defensive style Dave, I'll be right there.

**Germaine:** Round five. The worg gets... (*draws ✓x✓✓x*) three.

**Dave:** Same as last time: (*draws xxxx✓*) Oh no. One.

**Germaine:** Seven plays four. The worg strikes. (*draws four cards, like last time, the advantage plus one for the teeth, gets xx✓x*) One. Draw armour defense.

**Dave:** (*Kisses deck of cards, offers a small prayer and draws ✓*) Yes! Eat that, doggy!

**Germaine:** The worg bites out a chunk of your armour but doesn't connect with flesh. Round six, and the worg opens with... (*draws xxxx✓*) one.

**Dave:** (*draws xx✓✓x*) Two!

**Germaine:** One plays two. Round seven... worg gets (*draws x✓x✓✓*) three.

**Dave:** Um... (*draws xx✓xx*) one. Seriously guys, has someone been playing about with these cards?

**Germaine:** Four plays three. No strike. Round eight...

**Alf:** Am I here now?

**Germaine:** Yes!

**Alf:** I'm making wolf kebabs.

**Germaine:** The worg gets... (*draws ✓x✓xx*). Two, both points on D'zyrkol.

**Alf:** Awesome. I'll hit him for... (*draws ✓xxx✓✓, because he's 'ard*) three. And strike.

**Germaine:** Okay, lets finish Dave's draw.

**Dave:** (*draws xxx✓✓*) Two.

**Germaine:** Six plays five, no strike. Now, Alf, your strike. Three plays zero.

**Alf:** Longsword gives me three extra (*draws x✓✓x✓x*) Thats three. Is this thing armoured?

**Germaine:** Nope. That's a three-point injury, cutting a nice slash across the worg's face and chest.

**Alf:** Woohoo!

**Germaine:** The worg is trying to scamper off. Round nine, it gets no cards because of its wound and the two-point penalty for fleeing.

**Alf:** (*draws ✓✓x✓xx*) Three. Another strike please.

**Germaine:** Go for it.

**Alf:** (*draws ✓✓x✓x✓*) Four. Take it, dawg!

**Germaine:** Your blade smashes into the dog's spine and sends it crashing down to the ground in a limp, broken heap.

That fight took nine rounds, or 45 seconds in game-world time.

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## ARCHERY

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Ranged attacks are a bit different from melee attacks because there is no back-and-forth parrying and dodging.

**In ranged combat, the archer is allowed a certain number of shots per round based on the weapon and his Combat Training.**

**Each shot is made using the archer's full Combat Draw. The target draws his Combat Training to attempt to dodge the shot. If the shot ties or loses against the dodge, it misses. If it beats the dodge, it hits.**

Damage is worked out as normal, based on the damage rating of the weapon, and the target gets an armour save as normal.

To calculate a character's rate of fire (ROF) with a particular weapon, check the Bows table. The first three columns are the Combat Draws necessary to fire the weapon once per

turn, twice per turn and three times per turn respectively. If your Combat Draw isn't high enough to fire a weapon once per turn, you can't fire it at all.

### CROSSBOWS

Crossbows allow characters with less skill to fire some fairly heavy ordinance. The down side is their slow reloading: the rate of fire for a crossbow is either "alternating" or "once". "Alternating" means that the crossbow can be fired once every other turn. "Once" means it can be fired every turn. Normal crossbows can never be fired more than once per turn.

### Other factors

Archers are fairly lethal close-up, so the GM should give targets bonus dodge cards based on range and visibility. SS is not a tactics game, so exact ranges are irrelevant. In general, longbows can fire further than horsebows, horsebows can fire further than shortbows.

Factor	Bonus Dodge Cards
Medium range	2
Long range	6
Dusk	3
Darkness	loads
Cover	1 to 10, depending
Firing into a melee	2 per person in the melee

### HORSEBACK

Firing from horseback is hard: by default, archers on a galloping horse get a -6 accuracy penalty. The "Horseback archery" special move counteracts this penalty, one card per rank. The full set of

Factor	Bonus Dodge Cards
Firing from a...	
...standing horse	1
...walking horse	2
...trotting horse	4
...galloping horse	6
Using a...	
...crossbow on horseback	6
...longbow on horseback	10
Firing behind on horseback	6

So in theory, someone with a "horseback archery" rank of 22 could fire a longbow backwards off a galloping horse with no penalty.

Also crossbow rates of fire are halved when on horseback because you can't use the stirrup properly etc. That may mean that a crossbow that you can happily use on the ground, firing every other turn, you can't use on horseback.

### Stationary targets

Stationary targets are deemed to have a dodge draw of 1, plus whatever other factors may apply.

### Marksmanship (Special Move)

The Marksmanship special move allows an archer to make a slow, careful, sniping shot.

**To make a sniping shot, skip one shot and then add your Marksmanship rank onto your Combat Draw for the next shot.**

### Soft target (Special Move)

The Soft Target special move represents the ability of a skilled archer to place his shot on unarmoured or sensitive parts of the target; the downside to this technique is that because the archer is aiming off-centre, it's harder to hit.

**To make a soft target shot, double the target's dodge draw. If you still hit, apply your Soft Target rank as bonus damage cards .**

Soft Target shots work well in conjunction with sniping shots.

### Firing into Melee (Optional)

There's an obvious risk involved in firing a bow at a target that's very close to one of your friends. For this reason, there's an optional rule: if you get nothing but \*'s on your shot draw while firing at someone who is in melee with your own side, you've not only missed your target but accidentally hit the opposite side of the fight, which is probably one of your mates.

### Firing while in Melee

If you insist on trying to make ranged shots while people are trying to engage you in melee, you are treated as a stationary victim—see the coup de grace rules.

If you want to use a bow as a stick to fend off would-be attackers, it's counted as a staff.

If you want to shoot someone who is going toe-to-toe with you, you make a normal combat draw, but can not make a normal combat strike—instead, you make ranged combat rolls as normal based on a target difficulty of 3 (normal range and movement costs are ignored).

### Stun Attacks

If you want to disable rather than kill your opponent, you can try to cause stun damage—e.g., using the flat of an axe or the pommel of a sword rather than the cutting edge.

The Combat Draws are made as normal, and you build up a Combat Score as normal. The strike draws are a bit different: the target adds his Physique to his Armour Defense draw, so it's generally harder to cause damage against armoured targets. If you cause a "wound" it works as normal for penalizing the victim's draws, but it is actually stun damage and will wear off after a few minutes. But every fourth point of stun damage gets converted into an Actual Wound—you can't break someone's nose off their face and not expect them to bleed a little. If you want extra gory details, there's a stun damage table.

Recovering from stun damage: every minute (twelve rounds) you can make a physique draw, penalised by Actual Wounds. You shrug off as many points of stun damage as you get successes in the draw.

### Boxing

If you're unarmed, you can always resort to throwing punches. Attacks are considered Stun Attacks (see above),

## Stun Attacks

Strike draw minus Armour Defense and Physique draw	Wound
0 or less	Some air moves past the target's chin. No damage.
1	Thump. Vision shaken and head rings, but not too serious. 1 stun damage.
2	Bash. Staggers a bit, reeling from the blow. 2 stun damage.
3	Glass jaw. Leaves the victim wondering where the wagon that ran him over has gone. 3 stun damage.
4	Snap. An unpleasant sensation of something breaking. 3 stun damage, 1 actual wound.
5	Ram. A bone breaks and gets pushed into places no bone should ever go. 4 stun damage and 1 actual wound.
6 or more	Pulverise. Agonising feelings of things tearing loose inside, and possibly poking out in unlikely places. Every fourth point is converted into an actual wound, the rest is stun damage.

Stun Attacks

target is...	Difficulty
Completely still	+1
Moving on the spot (e.g. in melee)	+2
Moving at a walking speed	+3
Moving at a running speed	+4
Moving almost directly towards / away firer	-2
In melee with you (no movement or range costs)	+3
Short range	+0
Medium range	+1
Long range	+2
Extreme range	+3
Small dog, rabbit sized	+2
Large dog sized	+1
Man sized	+0
Twice man-size	-1
Hit "costs" for ranged targets	

Ranged attack tables

handbows	Once	twice	thrice	Damage	accuracy
Training Bow	1	2	n/a	1	0
Shortbow	2	4	n/a	2	0
Heavy Shortbow	3	6	n/a	3	-1
Horsebow	4	8	12	4	-1
Heavy Horsebow	5	10	15	5	-1
X-Heavy Horsebow	7	14	21	7	-2
Longbow	6	12	n/a	6	-3
Heavy Longbow	8	16	n/a	8	-3
X-Heavy Longbow	12	24	n/a	12	-4
Handbows					

CROSSBOWS	alternating	Once	Damage	accuracy
Concealed Crossbow	2	4	2	0
Light Crossbow	3	6	4	-1
Medium Crossbow	4	8	6	-1
Heavy Crossbow	6	12	8	-2
X-Heavy Crossbow	8	16	12	-2
Crossbows				

and you do not get a weapon bonus. “Boxing” here is any kind of hard martial art that focuses on powerful strikes against weak spots. Other examples include kick boxing and karate. The exact way your character fights is a matter between you and your GM.

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## Wrestling

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The other way of fighting unarmed is to wrestle. This could be any of the “soft” martial arts, the ones that focus on grappling and holds.

Wrestling is a two-phase system—you start with normal normal Combat draws as you try to begin the wrestle, but instead of making a Strike Draw, you make a Grapple Draw.

**Grapple Draws are just like Strike Draws, but there is no weapon bonus and your opponent gets to draw his Combat Draw in defense.**

Armour doesn't help.

If you tie or lose, nothing happens. Combat Scores reset to zero like after a strike.

If you win, you have grappled the enemy. On the next and subsequent rounds, continue to make normal Combat Draws against your enemy.

**Any time the person being held gets an advantage, he has broken the hold and Combat Scores reset to zero.**

**Any time the holder gets an advantage, he can make a Hold Draw, which is like a Strike Draw but the victim draws his Physique in defense. Wounds are inflicted as Stun Wounds.**

The scary bit about Holds, though, is that:

**After a Hold Draw, your Combat Score doesn't reset.**

Which means that unless the Combat Draws remove your advantage, you can make another Hold Roll on the round after, and the round after that, and the round after that, until your opponent is a broken, unconscious rag-doll.

Hold Rolls are optional—you can choose to just restrain an enemy.

When you are wrestling, you can't apply Combat Draw points to any score except the one against the guy you're

wrestling. So it's a bad, bad idea to wrestle when you're outnumbered.

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## Fire and Heat

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Fire and heat damage is dealt with pretty much as you'd expect: any source of fire will have a Fire Rating which represents how hot/painful it is. Every round that a character is in contact with the fire, the GM draws that many fire damage cards against them. The character is allowed an Armour Saving Draw. If the fire damage gets through it is treated just like regular damage.

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## Example

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Quick recap: the thief D'zyrkol has managed to upset the guard dog of one of the tavern's other guests. He's taken a nasty bite, but managed to hold on until Arathorn could hear him shouting and came to help. Trouble is, between his shouting, the worg's barking, and Arathorn's war cries the whole tavern is awake.

**Germaine:** Quick, what now?

**Alf:** Has anyone else appeared?

**Dave:** I'm running back down the stairs.

**Germaine:** Not yet, but you hear a *schwink* noise.

**Alf:** Schwink?

**Germaine:** Like a sword being unsheathed.

**Alf:** I'm following D'zyrkol down the stairs. “Basher! Cloud! Wake up!”

**Germaine:** Half running, half jumping, down the stairs. You crash through the door into the store room and wake the others up. Right then, a figure appears behind you and tries to stab you. Draw to avoid surprise.

**Alf:** Umm... what's that on?

**Germaine:** Combat Training (draws for the thug, who has Combat Training 3: **✖✓✖**). One to beat.

**Alf:** (Draws **✖✖✖✓✖**) Just! One.

**Germaine:** Combat draws for round one... the thug gets (draws **✖✓✓**) two.

**Alf:** (**✓✖✓✓✖**) Three.



**Bob:** Can I fight?

**Germaine:** Yes, but it'll take you two rounds to get your sword out and unsheathe it.

**Bob:** Stuff it, I'll just punch this guy.

**Celia:** How big is this room?

**Germaine:** About thirty feet square.

**Celia:** I'll grab my bow and look for some cover.

**Germaine:** Okay. Alf and Bob: Three plays two. Round two, and the thug gets (✓✓✓) three. He puts one point against Basher and two against Arathorn.

**Alf:** (✓✓✓✓✓) Five!

**Bob:** (✓✕✓✕✕) Two.

**Germaine:** So it's eight plays four, Alf's favour, and two plays one, Bob's favour. Strikes?

**Alf:** Yep. Four point lead, three points for the longsword... (✕✕✓✕✓✕✕) Only two?

**Germaine:** (Draws armour defense ✓) He takes a one point wound. Round three... (✕✕) he stands there like a lemon.

**Alf:** (✓✕✕✕✕) One.

**Bob:** (✓✓✓✓✕) Four.

**Germaine:** So it's one plays nil, Alf's favour, and six plays one, Bob's favour. Strikes?

**Bob:** Me! Me! Umm.. what do I need to draw?

**Germaine:** Well, you're boxing so you don't get a weapon bonus. You just draw as many cards as your advantage. And the thug gets to defend with his Physique.

**Bob:** Okay. Six plays one, so five cards... (✓✕✓✓✕) Three.

**Germaine:** He has a physique of three, not affected by wounds, (✕✕✕) it's not his night at all. Basher's bag-of-spanners-like fist crashes into the side of the thug's head, knocking him out cold. Celia, you can see another thug just outside in the corridor. It's the same one you all saw in the bar earlier. He's just stepping into the room but you can have an unobstructed shot at him this round.

**Celia:** How hard is he to hit?

**Germaine:** Umm... Walking, three, but towards you, so only one.

**Celia:** Great. I have four cards, so I'll take just take two shots, because I'm short on arrows (✓✕✓✕) Two hits.

Shortbow, broadhead arrows, so two cards damage on each (✕✓ and ✓✓) One and two.

**Germaine:** Armour saves... (✕✕ and ✓✓) Nothing and two. So he takes a one-point wound. Okay, round five. Basher and Arathorn can now engage him.

**Alf:** Yep. (✓✓✕✕✕) Two.

**Bob:** Okay (✓✕✕✕✕) One.

**Germaine:** With his wound... (✓✕) One. He defends against Arathorn. Celia? You can fire but it'll be into a melee. Difficulty two.

**Celia:** Yeah, I'll take one shot with all four cards... (✕✕✓✕) Oh dear.

**Germaine:** It would be a real shame to shoot one of your friends in the back at a time like this. You get a Combat Training draw to avoid that. Difficulty two, same as the shot.

**Celia:** Ulp... (✕✓✓✓) Phew.

**Alf:** Nice shooting, Ceel. Okay, two plays one, one plays nothing. Bob, you could make a one-point punch if you want?

**Bob:** No ta.

**Germaine:** Next round. The thugs gets... (✓✓) Two, one point on each of you.

**Alf:** (✓✓✓✓✕) Four. Heh heh heh.

**Bob:** (✓✕✕✕✕) One. What's wrong with this deck?

**Germaine:** Six plays two, two plays one. Strike, anyone?

**Alf:** Cleave! (✓✓✓✓) Four! In your face, thuggy boy!

**Germaine:** (✕) His paper-like armour fails to stop your longsword plunging into his heart and poking out the back.

**Celia:** Any more?

**Germaine:** No, it's gone quiet.

**Dave:** (Finishes a tin of drink) Hey, where am I?

**Germaine:** Hiding further down the corridor trying not to bleed to death.

**Dave:** Chewing blackleaves, I hasten to add (Blackleaves are a herbal narcotic that characters can use to ignore the effects of wounds. Short-lived and addictive, but perfect for characters like D'zyrkol).

**Germaine:** So you're hiding, and a bit high. In fact, you're just there when you see the old woman in the main bar. She must have used a secret passage or something.

**Dave:** I'll scream for the guys, and run at her.

**Bob:** Don't kill her!

**Germaine:** You catch up with her just as she reaches the front door. The rest of you will be here in two rounds.

**Dave:** I'll try to rugby tackle her.

**Celia:** Good grief, she's just an old woman!

**Dave:** I don't trust her. At all.

**Germaine:** Okay, combat draws. She gets... (✖✖) Nada.

**Dave:** (✓✓✓) Three!

**Germaine:** Three plays zero—nice draw by the way—you can make your grapple roll.

**Dave:** (✓✓✖) Two.

**Germaine:** (✓✖) One. You are now grappled. Round two.

**Dave:** (✓✓✖) Two. Again.

**Germaine:** Two plays one, you can try to use the roll.

**Dave:** Heck yeah.

**Alf:** Dave! I can't believe you're beating up an old woman!

**Dave:** She's pretty spry, you know. That hold draw: (✓) One.

**Germaine:** (✖✖) Zero. She screams as you bring her elbow into contact with her back.

**Dave:** I'll shout in her earhole, "Give up?"

**Germaine:** She nods feebly. At that moment the rest of you come thundering in.

**Dave:** I think it's safe to let go.

**Germaine:** She stands nursing her shoulder and muttering swearwords under her breath. Celia - have a Learning draw.

**Celia:** (✓✖✖✓✖) Two?

**Germaine:** You suddenly realise she's not swearing—she's reciting the words to a spell.

**Celia:** I'll slap her!

**Germaine:** As you raise your hand, she looks you in the eye, and vanishes.

## Choosing Equipment

The idea with a lot of these rules is to present a trade-off, an option when choosing what equipment your character should carry. It shouldn't be automatically better to have, say, a two-handed sword than a shortsword. If there was no trade-off, everyone would carry a two-handed sword as soon as they could find one, and that doesn't feel right.

So it goes like this: for close combat weapons, you have the minimum advantage needed, which is usually the same as the strike bonus. So to use a weapon with a high strike bonus, you have to be confident that you're going to be getting the appropriate Combat Advantage over most enemies. In a fight between two evenly matched unarmoured people, the guy with the little dagger may have an advantage on the guy with the longsword—not because he does more damage, but because he can get more little jabs in. Every time he gets a one point Advantage, he can have a go at a strike. Eventually, the guy with the longsword will be peppered with little wounds, unable to strike back because he never achieves a three point advantage.

Bringing armour into the equation changes things a bit. Now, the dagger's one-point injuries become irrelevant because they hardly ever get through, and the longsword, which is pulling a minimum of six cards off the deck every time it strikes, becomes a lot more potent because it can cause injuries right through leather and chainmail.

The choice is similar for bow weapons. Longbows and crossbows can punch their arrows through most armour. Shortbows, on the other hand, have a lot less power behind them. So why would anyone pick a shortbow? Because at short range, the shortbowman can unleash an insane volley of arrows while the longbowman is still bracing for his second shot and the crossbowman is frantically winding up for his first. Also, longbows are typically 6' long, while short bows are less than 5', often much less. Imagine holding a longbow indoors. You have to tip it forwards to go through doors. You have to cant it over at unlikely angles to fire it, because the top keeps hitting the ceiling (especially in low-roofed medieval buildings). So whilst the longbow is a more powerful weapon on paper, the shortbow is far more practical. Historically, longbows were only used for hunting and on big, open battlefields. Horseback archers like the Mongols never tried to develop larger bows because they would have been impossible to fire while riding. Instead, they developed the recurve bow, which offered many of the advantages of the longbow in a more compact form.



# Part the Third: Characters

To start playing Sacred Steel, you'll need to create a Player Character. The process is relatively simple—you start with an outline of how you see your character (there are some example outlines to get you started), then translate that into skills. Then you add specialities, and pick equipment.

You may find the process easier using the Character Work-Up sheet at the back of the book.

The basics steps to create a character are:

- 1: Think up an idea for your character
- 2: Pick a race
- 3: (Optional) Apply racial skill changes
- 4: Add 3 skill points anywhere as you see fit
- 5: (Optional) Move one point from one skill to another
- 6: (Optional) Shave off points to add to Depth
- 7: Pick three specialities
- 8: (Optional) Extra magic goodies if you took step (6)
- 9: Work out your Combat Draw
- 10: Buy your starting equipment
- 11: Fill out your character sheet

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## Character Ideas

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Describe to yourself how you see your character. Remember that starting characters have not had a great career of heroing—they are greenhorns, just starting out beyond the confines of their home village.

What is their purpose in the group—what do they contribute?

How do they like to work? Do they have any favourite tools or weapons?

What gender and race are they?

What do they look like?

Why are they heroing around instead of getting a proper job?

So Bob, from our examples earlier, might have dreamt up his character something like this: “Umm.. okay. He’s a fighter. He defends the rest of the group. He carries a mace but also has a fist like a sack full of iron bolts. He’s pretty tall and well-built, but kind of brutish... actually, I guess he’s an Orc. And... uh... he like hitting things. And he’s at a loose end. Okay?”

With your outline, you could begin roleplaying immediately. Everything else is just fleshing-out.

Here are some more ideas:

**The ex-militia soldier:** a fighter, prefers tactics and preparation to raw strength. He has a severe look and short black hair. From a large city, he got bored with never seeing any proper action.

**The cutpurse:** a petty thief, pickpocket and trickster. Trouble is, although she’s got talent she lacks experience and she’s got herself into trouble in too many places, so now she’s on the road.

**The thug:** Worked as hired muscle in his home town but realised it was a dead end job, in more ways than one. Bought a sword and started out on the road to find fame and wealth.

Skill Level	Physique	Combat	Learning
1 Disadvantaged	Extremely weak and poorly coordinated. Never attempts anything challenging. Manual labour is out of the question.	Has never fought, except maybe with little sister. And lost.	Uneducated; may be able to recognise a few simple words but otherwise unable to read. Can count out loud, but gets stuck somewhere between eleven and a hundred.
2 A bit below average	Below average physical skills. Can join in with sports etc. but does not expect to win. Can do physical work when needed but better in other roles.	Has fought in maybe a few bar fights; knows how to look after him/herself but has no formal training.	Probably literate but poorly read. Largely ignorant of everything except their immediate lifestyle. Can count and do basic sums.
3 Average	Average strength, fitness etc. Probably has a favourite sport or two, and can do a fair share of manual labour.	Trained to fight by a professional. Can exercise tactics in a fight and evaluate situation without panicking. Will usually only know one style of fighting.	Literate. Has a good memory and learns quickly. Good local and general knowledge. Understand arithmetic and simple fractions like "half", "quarter" etc.
5 Good	Above average. Happily takes part in sports, manual labour is not a problem.	A trained fighter, extremely dangerous to the untrained. Knows a few different styles of combat.	A good learner. Often ends up being the brains in peer groups. Can work out any arithmetic.
7 Very Good	Fit, strong, good coordination, prides him/herself on fitness. Exceptionally good at physical labour.	A professional fighter, always with one eye out for danger. Can take on several lesser foes and understands a range of techniques.	Very bright, likes to find out about things and keep abreast of any news. Very possibly will also have done some more advanced mathematics.
10 Excellent	Highly athletic, usually wins at everything. Takes on jobs singlehanded that would normally take a team.	A champion. In his hometown, famous for never losing a fight.	A true intellectual. Takes inspiration from learning and applying knowledge. Loves any mental exercise.

Skill Level	Awareness	Interaction	Depth
1 Disadvantaged	Constantly daydreaming, terrible perception. Would have trouble spotting the backside on a horse.	Socially inept, completely unable to gauge other people's emotions and reactions.	Unschool'd; has learnt some party tricks but nothing more.
2 A bit below average	Tends to miss obvious things, doesn't notice friends walking by.	Can behave appropriately in most situations, but often says or does the wrong thing. Subtle hints and displays of emotion are lost on him/her.	Initiated. Has accepted the powers of magic, but has yet to reach any real power.
3 Average	Spots things of interest, will notice out-of-the-ordinary things in most situations	Can get along in most circles. Picks up cues and can make jokes/threats etc. without looking stupid.	Adept. Knows a few tricks fairly well.
5 Good	Sharp; will spot things that have been hurriedly hidden.	Good at steering people's reactions. Makes friends easily, can be persuasive.	Expert. Has a good grasp of the field.
7 Very Good	A keen observer. Picks up small clues and can make inferences that baffle most people.	Possibly a professional performer or charismatic leader, very skilled at swaying people. Can motivate the unwilling, deliver threats that sound like they're meant.	Scholar. Very skilled.
10 Excellent	Eagle-eyed. Reads vast quantities of information from seemingly mundane situations.	A masterful leader. Boundless charisma, able to stir people to his bidding. Loved and remembered.	Master. Has achieved a remarkable level of power, and uses it in daily life

What the skills mean for starting characters (skills between 1 and 6)

**The traveller:** Her family were travellers, too, but something happened—maybe raiders killed them, or she got kicked out for something. Either way, she doesn't like to talk about it. She gets by with her sharp observation and good looks.

**The bard:** He's just finished his apprenticeship with a group of travelling minstrels, but he's yearning for real adventure. He's also remarkably skilled in magic, and uses little illusions to get him out of trouble.

Go crazy, think up new ideas, or combine some of these ideas. If you're really stuck, here's one sure-fire way to get an interesting character: think of the last thing you watched on TV. Pick a character from it. Drop that character into a fantasy setting (if they weren't already). Easy as that. You can always round off the rough edges later.

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## Race

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Everybody is from somewhere. It can colour your outlook as well as your skin. Races in Sacred Steel are very important. There are no "plain humans"; everyone is part of one of the races. On the other hand, you mustn't feel that your race should define your character—any of the races can adapt to any role.

The races of Sacred Steel are:

**Elves:** Graceful, airy types. The elven homeland in the southwest is one big forest, where they all live in mazes of wooden buildings among the treetops. They're very big on religion, and can be a bit aloof with the other races. Elven illusionists are some of the finest anywhere, but they will never touch fire magic, for ancient reasons (and practical reasons, i.e. living in exclusively wooden structures).

**Drelves:** The cursed offspring of the Elves. They have the same light bodies and sharp features, but with small, sharp horns jutting out from their foreheads. They have a far more practical (or cynical, depending how you see it) attitude to life and make good merchants. Most of the big caravans are headed and run by Drelves.

**Orcs:** Ugly, ungainly but tough-looking people. They live in the frozen mountains north of the Elves, farming what they can and occasionally getting into border squabbles with the four lands that they neighbour. Orcs are usually hired as fighters and guards.

**Highlanders:** The eastern extent of the same mountain range that the Orcs live in is occupied by a race of tough, dour warriors. They are loyal to their clans, their lands, and their friends and they wear their tartan with pride. Like the Orcs, their harsh upbringing often makes them good fighters.

**Plainsmen:** Down in the southeast is the huge, mostly flat area called the Plains, home to many tribes of wandering nomads. They sometimes paint their skin or wear dyed feathers. Life is a mixture of hunting and trading, and some tribes even turn to banditry. They often find jobs as scouts when they leave home.

**Realmsmen:** In the center of the land is a fragment from the days of the last empire. Seven huge cities, protected by well-trained armies and tall stone walls. Life here is more sophisticated than elsewhere, and the people, while not being physically different like Elves or Orcs, are often seen as being soft or pampered. They, on the other hand, know that they are the keepers of learning and art.

**Deathlings:** A vast but arcane cult. The Deathlings are not a race in the normal sense, but they live so differently that they may as well be. They are devotees of Death Magic who entice children to join their ranks at an early age and train them in necromancy. Deathlings are encouraged to travel and spread the word when they come of age. A deathling can be a member of any of the other races, and can apply Deathling skill changes as well as normal skill changes.

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## SKILLS

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The Character Work-Up sheet has five blanks for the five main skills, Physique, Combat Training, Learning, Awareness and Interaction. The Basics chapter describes what they all do, and there's a comparative table to give you some idea what the scores mean. The skills of brand new characters do not differ wildly. At this point, nothing your character does will be of epic proportions.

You'll see that they all start with the number 3 next to them. 3 represents the average for the normal human population. So if you did nothing else, you'd be exactly average.

Based on your race, you can choose to apply some racial skill changes. You can ignore these if you want to, and just use the default numbers.

Secondly you get three extra points to put wherever you like. This point is what makes your character better than the average joe—it means he has an advantage in something.

Last, you may (optionally) apply a one-point correction. That is, drop any skill by 1 and raise another by 1.

## Magic

At this point, if you want your character to have magical skills you can scrape points from anywhere off your Skills and put them on your Depth. Realise that losing more than one or two points from Skills in this way will give you a seriously subnormal character.

Read the Magic chapter if you want a magic-using character—you get extra freebies as well.

## Specialities

Specialities are what define your character’s favourite techniques and styles. A speciality should cover one particular field.

We’ve listed some specialities here that should cover most situations, but go ahead and make up your own if you want (if you’re a player, clear it with your GM first).

Each speciality gives the character a 1 card bonus when making relevant draws. You may give your character up to 3 specialities, but they cannot stack at this point—you cannot give a starting character a +2 or +3 speciality. They can stack later in play, but we’ll get there in due course.

Specialities are listed in groups according to which Skill they would normally work with, but they can be used with other skills. For example, Horseriding is listed under “Physique”, but could be used with Learning when trying to identify something about a horse.

### Physique Specialities

**Climbing:** The character is particularly adept at climbing, be it trees, stone walls etc. Useful for burglars and infiltrators.

**Endurance:** Tasks that require a sustained effort, like walking or running a long distance, or carrying something a long way.

**Feats of Strength:** The character specialises in sudden bursts of strength, for lifting heavy items, breaking down doors etc.

**Gymnastics:** Carefully judged jumps, graceful landings from high up etc.

**Horseriding:** (or other mounted animal) Riding without using your hands, standing in the saddle, aiming a bow while galloping.

**Reactions:** Sudden impulsive reactions, like slamming the door you’ve just opened when a worg leaps at you.

**Sprinting:** Bursts of speed, good for catching up with a fleeing enemy.

### Combat Training Specialities

**Boxing:** The character is skilled in a hard martial art, and can use it to paste opponents barefist. +1 on Strike draws when unarmed.

**Crossbow:** Trained with the crossbow, able to load and fire faster or better than normal.

Race	Optional Skill Changes	Notes
ELV	+1 Awareness, -1 Learning	Deep forest elves, used to living a very simple lifestyle
DELV	+ Interaction, -1 Physique	Lightly built but skilled bargainers
ORC	+1 Physique, -1 Learning	Tough but not too quick on the uptake
HIGHLANDER	+1 Physique, -1 Interaction	Hardened, dour types
PLAINSMAN	+1 Combat Training, -1 Learning	Low-tech lifestyle where skirmish is commonplace
REALMSMAN	+1 Learning, -1 Combat Training	Very cultured, but fighting is not a survival skill
DEATHLING	+1 Depth, -1 Physique	Doctrine emphasises magic over muscle

Racial skill changes - all optional

Skill	Speciality
Physique	Feats of strength
	Gymnastics
	Horsieriding
	Sprinting
	Endurance
	Reactions
	Climbing
Combat Training	Dagger
	Shortsword
	Longsword
	Greatsword
	Shortbow
	Longbow
	Crossbow
	Boxing
	Wrestling
	Defensive fighting
Surprise	
Learning	Lore
	Languages
	Survival
	Appraisal
	Lockpicking
	Medicine
Awareness	Stealth
	Hearing
	Sleight of hand
	Spotting
Interaction	Haggle
	Intimidation
	Persuasion
	Music
	Impersonation
	Command
Specialities	

**Dagger:** You are trained in a fighting style that accentuates the speed and versatility of the dagger, giving you +1 card on Combat Draws when using a dagger.

**Defensive fighting:** Improved ability to avoid injury in melee, regardless of weapon. Gives the character +4 cards when fighting defensively (a normal weapon

speciality would give you +2, being your +1 bonus doubled).

**Greatsword:** You are trained with the mighty two-handed sword and can judge its momentum better.

**Longbow:** You've practiced with the enormous longbow and can control a 100lbs pull at 36".

**Longsword:** The general-purpose favourite of fighters—you've focused on training with this weapon.

**Shortbow:** Horseback, indoors, outdoors, you've practiced using the versatile shortbow everywhere.

**Shortsword:** You're especially adept with shortswords.

**Surprise:** The governing factor of so many battles—you can organise ambushes, and avoid them. +1 card on Surprise draws, whether you are the initiator or the recipient.

**Wrestling:** You have learnt a soft martial art—one that emphasises leverage, grips and messily broken bones. +1 card on Combat Draws when attempting to grapple, and when attempting a hold.

**Other Weapons:** You can have a speciality in any kind of weapon not already listed here.

### Learning Specialities

**Languages:** Listening to travellers and reading books, you have picked up a few words of many languages and can try and bluff your way through in almost any tongue.

**Lore:** You have studied folk tales and mythology, and the history around them.

**Medicine:** You have learnt some basics of medicine, including bandaging, splints and tourniquets. You have steered clear of serious herbal medicine, because it looks a bit like magic.

**Survival:** You can spot edible plants and tell if any dangerous animals live in the area. Living outdoors is no bother to you.

**Appraisal:** Identifying and valuing things you've found. For example, determining the age of a sword found in a crypt.

**Lockpicking:** A general familiarity with lots of types of lock, and the ability to use skeleton keys.



## Awareness Specialities

**Hearing:** You have acute hearing; +1 card when listening out for something or checking for an audible clue.

**Sleight of hand:** You have learnt some tricks of performance magic and can palm objects. +1 card when trying to pull this sort of trick.

**Spotting:** People trust you on watch because you notice the slightest thing wrong. You also pick up on visual cues. +1 card on vision based Awareness draws.

**Stealth:** Sneaking and hiding. You have a good feel for the best places to move and stand to avoid detection. +1 card when being stealthy.

## Interaction Specialities

**Command:** You're good at leading, getting people to accept your orders.

**Haggle:** Maybe you've worked in a market or as a trader—you're good at back-and-forth price-bargaining.

**Impersonation:** You can learn voices and mannerisms, and try to pass yourself off as someone else.

**Intimidation:** You can make people take notice of you and deliver threats that sound like you mean it.

**Music:** You can play an instrument or sing. You can use music to rouse people for a fight, to be funny, or to calm a tense situation.

**Persuasion:** You can sell people on an idea, make your proposal sound like they thought of it themselves.

## Depth Specialities

To take any Depth Specialities, you must have some points in your Depth Skill. You must also be entitled to the appropriate field of magic.

See the Magic chapter for details.

**Fire Magic:** You like fire and heat and have extra skill with fire magic.

**Death Magic:** You feel a connection to The Other Side and are better at Death Magic.

**Mind Magic:** A student of the mind, you love to understand how people think, and twist them to your will.

**Witchcraft:** Practical magic, the magic of the people—your skill lies here.

## Combat Draw

One quick bit of maths—your Combat Draw is the average of your Physique and Combat Training, rounded up.

## Equipment

Lastly, you decide what kit your character will start with. The basic unit of currency in Sacred Steel is the generic penny, which is roughly the daily earning of a labourer.

You start with 100 generic pennies. You can spend as much or as little as you like, and keep the excess in your purse.

Most characters will need a weapon, and possibly some armour. You should think about professional tools, too, like lockpicks for a thief. It's probably a good idea to save some cash for the mundane things like tents and food. Equipment listings are in their own chapter.

## Examples

### Alf, and his character Arathorn

Alf has decided to play a fairly combat-oriented character, so he fills out the first bit of the character work up sheet like this:

**What is his/her role in the group?** A warrior

**What is his/her favourite piece of equipment or weapon?**  
Longsword

**Why is he/she leaving home to be an adventurer?** Wrongly dishonoured, needs to repair reputation.

At this point Alf reads the race stories and descriptions and decides the best match for his idea is the Plainsman.

**What race is he/she?** Plainsman

**What does he/she look like and wear?** Tall, wiry, withdrawn expression.

So now Alf has a framework to hang everything else on.

He decides to take the racial Skill option for Plainsmen (-1 Learning, +1 Combat Training), and divides his free points by putting two in Physique and one in Combat Training. He toys with the idea of using his optional point shift to

drop his Interaction by 1 and increase his Physique again, but decides he'd rather not have that disadvantage.

**Physique:** 3+5

**Combat Training:** 3+5

**Learning:** 3+2

**Awareness:** 3

**Interaction:** 3

So now he can work out his Combat Draw by averaging his Physique and Combat Training, which is nice and easy for him:

**Combat Draw:** 5

Now he gets to pick his specialities. Based on his role and background, he goes for:

**Longsword**

**Shortbow**

**Horseryiding**

He can ignore the options for magic users because he didn't take any Depth score. Now he can pick equipment and spend his 100gp starting cash:

**Leather chest and greaves (10gp + 10 gp)**

**Longsword (30gp)**

**Recurve bow (40gp)**

...leaving him 10gp to buy tents, food etc. once play has started.

### Bob, and his character Basher

Bob wants to play a fighter, too, but he pictures something a bit more barbarian than Arathorn. He starts his work-up sheet:

**What is his/her role in the group?** A hulking great bruiser

**What is his/her favourite piece of equipment or weapon?** Mace

**Why is he/she leaving home to be an adventurer?** See the world, hit it.

Given the description so far, he really has to pick the Orc race. He could have taken any of the others, though—the rules won't penalise him.

**What race is he/she?** Orc.

**What does he/she look like and wear?** Lumpy and tough, even for an Orc.

For his skills, he definitely wants to take the racial option (+1 Physique, -1 Learning). He also plonks 2 extra points in Physique and 1 in Awareness, and then drops his Interaction by 1 to increase Physique even further.

**Physique:** 3+7

**Combat Training:** 3

**Learning:** 3+2

**Awareness:** 3+4

**Interaction:** 3+2

Well, he's kinda one-dimensional but it fits his idea.

His combat draw is the average of 7 and 3, which is 5. Notice how it comes out the same as Arathorn's (above) even though he has wildly different skills.

**Combat Draw:** 5

His specialities go along these lines too:

**Mace**

**Feats of Strength**

**Intimidation**

It's worth pointing out at this stage that the speciality in Intimidation only puts him level with most people in that area, because he dropped a point from Interaction earlier.

His shopping list is similarly easy:

**Chain chest and greaves (30gp + 30 gp)**

**Mace (20gp)**

**Working dog (10gp)**

So again, he has 10gp spare.

### Dave, and his character D'zyrkol

Dave wants to go for something a bit different, like a stealthy thief-type character, but with all-round skills.

**What is his/her role in the group?** Scout/thief

**What is his/her favourite piece of equipment or weapon?** Shortsword

**Why is he/she leaving home to be an adventurer?** Avoiding the heat after a bad job.

**What race is he/she?** Drelv.

**What does he/she look like and wear?** Shadowy.

Although he's a Drelv, Dave doesn't want his character to be the normal silver-tongued trader type, so he doesn't take the racial skill option. Instead, he actually takes a point out of Interaction to Increase his Awareness, then splits his remaining points between Physique, Combat Training and Learning.

**Physique:** 3 4

**Combat Training:** 3 4

**Learning:** 3 4

**Awareness:** 3 4

**Interaction:** 3 2

His specialities reflect his stealthy nature:

**Shortsword**

**Stealth**

**Hearing**

He spends his money like this:

**Leather chest (10gp)**

**Shortsword (20gp)**

**Recurve bow (40gp)**

Leaving him 30gp for the start of play.

## Developing your Character

As your character completes jobs and moves through his heroic life, the GM will award Experience Points.

Keep a running total on your character sheet of experience. Whenever you receive experience, add the amount onto the total.

You can spend experience points to improve your character. Things you can "buy" with experience are skill improvements, speciality improvements and special moves.

### Improving Skills

You can improve one of your five main skills—Physique, Combat Training, Interaction, Awareness and Learning—by 1 point at a cost of 20 experience points. If you improve your Physique or Combat Training, remember to update your Combat Draw.

## Improving Specialities

You can improve an existing speciality, or start a new one (at rank 1) for 10 experience points.

### Special Moves

Special Moves are various tricks and abilities that you can add to your character. Each rank in a special ability costs 10 experience points.

#### Heroic Attack

Allows your character to wind up a single extremely powerful strike, although they will be vulnerable before and after the attack. See "Combat" chapter.

#### Backstab

Gives your character the ability to sneakily stick a knife in when someone tries to strike. See "Combat" chapter.

#### Marksmanship

Improves accuracy with ranged weapons. See "Combat" chapter.

#### Soft Target

Improves the damage that can be caused with ranged weapons. See "Combat" chapter.

#### Fast Cast

Allows a spell caster to warm up a spell much faster, although with a risk of negative effects afterwards. See "Magic" chapter.

# ELV

*Belithralia Eldendra picked up her jacket. It was a man's jacket, with armoured plates to stop you bashing your elbows when hunting. It wasn't hers, not really—she'd stolen it from one of her brothers years before, when he was the size she was now. She needed it because she was a better archer than he was, and she wanted to practice. But being female, and sole daughter of the only tree-priestess for miles around, no-one took her seriously. She was expected to follow her mother into the sistership, and when people saw her carrying a bow they made stupid patronising comments.*

*She felt guilty now about stealing the coat. Then, as she put her archer's mitt on, she felt guilty about stealing that, too. Her bow, at least, was hers. She'd made it herself, although she'd had to borrow the tools, but still, she felt a bit guilty about it just to be on the safe side. She put the jacket on, slung the bow across her back, and slipped out of the hatch into the branches below her family's home. At that moment she realised that all this guilt was slightly pointless, because she was, after all, running away from home without a word of warning to anyone. And she didn't feel guilty about that at all.*

*It would have been easier to use the walkways between the houses, but she wanted to stay out of sight. So she climbed down the trunk of a nearby redwood, using a route she'd known since childhood. When she had started down, dawn was just rising; although it was ten minutes later now, she found herself in almost total darkness on the forest floor, shadowed by the leaf canopy. Still, there was very little undergrowth this deep in the forest, so she started walking, hoping she was going the right way.*

*She walked south all morning until she came to the main road east to Aerbridge, which was where she wanted to go. At lunchtime, with the forest floor faintly lit through the leaves, she unlimbered her bow and bagged a couple of hares. In the*

*evening she cooked them over an open fire and slept in a hollow tree trunk. And she carried on like that for a week, until suddenly the trees ended and she was looking out over a huge sunlit expanse of land. In the far distance, she was sure she could make out the sea, shimmering into the horizon.*

*Now she was in Drelv land. She'd met Drelves before, usually trying to sell things. Her parents had never liked them and refused to buy anything, but then they were traditionalists. That whole war thing was ancient history now and the Drelves were polite and brought exciting things from far places.*

*Travelling was much easier on the firm, straight road to Aerbridge, and a few days later she saw the city outskirts. Huge! From atop a hill she could see a sprawling mass of what looked like tents pitched either side of the road, and the city itself, tall and dark, beyond that.*

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## *She was still wearing nothing below the waist except her britchcloth*

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*The trouble started as soon as one of the tent-dwellers saw her and wolf-whistled. In no time she was in the middle of a chorus of shouting and whistling, mostly from men, although*

*some strange looking Drelv women with very short hair were joining in too. Most of it seemed to be compliments (of one sort or another) and some of them were even kind enough to offer her board and lodging. At least, that's what Belithralia decided they were offering.*

*The problem, she worked out, was that in these parts the women all wore long skirts or even britches. She, on the other hand, was still wearing nothing below the waist except her britchcloth and sandal boots. And she had no money to buy anything.*

*She found a middle-aged Drelv with not much hair sitting alone next to a tall cart with a sign planted in the ground next to him saying "Hiring". He had looked at her as she approached, but had not said anything, which made him seem a good deal safer than most of the people here.*

*"Excuse me, sir", she started politely, "what are you hiring for?"*

*"A half bar a week, plus food."*

*"No, I mean, what would I need to do?"*

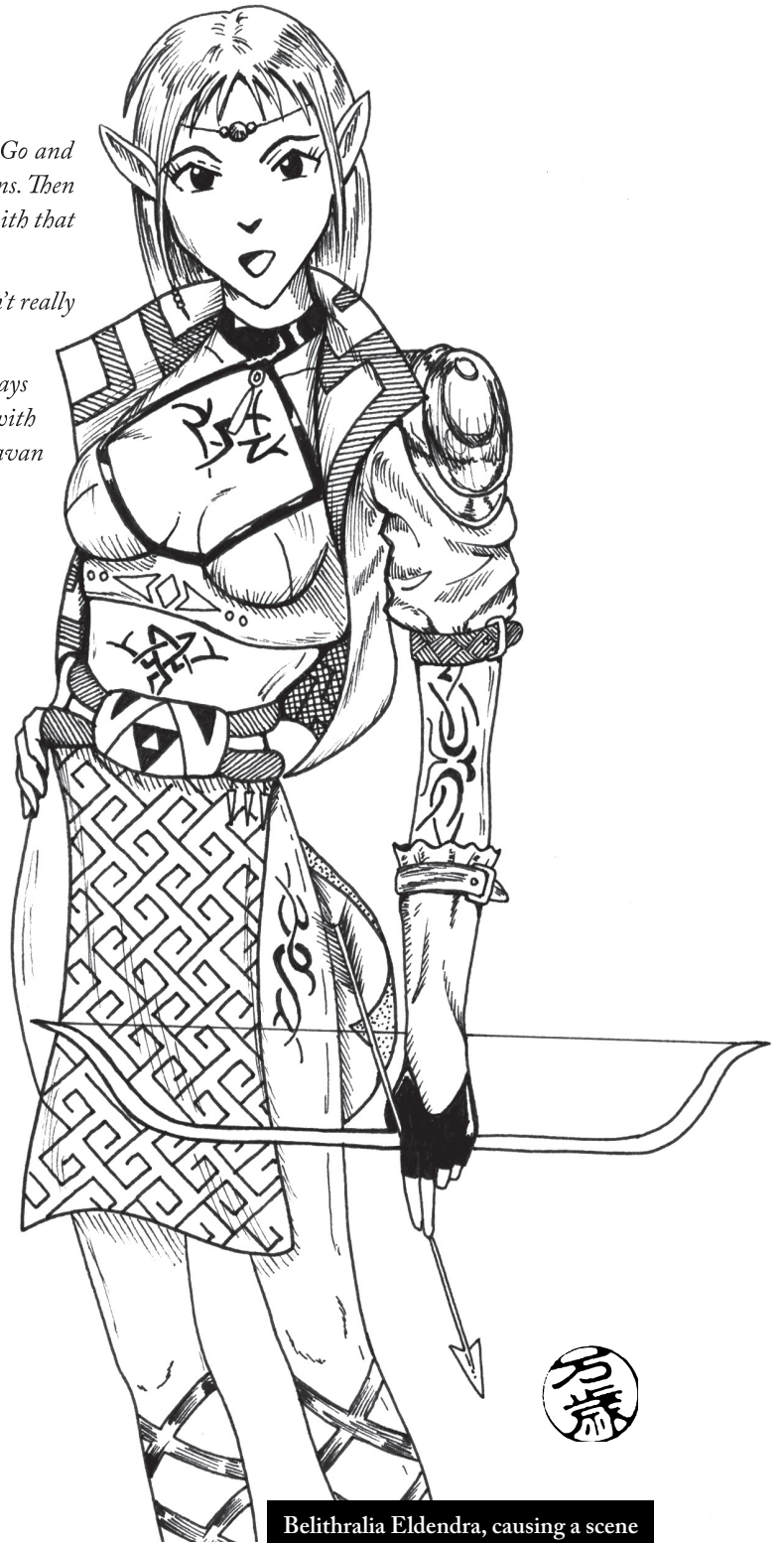
*"What do you want to do?"*

*"Buy some trousers."*

*"You're hired. Here's your first quarter bar in advance. Go and buy some britches before something inappropriate happens. Then come back here and help me recruit. And if you run off with that quarter I'll have you hunted down and killed."*

*"Yes sir! Thankyou sir! Wouldn't dream of it! But... I don't really know anything about recruiting."*

*"Good thing I do, then. I've been sat here for three days with no bugger turning up, and I can tell you that with you stood here we'll suddenly be the most popular caravan in Aerbridge."*



Belithralia Eldendra, causing a scene

# DRELV

*Azander Wyler leant casually on the side of an unattended stall, staying in the shade. He was broke, but as usual it was not his fault—the fence who had promised to take a bundle of expensive paintings had disappeared, forcing him to dump the works of art into the river Aer at midnight. Now he was going to have to find some honest work, preferably the sort that would take him out of the city, until the heat died down.*

*He scanned the people on the bustling market track. There were a few caravans assembling, taking on help, but he recognised most of the wagonmasters and knew that they would never give him work. His gaze stopped on an odd-looking pair next to a solitary cart: a slightly overweight guy with his horns polished as brightly as the top of his head, and next to him, a blonde Elv girl wearing a colourful elven jacket and a pair of badly-fitting khaki britches.*

*Smoothing his hair, untangling a few loose strands from his horns, and putting his best smile on, he walked up to the pair and introduced himself:*

*“Zander Wyler, scout and swordsman at your service!”*

*“What, all four of you?” asked the girl.*

*The bald guy smiled. “See, it’s working” he said to the Elv. Turning to the newcomer, he said “Eadric Batholmeir, wagonmaster. This is Bel. A half bar a week, plus food. Ever worked on a caravan before?”*

*Azander mulled this over in his head for a second. He’d worked a caravan before, but never really worked on one. “Oh yes, several times. But only as... ah... quartermaster.”*

*“Good enough for me. You’re hired.” He caught Azander looking oddly at Bel. “And keep your hands of anything you haven’t been given permission to handle.”*

*By the evening of that day three more drelv workers had signed up, all of them experienced caravaners. Eadric stood up out of his chair and stretched.*

*“I think that’s our lot. Right, ladies and gentlemen! You two,” he indicated two of the new hires, “hitch the horses. Bel and Zander, pay attention and see how it’s done.” he folded up his chair and his sign and threw them into the cart.*

*They were ready to roll a few minutes later. Eadric climbed onto the cart and announced that they were going to fetch the wagons. He twitched the reins, the horses started to plod forwards, and the hires fell into file behind it.*

*Azander maneuvered himself next to Bel as they walked.*

*“Come to see the big wide world, then?”*

*“Yes, that sort of thing. Get a job, make myself useful. What about you?”*

*“Me? Oh, a bit of this, a bit of that, you know.”*

*“No, I don’t. Are you local? What do you normally do?”*

*“I... collect things for people. A bit like a courier.”*

*“Um... these things you collect... are the owners always happy they’ve been ‘collected’?”*

*Azander was wishing he’d never started the conversation, but this girl was too smart to be fobbed off. “Look, just between you and me, my collection service is exactly why I’m signing up to leave town. There was a bit of a misunderstanding and I need to be Not Here for a while.”*

*Bel’s eyes were wide. Wider than normal. A real life professional thief! Tact was called for...*

*“You’re a professional thief! How exciting!”*

*“Gnnch! Shush-shush-shush.” Azander cast a look round the other caravaners. Either they hadn’t heard or were sensibly ignoring it. “You’ve got to learn to think before you open your mouth, Bel. You can get yourself in trouble if you don’t.”*

*“Oh, I’m sorry, ‘Zander. Your secret’s safe with me. I’m running away too.”*

*“You? What from?”*

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**“You’re a professional thief! How exciting!”**

---

*"Mossy Gate township. They wanted me to be a priestess."*

*"Oh, right. Celibacy and all that."*

*"Oh, no, not really celibacy. In fact every year at midsommers, they..."*

*"Thinking first, Bel."*

*"Oh yes, right. Anyway, I didn't want to be a priestess. And they wouldn't let me use my bow."*

*"I saw that bow. Any good with it?"*

*"Yes. Thanks for asking. Back home people just assumed it was for show."*

*By this point they had reached the city proper, and entered a narrow alley with six covered wagons. Eadric the wagonmaster started bustling people about, setting jobs to get the wagons ready. "It'll be getting dark soon, but we're going to set out today regardless. Zander, check the coverings and chase out any rats if you find them. Little buggers always find their way into an unused wagon."*

*Hey ho, thought Azander. Chasing rats was several rungs down the heroism ladder from where he felt he ought to be, but it beat hanging round the city.*



Azander Wyler, scheming

# Orc

*A windy cliff, overlooking a green plain. Up on the cliff, the air is cold and the ground, treacherous at the best of times, is also covered in patchy snow. Down below, it looks sunny and warm. It also looks full of Drelves, which makes it unappealing to the figure standing at the cliff's edge.*

*From his vantage point, Padash Dragonhater the Orc could see the Elv Road, cutting back and forth precariously up the sheer slope. That road had been carved a long time ago, before the Orcs became the only inhabitants of the west mountains. It was now connected to the Drelv lands, just east of Freepool. Caravans sometimes struggled up the road to swap goods, but only if they were well defended. And there was one coming now.*

*Padash straightened the faded blue cloak he wore over his animal hides. The cloak had been purchased from a trader many years ago in exchange for some pebbles with funny-looking insects trapped in them. It was Padash's favourite possession. He swept it over his lumpy, asymmetrical shoulders, narrowed his eyes into the wind and started walking to get back to Oburg Cross before the caravan.*

*The Cross was a tiny village, constructed in the shelter of the rocks where there was a natural four-way cutting. The Elv Road lead in from one direction, the Cliff Road from the other. If you followed the North Road out, you'd eventually come to Tohalon, the mighty volcano fortress, with its elaborate network of caverns and tunnels. But the Cross was not any kind of fortress. The inhabitants lived on the tiny amount of rock pigs they could farm, plus donations from passers-through. There was a small smithy, but it never had enough metal. The winters had been getting worse, and the pigs scrawnier. In fact, the Elv road was now the only reason this place still existed. It was also, Padash had decided, the only reason he still existed. The road would carry him out so he could see the land, earn some glory and come back a hero. He did not want to spend the rest of his life barely scratching out a living and begging from Drelv merchantmen.*

*He stood in the road south of the town, his Kerg axe in hand, and awaited the wagons. They arrived. It was a small caravan, just six wagons. They were all covered though, which meant they were full of things to trade. The driver of the first wagon was a weathered Drelv. He reined in his tired horses some distance away from Padash and shouted, "Eadric Batholmeir, wagon master. What is your business in stopping us?"*

*"I am not stopping you, lowlander", shouted Padash back. "But these are dangerous roads. You should be protected. By a body guard. I offer my axe at your side." He flourished the Kerg.*

*Bel and Azander were taking an interest by this point. Bel walked up to Eadric's wagon. He leant down and whispered to her. "Ages old ploy, this. He joins up with us, then some of his mates, then some more. And without realising it, we're travelling with more Orcs than Drelvs. Or, er, Elves, pardon me. Then they kill everyone and nick the merchandise. Or they order everyone off the wagons, which is as good as killing you in these parts." He stood up in the wagon and shouted back to Padash, "I've been through Oburg Cross many times before, Orc, and I've never needed help. Turn round and head back to the village."*

*This was not what Padash had planned for. Hurt and confused, he yelled back, "Please! I offer my services for free!" Had had wanted to be paid, of course, but desperation was kicking in.*

*"Yes, you always do." said Eadric. "Now run along and leave us alone"*

*Padash sighed. He now had no option but to stay in Oburg until another wagon came through, and with the winter closing in, it could be months. He turned away from the caravan and started trudging back to the village. He'd be the laughing stock now.*

*"Hup!" Eadric moved his horses on. Bel and Azander jogged back to their own wagons and moved off. Up ahead, they could see the crestfallen Orc walking as they entered the gulch.*

*Padash was gloomily wondering what to say to his family when a pebble bounced off his right ankle. It had rolled down the side of the gulch. Not unusual, but it alarmed him for some reason. He carried on a minute longer, until the wagon was at the point where the pebble had hit him. With icy certainty, he saw what was about to happen. Archers on both sides of the ravine stood up. He yelled, not words but an animal warning cry, the kind of sound that means "Danger!" in any language.*

*Eadric looked up in irritation. Azander started in surprise. Bel, though, knew the sound well and in a second looked around for attackers. And there they were, moments away from firing at them. Padash's scream had put some of them off, but the rest were ready. There was no time to explain things to the others. She grabbed her own bow, which never left her side, nocked an*



arrow and fired at the nearest attacker. Her arrow passed several others in mid-air, but luckily the Orcs were poorly trained and their shots scattered harmlessly on the ground. Hers, though, hit, dropping one Orc who squealed and rolled down the slope.

Eadric, Azander and the other wagonhands collected their weapons. The bandits dropped the bows and came charging down the slope. Padash hesitated only for a second; he wanted to leave the village, and although these bandits were his own people, they were attacking his ride out. He lifted the Kerg and charged at the bandits.

Unfortunately, by the time he got closer, that meant he was kind of charging at the caravan. He saw Eadric unhook a halberd from the wagon and set it against the ground to block his charge.

"Not me! Not me!" Padash shouted.

Funny kind of war cry, Eadric thought, and suddenly whipped the halberd round to the right, just in time for a bandit Orc to impale itself on the pointy end.

The wagonhands fought back-to-back. They had been in situations like this before.

Bel balanced on the roof of her wagon. A few Orcs tried to climb up to her but they couldn't stand on the stretched cloth and toppled over; she picked them off one by one as they came.

Azander was on the ground, fighting three Orcs but losing ground. Every thrust he made left him dangerously open. Suddenly one of them screamed and lurched back. In that moment, Azander had the chance to impale one of the others. As the two bodies fell, Azander saw the orc they had ignored earlier, with blood on his crude-looking axe. The last of the three bandits turned to face the newcomer. Padash and Azander together finished him.

Padash pointed down the caravan to where the wagonhands were losing ground; two were injured, with only one Orc out of the fight. They ran up to help, and Eadric joined them. Bel hopped from wagontop to wagontop until she could fire clear shots at the orcs. In no time the remaining bandits worked out that they had lost, and ran.

Padash stood silently, not knowing what to say. The Drelves looked at him, likewise speechless. Without

a word, he lifted the Kerg and thrust it straight at Bel's feet. She jumped. It would have been too slow, but the blade went between where her feet had been and made contact with the face of one last Orc who had managed to climb up the wagon.

"Now you owe me." said Padash. It seemed like a good, honest thing to say.

"Yes" sighed Eadric. "Yes, Orc, we do. What do you want? We have hardly any gold, and only our own personal weapons. Besides, they'd all be too small for you."

"I want to come with you. Like I said."

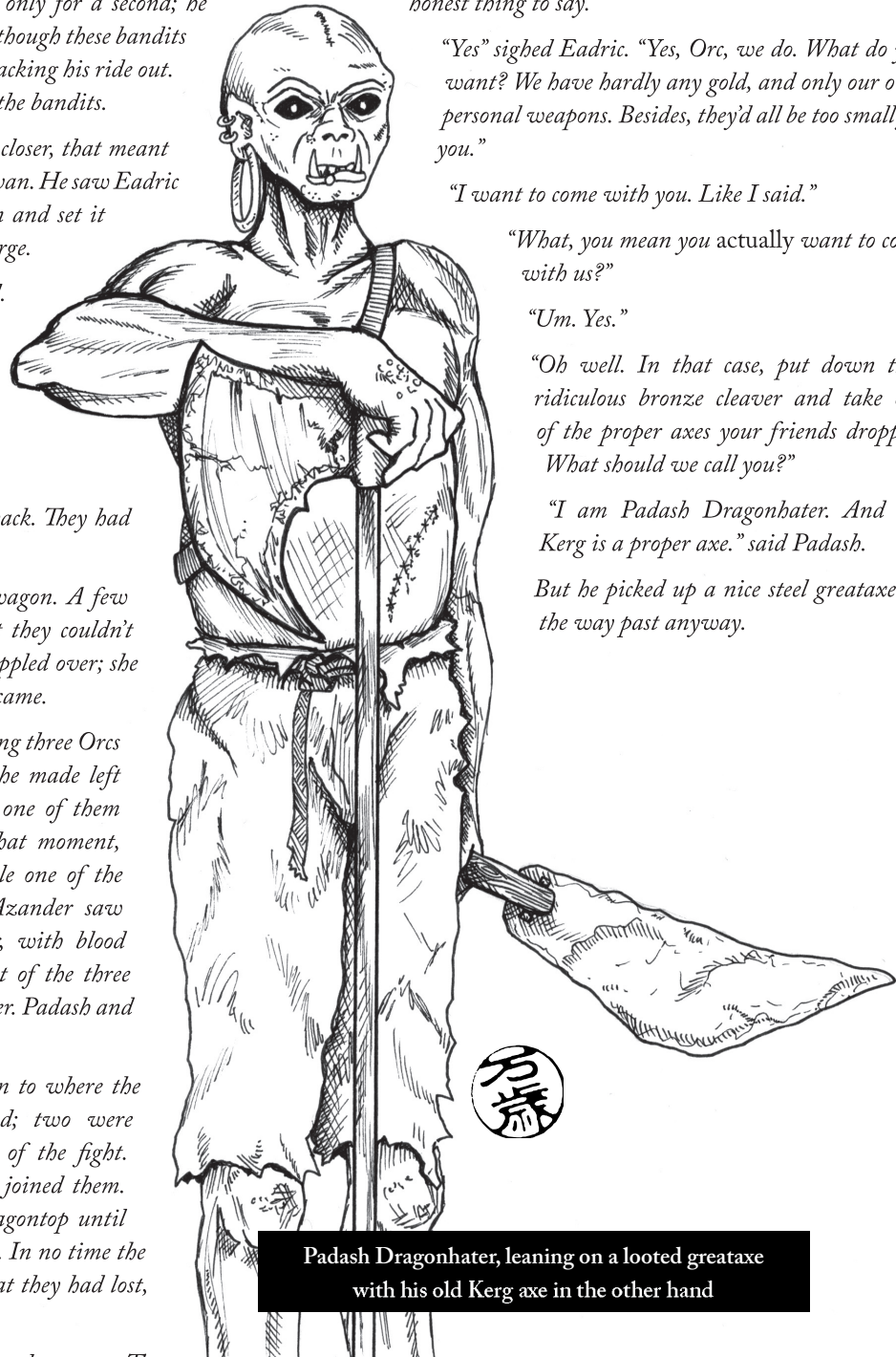
"What, you mean you actually want to come with us?"

"Um. Yes."

"Oh well. In that case, put down that ridiculous bronze cleaver and take one of the proper axes your friends dropped. What should we call you?"

"I am Padash Dragonhater. And my Kerg is a proper axe." said Padash.

But he picked up a nice steel greataxe on the way past anyway.



Padash Dragonhater, leaning on a looted greataxe with his old Kerg axe in the other hand

# HIGHLANDER

Tavish Mac Ahearn took one long look over the stone parapet of the fearann Ahearn, stooped to pick up his pack and started walking down the stone steps into the courtyard. He was supposed to have left days ago, before the new lord arrived, but something kept him near his family home. The thought of someone other than his father having control of the relics in the castle's keep made him sick, but the staff were in the pay of the new guy, and he wasn't allowed anywhere except the gatehouse and the courtyard. It was kind enough of them to not simply throw him out.

A guard in one of the towers, wearing no colours so as not to offend the new lord, shouted down into the courtyard, "He's here! Make ready!" The majordomo, the guard captain and a few other senior staff trotted out of the gate and stood either side of the path ready to salute Beagann as he arrived. Tavish stood off to one side, watching. One of the servants urged him to get out of sight, and he idly moved into the cover of the buttresses either side of the gates.

An ornate carriage pulled by four shiny black horses rolled in. The doors carried the crest of the Beagann clan. Behind, three imposing horsemen provided escort.

Gair Beagann, new lord of the fearann, climbed out. He was a short, bitter-looking man. His tall, bitter-looking wife climbed out after him. He nodded once to the majordomo and made as if to walk towards the doors of the keep, but just then one of the guards saw Tavish standing next to the gate. "Ho! Intruder!", he shouted.

Meanwhile a small caravan was slowly grinding its way along the snowy, rough road to the fearann.

The wagons were steered by a collection of figures wrapped up in heavy furs bought in the Orc mountains. In fact, the only figure not disguised as a furball was the orc Padash, who was used to the cold. He had taken over the lead caravan from Eadric, who in turn had relieved Azander, who was now inside one of the wagons shivering.

The sight of the stone walls was a blessed thing to Eadric, who had been here many times before. He looked for the mighty banner that had always hung over the keep and was surprised

not to see it. Instead, he saw the young Tavish struggling with three soldiers.

"Aho! Let go of the young Mac Ahearn or you'll answer to me and my men!"

Beagann turned slowly and observed the newcomers.

"Mac Ahearn? This is the fearann Beagann, and I am the Beagann of Beagann. And who in the name of all the frozen corpses in the highlands are you?"

"Let go of the young heir and we'll talk."

"Heir to nothing. This is my castle." Beagann gestured to the guards. "Get them out of here. But keep their wagons, might be something good in there."

Two of the guards detached from the squabble with Tavish and marched over to the wagons. Tavish stopped fighting for a moment as the one guard left pinned him to the ground; then suddenly sprang up, throwing the guard off, and ran into the doors of the keep. The guards dashed in after him.

"Well, they let go of the snotling. How about telling me who you are now?" said Beagann.

"Eadric Batholmeir, wagonmaster and friend of the Mac Ahearns." said Eadric striding up to him. He stopped inches from his face. "And what makes you think this is your castle?"

"Royal charter. In recognition of my valiant service. Since the old Mac Ahearn passed... ahem... away, and the bairn is barely old enough to shave, the whole fearann is now mine. And I say you are not welcome on it."

Beagann was saved from a broken nose by shouting from the keep; a second later Tavish Mac Ahearn dashed out carrying a wooden box under his arm, pursued by two of the three guards.

"Help! Eadric, help!"

"Not a problem," grinned Eadric, and motioned at his colleagues. "People, help the wee man!"

In a moment Bel was ready with her bow, aiming up on the foul little Beagann, while Azander had snuck out of the wagon he was in and tiptoed round behind Beagann's wife. The other

wagonhands drew weapons and formed a wall as Tavish ran past. The guards pulled up short.

“Okay. Easy does it now, lads,” said Eadric. “Everyone on the wagons. Bel, stay at the back and keep your eye on these monkeys as we leave.”

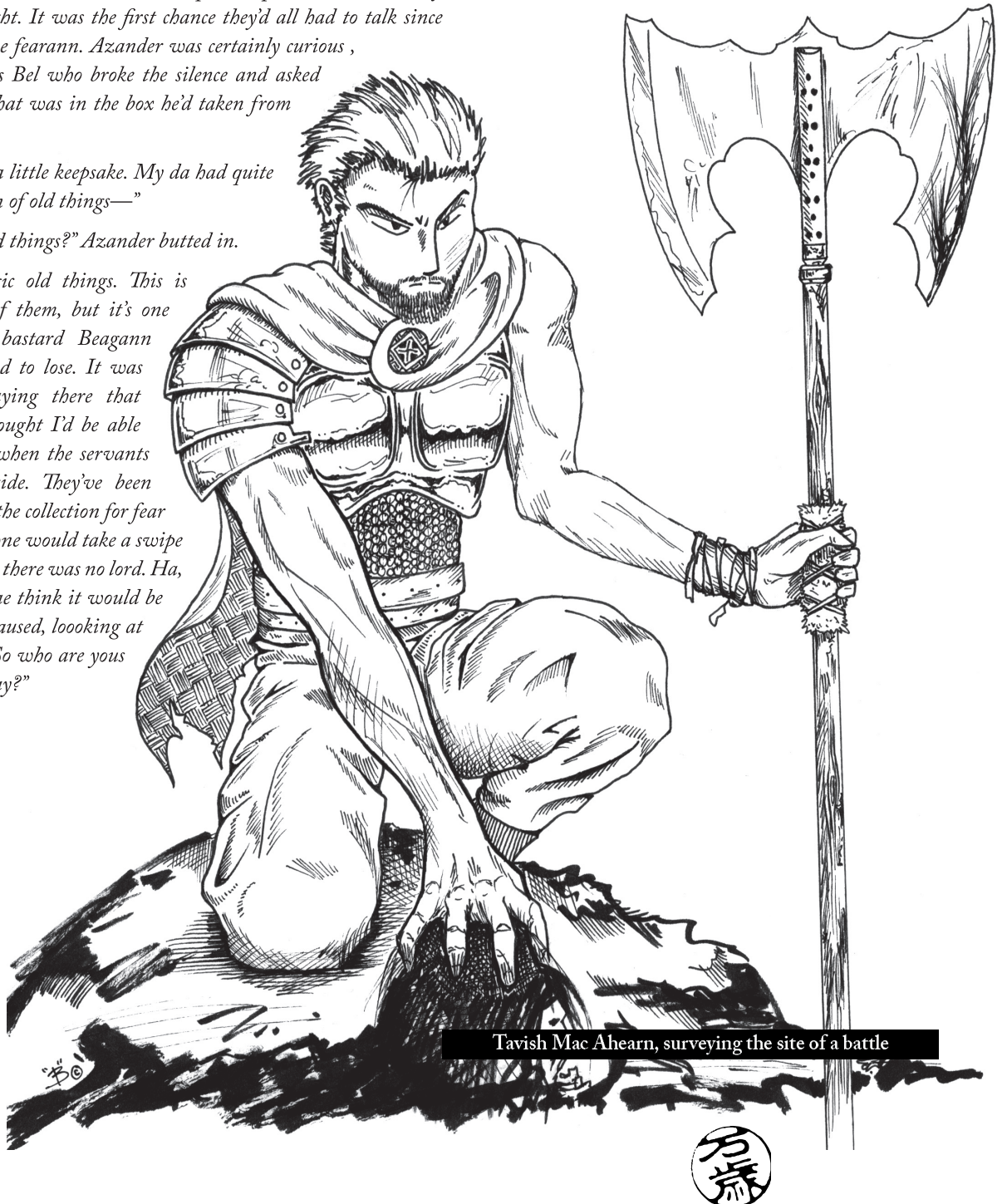
The caravan rolled slowly out of the courtyard.

A few hours later the caravan had pulled up in a sheltered valley to overnight. It was the first chance they'd all had to talk since leaving the fearann. Azander was certainly curious, but it was Bel who broke the silence and asked Tavish what was in the box he'd taken from the keep.

“Oh, just a little keepsake. My da had quite a collection of old things—”

“Magic old things?” Azander butted in.

“Aye, magic old things. This is just one of them, but it's one that the bastard Beagann will be sad to lose. It was worth staying there that long. I thought I'd be able to get in when the servants came outside. They've been guarding the collection for fear that someone would take a swipe at it while there was no lord. Ha, they didnae think it would be me.” He paused, looking at the box. “So who are yous lot, anyway?”



Tavish Mac Ahearn, surveying the site of a battle

# PLAINSMAN

Picture the scene from the point of view of an eagle. To the north are the Highland mountains. The harsh, snowy peaks gradually soften and give way to the grassy Plains. Coming down a mountainside path is a caravan, headed by a weathered Drelv. On the next wagon, a pretty young elv girl sits talking to a proud-looking highland boy, roughly the same age as her. Further back, an angular-faced drelv dressed in black is sitting next to an Orc. The Orc is talking fervently about something, but the Drelv's attention keeps returning to the Elv girl up ahead. The other wagons are manned by experienced-looking Drelv wagonhands.

To the east, a Plains tribe called the Tar'Touk are returning from the steppe before the winter closes in. They are followed by a procession of young horses that they have caught or reared, which they will sell when they reach the town of Midway.

To the South is Midway itself, and heading north from there is a bandit tribe called the Tar'Khali. The Tar'Khali have spent the last month spending their money in Midway and they are looking to replenish supplies.

All three groups arrive at the same spot at almost the same moment, an unmarked well on the route from the Highlands to Midway.

Eadric's caravan was there first. He had used this well before, as had his wagonhands. It was early evening when they stopped, and barely a moment later Bel, standing watch from the roof of a wagon, squeaked in surprise. "There's someone coming!"

Eadric concentrated on the horizon. He could see the slow-moving group. "It's alright. They look like desert nomads. I expect they're just heading out of harm's way for the winter. We might even be able to trade with them".

Despite the plodding progress, it didn't take the Tar'Touk long to reach the well. Eadric exchanged greetings with the Tar'Touk chief and they mutually agreed to swap goods.

As he helped to open up a wagon, Tavish (who knew something of Plains lifestyle) noticed what the Tar'Touk people were doing with their own wagons. He collared Eadric. "They're circling the wagons, Eady. We ought to do the same".

"No need, Tav. We're in the middle of nowhere here, no-one will ever...". He was cut short by Bel squeaking again. "That girl! She's been on a knife-edge ever since we reached the mountains. Yes, Miss Eldendra, what can you see now?"

"More people! And they... umm... look different."

One of the Tar'Touk men lifted himself up on the side of the wagon. "Tar'Khali! The Tar'Khali have seen us! We must defend!"

The area was suddenly ablaze with frantic movement. The nomads were digging out weapons that look like they hadn't seen the light of day for years. Eadric and his men were hastily shoving everything back into the wagons, but there were still things lying around as the horsemen of the Tar'Khali horde thundered around them. A single arrow was fired from one horseman, hitting a wagon's crossbrace with a sort of dull "sponk" noise.

"They wait for us to leave of our own will," explained the Tar'Touk chief. "But we will not."

One horseman blew a horn and the fight erupted. In seconds the area around the well was full of sword-blades and horses. The recruits formed a defensive line with the Tar'Touk warriors. Padash and Azander felt the young Tar'Touk who had been standing between them slip past and walk straight at the enemy. There was no time to stop him because right then one particularly hotblooded Tar'Khali was charging at them.

The youngster dropped his sword on the ground and appeared to be drinking something.

Padash tried to shout at him, but he had his Kerg axe braced and knew that if he moved, the sheer impact of the charging horseman would flatten him—and then the horse suddenly reared up, throwing its rider several yards away, its eyes wide in terror and screaming. It bolted from the group, crashing through the ranks of the Tar'Khali. The dismounted rider was stranded on the ground, staring in horror.

The young Tar'Touk man approached him. The raider was terrified of him, yelling and gibbering, "They have demons! Run!"

Stunned, Azander and the others looked to Eadric for ideas.

Eadric, though, was busy. It looked like he too was going to have a drink because he was fiddling with a small flask. He had a faint smile on his lips as he poured some liquid from the flask into the cap and flicked a flint wheel. The young Tar'Touk recovered his sword and moved back. Eadric shouted "This won't last long—so for the love of pie, fight!" and flung a glob of flaming liquid towards the Tar'Khali. It burst spectacularly, scattering horses and people.

The raiders had lost their momentum. The runaway horses were leaving a trail of destruction, and the guy on the ground, one of their best warriors, was clearly a ruined man. Those who could collect their wits were urging their horses away from the wagons; the remainder were confused and easily encircled. As quickly as it had begun, the fight was over.

The recruits were okay, barring bruises and nerves, but the wagon hands, along with many Tar'Touk, were dead.

Bel looked at Eadric, eyes shining. "What was that? Why did they get scared? And what was that fiery thing?"

"Magic." said Azander, flatly. "Fire magic. He can make that foul-smelling liquid do whatever he wants, I bet. When were you going to tell us about that little trick, Eadric? Never mind. As for our young friend here, he seems to be a mind magician. He takes some of that potion, and suddenly dragons spring up out of nowhere."

"It was a skerritch demon, in fact, but you're basically right," said the man.

"They brew the elixir in Hawl City, far south of here."

The Tar'Touk chieftan joined them.

"My friend Eadric, you won the fight for us. We owe you everything."

"Keep it. We haven't got room for everything. Just give us a hand getting to Midway and we'll call it quits."

"I insist you must be rewarded; and I have the solution. My son here is keen to travel. He is good with a sword and a bow, and he knows some magic, too."

The young man nodded.

"I am Yurukhan Orbei Tar'Touk. If you would have me, I am yours to command."

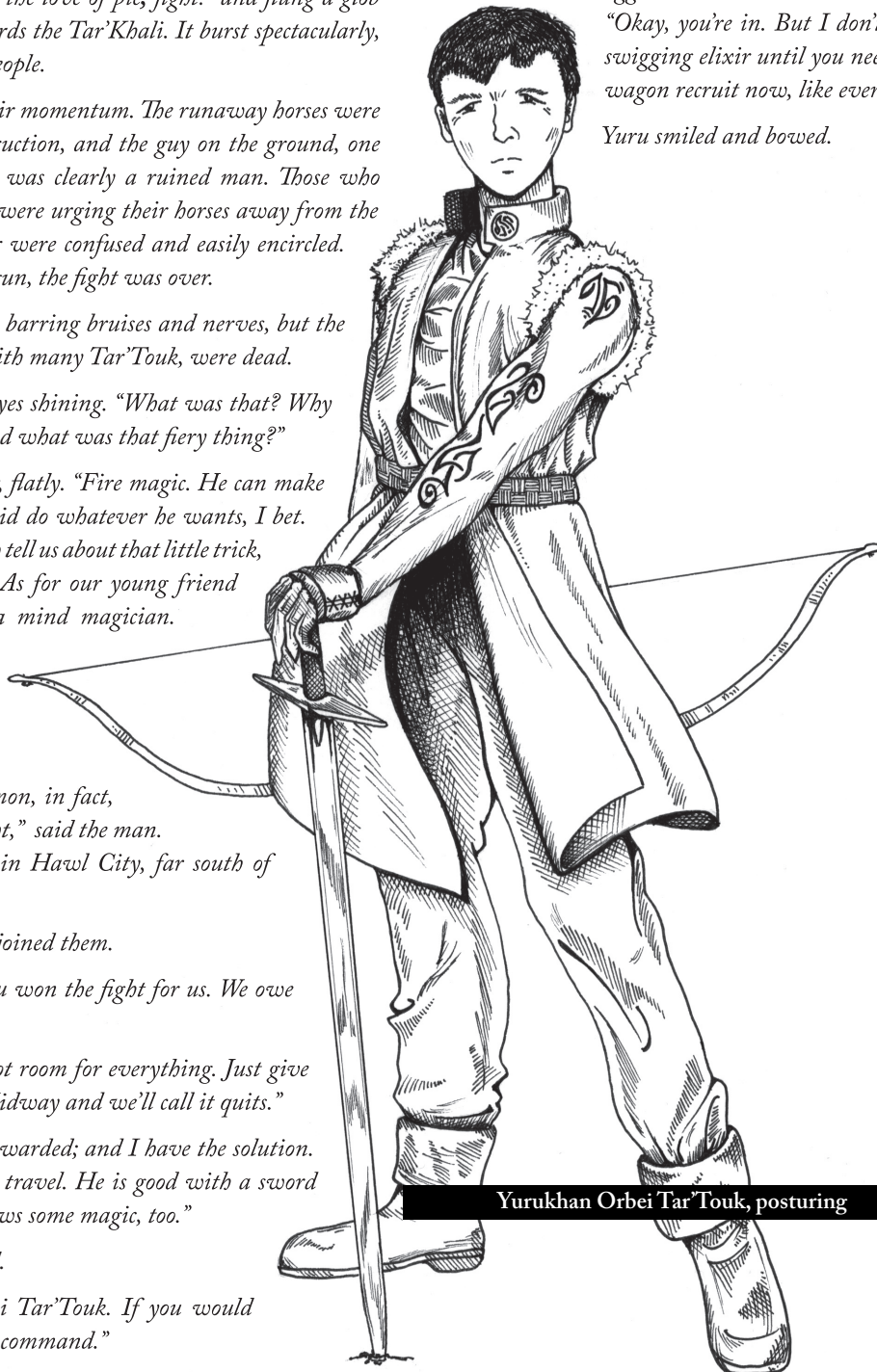
"Wait," said Eadric, "we help you win the fight and now we have to babysit your kids?"

Tavish leant in and muttered in his ear. "Eady... we are a bit short handed. And I think they know that."

Eadric realised that his wagon hands were not there.

"Buggerem!" He looked Yuru up and down. "Okay, you're in. But I don't want to see you swigging elixir until you need it, and you're a wagon recruit now, like everyone else."

Yuru smiled and bowed.



Yurukhan Orbei Tar'Touk, posturing



# Realmsman

*"I'm just saying, is all."* said Azander glumly as they rode along. *"We've picked up a succession of strays and waifs and no-one except you and I knows how to run a caravan."*

*Eadric snorted. "You know about running caravans now, do you? I seem to recall you were something of a stray when we picked you up in Aerbridge."*

*"That was different! At least you didn't hire me just because I wasn't wearing any trousers."*

*The both fell silent for a minute.*

*Azander continued. "We'll be in Roughmarsh soon, and then we can press north to Temple Haven. There'll be loads of jobbing caravanners, we can get our numbers back up. Maybe dilute the atmosphere a bit. Get rid of the stupid pantomime that Paddy, Tav and Yuru start playing whenever Bel's around."*

*Eadric changed the subject. "Look, you can just see the lights of Roughmarsh from here."*

*He was right. Roughmarsh was not a lovely place, built precariously in a low-lying wetlands area where the floods threatened to wash the entire town away every year. But it was the first sign of civilization the caravan had seen since leaving Midway.*

*The caravan rolled through the always-open gates of Roughmarsh mid-afternoon on an unseasonably warm day, and came to a halt on one side of the main square. The recruits started their usual clown act as they tried to unpack the wagons. Eadric stood apart from them, shielding the sun from his eyes and scanning the crowd. Azander came up to him.*

*"See anyone likely?"*

*"Yeah, one guy. With the pantaloons and beret, standing by the bell tower. See him?"*

*"Him? Looks like he'd take off in a light breeze."*

*"He'll do fine. You all will, I think."*

*"Thanks, I mean... what?"*

*But Eadric had already started off across the paving. Azander watched as they negotiated, and then Eadric led the new guy back to the wagons.*

*"Everyone! This is Warren Clarke the third. He'll be joining us on the next leg of our journey."*

*"Hi Warren."*

*"Hello Warren."*

*"Greeting, Warren Clarke the... pfft..."*

*"Thankyou everyone. I am honoured to be able to work with you, and I hope I will be able to represent my city well as I carry out my responsibilities."*

*"Good grief, he just gets better. Sorry chum, carry on."*

*"Thankyou, er..."*

*"Zander. I'm honoured to be able to be... to something something. Whatever. What do you actually do?"*

*"I am a scholar of history. And I have also been trained at the military academy here. Hence the beret, you see."*

*"A scholar? You mean like a monk or something?"*

*"Ha ha, no not a monk, sir. Ha ha, no. Do people have to become monks to study in your lands? Here children have to go to school as soon as they can walk, but I've heard that things are different elsewhere."*

*"Yeah, well, you know." Azander felt he wasn't getting the upper hand in the conversation so he was glad when Padash joined in.*

*"Do all your soldiers have to wear hats that look like knitted dead chickens?"*

*Warren touched his beret nervously. "Well, it's a mark of rank, you see. The feather lets people know I've been trained in the art of war. Look," he pointed across the square. "There's a detachment of the Eighth Noble Heavy Brigade. They're going to ring the bell."*

*A troop of soldiers in brightly coloured uniforms marched across the square with gleaming halberds on their shoulders. They*

stopped next to the bell tower, and one of them could be heard barking instructions according to some timing. The soldiers formed a circle around the towers and did something complicated with their halberds that involved all of them bringing the blunt ends down heavily on the paving simultaneously, making an impressively loud crunch. The captain continued to shout orders as two soldiers left the ranks and proceeded to the door of the tower. Working like clockwork, they unlocked the door and marched inside. After a carefully timed delay, the bell rang four times. The soldiers repeated their moves in reverse, locking the tower and joining the ranks, and then the lot of them formed back up into a unit and marched out of the square again.

“Gosh” said Bel.

“A fine example of military precision. Every hour, on the hour. I may join up with them one day.” said Warren.

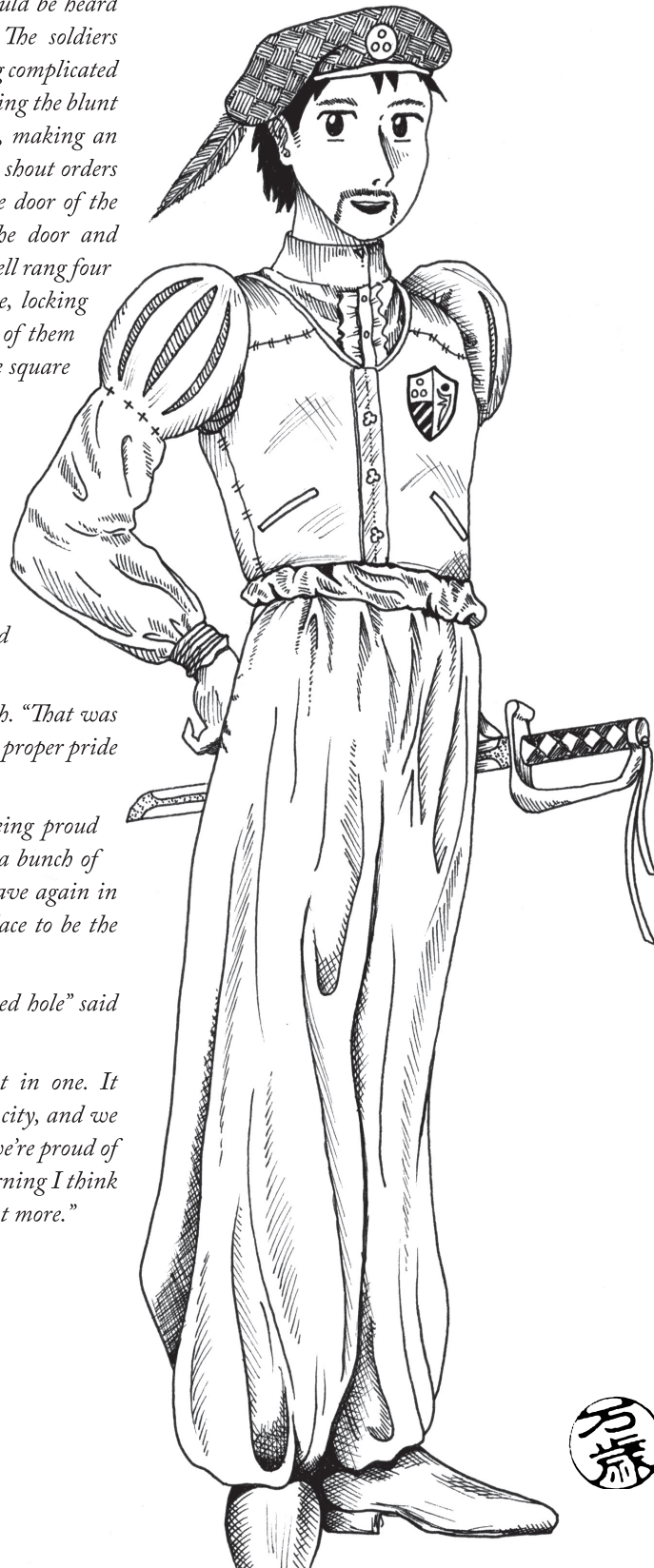
“An entire unit just to ring a bell? Wouldn’t it be easier to, oh, I don’t know, have a bloke go in and pull the rope?”, said Azander.

“You’ve got no sense of pride, ‘Zander”, said Tavish. “That was a good bit of pageantry. I like that. These guys have proper pride in their city.”

“It’s true.” added Yuru. “You never see anyone being proud of Midway. It’s more like an accidental city, like a bunch of people stopped there for the night and forgot to leave again in the morning. But here—they actually want to place to be the best it can.”

“Even though it is a half-flooded, mosquito infested hole” said Azander.

“I’m still here, Azander. But you’ve got it right in one. It wouldn’t really matter where we were. This is our city, and we have one of the finest militias in the Realms, and we’re proud of it. But I can see you want to head out, so in the morning I think we should go to Temple Haven. You’ll like that a lot more.”



Warren Clarke III being bright-eyed and bushy-tailed

# Deathling

*This is Temple Haven, the largest city in the Realms. The temple complex itself looms up from the centre of the sprawling mass of buildings and makes the palace visible for miles around.*

*The monks move around carrying out their duties. The Temple of Plenty is one of the busiest parts of the complex. Here, rich people can pay to be blessed by the monks and the poor are allowed to come in and offer prayers. The steps outside are always busy with peddlers looking for a quick coin from those desperate enough to travel here to pray.*

*Crouching in the gutter between two adjoining roofs, overlooking the steps, is Saza Finn. She is tucked into the shadows, and no-one is aware of her. She's watching the people down below, and although she doesn't yet know who she's looking for, she's confident she'll recognise them when they arrive.*

*She's right. Her last spell told her only that they'd all be from different places—and here they come. The leader is a Drelv, same as one of the others. The rest are an Elv girl, still wearing her woods clothing; an Orc, carrying his big kerg axe; a Highlander wearing his now fairly grubby and torn tartans; a Plainsman looking serious and strong; and a Realmsman, from Roughmarsh by his colours, smiling enthusiastically at everything.*

*Eadric turned and halted the group. "This is it! The biggest of them all. Admire it, there's nothing else like it anywhere, not even in Founding City. And when you've done that, I'll tell you why I brought you here."*

*Saza looked on. This is it, she thought, he's going to let them all in on it.*

*"Look, I haven't been entirely level with you all. You've been great as wagonhands, we've had a hectic trip and you're all still here, and I'm happy I've made the right choice. You see, I've been recruiting you for something else. The wagon was a reason to bring you together, but the truth is that inside this temple..."*

*A figure flitted down the steps and stabbed a wicked curved blade through Eadric's back so hard the tip stuck out of his shirt at the front.*

*"Bugger," croaked Eadric. "Didn't see that coming." He fell forward down the steps.*

*Padash was already chasing after the assassin, but the crowds closed in and he was gone. Bel was trying to rouse Eadric, but his blood was washing away down the dry stone steps and there was no sign of life. Tavish was looking at the wound, dumbfaced.*

*Saza froze for a second while a chill ran down her spine. She hadn't known that was going to happen, either. Then she moved away from the edge and quickly climbed down the drainpipe she'd used to get up there and ran over to the bleeding body.*

*Warren saw the gaunt, pale girl weaving towards Eadric. "You're not welcome, Deathling!" he snapped at her.*

*Saza stopped, suddenly very self-conscious about her skull-themed jewellery and black dress. "It's okay, I saw everything," she said, lamely.*

*Bel looked at the girl. "Deathling? You do death magic?"*

*Before she could answer, Warren butted in. "Vermin. They infest the cities, taking corpses and brainwashing kids for their dark magic."*

*"Hey!" said Saza. "I'm not brainwashed. And I've never taken any corpses. Well, only the ones I was entitled to. Look, I can help. I can still talk to him. I can find out what he was about to say."*

*Bel stammered slightly, "But... I thought that only worked on dead people. I'm sorry, I've never met a... I mean, I don't know much about..."*

*Tavish put his hands on her shoulders and moved her away from the body. "Bel, he is dead. And as for the deathling, I'm prepared to let her have a go. I'm no fan, but if you can ever help, now is the moment. I would have liked a deathling there when they found my da dead in the stables."*

*Warren nodded.*

*Saza knelt down by the body, touching the wound with her fingertips. "Oh... he's so close! I can nearly hear him... he's saying... he came here to take a magical orc from the temple. Orb! Sorry, orb, not orc. Right. The monks have been infiltrated by a dark order that are going to use it raise some barmy undead."*



*Or an army of undead, maybe. Probably. He says that's why I was sent here. I'm the last member of the group."*

*Padash glared at her. "How do we know you're not lying?"*

*Saza sighed, and then smiled. "He says that he trusted you enough to let you join the caravan and that you should share some of that trust. Bel, is that your name?"*

*Bel nodded.*

*"He says... for the love of pie, start wearing those trousers we bought you in Aerbridge before somebody gets the wrong idea. Tav... he says... he'll say hi to your da when he sees him. Yuru and Warren, he says he's sorry he didn't get to know you better. And now he says we need to get inside and find that orb because any minute now the place will be crawling with those assassins. Padash—that's you, right?" she asked the Orc. "Please, bring his body."*

*She stood, and the others followed. Padash hefted the bleeding corpse onto his shoulder as they moved inside the main doors amongst the throng of people. Monks standing around saw them, but assumed they had come to pray for an injured colleague.*

*"Through to the back. The orb is in a special room, apparently."*

*They moved through the crowd and through doors at the back, down passages and across courtyards. There were a few scuffles, but they were learning to fight well together and with Yuru's illusions and Bel's arrows keeping the enemy at bay they kept moving.*

*They came to a halt outside some impressively strong-looking oak doors. Saza beckoned them out of sight while Yuru spoke to a passing guard, who miraculously unlocked and opened the doors for them. Having done that he rubbed his forehead in confusion, but the pommel of Tavish's sword put him to sleep before he could work out what he'd just done.*

*Saza knelt down by Eadric's body again. "Please don't be upset," she whispered. "He wants me to do this. It will get us to the orb".*

*Eadric's body sat up jerkily, face slack and expressionless.*

*"Smile." said Saza. "And stand up."*

*The body did both. And following her orders, it walked through the oak doors. From outside, the group could hear Eadric, or at least Eadric's voice, saying "Death*

*does not slow me, defilers. I am more powerful than an assassin's knife. Back! I come only for the Orb of Grey, and you will give it to me."*

*Other voices were shouting "Revenant! He's back! You didn't kill him properly! Aargh!"*

*After a moment, Saza said, "Go! Grab the orb!"*

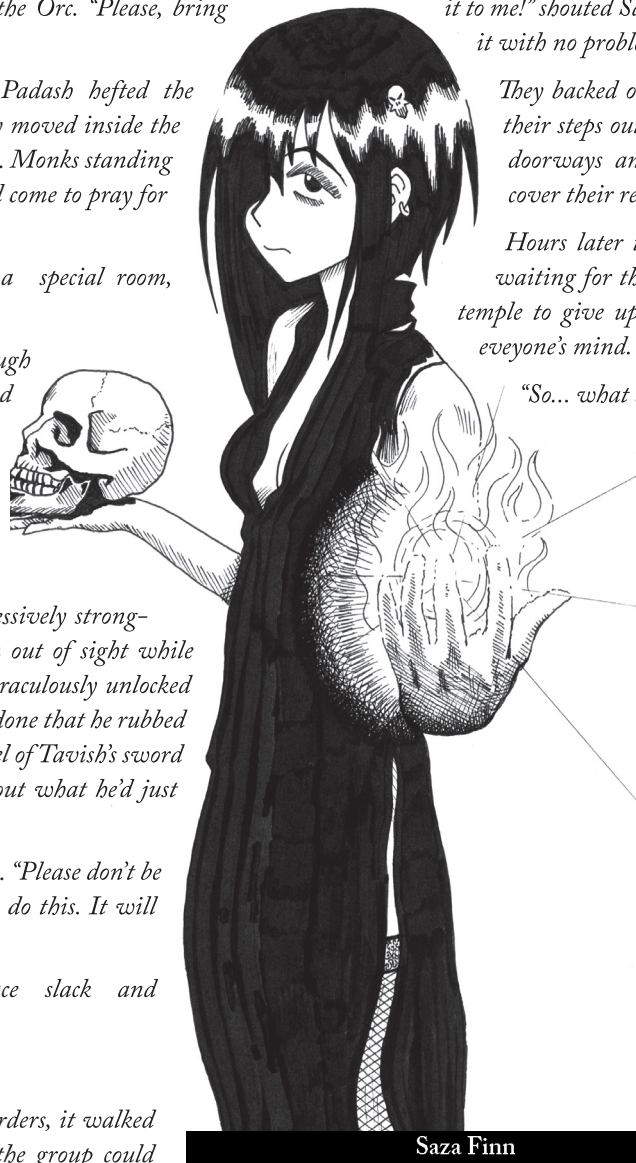
*The group ran in. Terrified monks were scattered around a circular room. In the middle was a dais, with a sort of altar on it, on which rested a brightly glowing ball with white flames dancing around it. The fighters kept the monks at bay while Azander dashed to the dais and grabbed the orb.*

*Saza let go of her spell and Eadric's body collapsed, for the last time. Azander juggled the orb, making ooh-ah sounds. "Throw it to me!" shouted Saza, and she caught and held it with no problem.*

*They backed out of the room and retraced their steps out of the temple, ducking into doorways and using Yuru's illusions to cover their retreat.*

*Hours later they sat behind the wagons waiting for the searching monks from the temple to give up. Saza spoke what was on everyone's mind.*

*"So... what do we do now?"*



Saza Finn

# Part the Fourth:

# Magic

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Magic cast by player characters in Sacred Steel is the art of making the unexpected happen; it cannot make the impossible happen, but it can play with the odds. Water cannot catch fire, but a bail of hay can; a good enough magician could take one tiny spark and make that bail of hay catch fire in a sudden incandescent blaze.

There are five fields of low magic. Each field of spells is based on what it affects—for example, fire magic affects fire and mind magic affects minds. Most spells also have a fuel. The fuel is the real-world substance that must be used to make the magic happen. Lastly, all magic has a price; the effect that long-term exposure to magic has, the way it has of warping and changing the magician.

These are called the low magics. Anyone can learn them, given enough time and patience. They can appear wondrous and terrifying and they can turn the tide of battle.

But they are nothing compared to the high magics. These ancient and arcane talents are regularly practiced only by a select few, and when they are unleashed, there is always a lasting wound. The creation of the Orcs was one of the most memorable feats of high magic. Sometimes, enough workers of low magic can join together and cast a spell of high magic, such as when the Elven witches and warlocks cursed the Drelves.

High magic cannot be scripted or have rules made for it; it simply is, and it will sometimes rear its ancient head and devour a piece of history.

Think of the difference between low and high magic like this: high magic is taking a pair of tailor's shears to the fabric of reality and cutting it into a new shape. Low magic is pulling on the knicker elastic of reality, changing its shape just for a moment.

Reality does not like to have her knicker elastic pulled. And if you try to stretch it further than you're really capable of, you'll feel it slipping out of your fingers, snapping back and surprising Reality, who will suddenly notice you and shout "STOP PULLING ON MY KNICKER ELASTIC, PATHETIC LITTLE MAGICIAN!" before smiting you. Be warned.

This phenomenon is called Snapback, because by all accounts it feels like the spell, as it slips away from you, bounces back and delivers its force onto you instead of whatever you intended.

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## Working Low Magic

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From earlier chapters, we've seen the Depth skill, which represents how deeply attuned with magical arts a character is. Specialities are simply individual disciplines, like fire magic or mind magic, and work like normal specialities, adding on to Depth when using magic of that discipline.

There are five common fields of magic. One of them, hiddlins, is open to anyone with a Depth score. The others (fire magic, death magic, mind magic and witchcraft) have to be learnt one at a time, one per point of depth. So if you start your character with a Depth skill of 4, you get all the fields; if you start with Depth 3, you have to leave one out and so on.

Magic in combat works like this: you decide what spell you want to cast, and what level of magic you need, based on the description of the spell (bigger effects and worse conditions make the level higher).

Then, each turn, you make a Depth draw (with a field speciality if you have one). But reality is pulling back, and the harder the spell is, the harder reality resists - so the spell itself (played by the GM) gets to make a draw of as many cards as the level of the spell.

It's like melee: you're looking to get a big enough advantage over the spell to make it cast. The advantage you need is: the level of the spell. So to cast a level 3 spell, you need a 3 point advantage, and every turn the spell gets to draw 3 cards against you. To cast a level 6 spell, you need a 6 point advantage, and every turn the spell gets to draw 6 cards against you.

When you reach the target advantage (which might be the first turn, if it's a low-level spell, or the tenth turn if it's a hard spell) the spell goes off and has whatever effect was desired.

But what happens if the spell starts winning? Snapback. If the spell ever gets enough advantage over the caster (the same amount of advantage that the caster would have needed to cast, i.e. the level of the spell), it gets fired back directly at the caster. The specifics depend on the spell and level, but it's never a good thing.

The caster can choose to let go at any point, and only take snapback effects at whatever level of advantage the spell had at that moment.

Unless noted differently, spells require the spellcaster to be able to concentrate, speak and use their hands for 1 round (five seconds) to cast. The effects of the spell happen on the next round.

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## Unlike "Other" Systems...

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If you've played other role-playing games that have magic in, you may be a bit lost by Sacred Steel's system. There are no per-day limits on the number or type of spells that can be cast. Nor is there a system of points for you to run out of at inconvenient moments. The only limitation is having the materials on hand that are needed, and if you've got those, you can cast away.

What about the old fantasy staple of the exhausted mage who's used up all his power/mana/spell slots? Sure, feel

free to roleplay it. Just the same as a fighter who has been swinging a sword all day, a magician who has been hurling fireballs all day will feel pretty tired. But they can always pull themselves together and cast one more spell if they have to.

The other thing that might worry you is the limited number of spells. Well, don't worry. Most magicians can cast any of the spells listed (only starting characters and characters who have magical skills as a side-line have to make any choices). Also, each spell can be cast at any level. The effects of the spell scale with the level, so the "Fiery Aura" you cast with a brand new character will be quite a bit different to the one you cast after a few months of earning experience.

And if you're desperate and think there's something left out, write out a spell description and use it. Better yet, bring it back to the Sacred Steel website and it might get included in the game or a supplement.

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## the fields of Low Magic

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### Hiddlins

Hiddlins is an old word that simply means "secrets". It's all the little spells that first-time magic users learn. Most people won't earn a living from the Hiddlins, but maybe it'll help them in whatever else they do.

### Fire Magic

The fire magician can control flames and sparks, making them burn faster or slower than normal, making them travel under the power of their own combustion.

Fire magic needs burnable fuel, like wood, hay, cloth, oil or alcohol—the easier or hotter the fuel would burn normally, the better the effects of magic. There is also a specially distilled substance called Pyrean, which is made specifically for fire magicians. It comes in very strong flasks, costs a lot, and because of its otherworldly properties it can be used to throw fireballs. A flask of Pyrean transforms a fire magician into a fearsome battlefield unit.



Long-term users of fire magic suffer physical scarring from heat. Even if they never actually burn themselves with their magic, the heat builds up in them. At early levels, it's barely noticeable. After a while (combined Depth+fire magic speciality of 8 or more) they will develop reddened, leathery skin. Later on, blisters will appear at random on their body and eventually, huge blackened patches will break out on the face and hands. None of this actually hurts the user; the greatest practitioners of fire magic look like they have been burned alive, but to them it is no more than natural and they wear the mark of fire with pride.

### Death Magic

Although frowned upon in many places, death magic has turned more battles than anyone can remember.

Death magicians can sense the dead, listen to them, and speak to them. The most potent power of the death magician is to coax spirits back into their bodies for a short while. Although ultimately these zombies will collapse, the sight of an army of undead is terrifying.

Death magicians can also speak to the spirits of the dead and ask questions of them, although the answers are often confused by the viewpoint of the spirit who has no connection to the living.

Bodies are the link to the dead; as the mortal resting place of the spirit, they are what the magician needs to work his spells. He can't summon a dead person's spirit to inhabit a tree or a suit of armour. Eventually, the spirit is drawn back to where it should be, and it leaves the body forever.

Death magicians develop an unhealthy fascination with the dead. Early on, it will manifest simply as a lack of concern about dead bodies or the smell of rotting, and they will handle corpses without squeamishness, like any undertaker. Later, they will actively seek the company of corpses, finding a link with other worlds there that they cannot find with the living. In time, this will turn to obsession; a powerful death magician's home will be lined with skeletons, skulls and even decaying corpses so the magician can study the progress of decomposition. The most powerful disciples of death magic turn to necrophilia and wearing unembalmed skins to connect them with the realm of death.

### Mind Magic

Conjurers, illusionists, enchanters—they are all about making you see or believe something that is not true. The more plausible the lie, the easier the spell. But the greatest workers of mind magic can make you see your closest friends as deadly enemies and themselves as your greatest friend.

Mind magic used on the stage is also good as an alternative source of income.

All these acts require suspension of disbelief, and work only when the magician can make himself, even for a moment, believe the lie as well. For this reason, mind magicians use herbs and drugs to alter their state of mind. Often they will develop a daily habit of some low-grade narcotic that keeps them on an elevated level, and then use a stronger herb to give them the hallucinations they need to "see" the magic. The favourite and most reliable substance is Miranoch's Elixir.

Hard drugs are bad, even in Sacred Steel. Mind magicians start to lose their connection with the real world. In the early stages, mind magicians will be distant and aloof, and behave patronisingly towards those that can't see what they can. After a while, the physical things seem to be nothing more than a thin veil over the world of possibilities that they constantly imagine. Eventually they will cease to have

anything to do with reality until they consciously chose to, having to force moments of clarity upon themselves to perform even simple tasks.

---

*The most powerful  
disciples of death magic  
turn to necrophilia*

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### Witchcraft

This area of magic goes by many names in different places, but it is essentially the magic of country folk, using (mostly) peaceful methods to help people go about their daily business.

Two of the spells of witchcraft, Blessing and Healing, are very closely linked. They're about empowering people, either to work and fight, or recover. This is an essential part of Witchcraft, because it's how the practitioner (witch, shaman, warlock) finds a role in a community. They also tend to be practically-minded people, able to offer hands-on medicine and assistance as well as magic.

The long-term effects of Witchcraft are, thankfully, fairly limited. Old witches and shamans tend to be quiet, reserved and long for solitude where they can simply appreciate the connectedness of nature without having to be personally involved.

## Making Spellcasting Characters

To make a magic-capable character, you need to put some points into their Depth score. As soon as you've done that, your character knows Magic.

And you get some freebies. Access to the fields of magic is restricted at early levels. If you look at the Character Work-Up Sheet or the Character Sheet, you'll see that Hiddlins already has a tick under the "Entitled?" column. That's because everyone gets to use the Hiddlins. You can also put down ticks next to as many other fields as you have points in Depth. If you only put one point in, you only get to pick one field. If you put four points in (the maximum for most new characters), you can tick all the fields. Lucky you.

Then, you also get some free specialities to add to fields of magic. You get as many as your Depth score (again) and unlike the regular three start-up specialities, these can stack.

As your character develops and earns experience, Depth and magical specialities can be improved at the normal rate. You don't get extra specialities every time your Depth score improves.

## Special Move: Fast Cast

The Fast Cast special move allows a caster to cast spells faster than normal, but with an increased risk of snapback.

When attempting a Fast Cast, the caster can draw double and get one extra card on the casting draw per rank of Fast Cast. For example, a character with a Depth of 5 and rank 3 Fast Cast would draw 13 cards per round. Once the spell has cast (or snapped back!) the caster is frozen, battling back the wave of power they used to supercharge the spell. They spend as long frozen like this as it took to cast the

## Spell Overview

### Hiddlins

**Light:** Illuminate your surroundings

**Shock:** Zap people. Like lightning, at higher levels

**Second Sight:** See magic

**Curse:** Visit vengeance on people

### Fire Magic

**Control fire:** Make flames advance, die back or leap out

**Resist Heat:** Protection from fire and heat

**Fiery Aura:** Covers your body in flames

**Fireball:** Fling gobs of burning fuel which explode

### Death Magic

**Raising:** Create zombies to help you

**Communion:** Talk to the dead

**Fear:** Create terror

**Overload:** Make nearly-dead bodies explode

### Mind Magic

**Illusions:** Make people see things which aren't there

**Enchantment:** Make people believe your lies

**Reading:** Pick up on people's emotions

**Defense:** Protect yourself from other Mind Magic

### Witchcraft

**Binding:** Restrain enemies with tentacles, vines, etc.

**Blessing:** Give people a boost

**Healing:** Fix injuries

**Weather:** Manipulate the weather in your area

spell. Each round they get to draw their normal Depth (nor doubled) + Fast Cast rank against the spell level, as though they were casting again. If the spell is winning at the end of the period, snapback effects occur at whatever level it was winning by.

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## Improvising

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For each of the disciplines, there are a few spells that cover common situations—but, GMs, be prepared to allow the players to think up alternative uses for their magic. There's no spell description for fire magic used for boiling saucepans. Why? Because it's unlikely to appear in your role-playing story, it probably wouldn't be very hard, and anyway, who cares? So show some creativity. These spells are not off-the-shelf special powers—they are general areas of talent.

Of course, you might find that there's something that you or your players keep doing that merits having its own spell. Go ahead and write it out. Remember that each spell needs variable levels and fuel consumption, and a description of fuel qualities. And no spell should totally discolour the game, it should just fit in and fulfill a niche.

These five fields aren't the only kinds of low magic. There's water magic, and plant magic, and all sorts of smaller disciplines that most people have never heard of. If you want a truly unique character, come up with some all-new spells (with your GM's agreement) and see how they play.

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## Playing High Magic

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High Magic should be a plot device in Sacred Steel. It may take sacrifices, quests and collaboration with higher powers to achieve, but you should never feel that High Magic simply never happens. It's just that it happens much less often than Low Magic.

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## Magic~Using Character Generation Example: Celia and her character Cloud

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Celia wants to play a sort of mystic, powerful-but-graceful type:

**What is his/her role in the group?** Healer and magician

**What is his/her favourite piece of equipment or weapon?**  
Magic

**Why is he/she leaving home to be an adventurer?** Holy orders / vocation.

**What race is he/she?** Elv.

**What does he/she look like and wear?** Tall, elegant.

She doesn't want the racial option, because she sees her character as being quite well educated. She divides her free cards by putting 1 in Interaction and the other two in depth. This how she gets some magical ability.

**Physique:** 3

**Combat Training:** 3

**Learning:** 3

**Awareness:** 3

**Interaction:** 3 4

**Depth:** 2

So her combat draw is...

**Combat Draw:** 3

She uses one of her specialities to improve her magical ability.

**Shortbow**

**Languages**

**Witchcraft**

Now she gets all her magical goodies. First up, she gets two entitlements, which she spends on Witchcraft and Mind Magic. Given that she'd already spent a regular speciality in Witchcraft, she had to entitle herself to it, and the coice of Mind Magic as the other one seemed to make sense.

Then she gets two free magical specialities, which she puts in Witchcraft again.

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## HIIDLINS: Light

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This is the first spell most magicians ever learn. It creates a ball of light that illuminates the area and follows the caster around. It can also travel some way from the caster.

Per level, a light spell:

**Illuminates an area 10' in diameter**

**Can travel up to 20' from the caster**

A light spell can be flashed up to dazzle people in dark places. The dazzlees can make an awareness draw against the level of the spell to shut their eyes in time. If they fail, they have a 1-3 card penalty on all actions involving sight. Alternatively, the spell can be kept going, but everybody gets penalised.

The type of light created can vary depending on the magical speciality of the caster. Fire magicians tend to make flame-like, warm flickering light, while Death magicians create a kind of washed-out, unhealthy looking light.

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### Snapback Effects

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A snapback Light spell dazzles everyone in the area as described above.

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## HIIDLINS: Second Sight

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Before learning to manipulate reality, a magician must learn to see in a way that normal people cannot. It is described as seeing deeply; hence, the idea of depth as a measure of a magician's power.

Second Sight allows a magician to see and even feel the presence of magic. The lingering after-effects of a spell might show up as a dull glow over an area; a spirit or ghost haunting an area would leave a feeling or aura.

Sometimes things will be able to communicate with a spellcaster through their second sight, like a ghost who wants to be released reenacting their own death to show the caster what happened.

Second Sight is a free skill, and no draw is necessary. The only limitation is that when a spellcaster wishes to hide the presence of their magic, it will be only be seen by other magicians with a higher Depth skill.

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## HIIDLINS: Shock

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Shock is a general purpose defensive spell. The caster builds up a charge of power, and then releases at a target. if it hits, it causes stun damage. The charge can be held indefinitely.

Per level, a shock spell:

**Causes 1 card of stun damage**

**Has a range of one foot**

At ranges of three feet or less, the attack is considered a melee strike, which must be made normally against the target. The charge can be delivered through a metal weapon if the caster uses one. The stun damage is drawn separately from the normal damage of the attack because it has to be treated differently (see the combat chapter for details, but basically three quarters of stun damage wears off).

At ranges over three feet, a ranged attack draw must be made. The caster must use their Combat Draw with specialities (well, theoretically you could take a specialization in "Firing Shock Spells" but I guess most people won't). The ranges are: short range: 3 yards; medium range: 6 yards; long range: 30 yards.

At higher levels the Shock spell looks like lightning.

The spell can also be used defensively, triggered by someone touching the caster.

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### Snapback Effects

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Hardly a surprise, but the failed Shock spell delivers its damage to the caster.

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## Midlins: Curse

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One of the most basic spells, and also one of the most diverse. Curses are so powerful that they sometimes happen by accident, brought on by a non-spellcaster making embittered oaths.

Experienced magicians treat cursing very seriously, especially reports of curses by laypeople.

The reason is this: a curse is carried out by a demon. You make the curse, name the subject and explain why they deserve it. If a demon spirit is listening, and likes the sound of it, and agrees with your reasons, they go and carry out the curse. That's why people can do it by accident—if they are emotional enough, if they put enough bile into their oaths, they can cause enough of a ripple to attract attention from the other side.

But the demon doesn't have to like your reasons. They may decide to take the curse for a while and make you think its worked, but then suddenly visit it back on you. Maybe they'll get to know the subject, and decide to change their mind. Maybe they'll just get bored.

The demon is a loose cannon, and you better be sure of what you're doing.

In general, the greater the level of spell used for the curse, the more powerful the demon summoned, and thus the stronger the effects of the curse.

Examples:

**At level 1, curses are relatively minor**, like a wart or an ingrowing toenail.

**At level 4, the curse might affect the subject on a daily basis**, like a tic or a skin complaint.

**At level 7, the curse could bring about some serious illness** including some ongoing penalty to all actions the subject makes. Examples include syphilis and/or madness.

**At level 10, the curse can seriously enfeeble the subject.** Maybe their limbs start to shrivel, or they have permanent delusions about their identity.

Curses take a while. Generally, about one hour per level, although sometimes much less. After the spell is cast, it does not take instant effect. It will start over the course of the next few days, sometimes so subtly that the subject is unaware that something is wrong.

The caster also needs a token, something that the subject will carry with them, like a necklace (given as a gift), or a tattoo. The token signals the subjects out to the demon who will effect the curse. If the token is lost or removed the demon may give up, or follow it to its new owner, if there is one.

Curses last indefinitely. There are three ways to remove a curse:

**Get the caster to revoke it.** This may displease the demon in various unpredictable ways, especially if the curse was only recently cast.

**The death of the caster.** In this case the demon will accept defeat and depart. Also a good reason to keep your identity secret or you body well protected if you curse someone who's good with a sword.

**Getting another demon to remove the curse.** This is seriously deep magic, and generally the demon will want something significant in return.

Incidentally, casting a curse back at someone who just cursed you is almost guaranteed to fail. Why? The demons

who do this work want to do it, it's their purpose in existence. The only reason to counter-curse is to negotiate a cancellation of the first curse, and no curse demon would see that as a good thing.

The only way you might get away with it is to make a clause of your curse that you will agree to live with the original curse forever: even if the person who cast it dies, it would be picked up by the demon who answered your own spell.

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*Curses are so powerful  
that they sometimes  
happen by accident*

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## Snapback Effects

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Obvious, really: the demon summoned to carry out the curse will ignore the subject and visit the curse on the caster. They might also get imaginative and twist the curse into something that amuses them.





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## Fire Magic: Control Fire

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The essential fire magic is to make flames obey your commands. The fire magician cannot bring flames out of nothing, there must be something burning beforehand to work with. For this reason fire magicians tend to be well-equipped with tinderboxes, flints and oils.

Fire magicians can control flames within one yard per point of depth.

Small effects, like making a candle burn bright or encouraging tinder to catch are free, and require no check.

“Plume of fire” effects, such as might be used to spread a fire or in combat etc., are worked out on the following basis:

**The spell needs one level per foot in diameter of the plume.** So surprising someone with a little one-foot plume from the top of their torch would be a level one spell; a ball of flame big enough to engulf someone head-to-foot would be a level six spell.

**The spell also needs one level per point of Fire Rating.**

This bit is optional - you can make a showy but not particularly hot fireball. Example: a two-foot diameter plume of fire that causes three cards of damage would be a level five spell. See the rules for fire damage for details.

**The level is also increased by having poor-quality fuel.**

Highly flammable fuels (tinder, oil, wax, paper) are free; burnable but less volatile things like wood or stacks of cloth add one level. Damp fuel makes the spell two levels harder. Sopping wet fuel makes it five levels harder.

Fuel is consumed at the same rate as you would have needed to burn to get the same amount of heat. Use your imagination.

Fire control can also be used to slow or extinguish a fire. This is one spell level per foot diameter of burning material to be put out. Also made harder by the fuel that’s burning: hot, heavy fuels like coal and logs make the spell three levels harder, kindling and light wood make it one level harder.

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### Snapback Effects

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A plume of fire going wrong generally fires itself straight at the caster from the nearest point of the original fire. It will “use up” as many of its levels as needed to get near the caster, and anything else goes into damage.

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## Fire Magic: Resist Heat

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Any fire magician who wants to live will learn to protect themselves before playing with fireballs and the like. Using this talent, magicians can walk through flames, across fires and move burning objects with their hands.

Per level, the spell:

**Lasts for one minute**

**Protects the caster from one point of Fire Rating**

The spell directly counteracts Fire Rating. For example, a level 3 spell would completely protect you from any fire less than Fire Rating 3, for 3 minutes. So you could hold a torch by the wrong end or something. If you jumped into a Fire Rating 5 bonfire, it would work like a Fire Rating 2 campfire.

But it’s low magic, remember. The fire doesn’t just go away. The caster just holds onto it for a bit, and makes it burn somewhere else. So this spell works a bit differently from most, because the fuel gets consumed afterwards. Once the spell has finished, the caster needs to find something to release all the absorbed heat into. It needs to be something that could burn, but big enough that it isn’t completely destroyed. So if you’ve just spent five minutes walking around a burning house, a tree in the garden would be suitable, but a small chair wouldn’t.

The timeframe for finding something suitable is roughly one minute per point of Depth of the caster. During this time, their skin will become hot to the touch, until eventually their clothes catch fire and ground burns under their feet.

If the time runs out, the caster takes all the damage that they protected themselves from, instantly. Which will make quite a good light show.

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### Snapback Effects

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Snapback on this spell is tricky. The caster will become a fire magnet, as though nature had suddenly noticed that someone was trying to cheat it and decided to play nasty in return.

All damage from fire is doubled for the duration that the spell was supposed to last for. If the caster tries another Resist Heat spell during that time, it will work as normal (assuming it doesn’t snapback as well) but the “stored” heat will be doubled.

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## FIRE MAGIC: FIERY AURA

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Be the Envy of your Friends! Or, more likely, Be the Terror of your Enemies! with this fiery, whole-body-covering layer of magical flame. Your foes will hurt themselves when they try to attack you! Your simplest melee attacks will have an added element of burning!

Per level, the aura:

**Lasts for one round of combat**

**Has a Fire Rating of 1**

**Consumes one phial of Pyrean**

So a level 5 spell would last for 5 combat rounds (25 seconds) and cause 5 cards of Fire Rating.

The heat damage is added to any successful melee strikes the caster makes. It can also burn people who try to attack the caster with bare hands or dagger-sized weapons.

### Snapback Effects

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If the spell snaps back, the aura appears alright, at whatever level it snapped back - and does damage to the caster. It only lasts for one round, but damage level is equal to the level of the spell. So if you snapped back a level eight Fiery Aura, you'd take eight points of heat for one round.

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## FIRE MAGIC: FIREBALL

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Fireballs are the ultimate showy spell. It's what people expect when they think of wizards doing battle.

The caster throws a glob of burning Pyrean at the target. It flies in a dead-straight line, propelled by its own heat and explodes onto the target, splashing them with the burning fuel.

Per level, the fireball:

**Can fly up to 2 yards**

**Has a burst diameter of 1 yard**

**Has a Fire Rating of 1**

**Consumes one phial of Pyrean**

So a level 2 fireball would have a maximum range of 4m, a burst diameter of 2m (just enough to get two people fighting side-by-side) and a Fire rating of 2.

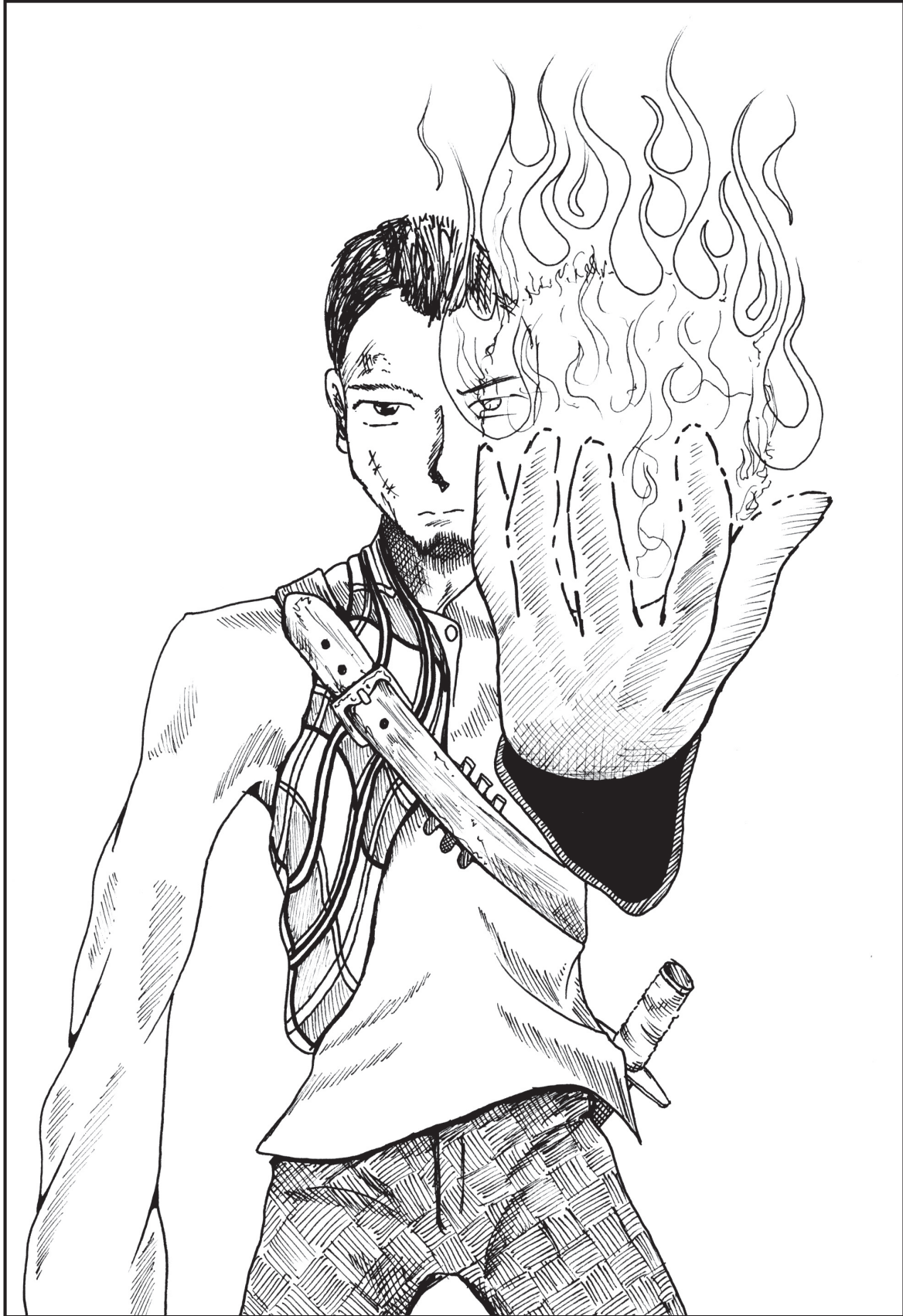
The caster can optionally reduce the range (obviously not so much that they get caught in the blast) but not the diameter or damage.

### Snapback Effects

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You can tell when a magician has just snapped back a fireball because you'll hear a distinctive noise. It sounds like "Oh sh—", and is rapidly followed by the whoomph of some phials of Pyrean all going off at once and, sometimes, some screaming.

The hapless magician who manages to snap back a fireball takes the fireball in the face at whatever level it went off. Friends standing nearby may get caught up in it, too.



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## Death Magic: Communion

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Death Magic's basic skill is Communion—talking to the dead. The caster needs to be able to touch the corpse of the subject, although sometimes an important personal possession will do. In extremes, being near the gravesite can also be enough to make some link to the departed spirit.

The caster can try to ask questions when communing. The spirit will respond with mental images or feelings of emotion—only very rarely with actual words. The answer can be as cryptic or as plain as the GM feels.

The level of spell needed to communicate with a spirit is based on:

**1 level per day since the death, rounded up**

**Plus 1 or more levels if the subject was hostile to the caster in life**

**Minus 1 or more levels if the spirit actually wants to communicate**

Many things can affect the results of a communion spell.

Those who were particularly strong-willed in life may have enough “self” left in death to communicate with words, or to be aware of the living world through the caster's eyes during the communion.

People who died with unfinished business may stay very close to their graves, or the spot where they died. The difficulty of contacting them may not increase with time, until whatever troubled them has been resolved.

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### Snapback Effects

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An attempt to commune that has gone awry sends loud warning signals through the planes of the afterlife. Absolutely anything might come to find out what caused it. It might be an evil spirit which will possess the body of the subject (even if it's dead and buried). Or maybe something will come to haunt the caster. If the subject was hostile (see the level guide), they might get a chance to do something nasty to the caster.

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## Death Magic: Fear

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Death Magicians have a heightened awareness of death. They see it in everything, they see mortality the same way most people see light. And it doesn't bother them. You have to give up being squeamish the first time you try a communion, because it's that or give up Death Magic.

Most people, though, aren't like that. Most people, when you get right down to it, are scared of death. They may say they aren't, they may say they accept death as part of a natural cycle. They may even say they are looking forward to it, for ethical or personal reasons.

But still. No-one wants to actually open that door that they've seen friends and relatives walk through in the past and find out what's on the other side.

The Death Magician can open that door and forcibly show people glimpses of what lies beyond. It has a seriously demoralising effect on the living.

The effect of the spell works in a roughly 90° cone shape extending outwards from the caster, up to 1m per spell level. Any living target in range will be affected.

Affected targets can make a draw based on their highest mental skill (Learning, Interaction or Awareness). If they equal or beat the spell level, then they are shaken but can function normally. If they get less than the spell level, then they are stricken with mortal fear and will freeze or try to run away for as many rounds as they lost by. If they are forced to fight or take any other action during this time, they are penalised by as many cards as they lost by.

The GM may award bonuses to the draw in certain cases. For example, a large group of people will be more confident than a solitary target and thus get some bonus on their draw. Also, people who have been briefed and prepared about facing a death magician will get a bonus.

Magicians may add their Depth and any speciality ranks in Death Magic onto their draw to avoid fear.

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### Snapback Effects

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It's not true that Death Magicians don't fear death; it's just that they are used to seeing it. If a Fear spell snaps back, some evil spirit from the other side who is fed up being used as a show-and-tell will take the cone of effect and fire it straight back at the caster and their friends. The caster does not get to use their Depth and Death Magic speciality as a bonus in this case.

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## Death Magic: Overload

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Overload is frowned upon by many magicians, even Death Magicians. The spell's nickname is "exploding corpses", which should give you some idea what it looks like in practice. It's not an accurate nickname, though, because what this spell is all about is taking the bodies of those who are near death, unconscious, slipping away but not quite dead yet, and yanking them so forcefully to the Other Side that a vacuum is left in their body, which then implodes in a rather horrible way.

Eligible bodies must have taken more wounds in total than their Physique (thus unconscious or unable to move) but no single wound greater than their Physique (which would instantly kill them).

"Named" characters (player characters and important NPCs) of course do not automatically die when they receive a mortal wound (greater than their Physique). They just start slipping away, so they remain eligible for Overload for some time.

The level of spell applied to a body can never be higher than the body's Physique was in life. Thus, bigger targets make better bombs.

Per spell level, Overload:

**Has a burst radius of one foot around the body**

**Does one card of damage to people inside the radius**

So if your group was fighting a bunch of regular guards (Physique 3) and one of them was felled, a Death Magician could cast a level 3 Overload on the body. It would burst up to three feet from the body, and cause three cards of damage to people that it caught, which might be two more of the guards.

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### Snapback Effects

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Whatever dark force was called upon to tear the victim away from their body relies upon the caster to guide them to the target. If the caster screws up, the same dark force will still come, but it will pick a target at random. It could pick one of the caster's friends. Worse, if the choice is limited, it might try to pick on the caster and give them horrible internal wounds up to the level of the snapback.

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## Death Magic: Raising

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The iconic spell of death magic is the raising of zombies. It works best in a group—as the fighters drop enemies, the Death Magician coaxes animation back into the corpses, swaying the numbers in the fight until it's all over.

A raised zombie is a short-lived thing, and once it has expired, it cannot be raised again.

A zombie can never be better than the living being it was made from. Its skill levels are either the skills it had in life, or the spell level used to raise it, whichever is lower.

Per spell level, the raised zombie:

**Will last for one minute**

**Will have one point in each of its skills** (up to a maximum of its living skills)

Multiple zombies may be raised simultaneously. The spell level to do this is simply the sum of the spell levels applied to each corpse.

Examples: Let's say that mid-way through a fight, your side has managed to drop two regular thugs (3 in all skills) and a captain (5 in all skills). Using a level 3 raising spell, you could raise one of the thugs. He'd last for 3 minutes, and work at full power. You could also do the exact same thing with the captain, but it would be a waste, because you could use a level 5 spell on him and get a better zombie.

Alternatively, you could use the level three spell to raise all three of them for one minute with one point in each skill. They're not going to win the fight for you on their own, but with three of them stumbling round groaning "braaiiins..." they are going to distract the remaining enemies and make them split their attacks.

The zombies act under their own will, but guided by instructions from the caster. They can communicate telepathically with the caster, but at lower levels they will have little or no initiative.

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### Snapback Effects

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Failed raising spells always work the same way: the zombies attack the caster. They are raised with just enough memory of life to know that they ought to be dead, and that a few minutes servitude with no heartbeat is not the same as resurrection.



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## Mind Magic: Illusion

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You don't need fireballs, zombies, or any of that hocus-pocus if you can pull this stunt: illusions. It's easy: you think up what you want people to see. Visualise it. Visualise it hard. And suddenly everyone's seeing the same thing as you.

There's just two problems.

First, what you see in your head isn't usually an exact picture of something, it's just the big recognisable features. Lets pretend you know all about horses, and you ask me to think about a horse. I imagine a big black destrier, stamping its hooves. Then somehow we burn an exact image of what's in my head onto a piece of paper. You'll look at that picture and say, yes, it does kind of look like a horse, but why does most of it look all cartoony? And those hooves are all wrong, they're far too small.

The reason is that's all I know about horses. All I can think up is what the word "horse" means to me. And people are very focused creatures, believe it or not. We see a little of a thing at a time, and rely on our short term memory to tell us what the rest looked like.

Secondly, people are very good at seeing what they expect. Magicking up a full tankard of ale in a tavern is easy, because it fits. Magicking up a tankard full of baby dragons—well, that's a lot harder.

The illusionist must make himself see an entire, detailed scene in his own head, even if it's only a small illusion. Which is why mind magicians use Miranoch's Elixir, which unfocuses the mind so it can see more.

The level of spell needed to pull off an illusion is based on a few things:

**Size. Small illusions, the size of a drinking pot or less, cost one level; up to man sized costs two levels; up to horse sized is three levels, and so on.**

**Plausibility. Things which would be obvious in context are free; anything else will cost one or more levels, at the GMs discretion.**

**Audience. Every person watching after the first costs an extra level.**

**Quality. Every time someone concentrates on an illusion, they have a chance of seeing through it. The illusionist can penalise their draw by adding levels to the spell.**

Also, the caster needs to take one dose of Miranoch's Elixir per level of spell.

To try and bust an illusion, anyone staring at it can make an easy (one success) Awareness draw. They can attempt the draw every round (five seconds) until they give up. The draw is made harder by every extra level put into the spell (see above). If someone the subject trusts or has reason to believe tells them it's an illusion, they will make the next draw automatically.

**Illusions last for as long as the illusionist is concentrating.**

He can do simple tasks, including talking and moving, but not cast any other spell or make any complicated actions like fighting.

**Illusions cannot hide things. The subject's eyes still see whatever is behind an illusion.**

An illusion is just a play on someone's senses, and it does not cancel out normal sight and hearing. Trying to make an illusion of a curtain to hide the assassin in the corner of a room would be useless—the subject would see the curtain but *also* be aware of the person behind it. The confusing images from their eyes would immediately break the spell.

**Illusions can only add, not subtract.**

An illusion must be of an object. It cannot make something invisible (see above).

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## Snapback Effects

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Snapback illusions prey on the openness of the illusionist's mind when under the effects of Miranoch's Elixir. They will immediately start to believe the illusion, whatever it entails. Even though they "know" that they just cast the spell, it becomes real in their mind and they must act appropriately. The effects wear off after five minutes per level of spell.



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## MIND MAGIC: ENCHANTMENT

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If Illusion is the stage show, Enchantment is the private performance. It's about making one person forget the truth for a while, and believe something else instead. It can be a simple thing, like making the barman think he's promised you a free drink. Or maybe a bit more pushy, like making a doorman think he's seen you before and you're allowed through.

Per level, an enchantment,

**Lasts for one hour**

**Is one point harder for the subject to see through.**

The spell's subject is allowed to make an Awareness or Learning draw once per minute, and also any time the topic of the enchantment is spoken about or brought to his attention. The difficulty of the draw is based on the plausibility of the enchantment, at the GMs discretion. Each spell level makes the draw harder.

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### Snapback Effects

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The subject is aware that someone is playing with his head, and may even start to believe the exact opposite of the intended spell. E.g. instead of turning a neutral character into a friend, he becomes a mortal enemy.

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## MIND MAGIC: DEFENCE

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Mind Magicians can defend themselves from Mind Magic, to some degree. A defence spell will give the caster a bonus on draws to see through illusions, break enchantments and avoid reading. The bonus is a number of cards equal to the level of the spell.

The spell lasts indefinitely but the caster may not use any other magic while it is running.

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### Snapback Effects

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A failed attempt at defence means that the caster may not make any draws against illusion, enchantment or reading for five minutes per spell level.

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## MIND MAGIC: READING

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While learning to fool people's minds, a magician learns to understand them as well. Through the Reading spell, a Mind Magician can discover people's emotions and states of mind.

**With a willing subject**, Reading is a free spell and requires no draw.

**Against someone who is unaware that they are being read**, the caster must first cast the spell, then make an opposed draw against the subject's Awareness or Interaction (whichever is higher). If the caster wins, they can read; if the subject wins or ties, the spell fails and the subject is alerted to the attempt.

**Against an actively unwilling subject**, the procedure is the same but the subject is assumed to have drawn all-successes.

The results of a successful Reading are feeling and emotions but not word-for-word thoughts. Sometimes (i.e. when the GM dictates it) the caster will simply pick up on obvious things, like feeling hungry or sleepy.

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### Snapback Effects

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The trouble with getting into people's heads is that they can be rather contagious. If a magician snaps back a Reading spell, they do pick up on the subject's emotions—but they also start to feel them. However irrational it may be, they will feel those emotions for half an hour per spell level.

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## Witchcraft: Binding

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Binding is a defensive ability. The subject gets assaulted by any nearby objects that can tangle them up, like ropes, vines or sheets. The binding spell does not seek to cause harm, but an immobilised target is easier to hit with regular weapons.

To cast the spell, the subject must be standing near something that can be used to bind them. The maximum level of the spell is affected by the materials on hand:

**A small heap of clothes** would limit the spell to level 1

**A large heap of clothes or sheets** would limit to spell to level 4

**The contents of a wardrobe or linen cupboard, or a good length of rope** would limit the spell to level 7

**Chains, or lots of strong rope,** would limit the spell to level 10

The spell is maintained as long as the caster is concentrating on it. They can move and speak during this time but not cast any other spell, fight etc.

Each round, the spell caster should make a draw based on the level of the spell. The subject is then penalised by the amount drawn on all physical actions for that round.

If he concentrates on escaping, the subject can make an opposed draw against the level of the spell (drawn by the caster). If he succeeds, he can act without hinderance for the next two rounds (ten seconds). This would normally be a good time to throw something at the caster to break their concentration. The binding materials cannot travel to reach their target, so if he uses the time to get away, he'll be safe.

Binding can be cast against multiple targets simultaneously. The combined spell level is simply the sum of the spell levels being cast against each target.

A binding spell weakens the materials used: clothes will become thin and tear easily, rope will snap and chain will rust. Use with caution.

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### Snapback Effects

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The magic will latch onto the binding material, but it will fixate on a randomly chosen target, probably the caster or one of their friends. The spell will last for one round per level.

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## Witchcraft: Blessing

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Blessing is the act of conferring the favour of a friendly spirit on a person. Sometimes it's done for show, to give people hope and encouragement, and sometimes its done with real magic.

**A Bless spell is cast over a group of people, no larger than the level of the spell. They then get one extra card on as many subsequent draws as the level of the spell.**

For example, with a level 5 Blessing, you could bless 5 people. They would then get 1 extra card on their next 5 draws.

If there aren't enough people, the "spare" cards are lost, not shared out. No-one ever gets more than one card per draw from blessing; even if two or more people bless the same subject, only the highest-level bless takes effect.

Casting a bless spell takes one round (five seconds) per level. The effects also wear off after five minutes per level, whether or not the extra cards have been used up.

---

### Snapback Effects

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If the caster is overambitious with a Blessing, no friendly spirits will come. Instead, something else will pay a visit. If the bless was right before a fight, it will give the other side the effects of blessing; otherwise, it will penalise the actions of the intended recipients for a while.

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## Witchcraft: Healing

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Magical healing is as much about practical medicine as it is about mysticism. When the magic stops the blood flowing, the healer must be able to back it up with bandages and splints.

Per spell level, healing:

**Cures one point of injury to the subject**

**Takes one hour**

**Uses one lot of healing supplies**

The scars will still need time to heal, and the player should role-play their character's need for some R&R as soon as they can get it.

Only one magical healing attempt can be made on a character per day. It is also deemed to include normal medical practices, so counts as a normal healing treatment in that respect.

Healing doesn't just have to be for battle wounds—most of the things a witch or shaman will treat will be normal, day-to-day injuries. People will always be hammering their thumbs, slipping with a woodaxe and falling off things.

### Snapback Effects

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Failed attempts at healing delay the patient's natural recovery for as many days as the snapback level. During that time, no magical or normal healing will have any effect (other than to comfort the injured).

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## Witchcraft: Weather

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Natural magics connect the spellcaster to their environment. In time, that gives them the ability to steer the weather, to bring rain or sunshine as needed.

Per level, a Weather spell:

**Lasts for one hour**

**Has a diameter of 100 yards**

**Can change the weather up or down by one line of the following scale:**

- 1 Baking hot, cloudless sky
- 2 Sunny, a few clouds
- 3 Patchy cloud
- 4 Overcast
- 5 Rainy
- 6 Heavy rain
- 7 Torrential rain
- 8 Hail and sleet
- 9 Snow
- 10 Blizzard

Off the ends of the scale, the effects get more extreme.

The downside is that the weather will want to release its energy eventually. When the spell wears off, the weather rapidly swings back the opposite way, the same amount, for the same length of time.

### Snapback Effects

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A snapback Weather spell simply inverts the effects. It will start with the opposite of the effect desired, then eventually swing back to what it should have been.

# Part the fifth: Equipment

Choosing hardware is half the fun of generating a RPG character. There are more details about choosing weapons and armour in the Combat chapter, so here we'll concentrate on describing equipment from a role playing point of view.

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## Currency

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Currency varies from one place to the next: you might find that your impressive haul of silver coins is worth much less when you travel to somewhere that silver ore can be picked up off the ground. For this reason, Sacred Steel prices are listed in "generic pennies", which represent a kind of uniform money that might be gold discs in one town, bronze rods in the next town and polished pebbles somewhere else. Generic pennies are abbreviated to "gp". Yes, really.

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## Weapons

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### Hand Weapons

Sacred Steel is not a number-counting game. In our world, there are two kinds of weapon: regular and doombringer.

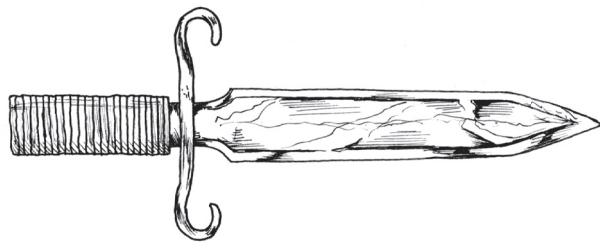
Okay, there's a bit more to it than that, but the thing is we're not at all interested in the combat dynamics of swords versus axes, or how warhammers work better against certain types of armour than others. The truth is that historically, almost all weapons started out as an improvisation based

on the tools that were lying around when a fight broke out. Gradually the designs were improved, turned into specialised fighting tools rather than farming and smithing tools, but one rule held constant: The bigger the blade, the more it hurts.

If you're having trouble choosing a weapon, here's how to do it: go for the sword family, they're the most general purpose. If your physique is 1, go for the dagger. It's all your puny little hands can hold. If your physique is 2 or three, take the shortsword, a good weapon for people who don't specialise in fighting. If your physique is four or five, take the longsword, the classic hero weapon. If you're a doublehard physique six-plus type, take the greatsword. Now go and cleave something.

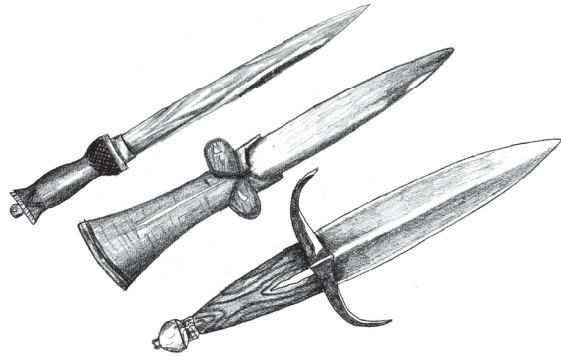
### Dagger

People have been fighting each other with pointy things since they learned to break bits of flint. The dagger is an ancient weapon in that respect, because it's really just a special name for "big knife". A standard dagger will have a steel blade six to twelve inches in length, double edged, with a small crossguard and leather-bound or wooden hilt.



Popular variations on the theme of daggers are the highlander dirk, with a narrower blade, usually with small or no crossguard and the ballock knife, which is really a

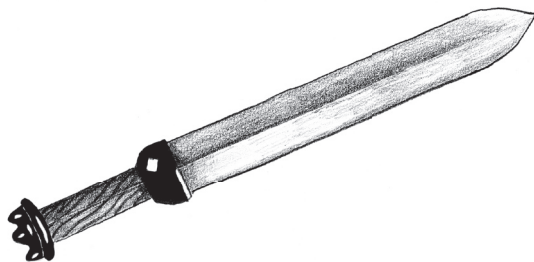
utility knife but has a guard made by carving the wooden grip into two lobes where it meets the blade. Yeah, you can picture it, can't you?



Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Dagger	1	+1	10gp

**Shortsword**

A natural progression for the dagger was to make it longer, and thus heavier and more useful in combat. A typical shortsword has a two or three-foot blade, usually fairly wide with a very pointy end, but also sometimes made with sharp edges. Shortswords are often carried as a backup weapon, or by those whose primary job is not hand-to-hand fighting.



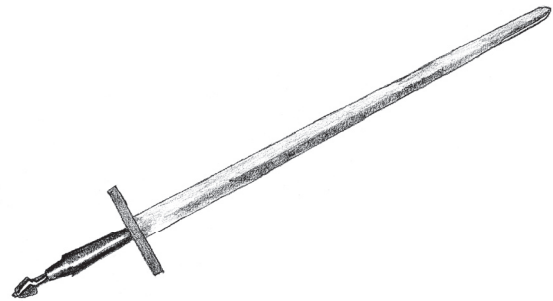
Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Shortsword	2	+2	20gp

**Longsword**

“Longsword” is really a generic term for any medium-sized sword designed to be wielded by a trained swordsman. The typical example has a thick double-edged blade about four feet long, with a decent crossguard and a one-handed hilt. In the hands of a good fighter, it can kill in a single strike.

A lot of larger longswords are not sharpened much—they rely on the sheer weight of metal crashing into the victim

to score injuries. Among beefier fighters, the bastard sword is a popular choice, because it can be used one-handed like a normal longsword, or two-handed like a greatsword.

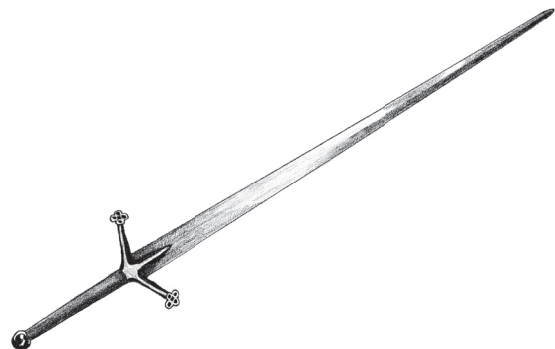


Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Longsword	3	+3	40gp

**Greatsword**

The motherlode of big hurty things! The greatsword is a huge length of metal, often six feet from guard to tip designed to be held with both hands and swung down on enemies, crushing armour and bone. Like larger examples of longswords, the edges are not usually very sharp.

The claymore, the iconic greatsword of the Highlanders, is one of the largest close-combat weapons you're ever likely to see. The blade is as wide as a man's fist at the crossguard and tapers only slightly along its length. They also have distinctive downward-slanting quillions (parts of the crossguard).



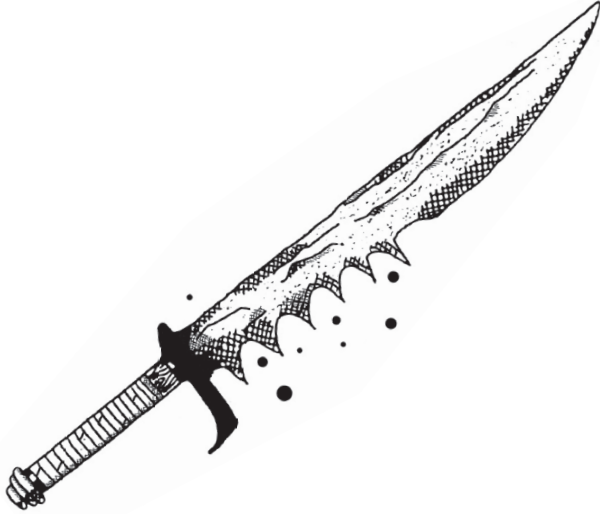
Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Greatsword	4	+4	60gp

**Goblin Cleaver**

Goblins love terror. They also love big hurty swords. That's why they developed the Cleaver—a massive two-handed

sword with huge flesh-ripping serrations down the lower half of the blade. The cleaver is a dangerous weapon, to be sure, but it's also hard to wield. Its real power is in terrorising those who see it coming for them.

Cleavers are only made by goblin smiths.



Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Goblin Cleaver	7	+5	100gp (to non-goblins)

**Handaxe**

A classic improvised weapon—at the outbreak of war, people grab the most dangerous looking thing they can find and use it as a weapon. It often turns out to be an axe: after all, a heavy, sharp piece of metal on the end of a stick is a good place to start if you're building a weapon. Between one fight and the next it gets developed and refined until it becomes a reasonable fighting tool. The handaxe, as sold for combat, is still very closely related to its wood-chopping ancestor meaning that most people can use it without difficulty. The head will be reasonably small and single-sided and the shaft will be no more than two feet in length.

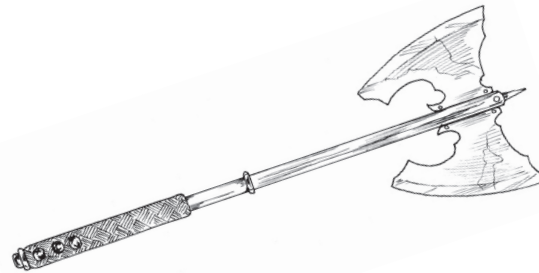


An alternative heavy, sharp piece of metal on the end of a stick is the adze, which is more for carving wood than chopping it. The head is mounted the other way round to an axe, and usually has a narrower cutting surface but heavier construction.

Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Handaxe	2	+2	20gp

**Battleaxe**

Once the handaxe has been used in few fights, the user wants something altogether bigger and scarier. The battleaxe has a three or four foot reinforced haft and often a double head.

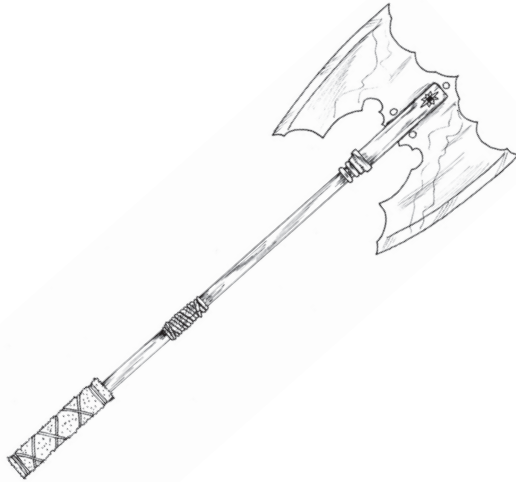


Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Battleaxe	3	+3	40gp

**Greataxe**

As big as a greatsword, the greataxe features a similar quantity of pointy metal, but mounted at the end of a four

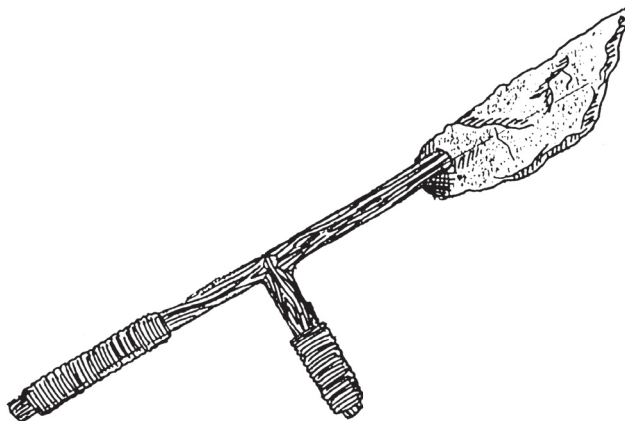
or five foot haft. Although slow and difficult to use, it can be devastating in combat.



Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Greataxe	6	+5	60gp

Kerg axe

A crude but effective weapon made by Orc blacksmiths. The head is single-sided and extremely thick, not unlike an Orc head.



Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Kerg Axe	4	+4	60gp

Club

The original weapon; the one that started it all, even before people got the idea about breaking bits of flint. Clubs will always be in use, as improvised weapons or for people who don't want a sharp weapon lying around. Maces and

hammers may provide better dynamics, but you can't beat a club for simplicity.

Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Small club	1	+0	2gp
Large club	2	+1	5gp

Mace

Basically a club with a heavier metal end, sometimes shaped into spikes or flanges. The mace is still a very simple weapon, so it is easy to use, but it also generates a lot of kinetic energy which improves its performance against armoured targets. Outside of the battlefield, maces are often used as ceremonial weapons by leaders who would rather not be seen as warlike sword-wielders, hence the invention of the sceptre.

Some warriors, suffering from a failure of imagination, have had outsized two-handed maces created. While having a huge weight behind them, they are particularly hard to use and tend to be more for show than anything else.

Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Mace	2	+2	20gp
Heavy Mace	6	+4	30gp

Staff

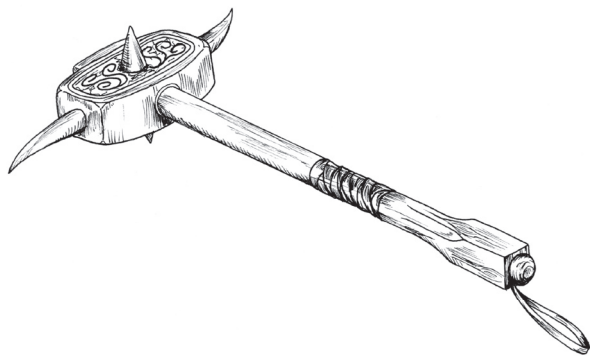
A simple weapon, like the club and mace, but one with an ancient history of skill behind it. Combat staves are long and heavy and are usually used in a double-ended style.

Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Staff	2	+2	20gp

Warhammer

A surprisingly vicious weapon, most often used on horseback. The head of the hammer, although not particularly huge, is swung on a three or four foot haft in the direction the horse is travelling in, striking passing targets at a ridiculously high combined speed. It's the same technique that gave rise to the sport of Polo.

Hammers can also be used on foot. The head is often made with a pick-like spike on the other side which can punch through armour.

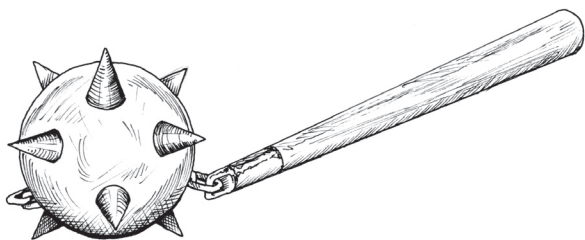


Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Warhammer	3	+3	40gp

**Flail & Morningstar**

So maces and hammers deliver a serious punch by putting a lump of weight on the end of a haft—the next step is to put some chain in between the haft and the weight so that it swings even further and faster. The flail is a general category of weapons made this way. Often there were three weighted rods on the end of six inch or so chains; that is the “classic flail” and it gives the user a decent chance of hitting with what is becoming a fairly unweildy weapon.

The other classic variant is the ball-and-chain or morningstar, which puts a single ball head on the chain. The morningstar always has a spiked ball, hence the name. It’s not an easy weapon to use, but it is awesome.



Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Flail	3	+3	40gp
Morningstar	5	+4	30gp

**Maul**

Okay, so the warhammer has a small, heavy, pick-like head, but what’s the classic image of the “warhammer” with an enormous cylindrical head like an outsized mallet all about?

That’s the maul. It’s another member of the noble family of improvised weapons, and it is basically just an enormous wooden hammer for driving wedges into rock (for mining and quarrying) or putting tent-pegs in. The sheer weight of the thing means it needs two hands to be used, and it’s slow as anything. But if it can drive wedges into granite, it will probably do something nasty to a living target.

Mauls customized for war often have spikes on the striking faces and metal bands reinforcing the haft and around the head.

Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Maul	7	+5	30gp

**Polearms**

Polearms are a big subject. Obviously spears have been around for a long time, but inventive smiths have added extra blades, shorter and longer hafts, spikes, blades, hooks and flanges in an attempt to create even better weapons. There are literally hundreds of recognised polearm designs.

The spear, as the original polearm, has given rise to many variants: most famously the super-long pike, but also any of the many designs that finish with a long spike at the end.

The other main thrust of development was in axes, leading to cutting-and-chopping designs like the lochaber axe and poleaxes like the halberd.

The scythe is also included here. Although originally a farmer’s tool, its long reach definitely makes it an honorary member of the group.

Weapon	Min. to hit	Strike+	Price
Spear	2	+2	20gp
Pike	3	+3	40gp
Halberd	4	+4	60gp
Scythe	4	+3	25gp

**Optional rules for Polearms**

You can see above that polearms just have standard stats that make them light, medium or heavy. If you want a slightly better representation of polearm combat, try this: raise all the “min. to hit” numbers by one, but also raise the “min. to hit” number for anyone attacking against a polearm by one. This represents the idea that although it can be hard to get a strike in with a long weapon, it also keeps enemies at bay; they need to get inside the weapon’s radius before they can strike. You could even increase the penalties for pikes and other really long weapons.



If you want to disappear up your own backside with realism, you could also give polearms bonuses when attacking from horseback or against mounted targets (because that's what they are often designed for), and give enemies penalties when attacking massed ranks of polearms.

## Bow Weapons

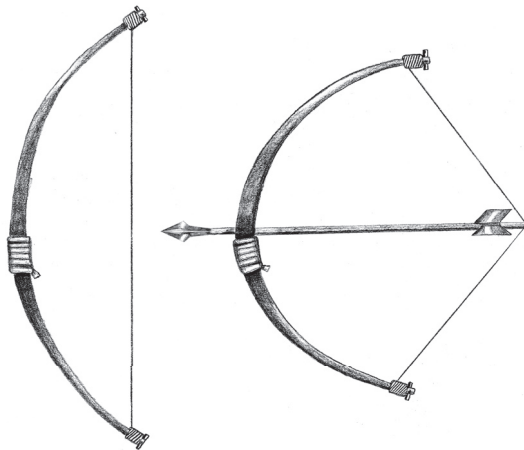
### Training Bow

This lightweight bow is made for children and people who have never fired a bow before. Its range and power are hardly enough to use in combat.

Weapon	Combat draw to fire...			Damage	Accuracy	Price
	Once	Twice	Thrice			
Training Bow	1	2	n/a	1	0	5gp

### Shortbow

This is the simplest handbow. It's made from a single piece of flexible wood and a twine string. These weapons are easy to use and cheap to make, but they are not very powerful.

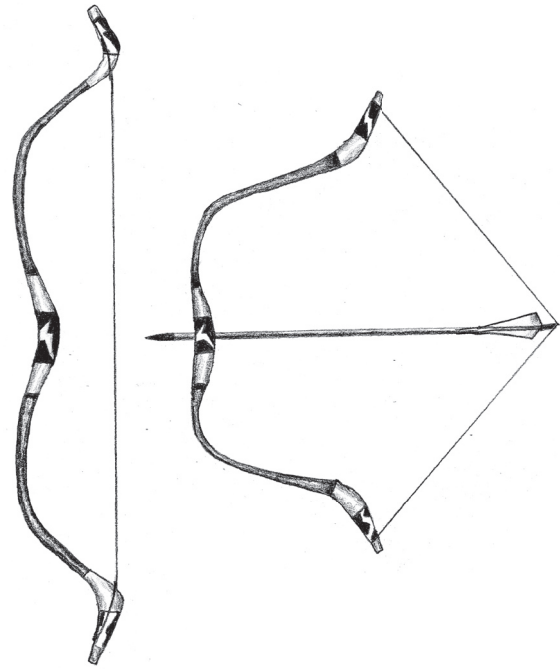


Weapon	Combat draw to fire...			Damage	Accuracy	Price
	Once	Twice	Thrice			
Shortbow	2	4	n/a	2	0	10gp
Heavy Shortbow	3	6	n/a	3	-1	15gp

### Horsebow

If you live out on the Plains, you live by the shortbow. That's why the Plains tribes have developed bowmaking to an art

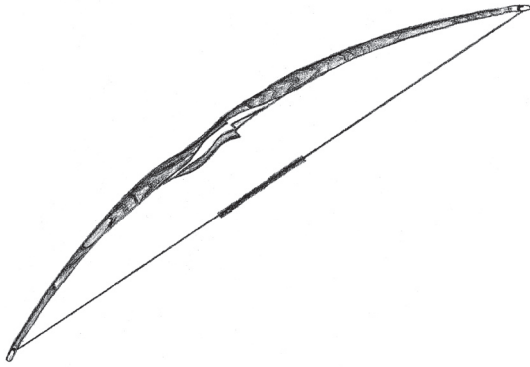
form. The standard Plains bow is a composite recurve bow: The back is made from sections of bone fitted together, which is much stronger than wood and also a better spring. And the shape is distinctive, too, because the ends of the bow curl back the other way ("recurve"), sometimes into a complete loop.



Weapon	Combat draw to fire...			Damage	Accuracy	Price
	Once	Twice	Thrice			
Horsebow	4	8	12	4	-1	25gp
Heavy Horsebow	5	10	15	5	-1	35gp
X-Heavy Horsebow	7	14	21	7	-2	45gp

### Longbow

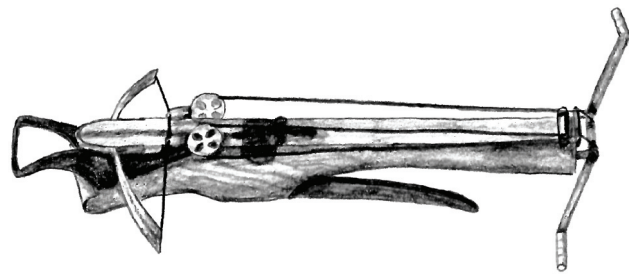
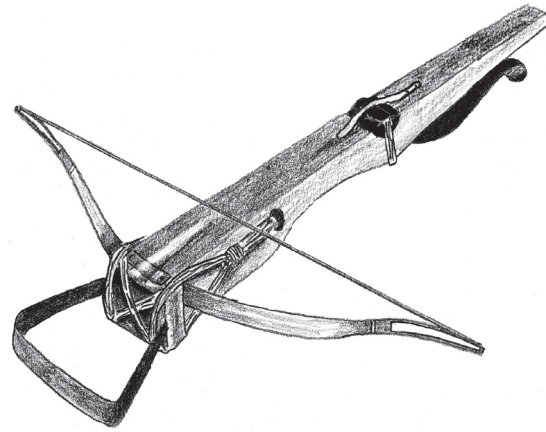
The longbow is the biggest handbow you can get. It's about as tall as the firer and uses enormous arrows which put a lot of weight into the shot. The downside is that it's a handful to carry around—most people sling it diagonally across their back.



Weapon	Combat draw to fire...			Damage	Accuracy	Price
	Once	Twice	Thrice			
Longbow	6	12	n/a	6	-3	30gp
Heavy Longbow	8	16	n/a	8	-3	45gp
X-Heavy Longbow	12	24	n/a	12	-4	60gp

**Crossbows**

The basic idea behind the crossbow is that you have a long block of wood with a groove in it for the bolt to lie in. That means you can also have a latch and trigger, so you can tension it and keep it ready, instead of having to pull right before firing like with a handbow. And *that* means you can have a system for cranking the tension right up: a standard set-up is to have a stirrup on the front of the bow that you tread in to hold it down while you pull up on the string. Some crossbows have a big lever to give you a mechanical advantage, too. Obviously all this takes time. Crossbows are deadly, but very slow firing compared to handbows.



Weapon	Combat draw to fire...				Price
	Alternating	Once	Damage	Accuracy	
Concealed Crossbow	2	4	2	0	40gp
Light crossbow	3	6	4	-1	60gp
Medium crossbow	4	8	6	-1	80gp
Heavy crossbow	6	12	8	-2	120gp
X-heavy crossbow	8	16	12	-2	160gp

**Bolts and Arrows**

The standard Sacred Steel quiver holds twelve arrows. The weight and cost of one quiver are included in the weight of the bow.

Item	Price
12 arrows for shortbow or horsebow	5gp
12 arrows for longbow	10gp
12 bolts for crossbow	10gp

## Armour

Armour types are listed here in two parts—one for the main body armour and one for “greaves”, which cover your arms and legs. You can mix and match as you see fit: chain armour with leather greaves is fairly popular.

### Leather

Leather armour is toughened and hardened by boiling and then being pressed into shape. It's thick enough to stop small weapons, and maybe slow down bigger ones. It's worn in plates, and often has to be fitted to the user by the tanner who makes it.

Item	Armour+	Price
Leather armour	1	10gp
Leather greaves	1	10gp

### Chain

There are lots of different types of flexible metal armour. Chain mail is the most famous—it's a mesh of tiny interlinking rings that gives you pretty good protection while still being quite easy to wear. A standard variant is brigandine or scale mail, which is made from tiny metal plates.

Item	Armour+	Price
Chain armour	2	30gp
Chain greaves	2	50gp

### Plate

Plate armour is the most protective kind. It may be made from large bands or sections, or just individual plates that fit over parts of the body. It's heavy and cumbersome and has to be fitted to the wearer by an armorer.

Item	Armour+	Price
Plate armour	3	50gp
Plate greaves	3	50gp

### Half helmet

The half helmet covers your scalp and maybe the back of your head. It gives you a bit more peace of mind without being too claustrophobic.

Item	Armour+	Price
Half helmet	1	10gp

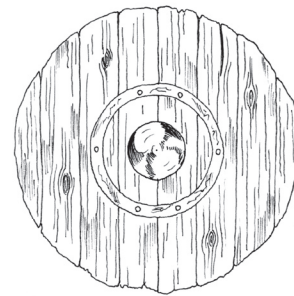
### Full helmet

The full helmet covers right down to your neck and over some of your face. It may even have a visor.

Item	Armour+	Price
Full helmet	2	30gp

### Buckler shield

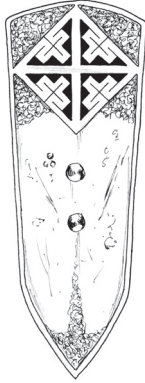
Bucklers are small leather and wood shields that are strapped to your off arm. It works almost like a second weapon: you use it to actively parry the enemy, or even hit him in the face with it. Slightly larger ones are known as target shields (because you try to make it the target instead of you) but they work the same way.



Item	Armour+	Price
Buckler	1	10

### Body shield

The body shield is a big plate, usually metal that reaches from your knees to your shoulders when you're carrying it. It gives you excellent protection but it's also cumbersome.



Item	Armour+	Price
Body shield	3	30gp

## SERVICES

### Inns

Camping works okay for a while, but when you're in a town you need somewhere secure to put your head down. A variety of inns can be bought depending on your coin purse.

Item	Price	Notes
Cheap	1gp / night	Shared rooms, straw cots. Probably vermin too.
Moderate	5gp / night	Double rooms, may have linen on the beds.
Luxury	20gp / night	Double or single rooms, clean linen beds.

## Camping Equipment

Travelling cross-country takes time, even with a good horse. Even on the bigger trails, you'll find yourself halfway between two places as dusk falls and need to rough it for a night. A prepared traveller will have cooking equipment, a tent or shelter and blankets to sleep under.

The simplest kind of tent is a single sheet, pegged down on one side and propped up on poles on the other side. You put it up with the pegged end facing into the wind and curl up under it, and hope the wind doesn't change during the

night (you can also put it up against a cliff face or bank, protecting you from two directions). These are called lean-to shelters because of their shape, even though they do not strictly have to lean against anything.

The two sided equivalent of the lean-to is the classic wedge tent, with a pole in the middle at each end and pegged down on two sides. These can normally sleep two. This is the correct type of tent for being woken up in the small hours and seeing some sort of monstrous shadow being cast on the side.

The wall tent is like a lengthened and widened wedge, but with "walls" that drop down from the roof on both sides to improve headroom and cut down on wasted material.

Lastly, the pavillion is a classic larger design with a fairly tall circular wall and a conical roof. It makes an impressive space inside.

Firepits (tripod equipment and cooking bowl) and decent bedding are also must-haves for more than one night's camping.

The choice of nobles and high-ranking officers, wooden camp beds are much more comfortable than regular bedding, but they weigh a ton compared to a blanket roll. Of course, if you're in the market for one you probably have someone to carry it for you...

Item	Price
Lean-to shelter	5gp
Two-man wedge	10gp
Four-man wall tent	15gp
Eight-man pavillion	30gp
Firepit	5gp
Bedding	5gp
Camp bed	20gp

## Animals

Trained animals are great: they can do all the jobs that you don't want to like walking and carrying.

Dogs are useful companions, keeping watch over night and retrieving game animals you have hunted.

Hunting dogs can be a vital part of the hunter's trade, because they can track prey by smell, and often catch birds or rabbits on their own. A well-trained hound helps characters attempting survival.

Working dogs (a.k.a. shepherd dogs) are not as fast or keen as hounds, but generally they're much smarter. They need to be, to keep herds of beligerent sheep in check. They also make great guard dogs, because of their alertness.

Other kinds of dog (terriers, spaniels) exist too, but they're of less use to a Sacred Steel character.

Dog	Price	Notes
Hunting	10gp	Physique 3, Combat 3, Learning 0, Awareness 4, Interaction 3 (in a doggy kind of way). +1 speciality in "biting". Characters get +2 cards on hunting or survival draws when accompanied by a hound.
Working	10gp	Physique 3, Combat 3, Learning 0, Awareness 6, Interaction 3 (in a doggy kind of way). Despite low "learning", can often recognise when people are in trouble and get help.

The horse family also has many uses.

Packmules are a reasonably cheap way of carrying vastly more kit than you could on your own back, while horses provide the quickest form of transport across land.

Destriers are big horses used in mounted combat. They are thick-boned, tall and heavy and their weight alone puts a lot of momentum behind a mounted attack.

The palfrey is a gentler, easier horse bred for regular and long-distance riding. It can happily take two riders.

The courser is bred for speed. It is happiest with only one rider but can gallop over great distances while the destrier and the palfrey are trotting to catch up.

Animal	Price	Notes
Packmule	30gp	Physique 6, Combat 1, Learning 0, Awareness 2, Interaction 2 (beligerent). Can carry a weight of 150lb.
Destrier	100gp	Physique 12, Combat 8, Learning 0, Awareness 4, Interaction 3 (placid). Can carry 400lb.
Palfrey	50gp	Physique 8, Combat 1, Learning 0, Awareness 4, Interaction 3 (patient). Can carry 350lb.
Courser	80gp	Physique 12, Combat 1, Learning 0, Awareness 4, Interaction 1 (skittish). Can carry 200 lb.

## Storage

Safe places to keep and carry your loot.

Item	Price
Small pack	2gp
Rucksack	5gp
Small chest	20gp
Strong chest	50gp

## healing

Medicine in Sacred Steel is not very advanced, but a good healer will always be necessary. General medical supplies are bought "per use" although the healer's kit might contain many different ointments, bandages etc. A healer's bag would contain all sorts of tasty dried herbs like cloves (antiseptic and painkiller), coriander (against fevers), ginger (for stomach problems) and mint (for cleaning wounds).

Item	Price
Healer's Equipment (per use)	10gp

There are also various useful herbs in Sacred Steel which can be brewed, smoked or swallowed to produce an instant effect.

Item	Price	Notes
Blackleaf	20gp	Chewed or smoked. Negates up to 3 points of wound-based penalties in combat for a few hours.
Bloodseeds	20gp	Swallowed or brewed. Gives healers +2 cards when treating critical wounds.
Giantseeds	20gp	Swallowed. Makes the user feel strong: +2 physique for a few hours.



### Equipment Summary

Item	Price	Notes
Inn, cheap	1gp/night	Shared rooms, straw cots. Probably vermin too.
Inn, moderate	5gp/night	Double rooms, may have linen on the beds.
Inn, luxury	20gp/night	Double or single rooms, clean linen.
Tent, lean-to shelter	5gp	Sleeps one
Tent, wedge	10gp	Sleeps two
Tent, wall tent	15gp	Sleeps four
Tent, pavillion	30gp	Sleeps eight
Firepit	5gp	
Bedding	5gp	
Camp bed	20gp	
Dog, hunting	10gp	
Dog, working	10gp	
Packmule	30gp	
Horse, destrier	100gp	Warhorse
Horse, palfrey	50gp	General purpose horse
Horse, courser	80gp	Fast horse
Small pack	2gp	
Rucksack	5gp	
Small chest	20gp	
Strong chest	50gp	

**Equipment**

Item	Price	Notes
Blackleaf	20gp/dose	Pain killer
Bloodseeds	20gp/dose	Helps healing
Giantseeds	20gp/dose	Enhances strength
Pyrean	50gp/flask	10 shots; used for fire magic
Miranoch's Elixir	5gp/phial	Used for mind magic
Lockpicks	30gp	
High-quality lockpicks	70gp	+1 card on lock-picking attempts
Quiver, short / recurve bow	5gp	12 arrows
Quiver for longbow	10gp	12 arrows
Quiver for crossbow	10gp	12 bolts
Quiver for arbalest	20gp	12 bolts

**Equipment**

## Bow Weapon Summary

Handbows	Once	twice	thrice	Damage	accuracy
Training Bow	1	2	n/a	1	0
Shortbow	2	4	n/a	2	0
Heavy Shortbow	3	6	n/a	3	-1
Horsebow	4	8	12	4	-1
Heavy Horsebow	5	10	15	5	-1
X-Heavy Horsebow	7	14	21	7	-2
Longbow	6	12	n/a	6	-3
Heavy Longbow	8	16	n/a	8	-3
X-Heavy Longbow	12	24	n/a	12	-4
Handbows					

Crossbows	alternating	Once	Damage	accuracy
Concealed Crossbow	2	4	2	0
Light Crossbow	3	6	4	-1
Medium Crossbow	4	8	6	-1
Heavy Crossbow	6	12	8	-2
X-Heavy Crossbow	8	16	12	-2
Crossbows				

## Armour Summary

Item	Armour Bonus	Price	Notes
Leather chest	1	10gp	Torso
Leather greaves	1	10gp	Arms+legs
Chain chest	2	30gp	Torso
Chain greaves	2	30gp	Arms+legs
Plate chest	3	50gp	Torso
Plate greaves	3	50gp	Arms+legs
Half helmet	1	10gp	The original tin lid
Full helmet	2	30gp	Covers your nose and your neck
Buckler shield	1	10gp	Used to actively parry
Body shield	3	30gp	Big, covers you from shoulder to knee
Armour			

## Melee Weapon Summary

Item	Min. to hit	Strike Bonus	Price	Notes
Dagger	1	1	10gp	
Shortsword	2	2	20gp	
Longsword	3	3	30gp	
Greatsword	4	4	60gp	
Goblin Cleaver	7	5	100gp	Intimidating
Handaxe	2	2	20gp	
Battleaxe	3	3	30gp	
Greataxe	6	5	60gp	Unweildy
Kerg Axe	4	4	60gp	
Small club	1	0	2gp	Cheap and simple. It's a stick.
Large club	2	1	5gp	Unweildy
Mace	2	2	20gp	
Heavy mace	6	4	30gp	Unweildy
Staff	2	2	10gp	
Warhammer	3	3	40gp	
Flail	3	3	40gp	
Morningstar	5	4	30gp	Unweildy
Maul	7	5	30gp	Very unweildy
Spear	2	2	20gp	
Pike	3	3	30gp	
Halberd	3	3	30gp	
Scythe	4	3	25gp	

Melee Weapons





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# Part the Sixth: the Lands

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## the Southern Cities

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## the Plains

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## Beyond the Torn Mountains

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## the Northern Realms

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## the Great Forest

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## the Drelv Country

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## the East Mountains

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## the West Mountains

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**the Undead**

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XXX

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**DUNGEON ECOLOGY**

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XXX

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**DRAGON SOCIETY**

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**GOBLINS**

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**POLITICS**

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**RELIGION**

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**PLANES**

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XXX



















# Part the Seventh: The Legends

Once upon a time, the Land was much bigger than it is now. You could, it is said, walk all the way around the coast of the Land, and end up where you started, like on an island. Nowadays you can only go so far north before you reach the Torn Mountains, and nobody has ever journeyed into them and returned. How the change happened is something we'll get to later. For now, we'll just say it had something to do with dragons.

Most things have something to do with dragons. They're like the steady bass rhythm in the music of history: you don't always notice it, but it wouldn't sound right without it.

Dragons are everywhere. Some live among people, taking humanoid form and keeping their true nature secret. Some rarely stray from their massive, terrifying natural form, and live in caves in the wilderness. One thing that binds them, though, is power, and that's where we see the rift between the two great classes of dragon.

On the one hand, we have the metal dragons. Their bodies are adapted to a certain type of metal, and by eating the ores of that metal their skin becomes as hard as armour and their bones as strong as stone. The metal dragons tend to think and work much like the smaller races do: they are as greedy,

selfish, passionate and violent as anyone else. Some use their power to acquire vast wealth or positions of authority, while others feel obliged to "do good". Whichever, it is usually safe to treat them the same way you would treat



anyone who can transform into a giant fire-breathing flying lizard with immense magical talent.

On the other hand, there are the elemental dragons. These are extremely magical creatures, with less physical might than the metallics. They rarely fight, and when they do it is with spells and cunning rather than claws and fire. Each elemental dragon is bound to a substance, and that substance gives them their strength. Unlike the metallics, they don't need to eat the substance, or even to be near it, although they may enjoy it. Common examples are Smoke dragons, Fire dragons, and Blood dragons, although there are many more. They regard their element like a clan affiliation, which is why it is common to use a capital letter when describing elemental dragons. The elementals behave oddly, by most standards. They don't assemble armies of followers like the metallics do; they don't seek wealth or fame or power. Instead, they steer. They exert influence. Although no elemental dragon would ever explain his motives to a lesser being, it seems they are the agents of forces even older and greater than dragons: the beings who are only ever known as The Powers That Be.

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## Elementalism

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The elemental dragons bring us onto the subject of elementalism.

Some worlds have developed scientific principles based on four elements (usually earth, air, fire and water) and some have developed a more profound understanding based on microscopic examination of matter.

The people of Sacred Steel know the truth, though. There is no finite list of elements, and to try to draw one up would be futile. Everything that is, is composed of matter, which in its raw form is shapeless, invisible and exists only in the void. The elements are the sparks of existence; the descriptions of How To Be. When matter is combined with element, something enters the world. A bone, for example, is a bone not just because it looks like one; it's a bone because it has the element of bone within it. The element tells it how to be a bone. Blood is not just a red liquid; it has to have the element of blood. And a person is not just a mishmash of bones and blood and flesh inside a skin bag; you also need the element of life.

The more complicated something is, the more elements it contains; and for everything that can be, there is an associated element.

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## The Alloy Dragons

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Right, now that's out of the way, let's explore a bit of history.

So there's a potentially infinite number of elements, but each elemental dragon is bound to one of them. And while there are probably a finite number of raw metals, new alloys appear every so often. So what happens? Does a new species of dragon magically appear when a new alloy is discovered? Yes, exactly. See, coupling between dragons of two different metals or elements is rare, and coupling between a metallic and an elemental dragon is even rarer. And when it does happen, the offspring will follow one side of the family or the other in looks and temperament, even though they may carry the blood of both parents. But every so often—say, once in a thousand years—a new type of dragon is born: an alloy dragon.

The alloy dragons cannot have children of their own, so the line is short-lived, but they are born with the knowledge of how to create their own alloy. By attracting followers, as all metal dragons tend to do, and teaching them the secret of the new metal, they can build extremely well-equipped armies. And as time moves on, the secret is let out, and the new metal becomes commonplace.

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*Does a new species of dragon magically appear when a new alloy is discovered? Yes, exactly.*

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The first alloy dragon in recorded history was the Bronze dragon, born 9,000 years ago following the union between a Copper bull dragon and his Tin dragon mate. The Bronze dragon, called Lotocanthys, lead a huge army equipped with sharper and stronger weapons than any

enemy.

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## The Bronze Empire

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When Lotocanthys was born, the entire northern half of the Land was the sole preserve of Elemental Dragons. There were no humanoids there.

Lotocanthys grew his empire quickly. In the south he was aided by the spread of news: for every kingdom that he conquered, another would subjugate to his rule even before his borders touched theirs. Once the south was in his grip, he pushed north through the Spine Mountains and started to occupy the land of the Elemental Dragons.

The Bronze Empire was the largest that had ever been seen at that time, encompassing the land from coast to coast in every direction, barring the Black Jungle and the Dankreef peninsula in the north, and the Great Forest in the south. It lasted for a peaceful 2,000 years without threat, which is a long time for an empire.

Then the goblins started to appear. First, they came charging out from the Black Jungle, raiding the farms along its border. Then they climbed out of the sea around Dankreef and moved inland. Lastly they started to appear in the middle of the empire's lands. Lotocanthys was slow to respond, and even if he'd been a bit more lively, his empire was soft from nearly two millennia of peace.

A few territories had engaged in minor warfare with their neighbours, so they had something resembling an army. They could not afford to wait for orders or help from on high and had to fight the goblin menace alone. Over the next 4,000 years the empire fractured along its borders as territories declared independence and goblins swarmed over every land that wasn't well defended. That 4,000 year period is known as the second dark age (the first being the period before the coming of the metal dragons).

Lotocanthys was pushed further and further south and his "empire" shrank down to nothing more than his home territories in the south and the nominally-still-loyal northern province. The final act of the Bronze Empire was to construct a massive stone wall across a section of the southern peninsula, defended with magic and huge ballistae, and retreat behind it. This was the origin of the area known now as the "Southern Cities", an area which is still closed to all traffic.

The Bronze Empire's legacy was powerful, though, because it had spread civilisation over nearly the whole land and cancelled out the north/south divide of previous ages.

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## The Steel Dragon

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The most recent alloy dragon was the Steel dragon, Canocanthys. He was born to Aldranth, a venerable Iron dragon, and the Air dragon Aethys, who apparently courted Aldranth for several years before he finally consented to mate with her.

That's a lot of dragon names. The only one you need to bother with is Canocanthys himself, because he's the one people might actually talk about. He was physically massive, even by dragon standards, towering over both his parents long before he'd finished growing. He consumed iron ore like his father, but his mother's blood purified it and changed the way it appeared on his skin: he was grey-blue all over, with just the slightest hint of oxidation on his extremities. Aldranth, on the other hand, had been rust-brown like most Iron dragons.

Some versions of history say that Aldranth feared his son and wanted to kill him before he came of age, and that Aethys killed him instead, to protect her son. Other versions say that Canocanthys killed Aldranth because he wanted his power. Regardless, Aldranth died, Aethys disappeared back to wherever she had come from, and Canocanthys took over his father's army.

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*Huge stony peaks exploded, and out of the chaos crawled some very ancient, and very angry, stone dragons.*

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Aldranth had led an impressive army of devotees even before Canocanthys was born, and with the secret of steel forging, people flocked to join. His lair was in the high plains south of the mountains, and the great

city of Canotharis grew up around it. His army had steel-tipped arrows, steel swords and steel armour. They were almost impervious to the soft bronze weapons of their enemies (yes, other alloy dragons had come and gone in the mean time but bronze was still the predominant metal for weaponmaking).

Canocanthys shone brightly. Some dragons subjugated themselves to him and served in his army. Those that did not were hunted and slain, or forced into hiding. Like Lotocanthys's Bronze Empire before, the Steel Supremacy stretched from shore to shore. Loyalists in conquered lands could expect elevated status and a comfy life. Rebels could expect short, painful lives.

Paintings and writings from those days generally depict the Supremacy as a place where the sun shone all day, people

worked happily, protected by dragons, with Canocanthys watching benevolently from the top. That's because in those days, anyone caught depicting the wholesale upheaval of centuries-old settlements, the brutal and relentless hunts for dragons who refused to bow to the Steel King, the slaughter of those who could not afford their tithes, would be killed, and their works burned.

But despite Canocanthys's attempts to control the history books, there was an underground. It was filled with metal dragons who had been stripped of their power and following, men and women who had been forcibly moved from their lands to make room for some general's estate, and, most incredibly, many elemental dragons.

Remember that the elementals don't usually get involved in day-to-day affairs. They might touch history here and there, and they might guide events when they need to, but joining an underground resistance as fully paid-up, card-carrying, passionate members is out of character for them, by all standards. The fact that they did suggests that dethroning Canocanthys must have been of paramount importance to them.

The Steel Supremacy lasted for several generations, and so did the resistance. The original humans were succeeded by their children, who could not rejoin the ranks of the empire even if they wanted to because if their ancestry was discovered, they were executed. All this time, the dragons of the resistance were planning, formulating, gathering power.

It seems the elementals were bargaining with the higher powers, and eventually they struck a deal. On the night now known as Tearing Night, the mountain ranges north of where the Orcs and Highlanders now live erupted in a storm of gravel and flying boulders. Huge stony peaks exploded, and out of the chaos crawled some very ancient, and very angry, Stone dragons. One by one they lifted their improbable weight into the air and began to fly south to Canocanthys's stronghold. And as the shattered earth fell back down across the mountains, magma started to leak into the craters, forming huge pools from which glowing, serpentine Lava dragons arose.

The entire flight of ancient elemental dragons descended on Canocanthys in the dead of night, clashing head on with an army of loyal metal dragons. At the same time, the resistance were waging a ground war, storming the towns and cities of the steel supremacy which were now defenseless while their dragons fought in the air.

Nobody saw which dragon killed Canocanthys. His body was found by the light of dawn the following morning, lying smashed and blistered not far from his lair. The Stone and Lava dragons flew back to the wreckage of the land they had burst from, and the survivors—dragon and human, loyalist and resistance alike—blinked in amazement at the end of the steel supremacy.

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## The Sacred Steel

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With the death of the Steel dragon, the empire had nothing to hold it together. Provinces once again became countries and the dragons resumed their former role as masters of society.

The remains of Canocanthys's core loyalists were left with a wasteland of rubble where their city had been. A government of sorts was established and new towns were built around the outskirts. Some people salvaged building materials, but most people who lingered in the old city after dark reported dark spirits, ghosts of those who had died on Tearing Night, flitting around the ruins, taunting and distracting the living. To this day, the ruins of Canotharis are largely untouched and unexplored, forming a dark crater in the middle of the city of Keelchurch.

One group did manage to survive inside the ruins. A group of Canocanthys's most loyal knights and scholars, accompanied by workers and hangers-on from both sides pressed into the darklands until they found the corpse of the great beast himself. His skin was still rich in powerfully magical steel—so powerful, in fact, that when they rendered it down the tools and weapons made from it were sharper, harder and faster than anything that any craftsman could have built. Suddenly people of the area had a new focus. The old King's Way, an avenue built in Canotharis wide enough for Canocanthys to walk down in dragon form, was cleared up and became almost completely safe to walk along as people flocked in to get their hands on some of this Sacred Steel. Smithies set up in the shelter of the stripped skeleton, selling Sacred Steel weapons, armour and jewellery, although much of it was diluted with regular iron to make it go further.

The loyalists realised that their beloved leader's body was being turned into trinkets, so they assembled together one night (when everyone had returned to the safety of the outskirts) and fortified the skeleton. The next morning, people were refused access unless they swore loyalty to the

newly-formed Church of Steel. Anyone caught trying to leave the area with any steel objects was publically hanged.

They cleaned the massive steel skeleton and used it, in place, to build a temple to Canocanthys's memory. The temple rises out of the grim ruins of Canotharis and is the headquarters of the Church of Steel still.




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## The Torn Mountains

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Tearing Night was the end of more than just the steel supremacy. It marked the separation of North from South, a situation that hadn't existed since Lotocanthys took his armies north to conquer the land of the Elemental Dragons. The shattered landscape left after the tearing has never smoothed over and is impassable on foot. It is freezing cold; it contains no flat surfaces so you have to climb everywhere; and it's treacherous—even if you are hardy enough to climb through it, you will lose your grip and plummet into a ravine before long. Some dragons have tried to fly north over the torn mountains, but they never return. There are stories that there is now a violent, stormy sea between the lands, and folk wisdom has it that the stone dragons are still around, watching for intruders.

See, I said it had something to do with dragons.

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## Dates

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Prior to Tearing Night, dates were measured in terms Lotocanthys's age (even during the Steel Supremacy). Tearing Night happened in the year 7011L. Although some places still use that system, the Realms and most other places decided to begin the count from scratch, making Tearing Night the year 0T. On this basis, Sacred Steel is set in the year 2000T.

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## The Rest of the Realms

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Things have levelled out a bit since the days of the steel supremacy, but Canocanthys's capital city and the level of civilisation raised around it have left that whole area of land with an elevated status. The modern city of Keelchurch, built in a ring-shape around Canotharis is an incredible, resplendent monument of sophistication and the other cities aren't far behind it.

Temple Haven was Canocanthys's unfinished masterpiece, a massive city-sized temple complex north of the capital. Much of it was levelled on Tearing Night, but what was left was repaired and inhabited in the years afterwards. The temple complex is a center of worship to the powers.

Even further north, amongst the foothills of what would later be the Highlander mountains, Duke's Hill was



a training fort for the steel army. It was run by one of Canocanthys's few human generals, Alexander Buckley. He was rewarded with a dukedom late in life, which is how the fort gained its name. The town that grew up around the fort now sprawls down the sides of the hill, with the keep, up on the top, visible for miles around on a good day.

Down in the south, the cities of Rockfax and Roughmarsh were built on deposits of iron and gold ore respectively. While rockfax was fairly productive and grew up into a large mining city, Roughmarsh suffered from being in a low-lying swampy area. The open cast pits flooded regularly making it a dangerous places to work, but the rewards were worth it for the workers who migrated here during Canocanthys's reign and ever since.

Oakbury and Rushfield, over in the west, were built later on, more as boundary markers against the Orcs and Drelves than anything else.

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## The Plains

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We'll travel back in time a bit here. Way before Canocanthys, way before Lotocanthys, in fact way before ant kind of organised empire, life was simple. People banded together to catch food and protect each other. When an area was all hunted out, they'd pick up their stuff and move elsewhere. They'd mill round for generation, sometimes coming back to where they'd been once it had recovered, sometimes migrating huge distances. Then some bright spark invented farming, and then people didn't need to keep moving around. And then stonemasonry became a practical idea, and big, solid, permanent cities sprang up in the wilderness, which ceased to be wilderness and became civilisation.

Kingdoms come and kingdoms go. And somehow, the area now simply known as "The Plains" hardly seems to have changed in thousands of years. While the other races settled down, and in some cases even went and founded their own territories,

the plainspeople just carried on doing what they had always done, roaming the land, hunting, following the weather and training horses. Sure, there have been Kingdoms on the Plains (Lotocanthys was based there, for one), and sure, there are some cities now—people from other territories have moved in and, well, they're kind of soft and need places to stay. And it's kind of handy to have towns where you can stop and trade. But basically, it's nomadic business as normal. And after all this time, they've got pretty good at it.



Your average plains tribe looks like this: three or four hundred people (men, women, adults and children) with around a thousand horses and fifty carts.

The men hunt and fight. They have at least three horses each, in case they get injured or tired. They are trained to fire a recurve bow from horseback from as soon as they can stand. Their job is to provide for everyone else.

The women have all the other jobs, like woodworking, metalworking, and keeping the horses. Sexist as hell? Only

a bit. Plains society (if you can call it that) is matriarchal, meaning the women are in charge. They organise the men, they vote on tribal matters, they decide when to move and when to stay put.

Some tribes are content with just this kind of subsistence-level living, but a many also engage in trade. There's a big industry in horses and related goods. Out on the plains, horses roam free and live quite a lot like the tribes do. A team of horsecatchers can intercept a herd and have them



roped and broken in a couple of days. Then all they have to do is lead them to a town or city and sell them. Plains horses are widely accepted as being the best coursers and palfreys available. Then there's the secondary goods, like horse-leather, compound bows (made from horse bone and sinew) and horse meat (an aquired taste).

Had enough anthropology for now? Thought so. Let's talk about the Khasar Eagles instead. They're pretty cool, in an evil way.

King Khasar was the self-appointed ruler of Hawl City, down on the south coast of the plains, about two hundred years ago. "Self appointed", because before him, there hadn't been any kings on the plains. He made himself rich through trading, then richer still through hiring out mercenaries from amongst his tribe. He settled in Hawl City, which was little more than a town in those days and let other people bring him food instead of hunting it himself. Eventually, he was so rich that he was the de facto ruler of the city. He lent money, adjudicated disputes and dealt with crime. The allegedly-democratically-elected town council were all in his pay, but everyone was happy. Hawl was a good place to be.

All this do-gooding was costing him money, though. While he was happy to keep making Hawl the strongest place it could be, he could see the population rapidly outstripping his ability to look after them based solely on his personal fortune. So did an unprecedented thing on Plains: he charged gate tax. If you wanted to enter the city, you paid for every person, horse and cart that came in. If you wanted to trade in the market, you paid for every square foot of space you used. In return, Khasar assembled the Plains' first militia, modelled after the Northern Realms, where he had once visited and been impressed with their pageantry. The militia defended the city against bandits outside the city walls and dealt with crime inside them.

King Khasar's oldest son took the name "Khasar Bujir", even though it had been a given name, because people recognised it. He should strictly have been called "Bujir, son of Khasar". The trend continued for several generations, until the word "Khasar" had become more like a title than a name. The real proof of this change was the recent ascension of Lord Udrun to the throne. He was not a member of the royal family, but he was extremely wealthy and important in his own right, and through his marriage to the king's eldest daughter he put himself fourth in line for the throne.

You can see where this going, can't you? One Khasar after another died or abdicated until Udrun was left with no challengers. Of course rumours flew about assassination and blackmail, and some people even suggested that Udrun was a dragon. But his lineage was provable and his claim to the throne was uncontested. He was crowned Khasar Udrun fifty years ago.

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*It starts with two small children, called Shenge and Pya. They are brother and sister.*

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Khasar Udrun took the principles demonstrated by King Khasar and expanded upon them. Where taxes had originally been levied to pay for the running of the city, Udrun squeezed every drop he could get out of his citizens. He was

careful, though. He knew the money would only flow so long as the city was a good place to be, so there were lots of attractions and entertainments. Petty crime and violent crime was dealt with harshly, while grand theft and fraud were mostly ignored because it meant the rich bandit lords would visit the city and pay taxes.

Udrun made no secret of his motives. He described cities as "the chokepoints of civilization", and legislated accordingly.

The story which will probably go down in history as his shrewdest but most vile act is the story of Midway. Up in the north of the plains there were very few settlements, and most of them were on the east coast. This meant that visitors from the Realms of the Highlands had to travel a long way to do trade. Or alternatively, tribal caravans had to cross the border into this lands. Either way a lot of time was being wasted in travel, and it seemed like a good idea to all concerned to build a trading town somewhere more accessible, where caravanners could take their goods, and people could buy whatever they wanted.

With the help of the Northern Realm's cities, Khasar Udrun constructed Midway on the site of a fallen city from the days of the Bronze Empire. The Realms paid for a huge central marketplace made out of stone quarried in the mountains, while the locals built all the surrounding and supporting buildings, generously paid for out of the Khasar's own wealth. The gates were open, with no taxes to enter or leave. And it all seemed good for about ten years. Midway became the only place to go to do trade in the area. And just then, when everyone was used having this happy, bustling place, Udrun clamped down on taxes. He charged one gold bar per head, plus two per horse and three per cart, to enter the city. It was an unheard of amount, many times

higher than what he charged in Hawl city or Eastport or Westport. But cleverly, he didn't charge outsiders. People from the Realms were allowed in and out freely, and only his own people had to cough up. So they were trapped. The Realmers weren't going to go elsewhere to trade, because it was free and convenient, so if the caravans wanted to sell, they had to grit their teeth and pay up.

Khasar Udrun is widely hated, but his wealth means he can afford to pay well and keep a loyal staff.

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## Creation

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Whoa! We're going all the way back from Khasar Udrun (who's still alive) to How The World Was Made.

All the cultures of Sacred Steel have some version of the same creation story. It starts with two small children, called Shenge and Pya. They are brother and sister. And they are playing a game on a big rectangular board. Shenge's pieces are small and coloured in various shades from pink to brown. He has lots of pieces all on his side of the board. Pya has very pieces, but they're huge creatures which can breathe fire.

They start off playing nicely, as might be expected. But then, as might be expected, one of them gets bored. It varies depending on who's telling the story, but in most human lands it's Pya who starts it off. She's bored because her dragons are stupid. Shenge's little people are running rings around her and she's getting frustrated, so she says that her dragons have intelligence. And now, instead of just being big scrawny water monsters or tree monsters or whatever, they're clever, cunning monsters who also happen to have special powers associated with their element. Pya takes over the game, knocking over Shenge's pieces and plopping her dragons down all over the board.

As you might imagine, this doesn't impress Shenge much, so he makes some new pieces of his own that are just like Pya's dragons, but they are shiny and have skin made of metal. And the two children keep grumpily playing for a bit with their new armies, but now Shenge is thinking to himself that what he really needs is an even better dragon. So he makes one. It's made of bronze, and it's twice the size of all the others.

"You can't do that!" yells Pya. "Where did you get bronze from anyway? Your little people don't know about smelting yet!"

Shenge responds by having his bronze dragon teach his people about alloying when he puts him on the board. They run round with their little bronze weapons, wearing their little bronze armour. The bronze dragon is really great. He ties all the little pieces together in one big army that fairly soon covers almost the whole board. As soon as Pya tries to play one of her dragons, it's surrounded by a swarm of bronze-clad warriors. She just doesn't have the numbers.

Pya fumes quietly for a bit while Shenge runs rampage over the board. Then she sits up and says "Right! If you can have dragons, I'm having little people!". And she up-ends a box full of tiny green pieces onto her end of the board. The little goblins break the bronze empire apart as Pya starts flicking Shenge's metal dragons off the board with her thumb and finger.

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*...a bloody exodus through  
the goblin hordes until  
they reached the safety  
of the treeline.*

---

They're both nearly in tears by this point. Shenge thought he was winning, and although he tries, he can't think up anything except yet another huge dragon. So he makes one, and this time it's made of steel. He plonks it

down, and starts putting the board back under his control. "Ha! What are you going to do about that then?" he sneers at his sister.

Pya is crying with rage. "Even... bigger... dragons!" she says, hurriedly making some huge beasts out of stone.

"No!" shouts Shenge, realising he's about to be out-done, and grabs his end of the board to drag it away from Pya. She grabs her end and the two of them tug on it and scream at each other until it suddenly rips down the middle and both of them go flying. Pya picks up her stone dragons and starts throwing them at Shenge's scattered pieces until she's satisfied that the stupid steel one is irretrievably smashed, then runs off crying. Shenge stamps really hard on Pya's end of the board and stomps away to sulk.

Well, that's one way of telling it. Monks and scholars tend to make it sound more impressive, but that's what it usually boils down to. According to most versions, the pieces (i.e. the inhabitants of the world) were left to get on with things without Shenge and Pya, although there is always the possibility of their return.

And that's why the Lands are split into Shengea (the south, where Sacred Steel is set) and Pyea (the north, which has been separated from Shengea for the last 2,000 years).

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## Elves

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The Elven nation was born during the late glory years of the Bronze Empire. Lotocanthys had joined most areas of the land together under his rule, but the original kingdoms were allowed to keep their identity for administrative reasons. One such kingdom was the Faraam province, occupying a strip of land in the west of Shengea.

The army of Faraam was under the control of a philosopher monk called Bruh. He had developed an extensive training methodology that taught focus and centeredness as well as the normal skills of fitness and speed.

So, when the goblin invasions started to threaten Shengea around 3,190L, The army of Faraam was the only decent-sized one in that area. Bruh had word of the goblin menace over the mountains in Pyea and begged the queen for permission to take the army there and meet the threat. The Queen, Tahilla denied his request. After a few years the goblins were seeping through the mountains and coming south. Still Tahilla denied Bruh's desires to face the enemy.

She had no choice when the goblins hit the borders of Faraam. The army was prepared, though. The borders more or less held for a few years, while all the lands around seemed to disappear under a sea of green skin. Refugees from neighbouring counties sought sanctuary in Faraam, and the cities started getting crowded.

The dam burst in 3,198L when the goblins laid siege to Faraam's capital city and catapulted dead animals and corpses over the walls.

Disease sprang up instantly. Tahilla fell ill and Bruh took control (although refusing coronation).

His first act was to evacuate Faraam city. The army staged numerous reprise attacks on the besiegers while the populace left the city walls and headed west towards the Great Forest. The army caught up with the civilians after a few days and they began the Green Walk, a bloody exodus through the goblin hordes until they reached the safety of the treeline.

"Safety" is a relative term here. The reason that humans had never inhabited the forest before was that there was already a population. The branches of the forest were occupied by

the ettercaps and their packs of trained giant spiders. The forest floor was the home of the mould pygmies, which while individually weak could become almost invisible in the undergrowth and ambush at any time.

The move was a success over all. They lost a lot of people, but there were enough left to start building a new community among the trees. The Ettercaps were scared off by a few firebrands, the pygmies didn't climb the tree and most importantly of all, the goblins gave up at the treeline and didn't chase them any further into the forest.

By 3,220L the new "Forest Elv" community was strong enough to launch its first crusade. Bruh personally led a thousand of his best troops out of the forest and back along the Green Walk to Faraam City, where they wailed mightily on the occupying goblins and returned to the forest with armfuls of recovered equipment and treasure.

Although that first crusade was over quickly, it encouraged the elves to be more ambitious. There were twenty elven crusades led by countless descendants of Bruh over the next two thousand years, and for that time the Elves were the best thing that humans had going for them.

The twenty-first elven crusade, marking the year 5000L, was the last. Fewer and fewer people had been returning from the previous crusades, and hardly anyone had returned from the twenty-first. They had bumped into the Orcs.




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*"Idiot. Blinder than your father."*

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## Orcs

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By the year 4,800L the people of Shengea had done a lot to push back the goblin invasion, and although attacks were still common, the kingdoms could reestablish their borders and get on with life as normal — which basically meant squabbling over land and gold.

Somewhere north of where Faraam used to lie, there were two very small countries nestling against the mountains. They were called Pentadaniir and Ostadaniir. The king of Pentadaniir and the Queen of Ostadaniir both claimed to be descended from the monarchs of the old country that had occupied the land before the goblins came. Neither would back down, so the land was split. They would stage

occasional border ding-dongs but never a full-scale war, although both claimants desperately wanted it.

So one day, King Laon of Pentadaniir received a visit from a sorceress called Fly. She claimed she could use her magic to turn normal men into unstoppable monsters. She offered to “turn” Laon’s entire army, and all she wanted in return was a share of gold when Ostadaniir was conquered.

Now, obviously Laon can’t have been too smart because he didn’t stop to ask any questions. He just immediately assigned a troop of men to Fly, who disappeared into the mountains with them, promising to return in a week.

And she did. She’d taken twenty men, and only returned with ten, but they were a horror to behold—taller, wider and nastier than they had been, with leathery, tough skin and a mouthful of jagged teeth. Fly said that they were to be called “Durok”. Laon was terrified but impressed, and sent a further hundred men off with Fly to be treated.

Now it happened that Laon had a son, a guy called Meron, but was not proud of him. Laon thought that his son should be a warrior, a mighty figure who could command the army when he had passed away. Instead, Meron was a thin chap, fairly affable but not commanding, and an academic, not a fighter. Prince Meron was allowed to live in the palace, but only so long as he didn’t show up at public functions or attempt to use his authority in any way. Which was fine by him. He had his friends among the court, and studied magic in his chambers.

Meron caught wind of the plans, and arranged to meet one of the Durok. Unlike his father, he was naturally cautious and had a well-developed sense of magic. So when he met the Durok, he knew that something was wrong. There was something he vaguely remembered reading, some pictures from an old tome that tickled his memory.

When the next batch of Durok arrived at the palace, he followed Fly and the next group of men up into the mountains, and found where they were going. It was a huge cavern with just one small opening halfway up the side of a mountain. Fly marched up the harsh slope effortlessly, the men behind her keeping up but exhausted by the time she stopped. Meron lurked around the entrance and watched as a squad of Durok came outside and frogmarched the new arrivals inside.

He used his mind magic to slip past the Duroks left on guard and followed them in, where he witnessed Fly stretch her arms, sigh and transform into a glistening dark-red Blood Dragon. Around the perimeter of the cavern, Durok were setting up crucifixes. The new arrivals were stripped

and manhandled onto the crosses, being viciously whipped if they tried to resist. Right at the back was a stone pool. Fly-the-dragon stood over it and vomited a stinking, black rancid blood into it. The Durok dipped buckets into the pool, and set about painting runes on the helpless recruits, who screamed as the shapes burned into their flesh and their bodies started to twist and stretch in completely unnatural ways, turning them into Durok within minutes. Their unconscious bodies were cut down from the crosses and dragged to the side of the cavern to rest.

Meron’s next action was bold by anyone’s standards. He waited, hidden, until all the recruits had been doused, until the Durok were out of the way, until Fly had settled down to sleep. Then he crept up to the pool, choking down the gag reflex from the awful liquid, cut his arm with his pocket knife and bled into the pool, polluting Fly’s blood with his own.

For weeks he kept doing this, heading up to the cavern and adding his own blood to the pool. The Durok from the polluted batches were different to the others—more human, less monster, but Fly seemed unconcerned. King Laon kept his Durok army a secret, even though it meant drastically diminishing his active forces. Luckily the Ostadaniir army was also looking fairly thin.

Eventually Laon and Fly decided that enough men had been turned and they organised a grand unveiling ceremony. Laon was taken up to the cavern for the first time, along with an entourage of court nobles. Most surprisingly, he insisted that Meron should come.

The King and his court were appalled at the cavern, but Laon was too proud of his army to let it show, and the rest of the court followed suit. They stood around attentively as though they were watching a nice bit of pageantry while Laon showed off his Durok warriors to them. Finally, he summoned Meron to join him. And to the horror of the assembled people, Meron was stripped down, tied to a cross and painted with the black fluid from the back of the cavern.

The transformation happened to Meron as it had to the other Durok; the burning, tearing feeling; the strength, the bile. But Meron was being painted with his own blood as well as the dragon’s. He awoke only minutes after the change to see Fly holding his father by the scruff of the neck and announcing her accession to the throne—now that the entire army was under her control alone. Laon could barely understand what had happened. And it only made it worse that as she laughed in his face, Fly slowly transformed into a dragon.



Meron tore free from the cross. He could feel a link to the minds the Durok who he had tainted with his own blood, presumably the same link that Fly had with the other Durok. With an unspoken understanding, both sides of Durok clashed in chaotic battle. The nobles of the court ran screaming down the mountainside. Fly thrashed about in the middle of the cavern trying to restore order, flattening as many of her own men as those under Meron's magic.

In the middle of it all, Meron took a sword from a fallen Durok and used it to stab Fly in the throat. She fell heavily. Her Durok were broken by her death, and Meron's side were victorious. Just. Only a fraction of the number that had started the fight were still standing, and most of them were badly wounded. Fly hissed her last words at Meron.

"Idiot. Blinder than your father. I've been working the same spell in Ostadaniir, and now they have a full army of Durok, while you have half an army of halfbreeds. They'll be here

before you can blink, and instead of my triumphal reign over the lot of you, they'll conquer you and you'll die."

Meron didn't wait to find out if she was right. He led his men out of the cavern, but instead of going back down to the Kingdom, he took them higher up the slopes and into the mountain ranges, where they settled and survived as best they could.

Which actually turned out to be quite well. They could cope with the cold better than mere humans, and in time they learnt to farm the tough animals that lived up there. They heard that Pentadaniir had been peacefully conquered by Ostadaniir. Generations came and went. The site of Meron's grave became Tohalon, the capital of the growing territory. The word "Durok" was shortened to the monosyllabic "Orc" and as it turned out, they have outlasted the Kingdom of Ostadaniir by several thousand years and counting.

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## Elves

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The twenty-first and last elven crusade began in 5,000L. Its priest-in-command, Tebla Annanouriel, had intended to push through the western end of the Spine Mountains and find out what was left of the Bronze Empire to the north. Instead, he found the now 200-year-old Orc race. Mistaking them for some kind of goblin variant he attacked, and lost spectacularly. The Orcs knew the mountains and weren't affected by the cold. The Elves, on the other hand, kept freezing to death and falling off things. The few who survived the battle fled back down the mountains towards the forest, many more of them dying along the way for want of supplies.

It has been said (though not usually within earshot of Orcs or Elves) that if Annanouriel had approached the Orcs peacefully the two races might not have ended up fighting bitterly for thousands of years.

The disaster of that last crusade turned the Elves inwards for a long time. The land seemed to be recovering; the Bronze Empire had been beaten to a pulp but little kingdoms were springing up here and there; and being roundly thrashed by the Orcs generally made them feel that if the outside world didn't want them, well, then, they didn't want the outside world.

The era was fairly crassly called "The Age of Thought" at the time, as though previous generations had got from day to day by pointing and hooting. Bruh had left a lot of writing, from notes he made when he was a young commander in Faraam all the way through to the vast treatises he wrote on his deathbed, and now these works were being picked up and studied. Without the wars to focus on, the Elves dedicated themselves to perfecting their understanding of Bruh's philosophy.

Trouble is, they treated it like a religion. They assumed that Bruh was so clever and knowledgeable that he could not possibly have made any mistakes. But he had, in the sense that what he wrote when he was 25 was not exactly the same message as what he wrote when he was 80. Some of it even directly contradicted other bits. The priests held lengthy discussions about the true meaning of Bruhism, and when they couldn't find a mutually acceptable answer, they formed their own little cults of Bruhism to follow the teachings their own way.

Which led to a divided society: early-Bruhism vs late-Bruhism; pro-war vs. anti-war; separatists vs. unionists.

Factions started to break off and form their own communities, occupying new parts of the forest.

Skip forward a bit more and you have some very insular groups bitching with each other about "true" Bruhism. And it doesn't take long for the bitching, religion, sectarianism, conflict and stagnation to lead the elven population straight back to war—this time, amongst themselves.

By 5,700L the forest was a mess of small and large settlements allying, breaking up, arguing and fighting. Treetop warfare had become an artform. The oldest settlement, the original village at Arawill, was the home of the largest army, but it was generally outnumbered on all sides. The interesting story, though, starts in a tiny little settlement, barely more than 50,000 people all told.

It's called Anuvill. The high priest of Anuvill has successfully conquered the neighbouring settlement to the north (Barvill), and taken most of the army off to attack the next one north (Cyrawill), leaving a priest called Thetax in charge of the home turf with a tiny skeleton army. Predictably, enemies on both side close in on the battered and undefended Barvill, seperating Anuvill from its army, which was busy fighting in Cyrawill.

Anuvill starts getting battered fairly quickly. The thing it has going for it is that its almost too small to worry about, so instead of people attacking it, they attack through it—armies on all sides use Anuvill like a neutral zone. Thios starts to annoy Thetax, who was always dangerously pragmatic and was never quite sure what all the fighting was for anyway.

Now, up until this point there has been one golden, unbreakable rule in the fighting: No Fire. No Matter How Bad Things Look, Don't Use Flames, It'll Burn Down The Whole Damn Forest, Especially With All This Warm Weather We've Been Having.

So Thetax, never one to let tradition get in the way of a good plan, starts to train up fire archers. They extract tar oil from the forest floor (it's there, if you know where to look) and make up arrowheads wrapped in tar-soaked rags.

Thetax himself disappears for a few days, leaving his trusted commanders to coordinate preparations. Most of the population don't know what's happening, just that they need to be ready to move when the word goes out. When the day comes, Thetax comes back, looking grim but rock steady. The day wears on. Some soldiers from other settlements move through Anuvill and are surprised to find no resistance. Dusk falls, then night. If you were standing in the high branches of a tree near the borders of Anuvill



that evening, you might have fancied that you saw some menacing, serpentine shapes coiled up around the treetops. You might even fancy that you occasionally saw a pair of red eyes glance at you, then glance away again. You might fancy all that, but in truth no-one knew what was going to happen except Thetax.

One lone flaming arrow shot up from the center of Anuvill, which was a rare enough sight in itself. The commanders got their men ready, and waited for the second signal.

The treetops burst into light as hundreds of Fire Dragons covered themselves in flame and took flight, breathing flames that were sometimes so hot they were invisible. They swooped down into the territories to the east, immolating anything their path.

That was the second signal, then. Thetax and his people left their homes, cimbing down through the forest to the floor and beginning the long walk to the open land. The way was clear enough; their enemies were preoccupied with burning to death or fleeing a sheet of shimmering air so hot that it vapourised its victims. Any enemies that tried to get in the way found themselves surrounded by flames from the archers.

The former inhabitants of Anuvill walked for a week until they found the start of the old Green Walk, and followed it along until they came to the old ruins of Faraam city, long ago abandoned by the goblins. They didn't stop there though—they kept moving until they reached the south coast. Then they stopped. There were no people for hundreds of miles around, truly uncontested space. Thetax planted his bow in the ground and founded a new home there.

Back in the forest, the elven battle-priests had been devastated by Thetax's departure. All around Anuvill was a smoking crater, still too hot to pass. Anuvill itself had caught light, but they couldn't get to it, even if they'd wanted to. The whole time that Thetax was heading south, Anuvill was slowly burning, lighting up the sky over the forest at night and filling it with smoke by day.

The war priests assembled at Arawill to work out what should be done, abandoning former hostilities for duration.



What they settled on was to warm up the biggest curse they could think of. They pooled their power, channelling the grief and rage of the previous days and focused on scarring the evildoers forever.

Thetax's Elves were working busily down in the south. They woke one morning to find they had started to grow horns. Vicious ivory ram's horns for some, short red bull's horns for others, and many in-between. They were intended as a brand, a visible curse that would remind the fire-users of their evil.

It didn't have that effect. Thetax already knew that his land was going to be very different to the old Elv ways, and this "curse" just made the difference physical. In a speech which was written down and carried around the entire fledgling city, he told the people not to fear the horns, but to be proud of them. He gave them the name Drelves, crowned himself King Thetax I and led them to becoming a full size nation within his own lifetime.

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## Highlanders

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Around the time of the Tearing, there were a few tribes that had not been subjugated by the Steel Supremacy. One such was the Tarran clan, which had moved over the years to avoid the Steel armies and eventually found a stable home in the Spine Mountains.

They were tough, adventurous people, so their habitation spread from the northern edge of the mountains, heading west towards the Orc territories and south towards the Plains.

When the Tearing came, the Tarran people living in the southern half of the mountains were well established, with a wall around their territory and a full-time watch against Orc raiders. They swapped goods with their tribesmen to the north and generally stayed out of the way of the plainsfolk. The Tearing left them isolated from their only allies.

In the following years they had to learn how to survive without their homelands to trade with. They opened up trading posts to exchange goods with the newly-liberated Northern Realms and the Plains, and even, to a lesser degree, with the Orcs.

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## Deathlings

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XXX

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## Dragoners

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XXX

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do a proper timeline based on the SXC version



# Part the Eighth:

# Gms

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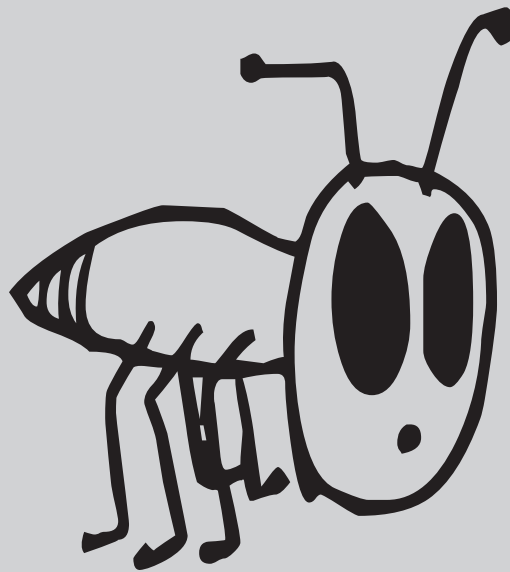
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## M3

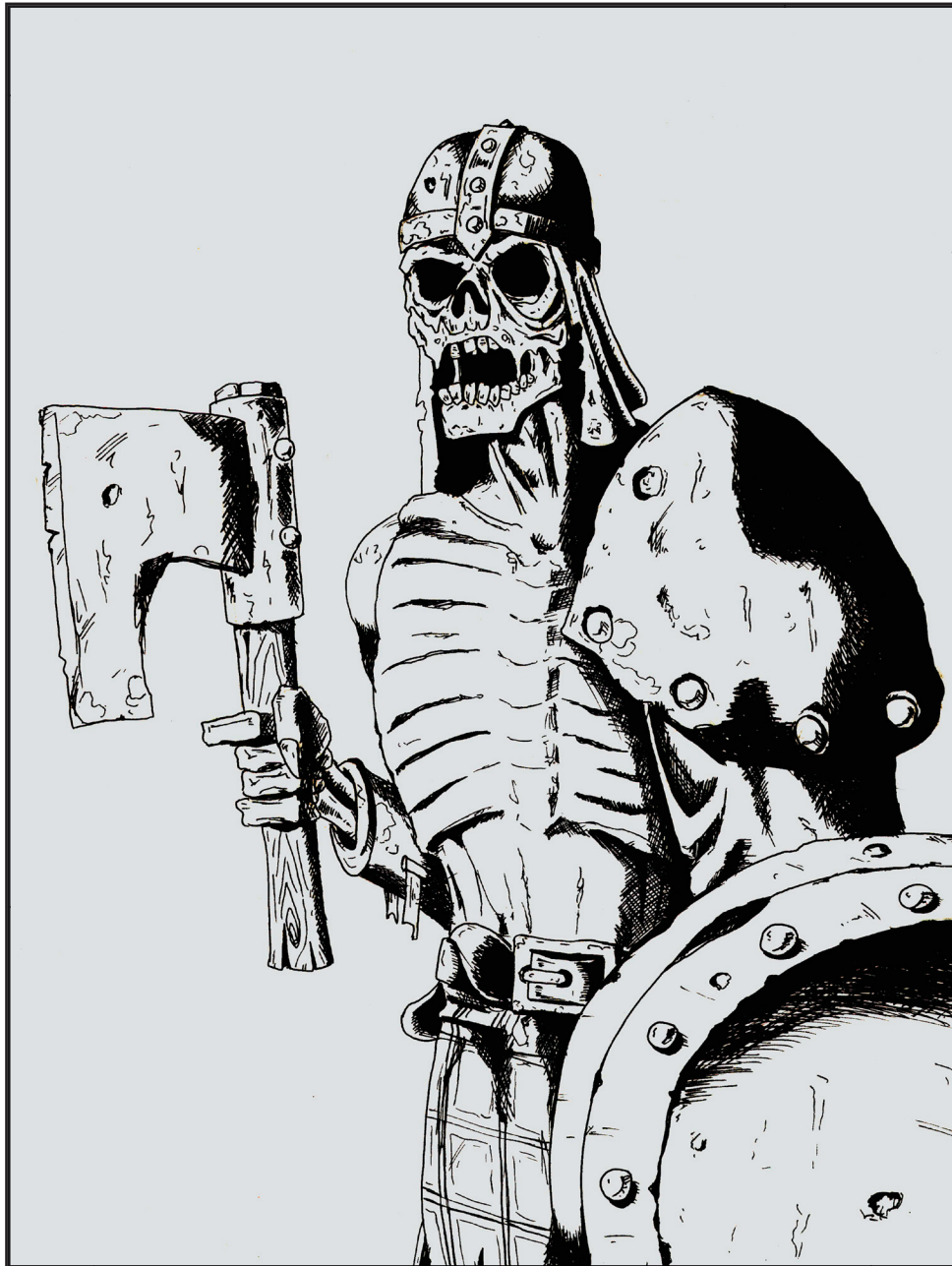
This chapter is not complete!

It will stay incomplete until we start the M3 phase, which will be all the GM-goodies: stuff about running campaigns, how to flex the rules, monsters, bad guys, treasure etc. In other words, all the cool stuff that you can make up as you go along until the chapter arrives.

Come and see how work is progressing at the Sacred Steel website: (<http://sacredsteel.org>) and chip in your own ideas.



History: Middle Ages, mostly early (Dark Ages). 500-800AD, Holy Roman Empire maybe. But also elements from later on (heavy plate etc.)











# SACRED STEEL

## Character Sheet

Name Leluma  
 Race Elv  
 Occupation Archer

### SKILLS

Physique  
4

Combat Draw  
5

Combat Training  
5

Learning  
2

Awareness  
4

Interaction  
3

### Experience

### Specialities & Special Moves

Name	Rank
<u>Longbow</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Longsword</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Survival</u>	<u>1</u>

Depth

### Magic

Field	Entitled?	Speciality Ranks
<u>Hidden</u>	<u>(✓)</u>	
<u>Fire</u>		
<u>Death</u>		
<u>Mind</u>		
<u>Witchcraft</u>		

### Equipment

Wedge Tent

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### Coins

10

### ARMOUR

Item	Armour+
Main <u>Chain</u>	<u>2</u>
Greaves	
Helmet	
Shield	
<b>Total Armour Save</b>	<u>2</u>

### Weapons

Weapon	Combat Draw	NOCK / LOAD Penalty	Min. to hit ~OR~ Max Shot	Strike bonus ~OR~ Damage
<u>Longbow</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Longsword</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>

# SACRED STEEL

## Character Work~Up Sheet

### 1) DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER

What is his/her role in the group?

What is his/her favourite piece of equipment or type of weapon?

Why is he/she leaving home to be an adventurer?

What race is he/she?

What does he/she look like and wear?

Use single words if you want, but try to put something on each line. It will help to develop your character and give them some personality.

### 2) SKILLS

Physique	3
Combat Training	3
Learning	3
Awareness	3
Interaction	3
Depth	0
Combat Draw (av. Phys + Combat Training)	

All your skills, apart from Depth, start at 3. The race you chose may give you the option of applying some modifiers here. After that, you have three points to spend anywhere you like, and if you're still not happy, you can move one point from one skill to another. Lastly, work out your Combat Draw by averaging your Physique and combat training.

### 3) Specialities

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your three specialities are things that your character is particularly good at. There's a list of things in the book, like trades and weapons, or you can make up your own. Pick three.

### 4) Magic (Optional)

	Entitled?	Speciality Points
Hiddlins	(✓)	_____
Fire Magic	_____	_____
Death Magic	_____	_____
Mind Magic	_____	_____
Witchcraft	_____	_____

If you put any skill points into Depth, you now get to pick your magical skills. For every point you have in Depth, you can access a new field of magic. Put ticks next to whichever fields you want (you get "Hiddlins" for free). You also get a free magic speciality per point of depth. Unlike the specialities in step 3, these can stack, so you can put all of them in one field if you want.

### 5) Money & Equipment

Coins

Purchases

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Spending spree! Remember you'll probably want at least one weapon and some armour. You may also want equipment like healing herbs, tents, and something to carry it all in.

# SACRED STEEL

## Character Work~Up Sheet

### 1) DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER

What is his/her role in the group?  
Fighter / Archer

What is his/her favourite piece of equipment or type of weapon?  
Longbow

Why is he/she leaving home to be an adventurer?  
Orphaned

What race is he/she?  
Elv

What does he/she look like and wear?  
Elv colours, chainmail, long red hair

Use single words if you want, but try to put something on each line. It will help to develop your character and give them some personality.

### 2) SKILLS

Physique	<u>3</u> <u>4</u>
Combat Training	<u>3</u> <u>5</u>
Learning	<u>3</u> <u>2</u>
Awareness	<u>3</u> <u>4</u>
Interaction	<u>3</u>
Depth	<u>0</u>
Combat Draw (av. Phys + Combat Training)	<u>5</u>

All your skills, apart from Depth, start at 3. The race you chose may give you the option of applying some modifiers here. After that, you have three points to spend anywhere you like, and if you're still not happy, you can move one point from one skill to another. Lastly, work out your Combat Draw by averaging your Physique and combat training.

### 3) Specialities

Longbow  
Longsword  
Survival

Your three specialities are things that your character is particularly good at. There's a list of things in the book, like trades and weapons, or you can make up your own. Pick three.

### 4) Magic (Optional)

	Entitled?	Speciality Points
Hiddlins	<u>(✓)</u>	_____
Fire Magic	_____	_____
Death Magic	_____	_____
Mind Magic	_____	_____
Witchcraft	_____	_____

If you put any skill points into Depth, you now get to pick your magical skills. For every point you have in Depth, you can access a new field of magic. Put ticks next to whichever fields you want (you get "Hiddlins" for free). You also get a free magic speciality per point of depth. Unlike the specialities in step 3, these can stack, so you can put all of them in one field if you want.

### 5) Money & Equipment

Coins 100gp 10gp

Purchases  
Longbow (20gp), Longsword (40gp),  
Chainmail armour (30gp)  
(...hope someone else bought me a tent)

Spending spree! Remember you'll probably want at least one weapon and some armour. You may also want equipment like healing herbs, tents, and something to carry it all in.

# SACRED STEEL

## COMBAT TRACKER

FILL IN THE PCs ON THE RIGHT AND KEEP TRACK OF THEIR WOUNDS IN THE BIG BOXES; FILL IN THE BAD GUYS BELOW. USE THE BIG OPEN AREA TO WRITE CHARACTER NAMES, CONNECTED BY LINES TO SHOW WHO'S FIGHTING WHO, AND WRITE COMBAT SCORES AT EACH END OF THE LINES TO TRACK ADVANTAGE. CROSS CHARACTERS OFF THE GRID WHEN THEY DIE.

### PLAYER CHARACTERS


### Non-Player Characters


### GRID

--

# Sacred Steel

## Combat Tracker

Fill in the PCs on the right and keep track of their wounds in the big boxes; fill in the bad guys below. Use the big open area to write character names, connected by lines to show who's fighting who, and write Combat Scores at each end of the lines to track advantage. Cross characters off the grid when they die.

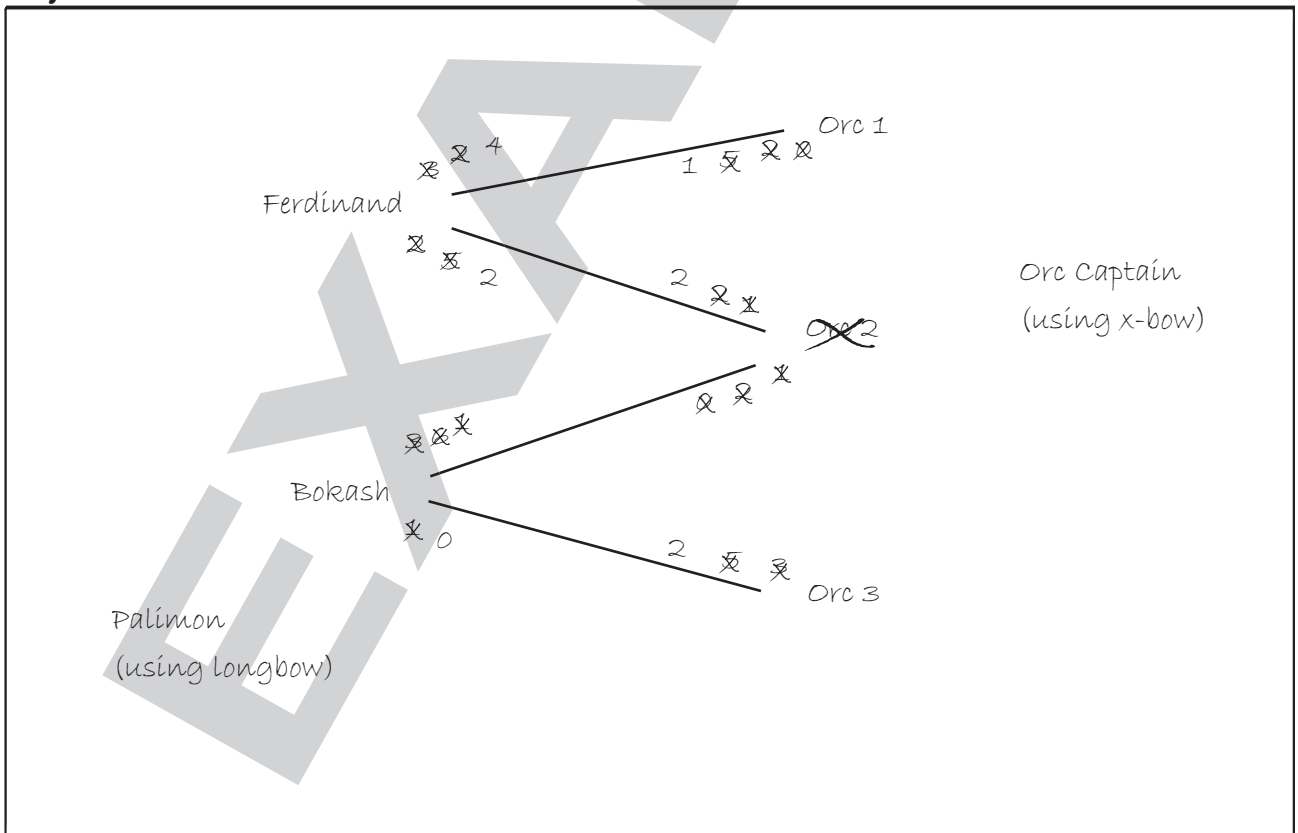
### Player Characters

Ferdinand -1	Bokash -2	Palimon 0

### Non-Player Characters

Orc 1 -1	Orc 2 <del>-1</del> 2	Orc 3 0	Orc Captain 0		

### GRID



# Sacred Steel

## Character Tracker

Use this sheet to keep track of your character in play.

Track wounds, stun wounds and luck in the boxes provided.

The consumable equipment tracker lists various common items. Circle the one appropriate and shade out circles from the right to make the line the right length. There are twelve circles, enough for one quiver.

Simply take a new sheet when you need it.

Character or Player:

Wounds

### Consumables

Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Stun Wounds

Luck

Temporary Equipment / Notes

# Sacred Steel

## Character Tracker

Use this sheet to keep track of your character in play.

Track wounds, stun wounds and luck in the boxes provided.

The consumable equipment tracker lists various common items. Circle the one appropriate and shade out circles from the right to make the line the right length. There are twelve circles, enough for one quiver.

Simply take a new sheet when you need it.

Character or Player:

Archie the mad monk

### Consumables

Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



Shortbow / Longbow / Crossbow / Arbalest / Pyrean / Miranoch's Elixir  
/ Blackleaf / Healer's kit / \_\_\_\_\_



### Wounds

2 / 10

### Stun Wounds

### Luck

3 / 3

### Temporary Equipment / Notes

Gold shiny thing?

Broken goblet from the temple

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