

ROLEMASTER QUARTERLY

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third issue of the *Rolemaster Quarterly*. The purpose here is to expand and enhance your *Rolemaster* game, both by broadening the rules and by deepening the setting details, giving you a richer and more fulfilling game and game environment.

We've seen many expansions for spell users in *Rolemaster*, but it's been a long time since the pure arms users have had a little love. This issue we tackle the fighters of *Rolemaster* with four fighter schools. In addition, you'll see information on traps and a new creature, the monster crocodile.

Enjoy.

Dedication: We would like to dedicate this issue of the *Quarterly* to Steve Erwin. He will be remembered.

WARNING! All Items in this PDF should be considered optional and completely unofficial.

CREDITS

Author: Robert J. Defendi

Editing: Tim Dugger, Heike Kubasch

Pagemaking, & Layout: Tim Dugger

Artwork: Toren "MacBin" Atkinson, John Dollar, Mike Jackson, Jeff Laubenstein,
Pat Ann Lewis, Larry MacDougall, Colin Throm, Jonathan White

ICE Staff

CEO: Bruce Neidlinger

President: Heike Kubasch

Office Manager/Cust. Service: Lori Dugger

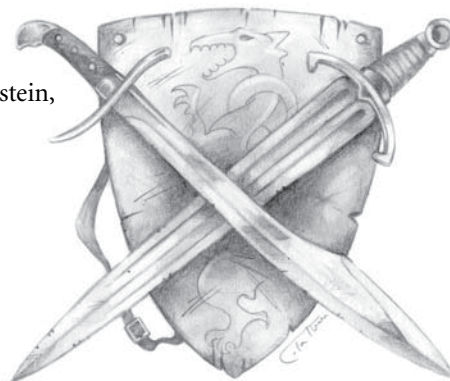
Editor/Jack-of-All-Trades: Tim Dugger

Pagemaking: Sherry Robinson

Web Mistress: Monica L. Wilson

Office Cats: Rajah, Pheobe, & Matsi

My House Cats: Bandit, Coco, & Rascal



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FIGHTER SCHOOLS

The schools below show how fighters can be individualized in the RM game. Each school comes with a background and an outlook. They have associated training packages as well (sometimes new, sometimes preexisting in the RM game). The information in the main text is presented in a generic fashion, as we mean you to place these schools in any game setting you play. At the end, however, you will find notes on how to place them in Iron Crown Enterprises *Cyradon* and *Shadow World*, as well as Final Redoubt Press' *The Echoes of Heaven*.

Note: There are many generalities in the text below that could be construed as absolutes. No two pit fighters are exactly the same in the same way no two countrymen are exactly the same. Matters such as philosophies of the school are trends and teachings, not some ultimate guide to personality. These students are taught, not programmed.

THE PIT FIGHTING SCHOOL

Overview: Feared throughout the world, the Pit Fighting School is a dark and dangerous place. Inside its twisted halls and unbearable heat, half-clad warriors struggle to hack and gouge each other. This school trains warriors in the most brutal and horrid fighting styles, aiming not just to win, but to maim and blind if necessary. When two pit fighters seriously clash, the *lucky* loser dies. Many of the others find themselves disabled for life.

Fortunately for all concerned, not many battles in the pits are "real." While the combatants do fight, killing or maiming another fighter ends their career, and few fights take matters this far. Therefore, the pit fighter is also a master of fighting without killing. While it would be an injustice to say these fights were fake, in a normal pit fight, the combatants discount many types of moves and strike with clean, disabling attacks. These fights usually end with one of them down, and the other demanding an

end from the crowd, be it death or mercy. Despite the unavoidable cries for death, the spectators with the real clout in the matter almost always choose mercy. Then the downed fighter can heal and regain his strength and eventually overcome the wound and fight again.

This makes graduates of this school something of a dichotomy. Able to unleash the dirtiest and most brutal attacks, they rarely do so, trained instead to fight in a clean, almost theatrical style. Fighting a pit fighter is usually safe . . . unless one makes him mad.

Philosophies: Pit fighters live under the view that the fight is everything. The fight is life, love, and joy. In the movements of struggles of the fight, the warrior loses all pretense and all airs. In the end, he becomes the essence of combat. To learn the true nature of a man, one need only fight him. When a man's life is on the line, all his masks fall away.

On a more practical level, pit fighters believe in winning at all costs. While it's fine to lose in a showy fight when no one is at risk, when lives are on the line, matters of honor and morality become pointless. There is no such thing as an honorable dead man. Dead men rot.

Still, their training in the more histrionic styles give them something of a two-layered view on life. They see most of the world as a show, filled with bluster and pomp, with little honesty. No man shows his real face willingly to the world. They hide their true natures behind the flashy veneers they present to the world. Only mind-shattering suffering and desperate combat can strip these away. Because of this, many pit fighters watch the world with half a smirk, watching the surface, but probing for truth in the glimpse of self that men show only by accident.

History: The Pit Fighting School was founded one hundred and fifty seven years ago in an attempt to codify and civilize gladiatorial combats throughout the land.



Before this time, pit fighting and gladiatorial combat was governed by individual slave owners and fighter managers. The system worked, but it was more an organized chaos than a real system.

Then came Gaerius, a slave gladiator who earned his fame and freedom in the pits. When they gave him his gladius and set him free, he signed on with a manager and continued to fight, but this time for his own profit. Soon he was one of the richest and most successful fighters in the southern circuit. Not long after that, trainers were theorizing he might be the greatest warrior ever to grace the pits.

Gaerius considered this rubbish, but he used the reputation to good effect. Using his wealth as seed money, he began to seek patrons for more funds. Soon he had a small fortune at his disposal. With it, he formed the Pit Fighters School. Its graduates have dominated the sport ever since.

Characters: This school is well suited to player characters. Graduates of the school can be played in the pits, as slaves trying to earn their freedom, or as free men trying to find their way. Characters could be under the yoke of oppression or free slaves trying to outlive the stigma of their past. Many of these characters are deeply troubled, having seen too much death as sport to have a whole view of humanity.

But that doesn't mean that characters using this school as a background have to be grim. Quite the contrary. Those who hold up under the inherent darkness of fighting for sport often take a carefree and liberated view on life. They've seen death as a game and it isn't a long reach from there to seeing all of life as a game. They laugh and they love and they joke. They gravitate to the center of any function, used to people orbiting around them. They are charismatic and affable.

The primary decision to make is where they stand in their career. A gladiatorial slave may be an interesting character to play, but only if the campaign is based around the pits. Otherwise, it's hopelessly stifling. Better to play a freeman (his freedom being either earned or born) or an escaped slave. A dark past can lend great depth to both a lighthearted fun-loving character as well as a brooding soul hunting for release and redemption.

Training Package: For the Pit Fighter School use the Gladiator Training Package from the *School of Hard Knocks*.

Skills: The Brawling and Subdual skills are everyman for a pit fighter. The player must select one combat maneuver or special attack to be restricted (because of the focus of his style.)

Talents/Flaws: The pit fighter gains the Dirty Fighter talent. This talent causes an extra round of stun, unable to parry any time the opponent is stunned or worse. The character is fighting dirty when he uses this talent and shouldn't take the extra round of stun in situations where dirty fighting would be inappropriate (and there are witnesses).

He also gains the Social Stigma flaw for coming from such a low and dishonorable background. This flaw causes all those who know his background to look down on the character. He will be snubbed for jobs. Innkeepers will charge more for rooms. The watch will pay extra attention to his movements. The character can hide his background, and if he does so successfully, this flaw doesn't come into play.

These don't count against his background options.

Cyradon: Of all the diverse cultures available on Cyradon, The Skaldi and the Desnians are the two civilized cultures to most likely have developed Pit Fighting, though fights in these two cultures would rarely be lethal, they would never be scripted or staged as both races have too much pride. The Schirae would also have Pit Fighters and like the others, their fights would never be stages, however, their fights would always be to the death.

Shadow World: Shadow World is a side and diverse place and each of the continents is essentially its own little campaign setting. Because of that, there are no set locations for these schools. Two good locations for the school, though, are Lankanok and Komaren.

The Echoes of Heaven: There hasn't been large-scale gladiatorial combat in the world since the fall of the empire. However, one could still build a character around this concept, especially one from Hairan, where such "uncivilized" pastimes are still appreciated.

THE KNIGHTS-ERRANT

Overview: A knight-errant is a knight who wanders the land looking for adventure or the opportunity to display his military prowess. Typically, a knight-errant is without a lord (and usually keeps an eye open for one), but sometimes the knight-errant was sent out on the land by his lord in order to carry out a specific task or quest. Out of all the chivalric figures in the world, the knight-errant might well be the most romantic.

But one must be careful, for there are many dispossessed knights in the world and few of them are up to any good. Most knights are the second or third sons of nobles, far out of position for any inheritance. They have schooling only in the art of war and when they are dispossessed, they wander the world looking for work. If they can't find it, they usually take up banditry and become outlaws. There are many knights out there claiming to be knights-errant. Very few of them are after anything but a person's purse.

So knights-errant must constantly prove themselves. Anyone they happen on in distress is more likely to expect them to be predators than saviors. The true knight-errant knows this and understands. He accepts his lot in life, making certain to help even when that help is spurned. They aren't in this for the glory anyway.

There are two main types of true knight-errant. The first is the dispossessed knight out looking to bring his chivalric ideals into the world. He usually acts in the name of a lady, dedicating his actions to her before leaping into the fray. This knight is a loner and often a misfit, but he does what he does for the good of the world.

The second type of knight-errant belongs to a questing order. These orders of knights stand outside normal feudal entanglements (and they aren't appropriate in all settings). They take their questing seriously and often have a bureaucracy in place to get knights to locations where and when they are needed. Knights belonging to these orders tend to eat more regularly than the lone knight-errant.

Philosophies: Knights-errant are driven by the need to do good or to prove themselves in the world. There are two basic types of knights-errant, those out to advance their ideals, and those seeking to prove themselves in battle.

The first kind of knight-errant is often naive and trusting. He believes in the basic goodness of all people and it's his desire to right all the world's wrongs. He strives and he quests and he seeks. He keeps his helmet off on highways to make certain he can hear any cries for help. He often tries to live to a higher standard than most people, never eating or drinking to excess. He is usually religious, or at least spiritual. He knows what's right and what's wrong and he often has trouble seeing the shades of gray. This type of knight usually matures with age, and while he never loses that sparkle of idealism, he becomes more practical as time goes on, sometimes he even becomes jaded. An old knight-errant of this type is likely to put on gruff and difficult airs, pretending to be an uncaring curmudgeon. Only when something manages to punch through his veneer does he show his true colors.

The second kind of knight-errant has a more self-centered view of the world (though this isn't necessarily a bad thing). He believes in his ideals and he tries to see them through, but he's more interested in proving himself than anything else. He's not surprised by betrayal and may even grumble when he finds an inconvenient wrong to right. He'll do it, though, because he has to prove that he's a master of his craft. He is usually looking for permanent service under a lord and he spends more of his time in tourneys than wandering villages looking for bullies. He hones, he trains, and he fights. In the end, he cares about the fighting, not the fight.

History: The knight-errant has been around as long as chivalry itself. They are the characters in legends and romances. It's the knight-errant that young girls dream about and young boys play at. The knight-errant is more than an ideal; he's a symbol of everything that nobility is meant to represent.

There are many sordid stories in the annals of the knight-errant, most of them having to do with tricksters and impostors, even con men. A dispossessed knight will claim anything to get a hot plate and a place to sleep, and often once they're in a person's home they will steal and

take any advantage they can. If you meet someone who claims to be a knight-errant, it's more likely they are an outlaw knight turned to the short con.

Characters: Knights-errant lend themselves wonderfully to player character types. This is the type of idealism that so often finds its way into the personality of the starting character. The wandering and the questing make for a conflicted (and therefore exciting) life. The story of a knight-errant is inherently episodic in nature, lending itself well to games.

Knights-errant have little stricture over them. Even those who have a lord or an order are more likely to look to their superiors for instructions on where to find their next adventure than anything else. Especially in more historical settings, the knight-errant knows great freedom, and few dare question it.

The knight-errant may have some trouble making ends meet. Many of the things he does don't pay, and while he might collect treasure from monsters and the like, he's also likely to donate this back to the people he's saved. If he's the idealistic type, at least.

Training Package: The knight-errant uses the knight training package from *Rolemaster Fantasy Role Playing*.

Skills: The knight-errant gets riding and jousting as everyman skills and usually chose mounted combat as their everyman combat maneuver if they are a fighter. Duping and bribery are restricted to them, even in the more self-centered knights (leave that to the bandit knights).



Talents/Flaws: Knights-errant receive the Knighted talent and the Code of Honor flaw for free.

Cyradon: The Treaty Kingdoms of Anias has many orders of Knighthood. At least one order for each of the many small fiefdoms and kingdoms found within the Treaty Kingdoms. Many of those Knights fought alongside the Tarahiri troops, and several dozen knights, under the command of Grayson, were transported to Cyradon with the refugees.

Shadow World: Again, Shadow World is a wide and varied place. Some good locations for Knights-Errant are Rhakhaan, Miir, and Stroane

The Echoes of Heaven: There are knights-errant in the Mortal Realm, both loners and the type that belong to a group. The two groups that should use this school in the Mortal Realm are the Order of the Knights Equis and the Order of the Knights-Errant (in the Sons of Almia.)

WAR COLLEGE

Overview: There is war. The churches of the world preach and spread and minister and still there is war. Diplomats travel from nation to nation and still there is war. Good men scream with despair and still . . . there is war.

And because there is war, there is the War College.

The War College is the foremost school of strategy and tactics in the known world. Here, the sons of nobles (and sometimes commoners who can afford the tuition) study and train and learn. The school teaches everything that a young lord needs to know to be a general. Classes include military history, diplomacy, horsemanship, tactics, strategy, and personal combat. Here, the future commanders also learn the less-glamorous skills, such as military organization, administration, and budgeting.

Men can learn these skills elsewhere, but the War College's renown is sung worldwide. Generals everywhere earn their position by fighting their way up through the ranks of officers, but the greatest marshals through the land all spent their youth here. It's said the wars that will happen in twenty years are right now being won or lost on the fields of the War College.

Training here is difficult and far from complete . . . only a lifetime of war can make a general . . . but you must lay the foundations when the man is young. This can happen through chance, but the War College doesn't believe in chance. They've mastered the art of molding a mind while it's still young.

Men and women tend to join the War College at the age of sixteen. They spend at least four years there, but the promising failures can continue for as long as their instructors believe there is hope. One famous student didn't graduate until the age of thirty-five. He went on to become Lord High Marshal of his nation.

Philosophies: The War College teaches only one thing . . . how to win. This isn't to say that they are amoral. Although they do teach war without ethics, they also teach chivalric war and everything in between. It's the opinion of the College that war transcends morality, but warriors don't. They strive to make their students just as capable at a knightly war on an open field as they are in a small, guerrilla war against a large, occupying opponent.

They teach every philosophy here, and their ethics classes bring up questions graduates still debate years later. They don't teach answers to matters of wartime ethics, only how to ask the right questions. Once graduated, their students can handle any set of rules of warfare.

Because of this, the people graduating the school can be of different moralities. The War College doesn't care . . . anyone willing to follow the rules of conduct at the school (and pay tuition of 10 GP a term) is welcome.

Because of this, the school has produced every type of general from the most heinous butchers to the noblest paladins. In fact, it's not unheard of for bitter enemies in the real world to start as great friends in the War College. In fact, many of the most romantic stories involve two friends placed on opposite sides of bitter war.

History: The War College was founded 557 years ago with the stated intention of ending all war. The theory of the founder was that if he could make a place where anyone could learn the art of war, and master it, it would make war so efficient, so brutal, that no one would dare fight again.

The theory proved to be woefully naive, but historians consider the College a success nevertheless. While it might not have ended war, it has made it more efficient. Historians believe there is less needless death in war when a graduate of the War College heads at least one side. Even when both sides are evenly matched and headed by graduates, every soldier who dies dies with a purpose. There are few ill-conceived charges and desperate ploys under the hands of a graduate.

Since its founding, the College has grown in scope and quality. The masters here are each foremost in their particular niche of war and many instructors refine the theory of their subject during their lifetime, leaving behind a better body of knowledge than they found when they came. The library at the college is filled with books on tactical or administrative theory (to name two), each argued and honed and refined by a seemingly endless series of masters.

Now the College has reached a height of prominence that few think it can surpass. Respected throughout the world, no one doubts the curriculum or the teachings. This isn't to say the school doesn't turn out bad tacticians. It's just to say that no one doubts that a graduate from here is better than he could have possibly been, taking a different path to command.

Characters: Graduates from the War College are typically marked for greatness, and this can leave the character more confined than the ideal player character. However, certain graduates, especially ones without any sponsor or connections, can end up delegated to the lowest duties. Perhaps the character is blacklisted, and kicked out of the military, looking for his own redemption. This could be the beginning of a campaign where a common adventurer ends up commanding an army and saving the world.

Another interesting campaign for a graduate of the War College could involve a small band of special scouts headed by a graduate of the War College. In this type of campaign, the character leads a series of raids and guerrilla actions against the enemy, living more behind enemy lines than in friendly territory.

Of course, the War College could just be an interesting history to an otherwise typical adventurer.

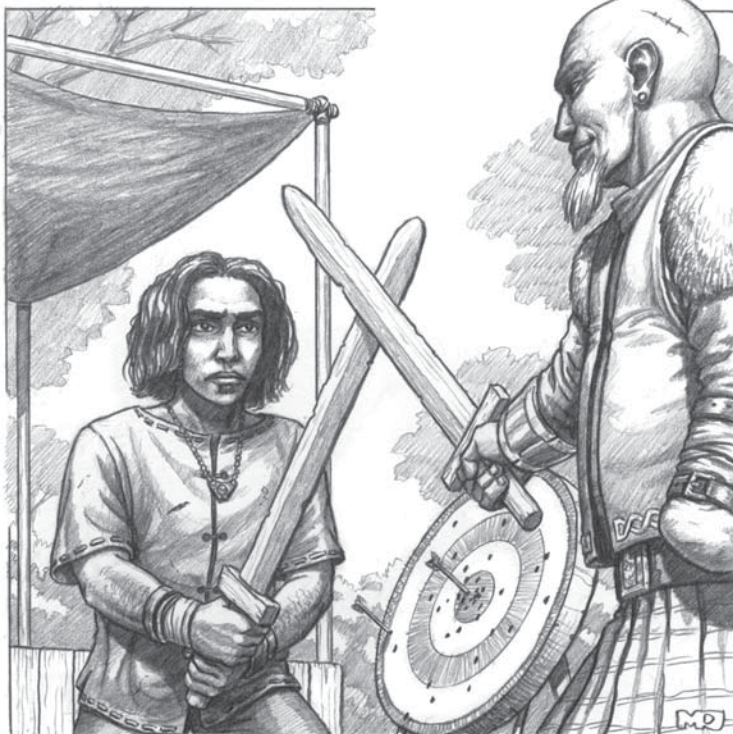
Training Package (Lifestyle): The War College training package is perfect for any character that is a graduate of the War College. For those who aren't it would still be appropriate, especially if the character's stats or flaws suggest that even with the ranks learned the character still might have flunked out.

Time to Acquire: 96 Months

Starting Money: normal

Special:

- +5 Melee weapon (award for merit) 30
- +5 Warhorse (award for merit) 40
- +5 Military Tunic (bonus to leadership) 60
- Favor from a highly placed officer 80
- Lifelong friend 100



Category or Skill	# of Ranks
Influence	1
Leadership	1
Lore • General	1
Heraldry	1
Tech/Trade • General	1
Orienteering	1
Tech/Trade • Professional	0
Military Organization	1
Tech/Trade • Vocational	0
Administration	1
Siege Engineering	1
Tactics	3
Stat Gain: Intuition	

COST BY PROFESSION

Fighter	29	Cleric	29
Ranger	29	Thief	29
Animist	29	Paladin	28
Rogue	29	Mentalist	29
Monk	29	Warrior Monk	29
Lay Healer	29	Dabbling	29
Layman	29	Healer	29
Bard	28	Magician	29
Mystic	28	Magent	29
Illusionist	29	Sorcerer	29

Skills: Graduates of the War College receive the Tactics and Military Organization skills as everyman. Attunement and Read Runes are restricted.

Talents/Flaws: Graduates of the War College receive the Master Tactician talent. They must choose either the Duty or the Sense of Duty flaw.

Cyradon: Tarahiri, thanks to its long and troubled history would have easily supported a war college, and many students and graduates may have been among the survivors, as they would have recognized the dire straights that the city was in. From Cyradon, Desnia is a likely location, as is the Five Cities of the Nagaral. Both of these nations are aggressive enough to support a war college within their midst.

Shadow World: Good locations in Shadow World for a war college include Rhakhaan, Stroane, and Komaren

The Echoes of Heaven: This school is perfect for the Bastrin War College. Where that school contradicts the information above, use the information from the campaign setting.

FENCING SCHOOL

Overview: Where personal honor has become more important than life itself and armor is rare, the fencer arrives. The fencer is the ultimate one-on-one fighter, a master of the blade. He studies the art of the sword with a passion, favoring light weapons over heavy, finesse and quickness over strength.

Fencing is a dueling art. Fencers are specialized in fighting (and killing) one man at a time. This means that they might falter when fighting in wilder environments, but not always (to see a fencer fight multiple foes, watch *Cyrano de Bergerac*, especially the 1950 version). The fencer concentrates on movement and a keen eye.

Fencing is important in societies where armor is impractical, whether because of technology (gunpowder), climate (desert), or location (at sea). It is a science of movement and fluid attack and defense. While it can become a sport, it's also deadly as a fighting style.

Some fencers undertake the skill as a profession. These men are duelists for hire, seeking out victims and insulting them until the challenge comes. Then they dispatch the target and often no one realizes it was an assassination. Other professional duelists hire out as champions for those who can't fight themselves, whether for age or infirmity.

Philosophies: Fencers don't have a grand philosophy of life, although they have many philosophies on the nature of fighting. They study art and poetry as much as the fighting itself, seeking movement in the lines of sculpture and paintings. They study dance as well, for more obvious reasons.

The one philosophy that fencers tend to carry into their life in general is a sense of honor. Fencing is a dueling art, and those that study it tend to carry an intense sense of personal honor. Anyone insulting a fencer's honor is likely to find themselves confronted with a quick blade.

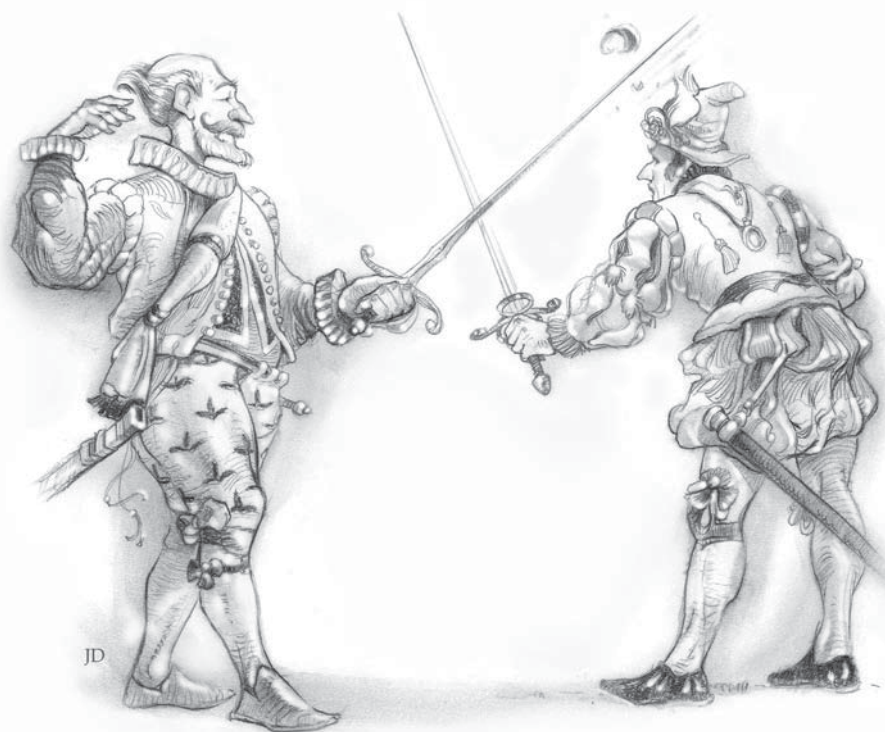
History: Fencing typically develops with the onset of gunpowder, when armor becomes more a hindrance than an asset. As the armor comes off, lighter blades and swordplay become more important. Fighting becomes as much art as science.

Youths in a fencing culture take up these light blades and the price of becoming a warrior drops with the loss of armor. Soon, young bravos roam the streets, challenging one another to fights. Many of these fights are for sport, but such is the nature of youth that many duels are to the death.

In the beginning, fencing training is informal. Then fencing masters arise and train those rich enough to afford them. When the demand becomes high enough, the Fencing School is born.

Characters: Fencers are one of the easiest characters to turn into adventurers. In societies where fencing is popular, fencers are everywhere, with the children of nobles and the middle class studying the art, either formally or informally. While a commoner is unlikely to be a graduate of a fencing school, any child from a rich enough family could. In fact even a commoner could be a fencing graduate if they were taken under the wing of one of the masters.

Fencers tend to flamboyance and a love of youth and art. They value single combat over everything and are the characters most likely to become upset if another character attacks his foe. Fencers tend to be territorial about their kills.



Training Package (Lifestyle): The Fencing School training package is perfect for any character who graduated from the Fencing School.

Time to Acquire: 96 Months

Starting Money: normal

Special:

- +15 Melee Weapon 20
- +15 Parrying Cloak (acts as a buckler) 40
- +5 Melee Weapon 60
- +5 Parrying Cloak (acts as a buckler) 80
- Dashing dueling scar (+5 to seduction) 100

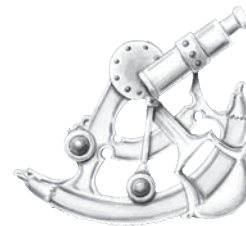
Category or Skill **# of Ranks**

- Body Development 0
 - Body Development 2
- Combat Maneuvers 0
 - Swashbuckling 2
- Special Attacks 0
 - choice of one Disarm skill 2
 - Feint (armed) 2
- Weapon • 1 Handed Edged 5
 - Choice of one weapon 5

Stat Gain: Quickness

COST BY PROFESSION

Fighter 28	Cleric 55
Ranger 41	Thief 35
Animist 54	Paladin 34
Rogue 33	Mentalist 57
Monk 49	Warrior Monk 42
Lay Healer 57	Dabblers 46
Layman 43	Healer 59
Bard 46	Magician 61
Mystic 61	Magent 45
Illusionist 61	Sorcerer 61
Swashbuckler 34	



Skills: Swashbuckling and one special attack (player's choice) are everyman skills for a graduate of the Fencing School. The Plate armor skill is restricted.

Talents/Flaws: The graduate of the fencing school gets the Master Warrior Friend talent for free. He also receives the Code of Honor flaw (gentleman's code of honor).

Cyradon: Fencers can come from almost any culture on Cyradon. However, the two cultures most likely to produce fencing schools are the Nagazi and the Janieal Elves. Both consider themselves sophisticated and above petty conflict, yet still recognize the need for defense. Desnia, not to be outdone by the Janieal, would also have followed their lead and created fencing schools, not that they would ever admit it.

Shadow World: Two good places to locate a fencing school in Shadow World are Namar-Tol and Nuyan-khom.

The Echoes of Heaven: There is a small fencing school in Marnele, but graduates are rare as the nation still values the heavy knight. There are several major schools in Maroldo and fencing is a way of life there, probably due to the warm weather and the seagoing bent of the citizens. Few other countries are willing to forgo their armor to study fencing.



TRAPS

Traps are another area overlooked in *Rolemaster*. Many new GMs have problems implementing traps in the RM system with its unique attack charts. Below you will find a treatment of a few of the more classic traps, as well as something a bit more complex, for the mischievous crowd.

TRIPWIRE

The simplest of all traps, the tripwire has two primary uses. The one most used in games is to trigger a trap, but a tripwire can be a trap itself. Either way, a tripwire has some basic rules which always apply.

The main benefit of a tripwire is that it's difficult to spot. In bright daylight, a character must roll an Alertness, Observation, or Situational Awareness Maneuver (whichever is appropriate) to spot a tripwire. Spotting a tripwire in light shadows is a hard maneuver. In medium shadows it's Very Hard. In heavy shadows it's Extremely Hard. In the dark it's Sheer Folly. These penalties supersede the normal lighting modifiers.

If a character walks through a tripwire, the results depend on whether the tripwire is a trap or merely triggers the trap. If the tripwire is a trigger, then an Absurd Quickness Maneuver allows the character to stop before triggering the trap. The GM can modify this for the situation as appropriate (if the character is barefoot and feeling for tripwires, for instance).

If the tripwire *is* the trap, the chance of avoiding it depends on the character's pace. If the character moves into a tripwire, he must make a Moving Maneuver using Agility. It is a Routine Maneuver to avoid tripping at a slow, careful walk. At a normal walk, it's a Light Maneuver. At a Fast Walk or Jog it's a Medium Maneuver. At a Run it's Hard. At a Sprint it's Very Hard. At a Fast Sprint it's Extremely Hard. At a Dash, it's Sheer Folly.

Tripping is a 0' fall, so most of the time, the character will barely be injured, although a few rounds of stun isn't unusual. However, if the character moves faster than a slow, careful walk, things become more dangerous. If the character isn't moving carefully, multiply his pace modifier by 10. Add the result to the character's fall on the Fall/Crush table.

To make a tripwire actually dangerous, put it on a flight of stairs. Falling down stairs has an OB equal to the pace modifiers outlined above, plus half the height fallen.

PIT TRAPS

Perhaps the most venerable of all traps are the pit traps. This comes in several different varieties. The simplest is an open pit, perhaps hidden by terrain (behind a bush for instance). The next most complicated pit trap is covered, usually with a light network of branches with reeds or grass layered on top. After that, covers can become more complex, with the ultimate cover being the swinging trapdoor, camouflaged as floor.

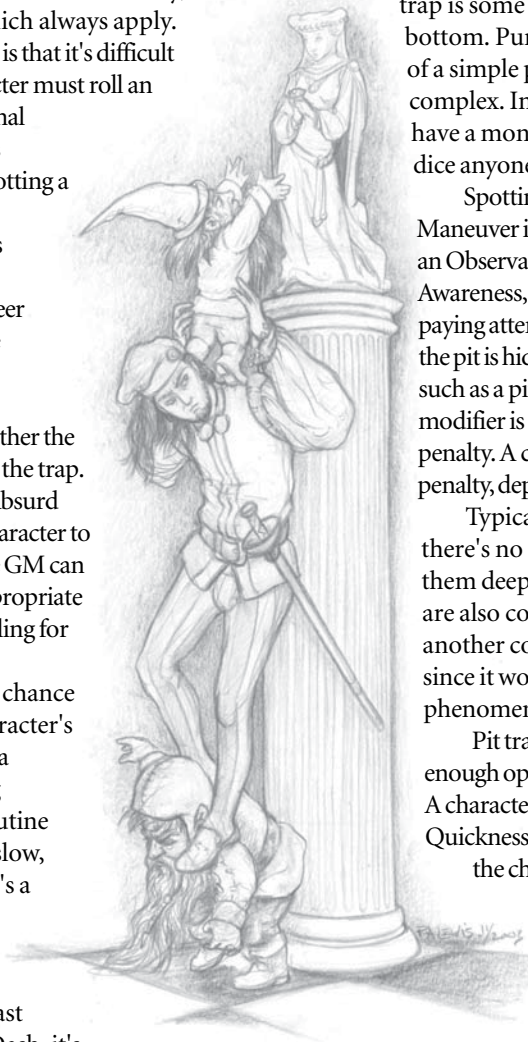
After that, the next most common element of a pit trap is some sort of deadly addition to the bottom. Pungi sticks are easy to add to the floor of a simple pit. Spikes or blades are more complex. In a magical game, a pit might even have a monofilament grid of wire, to slice and dice anyone falling through.

Spotting a trap requires an Alertness Maneuver if the character isn't paying attention, an Observation, Spot Hidden, or Situational Awareness, as appropriate, if the character *is* paying attention. Modifiers depend on how well the pit is hidden. If the concealment is negligible, such as a pit hidden behind a bush, then the modifier is 0. A crude reed covering has a -10 penalty. A camouflaged door gives a (-20) - (-70) penalty, depending on its quality.

Typical pit traps are ten feet deep, although there's no reason, other than effort, not to dig them deeper. Twenty or thirty-foot deep traps are also common depths. The bottomless pit is another common version (in stories at least, since it would take an intense magical phenomena to create one).

Pit traps are usually designed with a wide enough opening to make catching the lip difficult. A character stepping into a trap gets a Medium Quickness Maneuver to try to avoid falling in. If the character fails this check, they may make an Extremely Hard Agility Maneuver to spin and catch one of the lips. If the character fails, he falls to the bottom of the pit, taking appropriate falling damage.

If the character lands on weapons at the bottom of the pit, the damage depends on the type of weapon. Roll 1d5 or 1d10 to see how many hit the character (depending on density). For every weapon over the first, add a +10 bonus to the attack. In addition, add the distance fallen to the OB of the attack. The damage depends on the type of weapon. Pungi sticks strike as -10 daggers. Spikes attack as normal daggers. Longer blades might attack as short swords. For more exotic weapons, the GM must use his best judgment. A monofilament grid, for instance, might kill a character instantly, no RR.



DART TRAPS

The dart trap is another classic, this one made so by *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. In this trap, the character steps on a pressure plate, which then fires a cloud of darts in his direction, whether by magic or air pressure. While the later solution is possible, the technology needed to make the entire system airtight is high, as would be a method of reloading the darts.

A single dart attacks on the stinger chart with no bonus . . . they aren't accurate. This trap gains OB off of volume of darts it puts into the air. These traps are rated by the number of darts it puts into a 5', man-height area. The trap receives a +1 bonus for every dart it fires over 1.

Dart traps aren't deadly in and of themselves. The real danger comes from poison. If the darts are poisoned, they inflict their poison with any successful critical. If the character is hit by a critical greater than 'A' severity, modify the level of the poison by +1 level for every increase in severity (to represent a larger dose.)

For more information on poisons, see *Gamemaster Law*, pages 89 and 109.

ARROW TRAPS

A variation on the dart trap, the Arrow Trap fires a full arrow at the character, almost certainly by use of magic. The purpose of this trap is to actually kill the character with the arrow, although sometimes the arrow is poisoned, just to increase the odds.

This trap is usually triggered by a pressure plate as well, although often the trap is placed behind a closure, such as a door or inside a chest. The arrow would then fire when the closure was opened.

The easiest way to avoid this trap is just to stand to one side, which usually foils it completely (although



sometimes designers place traps on either side, just to be wicked). If the character stands in the trap's target zone, the trap gets to make an attack on the character using the composite bow attack table. The OB of the trap is typically 25, although magically enhanced versions could have a 50, 100, or even higher, OB.

SPEAR TRAPS

Spear Traps are like arrow traps except that many of them make a melee attack instead of missile. While this has no game mechanic impact, it can have logical implications in avoiding the trap. The missile version of the trap fires a spear at the character, usually one that is standing a distance away. The melee version is often used in enclosed places, such as a corridor, where the spear doesn't have room to completely come clear of the mechanism. Spear traps can have any trigger, but pressure plates and opening closures are the most common.

Spear traps strike on the Spear Table and typically have a 25 OB. Traps with the target enclosed in a more restricted space can have a 50, 100 or higher OB. Magic or simply masterful engineering can grant an OB increase as well.

THE ROLLING BOULDER

One of the most iconic traps, again due to *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, is the rolling boulder trap. In this trap a large, spherical boulder releases into a narrow, sloped corridor. It then chases the character until they trip or fall or evade the trap. The trick to this trap is that it applies pressure on the target, forcing them to act before they have time to think.

The boulder's speed depends on the angle of the corridor and the smoothness of the path. 150 is a good movement rate, as it forces most characters into at least a sprint. Those who can make their Pace Maneuvers and stay ahead of the boulder are probably fine (unless there is a dead end). Those don't fall and are run over by the boulder, which attacks on the Fall/Crush table with a 100 OB.

Surviving the trap can happen four different ways. First of all, the character can outrun the boulder and escape. Second, the character can find a side, ceiling, or floor exit and dive into it. Third the character can find a way for the boulder to pass. Finally, the character can let the boulder roll over him and pray he lives.

All of those options except for the third should be easy enough to judge. The third option typically involves finding a cranny and sliding into it while the boulder passes. Sometimes that will involve a niche or an alcove, but if the corridor is square in cross section, the character can stretch out against wall, using the corner to allow the round boulder to pass.

More deadly versions of the trap have a rounded floor or a cylinder for a boulder. Either way, the character can't use the cross section of the floor to find a place where the boulder can pass over them safely.

ILLUSIONED PIT TRAP

In this variation of the Pit Trap, the pit itself is a red herring. Here, the pit blocks the character's path, often in a corridor where the character cannot just go around. Instead, the character will find a way to jump over the pit. This is exactly what the builder intended.

When the character clears the pit, he discovers the normal-looking corridor is an illusion. Instead, he breaks through the image and finds himself flying toward a series of blades or other weapons. This trap usually attacks on the broadsword or spear table. The character's own momentum drives the attack, giving it a 50 OB.

Other variations include a second pit on the other side of the first pit, spears instead of broadswords, or the monofilament grid from the pit trap above. All of these just do the same thing, they cause the character to leap to his own doom.

THE DISTILLED WATER TRAP

This trap requires magic, but the more alchemically-minded villains might favor it for style. In this trap the character must walk through a puddle of distilled water. In this trap, the floor and walls that contain the puddle are treated so no minerals can dissolve into the water. Also in the water are two electrically charged points.

The trick to this trap is that water doesn't conduct electricity, the minerals dissolved in the water do. When the characters step into the water, they feel nothing. If they are wearing no armor, they can probably get to the other side without any problems, there not being enough minerals on the skin or clothes to complete the circuit.

When a character wearing armor steps into the water, things change. If the character moves through quickly, they're all right, but if they dawdle, or if a second armored person passes through (or the first one passes through twice), the magic helps the armor and the water exchange enough trace elements to complete the circuit. The first round the character takes an 'A' Electricity critical. Any round in which the character takes becomes Stunned, Unable to Parry, they can't move (without a Stunned Removal or a Stunned Maneuver check.) If the character takes enough stun or damage to pass out, they take 'E' crits while lying in the water.

POSITIVE PRESSURE TRAP

This trap uses pressure to trap, and probably kill, the characters. In this trap a room contains inward-opening, nearly airtight doors. The roof of this room is tall and

essentially a floating stone block in an airtight shaft. When the characters open the door and enter, the stone block is locked in place. After they are inside, the stone block releases and falls. The air pressure in the room builds quickly, slamming the doors closed and crushing them with overwhelming pressure as the air compresses until the pressure can hold the roof aloft.

Every round the characters are in the room, they must make a Constitution-based RR against a 20th level attack or they pass out. If they succeed, they can function, if under a -20 penalty. An RR vs. a 50th attack, based on Constitution, is necessary to keep from rupturing eardrums and taking a -50 penalty to hearing.

The pressure of the room holds the doors shut. Plus, they aren't *quite* airtight. The air hisses out and the ceiling continues to descend, albeit slowly. It takes an Absurd Strength Maneuver to open a door. If they can, the ceiling will fall the next round.

The character's best hope is to smash a door open. However, this also causes the ceiling to fall the rest of the way, smashing everyone still inside with a +200 Fall/Crush Attack. If you're nice, you'll place a number of doors in the room equal to party members, allowing the possibility of them smashing the doors open simultaneously, all of them escaping, though splitting themselves up in the process.

If you have *Spacemaster Datanet 1*, feel free to give everyone who escapes 'A' vacuum criticals.



NEW MONSTERS

Starting with this issue, we will introduce new monsters for your *Rolemaster* game. The first of these is the Supercroc.

SUPERCROC

In Water:

Level: 5E **Size:** H **MS/AQ:** MD/MD
Base Move: 80 **Max Pace:** Run **MM Bonus:** +20
Hits: 300E **Crits:** SL **AT (DB):** 12(20)
#Enc: 1 **Treasure:** — **Bonus XP:** E

Attacks: 160HBi / 160HGr√ / Special

Habitat: hmnw-(—),LME,(—),HJ-2.

Outlook (IQ): Aggressive

On Land:

Level: 5E **Size:** H **MS/AQ:** VS/SL
Base Move: 50 **Max Pace:** Run **MM Bonus:** +10
Hits: 300E **Crits:** SL **AT (DB):** 12(20)
#Enc: 1 **Treasure:** — **Bonus XP:** C

Attacks: 80HBi / 120HBa

Habitat: hmnw-(—),LME,(—),HJ-2.

Outlook (IQ): Aggressive

Description: Much like the smaller crocodile, the supercroc is a monster of huge proportions, averaging 37'-40', with a head over 6' long. With armored plates, this massive creature can tear humans literally limb from limb.

Lifestyle: The Supercroc is adapted for water life and water combat. Their huge bulk moves effortlessly through the water but they are a bit clumsier on land. Because of this, there are two sets of stats above, one for water and one for land.

Combat: Supercrocs have powerful jaws and muscular bodies. In the water, they grapple their foes and drown them. On land, they attack with their jaws and their lightning-fast tails.

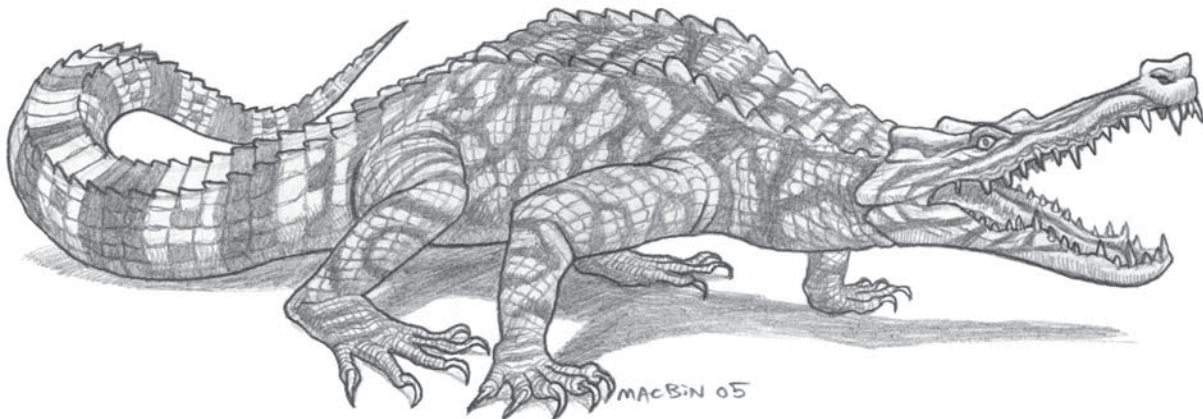
MAGIC ITEMS

Continuing with the theme of this quarterly, fighters, below you will find eight magic items. Each are ready to use for the fighter on the go.

BELT OF FOCUS

The Belt of Focus is a wide leather weapon belt. It's made of thick brown leather and its mirror-smooth finish is marred by numerous cuts and nicks, revealing the deep naked leather for all to see. As soon as a character attunes to it, they will notice an increase in their focus and their alertness. Many will think that this grants a bonus to the Awareness categories, but practically it doesn't. Things seem a little brighter and louder with the belt on and it comes with additional noise that balances with the increased perception.

What the belt *does* do is slightly tune-up a character's mental focus. While wearing this belt the character has a heightened ability to resist pain and increased general endurance. This grants a +10 bonus to any RRs made to resist physical hardships (GM's discretion) and Stunned Maneuver or Removal. Perhaps more importantly, this belt can allow a character to automatically shrug off stun. Treat this ability as if the belt were "absorbing" the stun. Whenever the character wearing it takes any type of stun (including a "must parry" result), the belt will take the stun if it can. The belt starts with the worst stun first and can remove up to one round plus one round for every point of bonus in the character's Self Discipline. For instance, if the character has a SD bonus of +2, the belt can remove up to three rounds of stun. The belt gets rid of one round of stun every round, as if it were a character. The belt absorbs the stun instantly, and if it allows the character to shrug off all their stun, then the character will be as if he had not been stunned at all. In addition, this happens before the character must make any Stunned Maneuver or Removal rolls.



HELMET OF SHIELDING

This helmet is a single piece of metal with a T-slit that exposes the eyes, nose and mouth. The helm itself is made from high-quality steel and the edges are gilt in gold. Celtic-style designs cover the steel portions, and the inside is lined in felt.

The helmet grants the wearer a +25 bonus against mental (m) spells.

TORC OF REFLEX

This is a simple piece of rolled gold that one wears as a necklace. It's soft enough to bend apart and then bend it back around the neck. The ends are shaped into small dragonheads. The eyes of the dragon are tiny rubies. The entire piece has a beaten and rough-hewn look. The torque is always cool, no matter the background temperature or the level of the wearer's exertion.

While wearing the Torc of Reflex, characters react more quickly in combat. The character receives a +10 to Defensive Bonus and Situational Awareness (Combat). In addition, the character can act in the Snap Action Phase with no penalty.

ARMBANDS OF STRIKING

These two bands are made of bronze, about three inches wide and half an inch thick. They shine brightly as if newly polished and their exterior is always a mirror finish. Inside, inscribed runes list the names of several gods of war, as well as legendary heroes. Connecting rune structures invoke the strength and prowess of those named and the bands tingle to the touch. The bands are worn across the middle of the biceps and the arms of the wearer look toned and powerful.

The bands grant a +10 bonus to Power Lifting and similar maneuvers, when those maneuvers involve the arms. They also grant a x2 multiplier to Hits delivered by the character with melee attacks.

SIEGE MATTOCK

This powerful magic item appears to be a normal war mattock. It's battered and well-used, the blade chipped and worn. The handle is smooth and polished by many hands.

The item grants a +20 bonus in combat. In addition, when used against a building or fortification, the damage caused by the weapon is applied directly to the structure, in the structure's scale of Hits. With this weapon, a single determined man can breach many walls in a matter of minutes.

DESERT PLATE

This is a suit of full plate armor, made of gleaming high steel. The armor is nearly as reflective as adamantium and its polished surface returns perfect images of the world around it. Under a bright sun, it hurts to look directly at the armor's surface. Even under torchlight, the armor seems to magnify the light.

This armor has a +15 bonus. In addition, when in direct sunlight, the armor shines as if surrounded by the Aura spell. Finally, the armor has a cooling effect, keeping the occupant cool, even in the worst desert temperatures.

SPELL SHIELD

This full shield is covered in arcane runes and glyphs. The shield itself is made out of some strange, porous substance that's as strong as steel. Legend has it this substance is magic itself, distilled and solidified into solid mass. Whatever the substance, it's light and easy to carry. The shield seems to respond almost to the character's thoughts, moving with the arm to intercept attacks, moving quickly and efficiently, propelled by internal magic.

The Spell Shield has a +25 enchantment. In addition, it conveys its entire DB bonus to any Directed Spell or area attacks. It also grants a +10 bonus to RRs the wielder makes against any Base Spell Attacks. Finally, the shield can cast *Cancel Essence*, *Cancel Mentalism*, and *Cancel Channeling* once per day each.



GAUNTLETS OF GRASPING

These plain gauntlets are made of sharkskin. They appear smooth and clean and they glisten slightly, as if damp. They are cool to the touch and cover the arms to mid forearm. They are gray in color and quite form fitting.

These gauntlets make it easy to catch and hold something. They grant a +10 bonus to any skill where grasping would be a benefit, Climbing for instance. In addition, reduce all fumble ranges with weapons by two.