

SHADOW SWORD & SPELL



BASIC

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Shadow Sword & Spell

BASIC

RICHARD IORIO II



CHICAGO

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POWERED BY 12°. IT IS TIME TO USE YOUR 12-SIDED DICE.

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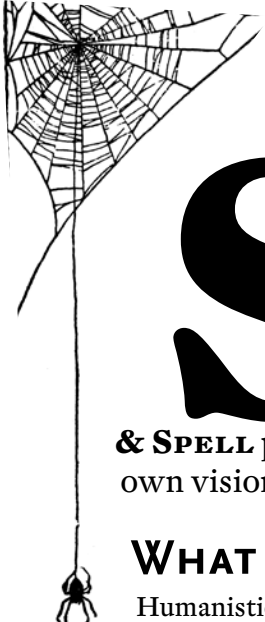


C **HAPTER**

1

P R I M E R





S**HADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is a humanistic, pulp fantasy game that draws its inspiration from the stories of pulp fantasy writers who wrote between 1930 and 1960 – Robert E. Howard, Fritz Leiber, Gardner Fox, Jack Vance, Fletcher Pratt, L. Sprague de Camp, and their contemporaries. **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** provides you with the tools you need to create your own vision of the sword-and-sorcery genre.

WHAT IS HUMANISTIC, PULP FANTASY?

Humanistic fantasy is a fantasy genre in which humans take the center stage. It is fantasy largely without the races that are familiar to fantasy readers today – elves, dwarves, and the like.

Of course, **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is more than just humanistic fantasy; it is also pulp fantasy. Pulp fantasy, to put it simply, is a genre of fantasy that is low in magic, high in adventure, and big with ideas. It is grittier, as often you cannot tell the difference between the hero and the villain, and the drama is more internal and personal. You are given the options of playing pulp fantasy inspired by not only Robert E. Howard, but Clark Ashton Smith and H.P. Lovecraft. This is not to say this is a “Conan Game” or a “Dreamlands Game.” This is a game about tone and feeling. Horror and discovery. Secrets and mystery. It is about larger than life characters, vile villains, vast vistas, and nubile men and women in distress. **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is your game.

Everything you need to know as a player or Gamemaster can be found in this book. This chapter – the Primer – tells you what to expect from the game, and explains its core mechanics and how these are used in the game.

After all the rules and options, little room is spent telling you what a game should not only feel like, but what you should do with it. As a player, you should know after reading this chapter what to expect from the world of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**. As a Gamemaster, you will have an idea of what you can do with the game, and know about the type of games you are able to run. This Primer is your amuse-bouche, if you will. This one bite sets the table for what is to come. So without further ado, here is **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**.

SETTING

SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL is set in a world laden with mysteries, magic, and plots. This is a world in which the characters are born and in which they must survive if they are to make a name for themselves. This setting is filled with a smörgåsbord of cultures waxing and waning in power. Various kingdoms, city-states, and regions exist that offer numerous challenges. Drawing inspiration from the writers that

influenced this genre, the world of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** offers numerous locations teeming with possibilities. This is a world awash in conflict, tinged with magic, and filled with danger.

The stronger you are, the more power you possess, and this is evident in the world. Merchants work and scheme to gain more wealth. Nobles work and scheme to achieve power. Priests work and scheme to gain influence. Everyone has an agenda, and often these agendas conflict. It is this conflict which often drags the characters into it, either willingly or unwillingly.

The world contains sun-blasted deserts, vine-shrouded jungles, ancient ruins with hidden secrets and more, and these offer endless possibilities. It is this world that GMs will set their adventures in, and players will explore.

FOR THE PLAYERS

Your character is a native of The World. They might be a thief, who due to their knack of picking pockets, makes a living in Gravina robbing all, while dodging the competing guilds. They might be a raider, who sells their sword to the highest bidder and fights for any or all as long as the silver continues to flow. They might even hail from the region of Cal'athar, and have an affinity for the forces of the arcane that allows them to work spells outside the scope of everyday life. In **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL: BASIC**, you create a character who is at the start of their adventuring career. Some event, some desire, drives you to thumb your nose at your lot in life, and you choose to live the way you want. Society holds no bonds for you, and you choose the life you want to live. Why should the wealthy alone be rich? Why should the baron own his own land? You want that, and more, and by Azathoth's Radiance, you will have it!

In **BASIC**, your character adventures and grows. Slowly, she becomes stronger and influential. Over time, she will begin to acquire not only the trappings of wealth, but power. Her influence and fame will lead her to command armies, to rule a kingdom, to influence society – but let's not get ahead of ourselves. Basic gets you to this point – that is, if you survive it!

FOR THE GAME MASTER

So what does the Gamemaster (GM) do? Pretty much everything.

Your job is harder than that of the players. While they create one character, it is your job to create a cast of thousands. This cast is designed to aid or harm the player characters. They serve to act as informants, enemies, victims, targets, and clients of the player characters. They react to and act against the characters. They pass along needed or obscure vital information. Besides this cast of thousands, it is your job to create the adventures in which your players participate. You devise the adventure goals, the opponents needed to be overcome, and the ramifications of succeeding or failing at the adventure.

You also act as the referee ensuring the rules are not so much followed, as un-

derstood. You decide when to enforce them, when to bend them, and when to apply them. More importantly, you keep everything in balance. This means that you make sure each player has a chance to shine, and that each player knows the risks and consequences of her character's actions.

Scared? Don't be. GMing is fun and rewarding. You know all the secrets, and you know all of the player characters' plots. Even though you know this, part of the fun of being a GM is seeing how events not only play out, but how the players react. GMing has two rules, and these two rules are the key to not only **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, but to all roleplaying games. Knowing these rules make everything easier.

So what are these rules?

RULE 1: HAVE FUN.

Simple, I know, but truthfully, very important. If you are not having fun, neither are the players. For example, a player wants to perform numerous actions with their character to try and succeed at a given task. Many of these actions are not covered by the rules, and play is being slowed down by endless arguments over what "can" and "cannot" be done. This is not fun for you, and you can be assured that it is not fun for the other players. In cases like this, let it go. Roll the dice, move the action along, do something, anything, rather than continue the disagreement.

RULE 2: WHEN IN DOUBT GO WITH YOUR GUT.

To put it simply, when faced with a question, go with your first reaction, as often it is the correct way to proceed. In the example above, if your gut tells you the action the player wants to take has a +10 TN, then go for it. Roll the dice and move along. **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is a game, and it should be fun. If the players do something unexpected, don't panic. Roll with it and see what happens.

12°

Everything you need to know in order to play **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** can be found in this book. The basics found in this chapter should allow you to quickly understand the game's mechanical foundations. Of course, **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** isn't complex. Most of the rules are fairly straightforward and easy to remember. Nevertheless, there are a handful of occasions when multiple modifiers and special cases come into play. The more you understand the basic rules, the better prepared you'll be to deal with these few exceptions.



PLAYING THE GAME

In order to play **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** you need a few things.

- First, two twelve-sided dice (d12). GMs might want to have a few more handy.
- A blank piece of paper (or a Character sheet) and a pencil.
- A willingness to have fun.

RULES OVERVIEW

Action in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** isn't intended to be "realistic" or "gritty." It's meant to recreate the type of action you're likely to read in books, see in comic books, or see in a movie or television show. Note: **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is not cartoonish or ridiculously over the top, but the emphasis in the game is on verisimilitude and plausibility, rather than a strict reality simulation. The game's rules, known as **12°**, are designed to accommodate this style of play with ease. Action is about doing things in a flashy and larger-than-life way. It is one thing to say your Character is fighting a pack of wolves, it's another to say they are doing so while balancing on a crumbling wall of a famous ruin.

Every action, regardless of whether your Character is swinging a sword or intimidating a merchant, is handled the same way. Roll 2d12, and if the result is equal to or less than your Target Number (TN), the action succeeds. Simple as that.

Your TN is a number based on the associated Abilities or Skills, plus or minus any modifiers. For example, if your Character wants to throw a dagger and has a Quickness Ability of 6 and Throw Skill 8, your TN is 14. Thus, rolling a 2d12 and getting a result of 13 results in a success; rolling 2d12 and getting a 23 results in a failure.

TESTS

All actions in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** are called Tests. There are three types of Tests – Ability, Skill, and Opposed – that depend on specific situations; the Gamemaster will tell you what type of Test you need to make if it's not obvious.



ABILITY TESTS

Ability Tests depend on one of your Character's Abilities and are used in times of great need or danger. These Tests are not tied to Skills; instead, they are tied to your Character's innate ability to do something. Your Target Number is always the unmodified score in your Ability.

For example, suppose your Character is running away from a rampaging dinosaur. You decide to shake your pursuer by declaring your Character is going to

dive into a nearby pond and hold her breath while underwater, hoping the dinosaur does not detect her. Once your Character reaches her limit, your GM tells you to make a Toughness Test, to see if your Character continues to hold her breath. In this case, your TN would be your Character's Toughness Ability (8). Rolling 2d12, the result is 15, failure. Thus your Character fails her Toughness Test and begins to drown.

SKILL TARGET NUMBER

Governing Ability + Rank in Skill = Target Number (TN)

SKILL TESTS

Skill Tests are the most common Tests found in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**. Most actions, from throwing a spear to researching a demon, are handled by Skill Tests. Your Target Number in a Skill Test equals your Skill Rank plus the Rank of the Skill's associated Ability, plus or minus any bonuses or penalties associated with the Test. The resulting number is the one you need to meet in order to succeed.

For example, your Character is scaling the wall of a wizard's tower. This is normally a Routine Test (see Bonuses and Penalties, below). Unfortunately, your Character is attempting to climb a wall in the pouring rain while not being spotted by the guards patrolling the area. Your Character's Athletics Skill is 7 and his Quickness Ability is 6, making your TN 13. Due to the rain and the need for your Character to be silent, your GM assesses your Character a -4 penalty, which lowers your Character's TN to 9 for this Test.

OPPOSED TESTS

Opposed Tests are Tests between your Character and another person, being, or creature, usually occurring when your Character is competing against another Character or is acting against a non-player Character of some sort. Opposed Tests are necessary because the degree of your Character's success (or failure) determines how the game's events proceed to unfold. Opposed Tests require two or more parties to make a Test; whoever rolls lowest, but still below their Target Number, succeeds. Opposed Tests also come into play for some specific Skills, such as Stealth, as well as in combat.

An example of an Opposed Test for Stealth would be in the case of hiding. Your Character is sneaking into a protected villa. A guard is keeping watch, and the GM states that they have a chance of noticing your Character sneaking into the house. The GM tells you to make a Stealth Test, while the GM makes an Observe Test. Rolling the dice, your result is a 4 (your TN was 12) – success! The GM, rolling for the guard (whose TN is 9), rolls a 5 – also a success. However, your character rolled 8 Degrees of Success, while the guard rolled 4 Degrees of Success. (See below for more details on the Degrees of Success.) Your Character easily sneaks into the house, while the guard standing watch fails to notice her.

SUCCESS & FAILURE

As long as you roll a number equal to or less than your Target Number, your Character succeeds at her action. Anytime you roll higher than your TN, your Character fails. In some cases, your Character may also experience a Dramatic Success or a Dramatic Failure.

DRAMATIC SUCCESS

Anytime you roll a “2” on 2d12, you score a Dramatic Success. The meaning of a Dramatic Success varies with the type of Test being used. Typically, it means your Character has not only succeeded, but did so in a spectacular, memorable fashion. In combat, a Dramatic Success indicates you have dealt your opponent maximum damage for her weapon type, whereas in a Skill Test it indicates that you’ve achieved all you were attempting and more.

DRAMATIC FAILURE

Rolling a “24” on 2d12 means your Character experiences a Dramatic Failure. What this means is that your Character not only failed her Test, but also performed her action so badly that she has either placed herself in danger or otherwise adversely affected herself (and possibly her companions). In combat, a Dramatic Failure indicates that your sword breaks, while in a Skill Test it indicates that you are either badly mistaken or have failed in such a way as to make your situation more precarious.

DEGREES

As you might expect with a game mechanic called **12°**, your Character’s Degree of Success is important. Your Degree of Success is the amount by which you roll under your Target Number. For example, if your Character’s TN is 14 and you roll 11, you achieve 3 Degrees of Success. In combat, your Degree of Success acts as a multiplier to your weapon’s base damage.

Using the above example, if your Character is fighting with a sword with a base Damage Value (DV) of 5 and achieved 3 degrees of success, she would deal 15 points of damage to her opponent.

In Skill use, Degrees of Success have a much more “impressionistic” meaning, which is to say, the results are largely up to the GM. Generally, Degrees of Success either indicate the time factor is modified for the task or an increase in the task’s effectiveness. Returning to the above example, a task that normally takes 10 rounds will take only 7 if you achieve 3 Degrees of Success. Conversely, in the above example, if the Character had failed the task by 3 Degrees of Success, the

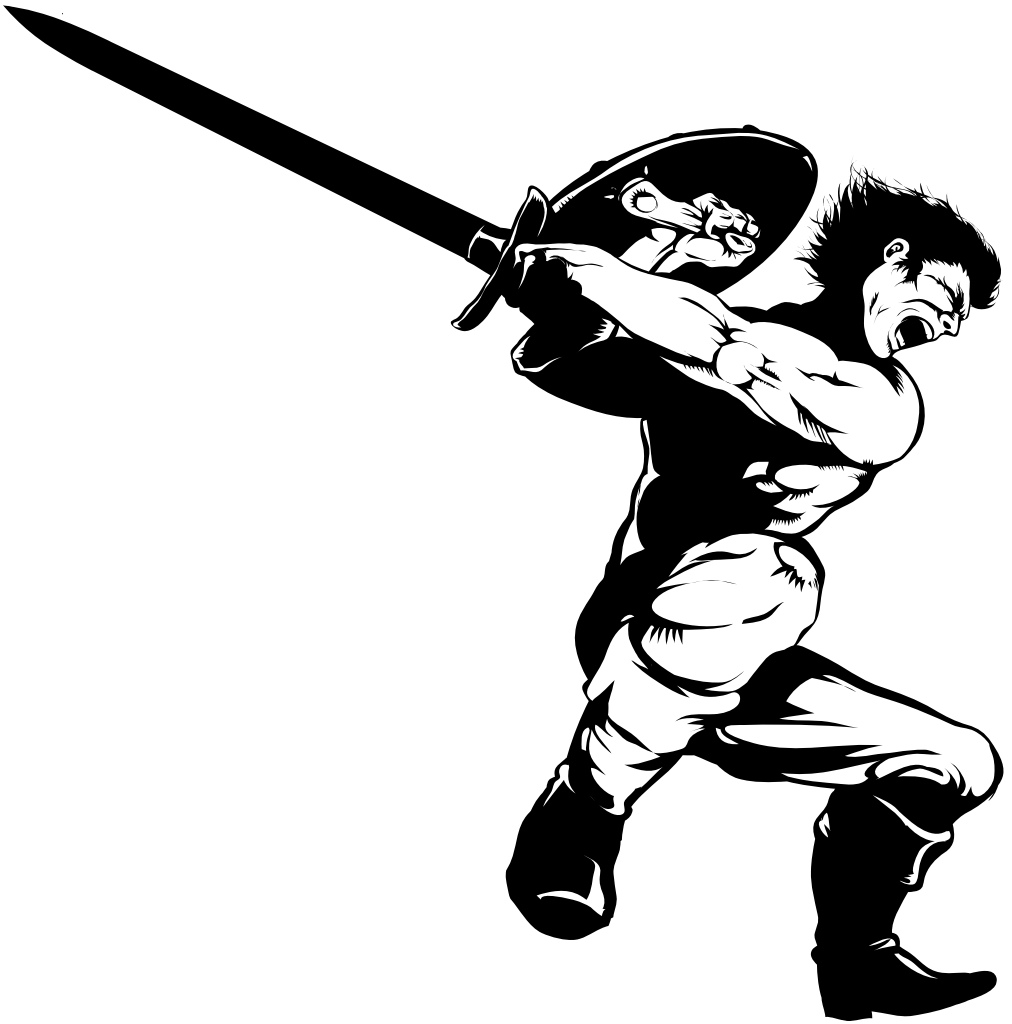
TABLE 1:1 SITUATION MODIFIERS

SITUATION	MODIFIER
Impossible	–6
Daring	–5
Reckless	–4
Challenging	–3
Difficult	–2
Hard	–1
Routine	±0
Feeble	+1
Easy	+2
Trivial	+3
Simple	+4
Basic	+5
Instinctive	+6

same task would have taken 13 rounds instead. Ultimately, the Gamemaster is the final arbiter of how Degrees of Success improve or negatively affect Skill-based tasks, but it should always be an obvious improvement or decrement that fits the degree of success a Character achieves.

BONUS & PENALTIES

Sometimes, depending on the situation, your Character gains a bonus or penalty to a Test. These modifiers change the Target Number of the Test, making it easier (or harder) for your Character to achieve what she wants. Bonuses and penalties are never applied to the dice roll; they are added (or subtracted) directly to the Target Number (TN).



GMs, as they run adventures, determine what the situations are and whether any bonuses or penalties come into play. For example, suppose you are the GM and one of your players wants her character to fire a crossbow while riding a running horse. Typically, firing a crossbow is a Routine Task (no modifier), but firing it from a running horse is more challenging. As the GM, you decide that, due to the nature of this task, the player suffers a -3 (Challenging) penalty while firing from a running horse.

HOOKS & ACTION POINTS

SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL succeeds, or fails, based on the Characters that are played. Of course, the Gamemaster's skill at creating an interesting and fun adventure is almost as important, but it's the Characters and their actions that drive the game. To encourage you to create interesting and well-rounded Characters and emphasize their most interesting characteristics in your adventures, **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** uses Hooks.

Hooks are roleplaying tools that describe some aspect of your Character's past history, personality, or connections to other Characters, among other things. For example, a Character might have "Last surviving member of their tribe" or "Bearer of the Mark" or "Strong as a lion" as Hooks. Each of these hooks is suggestive about your Character and possibly about her relationship to the larger world—both of which make them invaluable to the GM as she plans engaging adventures in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**.

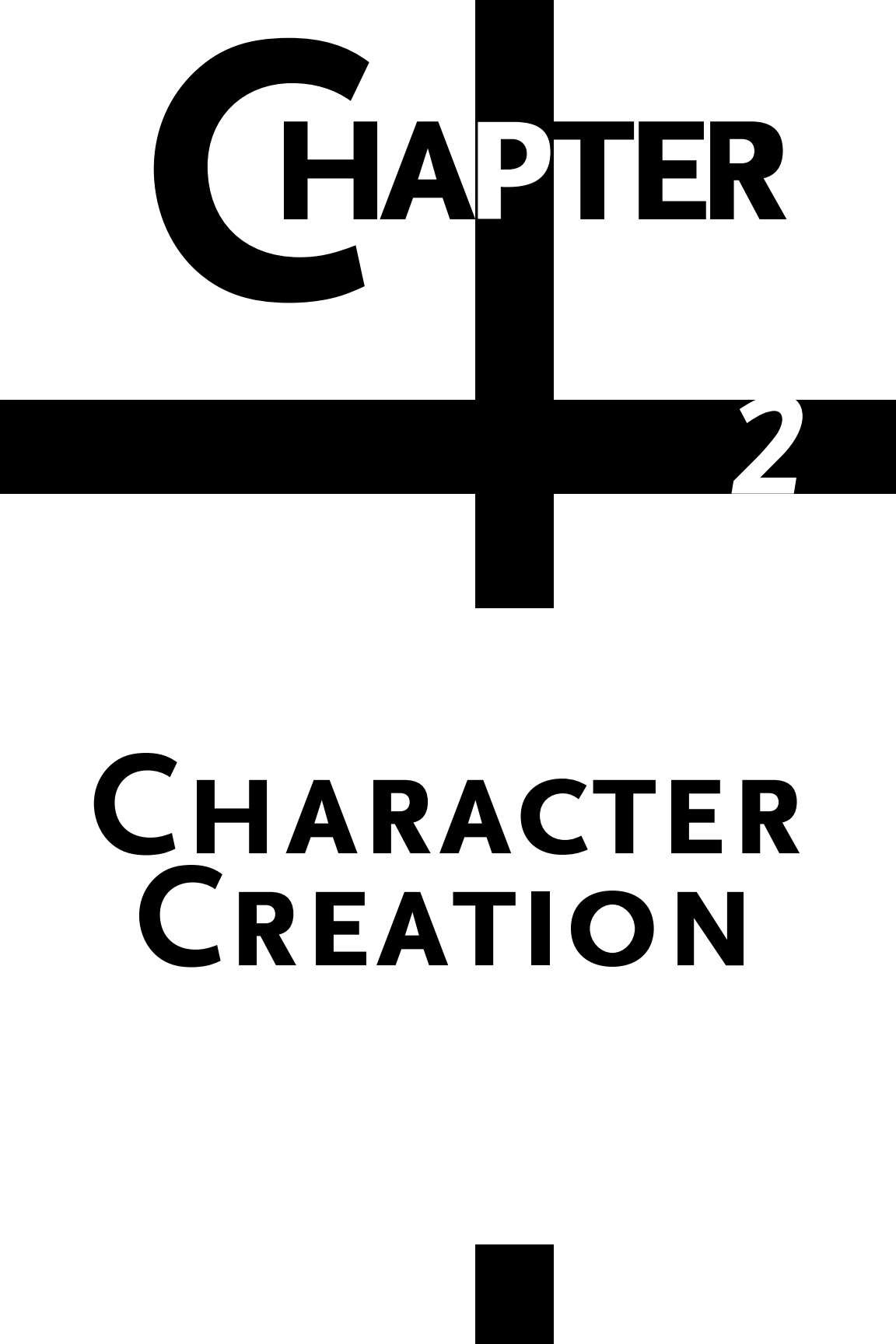
Besides suggesting interesting things about your Character to the GM, hooks have another more immediate benefit: Action Points.

Action Points are dramatic "currency" you acquire by creating Hooks. They can be traded in for situational boons, such as bonuses to your Target Number, free re-rolls, and other benefits. Action Points are finite in number, with Characters having no more than 12 Action Points at any given time, more often due to their using them in an adventure. Action Points can be regained by bringing your character's hooks to bear in an adventure in ways your GM thinks will make the game more exciting and fun for everyone.

WHAT'S NEXT?

What follows are all the rules and options you will need to run and play your own game of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**. These rules and options allow you to create your own games, and you have the freedom to use or ignore what you choose from these rules and options in order to create the style of play you want. This is your game. This is your world. We have given you the tools to have fun. So let's go have some fun!





CHAPTER

2

**CHARACTER
CREATION**

THE CHARACTER CREATION PROCESS

The process of creating a character for **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** has five simple steps. Each step is described in greater detail below. These steps are:

1. **Choose Abilities:** Divide 35 Ability Points between your Character's five Abilities.
2. **Choose Background:** Your Background helps define your Character, and helps set the path he took before undertaking a life of adventure.
3. **Choose Skills:** You have 45 Skill Points, which you may use to purchase the Skills your Character knows.
4. **Hooks:** Choose five Hooks, three based on your Character's background, one based on the life he had before he began adventuring, and one based on the personality of the character.
5. **Finishing Touches.**

BASICS

Before getting to the heart of the character creation process, here are a few definitions and things that should be kept in mind.

ABILITY

The stats that measure a character (which are typically called Attributes in other roleplaying games). These do not have Ranks, they simply have a value or a score.

SKILL RANK

The term Rank is used with Skills, and is a measure of how skilled a character is with a specific Skill. When a Skill is first purchased, it is said to have been purchased at the Base Rank (see below).

BASE RANK

Base Rank is defined as the starting Rank of a Skill, which is equal to the governing Ability at the time the Skill is first purchased. This is a number that a player needs to keep track of, as it will determine the cost of Skill Rank increases in the future. One cannot automatically assume that a Skill's Base Rank will always be equal to the governing Ability, as it is possible for an Ability to change in value during the course of the game. In addition, if a governing Ability rises or falls, the Skill's Base Rank need to be adjusted as well.

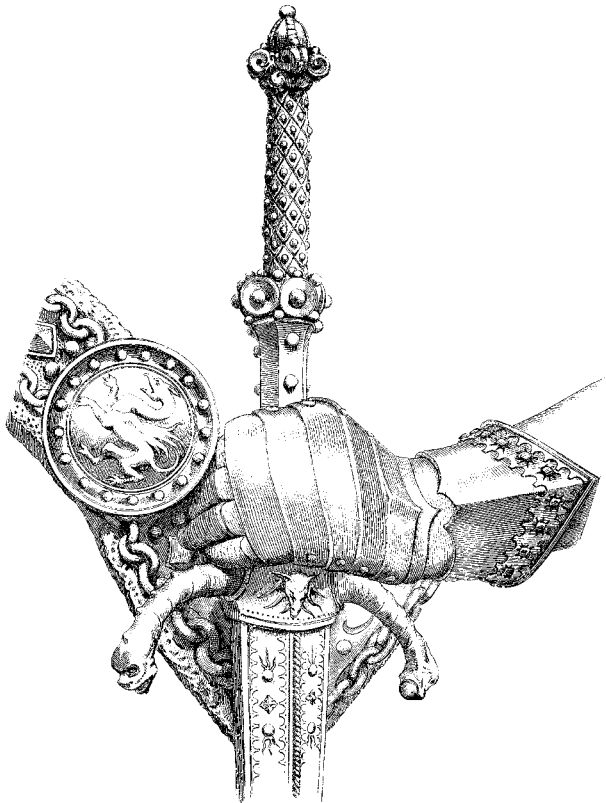
So if you bought a Skill's Base Rank at 6, the score at which the Ability was at when buying the Skill, and you increase the value of the Ability, that the Base Rank of the Skill goes up by 1, and thus the Skill Rank increases by 1.

SKILL LIMITS

A Skill cannot have more than 12 Ranks. If a character starts with an Ability at 10, this means that the player cannot add more than 2 additional Ranks to give his Character a Skill with a Rank of 12; if a character has an ability at 12, they can only buy a Skill at the Base Rank. Why? Characters with Abilities at 10-12 are damn near demi-gods, and therefore, when they buy a Skill at Base Rank they are very near to, or at the top of their game. Period.

ABILITIES

Abilities are the innate aspects of the character, such as physical strength, toughness, and so forth that define a character in terms of their raw ability at a given task. Abilities range in numeric value between 1 to 12, with 7 being average for most. You have 35 Ability Points to divide amongst your Character's Abilities at his creation. Once the Abilities are set, they are unlikely to change over the course of play, so allocate them wisely.



Abilities, like many other game mechanics in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, have scores. These scores or values are used to measure your Character against others. These scores also set the Target for your Tests. **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**'s five Abilities are: Brawn, Quickness, Toughness, Wits, and Will. There are also three derived Abilities: Vitality, Resolve, and Sanity.

BRAWN

Brawn measures how physically strong your Character is. You use this stat to determine how much he can lift, how far he can throw objects, and how hard he can hit. Brawn is the sheer amount of brute force your Character has, and can affect your Character's appearance. The more Brawn your Character has, the more muscle he'll have.

QUICKNESS

Quickness measures how agile your Character is, as well as his manual and physical dexterity. It is also used to determine how fast your Character's reactions are. In combat, Quickness is used to determine when your Character acts during a Combat round.

TOUGHNESS

Toughness measures how healthy your Character is, and also acts as his endurance. Toughness is different than Brawn, because Toughness is not dependent on how physically strong your Character is – a very weak character could have a lot of Toughness and vice versa.

WITS

Wits measures your Character's mental faculties, including memory, awareness, and logical or basic reasoning. A character with a high Wits might have received an extensive academic education or he might simply be highly perceptive and imbued with common sense.

WILL

Will measures the emotional strength and inner fortitude of your Character. Resolution is important when your Character comes into contact with otherworldly beings or must withstand great mental stress.

THE THREE FORMULAS FOR DERIVED ABILITIES

Please note, that in the case of averaging, one always rounds down.

$$[(\text{Brawn} + \text{Toughness}) \div 2] \times 5 = \text{Vitality}$$

$$\text{Wits} \times 5 = \text{Sanity}$$

$$\text{D12} + [(\text{Quickness} + \text{Wits}) \div 2] +/- \text{modifiers} = \text{Initiative Rating}$$

2

VITALITY

Vitality represents your Character's ability to take all types of physical damage. Unlike the other Abilities, you determine Vitality's numerical value not by spending Ability Points, but by a simple calculation, namely **$[(\text{Brawn} + \text{Toughness}) \div 2] \times 5$** . Thus, a character with 7 Brawn and 6 Toughness ($7 + 6 = 13 \div 2 = 6$) has 30 Vitality.

Every time your Character takes physical damage, he suffers a variety of mounting damage penalties, making it more difficult for your Character to act. Your Character is either unconscious or dying if he has no more Vitality in the course of a combat. Further information on Vitality and how it relates to damage is found in *Chapter 5*.

SANITY

Every character has a measure of Sanity that tells you about your Character's mental well-being. This Ability can sometimes be even more important than your Vitality. Coming face-to-face with a demon, for example, will have an effect on your Character's Sanity. Sanity also comes into play for those characters skilled in the art of Magic. Some spells require the spellcaster to call upon their Sanity, and the more powerful the magic is, the more Sanity comes into play.

Sanity is generated by taking the character's Will score and multiplying it by 5; this gives you your Character's starting Sanity, as well as the maximum number to which his Sanity can rise. Every time your Character loses Sanity, fill in the appropriate number of circles.

As your Character loses Sanity, this takes its toll on him. The more Sanity he loses, the greater the risk your Character runs of gaining a Disorder. If your Character's Sanity reaches zero, he has fallen into madness, and your Character can no longer function because whatever Disorders he has acquired has taken over his mind and his life. The rules for Sanity can be found in *Chapter 5*.

WHAT ABOUT FRACTIONS?

Whenever you need to divide a result, Stat, or even degree of success by half, any fraction is rounded down. This is a universal rule for **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**.

INITIATIVE

Which character gets to act first in a Round is determined by his Initiative Rating. Initiative is determined by the following formula:

$$D12 + [(QUICKNESS + WITS) \div 2] +/- \text{MODIFIERS} = \text{INITIATIVE RATING}$$

Initiative is covered in depth in *Chapter 5: Action*, but in the meantime, simply record the rating.

HOOKS

Player characters begin the game with five Hooks. Hooks are noteworthy qualities, people, events, locations, or even objects that link your Character to them as well as describe him more fully. For each Hook, you should write down one or two sentences that offer an insight into your Character's nature. When the moment strikes, you can use Hooks during the adventure. Your GM, using the rules in *Chapter 3*, will then weave them into the action.

What makes for a good Hook? Here are some examples:

- Growing up on the streets of Gravina, you learned early on never to turn your back on strangers.
- Your travels across the continent have given you a love for new languages and customs.
- Your tribe was wiped out by a sorcerer, and now you both hate and fear magic.

For more information on how to provide useful information about your Character's background through his Hooks, please read *Chapter 3*.

Hooks have another purpose beyond roleplaying: they let you gain and spend Action Points (see below) for your Character. Hooks provide you with a justification for using Action Points at an appropriate time in an adventure, such as as-

suming they succeed on a Test. Conversely, if you can insert and/or connect one or more of your Hooks into the current adventure in a way that makes your Character's life more difficult (which is to say, more exciting), you gain Action Points. Likewise, the Gamemaster may, at certain times, decide that one or more of your Hooks is relevant and introduce new obstacles to your Character's progress because of this, in which case you also gain Action Points.



ACTION POINTS

Every newly created player Character starts with five (5) Action Points. Action Points allow you, as a player (rather than as your Character), to influence

events in the game in small, but interesting ways. Action Points can be used for the following: +1 Bonus, Hook, or “Editing”. Each of these is discussed below.

+1 BONUS

The most basic use of Action Points is to grant a +1 bonus to the Target of any dice roll.

Hook

If you have a Hook that you feel is applicable to your Character’s current situation, you may mention this to the GM and, if he agrees, you may then spend an Action Point to do one of the following:

- Re-roll any dice roll.
- +2 bonus to any Target Number.

You may use as many Hooks as you wish on any single Action, provided the GM agrees that they apply to the situation, and you have sufficient Action Points to do so. You may not, however, use the same Hook multiple times to spend multiple Action Points on the same action.

“EDITING”

Action Points can also be used to “edit” an adventure so as to introduce additional elements, provided that they don’t directly contradict anything that’s already been established by the GM or otherwise disrupt the flow. For example, your Character and his companions are having a drink in a seedy inn in Fox Point, when a pair of thugs enters intent on capturing them. You can spend an Action Point to establish that the inn not only has a back exit, but that your table is conveniently located near it so that you and your friends can make a hasty retreat unseen by your pursuers. Unless the GM has specifically stated that there is either no back exit or that your table is located far from any exit, this is a perfectly legitimate use of an Action Point. On the other hand, if you attempted to use an Action Point to say that the ceiling collapsed on the thugs just as they entered the inn, killing them in the process, the GM would be well within his rights to overrule you.

In general, GMs are encouraged to be fairly lenient with the use of Action Points to edit adventures, particularly if the player makes some connection to one of his Hooks. In the example above, if one of the player characters had a Hook for his character called “Easy Getaway”, and has established he always makes sure he knows where multiple exits are for escaping from potentially dangerous situations, the GM would have even less reason to deny his use of the Action Point to find a back exit.

More information on the use of Action Points can be found in *Chapter 3*.

BACKGROUNDS

Pulp fantasy characters are a diverse lot, shaped not only by their exploits but also by their origins. That's why each **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** character has a Background that gives him a small set of bonuses (and, in some cases, penalties) that represent early and lasting societal and cultural influences.

Because of the wide range of possible options, Backgrounds consist of two parts: a Culture and a Modifier. Cultures include Primitive, Barbarian, Civilized, and Advanced. Modifiers, as their name implies, modify the Culture by adding a quality to it, such as "Decadent," "Nomadic," or "Southern." By associating one Culture and one Modifier together in various combinations, you can create many different Backgrounds, each of which has its own unique characteristics. Thus, you can create a Nomadic Barbarian Character who will have different bonuses and penalties when compared to a Southern Barbarian Character.

This section describes four primary Cultures and many Modifiers. Future Shadow, Sword & Spell products will include additional Cultures and/or Modifiers, but players and GMs can make their own using the guidelines presented below.

CULTURES

As noted above, there are four Cultures you can choose for your character.

PRIMITIVE

A Primitive character belongs to a pre-literate culture, one that lacks metal-working, large permanent settlements, and has no social structure larger than the family or clan. Generally, Primitive Characters come from a hunter-gatherer background. Historical examples of Primitive cultures include Australian aborigines, African bushmen, and many Pacific islanders. Literary examples include Robert E. Howard's Picts and Michael Moorcock's Yurits.

Background Bonuses: Athletics at Base Rank, Survival at Base Rank, +1 Action Point

BARBARIAN

A Barbarian Character belongs to a culture that lacks the large permanent settlements and organization of Civilized societies, but possesses many other advances, such as agriculture, metal-working, and, in some cases, literacy. Historical examples of Barbarian cultures include Celts, Huns, and Vikings. Literary examples include Robert E. Howard's Cimmerians and Tolkien's Rohirrim.

Background Bonuses: Athletics at Base Rank, Melee at Base Rank, Ride at Base Rank

CIVILIZED

A Civilized Character belongs to a culture that possesses large permanent settlements, powerful central governments, and engages in large-scale civic engineering projects. Historical examples of Civilized cultures include Imperial China,

ancient Egypt, and the Romans. Literary examples include Robert E. Howard's Aquilonians and Fritz Leiber's Lankhmarites.

Background Bonuses: Bureaucracy at Base Rank, Diplomacy at Base Rank, +1 Action Point

ADVANCED

An Advanced Character belongs to a culture whose achievements far outstrip those of their contemporaries, both in scope and in magnificence. Advanced cultures may even possess magic and/or sciences otherwise unknown in the world. There are no historical examples of such cultures, but literary ones abound, including Michael Moorcock's Melnibonéans and the Red Martians of Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Background Bonuses: Lore at Base Rank, Study at Base Rank, +1 Action Point

Background Penalty: -1 TN when attempting socially-oriented Tests with members of "inferior" cultures.

MODIFIERS

The following is a small selection of Modifiers that can be applied to the four Cultures noted above. All Modifiers grant small bonuses and penalties to Skill Tests. Generally, this consists of either a single +2 bonus or two +1 bonuses. A greater number of bonuses are possible, but any bonuses above +2 (in aggregate) must be counter-balanced by a -1 penalty for each additional +1. Thus, a Modifier that granted a +1 bonus to three different Skill Tests would also include a -1 penalty to a single Skill Test.

With this in mind, each Gamemaster can create as many Modifiers as desired for his campaign. Here are a few examples to illustrate how it is done:

DECADENT

Your Character's culture is in a state of decline.

Bonuses: +1 Bureaucracy, +1 Streetwise

Penalty: -1 Empathy, -1 Resist

EASTERN

Your Character's culture is located in the "mysterious East."

Bonuses: +1 Bureaucracy, +1 Lore

Penalty: -1 Socialize

HAUGHTY

Your Character's culture considers itself superior to others.

Bonuses: +2 Intimidate

Penalty: -1 Bargain, -1 Empathy

MERCANTILE

Your Character's culture is renowned for its traders.

Bonuses: +1 Bargain, +1 Diplomacy, +1 Merchant

MARITIME

Your Character's culture is a sea-going one.

Bonuses: +1 Athletics, +1 Profession (Sailor)

MARTIAL

Your Character's culture holds warfare in high esteem.

Bonuses: +1 Defend, +1 Melee, +1 Tactics

Penalties: -1 Diplomacy

NOMADIC

Your Character's culture has no permanent settlements.

Bonuses: +1 Animal Handling, +1 Ride, +1 Survival

Penalties: -1 Bureaucracy, -1 Profession

NORTHERN

Your Character's culture hails from the frozen North.

Bonuses: +1 Survival, +1 Track

PIOUS

Your Character's culture is very devoted to the gods.

Bonuses: +2 Study (Religions)

SCHOLARLY

Your Character's culture holds knowledge and scholarly pursuits in high esteem.

Bonuses: +1 Diplomacy, +2 Study

Penalties: -1 Melee, -1 Brawl

SORCEROUS

Your Character's culture make regular use of magic.

Bonuses: +1 Resist, +1 Study (pick an emphasis of choice)

Penalty: -1 Diplomacy, -1 Socialize

SOUTHERN

Your Character's culture is found in the burning South.

Bonuses: +2 Survival



TOLERANT

Your Character's culture is welcoming to outsiders.

Bonuses: +1 Diplomacy, +1 Empathy

CHOOSING SKILLS

Once you have determined your Abilities and chosen your Backgrounds, it is time to buy the character's Skills with a pool of 45 Skill Points.

All Skills are associated with one of the five Abilities, and a Skill's Base Rank is equal to the value of its associated Ability score. Every time you buy a new Skill, you always buy that Skill at its Base Rank, which is equal to the Ability score. To raise the Rank of the Skill, you simply spend half of the associated Ability score, round down, per point, using your Skill or Experience Points. You can read more about Skills in Chapter 3.

For example, you want your Character to be able to shoot a bow and arrow, so you decide to buy Archery. Archery Skill is associated with Quickness. You purchase the Archery Skill at its Base Rank, which is equal to your Character's Quickness score of 6. You plan on hunting deer with your bow and arrow, and you feel that 6 is not a good enough Skill Rank to do this, so you buy two more Ranks in Archery. Since each Rank in a Skill translates to one point, your new Archery Rank will be 8; thus, the Target Number for all of your Character's Archery Tests is equal to 6 (Quickness) plus 8 (Skill Rank), or a TN of 14. The total amount of points that you will spend on the Archery Skill purchase is equal to 6 for the Base Rank, plus 6 (3×2) to increase the Rank by 2, for a total of 12 Skill Points.

Some Skills require you to pick an emphasis, and Skills requiring such are indicated within their description. Since **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is designed not to be overly complicated, the Skill system is more broad, and not as defined when it comes to specific skills. A good example of this is with the Profession Skill. Instead of having a multitude of Skills covering every conceivable profession, they are included under a general Profession skill. So if you want your Character to be a blacksmith, they would have Profession (Blacksmith). Note skills which must have an emphasis can never be specialized. In addition, you cannot take the broad skill and be skilled in every facet of that skill.

TABLE 2:1 SKILL COST TABLE

	ABILITY RANK											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Base Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Raise 1 Rank	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Characters may also buy training to increase their Skill Ranks. The cost for such training is typically a number of Gold Coins equal to the Rank the character wishes to acquire. Thus, raising Melee 6 to Melee 7 costs 7 GC. This cost is cumulative if the player wishes to raise the Skill Rank multiple times. Thus, a character who wishes to raise a Skill from Rank 6 to Rank 8 would need 15 Gold Coins to do so.

Since new player Characters begin the game with only 75 Silver Coins, they cannot buy training solely through their own resources. They may, however, acquire credit from guilds, associations, secret societies, and other organizations with which to purchase training. This credit is a number of Gold Coins equal to the Rank of any single Ability the character possesses. The choice of Ability is up to the player, but bear in mind that any Gold Coins extended in credit to the character can only be used for Skills governed by that Ability. Thus, a player whose Character has Brawn of 7 could receive 7 Gold Coins in credit with which to raise the Ranks of any Brawn-related Skills.

Of course, credit comes with a price, namely indebtedness to the organization that extended it to the character. Any character who takes up an offer of credit is expected to pay it back, with the precise terms determined by the Gamemaster. Generally, such credit is interest-free, but in return, the character will agree to undertake various jobs and missions for his sponsor, in addition to repaying the loan. Any character who takes credit gains a sixth Hook, “Indebted to X,” with “X” being the organization or person to whom he owes money. The Hook functions like any other Hook, but is lost when the character repays the loan extended to him.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

As your Character completes adventures, he earns Experience Points. Experience Points are used to buy Ranks in existing Skills, purchase new Skills, buy new Ranks in Spells, and purchase new Spells. See *Chapter 3* for more information about Skills, and *Chapter 6* for more information on Magic.

FINISHING TOUCHES

After selecting a Background and Hooks, your Character is almost complete. You still need, at a minimum, to choose a name, an age, and a gender for your Character. It would also be a good idea to have at least a basic background for your Character, since this will give you a better sense of how to play him in adventures, and can provide hooks for the Gamemaster to use in creating compelling scenarios. Of course, your Character’s Hooks cover some of this ground, but more is always better when it comes to fleshing out your Character.

NAME

Your Character's Name is important, since it's something that sticks with him throughout his many adventures, even as he learns new Skills, takes on new jobs, and acquires new equipment. There are lots of schools of thought regarding the "proper" way to name a Character in a roleplaying game. Truth be told, there is no right or wrong method of naming a character. Provided you like the name and it suits the type and style of game your GM is running, whatever you choose is fine.

AGE


Your Character's Age is also important. They will likely still adhere to the equation of youth and inexperience versus old age and wisdom. Consequently, think carefully about how you want to portray your Character, and how you wish others to view him. Is he a hotshot young mage still wet behind the ears and aching to prove their worth? Or is he a hard-bitten warrior who's been on one too many campaigns and seen one too many friends die? There is no game mechanical benefit or penalty to being either young or old, but there are roleplaying consequences to your choice.

GENDER

Your Character's gender matters less than his name or even age, but it's still important. The rules of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** make no distinctions between men and women, and the implied setting of the game likewise assumes that there is no noteworthy distinction. That said, many fantasy settings, especially those that inspired this game, do treat men and women differently, often to the detriment of women.

Of course, some players enjoy the added challenges that comes from "playing against type" or creating a rebel defying established social conventions. Fortunately, such characters are likewise common in the pulp fantasies that inspired **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, and players are no less encouraged to emulate them than they are to cleave more closely to the social norms of the setting. In the end, it's up to each Gamemaster to decide for his game whether the choice of gender has any consequences. The default assumption throughout this rulebook is that gender differences are insignificant. It's not the only assumption, nor is it necessarily the best, but it's the simplest one, which is why we've adopted it.





CHAPTER

3

**SKILLS
&
HOOKS**

Skills in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** define what your Character knows, whether it's using a sword, being able to differentiate between dangerous herbs, scaling a wall, or avoiding a trap. Most Skills are broad, covering several related areas of expertise. Thus, Melee covers all types of melee weaponry, from swords to axes, but Profession covers only one type of occupation (more on this below).

In *Chapter 1*, we covered the basic mechanics of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**. In this chapter, we go into greater detail about how Skills are used and what types of Skills are available to your Character.

A design goal underlying all **12° SYSTEM** games is that characters will have only a handful of Skills in which they are truly formidable, and a number of Skills in which they are of average proficiency. Keep this in mind.

There are two types of Skills in the games, Untrained (noted as such in their descriptions in this chapter), and Trained (there is no such category as Trained in the game, but it helps for the purpose of the following explanation, so it is best to think of them as such)

Untrained Skills can be used by anyone without the need to spend Skill Points on them.

Trained Skills can only be used by spending Skill Points on them.

Remember that Base Rank is defined as the starting rank of a Skill, which is equal to the governing Ability at the time the Skill was first purchased. This is a number that a player wants to keep track of, as it will determine the cost of Skill Rank increases in the future. One cannot automatically assume that a Skill's Base

Rank will always be equal to the governing Ability, as it is possible for an Ability to change in value during the course of a game.

A Skill's Target Number (TN) equals the Skill's governing Ability + the Skill's Rank.

Any character may use an Untrained Skill at any time, but with a -4 modifier to the Target Number (TN). Trained Skills may only be used by those who have purchased Skill Ranks in them (therefore they never suffer the -4 Untrained modifier to the Target Number).

Untrained Skills have a Target Number equal to the sum of the governing Ability and the Base Rank equivalent, minus the Untrained penalty of -4 (e.g., Brawn 10



gives a Melee of 16 Untrained ($10 + 10 - 4 = 16$). Trained Skills have a Base Rank equal in number to the governing Ability only after the player has spent a number of Skill Points equal to the governing Ability (e.g., Quickness 7 = Acrobatics 7 as a Trained Skill only after spending 7 Skill Points).

A player may spend Skill Points on a Trained Skill to increase the number of Skill Ranks in it beyond the Base Rank. Remember that Trained Skills can only be used after being purchased at the Base Rank.

To increase a Skill's Rank by +1, a player spends a number of Skill Points equal to one-half the Base Rank, rounded down, for that Skill (this is why it's important to record what a Skill's Base Rank is). Note that multiple Rank increases may be purchased at the same time, each costing the same.

RANKS

All Skills are associated with one of the five character Abilities described in *Chapter 2*. The numerical value of a Skill's associated Ability provides the Skill's Base Rank. Every time you buy a new Skill, you always buy that Skill at its Base Rank. Every time you raise a Skill one Rank, you spend Experience Points equal to one-half of your Skill's Base Rank, rounded down.

For example, your Character has gained Experience Points as a result of completing an adventure (see *Chapter 8*), and you want to purchase the Investigation Skill, which your Character did not previously have. Investigation is associated with the Wits Ability, and your Character has a Wits of 8. Thus, it costs 8 Experience Points to gain the new Skill at Base Rank 8.

On the other hand, suppose you want to improve an existing Skill your Character already possesses, like Track, which you already have at Skill Rank 8. To do this, you purchase one more Rank in Track, which increases your Character's Tracking Rank from 8 to 9. Purchasing one more Rank costs you half of your base Ability, rounded down. In this case, your base Ability is 8, the value of your Wits, so you would spend 4 Experience Points to increase your Track Rank from 8 to 9.

Remember, the higher your Rank in a Skill is, the easier it is for your Character to perform tasks associated with it.

SKILL TEST MODIFIERS

Sometimes a situation arises that makes a Skill Test easier or more difficult. Modifiers come into play when the situation demands it, and the GM uses them to determine the final Target

TABLE 3:1 SKILL TEST MODIFIERS

SITUATION MODIFIED	TN
Impossible	-6
Daring	-5
Reckless	-4
Challenging	-3
Difficult	-2
Hard	-1
Routine	±0
Feeble	+1
Easy	+2
Trivial	+3
Simple	+4
Basic	+5
Instinctive	+6

Number (TN). Every Skill listed in this book can be modified, depending upon the in-game situation and whether or not the GM feels a modifier is applicable or necessary.

So How Does This Work?

Suppose your Character is trying to intimidate a group of guards on the road outside of a small village to make them afraid of her. Your GM asks you to make an Intimidate Test with no modifiers. If your Character is trying to intimidate the same group of guards, and the group noticeably shies away from your Character's drawn sword, your GM might say that the Intimidate Test is Easy and give you a +2 modifier to the TN. However, if your Character tries to intimidate the same group of guards that are with a garrison of professional mercenaries, your GM might say the situation is Difficult and give your Character a -2 penalty to the Skill's TN.

Important Reminder: When modifying the difficulty of a Skill Test, the modifier always applies to the Target Number, not the roll. Thus, Tests easier than Routine ones get bonuses to the TN, while Tests that are harder than Routine get penalties to the TN.

Degrees of Success

More often than not, Skill rolls will beat a Target Number by two or more. For example, your Character is making

a Dodge Test to avoid a throwing axe. Your Character's Quickness is 7 and his Dodge Skill is 8. This gives him a TN of 15, modified by -3 because the GM rules it is a Challenging Test. Her final TN is 12. You get lucky and roll 6 on 2d12, meaning you beat the TN by 6 points (Degrees of Success)!

Strictly speaking, beating a TN by 1 is no different than beating it by 10. Except in combat, where the Degree of Success determines the damage done, the Degree of Success has no specific mechanical benefit. Nevertheless, the Gamemaster should often reward beating a Target Number by more significant amounts, as an acknowledgement that the character has performed exceptionally well. What happens with the Degrees of Success equal 0 (you roll the exact Target Number)? If you roll the exact TN you still succeed.

In the end, it is up to the Gamemaster to decide what an appropriate benefit should be. As a general rule, Degrees of Success greater than 2 should be rewarded with, at minimum, some small in-game effect. In the example above, perhaps the skill with

AUTOMATIC SUCCESSES

Test rolls represent attempts to perform difficult actions under stressful circumstances, when failure can mean the difference between life and death. Consequently, GMs preferring not to have players roll for everything their Character does, particularly Routine tasks (such as riding a horse to get from one place to another or reading a scroll to find very basic information), would be wise to assume their Character simply succeeds without calling for a Test. Not only does this speed up play, but it also lets players and the GM concentrate on those aspects of the adventure that really matter.

which the character executed the maneuver was observed by a group of villagers, who spread tales of this feat to the point where a song is composed and sung proclaiming the character's skill. This is but one possibility; the GM can no doubt come up with many more. The higher the Degree of Success, the greater the reward should be, but by and large, such rewards should enhance the roleplaying experience and add to the overall story, rather than grant significant mechanical game benefits.

DEGREES OF FAILURE

Just as there are Degrees of Success, there can also be Degrees of Failure: the number by which your roll misses the Target Number. For example, if the TN is 11 and you roll 14, you have achieved three Degrees of Failure. Except in a few circumstances (like Opposed Tests), Degrees of Failure mean very little mechanically; failing by 10 is no different than failing by 1. However, if the Gamemaster wishes, she can assess some additional penalty to a failed roll based on its Degrees of Failure, so long as she uses the Dramatic Failure rules (see below) as a guideline for her assessment.



DRAMATIC SUCCESS

Anytime you roll a “2” on a 2d12, you score a Dramatic Success. The meaning of a Dramatic Success varies with the type of Test, but it typically means that your Character has not only succeeded, but has done so in a spectacular, memorable fashion, granting your Character either a +2 to the TN of a future roll related to her success or penalizing an opponent with a -2 to the TN of a future roll related to the success. In combat, a Dramatic Success indicates that you have dealt your opponent maximum damage for your weapon type, whereas in a Skill Test it indicates that you’ve achieved all you were attempting and more.

Here are some examples of Dramatic Successes:

- Through the use of Observe, your Character uncovers a clue or item that not only solves an immediate problem, but also points the way toward the resolution of a more protracted problem.
- By using Sense, you realize a sorcerer is attempting to cast a spell on you, and you gain a +2 bonus to Resisting the spell.
- Your Character uses Defend to avoid a punch and finds herself in an advantageous position, gaining +2 to the TN of either her next counterattack or her next attempt to Defend against the same attacker.

DRAMATIC FAILURE

Rolling a “24” on a 2d12 means your Character experiences a Dramatic Failure. What this means is that your Character not only failed her Test, but she performed her action so badly that she has either placed herself in danger or otherwise adversely affected herself (and possibly her companions), granting your Character either a –2 to the TN of a future roll related to her success or granting an opponent a +2 to the TN of a future roll related to the success. In combat, a Dramatic Failure indicates that you drop your weapon, while in a Skill Test it indicates that you are either badly mistaken or have failed in such a way so as to make your situation more precarious.

Here are some examples of Dramatic Failures:

While attempting to calm a potentially hostile situation, your Character inadvertently insults someone by using a derogatory term.

Your Character’s Dodge attempt fails, making her an easier target for a thug, who gains a +2 TN on their next shot at your Character.

Your Character misreads a combat situation while making a Tactics roll, and gives faulty orders to her comrades, thus penalizing them with a –2 TN on their next combat roll.

RETRIES

Provided a failure does not have immediately negative consequences, most tasks may be attempted again. Each additional attempt lowers the Target Number by 1, in addition to taking up more time. Thus, if your Character is trying to perform a particularly difficult dance move, she makes a Performance roll against the appropriate TN (in this case, 13). If that roll is a failure, she may try again, with the TN being 12 this time.

UNTRAINED SKILL USE

Some Skills can be used even if your Character does not possess them. If a Skill has the word “Untrained” in parentheses after its name in the list of Skills below, it may be used even if your Character does not possess it.

For example, your Character is unskilled in Melee. Surrounded by a group of bandits, your Character grabs a nearby sword hoping to defend herself. Though untrained, your Character can still wield the sword in the hopes of hitting someone (or something). The TN is equal to your Character’s Brawn (the Ability associated with the Melee skill), we’ll call it an 8 and the would-be Base Rank of the Skill, also 8, reduced by 4 Ranks due to the –4 penalty of using an Untrained Skill. Thus your Target Number would be:

$$8 \text{ (BRAWN)} + 8 \text{ (MELEE BASE RANK)} - 4 \text{ (UNTRAINED MODIFIER)} = \text{TN } 12$$

SKILL LIST

Each Skill entry includes the name of the Skill, its associated Ability (which determines the Skill's Base Rank), and if it can be used Untrained. In addition, the entries describe the Skill's scope and offers sample specializations (if any).

ACROBATICS (QUICKNESS)

Acrobatics is the Skill of performing physical feats, either at a great height or under adverse conditions, affecting your innate sense of balance.

Skill Usage: Balancing, Contortion, Falling, Gymnastics, Tumbling.

ALCHEMY (WITS)

Alchemy is a magical Art involving the creation of items of power. For more on Alchemy, as well as buying Alchemical Arts, refer to Chapter 6.

Emphasis: Various Alchemical Arts.

ANIMAL HANDLING (WITS)

Animal Handling is the Skill of caring for and training of animals.

Skill Usage: Specific animals such as dog, horse, mule, ox, sheep or bear.

ARCHERY (QUICKNESS, UN- TRAINED)

Archery is the ability to aim and shoot a bow, and those trained in this Skill know how to fashion bows and arrows or quarrels, care for and handle a bow, as well as shoot one.

Skill Usage: Longbow, Shortbow, Fletching, Bowyer, Crossbow, Heavy Crossbow.



ART (WILL)

This Skill represents experience and training in a specific art form covering a wide range of disciplines. It includes the ability to create, design, and critique art in the chosen specialization.

Emphasis: Drawing, Music Composition, Painting, Poetry, Sketching, Sculpture, Writing.

ASTROLOGY (WITS)

Astrology allows a character to research someone's background and birthright by plotting star charts based on some general knowledge about the person. Types of general knowledge about the person that would be helpful to use Astrology would include odd, physical attributes like birthmarks or tattoos, full name, birth/death time and date, etc.. Unlike Divination (see below), Astrology does not provide any clues to help your Character determine what will happen in the future, but will give you some symbolic insight into a character or person's personality and past. Astrology charts can be drawn for your own character, but they typically don't provide more information about your Character's personality than you already know. However, when doing your own charts, you gain a +2 TN to the Skill Test due to your having greater insight into your own life and personality.

ATHLETICS (BRAWN, UNTRAINED)

Athletics is the Skill of performing activities that depend on your physical strength and endurance.

Skill Usage: Climbing, Jumping, Running, Specific Sports, Swimming.

BARGAIN (WILL, UNTRAINED)

Bargain is the Skill of convincing others through deception, as well as one that allows negotiating of the terms and conditions of a transaction, either material goods or a service.

Skill Usage: Bluff, Bribery, Charm, Fast Talk, Hagglng.

BRAWL (BRAWN, UNTRAINED)

Brawl is the Skill of fighting without weapons, which includes the use of improvised weapons.

Skill Usage: Dirty Fighting, Grappling, Kicking, Punching.

BUREAUCRACY (WITS)

Bureaucracy is the Skill of understanding and manipulating organizations and power structures, as well as being able to cut through the paperwork of said organizations and power structures.

Skill Usage: Academic, Business, Customs, Government, Legal, Military, Religious.

CRAFT (WITS)

Craft is the Skill that represents experience and training in a specific trade. This Skill covers a wide range of craftsmen skills, and characters with this Skill are able to build, repair, or modify items and equipment in their chosen craft. Your Character must specialize in one focus craft of their choice, but may purchase other Craft Skills separately.

Emphasis: Carpenter, Smith, Glassblower, Tailor, Weaver, Cooper, etc..

DEFEND (BRAWN, UNTRAINED)

If your Character comes under attack, your Character will want to defend her position instead of attacking her opponent. Defend is a catch-all and covers such things as parries (blocking melee attacks with a hand-held weapon or item), blocks (using unarmed combat), disarm (either with a weapon or with arms/hands) and deflect (using a weapon or fists to deflect missile weapons). See *Chapter 5*, Combat, for more.

Skill Usage: Block, Deflect, Disarm, Parry.

DIPLOMACY (WILL, UNTRAINED)

Diplomacy is the Skill of convincing others by swaying them to your point of view.

Skill Usage: Debate, Etiquette, Leadership, Negotiation, Persuasion, Seduction.

DIVINATION (WITS)

Whether you read the lumps on someone's head or tea leaves, Divination is the Skill used to divine the future to see if an event will work in your favor. There are several different types of Divination that you can



use, depending upon what you want to know and how you want to learn it. Characters that want to learn more than one form of Divination will have to buy this Skill multiple times. Because the future events in question are not set in stone, the more successful you are at a Divination Skill attempt, the more clearly you will be able to understand your readings. While Divination can be useful, by no means is it an exact science. Many forms of Divination are based on symbolism and allegory that can be interpreted in many different ways.

Emphasis: See below.

Augury – By reading the flight patterns of birds, you can discern the success of social or group activities that are not war- or combat-related.

Card Reading – Your Character uses a deck of cards to perform general readings. The cards correspond to suits, which also correspond to your Character Abilities. Depending on how the cards play out, you can assess a general direction of where your Character should focus their attentions in the near future.

Palm Reading – You can tell a lot about someone by reading the lines in their hand. The more skilled you are in palm reading, the more you will be able to tell about a character's personality.

Rune Casting – A favorite form of Divination among barbarians and uncivilized people. By closing her eyes, the character focuses on a “yes or no” question, and by tossing the runes upon the ground and reading the patterns they fall into, the better and clearer their messages will be.

Tea Reading – Whether you read tea leaves or coffee grounds, Tea Reading is used to perform a general reading for yourself or for another person by reading the shapes in the tea leaves or coffee grounds to divine a future applicable to the person who has drained their tea or coffee cup. The more successful this Skill use is, the less symbolic the images will become.

DODGE (QUICKNESS, UNTRAINED)

Dodge is the Skill of avoiding ranged attacks and the avoidance of non-ranged attacks through speed and agility.

EMPATHY (WILL, UNTRAINED)

Empathy is the Skill of reading and understanding other people's feelings and mental states.

Skill Usage: Body Language, Emotions, Intuition, Lies, Motives.

GAMING (WITS, UNTRAINED)

Gaming is the Skill of playing non-physical games of strategy and chance.

Skill Usage: Gambling, Odds, Specific games.

HEAL (WITS)

From using natural remedies or using knowledge of how to administer first aid, your Character knows how to heal wounds and treat injuries. For more information on Healing, please refer to the section on damage in *Chapter 5*.

HERBALIST (WITS)

From knowing the properties and differences between types of plants to the brewing of teas, Herbalist Skill allows your Character to know how to use plants for a variety of purposes.

Skill Usage: Antidote Making, Medicinal Use, Poison Making, Tea Brewing.

INTIMIDATION (WILL, UNTRAINED)

Intimidation is the Skill of convincing and persuading others through fear.

Skill Usage: Bluster, Interrogation, Orders, Torture.

INVESTIGATION (WITS, UNTRAINED)

Investigation is the Skill of finding clues and uncovering evidence.

Skill Usage: Criminal, Interview, Mysteries, Research, Search.

LANGUAGE (WITS)

The Trade Tongue is the main language for most of those living on the continent – but your Character might know other languages as well. This Skill can be taken multiple times for additional languages, and may also be purchased for the purpose of gaining additional Ranks so as to be more fluent with their language of choice. Not all languages are available to read and write because some are only available in spoken form. All characters are fluent in one language, usually their Native Language. Fluency means that no Tests are needed when speaking, reading or writing in this language.

Emphasis: Individual languages.

LORE (WITS)

Through experience or the reading of forbidden texts, your Character has a gift when it comes to knowledge about demons, otherworldly beings, and Magic. Using this Skill, your Character is able to identify different types of monsters, spells, magical cults, etc., as well as remember specific details about them.

Emphasis: Demons, Monsters, Magical Cults, Otherworldly Beings, Infernal Beings, Magic, and other occult subjects.

MAGIC (WILL)

Magic is a power possessed by many, but which few understand. By being skilled in Magic, a character is able to use great power. For more on Magic, as well as buying spells, please see *Chapter 6*.

Emphasis: Various Common Spells.

MELEE (BRAWN, UNTRAINED)

Melee is the Skill of fighting with weapons of various types.

Skill Usage: Axe, Sword, Spear, etc..



MERCHANT (WITS)

From knowing how to buy and sell goods, to being able to judge the value of items, the Merchant Skill allows your Character to make money from trade. (**Note:** A character with the Merchant Skill who attempts to haggle with a character who has the Bargain Skill receives a bonus of +1 to the TN; Merchants are experts at haggling, normal bargainers less so.)

Skill Usage: Appraisal, Contracts, Haggle, Supply & Demand, Hawking.

OBSERVE (WITS, UNTRAINED)

Observe is the Skill of being aware of your surroundings and noticing small details.

PERFORMANCE (WILL)

Performance is the Skill of entertaining people.

Skill Usage: Acting, Dancing, Oratory, Singing, Specific Musical Instrument.

PHYSICK (WITS)

Physick is the Skill of diagnosing and treating physical ailments. Unlike Heal, Physick is what many would consider the equivalent of medical science in this time period.

Skill Usage: Diagnosis, Chirurgery, First Aid.

PROFESSION (WITS)

Profession is the Skill of being knowledgeable about a particular career or vocation.

Emphasis: Cook, Farmer, Sailor, Shepherd, etc.

RESIST (WITS, UNTRAINED)

Whether you are resisting a character who is trying to read your aura or want to mentally block a sorcerer's attempts to curse you, this Skill allows you to block a magical attack or people's supernatural efforts to influence you.

RIDE (WITS, UNTRAINED)

The ability to ride and care for a mount.

Usage of Skill: Specific animal.

SENSE (WITS)

Whether your Character wants to simply identify a spellcaster or find out where a spell had originated, she can use Sense to track magic's unique signature or read magic in an entity's aura. Creatures who are magical in nature also give off an aura, and they can be sensed via the use of this Skill as well.

SOCIALIZE (WILL, UNTRAINED)

Socialize is the Skill of interacting positively with other people in a social situation.

Skill Usage: Carousing, Masquerade, Ball, Royal Banquet.

STEALTH (QUICKNESS, UNTRAINED)

Stealth is the Skill of hiding oneself and moving without being seen.

Usage of Skill: Camouflage, Disguise, Hiding, Shadowing, Sneaking.

STREETWISE (WILL)

Streetwise is the Skill of being able to interact with individuals engaged in illegal and quasi-legal activities.

Emphasis: Contraband, Criminal Contacts, Scrounging.

STUDY (WITS)

The Study Skill addresses subjects of knowledge your Character might have learned, or is passionate about. This is a broad skill, and has many subcategories covering specific areas of knowledge. This Skill can be taken multiple times to learn a different aspect of a subject so as to have a well-rounded character, or it can be bought once to focus on one area of study and achieve higher Ranks.

Emphasis: Astronomy, History, Navigation, Theology, Weather.

SUBTERFUGE (QUICKNESS)

Subterfuge is the Skill of using your hands to engage in illicit activities.

Skill Usage: Forgery, Lock Picking, Pick Pocket, Sleight of Hand.

SURVIVAL (WITS)

Characters skilled in Survival know how to use the hostile environment around them to their advantage, to survive not only on the battlefield, but also in woods, grasslands, hills, desert, swamp, tundra, or mountains. Once per day, your Character can make a Survival Test, and if successful, will meet her basic needs and find food. Sustenance could constitute game, wild fruits, vegetables and nuts, and fresh water. In order to find food and shelter for other characters, your Degrees of Success need to be equal to or greater than the number of people you are trying to help survive. Thus, if you are looking for food and shelter for four characters, your Degrees of Success need to be equal to or greater than 4.

Emphasis: Arctic, Desert, Forest, Jungle, Mountains, Ocean, Swamps, Tundra.

TACTICS (WITS)

Tactics is the Skill of organizing and planning military operations.

Emphasis: Defense, Guerrilla Warfare, Siege, Small Unit.

THROW (QUICKNESS, UNTRAINED)

Throw is the Skill that allows for the throwing of specific types of ranged weapons.

Skill Usage: Axe, Knife, Spear, etc..

TRACK (WITS)

Track is the Skill that gives a character the knowledge to read tracks and follow them.

Emphasis: Arctic, Desert, Forest, Jungle, Mountains, Ocean, Swamps, Tundra.

ACTION POINTS

One way to improve the odds of a Test is through the use of Action Points. As noted in *Chapter 1*, Action Points are a kind of dramatic “currency” that you can use to alter the Target Number of any Skill roll. You do not need to spend the Action Points in advance; you can do so after the fact, if you choose. For example, your Character has a TN of 13, and you roll 14 – a failure. Since the success of the Test is important to your Character’s survival, you decide to spend an Action Point and boost the TN to 14, turning a failure into a success.

You may spend as many Action Points as your Character currently has to improve the TN of a Test. You may not, however, use Action Points to improve the TN of another character’s Test. To do that requires the use of Hooks, which are described below, along with several other uses of Action Points.

Characters regain their pool of Action Points at the beginning of each game session, provided that they used them in dramatically appropriate ways or ways that enhanced the fun and enjoyment of everyone playing the game (in the GM’s opinion). Each character starts the game with a pool of 5 Action Points, but additional Action points may be purchased to increase that pool through the expenditure of Experience Points (see *Chapter 7*).

Hooks

In *Chapter 2*, the concept of Hooks was introduced. As you may remember, starting Characters begin the game with five Hooks. Hooks are special attributes that describe important elements of the Character's personality, background or relationship to the world around them. They are short-hand ways of painting a detailed picture of the character, aiding both the player and the Gamemaster to understand not only how the character is portrayed and how others relate to her, but also just what the player considers her Character's role to be in the campaign. Thus, they are both a player and GM tool.

Hooks are also the best means by which players can spend Action Points to give their Characters an edge during the course of an adventure.

CHOOSING HOOKS

There is no grand list of Hooks that players can look at and select from. Each character will have her own unique list of Hooks. What constitutes an acceptable Hook is entirely up to the GM, but Gamemasters are encouraged to be very lenient in allowing players to choose Hooks for their characters. The primary way of knowing if a Hook is an acceptable one is if it doesn't just make the character more interesting, but also the wider campaign. If the Hooks do, there is usually little harm in allowing a player to have the Hooks she desires.

Players should nevertheless take great care in choosing their Character's Hooks, since they will, in many ways, define their Character far more than their Abilities and Skills. Hooks highlight the things a player thinks are important about their Character, and tell the GM the kinds of plots and dramatic elements they would like to see in adventures involving their Character. If a player chooses "On the run from the Black Brotherhood" as a Hook, the chances are she wants to have this vicious band of assassins appear as recurring antagonists in the campaign.

"BAD" HOOKS

There is no requirement that Hooks have to be "good" or otherwise positive. Indeed, some of the best Hooks are ones that some might consider negative. That may seem counter-intuitive, but it is not. Remember why Hooks exist and what they do. First and foremost, they define a Character and tell a GM about the kinds of dramatic situations the player of that character finds interesting. Secondly, a Hook provides an occasion to spend Action Points. So, if a player chooses the seemingly negative "Suspicious of outsiders" as a Hook, it is as much a blessing as it is a curse. Sure, it means the character will behave in a standoffish manner to those not in their circle of friends and allies, no doubt earning her enemies and landing her in trouble throughout the campaign — but that's a good thing! It's the stuff that makes for good adventure and, just as importantly, it provides opportunities for the player to spend Action Points where appropriate.

It would be a mistake for either the GM or the players to think of Hooks as unambiguously positive traits; they are not. They are, however, unambiguously fun traits. They exist to reward players who flesh out their Characters, and give the GM the basis of fun situations to throw at the Character and her companions.

USING HOOKS

Hooks can be activated by either the player or the Gamemaster. A player activates a Hook when she feels it is relevant and, if the GM agrees, she can spend an Action Point to gain a bonus related to her Hook. The GM activates a Hook when she feels it is relevant and, if the player agrees, she gains a free Action Point that she can use immediately (if the situation the GM has created warrants it) or that can be saved for later use, either with this Hook or another one.

Hooks can be used whenever either the player or the Gamemaster believes they are relevant to the current situation and the other party agrees. As with the creation of Hooks, it is recommended that both players and GMs be very lenient in defining “relevant” in this context. After all, Hooks are intended to be used rather than side-stepped, and no one has any fun if everyone allows their use only in a very narrowly defined set of circumstances.

As noted previously, the activation of a Hook gives Action Points greater utility, namely:

- Re-roll any Test result.
- Add 2 to your Target Number.

There is theoretically no restriction on how many Hooks (and thus how many Action Points) may be used in a given circumstance, but no Hook may be used more than once for the same game situation.

HOOK EXAMPLES

What follows are examples of Hooks that have appeared in various sessions of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**. These hooks – much to this writer’s chagrin – have caused me much amusement and given me some trouble in my games. This is not a bad thing, mind you, it is the curse of a Gamemaster to have players delight in surprising them with their creativity.

- *Though the battle was won, I carry the scars to this day.*
- *With my hand covered in blood, I will avenge you.*
- *I am too old for this.*
- *May the touch of Hastur bring you peace.*
- *Die? I never die.*
- *Death is a game I refuse to play.*
- *Shall we dance the dance of blades?*

Hooks in Play

One area which is confusing to some is: When do you bring a Hook into play? There is no hard and fast rule to this. If the situation, be it a Skill Test, spell casting or combat, feels like the appropriate time, play a Hook.

For example, say your character is fighting a lion. You could play the hook “*Shall we dance the dance of the blades?*”. Why? You want to assure your Character survives her encounter with the lion, and by playing the hook, you choose to increase your Target Number by 2.

The point of Hooks is that they give you the means to have your Character stand out and have an impact on the game. Play them to help you succeed. Play them to allow you to try a Test again.

A FINAL WORD ON HOOKS AND ACTION POINTS

Hooks and Action Points are meta-game elements, which is to say, they represent a rare example where the player (or the GM) rather than the character influences the game world of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**. Generally speaking, the outcome of events in the game is the result of the interaction between your Character’s Abilities and Skills and the GM’s adventure plots, with the additional random element that dice rolls bring. In a sense, certain things happen in the game independent of both the players’ and the GM’s desires, and part of the fun of a role-playing game is being surprised at how things unfold. Everyone playing is thus as much a watcher of the game as they are a participant in it.

Hooks and Action Points, however, give everyone a chance to push the game this way or that, to influence dice rolls so that certain Tests turn out well at the moment when the player or GM wishes them to do so. **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** may be a game that includes plenty of random elements, but there is more to role-playing than just letting the dice fall where they may and reacting accordingly. Very few people enjoy feeling as if they are impotent flotsam on the waves of fate, particularly in a form of entertainment like roleplaying. That’s why Hooks and Action Points exist: as a vehicle for letting players and GMs alike tailor the story of their campaigns to their wishes. As long as these meta-game elements are viewed in this light, they will be used properly and add greatly to the fun and excitement of your campaigns.

CCHAPTER

4

ECONOMY & GEAR

A

s the saying goes, money makes the world go around. Nowhere else is this saying more true than in a pulp fantasy game. Money is a prime motivator in pulp fantasy stories, no matter what and where the culture is or what shape the power structures of the world take. Money inspires merchants to acquire goods to sell.

Money inspires the foolhardy to risk all on a chance for a financial windfall. Money is the primary reason many take to the life of adventure in the hopes of gaining enough wealth to live an easy life. In **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, money is one of the main motives and guiding forces for adventures as well. Heroes are always searching to acquire more money, and it seems as much as they earn, they lose.

CURRENCY

The basic unit of currency in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is the silver coin. Silver is the most plentiful of the precious metals found in The World, and it is the one most people come into contact with on a daily basis. Though silver is the base unit of coinage, other metals are also used which allow for smaller denominations of coins.

GOLD

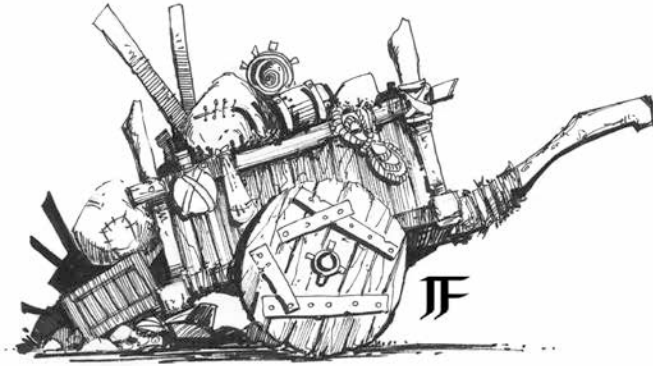
This is the currency of the elite. When merchants, nobles, and the wealthy need to deal in larger sums, gold is the choice. Gold coins are commonly known as Suns, but other regions refer to them as Stars and Plates. For **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, gold coins are abbreviated as GC.

SILVER

As mentioned, silver is the most plentiful of the precious metals found in The World, and it is commonly used for coins. Silver coins are known most often as Moons throughout The World. For **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, silver coins are abbreviated as SC.

BRASS

An alloy of copper and zinc, brass coins are gaining in popularity, and are often encountered in southern regions. Due to trade, they have slowly moved into the more civilized regions and are gaining in popularity. Commonly known as Thumbs, in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, brass coins are abbreviated as BC.



COPPER

The copper coin was developed by merchants and trade guilds as a means of preventing the clipping of silver coins. In the past, when a merchant was selling goods or services and the price was not equal to a full silver, the coin was clipped either in half or quarter. This created a problem with numerous bits of silver being collected, melted down, and then recast as new coinage. To alleviate this, copper coins were developed and have become widely accepted. Known commonly as the Bit, in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, copper coins are abbreviated as CC.

TABLE 4:1 EXCHANGE RATE

1 Gold = 100 Silver
1 Silver = 50 Copper
1 Copper = 25 Brass
1 Brass = 15 Iron

IRON

The smallest units of currency, iron coins are commonly found among the poor and the lower classes. Known commonly as the Dagger, in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, iron coins are abbreviated as IC.

OTHER CURRENCY

For the most part, during their daily lives, the majority of people only come into contact with the Silver Coin. Maybe, if they are lucky, they will see a Gold Coin from time to time, but for the most part, Silver, Copper, Brass, and Iron are the coins they see and commonly deal with. For the extremely wealthy, another type of “currency” is gems. Even Heroes, who often engage in stealing them from the wealthy, occasionally earn gems as payment for their services. Merchants favor gems, due in large part to this allowing them to move large sums of money easily. Heroes who are lucky enough to get a gem or two soon understand their value, in that it allows them to live very well.

TABLE 4:2 GEM VALUES

1 Diamond = 100 Gold
1 Ruby = 50 Gold
1 Emerald = 25 Gold
1 Sapphire = 15 Gold

STARTING GEAR

All player characters begin life with the following: one hand weapon, one set of clothes suitable to them, and 75 SC in wealth.

WEAPONS, ARMOR AND GEAR

TABLE 4:3 HAND WEAPONS

TYPE	DV	MIN	DEFEND	RANGE	ROF	SIZE	COST
Axe, Battle	6(85)	7 Brawn	-1	—	—	2H	7 SC
Axe, Hand	4(80)	—	—	5/15/25	1/1	1H	4 SC
Club	2(40)	—	—	—	—	1H	3 SC
Dagger	2(35)	—	—	10/20/30	2/1	1H	3 SC
Halberd	3(60)	8 Brawn	-2	—	2	2H	7 SC
Knife	2(20)	—	—	—	—	1H	2 SC
Lance	4(70)	8 Brawn	-2	—	—	2H	10 SC
Mace	4(50)	—	—	—	—	1H	5 SC
Morningstar	4(70)	7 Quickness	+1	—	—	1H	5 SC
Pike	6(35)	8 Brawn	-1	—	—	2H	3 SC
Staff	3(60)	—	+1	—	—	2H	10 SC
Sword, Short	6(80)	—	+1	—	—	1H	7 SC
Sword, Long	7(90)	—	—	—	—	1H	10 SC
Sword, Two handed	8(95)	9 Brawn	-1	—	—	2H	15 SC
Warhammer	3(60)	—	—	—	—	1H	5 SC

TABLE 4:4 RANGED WEAPONS

TYPE	DV	MIN	PARRY	RANGE	ROF	SIZE	COST
Bow, Short	—	—	—	50/100/150	2/1	2H	25 SC
Bow, Long	—	9 Brawn	—	60/120/240	2/1	2H	50 SC
Crossbow, Light	—	—	—	30/60/90	1/2	2H	30 SC
Crossbow, Heavy	—	9 Brawn	—	40/80/160	1/2	2H	60 SC
Javelin	4(60)	—	—	25/50/100	1/1	1H	1 SC
Sling	—	8 Quickness	—	25/50/75	1/1	1H	20 SC
Spear	4(35)	—	—	15/30/60	1/1	1H	30 CC
Trident	3(50)	—	—	5/10/20	1/1	1H	5 SC
Arrow	3(60)	—	—	—	—	—	10 BC/Arrow
Bolt	3(70)	—	—	—	—	—	1 CC/Bolt
Stone	1(20)	—	—	—	—	—	5 IC/Stone

TABLE 4:5 ARMOR

TYPE	AV	COST
Breastplate	10	15 SC
Leather	20	20 SC
Furs	25	25 SC
Scale	30	30 SC
Chain	35	40 SC
Plate	45	60 SC
Full Plate	50	2 GC

TABLE 4:6 SHIELDS

TYPE	DEFEND	COST
Shield, Small	+1	6 SC
Shield, Medium	+2	10 SC
Shield, Large	+3	14 SC

TABLE 4:7 HELMETS

TYPE	AV	COST
Helmet, Small	2	5 SC
Helmet, Full	5	10 SC

TABLE NOTES

Type: What the item is.

Min: The minimum Ability you need to use the item.

Defend: The bonus or penalty to Defend when using this item.

Range: The range of item when fired or thrown. The three numbers, starting from left to right, are Small/Medium/Long.

ROF: Rate of Fire is used for ranged or thrown weapons, and tells you how many times you can throw or fire it per round.

Size: If the item is one-handed or two-handed.

Cost: How much the item costs; the default price is always listed in Silver. If the item costs something else in another denomination of coin, it is indicated.

AV: Armor Value.

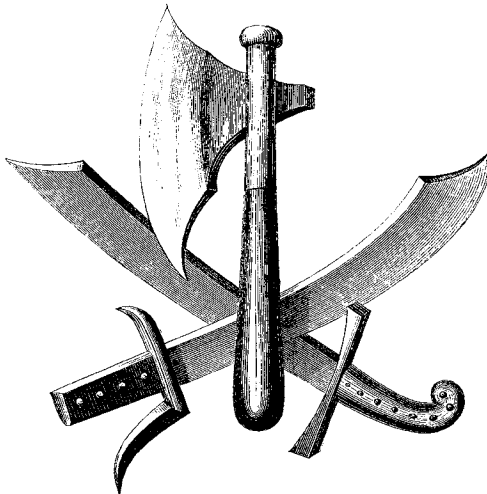
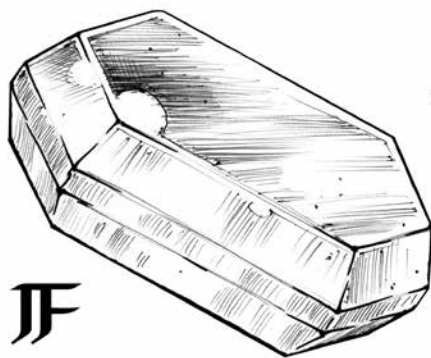


TABLE 4:8 GEAR

ITEM	COST
Backpack	5 SC
Belt	2 CC
Walking Shoes	1 SC 6 CC
Boots, Plain	30 CC
Boots, Hard	5 SC
Boots, Riding	1 SC, 15 CC
Sandals	12 BC
Flask of Oil	2 SC
Cloak, Short	20 CC
Cloak, Long	5 SC
Clothes, Plain	20 CC
Clothes, Common	5 SC
Clothes, Fine	15 SC
Clothes, Wealthy	25+ SC
Jacket, Light	10 SC
Jacket, Heavy	20 SC
Loincloth	8 IC
Sleeping Shift	2 SC
Hammer	2 SC
Grappling Hook	25 SC
Hat, cap or hood	10 CC
Holy Symbol	25 SC
Iron Spike	5 BC
Iron Spikes (10)	2 CC
Lantern	10 SC
Mirror	5 SC
10' Pole	1 SC
Belt Pouch	10 CC
Quiver	1 SC
50' Rope	1 SC
Sack, Small	12 CC
Sack, Large	24 CC
Mapcase	10 SC 15 CC
Ink (1 oz.)	6+ SC
Quills (12)	15 CC
Parchment (5 sq. ft.)	4 SC

ITEM	COST
Paper (12 sheets)	11 CC
Mallet	30 CC
Wooden Stake	2 IC
Thieves Tools	1 GC
Flint & Steel	1 SC
Tinder Box	3 SC
Torch	10 BC
Candles (6)	2 CC, 10 IC
Water/Wineskin	1 SC
Sleeping Sack	16 SC
Bedroll, Light	8 SC
Bedroll, Heavy	12 SC
Blanket, Light	1+ SC
Blanket, Heavy	3+ SC



IF

C **HAPTER**

5

ACTION

The character that you play is the means by which you interact with the world of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, but what your character does, and how she does it, is governed by the **12° SYSTEM**, described in previous chapters. This chapter builds upon the foundations laid down earlier, and provides expanded sub-systems that are important for actions your Character can take during the course of an adventure. To put it more simply, this chapter shows you how to fight, perform, and act against enemies great and small. (Okay, not in real life, but in the context of the game!)

PERSONAL COMBAT

Before getting into the mechanics of Action, keep in mind that when declaring your Character's Actions in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, you're describing a scene in a movie or a passage in a book. At times, your Actions will be unbelievable; at other times, you might take risks where any sane person would play it safe.

TELLING TIME

Personal Combat is divided into units of measurement called Rounds. Rounds do not necessarily correspond to any specific length of time in the real world. Instead, a Round is the amount of time it takes for all the characters involved in a combat situation to complete all their available Actions. Thus, it is an arbitrary unit intended to help both the Gamemaster and players keep track of who does what, and when they do it, in the course of a combat. Rounds are not realistic representations of anything; they are a game convenience. If you need to know how long a Round is, it is roughly 5 seconds in length.

INITIATIVE

Which character gets to act first in a Round is determined by her Initiative Rating. Initiative is determined by the following formula:

$$D12 + [(QUICKNESS + WITS) \div 2] \pm MODIFIERS = INITIATIVE RATING$$

Note, as mentioned in *Chapter 2* (see page 25) you always round down in the cases of averages.

Once Initiative is determined, this is set for the entire Combat. You only check for Initiative once. Actions proceed throughout a Round based on Initiative Rating, from highest to lowest, of the participants. In the case of ties, the character with the highest Initiative Rating acts first. Once the Initiative order is determined, it

remains fixed until Combat is completed. The only exception to this rule is if a character chooses to delay acting in a Round until later than her Initiative Rating would normally warrant. If she does so, her Initiative Rating drops to the new, lower rating and stays there until the next rounds of combat.

Initiative can be determined either on an individual or “per side” basis. What this means is that the GM can have every character, including NPCs, roll individually for their Initiative Rating, or she can designate a single character per side in the conflict whose Initiative Rating she will use to determine who acts in what



order. Typically, the character with the highest Tactics Skill is the best person to designate for this task (although characters who have the Haughty or Noble Modifier might feel that they are better suited to go first, regardless of the Initiative order), but players should feel free to offer alternative suggestions. In general, individual Initiative works best when there are smaller numbers of combatants, while “per side” Initiative works best for large fights between many opponents.

INITIATIVE MODIFIERS

The Initiative Rating can be modified by any number of factors, as determined by the GM. Characters wandering into an ambush might rightly receive a penalty to their Initiative Ratings, whereas those laying a trap for their opponents might receive a bonus. Likewise, previous combat experience might modify Initiative Ratings as well.

INITIATIVE OPTION

Initiative rolls in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** are made one time only, at the start of combat. This sets the Initiative order for the entire Combat. As an option, GMs may allow for Initiative checks at the start of every Round of Combat. This option slows Combat down slightly, but accounts for the ebb and flow of combatants throughout the course of battle.

SURPRISE

Sometimes one side of a combat gains the element of surprise. Surprise typically happens as a result of ambushes, lack of observation of the arrival of something, and other stealthy means. Those who surprise their opponents gain a free Round of Action. Once the free Round is over, Initiative proceeds as per the normal rules.

TACTICS

The Tactics Skill has an additional use in Combat. At the beginning of each combat Round, the character with the highest Tactics Skill (or the one designated as the “leader,” that is to say, the one who will be directing the actions of the other characters on her side), must make a Tactics Test. That character can then divide the Degrees of Success (if any) among the characters as bonuses to any Test during that Round, provided that the characters in question are in communication with her. This represents the leader’s direction of the combat through her command of tactics. No character may receive a bonus in this fashion greater than her own Tactics Rank or 1, whichever is greater. Likewise, no more than one-half of the character’s Degrees of Success may be given to any other single character.

ACTIONS

An Action is whatever your Character chooses to do during a Round. Normally, a character has only one Action per Round. If she wishes to attempt more than

one Action in a Round, she suffers a multiple Action penalty (see below). So, what can you do in a Round?

Typically all combatants have one Action per Round. In a Round, you can close in to Hand-to-Hand Range for free. Furthermore, you can declare that you are going to Attack, Defend, cast a spell or undertake the use of an applicable Skill. Drawing a weapon counts as an action (unless the weapon is already drawn). Rising from Prone to Standing, or dropping to Prone, counts as an Action. Characters are able to take Multiple Actions (see below) in a Round, as long as the Multiple Action Rules (see below) are followed.

MULTIPLE ACTIONS

A character attempting more than one Action in a Round suffers a -2 penalty to the second Action. A character is allowed to take more than two Actions. For each additional Action after the first, this -2 penalty is cumulative. For example, your character wants to Attack and parry an attack (using her Defend Skill) in the same Round. The Attack Action suffers no penalty, while the Action of defending herself would be at a -2 penalty. If the character wanted to Attack a second time as well, the third Action would suffer a -4 penalty.

Let's see how this works. Assume that your Character has a Brawn 7 and Melee +10, which gives her a TN 17 for attacks. You want to Attack three times. This means the first attack has a TN of 17, the second Attack a TN of 15, and the final Attack a TN of 13.

TABLE 5:1 RANGE MODIFIERS

Long -4
Medium: -2
Short: +0
Point Blank: +1

RANGE

SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL uses a simple system of Ranges, dividing distance into categories: Point Blank, Short, Medium, and Long. Individual weapons include Range listings that follow this pattern, allowing you to know when firing a crossbow whether you incur a bonus or a penalty due to Range.

Note: Range is always listed in feet.

THROWING

How far can your Character throw something? All weapons that can be thrown have their Range listed. For objects not designed to be thrown (such as rocks, mugs, small people), a character can throw said objects weighing no more than 1 lb. a distance of 5 feet for every point of her Brawn score. That distance is decreased by an appropriate factor if the weight of the thrown object is increased. Thus, an object weighing 2 lbs. can be thrown half that distance, a 4 lbs. object can be thrown one-quarter that distance, and so forth.

MOVEMENT

Movement is important in tactical situations such as Combat. When it comes to other forms of movement, such as travel, the GM is free to deal with it in any way she chooses. Remember, **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is about action – action that centers on tactical situations. Furthermore, action in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is fast-paced, and the rules are designed to allow for fast action, and a “broad strokes” approach to action. Because of this, the rules governing Movement are flexible and offer enough definition to keep things straightforward.

A Character in Combat is able to move a number of feet equal to 5 times the character’s Quickness. Thus a character with 8 Quickness is able to move 40 feet per Round. A character choosing to run moves a number of feet equal to 10 times their Quickness. Thus, a character with 8 Quickness is able to run 80 feet. A character who is running, suffers a –1 TN to all Actions when running.

TABLE 5:2 RUNNING AND WALKING

QUICKNESS	MOVE	RUN
1	5 feet	10 feet
2	10 feet	20 feet
3	15 feet	30 feet
4	20 feet	40 feet
5	25 feet	50 feet
6	30 feet	60 feet
7	35 feet	70 feet
8	40 feet	80 feet
9	45 feet	90 feet
10	50 feet	100 feet
11	55 feet	110 feet
12	60 feet	120 feet

PERSONAL COMBAT BASICS

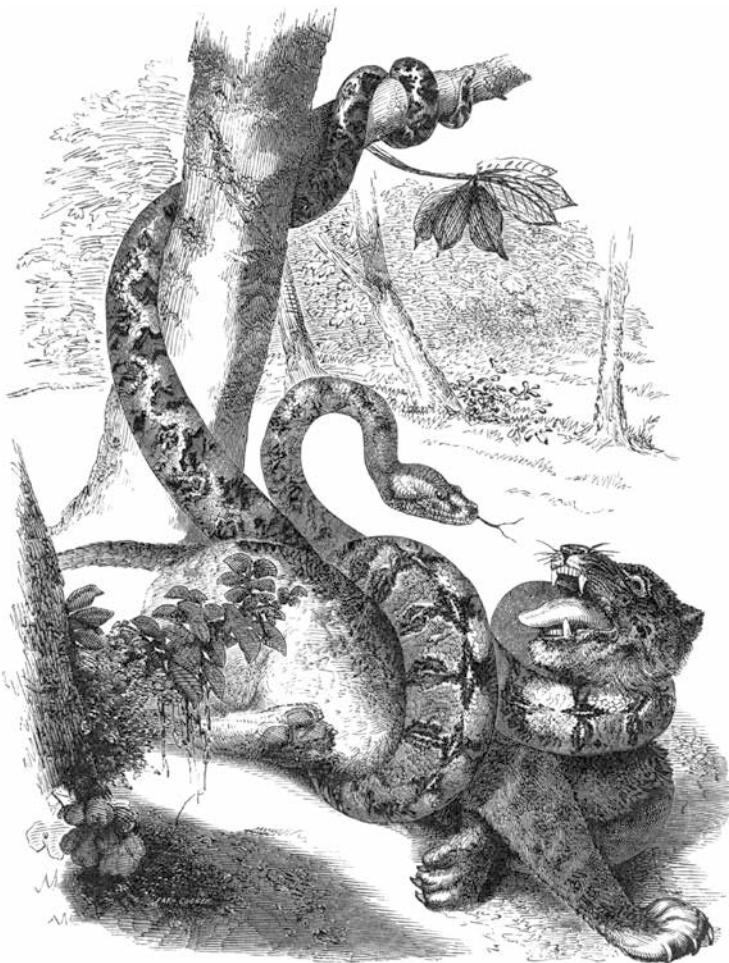
Personal Combat, whether melee or ranged, is straightforward and proceeds in the following fashion:

1. Choose the right skill
 - For attacking with Ranged weapons, use Archery.
 - For attacking with Thrown weapons, use Throw.
 - For attacking in hand-to-hand combat, use Brawl.
 - For attacking in armed combat, use Melee.
2. Roll 2d12
 - If the result is less than or equal to your Target Number (including any modifiers), you hit.
3. Determine Damage.
 - Make a note of the Degrees of Success from your roll to hit. Multiply this value by your weapon’s base Damage Value (DV) to determine the Vitality damage you deal to your opponent. In the case of 0 Degrees of Success, you treat damage as if it was 1 Degrees of Success.

NOTE ON COMBAT

Combat in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, as well as the other 12^o games, is fast. In addition, Combat is designed to encourage a more narrative structure. This means that the GM and players should describe what is going on, use Hooks if they fit the circumstances, but most importantly, be descriptive. Furthermore, make sure that modifiers to tasks are used often. Modifiers add to the challenges that characters, both player and NPC alike, must face, and tend to even the odds somewhat.

Finally, the system mechanics are designed to emulate the genre. Consider such heroes as Conan, Kull, and even Hawkmoon; when these heroes fight a lowly guard or thug, Combat starts and finishes quickly. Fighting against weaker opponents should be resolved quickly. It is only when a hero is fighting against an equally matched opponent that combat should become challenging.



ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS

There are additional complications that come into play during Combat such as Armor, avoiding attacks through Dodging, and various other modifiers. Keep in mind that all modifiers are cumulative, and the more things you do in combat the lower, or higher, your TN will be. These are delineated below.

AREA ATTACKS

Some attacks – as well as Magic – deliver damage that covers an area rather than a specific, single target. If the attacker successfully hits the area she wishes (by making an appropriate Test, modified by Range and other factors), all of the targets in the area of effect of the attack must make a Dodge Test (see below). If successful, the target may deduct the Degrees of Success of their Test from the Degrees of Success of the attacker when determining the damage. However, each character that makes a Dodge Test deducts her own Degrees of Success, meaning that multiple characters within an area of effect from an attack will take different amounts of damage, depending on how well they managed to Dodge.

CALLED SHOTS

A Called Shot is an attempt to hit a specific area on a target, be it with a hand-held weapon, ranged weapon, or unarmed attack. Because this is harder to do than a normal shot, a Called Shot suffers a penalty. Penalties range from -1 to -4, depending on size, speed, and other factors pertaining to the target, as assessed by the GM. Called Shots are most often used when trying to hit a particular part of an opponent's body. In such cases, the GM should use the following Called Shots Table, which lists the modifiers and effects of these Called Shots.

TABLE 5:3 CALLED SHOTS

TARGET'S BODY PART	TN MODIFIER	EFFECT
Abdomen	-2	+2 Degrees of Success for determining damage
Arm (Left/Right)	-3	Successful Quickness test at -2 or drop any held items
Chest	-2	None
Feet (Left/Right)	-2	-1 to Quickness Test
Head	-4	+3 Degrees of Success for determining damage
Leg	-3	Movement reduced by $\frac{1}{4}$
Shoulder (Left/Right)	-3	Successful Quickness test at -1 or drop any held items
Thighs	-2	Movement reduced by $\frac{1}{2}$

CAREFUL AIM

When making a Ranged attack, your Character may declare that she is taking careful aim. In this case, your Character spends one entire Round aiming, during which time she may neither attack nor defend. On her next Action, she receives a +1 TN bonus to her attack (to a maximum of +4). If anything interrupts the character while she is taking careful aim, her concentration is disrupted and she loses the TN bonus on her next attack.

CHARGE

Charging (be it on foot or mounted) is an all-out move and attack that allows a Character to quickly move into hand-to-hand combat Range. In addition, Charging negates the range modifiers listed in Table 5:1, due to the character charging. Charging counts as an Action, and doing so gives the character a cumulative +1 Bonus in the actual first Round of Combat depending on the distance spanned. Thus, a Character Charging from Short to hand-to-hand combat Range gains a +1, while Charging from Long to hand-to-hand combat Range gains a +3. While a Character charges, she is unable to Defend. On the next Round after the charge, the character suffers a -2 penalty in that Round of combat as they recover from their action.

TABLE 5:4 ADDITIONAL COMBAT MODIFIERS

SHOOTING WEAPON USING OFF-HAND -2

Shooting while walking -1

Shooting while running -2

Shooting from a moving vehicle (like a cart) -2

Shooting while on horseback -2

Attacking with Off Hand -2

Using a 2-Handed Weapon 1-Handed -3

Attacking with hand-held weapon from a charging horse +3

Attacking while running -3

Attacking while walking -1

COVER

The easiest way for a character to avoid being hit in Combat is to seek cover. Cover refers to any type of physical barrier that stands between your Character and her opponent. Depending on the cover, the attacker gains a penalty to their TN in trying to hit your character. Cover comes in three varieties:

FULL COVER (-3 TN)

Full cover completely protects your Character, making her extremely hard to hit. Some examples of Full Cover would be being fired at from inside a building through a window, having a bow being fired at your Character through dense trees, concealing yourself behind a wagon or wall or crouching behind a large boulder.

PARTIAL COVER (-2 TN)

Partial cover provides limited protection to your Character. Two examples of Partial Cover would be hiding in tall grass, crouching behind a smaller boulder or a burned out wagon or having a bow fired at your Character while she is behind a tree.

PRONE/MINIMAL COVER (–1 TN)

Prone describes your character when she drops to the ground in an attempt to avoid being hit. Prone is considered a form of cover because not only is your Character's field of vision altered, but she is much harder to hit because she is not a target standing up on the field of battle. Alternately, a character who is immobilized or otherwise unable to act is much easier to hit, granting a +3 TN to anyone firing on them. Minimal cover is using flimsy types of objects as cover.

DARKNESS AND LIGHT

Another form of Combat modifier is visual impairment that can be caused by darkness, light of varying intensities, and smoke or fog. Not being able to see one's opponent makes it harder to hit them in Combat. Darkness and other visual impairments incur the following TN penalties to both the attacker and the defender.

TABLE 5:4 DARKNESS AND LIGHT

CONDITION	MODIFIER
Full Darkness	–3 TN
Partial Darkness	–2 TN
Dim Light	–1 TN
Weak Light	–1 TN
Smoky/Hazy	–1 TN
Bright Light	–2 TN
Blinding Light	–3 TN

The term “Darkness” need not be taken literally in every case. Other effects that mimic darkness or have similar consequences merit the same Combat penalties. Such examples would include being blindfolded, blinded, or hit in the eye.

SIZE

The relative Size of the target of an attack affects the difficulty of striking it in Combat. For every doubling of a target's size compared to that of the attacker, the Gamemaster should grant a +1 TN bonus. Conversely, for every halving of a target's Size compared to that of the attacker, the GM should impose a –1 TN penalty.



TWO WEAPONS

Some characters may attempt to use two hand-held weapons at the same time. This is possible but difficult, even for the best trained warriors. In addition to suffering the usual penalty for taking multiple Actions in a Round (–2 TN per additional Attack), the character suffers an additional –1 TN to each attack, for a grand total of –3 TN per attack. Characters who are ambidextrous due to a Hook suffer only a –1 TN with the second weapon.

DAMAGE

Attacks which succeed and are not avoided (see “Avoiding Damage” below) inflict damage. In addition to injuring the character, taking damage makes it harder for a character to perform Actions, including those relating to Combat. For every 15 Points of damage a character takes, she suffers a –1 TN to all tasks until healed. This penalty increases by an additional –1 to the TN for each additional 15 Points of Vitality damage she takes. Thus a character who has 50 total Vitality suffers a –1 TN penalty when she drops to 35 Vitality, a –2 TN when she drops to 20 Vitality, and so on.

When your Character is reduced to 0 or less Vitality, she is unconscious and will die in a number of Rounds equal to her Toughness score, unless she receives medical attention. A successful Heal or Physick Test will be sufficient to stabilize a wounded character for one hour, and prevent immediate death. However, if she does not receive such attention, another Heal or Physick Test must be made each hour thereafter. Failure results in death.

OPTION: SHOCK

Combat in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is fast and deadly, but some Gamemasters may wish to add a further layer of lethality to the proceedings. The Shock rules represent the potential of a character becoming suddenly incapacitated by an attack. Using this option, any time a character takes more damage from a single attack than the sum of her Toughness + Will, she must make a Will Test or be overcome with shock. A character in shock is incapacitated and incapable of doing anything, including defending herself, for a number of Rounds equal to the Degrees by which she failed her Will Test.

OPTION: CLEAVE

This option allows damage to carry over or through to other opponents. How this works is that if your Character attacks a target and the damage dealt kills that target, any remaining damage passes to an adjacent target. As long as the character could have successfully hit the adjacent target, they can damage that target.

UNARMED AND MELEE COMBAT DAMAGE

Like all damage, unarmed combat damage is handled by referring to the Degrees of Success of the attack that dealt it. The base damage of unarmed combat is $\frac{1}{2}$ the Degrees of Success, modified by the attacker's Brawl Skill Rank. For example, a character punches a village guard and achieves 4 Degrees of Success. Multiplied by the unarmed combat base damage of $\frac{1}{2}$, the character achieves 2 points of damage, to which she adds her Brawl Skill Rank of 7, for a total of 9 points of unarmed combat damage.

Melee weapons function very similarly, dealing damage based on the Degree of Success achieved by the attacker using said weapon, to which is added the attacker's Melee Skill Rank as well.

For example, a character attacks a marauder with a Longsword, achieving four Degrees of Success. A Longsword's base damage is 7, meaning the character deals 28 points of Vitality damage. To this number she adds her Skill Rank in Melee combat, in this case 6, meaning that she deals a total of 34 points of damage to the marauder.

At the Gamemaster's option, Brawl or Melee attacks that rely primarily on brute force rather than finesse, such as boxing-style punches or axe blows, may add the Brawn score of the attacker instead of the appropriate Skill Rank, if it is higher. For example, a character is in a barroom brawl and picks up a stool to smash over the head of her opponent. The GM rules that the damage such an improvised weapon deals is more a function of the character's strength in wielding it than any Skill, so the character may add her Brawn score of 9 to the damage, since it exceeds her 6 Skill Ranks in Brawl.

ZERO DEGREES OF SUCCESS

So what happens when a character rolls the same as her Target Number in combat? That's zero Degrees of Success, so does it mean her weapon deals no damage? No, rolling exactly equal to the Target Number is treated as 1 Degree of Success for damage purposes, though, at the GM's discretion, achieving such a result could have other effects, such as another chance to achieve a Dramatic Success. Because the probability of achieving zero Degrees of Success shifts as the character improves her abilities and Skills, no special effects are assumed in the default rules, but individual GMs should feel free to treat such differently, if they so choose.

RANGED COMBAT DAMAGE

Ranged combat deals damage according to the base damage of the weapon and the Degrees of Success achieved while attacking with it. For example, a character is using a Longbow and hits a lion and achieves six Degrees of Success. An arrow has a base damage of 3, so the character deals 18 points of ranged combat damage to the lion. Note, only the missile – arrow, bolt and stone – cause damage, the weapons firing the missile does not cause damage.

DRAMATIC SUCCESSES AND MAXIMUM DAMAGE

Most weapons have a maximum Damage Value (DV) listed in their description. This means that, no matter how many Degrees of Success a character achieves, they can never deal more than the maximum damage for the weapon type. Attack rolls that achieve a Dramatic Success (sometimes called a “critical hit”) automatically do maximum damage. This maximum is absolute; nothing allows a character who achieves a Dramatic Success to do more damage with the weapon in question than the maximum listed under the weapon description. This applies to all weapons without exception.

HEALING

Vitality damage can be healed, except in extremely unusual situations. A short period of rest, followed by a successful Test against the average of your Character’s Toughness + Will allows her to recover a number of Vitality points equal to the Degrees of Success achieved on the Test (Dramatic Failure indicates she takes additional damage, and does not heal damage). A successful Heal, Herbalist or Physick Test will also heal a number of Vitality points equal to the Degrees of Success of the Test, but is conditional on your Character resting while the method of healing being used is administered (Dramatic Failure means she takes additional damage, and does not heal damage). After this, your Character regains Vitality at a rate equal to the average of her Toughness + Will per day until she is fully healed.

OTHER TYPES OF DAMAGE

The potential to suffer damage in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** from hazards other than weapons and punches or kicks to the face also exists. A few of the most common hazards that can deal damage are described below.

DROWNING

Characters can hold their breath underwater for a number of Rounds equal to their Toughness. For every Round after that, they must make a Toughness Test. A failure results in 1d12 points of Vitality damage every Round thereafter until either the character is dead or she is able to breathe again. The character gets to make another Toughness Test every Round, if they failed the first one, but it has a cumulative –1 TN.

FALLING

Every 20 feet the character falls from a height (or fraction thereof, round up) causes 1d12 damage, and for every additional 20 feet they take an additional 1d12 damage. Thus, falling 60 feet results in the character taking 3d12 damage. Characters with the Acrobatics or Athletics Skill can make a Skill Test with success allowing them to reduce the damage by 1d12 (Dramatic Success means they take half damage, and they add a 1d12 worth of damage on a Dramatic Failure).

FIRE AND SMOKE DAMAGE

Fire, like that of a small campfire, causes 4 points of damage per Round until it is extinguished. Larger fires deal double the amount of damage with each doubling of the size of the fire. Fires also create smoke, which obstructs vision, as well as making it more difficult to breathe. Use the rules above covering Darkness above to cover the matter of penalties to vision to smoke.

AVOIDING ATTACKS

DEFEND

This Skill allows your Character to avoid a melee attack, whether she is armed or not. This is a broad Skill, in that it covers such defensive moves as parry, block, and deflect. Like all other Skills, when your Character defends, it counts as one Action. Making a successful Defend Test means that your Character deducts the Degrees of Success achieved on her Defend Test from her opponent's Degrees of Success on her attack. If this reduces your opponent's Degrees of Success to 0 (see above) or less, you have completely defended against the attack and take no damage whatsoever. If your character wants to Defend against more than one melee attack, you can expend more Actions, provided you are willing to accept the Multiple Action penalty described above.

DODGE

Ranged attacks, as well as hand-to-hand attacks, can be dodged with a successful Dodge Test. As long as you have an Action remaining in a given Round, you may Dodge an attack. Making a Dodge Test counts as an Action. If the Dodge Test is successful, you may deduct the Degrees of Success achieved on your Dodge Test from your opponent's Degrees of Success on her attack. If this reduces your opponent's Degrees of Success to 0 (see above) or less, you have completely dodged the attack and take no damage whatsoever. If your character wants to Dodge more than one ranged attack, you can expend more Actions, provided you are willing to accept the Multiple Action penalty described above.

ARMOR

Wearing Armor is an effective means for a character to protect themselves against damage from attacks. All armor has an Armor Value (AV), which is a number that represents how much damage the armor absorbs when you are attacked. For example, your Character is wearing chain mail (which has an AV of 35). Any damage your Character takes below this AV 35 is absorbed by the armor, and anything above this value is passed on to the character. For example, your Character is hit by an attack from a longsword that causes 50 points of damage. The armor absorbs 35 of this damage, and the remaining 15 points are passed on to the character.

SHIELDS

Unlike armor, Shields make it harder for your opponent to hit you. Every shield has a Defend Bonus, which you apply to your Defend skill. For example a Small Shield has Defend +1. Your character has a Defend Skill TN of +14, and using the shield it would give a Defend TN of +15.

OPTION: DEADLY DAMAGE

This option makes Combat a little more deadly. While the armor behaves the same way as above, the change here means that any Dramatic Success causes the damage to bypass the armor completely, and to be taken directly by the character. In the case of shields, the attacks is not defended, and goes to the character as well.

OPTION: DECAY OF ARMOR

This option is one that adds a bit more realism. If your Character's Armor takes damage over and above its AV, the AV of the armor is reduced by a number of points equal to the amount taken above the AV of the armor, and remains in this condition until repaired. In the case of shields, the Defend bonus is reduced by 1 point.

MOVING, LIFTING, AND PUSHING

How much a character can move, whether by carrying, lifting or pushing, is a function of her Brawn score, as shown in the table below.

TABLE 5:5 MOVING, LIFTING AND PUSHING THINGS

BRAWN SCORE	CARRYING	LIFTING	PUSHING
1	5 lbs	10 lbs	lbs
2	10 lbs	20 lbs	30 lbs
3	20 lbs	30 lbs	40 lbs
4	30 lbs	40 lbs	45 lbs
5	40 lbs	45 lbs	50 lbs
6	45 lbs	50 lbs	65 lbs
7	50 lbs	65 lbs	75 lbs
8	65 lbs	75 lbs	90 lbs
9	75 lbs	90 lbs	110 lbs
10	90 lbs	110 lbs	125 lbs
11	110 lbs	125 lbs	250 lbs
12	125 lbs	250 lbs	500 lbs



SOCIAL INTERACTION

Personal combat is not the only way a character interacts with others in the world. Indeed, violence is generally viewed as a last resort rather than a preferred course of action. In the right situations, one can always resort to the weapons of social interaction to cause damage to an opponent's confidence and/or reputation, which can be just as devastating in its own way as a crossbow bolt in the chest. The Gamemaster and the players are neglecting an important part of gameplay by limiting their adventures solely to brawls and firefights.

ATTITUDES & SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

How a character or NPC feels toward others can be defined by one of the five attitudes listed below:

TABLE 5:6: ATTITUDES

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	TN MODIFIER
Antagonistic	Antagonistic characters go to great lengths to oppose their enemies	-2
Unfriendly	Unfriendly characters hope harm comes to their opponents	-1
Neutral	Neutral characters have no strong opinions either way	0
Friendly	Friendly characters hope good things befall their friends	+1
Helpful	Helpful characters go to great lengths to aid their friends	+2

When a character meets a non-player character, the Gamemaster determines how the NPC feels about a character, using one of the five attitudes as a starting point. For example, a character meets a shifty tavern keeper evasdropping on thier conversation. The GM decides the tavern keeper starts off as Unfriendly toward the character. Alternately, the character runs into an old fellow soilder whose life he saved in a battle against the barbarian hoards. The GM rules that the soilder starts off as Friendly toward the character.

CHANGING ATTITUDES

The purpose of any social interaction in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is to change the attitude of NPCs toward a character. This is accomplished by social skill tests, such as Bargain, Bureaucracy, Diplomacy, Empathy, Intimidation, Investigation, Socialize, and Streetwise. To do this, a character makes a test, using the TN modifiers appropriate to the NPC's attitude level toward him. Table 5:7 shows how many degrees of success the character must achieve to shift the NPC's attitude positively toward him by one level. The number of degrees of success required is based on the NPC's Will.

TABLE 5:7: CHANGING ATTITUDES

RESOLUTION	DEGREES OF SUCCESS REQUIRED
1-4	0-2
5-7	3-5
8-10	6-8
11	9-11
12	12+

For example, a character is trying to convince a scholar to let him examine a book in their library. The scholar has a Will of 7 and is initially Unfriendly toward the character (-1 TN to all social interaction tests), but he has no personal stake in opposing the character. To get the scholar's aid, the Gamemaster states that the character must use a social interaction skill to change his attitude so that he is at least Friendly toward the character.

The character decides to use Bureaucracy to do so, quoting arcane university rules as well as documented instances of the scholar helping others in the past. He makes a Bureaucracy test and achieves 3 degrees of success. To this, the character adds his rank in the social interaction skill he used. Since he has rank 6 in Bureaucracy, the result is 9 degrees of success. Consulting Table 5:7, the player sees he needs only 3–5 degrees of success to shift the scholar's attitude one level. With 9 degrees of success, his character can shift the scholar's attitude three levels. However, the target of a social interaction test gets the chance to resist, which he can do freely each round without incurring a multiple action penalty. Most social skills can be resisted by a resist test, although the GM may decide that, in certain circumstances, other skills (such as Empathy) might be more appropriate.

The degrees of success achieved on a test to resist a character's social skills are deducted from the total degrees of success achieved by the character attempting to influence the target. If the target achieves more degrees of success than the character attempting to influence him, the target's attitude may harden. For every 3 degrees of success achieved by the resisting character, his attitude drops by one level, making him harder to influence in the future. Furthermore, the social skill previously used can no longer be used, representing that the target is no longer impressed by the character's efforts. A character can continue to try to influence the target's attitude with other social skills, if they can plausibly be used. Otherwise, the social interaction ends at that point. For example, if a character fails to use Bureaucracy to convince the scholar, he must either admit defeat or find another appropriate skill to use, perhaps Bargain in trying to fast-talk the scholar into doing what he wants.

SOCIAL INTERACTION AND YOUR CHARACTER

The social interaction system is intended to function for both player and non-player characters. What this means is that it is possible for NPCs to use their social skills against your character and change his attitudes toward them. As noted above, you decide for yourself how your character feels about any supporting character, setting the initial attitude level. Once that is done, however, supporting characters can do their best to make your character feel better disposed towards them.

Some players might balk at this game mechanization of social interaction, which is understandable. Many players generally do not like losing control of their character's actions, such as having a femme fatale seduce him or a wily merchant cheat him out of hard-earned coin. However, it is important to remember that your character is not you, and, while you created him or her, he or she might not necessarily behave as you would in the same circumstances. Likewise, as a player, you often know more than your character does. That is, you may know that the beautiful woman who has taken a romantic interest in your character is a rival family member, but would your character know this? Consequently, having your character "suffer" as a result of social interaction sometimes makes perfect sense and is a natural result of how an adventure unfolds. Great roleplaying comes from embracing rather than resisting it.

If, however, you have a problem with the result of a social interaction, talk with the Gamemaster about it, who may be willing either to overlook or ameliorate its results. After all, the goal of roleplaying is to have fun, and there will be times when applying the “rules as written” simply is not fun. Similarly, do not use this as an excuse to get your character out of unpleasant situations without good cause. These situations are the stuff of great adventures, and the success of a social interaction roll against your character can lead to results and consequences far more interesting and exciting than expected.

FEAR AND SANITY

For most people, fear is mundane. Large crowds, sudden noises, someone sneaking up on you unnoticed, all of these things are fearful, but once one gets over the initial shock, there is no lasting effect. Fear is real, however, and being exposed to it does wear down even the most stern, strong-willed character.

FEAR

Coming face-to-face with scenes of grisly murders, tortured children, and the horrors of war are traumatic experiences for any character – but these are experiences caused by human beings nevertheless. Encountering leathery-winged demons, scaly mermen, or rotting, undead minions, on the other hand, will shatter one’s sanity. When faced with supernatural creatures like these, your Character will need to make a Fear Test.

A Fear Test is an unmodified Will Test. If your Character fails her Fear Test, she will be at a –1 on all Tests for one full day.

SANITY

Every time your Character fails a Fear Test, she will lose one point of her current Sanity. For every 10 points of current Sanity your Character loses, she must make an unmodified Will Test to see if she gains a Disorder. As to what the Disorder is, that is for the GM to decide in consultation with the player. When your Character is reduced to 0 Sanity, her Sanity cap is permanently reduced by 1 Point. For example, your Character’s Sanity cap is 45. Through the course of an adventure, her Sanity is reduced to 0. After she has recovered, her Sanity Cap is reduced to 44, and every time she has it reduced again to 0, this cap continues to be diminished. Once your Character’s Sanity Cap is reduced to 0 Sanity, she has been driven into madness, and is out of the game.

The most logical means of choosing your Character’s Disorder is to acquire a Disorder that is the direct result of your Character failing her Fear Test. For example, let’s say your Character was stuck in a tiny cabin when she confronted a Devil. This traumatic experience was enough to force your Character to make a Fear Test, which she failed. Not only was your Character penalized for a number of Rounds, but she also lost another Sanity Point, which forced your Character



to make a Will Test. After failing her Will Test, you scan through the various Disorders and choose Claustrophobia, to represent your Character's trauma.

In order to keep the game flowing, Will Tests for Disorders should be made after, not during, Combat. Once Combat has been resolved, your Character will begin to feel the effects of her violent, unearthly experiences.

USING SANITY

Sanity ebbs and flows throughout the game, and with it, a character is able to do things normal people would not dare to do. Certain magical spells cost the caster a little bit of their Sanity. Over time, they might not realize that working such magics has this effect, but eventually they cast one too many spells, which saps their Sanity. Some characters might choose to use their Sanity to enter into a state of rage (history calls such people Berserkers) that allows them to press on past their point of sanity. This state of rage has a lasting effect on a person, and eventually they will enter into this state of rage one too many times, and be unable to recover from it.

Depending on the style of fantasy you are running, Sanity is a concept which comes into play in a number of ways.

OPTION: RAGE

You can use your Sanity to enter a Berserker Rage. The player declares her Character is spending all of her Sanity, and she enters a Berserk Rage. Entering this state, the character's Brawn and Toughness are temporarily raised by 2 points each, and her Vitality is temporarily increased by 15 Points. In addition, both her Will and Wits are temporarily lowered by 2 points. Rage lasts for a number of Rounds equal to the enraged character's base Will (not the temporarily reduced level) and, while in this state, the character is immune to all Fear, and will ignore any modifiers associated with lost Vitality. As soon as the Rage state passes, the character's Abilities will return to normal, and the boosted Vitality disappears.

OPTION: MENTAL DECAY

This option, which is usually found primarily in the works of Lovecraft and Smith, called Mental Decay, is one in which the Sanity of the character does not reset. Every lost point of Sanity moves your Character closer and closer to the edge. Once out of Sanity Points, the character becomes deranged.

REGAINING SANITY AND LOSING DISORDERS

Sanity cannot be boosted above its starting value, what we called its Cap earlier, as determined in *Chapter 2*. However, lost Sanity can be regained at a rate equal to the character's Wits per new day. If your Character had a bad encounter with a Witch one morning, for example, she will not be able to regain any Sanity until the next day after her battle. If your Character loses all her Sanity, she will be unable to act until the next day, at which time she will regain some of her Sanity. However, her Sanity total is permanently reduced by 1 point. Each time the character goes down to 0 Sanity, their total is reduced by 1.

What happens when your Character reaches 0 Sanity? She gains a Disorder, that she cannot recover from, and your Character suffer its effects for the rest of her life.

COMMON DISORDERS

Here is a list of some of the common Disorders that may affect your Character.

ABSENT-MINDEDNESS

Your Character tends to lose her mental focus; she has a difficult time concentrating on the task at hand. This Disorder causes your character a mild form of dementia; she is only able to perform an Action once every other Round. Absent-Mindedness can also cause your Character to not recognize other characters or Villains, and this leaves the door open for Villains to use their Skills to try to charm her into believing their lies. Once you acquire Absent-Mindedness, you are no longer able to resist magical attacks, even if you once purchased the Resist Skill.

AGORAPHOBIA

Your Character is afraid of open spaces, and when she is outdoors, she must make a Will Test. Failing the Test, your Character suffers a -1 to all Tests until she is safe from viewing the outdoors or whatever caused her to have an episode of Agoraphobia, and she also loses a number of Sanity Points equal to one-half the character's Will. This fear comes into play on the battlefield, on a grassy prairie, at a market, or anywhere else that has a wide, open space.

ADDICTION

To forget the pain your Character has felt because of her experiences, she turns to alcohol to help herself cope with her fears. Always drunk, your Character suffers a -2 to all Tests in Combat, as her arms swing wildly and she is unable to hit her mark. In addition, she must make a Will Test whenever she comes across a jug of wine. If she fails, she'll drink the jug, regardless of where she is or who she is with.

ALLERGY

After coming into contact with a supernatural terror, your Character has developed a severe Allergy, which is fueled by her paranoia. Examples of Allergies can be

food, metals, textiles, plants, or other people. Allergies in these cases don't need to be realistic, because your Character is allergic to something simply because she believes she is. After deciding on an Allergy, your Character will suffer a -1 to all Tests until she has been removed from the allergen for about an hour.

AMNESIA, SHORT-TERM

To cope with all that your Character has seen, everything she knows (from her name to what side of the war she is fighting on) is forgotten when she wakes up every morning. To overcome Short-Term Amnesia, your Character can make a Wits Test once per day. If you roll successfully, your Character regains all of her memories since the time she lost it, but won't remember anything else. Roll a Dramatic Success, and you'll regain all of your memories for that day. If you fail this Test, your Character loses 1 Sanity Point. Dramatically Fail this Test, and you'll lose 5 Sanity Points.

ANOREXIA

The mere thought of eating is enough to make your Character sick. When faced with the sight of food or after being forced to eat it, your Character must make a Will Test to see if she can keep her stomach calm. This is a deadly Disorder; most characters who have Anorexia must find a way to cure themselves quickly. For every month your Character suffers from Anorexia, she loses 1 Vitality and 1 Brawn.

CLAUSTROPHOBIA

Your Character is deathly afraid of small, enclosed spaces. When in a confined place, such as a closet, small cabin, trunk, ship's berth, etc., your Character must make a Fear Test to see whether or not she can overcome her fears. If she does not, then your Character will suffer the effects of the Fear. This phobia may also work against your Character when she is trying to be stealthy. Also note that many effects of Darkness can suddenly cause a character to become claustrophobic.

DEPRESSION, SEVERE

Believing that evil is behind every door, your Character is severely depressed and is convinced that fighting is an exercise in futility. Characters who suffer from Depression are unable to draw upon their Action Points unless they are on their deathbeds. By having no Action Points, your Character interacts with other player characters and NPCs poorly, and will not spend them to save others from certain death.

FALSE BRAVERY

Your Character has convinced herself that she has survived her encounters through more than just sheer, dumb luck. She has an inflated ego, and is filled with an overconfident bravado that frequently gets her into trouble.

GLUTTONY

Food becomes your Character's saving grace, and it has manifested into more than just a comforting activity. When your Character comes face-to-face with any plate or an abundance of food, she must make a Will Test. If she fails the Test, your Character gorges herself on everything in sight. Once full, your Character suffers a -1 to all Tests for one day, until she's had time to digest her feast. If she rolls a Dramatic Failure, your Character becomes obsessed with whatever food she is eating for one day.

MIGRAINES

Your Character has purposefully put her horrifying experiences with a man-eating snake out of her mind; however, the pain in her head tells her otherwise. Any time your Character makes a Wits, Will or Skill Test, she must roll a 1d12 beforehand; there is a 1-in-12 chance she will get a Migraine headache. The Migraine lasts for the same number of Rounds; while your Character's head is pounding, she suffers a -1 to all Tests.

NIGHTMARES

Every night when your Character's head hits her pillow, she suffers from terrifying nightmares. These nightmares could be the same over and over again, or they could be different each night. Because your Character's nightmares interrupt her good night's sleep, she needs an extra two hours of sleep per night, and if she is unable to rest, she will lose one Vitality Point that day. However, if your Character shares her dreams about odd, glowing red eyes and rotting fish, your Character will feel a temporary sense of calm, and gain back 1 Vitality Point. Once she shares her dreams, your Character must make a Fear Test if she sees something that reminds her of her Nightmares.

OBSESSION

Your Character has turned an innocent aspect of her life into a severe obsession. Obsessions can manifest as behaviors, things, people, or routines. Whatever your Character is obsessed with or about, she will need to make a Will Test whenever faced with her obsession or some aspect that reminds her of it. If she fails her Test, she will proceed to ensure that she has whatever it is she wants and obsesses about at all costs. If your Character's Obsession is an Action or Routine, like constantly pulling their hair or chewing on their fingernails, she will suffer a permanent -2 penalty to all Actions involving social Skills.

OTHER PHOBIAS

The bloody carnage your Character has seen has given her a Phobia. This Phobia can be something trivial, such as a fear of water, or something more unusual, like a fear of powdered wigs. Whenever your Character comes into contact with her Phobia, you must make a Fear Test. If you fail this Test, your Character is forced

to flee, refusing to return for 2 Rounds of Combat or Action. Whatever your Character's Fear is, keep in mind that her Phobia can come into play at any time, so choose what you're afraid of wisely – or else you'll find your Character is quickly turning into a scaredy cat.

DISEASES AND AILMENTS

Life is filled with untold danger. Danger hides behind every corner, in every leg of lamb, or flowing in every keg of ale, in the form of disease. In the world of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, medical knowledge isn't enough to prevent diseases from spreading or curing them after study.

When faced with the potential to contract a Disease, your Character must make a Toughness Test. If she fails this Test, she will become sick with the ailment and, unless otherwise noted, must roll 1d12 to determine how many days or hours the Disease lasts. Some of these Diseases are temporary in duration, and some are longer lasting.

If a Dramatic Success is rolled against any of these Diseases, the Disease in question will be cured, and the character will not suffer any of the ill effects of the Disease, becoming immune to that Disease – with the exception of supernatural diseases. On a Dramatic Failure, the character will take an additional -1 penalty to whatever roll they have to make to overcome the Disease or deal with its effects.



AGUE

This disease is marked by fever and chills, regardless of what the weather is like outside. If your Character contracts Ague, she must roll 1d12 to see how many days this disease lasts. Under the effects of this disease, your Character will be at a -1 to all Toughness-related Tests until she has healed.

BARREL FEVER

Your Character suffers from nausea and sickness. This lasts for 1d12 hours, and while your Character is sick with Barrel Fever, her Vitality is reduced by half until the sickness passes.

BLOODY FLUX

Your Character suffers from flowing fluids, which lasts for 4 days. As a result, your Character loses 1 Vitality each day, and is at -1 to all Tests while sick.

BRIGHT'S DISEASE

Bright's Disease causes your Character's kidneys to become inflamed. This disease lasts for 1d12 days, and until your Character is cured, she is at a -3 to all Brawn-related Tests.

BURSTEN

General fatigue sets in, causing your Character to be constantly tired and weak. Your Character's muscles ache from lack of use for 1d12 days. While under the effect of this disease, your Character is at a -1 to both Brawn- and Quickness-related Tests.

CAMP FEVER

Your Character has an unnaturally high fever, and experiences bouts of vomiting and uncontrollable weakness for 5 days. During this time, her Vitality, Brawn and Quickness are each reduced by half, and she is at a -1 penalty to all Tests until she is healed.

CHIN COUGH

Your Character suffers from non-stop coughing. The effects of this are such that the character suffers a -1 to all Tests. Chin Cough lasts for 12 days, and at the end of that time, your Character can make a Toughness Test. Success see the character recover, as the disease has run its course, while Failure sees her suffer for another d12 days. A Dramatic Success results in your Character becoming immune to this disease, while a Dramatic Failure sees the disease last for 2d12 days.

CONSUMPTION

Your Character has been diagnosed with an early form of Tuberculosis. During this time, your Character's Toughness is reduced by 4, and her Vitality is reduced by 20. It takes 1d12 days for Consumption to run through your system.

CURSE OF THE GRAVE

Sometimes contact with the Undead has life changing consequences. A rare disease, Curse of the Grave is contracted only when a character comes into contact with a ghoul. In order to resist the disease, a successful Toughness Test is required. Failure earns the victim the Curse of the Grave, turning her into a ghoul in just 1d12 days, or 1d12 hours on a Dramatic Failure. There is no known cure for this disease. The character becomes a mockery of what she was in life, a ravaging thing that retains all the memories of what she once was.

DOCK FEVER

Your Character burns with a fever so high that she hallucinates pink, fluffy bunnies. Also called "Yellow Fever," Dock Fever strikes down even the strongest character with no warning, and is commonly caught near the waterfront. Your Character's Vitality is reduced by half, and cannot be restored through any methods of healing or magic rituals for 1d12 hours.

FALLING SICKNESS

Your Character suffers from spells of fainting and convulsions. There is no known cure for this diseases unless your Character seeks out a magical cure. Once she contracts this disease, each day there is a 1 in 12 chance (roll a 1 on a d12) that the character will faint and go into convulsions, losing 2 Vitality Points in the process.

GRIPE

Your Character suffers from a high fever, coughing, nausea, and difficulty breathing. For 1d12 days your Character's Vitality is reduced by one-half and she is unable to be healed while suffering from the disease. In addition, she suffers a -1 to all Tests.

HEMIPLEGY

Your Character suffers from palsy on one side of her body. There is no known cure for this disease, other than magical ones, and once Hemiplegy is contracted, your Character permanently loses 1 Rank of Quickness. Furthermore, any task that requires one hand now requires two.

JAUNDICE

Your Character's skin has a yellowish cast to it, and she loses her appetite, weakening her constitution. Jaundice lasts for six days, and while suffering the effects of Jaundice, your Character's Brawn is reduced by half.

LUNG FEVER

Your Character suffers from constant coughing, a loss of breath, and weakness. This disease lasts for d12 days and while suffering from it, your Character's Toughness is reduced by half, and she loses 1 Vitality each day. While suffering from Lung Fever, your Character is unable to have her Vitality restored.

LYCANTHROPY

A rare disease, Lycanthropy can only be contracted through a werewolf's bite. Once your Character is bitten by a werewolf, she must make an unmodified Toughness Test to see if she has been infected. Failing this Test results in your Character contracting the disease. Dramatic Success and Dramatic Failure do not come into play, because this is a black-and-white situation for your Character — she either become a werewolf, or she doesn't. There is no known cure for this disease, magical or mundane.

A character who contracts this disease reverts into a wolf-human hybrid each full moon. The effects of Lycanthropy are devastating to "changed" characters, and are applicable once they have turned into were-beasts:

- Brawn, Quickness, & Toughness - increased by 2
- Will - decreased by 6
- Obsessions (Disorder): Eats humans, infect others
- Amnesia (Temporary): Whenever your Character reverts back to human form, she forgets the previous night's events
- The traits of a werewolf (see page 164)

MORSAL

A wound begins to fester and a foul smell emanates from it. After two days, the wound begins to turn blackish green. This disease affects one of your Character's body parts. She loses 2 points of both Brawn and Quickness, and 1 point of Toughness each day she is sick. Unless the wound is healed magically, the only cure for Morsal is to amputate the limb that is affected.

MUMMY ROT

This disease is contracted when a character is touched by a mummy, and there is no natural cure. To resist the disease requires a Toughness Test, with Failure indicating the character has contracted the disease, which manifests in a number of days equal to the character's Toughness. Once the incubation phase of Mummy

Rot is over, the character loses 1 Toughness point per day, and once their Toughness is reduced to 0, their body turns to dust. While the character is suffering from the disease, their body takes on a dry and flaky appearance.

PLANET STRUCK

Your Character suffers from confusion. When stricken by this disease, your Character's Wits score is permanently reduced to one-half its normal value.

SPOTTED FEVER

Your Character suffers from weakness, and a high fever. The disease lasts for 1d12 days, and each day she is sick, your Character loses 1 Vitality. While sick, your Character is unable to have her Vitality restored naturally, and suffer a -2 penalty to all Tests.

RICKETS

What your Character thought was a lack of energy turns out to be a bout of Rickets, a disease that has targeted your bones and weakened them for 1d12 weeks. Until your case of Rickets is healed, your Character's Brawn is reduced by 3 points, and any type of physical damage that you incur does one extra point of damage due to the condition of your brittle bones.

POISON

Villains use poison to slow down their enemies or in an effort to assassinate them. In a manner similar to that with known diseases, your Character can develop immunities to these poisons by rolling a Dramatic Success when attempting to resist their effects. If your Character ingests a Poison or wishes to determine which Poison she is dealing with, an appropriate Skill Test (Study (Botany), Survival, etc.) will allow her to identify what poison she is facing.

Poison is a standard in the pulp fantasy genre. Some writers are specific in their use and portrayal of poison (Lovecraft, Smith and even Moorcock provide good examples of this), which adds color and a sense of believability to the writing. Other writers, such as Howard, do not go into specifics, and instead rely on poison as a throwaway effect, mentioning the poison, and then moving on. Regardless of the type and style of fantasy the Gamemaster wishes to use, all poisons behave the same way.

HERBALISTS AND POISON

Creating poisons is a crime, but some herbalists have been known to craft them either for their own use or for the use of others. Herbalists are able to distill natural poisons and it requires 8 hours per Rank of poison (see Table 5:6 below) to brew one ounce of the poison (enough for one use). Upon the completion of this brewing

process, the Character makes an Herbalist Test, with success leading to the distillation/creation of a poison, and failure resulting in the creation of a vile tasting liquid. A Dramatic Success results in the brewing a poison that is 1 Rank stronger in strength; a Dramatic Failure results in the poison turning into a gas and automatically affecting the Character, doing damage equivalent to what it would have done as a liquid. Poisons retain their potency no matter how long they sit.

TABLE 5:6 POISON CREATION

RANK	MODIFIER	EFFECT
1	+0	-1 Brawn for victim, effect last for 4 hours
2	-1	-1 Brawn, -1 Vigor, effect last for 8 hours
3	-2	-1 Brawn, -1 Vigor, effect last for 12 hours, loses 12 Vitality
4	-3	-2 Brawn, effect last for 4 hours
5	-4	-2 Brawn, -2 Vigor, effect lasts for 8 hours
6	-5	-2 Brawn, -2 Vigor effect last for 12 hours, loses 24 Vitality

Besides creating poisons, a Character is able to create an Antidote that will negate the effects of poison regardless of strength (but it does not restore any Vitality lost due to the poison's effects). All Antidotes, regardless of Rank (see Table 5:7), automatically negate the effect of natural poisons. It takes 6 hours and a successful Alchemy Test to brew one ounce of an Antidote. A Dramatic Success results in an Antidote one Rank stronger. If the roll is failed, the Antidote is actually a poison, and has the same potency as a Rank 2 Poison. A Dramatic Failure results in the creation of a Rank 4 Poison. Successfully brewing an Antidote creates enough of the substance for one use. An Antidote does not lose its potency no matter how long it sits in its vial.

TABLE 5:7 ALCHEMICAL ANTIDOTE

RANK	MODIFIER	EFFECT
1	+0	Negates the effect of Rank 1 Poison
2	-1	Negates the effect of Rank 2 Poison
3	-2	Negates the effect of Rank 3 Poison
4	-3	Negates the effect of Rank 4 Poison
5	-4	Negates the effect of Rank 5 Poison
6	-5	Negates the effect of Rank 6 Poison

OPTION: SPECIFIC POISONS

Poisons are kept streamlined for the purpose of game play. Some Gamemasters, however, might want to have poisons that are based on more real world versions of poisons. The four sample poisons below are examples of real world poisons, that could be used in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**.

HEMLOCK

Hemlock is a plant with a purple-spotted stem and fern-like leaves; its small, white flowers give off an unpleasant aroma. The plant is common throughout The World, which makes the availability of this poison easy. If your Character is poisoned with Hemlock, she must make an unmodified Toughness Test. If she fails this Test, she will lose the ability to heal for 1d12 days unless she is healed, while a Dramatic Failure kills the target outright.

HELLEBORE

The Hellebore flowers in the winter with large white, green or purplish flowers, and is known as the Winter Rose. The juice of this plant is extracted and it is highly poisonous. Extracting the juice, and having it reduce over a low fire, creates a thick and highly lethal toxin. If poisoned with Hellebore, your Character must make an unmodified Toughness Test to see if the Hellebore has rendered your Character unconscious, draining your Character's Toughness by all but one point.

ARSENIC

Arsenic has been known since ancient times, but it was Atlantean Alchemists who discovered that by heating realgar (a reddish naturally occurring mineral), they created a substance known as white arsenic. If your Character is poisoned with Arsenic, an odorless, colorless, poison, she will experience a mild heart attack (8 Damage), which will weaken her for 1d12 days until she recovers. During this time, your character will be at a -1 to all Quickness and Brawn-related Tests.

CYANIDE

Cyanide is a poison created by cooking down bitter almonds and cherry laurel. One of the rarer poisons, cyanide is difficult to concoct because of its distinct smell and lethal fumes during the creation process. Although it is easy to recognize, cyanide is a deadly poison. Once it is ingested, your Character's Toughness is reduced to zero after 1d12 hours unless she is healed.

DRUGS

Like Poisons, Drugs come up quite a lot within the literature. The reason for this is that drugs are one of the substances which can effect changes to a character – either good or bad – that allow for movement of the plot and action in the story. Drugs are one of the features that GMs have the option of using or leaving alone. In fact, drugs are more appropriate to certain styles of pulp fantasy. For example, in Moorcock's Elric stories drugs are used as a means of allowing characters to enter new realms of mental processing, permitting them to contact higher powers, as well as being able to sustain a person's health due to sickness. Howard and Lovecraft were two writers who used drugs as devices to cause harm to the characters.

TYPES OF DRUGS

Drugs can be broken down into four categories:

- *Enhancement*: Drugs which give the user a brief benefit that allows them to perform feats greater than most.
- *Harm*: Drugs used against another, to cause a person harm.
- *Control*: Drugs used to control others.
- *Adaptation*: Drugs that allow the user to adapt to a specific situation.

All Drugs have an advantage and a drawback. Advantages are simply what affect the drug has on an individual, while the drawback is the long term effect the drug has on a person.

Every time a Drug is used, the user/victim must make an Opposed Test against the Drug's Addiction, which sets the Target Number for the Test. Failing the Test, the character gains the Addiction Disorder.

EXAMPLES OF DRUGS

DEMON'S TOUCH

Type: Harm

Addiction: 6

Demon's Touch is a drug favored by those seeking to cause harm to others from a distance. This fine black powder resembles pepper, and though somewhat bitter, tastes like it as well. Ingesting this powder causes the victim to be immediately struck with a sense of being on fire. Her entire body feels inflamed, and she sees imaginary flames coming off her body. To resist this drug requires a successful Toughness Test, with Failure causing the flames to last for 6 Rounds (12 Rounds for a Dramatic Failure). While suffering from the effects of this drug, the victim is at -4 to all Tests, and in addition they lose 2 Sanity per Round. When the drug wears off, the victim still suffers a -2 to all Tests for 3 Rounds (6 Rounds for a Dramatic Failure), but the Sanity loss stops.

FLOWERS OF ETHER

Type: Enhancement

Addiction: 9

Flowers of Ether is a drug favored by sorcerers, as it makes them more in tune with the forces of magic, and thus allows them to cast spells and work magic easier. Ingesting this drug requires the user to burn the flowers and inhale the smoke. Doing so, the caster gains a +4 bonus to their spellcasting Tests for a number of hours equal to twice their Will. Once the effects of the drug wear off, the caster finds herself lethargic and the act of casting magic is more difficult. This grants her a -4 bonus to all Tests for a number of hours equal to her Will.

GIFT OF LIFE

Type: Adaptation

Addiction: 8

Gift of Life is a drug often used by warriors who want an edge before battle. Ingesting this drug gives them an extra 15 Vitality points for a number of minutes equal to their Toughness. This extra Vitality is only temporary, and allows the warrior to carry on past the point of death. Once the drug wears off, the warrior has 5 Rounds to seek out medical aid, and heal the lost extra damage. If they do not, and the lost extra Vitality takes them below 0 Vitality, they die.

This is an addictive drug, and each time it is taken the person must take an extra amount of the drug for it to have an effect. The typical dosage is one ounce, and each time the warrior fails the Addiction Test, the amount of the dose goes up by 1 ounce.

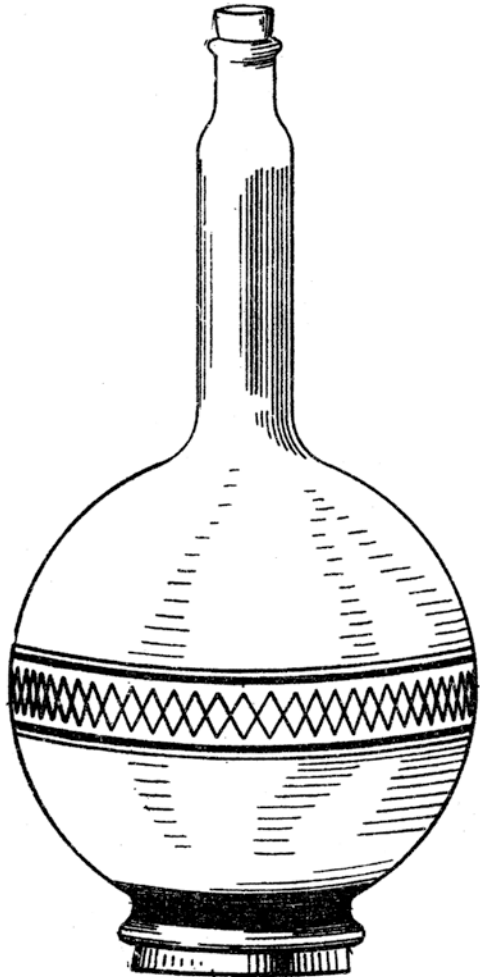
LILITH'S KISS

Type: Control

Addiction: 5

This drug is a pale red liquid which can be added to anything. Once ingested, the target must make an unmodified Toughness Test, with Failure causing them to fall into a hypnotized state that lasts for 1 hour (2 hours, if a Dramatic Failure). While in this state, the victim can be controlled by the first person they see, and will perform tasks they might not otherwise be inclined to do. These tasks might include opening a locked vault, leaving a door open, and the like. As long as the person is not asked to cause themselves harm, they will perform the actions requested.

When the drug wears off, the victim falls into a deep sleep and is unable to wake for a number of hours equal to their Toughness. Upon awakening, they have no memory of what they did.





C **HAPTER**

6

**THE
MAGICAL
ARTS**

In the world of **SHADOW, SWORDS & SPELL**, Magic is real. For most people, Magic is beyond their comprehension, something they fear and condemn. Practitioners of Magic study and learn their Arts in secret. While there is no nation with laws forbidding the practice of Magic, many individual towns and tribes have unwritten laws about the use of Magic.

SPELLS

Spells are the magical feats that some characters, Villains, and even non-player characters are able to perform. Common Spells, which are simple spells that most Spellcasters learn, can be powerful, but are not long-lasting and do not have the potential to cause serious harm.

ACQUIRING SPELLS

When your Character wants to learn a Spell, they'll first have to find someone who knows Magic and can teach it to them. Asking the wrong person could be taken as a breach of etiquette or worse – lead to a public hanging or time with the inquisition. Some learn Spells from family members, as their entire lineage has been devoted – from one century to the next – to the Arts of Magic.

One benefit of learning Magic is that by seeking forbidden knowledge, the Spellcaster becomes part of a select group of individuals who have something in common – together they risk their lives and their place in society by learning, using, and acquiring magical knowledge.

Characters (as well as Villains and NPCs) acquire Spells by purchasing them. The means by which this is accomplished must be handled on a case-by-case basis. The character could learn a spell from an old fortune teller who dabbles in magic, from his mentor in the magical Arts, from a book that he came across in a set of ancient runes, and other means that the player and GM determine in concert. The Gamemaster is the final arbiter of what constitutes a good reason for purchasing Spells and the method involved in every case, based on his own judgment and the nature of his campaign.

TABLE 6:1 MAGICAL ARTS COST

	RANK											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
New Common Spell	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
New Alchemical Art	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Raise Common Spell Rank	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6
Raise Alchemical Art Rank	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6

When a player character buys a Spell, he always purchases it at Power Rank 1. The cost of buying a Spell is equal to the Character's Will. In order to increase the Rank of a Spell it costs one-half the character's Will.

SPELL POWER RANK & TESTS

Spells have a Power Rank. Unlike Skills, where the Base Rank always equals the Skill's governing Ability, Spells and Alchemical Arts have a base rank equal to 1. To avoid confusion, this base rank for Spells is called a Power Rank.

Spells and Arts are associated with Will. A character's total Spell Rank with any known Spell is equal to his Power Rank + Will. So, for example, a character with Burn 4 and Will 10 has a Spell Rank of 14 in that spell.

USING SPELLS

Unless otherwise stated in their descriptions, all Spells use the following guidelines.

TIME

Using Magic is an act of will. Consequently, a character calls upon his abilities with Magic through nothing more than intense concentration. All Spells require two Rounds to cast, the first Round to prepare said Spell, and the second Round to unleash the Spell. Thus, if a sorcerer wants to cast Burn, it will take one Round to prepare, and on the second Round, their Action will be to unleash the Spell. It is not possible to prepare and unleash a spell in the same Round.

ATTACK ROLLS

Some Spells require an Attack Test to affect a target, particularly in the midst of Combat, and this counts as the character's Attack Action for that Round. Spells requiring Attack Tests are subject to the normal Combat modifiers detailed in *Chapter 5*.

RESISTANCE

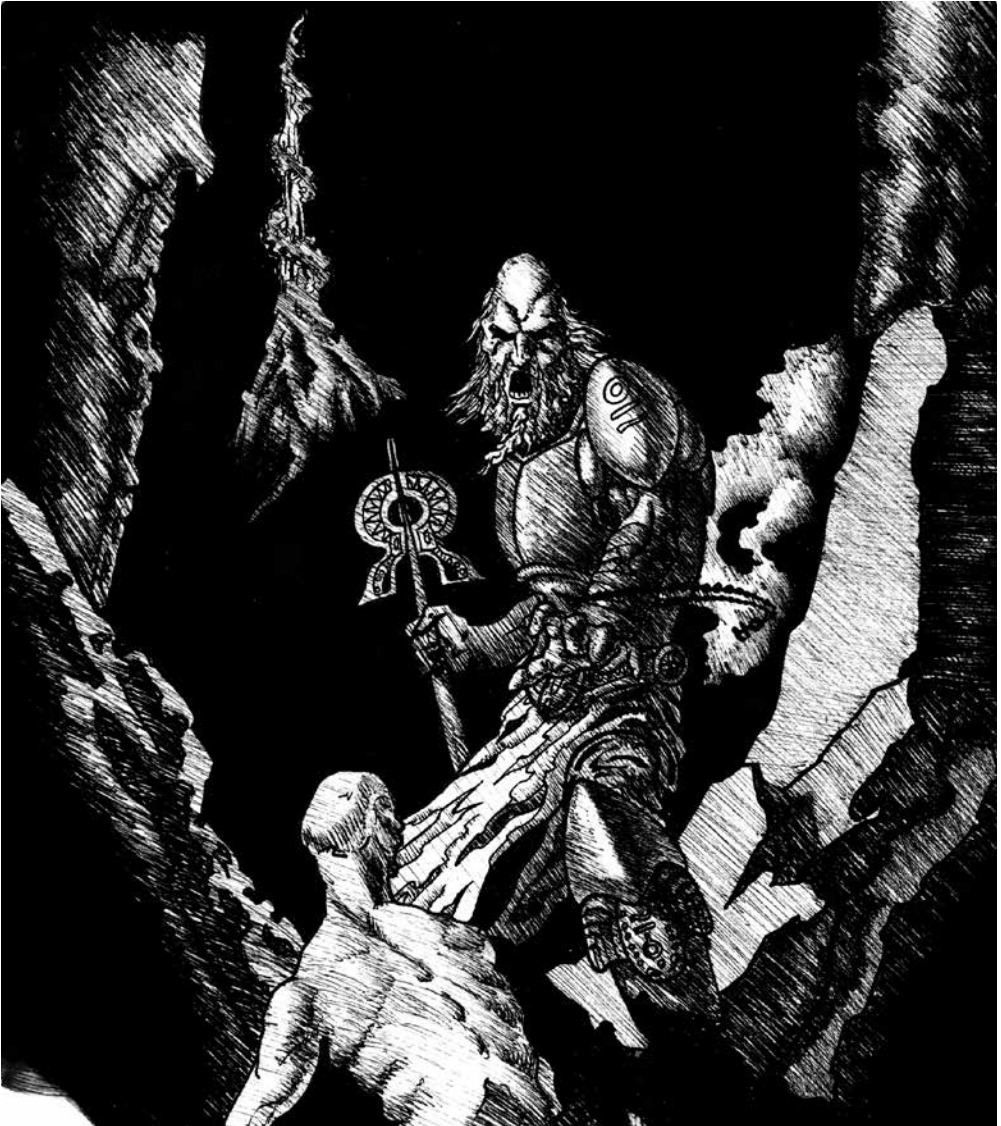
Spells affecting others can be Resisted through an Opposed Test that pits the character's Power Rank against the opposing character's Resist Skill. This Test functions exactly like any other Opposed Test, as detailed in Chapter 1, but with the additional rules for Opposed Tests in Combat as described in Chapter 5.

Subjects of Spells can choose to forego the Resistance Test by willingly accepting the effects of the Spell. This choice must be made before the subject knows what that Spell effect is! This assumes a certain level of trust between characters (or between the players and GM!) that is typically lacking in society, making it a rare occurrence indeed.

RANGE

Specific limitations on the Range of Spells are noted in their descriptions.

While scholars believe that Spells operate according to physical laws, many Spells do so in ways that defy explanation. For example, some Spells can affect targets anywhere that the Spellcaster can see. However, using a Spell against targets that are out of sight and unfamiliar to the caster is still difficult, and effectively limits the range of most Magic to somewhat familiar targets or people and things in the caster's line of sight. If a Spell's description doesn't specify a Range, assume it is line of sight.



VITALITY COST

Magic takes its toll on the caster's health, and every time a Spell is cast it takes a little of the caster's Vitality with it. Each Spell has a Vitality Cost, and this cost must be met regardless of whether the Spell is cast successfully or unsuccessfully. If the Spell is to be maintained over time, then Vitality must be deducted as well since the caster is fueling it with his own life. Even more importantly, if a caster does not have enough Vitality to cast the Spell, he cannot do so. Note that while most Spells only cost Vitality at the time of casting, Spells that require Vitality for maintenance or continuation each Round have this noted in their Spell descriptions.

MAINTAINING SPELLS

Some Spells can be maintained, that is to say their effects continue at the same level achieved by the initial casting of the Spell. This maintenance requires at least a modicum of concentration on the character's part, and maintaining a Spell and its effect requires an Action each Round.

Casting another Spell while maintaining one or more Spells is extremely difficult, and incurs an additional -2 TN penalty per additional Spell, in addition to the usual multi-action penalty (see *Chapter 5* for more details). Furthermore, in addition, the Spell's Vitality cost must be paid as well as the Sanity Cost, if any. If the caster does not have enough Vitality and/or Sanity, the Spell cannot be maintained.

A caster who is distracted while maintaining Spells must make an unmodified Will Test, with a -2 TN for each additional Spell maintained after the first. Additional modifiers may be applied for damage and other distracting conditions at the GM's discretion. A failed Will Test means the caster stops maintaining all of the Spells. Optionally, the Gamemaster may rule that the caster stops maintaining one Spell for every two Degrees of Failure by which the Will Test failed (rounding up). A Spellcaster who is unable to take any Actions (due to being stunned, for example) cannot maintain Spells.

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

The Spells in this chapter operate similarly to Skills, with a few modifications. First, no Spell can be used Untrained. Second, a description of what each of the Spells does follows below, along with any rules specific for using the Spells. If a Spell costs Sanity, this is indicated. If a Spell requires maintenance, concentration or mental contact, this is included in the Spell description.

Furthermore, some Spells have a Retry section, that describes whether or not it is possible to attempt a failed Spell again and the conditions for doing so. If this section is absent, assume the Spell in question may not be attempted again without restriction.

Each description of a Spell ends with the time it takes to use the Spell. In some cases, this varies depending on the conditions under which the Spell is used.

COMMON SPELLS

Common Spells are the Spells that all mages learn when they begin to proceed down the path of the sorcerous Arts. For some, this is the limit to their devotion of the pursuit of Magic, and the desire to work more powerful spells is passed by for various reasons. Common Spells are powerful in their own right, and they allow the practitioner to perform feats most mortals only dream of. Regardless of culture or nation, all Spells have similar characteristics, though they may not be known by the same name from place to place. This is important, since Magic is something that is affected by culture. Ball might be known as “Fury of the Elements” in one locale, or known as “Arrow of the Elements” somewhere else. Though the same Spell, the name of a Spell provides a deeper meaning, and helps make it part of the game world. GMs, and players, are encouraged to think of new names for Common Spells. Doing so is very easy and adds color to your games!

What about the more powerful Arcane Spells? Look to **SHADOW, SWORDS & SPELL: EXPERT** for those spells. They are much too powerful for starting characters.

AWAKE

Range: Touch

Duration: Days equal to the caster's Will

Performed On: Self, Others

Vitality Cost: 3

By performing this clever Spell, the caster renders the intended target unable to fall asleep for a number of days equal to the caster's Will. A person who cannot fall asleep is unable to replenish their Vitality without the use of magic; in addition, he loses 2 Sanity every day that he is unable to sleep. For each additional Power Rank in this Spell, the number of targets a caster can affect increases by 1. Thus, if the caster has 4 Power Ranks with this Spell, he is able to affect 4 people.

Dramatic Success in casting this Spell doubles the duration of the Spell. Failure to cast the spell results in the intended target being unaffected by the Spell. A Dramatic Failure, on the other hand, has repercussions for the caster. Instead of causing a target to be unable to sleep, the caster suffers the effect of this Spell instead.

BURN

Range: Sight

Duration: Hours equal to half the caster's Will

Performed On: Small Objects

Vitality Cost: 4

Invoking the element of fire, the caster harnesses its power and causes a candle or torch to burn continually until the spell wears off. Regardless of weather, wind and the like, the object continues to burn and the flame does not go out. This spell can only be used on inanimate objects that fit in the palm of the caster's hand and are already lit, although darker versions of this Spell have been attributed to larger

fires. If the caster fails to perform this simple Spell, the object will become temporarily useless – unable to light again for as many Rounds as the Degrees of Failure incurred. Dramatic Success doubles the Spell's duration, while a Dramatic Failure causes the caster to become burned by fire, suffering 1d12 + Will in damage from the flames. Burn is a focused Spell that also aids flame and fire resist wind and water. Increasing Power Ranks in this particular Spell allows the caster to keep more than one flame glowing.

BALL/BOLT

Range: 30 feet

Duration: Instant

Performed On: Objects, Others

Vitality Cost: 8

This spell creates a ball or bolt of elemental force that, if successfully cast, allows the caster to hit targets within range of the caster. The damage that a ball or bolt causes is equal to a Damage Value of 5(60). The caster can choose to make the bolt or ball be of any elemental type they desire. A sorcerer who buys this Spell is able to cast one type of elemental ball or bolt. Every 2 Power Ranks in this spell allows the caster to cast an additional ball or bolt of the same type or to add 10 feet to the Range of the spell. A caster who wants to cast this Spell must not only verbally convey the spell, but he must also do one of the following per ball or bolt he is casting:

- *Earth Ball*: The caster must have a handful of dirt from an area where people have died in a landslide. This dirt is thrown in the direction of the target when casting the spell, and when thrown, coalesces into a rock that strikes the target.
- *Air Ball*: While holding a wand carved from a tree toppled by a tornado, the caster holds the tip to his lips, and blows as he casts the spell.
- *Fire Ball*: The caster must hold a lit candle made from the fat of a salamander.
- *Water Ball*: The caster must fill a cup carved from the bone of a whale. Upon casting the spell, the caster tosses the water toward the target.
- *Ether Ball*: The caster must have a wand carved from the rib of a sorcerer that he has killed.

Casters wanting to be able to cast two different element bolts or balls need to buy the Spell again for that element.

ELDRITCH TENDRIL

Range: 15 feet

Duration: Rounds equal to the caster's Will

Performed On: Others

Vitality Cost: 3/Round

This Spell creates a number of tendrils composed of magical force. Successfully casting this Spell creates one magical tendril, which last for a number of Rounds equal to the caster's Will (Dramatic Success doubles the duration). Those trapped

in the tendril(s) can try to break free by making a successful Brawn Test. For every Round trapped in the hug of the tendrils, the opponent suffers a cumulative -1 to the Test. For example, if the opponent has been in the grasp for 3 Rounds they would suffer a -3 to the Test.

Damage from the grasp is equal to the caster's Will, and an opponent in the tendril's Grasp takes this damage each Round they are trapped. If the mage fails to cast the spell, no tendrils are produced; a Dramatic Failure does produce the tendrils, but they automatically grabs the caster. Buying this spell at the base Power Rank allows the caster to create one tendril, while each additional Power Rank allows the caster to produce one additional tendril per Rank. Thus, a caster who has 4 Power Ranks in this spell is able to produce four tendrils.

FLOATING DISC

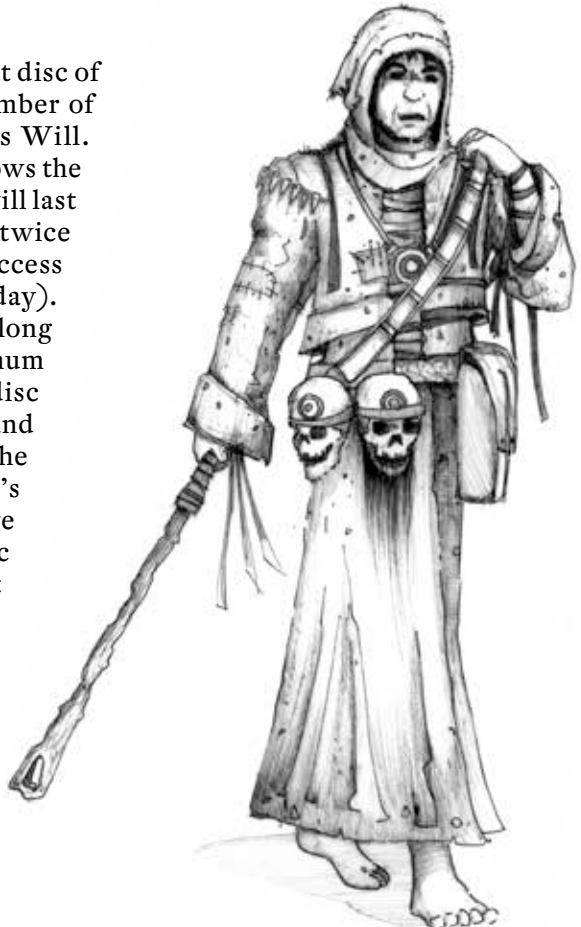
Range: Within 5 feet of the Caster

Duration: Hours equal to the caster's Will $\times 2$

Performed On: Not Applicable

Vitality Cost: 1 per Round

This Spell creates a translucent disc of magical force that can hold a number of pounds equal to $10 \times$ the caster's Will. Successfully casting this Spell allows the caster to create the disc, which will last for a number of Rounds equal to twice the caster's Will (a Dramatic Success has the spell last for one entire day). The disc can carry anything, as long as it does not exceed the maximum weight that can be carried. The disc floats 5 feet above the ground, and is always within arms reach of the caster. The disc follows the caster's mental commands, and if the mage is light enough, he can ride the disc if he so chooses. Failure to cast the Spell results in the disc not being produced, while a Dramatic Failure results in the caster being knocked out and losing a number of Vitality equal to his Will.



FRIGHT

Range: Sight

Duration: Rounds equal to the caster's Will

Performed On: Others

Vitality Cost: 4

Successfully casting this Spell causes one target to become afraid of the caster, forcing them to flee if at all possible and making them unable to attack or take any other Actions for a number of Rounds equal to the caster's Will. A Dramatic Success when casting this Spell not only causes the target to flee in fright, but to lose a number of Sanity equal to the caster's Will. Failure to cast the spell has no effect, while a Dramatic Failure causes the Spell to affect the caster. Each Power Rank in the Spell above the first allows the caster to affect one additional target.

GUARDIAN

Range: Sight

Duration: Number of days equal to the caster's Will

Performed On: Animal

Vitality: 10

Sometimes a mage needs servants to help him do the simplest of tasks, like watching out for enemies or carrying messages to an ally. Guardian is a Spell that creates a temporary guardian. By summoning a guardian, the caster can instruct his animal to obey the simplest commands, such as Hunt, Fetch, or Carry, provided the animal is physically equipped to carry out his commands. If the caster bonds with a squirrel, for example, he can command them to hunt, but the squirrel will bring him back nuts — not rabbit meat.

The caster's animal guardian and the bond he shares with it are directly related to how well he treats his friend. Be kind to your familiar, and your animal will remain loyal and by your side, even defending you when you least expect it. The more the caster abuses his familiar, the more often it will resist his attempts to command it, and either attack him or eventually run away.

In order to summon an animal guardian, the mage needs to have a bit of fur, feathers, or skin — anything from the animal they intend to summon. For example, a mage who wants to summon a dog must have a bit of dog fur in order to do so.

On a Dramatic Success, the duration of the Spell is doubled. Failure of the Spell results in the animal fleeing the mage, and he will not be able to cast Guardian on that animal for the rest of the day. Dramatic Failure results in the intended familiar attacking the caster. The more Power Ranks above the base the caster has, the more animals he can affect.

HEALING

Range: Touch

Duration: Instant

Performed On: Self, Others

Vitality Cost: 10

This Spell allows the caster to heal an individual (including themselves) of damage. Successfully casting this Spell allows the caster to heal a number of Vitality equal to his Will (a Dramatic Success doubles the amount of Vitality healed). An individual cannot have their Vitality restored above their normal maximum level. Failing to cast this Spell means that no damage is healed, while a Dramatic Failure results in the caster causing an additional amount of Vitality damage equal to his Will. Each Power Rank above the base allows the caster to heal one additional person.

ILLUSION

Range: 10 feet x caster's Will

Duration: Hours equal to the caster's Will

Performed On: Others, Objects, Area

Vitality Cost: 6

This Spell allows the mage to create an illusion of something they have seen or are familiar with. Thus, if the mage has seen a dragon, he is able to cast the illusion of a dragon. If he has not seen a dragon, he cannot create an illusionary one. Successfully casting this Spell, the caster creates an illusion that behaves as if it were the real thing. The illusion will last for a number of hours equal to half the caster's Will (Dramatic Success doubles the duration). Failing to cast the Spell means that no illusion is created, while a Dramatic Failure results in the caster being knocked out for a number of Rounds equal to his Will; in addition, the caster loses a number of Sanity equal to his Will. Illusions can be disbelieved; to do so requires an Opposed Test between the caster's Will and the Wits of the target. Those who disbelieve the illusion are not affected by it.

Illusions affect the sense of sight, and thus, anyone seeing the illusion will think it is real. Illusions have no smell, taste, feel, or sound to them. They can "attack" targets, but the attacks cause no damage.

LEAP

Range: Touch

Duration: Instant

Performed On: Self, Others

Vitality Cost: 2

Successfully casting this Spell allows a target to leap horizontally or vertically a number of feet equal to twice the caster's Will (a Dramatic Success doubles this distance). Failing to cast the Spell means the Spell does not work, while a Dramatic Failure results in the caster being smashed into the ground, and suffering damage equal to twice his Will.

PRODUCE ELEMENT

Range: 30

Duration: Instant

Performed On: Area equal to the caster's Will

Vitality Cost: 4

Successfully casting this Spell produces one of the five elements in an area equal to the caster's Will (double the area for a Dramatic Success). A sorcerer who learns this spell is able to produce one element. For every 2 Power Ranks in this spell, the caster is able to produce an additional element. Depending on the element produced, the effects will differ as follows:

- *Earth*: Produce stones, which cause 2(30) in damage and destroy any objects in the area. The stones remain and weigh a number of pounds equal to the caster's Will.
- *Air*: Gust of wind, which strikes for 2(30) damage, and extinguishes any flames.
- *Fire*: Produces a burst of flame which causes 2(30) damage and ignites anything flammable. Any flammable material which the Spell ignited burns for a number of Rounds equal to the caster's Will.
- *Water*: Produces a deluge of water that strikes for 2(30) damage, as well as soaking all within the area. If water is cast into a large enough container the water produced is equal to a number of gallons equal to the caster's Will.
- *Ether*: Creates a magical burst of light that causes 2(30) damage, and blinds all within the area for a number of Rounds equal to the caster's Will.

Failing to cast this Spell does not produce the element, while a Dramatic Failure has the spell affect the caster.

PROTECTION

Range: Touch

Duration: Rounds equal to the caster's Will

Performed On: Self, Others

Vitality Cost: 6

Successfully casting this Spell covers the caster or a target of his choice with a form of magical armor that protects with an AV 10. For each additional Power Rank in the spell, the AV is increased by +5. Thus a mage with 4 Power Ranks in Protection has an AV of 25. The result of AV 25 is derived as follows: Base 10 for Rank 1, plus 5 per extra Rank equals 10+15 (3 additional Ranks to make Rank 4). The Spell lasts for a number of Rounds equal to the caster's Will (a Dramatic Success doubles this duration). Failure to cast the Spell has no effect, while a Dramatic Failure makes the caster easier to hit: anyone trying to hit the caster gains a +2 Bonus to do so.

QUICKEN

Range: Touch

Duration: 1d12 Rounds

Performed On: Self, Others

Vitality: 3

This Spell is one of the most popular ones that a Spellcaster can learn, because Quicken grants the caster extra speed. Upon casting this Spell, the caster is able to run faster, dodge more easily, and swim more quickly. After casting this Spell, the caster has the choice of either taking a mechanical bonus, or using it to get somewhere faster (movement is doubled). Succeeding at a Quicken Spell Test earns the caster a +1 to any movement-related Skill. Failure to cast the spell slows the caster down and burdens them with a -1 penalty to any movement-related skills. For every 4 Power Ranks in the Spell, the bonus is increase by a +1 to a maximum of +3.

Dramatic Successes and Failures do not grant bonuses or penalties. Instead, depending upon the situation, the caster moves extremely fast or extremely slow. For example, on a Dramatic Success, the caster moves so fast they are “transported” to their intended destination. If used in Combat, the target always goes first before Initiative is taken. A Dramatic Failure, on the other hand, causes the caster to move so slowly that others might think he is dead. The drawback to this Spell, of course, is that speed is hard to control.

REFRESH

Range: Touch

Duration: Instant

Performed On: Others

Vitality Cost: 2 per Sanity Point Restored

Successfully casting this Spell allows the mage to restore some Sanity to an individual that he touches (Dramatic Success allows anyone within 10 feet of the caster



- ≡ and they are affected equally by the spell). The amount of Sanity restored to the target depends on how much Vitality the caster wants to expend. For example, if the caster wants to restore 15 Sanity to an individual, it will cost them 30 Vitality. Individuals cannot have their Sanity restored above and beyond their Sanity Cap. Failure to cast this Spell means no individual has their Sanity restored, while a Dramatic Failure results in the individual losing additional Sanity instead of having it restored, in an amount equal to the caster's Will.

SANCTIFY

Range: 10-foot Radius around the Caster

Duration: Hours equal to the caster's Will

Performed On: Self

Vitality Cost: 2

This Spell creates a sacred space or circle around the caster, allowing for the better practice of magic. Casting Sanctify creates an area that is conducive to magic, and any magic performed within the radius of the caster earns a +1 Bonus to Spell Tests, as long as the caster remains within the circle. A Dramatic Success in casting this Spell causes the bonus to be a +4. Failure to cast the Spell causes the caster to suffer a -1 to all Spell Tests while in the circle, while a Dramatic Failure creates a dead zone within the circle in which no magic may be cast. Sanctify cannot be cast for other mages, although two Spellcasters can combine their efforts to create a larger area so both of them are able to work magic more effectively. In this case, if one mage fails their Spell Test and the other succeeds, the successful caster may still use the circle and gain the bonus for a single caster.



SLEEP

Range: Feet equal to twice the caster's Will

Duration: Hours equal to the caster's Will

Performed On: Others

Vitality Cost: 2

Successfully casting this Spell allows the caster to put a number of targets to sleep. The number of targets affected is equal to one-half the caster's Will. Each target must make an Opposed Will Test with Failure resulting in their falling asleep for a number of Rounds equal to the caster's Will (a Dramatic Success doubles this duration). Failure to cast this Spell means no one is put to sleep, while a Dramatic Failure causes the caster to be put to sleep.

For every Power Rank above the first that the caster has, he may put one additional target to sleep.

STRIKE TRUE

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 attack until used (see below)

Performed On: Weapons

Vitality Cost: 5

Numerous versions of this Spell exist, but there is not one group or individual mage who can claim to be the creator of this Spell. This Spell allows the caster to bless a weapon, enabling it to strike with more accuracy. The caster must bless one weapon with their blood (at a cost of 1d12 Vitality), thus giving the weapon a +1 bonus to hit a target. Many who seek out a mage to cast the Spell have them cast it on a sling bullet or an arrow, saving it for a crucial moment. Taking one full day to prepare, this Spell can only be performed once per weapon per day. Additional Power Ranks in the Spell allow for more than one weapon to be blessed in a single day (3 Ranks allow for 3 weapons, etc.). Failure to cast the Spell means the weapon is not blessed, and it will be unaffected by additional attempts to do so for that day. A Dramatic Success causes the blessing to last for two attacks, instead of one. A Dramatic Failure in casting this Spell results in the weapon being cursed, and it suffers a -1 penalty to hit a single target.

ALCHEMY

The practice of Alchemy requires a lab that must include not only a furnace, but also the necessary tools to produce the works of this Art. Alchemists need bellows, tongs, numerous glass beakers, as well as vessels made from copper, tin, and iron, all of which are used for distillation. The cost to outfit a full lab is 25 SC. Besides the needed gear, Alchemists also require the ingredients to perform their work, which incurs even more costs. Though some Alchemists use portable labs (a horse-drawn wagon), using one incurs a -3 TN to any Alchemy Tests. This is due to the portable lab not being as easy to work with as compared with an Alchemist's personal lab.

Alchemy focuses on the following Arts: Acid and Alkali Creation, Elixir Creation, Poison Creation, Explosive Making, Metal Creation, and Transmutation. Alchemy is an Art that is linked to Wits. In addition, some of these Arts allow for the production of their creations at various strength levels. To brew a stronger creation, the Alchemy Test is modified as per the numbers found in the various tables below.

For example, the character has Alchemy – Acid and Alkali at Power Rank 7. To produce a Rank 1 Acid, he must make an Alchemy Test with his Target being his Rank in the Art. In this case, his Target Number is 7. If he wanted to create a Rank 5 Acid, his Target would be lowered by 4 Ranks, making the Alchemy Test more difficult, and the Target Number would be a 3.

ACIDS AND ALKALI CREATION

Acids are fluids that can dissolve almost any material, as well as being able to cause damage to living creatures. Alkalis neutralize acids, stopping them from working and inflicting their burns.

Acids, as well as Alkalis, have various Ranks of intensity at which they can be created. Alchemists skilled in this Art can manufacture any acid or alkali of any strength, but doing so is difficult. The stronger the creation, the harder it is to create. Alkalis are Ranked in strength as are Acids, and they only work against Acids equal to or less than their own strength Rank. For example, an Alkali Rank 2 is only capable of neutralizing Acid Rank 1 and Acid Rank 2; it has no effect on Acids of Rank 3 or higher in strength.

It takes 1 full day to distill a half-pint of an acid or alkali (enough for one use), and this requires a successful Alchemy – Acids and Alkali Test. A Success results in the Alchemist creating the acid or alkali; a Dramatic Success results in the acid being the next higher Rank in strength. Failure causes the Alchemist to create an inert liquid, while a Dramatic Failure results in the liquid suddenly boiling over, spraying the Alchemist for 1d12 points of damage.



TABLE 6:2 ACIDS AND ALKALIS BREWING

RANK	MODIFIER	DAMAGE VALUE	BURNING TIME	MATERIAL DISSOLVE
1	+0	2(10)	1 Round	1 ounce
2	-1	2(20)	2 Rounds	2 ounces
3	-2	3(30)	3 Rounds	3 ounces
4	-3	3(40)	4 Rounds	4 ounces
5	-4	4(50)	5 Rounds	5 ounces
6	-5	4(60)	6 Rounds	6 ounces

POISON CREATION

Creating Poisons is a crime, but some Alchemists have been known to craft them either for their own use or for the use of others. Unlike natural poisons, these Alchemical Poisons are very powerful and often prove to be quite fatal. It takes 8 hours to brew one ounce of poison (enough for one use), and upon completion of this brewing process, the Alchemist makes an Alchemy Test, with success leading to the creation of a poison, and failure resulting in the creation of a vile tasting liquid. A Dramatic Success results in the Alchemist brewing a poison that is 1 Rank stronger in strength; a Dramatic Failure results in the poison turning into a gas and automatically affecting the Alchemist, doing damage equivalent to what it would have done as a liquid. Unlike Elixirs (see below), Poisons retain their potency no matter how long they sit.

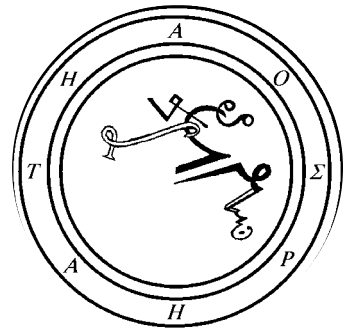


TABLE 6:3 ALCHEMICAL POISON

RANK	MODIFIER	EFFECT
1	±0	-1 to any Attribute, effect lasts for 4 hours
2	-1	-1 to any two Attributes, effect lasts for 8 hours
3	-2	-1 to any three Attributes, effect lasts for 12 hours, loses 12 Vitality
4	-3	-2 to any two Attributes, effect lasts for 4 hours
5	-4	-2 to any three Attributes, effect lasts for 8 hours
6	-5	-2 to any four Attributes, effect lasts for 12 hours, loses 24 Vitality
7	-6	Instant death, successful resist of poison and lose all but 1 Vitality (half for Dramatic Success)

TABLE 6:4 ALCHEMICAL ANTIDOTE

RANK	MODIFIER	EFFECT
1	±0	Negates the effect of Rank 1 Alchemical Poison
2	-1	Negates the effect of Rank 2 Alchemical Poison
3	-2	Negates the effect of Rank 3 Alchemical Poison
4	-3	Negates the effect of Rank 4 Alchemical Poison
5	-4	Negates the effect of Rank 5 Alchemical Poison
6	-5	Negates the effect of Rank 6 Alchemical Poison
7	-6	Negates the effect of Rank 7 Alchemical Poison

Besides creating Alchemical Poisons, an Alchemist is able to create an Antidote that will negate the effects of poison regardless of strength (but it does not restore any Vitality lost due to the poison). All Antidotes, regardless of Rank, automatically negate the effect of natural poisons (see *Chapter 5*). It takes 6 hours and a successful Alchemy Test to brew one ounce of an Antidote. A Dramatic Success results in an Antidote one Rank stronger. If the roll is failed, the Antidote is actually a poison, and has the same potency as a Rank 2 Poison. A Dramatic Failure results in the creation of a Rank 4 Poison. Successfully brewing an Antidote creates enough of the substance for one use. An Antidote does not lose its potency no matter how long it sits in its vial.

ALCHEMICAL VITRIOL

Alchemical Vitriol is a highly unstable and powerful explosive; only an Alchemist can create it. With the growing tensions in The World, many have put this knowledge of Vitriol creation to good use.

It takes a skilled Alchemist eight hours to produce one ounce of Alchemical Vitriol. Upon finishing the task, the Alchemist must make an Alchemy – Alchemical Vitriol Test, with success indicating they have created one ounce (enough for one use) of Alchemical Vitriol. A Dramatic Success results in the compound being one Rank stronger. If the Alchemy Test is failed, the compound explodes, doing damage as per the strength of the explosive; a Dramatic Failure results in the compound exploding and doing damage as if it were 1 Rank stronger. Once created, Alchemical Vitriol is highly unstable, and there is a 50% chance it will explode if the bottle is shaken excessively (roll a d12, if the result is even, it explodes). Placing the vial of Alchemical Vitriol within a container of water is enough to cushion it somewhat, and reduces the risk of explosion to 25% (roll a d12; if the result is a 3, 6 or 12, it explodes).



TABLE 6:5 ALCHEMICAL VITRIOL

RANK	MODIFIER	EFFECT
1	+0	6 points damage in a 10-foot radius
2	–1	12 points damage in a 20-foot radius
3	–2	18 points damage in a 30-foot radius
4	–3	24 points damage in a 40-foot radius
5	–4	30 points damage in a 50-foot radius
6	–5	36 points damage in a 60-foot radius

ELIXIR CREATION

Through the process of distillation and brewing, Alchemists have the skill of being able to extract powerful Essences from minerals and organic compounds. This process enables them to produce powerful Elixirs to aid a person. A character can only drink one Elixir of the same type at a time, and drinking any more than one Elixir has dire effects. Drinking more than one Elixir reduces the character's Vitality to 0.



ABILITY ELIXIR

Ability Elixirs are Elixirs that can raise one Ability for a short period of time. There are five types of this Elixir, and each one is associated with one Ability. Only by drinking the appropriate Elixir can the Ability actually be raised. The Elixirs are: Elixir of Brawn, Elixir of Quickness, Elixir of Toughness, Elixir of Wits, and Elixir of Will. In order to get the benefit of the Elixir, the entire quantity of Elixir must be consumed.

Ability Elixirs are ranked in Strength, with Rank 1 being the weakest and Rank 6 being the strongest. It takes 6 hours to brew an Ability Elixir, and upon completing this process, the Alchemist must make an Alchemy Test. Success indicates that the Elixir has successfully been brewed. Failure means that the Elixir is not made properly, and an inert liquid has been produced. A Dramatic Success results in the duration the Elixir being doubled, while a Dramatic Failure causes the Ability to be reduced instead of raised.

TABLE 6:6 ABILITY ELIXIR

RANK	MODIFIER	INCREASE	DURATION
1	±0	+1	1 Hour
2	-1	+1	2 Hours
3	-2	+2	1 Hour
4	-3	+2	2 Hours
5	-3	+3	1 Hour
6	-4	+3	2 Hours
7	-4	+4	1 Hour
8	-5	+4	2 Hours
9	-5	+5	1 Hour
10	-6	+5	2 Hours
11	-6	+6	1 Hour
12	-7	+6	2 Hours

BOOST ELIXIR

Boost Elixirs are simple liquids that aid a person when they need to have sharp wits or focus. It takes 6 hours to brew an Elixir of this type, and at the end of the brewing process, there is enough of the liquid for two uses. Once consumed, Boost Elixirs aid the user by providing them a bonus to all Tests for the duration of the Elixir.

Boost Elixirs do not have various Ranks of strength so as to make them more effective. Successfully brewing a Boost Elixir (a successful Alchemy Test) creates an Elixir that gives the imbiber a +1 bonus to all Tests for 2 Hours. A Dramatic

Success creates a powerful Elixir that gives the imbiber a +2 bonus to all Tests for 4 Hours. A Failure results in the imbiber suffering a -1 penalty to all Tests for 2 Hours, while a Dramatic Failure results in the -2 penalty to all Tests for 4 Hours.

ELIXIR OF HEALTH

Elixirs of Health are powerful creations that allow a person to heal from their wounds or sicknesses upon drinking the Elixirs. Though these Elixirs are powerful, they are not able to bring someone back from the dead. It takes 12 hours, and a successful Alchemy Test, to brew enough of this Elixir for one dose, roughly 6 ounces.

TABLE 6:7 ELIXIR OF HEALTH

RANK	MODIFIER	EFFECT
1	±0	Restores 4 Vitality
2	-1	Restores 8 Vitality
3	-2	Restores 12 Vitality, Restores 4 Sanity
4	-3	Restores 16 Vitality
5	-4	Restores 20 Vitality
6	-5	Restores 24 Vitality, Restores 8 Sanity

A Dramatic Success creates an Elixir that is one Rank stronger. Thus, if the Alchemist was brewing a Rank 5 Elixir, and had a Dramatic Success on their Alchemy Test, the Elixir would be Rank 6.

In order to gain the effects of the Elixir, the entire dose must be drunk. Freshness of the Elixir is important because of the ingredients used. Elixirs of Health eventually lose their strength over time. For each week the Elixir sits and is not consumed, it drops one Rank in effectiveness. Thus, if the Alchemist brewed a Rank 1 Elixir, it becomes useless after one week, while a Rank 4 Elixir drops down to Rank 3, then to Rank 2, and finally to Rank 1, eventually becoming useless.

If the Alchemy Test is unsuccessful, the Elixir is not created; however, what is created in its place is one that causes damage instead. For example, if the Alchemist is brewing a Rank 3 Elixir and fails the roll, the Elixir drains 12 Vitality instead of restoring 12 Vitality. A Dramatic Failure results in the Elixir draining double the amount of Vitality. Thus, using the previous example, a Rank 3 Elixir would drain 24 Vitality, not 12!

METALLURGY

One of the most important and practical skills in an Alchemist's repertoire is Metallurgy. In a time where not only iron goods are needed but also iron weapons, Metallurgy can give the characters an advantage over others. Skill in this Art allows an Alchemist to not only create new metals, but also to strengthen existing ones. If an Alchemist is versed in such Skills as Craft (Metalsmith) or Craft (Weaponsmith), he can transform



these new alloys into items of value. If an Alchemist is not skilled in such Skills, he can sell his alloy to someone with the skill to do so. To create an alloy requires 8 hours and a successful Alchemy Test, and this produces 1 pound of alloy. Any weapon crafted from this alloy gains a +1 bonus. Failing the Test results in no alloy being created. Failure means the Alchemist has created a substance that grants a -1 bonus to any weapon crafted from it. A Dramatic Success results in the metal conferring a +2 bonus to any weapon crafted from this metal. A Dramatic Failure results in the metal conferring a -2 penalty to any weapon that is crafted from it.

TRANSMUTATION

The most famous of Alchemical Arts, and the one that is the most misunderstood, is Transmutation. Transmutation is the conversion of one object into another. Though many think this means changing lead into gold, transmutation is much more than that; it is the ability to transform an organic or inorganic material into another material. The downside of Transmutation is that the transformation is not permanent. An Alchemist skilled in this Art can work what some consider miracles. He can transmute an object into any shape he can think of. The only limit is the Alchemist's imagination.



Transmutation requires an object, a circle of transmutation, and a few minutes. The transmutation circle can be inscribed on any surface. Once inscribed, the Alchemist places the material he wishes to transform inside it. A successful Alchemy Test transforms the original material into another material; a Dramatic Success has the amount of time it takes to transmute the object reduced by half. Failing the Test means the transmutation does not work, while a Dramatic Failure has the Alchemist take Damage equal to twice his Will. Besides changing material into another, the Alchemist can change the shape of the material as well, but this requires another, separate Alchemical Test. Failing this roll twists and warps the

TABLE 6:8 TRANSMUTATION


RANK	MODIFIER	DURATION	EFFECT
1	±0	4 Hours	Can transform any liquid into a solid; any solid into a liquid.
2	-1	8 Hours	Can transform any solid into a gas; any gas into a solid.
3	-2	12 Hours	Can transform any gas into a liquid; any liquid into a gas.
4	-3	16 Hours	Can transform any metal into another metal.
5	-4	20 Hours	Can transform any object into any shape; maximum size of shape is equal to Alchemist's Wits in feet.
6	-5	24 Hours	Can transform one element into its opposing element; Fire into Air; Earth into Water.

material, but it still maintains its properties. It takes time to transmute an object (see Table 6:8 below), and Alchemists must devote the entire time required to perform a Transmutation and may do nothing else during this work. If the Alchemist steps away, or stops, the process automatically fails.

For example, let's say an Alchemist has a pound of lead and wishes to transform it into a silver dagger. He first inscribes the circle, and then places the lead in the center. Making a successful Alchemical Test, the lead is transformed into silver. To have the silver take the shape of a dagger, the Alchemist makes another Alchemical Test, but fails. The silver takes on a twisted, flat shape, and though it is still silver, it is not the shape he wanted.







CHAPTER

**MASTERING
THE
GAME**

WHAT IS “PULP FANTASY?”

SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL is a roleplaying game of pulp fantasy. What exactly does that mean? Put simply, it means that this game takes as its primary inspiration the works of fantasy writers from the 1930s to the 1960s, including such authors as Robert E. Howard, H.P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Fritz Leiber, Jack Vance, and Michael Moorcock, as well as later writers who also looked to their predecessors for their own inspiration. Each of these writers contributed to the creation of a new kind of fantasy, one that is as different from the whimsical fairy tales of the 19th century as it is from the epic (or “high”) fantasies of the 20th century. If you’re already familiar with the works of these authors, the meaning of “pulp fantasy” is likely clear to you, but what if you’re not? That’s where this section of the book comes in handy. What follows is a brief overview of the most important aspects of pulp fantasy, for the benefit of both the Gamemaster, as she creates adventures for **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** and for the player, as she creates a character to use and play in these adventures.

BLOOD & THUNDER

Pulp fantasy adventures are often described as “gritty,” which usually means that they are often violent and “down and dirty.” Protagonists in pulp fantasy adventures achieve their goals at the cost of blood and sweat, facing obstacles – and opponents – that make them pay for every last victory one way or another. In practical terms, this means that the life of an adventurer in a pulp fantasy world is not glamorous. It’s often difficult, filled with challenges that demand every ounce of skill and determination on the part of the protagonist to overcome, and, even when they are beaten, these challenges often leave their mark on the adventurer, whether physical or emotional, that lingers for a long time after the fact.

Pulp fantasy characters are thus “working stiffs.” The world isn’t handed to them on a silver platter; they have to fight for every silver piece they lay their hands on, and there’s always someone looking to steal it from them. These men and women live in a “dog eat dog” world, and that means always being on guard against danger. If that sounds like a miserable existence, you might be missing the potential it holds for exciting adventures. Everything the characters do, from journeying from one city-state to another to negotiating a mercenary contract in a seedy inn, is fraught with danger – bandits lie in wait along the trade routes to ambush the unwary and disreputable agents look to press-gang foreigners into military service. And that’s not even counting all the tombs to be robbed, the lost cities to be explored, and the dispossessed rulers looking to reclaim their crowns!

There can be no doubt that pulp fantasy characters lead a hardscrabble life. They rarely stay on top for long and are always on the move, seeking out new ways to keep themselves fed, acquire lodging and supplies, let alone the finer things in

life. If they're talented and daring – and lucky – they might manage to acquire wealth and gain power in the long run, but, even so, there's never any guarantee they'll remain in that state for long. Indeed, there's a pretty good chance that someone will already be plotting to take it all away from them in order to achieve their own goals.

ROGUES — WITH OR WITHOUT HEARTS OF GOLD

Not surprisingly, pulp fantasy characters aren't generally what you'd call upstanding members of society. They lead their lives on the margins of society, taking jobs and undertaking adventures that “normal” sane people would never even consider. Likewise, their motives for doing so are rarely altruistic. Instead, they're motivated by more venal desires, which probably explains why they have few qualms about putting their own good ahead of that of others.

This makes it very easy to create adventures for characters in *Shadow, Sword & Spell*. Adventurers are always in need of money. Dangle a likely source of wealth in front of them and they're likely to consider it, even if the risks are seemingly great. After all, pulp fantasy characters may be greedy, but they're also a cut above the average person. Risk-taking is in their blood, and they crave excitement almost as much as they crave gold coins. Combine the possibility of wealth with the opportunity for derring-do, and you've got a great recipe for a **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** adventure.

That's not to say that pulp fantasy characters never act out of noble motives. Even the greediest thief or the most self-interested sell-sword may believe in something other than filling her belly and her purse. The best pulp fantasy characters are those who have interests other than their immediate self-betterment. That's why the GM should encourage players to create characters with goals and interests outside the stereotypical gold-digging. These goals and interests can be used to add further depth to not only the characters but the adventures, providing even more reasons for the characters to get involved. It's great if the characters want to explore the Lost City of Shambhala because of the wealth that's rumored to lie within its walls, but it's even better if one of the characters is descended from the Shambhalans and dreams of re-establishing their once mighty empire under her own rule.

ONE OF A KIND

Pulp fantasy is often criticized for making heavy use of stereotypes to describe people and, in the grand scope of things, entire cultures. There is some truth to this, but, like many such criticisms, it fails to take into account that sometimes these stereotypes exist so that they can be broken in surprising ways. For example, if an entire culture is described as being one of sub-human, bloodthirsty cannibals, it makes things all the more dramatic when a member of that culture shows herself to be an urbane individual every bit as sophisticated as the player characters. It not only calls into question the stereotype, but also throws the players for a loop,

since they must deal with a situation they never expected.

The key word here is “individual.” Pulp fantasy is very much about individuals. Certainly there are cities, nations, and cultures in *The World*, and these are important, but they’re mostly painted in broad strokes. Individuals, on the other hand, are the center of attention, and they must be given much greater detail. This extends not only to the player characters themselves, but also to important NPCs. It’s perfectly fine if most members of the City Watch of Gravina are portrayed as nameless, faceless cut-outs because they’re not important. However, Watch Commander Nikephoria, who’s taken notice of the characters’ daring thefts of the city’s temple treasures, deserves more. The GM should present her in great detail, since she’s an important antagonist and one who’ll dog the characters’ heels for many adventures.

In a similar fashion, monsters, that is to say, non-human enemies, should be treated as individuals as well. You’ll notice that there are no monstrous “races” in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**. That’s by design, in keeping with the traditions of pulp fantasy. The characters won’t encounter “orcs” or “elves” or anything of the sort. Instead, there are individual monsters, such as Thog-Ummath, The Thing That Should Not Be, or The Black Beast of Blood Moon Pass. Each monster is unlike any other, with its own unique history, purpose, and abilities. This means that the characters can’t rely on conventional wisdom to defeat monsters, but must approach each one on its own merits – a great way to ensure excitement.

THINGS MAN WAS NOT MEANT TO KNOW

In many types of fantasy, magic is a substitute for science. Its principles are well-known and its practitioners can rely upon magic to do what they expect it to do. Not so in pulp fantasy! Magic in pulp fantasy is a mysterious – and frequently, dark – power. It acts according to its own laws and obeys no one, not even those who claim to command and wield it. Using magic is the domain of the foolhardy and the insane, and those who fail to understand this soon come to realize the error of their ways.

In **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**, characters can learn to wield Magic, but doing so comes at a price. Likewise, the practice of Magic won’t win them many friends. In fact, it will only further marginalize them as disreputable outlaws with whom upstanding people will refuse to have dealings. At the same time, there’s no question that Magic brings with it the potential for great power and influence, making the arcane arts another terrific motivator for adventures. If a character is looking for the Ritual of the Emerald Sleep in order to add to her knowledge, learning that this information can be found within the tower of Archmage Pharnibazus, Hierophant of Lemuria, will prove a strong temptation that a clever GM can use to good effect.

Likewise, Magic can be used as a means of adding mystery to a **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** adventure or campaign. By its very nature, Magic breaks the laws of reality as they’re commonly understood. Using Magic is a terrific way to

do something unexpected, whether it be a chamber where the gravity is reversed, a city located underwater, or a sword with a mind of its own. Use Magic to throw the characters off kilter and keep them guessing. Play with their expectations and make them doubt what they think they know. This will not only add mystery to an adventure, but it will also ensure that there's always something new for them to experience.

ABOVE ALL, FUN

In the end, regardless of all the guidelines offered above, pulp fantasy is a wide open genre of fantasy that's infinitely malleable and conducive to a variety of interpretations. You might say that its first and most important rule is that there are no rules. That's why many pulp fantasies include elements of science fiction, horror, detective stories, and other genres if their inclusion makes for a more fun and exciting game. No one will

or should tell you what's right or wrong in your game, so you should feel free to add those elements that you think work best. Thus, if allowing laser pistols or flying cars alongside your barbarian warlords and evil necromancers makes for a better game, more power to you!

Pulp fantasy isn't a hidebound genre. Like its protagonists, it is fond of taking risks in the name of adventure. Never be afraid to add or subtract whatever elements you wish your games to have if it makes them more enjoyable for everyone. This book and future **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** supplements will provide lots of examples and suggestions on what to include, but none of these are written in stone, and players and Gamemasters alike are encouraged to treat them for what they are – as inspiration – just like the books and authors that influenced this game.



AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

At the end of every adventure, you should reward your players with Experience Points (XPs). XPs indicates the measure of what each Hero has accomplished. By learning from their in-game decisions, Heroes become more proficient at what they are capable of doing. XPs are given if the Heroes succeed at their tasks, accomplish their goals, roleplay well, and/or perform some great feat or feats.

Anywhere from between 1 to 4 XPs should be awarded per adventure, with the typical reward being 2 XPs.

SPENDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Experience Points (XPs) convert to Skill Points on a 1 to 1 basis. Thus, if you have 10 XPs, you can convert these into 10 Skill Points. These Skill Points can be used to increase Skills, purchase new Skills, as well as for Spells and Alchemical Arts. Heroes who acquire new Skills should provide some explanation for how they acquired such new knowledge, and the GM is within her rights to restrict or otherwise limit the skills a Hero can plausibly gain through the expenditure of XPs without an in-game explanation. Ideally, a player will only spend XPs on those Skills she actually used during the course of an adventure. Likewise, the acquisition of new Skills should be logical, and stem from events in the campaign rather than mere player whim. XPs can also be used to purchase additional Action Points to add to those received at Hero creation. Each additional Action Point costs 10 XPs. However, the GM and players should bear in mind that the new Action Points must be tied to a new Hook.

A new Hook must make sense within the context of the Hero's development and her place in the campaign. That is to say, a Hero cannot suddenly acquire a Hook like "Heir to the throne" when there has been no previous suggestion that the Hero was related to royalty, or there was no plot in the campaign revealing this heritage. Once acquired, the new Action Points and associated Hook function normally as per the rules laid out in *Chapter 3*. Some GMs may wish to limit the number of Action Points and Hooks that a single Hero may acquire through XPs. As a practical guideline, it is generally best if no character has more than 12 Action Points or Hooks, but a GM is free to ignore this suggested limitation or institute a lower cap, as she deems best for her campaign.

RAISING SKILL RANKS

At the end of each adventure, XPs are awarded. GMs and players should take note in terms of what Skills, Spells or Arts were used during the course of the adventure. These are the Skills that players can increase with Experience Point expenditures. If the characters used any Skills Untrained, and used them a lot (at least two or three times per session), these Skills can be purchased at their Base Ranks.

What About Raising Abilities?

It is possible to raise Abilities. It costs 25 XPs to raise an Ability by 1 point.

THE COST OF SKILLS AND SPELLS

As mentioned in *Chapter 2*, all Skills are associated with one of the five Abilities, and a Skill's Base Rank is equal to the value of its associated Ability score. Every time you buy a new Skill, you always buy that Skill at its Base Rank, which is equal to the Ability score. To raise the Rank of the Skill, you simply spend half of the associated Ability score, round down, per point, using your Skill or Experience Points. You can read more about Skills in *Chapter 3*.

In the case of Spells and Alchemical Arts, when a player character buys a new Spell or Art, she always purchases it at Power Rank 1. The cost of buying a Spell is equal to the Character's Will. In order to increase the Rank of a Spell costs one-half the character's Will.

TABLE 7:1 UNIFIED SPELL AND SKILL COST

	RANK											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
New Common Spell	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
New Alchemical Art	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Raise Common Spell Rank	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6
Raise Alchemical Art Rank	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6
Skill Base Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Raise Skill 1 Rank	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6



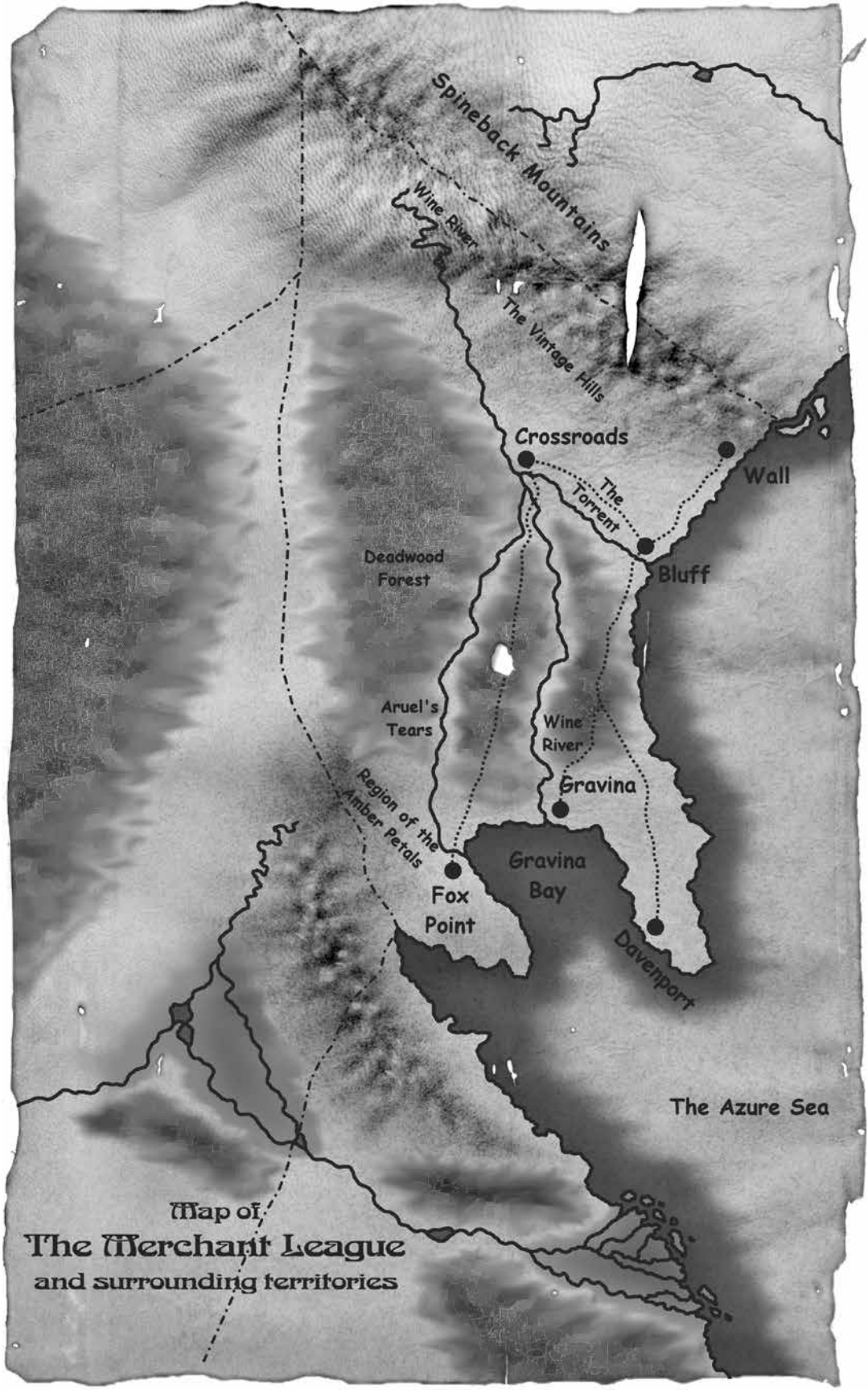
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C **HAPTER**

8

SETTING



Spineback Mountains

Wine River

The Vintage Hills

Crossroads

Wall

Deadwood Forest

The
Torrent

Bluff

Aruel's
Tears

Wine
River

Gravina

Region of the
Amber Petals

Gravina
Bay

Fox
Point

Davenport

The Azure Sea

Map of

The Merchant League
and surrounding territories

Nestled on the Azure Sea, lying wedged between countries coveting its wealth, are the collection of trading cities known collectively as the Region della Vite d'Oro (*Golden Vine Region*). This region teems with wide open spaces, and pockets of settlements that represent the attempts to tame this wild land. Compared to the rest of The World, the region is relatively young, but several of its roots run much deeper.

Bordering the northern edge of the region are the tall, jagged peaks of the Spineback Mountains. These mountains protect the northern part of the region from the expansionistic plans of the City-States of Döarn. The Spinebacks, aside from being a haven for bandits, raiders, and creatures, house numerous ruins and hidden mysteries. Flowing south from the Spinebacks is the Wine River which cuts through the region, dividing it in two. The river is wide and deep, and ships from the coast can be found sailing up and down the Wine, carrying goods into and out of the interior of the region. Dominating the majority of the western portion is the vast Darkwood Forest, a dark, ancient wood that conceals numerous threats.

The country itself is broken into three regions: The Vintage, the Region of the Amber Petals, and The Coast. The largest of the three, and the most culturally important, is the Wine Region (The Vintage). This area, nestled at the feet of the Spineback Mountains and running east to the sea, is dotted by numerous wineries and hills choked with a wide variety of grapes. As you come closer to the coast, olive plantations spring up everywhere, and some of the best oils in The World are pressed and produced here.

The wineries and plantations found here are more like small, independent towns, and there is no real central authority to be found in the region. Smaller, but far more wealthy than The Vintage, is the Region of the Amber Petals. This part of the region is famous for one thing – saffron. The most expensive spice found in The World, many covet saffron to the point of plotting to take over the county merely to control the saffron trade. Unbeknown to all, the Region of the Amber Petals has its own plans, and there is a threat to all here that festers unchecked. The third area in this country is The Coast, and it is here that the engine of commerce churns, and vast amounts of wealth and goods are sold daily.

CITIES

The country known as the Merchant League has many small settlements, the majority of which are located in the interior, notably in the The Vintage and the Region of the Amber Petals. Major cities can be found on the coast, though there is one city in the interior which has grown to become a major power.

GRAVINA

Any discussion about the cities of the Merchant League begins and ends with Gravina. This ancient city, built around a system of canals, dominates trade, discovery, magic, art, and learning. An old city, its roots can be traced back nearly 600 years, and thus numerous hidden crypts and basements abound within the city, due to the water levels that rise year after year. Gravina is seen by many to be a den of thieves, scoundrels, and villains. However, Gravina is large, diverse, and encompasses many, and thus it is a melting pot of different peoples and cultures, though less savory folk can also be found here.

FOX POINT

Seen as the de facto capital of the Region of the Amber Petals, Fox Point is a small city -- when compared to Gravina -- but is probably one of the wealthiest, due to the thriving saffron trade. It is from Fox Point that all saffron is bought and sold, and many from the world over can be found here buying and selling this rarest of spices. In addition, Fox Point is known for its darker commerce, and some whisper that the city is the source of the flesh trade.

DAVENPORT

Smaller than its sister cities, Davenport is known throughout the region and neighboring countries for its shipping, via land, water and air. The city is also recognized for its military, and compared to the other cities of the Merchant League, it has both a navy and army. For those who live in the communities of the League's inner lands, Davenport is the protector, and it is to their credit that many of the threats to the Merchant League have been pushed back.

CROSSROADS

The largest city found in the interior of the Merchant League is Crossroads. It is viewed by many as the gateway for the wine trade. Though small when compared to the cities in the south, Crossroads is seen as one of the last bastions of civilization before one enters The Vintage. For others, it is said to be a rural area, populated by those who lead a simple life, and devoid of any culture.

BLUFF

Located along the southeastern coast, Bluff is known for trade, but has become infamous (or famous, depending on who you ask) for smuggling and piracy. Gravina is at odds with Bluff over their lack of interest in dealing with the piracy and smuggling that goes on.



WALL

Located at the foot of the Spineback Mountains, and blessed with a deep harbor on the Azure Sea, Wall is known for its shipbuilding as well as its trade. In addition, the city is one of the few in the Merchant League that encourages the study of the ways of Magic.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

The lands of the Merchant League are a loose collection of small principalities, centered around the major cites or regions (in the case of The Vintage centered on wineries). Each principality has its own laws, currency (though weights are standard), and standing military. Though each principality has its own cultural and societal differences, they each revere the same deities and they share a common past. This past history is one that saw a kingdom ripped apart

TABLE 8.1: TYPES OF GOVERNMENT

Gravina	Guild Rule
Davenport	Elected Mayor
Fox Point	Heredity Viscount
Crossroads	Family Tribunal
Bluff	Oligarchy
Wall	Ruling Council
The Vintage	None

when a feudal king died without an heir. Said conflict ripped the kingdom to shreds, and created the current environments and cultures. Though the cities of the Merchant League are independent, from time to time representatives meet to decide group policy, settle disputes, and insure that the safety of the region is preserved. The League Council meets once a year, and rotates from city to city. When it comes to The Vintage, the yearly conference is held at the region's largest winery. Other than The Vintage – which has militias comprised of villagers as well as the younger sons of the winery's owners – each principality has its own standing military.

THREATS

Numerous threats exist within the Merchant League, ranging from bandits and cultists to monsters and other unspeakable things. Each city has its own threats to contend with, which can range from street gangs and organized crime (be it guilds, racketeering, gamblers, smugglers, and black marketeers) to agents from foreign countries. In the wilds of The League, bandits, highwaymen, creatures



great and small, and other vile threats lurk within the shadows waiting to pounce on the careless.

DAILY LIFE

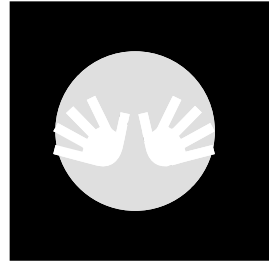
Life in the area of the Merchant League is a strange mix of urban and rural. There are large cities which command great power and prestige, yet there are great expanses of rural areas where life is lived at a slower pace.

GODS AND GODDESSES

Though numerous Gods and religions exist in the larger world, there are many Gods native to the area that comprises the Merchant League. Though these Gods and Goddesses are specific to the area, there are other deities worshipped in secret cults throughout the nation.

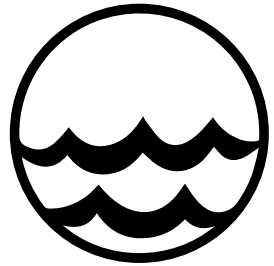
ADONAEI: GODDESS OF HEALING

The priests and priestesses of this Goddess deal with the healing arts, and for many, the advances in the fields of science and medicine have been due to the faith and dedication of Adonael's worshippers. Though many feel it is a dichotomy that the faith concentrates on fighting as well, warriors dedicated to the Goddess are thought to be some of the deadliest alive today. The priests and priestesses of Adonael believe in fighting corruption, regardless of whatever form it takes, and the warriors of Adonael always stand ready to fight.



ARUEL: GODDESS OF WATER

One of the oldest of the region's deities, Aruel is the Giver of Water and Life. Farmers worship Her, appealing to Her to help their crops grow, while sailors worship Her in the hope She will provide gentle seas and strong winds. A capricious Goddess, Aruel's priests and priestesses are known to be similar in this regard to their Goddess in both mindset and behavior.



IAOTH: GODDESS OF THE TRUTH

The favored deity of lawyers and judges and those in leadership positions, Ioath is thought to be the One who shines Her brightest light in the darkest of corners, so as to reveal the truth and that which is hidden. A relatively young faith, this religion has been caught up in controversy dealing with the secrets of the The Vintage.



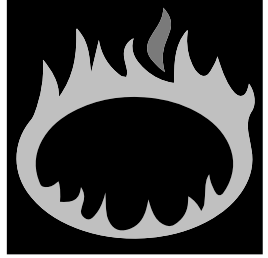
MARCHIDIEL: GODDESS OF KNOWLEDGE

The large temples devoted to this Goddess tend to be libraries and schools, open to all who wish to learn and discover new ideas. Her worshippers view Magic not as a work of evil, but as a divine gift that is usable by all those who desire to learn.



OCH: GOD OF ALCHEMY

It was Och who taught the first Alchemist how to distill the elements and transform them into other things. Those worshipping Och are viewed more often than not as a cult, rather than as an organized faith. His shrines, when they are encountered, are found in alchemical forges and small, out of the way places.



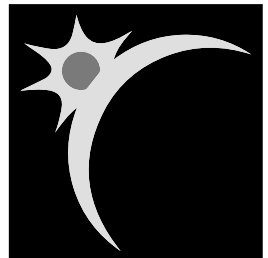
SABRAEL: GOD OF PROTECTION

The favorite of those in the military, Sabrael is also venerated by those who wish to protect the weak and persecuted. Sabrael's tenets include strength, both in mind and body, as well as service to all. Templar Knights swear vows to help all those in need, and to defend the helpless. Priests of Sabrael take vows to protect the voiceless and powerless, while their lawyers seek to represent those in trouble. Regardless of whether they are templars or priests, all of these worshippers of Sabrael are considered to be the finest warriors.



URIEL: GOD OF SALVATION

By far the most widely worshipped God, Uriel is dedicated to the ideals of salvation. This religion teaches that pacifism, meditation, and tolerance are the roads to salvation. Those dedicated to the God do not take up arms, and instead seek to be the calming voice in this time of troubles. Aside from its vows of pacifism, the temple preaches chastity and poverty. For the faithful, there is no better way of showing their faith in their deity than by giving all that they can to those in need.



RELIGIOUS CULTS

Though the Merchant League has its own Gods and Goddesses, there are small sects devoted to other religions found hidden in the shadows. Some of these Cults are nothing more than social clubs that elites join for the sake of danger and thrills. However, due to the melting pot nature of the major cities of the area (as well as

the influx of traders), merchants and travelers from other nations and regions have introduced various religions to the Merchant League, and thus small sects and cults now work to convert people and plot against those who will not convert.

AZATHOTH

The God of distant Atlantis, no one knows exactly who or what this God is. Rumors abound, but no real facts are known. Theologians whisper that Azathoth is concerned with Magic and Knowledge, and that His worshippers seek to learn as much as they possibly can. Some texts referring to Azathoth state that He was driven insane due to His discovery of what lies at the center of the universe.

CAIM

Known by most as the God of Night, Caim is worshipped in the south. The cults that focus on this God primarily worship the night and darkness. The majority of devotees of this God tend to be thieves and assassins, and the way in which one shows one's devotion to Caim is by practicing these arts. However those who bring death through other means, such as posion, tend to be worshipers as well.

CTHULHU

An Elder God, and His memory stretches back eons. Though the main god of Ku'Kku, small sects devoted to Cthulhu have spread into the lands of the Merchant League. Dedicated to dreams, destruction, knowledge, and death, the worshippers of Cthulhu and His sects work toward bringing the god into The World.

HAZIEL

A God that little is known about, Haziel is venerated in the northwest, and though some believe he is a God of War, Haziel's devotees worship Him for other reasons. Soldiers tend to worship Him in secret, as one of His tenets is strength, and this devotion takes place in gladiatorial pits and secret fighting clubs.

MULCIBER

The God of Destruction and Punishment. Two smalls sects are said to exist in Gravina. A dark God whose work is to corrupt all, His sects have been working towards this goal.



SETH

The main God worshipped in the eastern Jungles of Moarn. Small sects and cults devoted to this God can be found in all the major cities of the Merchant League. These small sects deal with dark acts, and much of their rites and worship centers around human sacrifice.

SHUB-NIGGURATH

A vile deity dedicated to sex, power, and decadence, this God is gaining popularity because of the rituals associated with His veneration. Brothels, sex clubs, and even darker places where devotees congregate and worship their God are the places this sect is found. Neither male nor female, the priests of Shub-Niggurath are said to be hermaphrodites.

TRADE GUILDS

Numerous Trade Guilds exist in the major cities of the Merchant League, and these Trade Guilds run the gamut from trade to labor. Trade Guilds vie for power and prestige, and members seek to join them not only for safety but for the training they offer. Trade Guilds are powerful and wield much influence, and often the power these Trade Guilds possess leads them into conflict with one another. Some Trade Guilds hide in the shadows, and work in trades that are quite dark and vile.

MERCHANT HOUSES

The lands of the Merchant League are wealthy and center around trade. The Merchant Houses are old, and some of the oldest families trace their origins to the foundation of the Merchant League. Unlike small businesses, Merchant Houses are families dedicated to trade. They scour the globe, searching for goods to buy, merchandise to sell, and markets to exploit. Merchant Houses feed the building of infrastructure to discovering new lands as well as the rapid developments of the world. Merchant Houses are always looking for new markets, workers, and others to help increase their wealth and prestige.



THE SAFFRON LEAGUE

The Saffron League, or more commonly The League, began as nothing more than a consortium of saffron growers. Working in unison, these growers became the sole

provider of saffron, and grew extremely wealthy in the process. The League was the brainchild of two men, Giovannell Falco and Rustichell Maggioncalda. Of all the saffron farmers in the Region of the Amber Petals, these two men were seen to be the most successful. Before the Saffron League's founding, prices for saffron varied from producer to producer. The market was in a state of flux, and buyers could pit the various farmers against each other to obtain the lowest price. Realizing that more money could be made and that all saffron producers could benefit, Giovannell and Rustichell called for a meeting of the growers.

The saffron growers discussed the wide range of prices and the demand there was for saffron, and all agreed that demand was high enough to support high prices, but that there was no way to get these prices with buyers being able to play the producers off each other to garner the best price for themselves. What Giovannell and Rustichell proposed was a unified front for the saffron growers. The farmers would deliver their saffron yield to a centralized location, and from there, buyers would be able to purchase their needed quantities. Unlike in years past, the buyers would be given only one price, and if the price was not met, they would not be sold the saffron they desired. The farmers signed the agreement three weeks before the bulbs were to be planted, and from that moment on, the Saffron League became the one source of saffron.

Over the years, the Saffron League has become the major power in the Region of the Amber Petals. They have used their monopolistic control of the saffron industry to become powerful and influential. Despite appearances, the League is not highly organized, and many members have different goals and agendas. The only thing that the members agree on is the continued protection of the saffron trade. The trade's continued survival is paramount, and measures are taken to keep profits high. In order to guarantee this, the League pays mercenaries to protect saffron shipments, warehouses, and the fields. The mercenaries also ensure that none of the workers steal any of the crop. These mercenaries are also used for other purposes, most of them not legal.

Using the cover of the Saffron League, a few farmers have expanded their business interests into other areas. These areas are all criminal in nature, and over the years, the Saffron League has become a major power in the criminal underworld. Not all of the fifteen plantations that are members of the Saffron League participate in criminal activity. Members who do not partake in criminal activities look the other way, since all members share in all of the benefits, primarily increased profits. Originally the League was active in the drug trade, and used saffron shipments to the eastern kingdoms to smuggle drugs back to the Region of the Amber Petals, eventually distributing them throughout the south and up to the north. Beside drugs, the Saffron League has another side business – slaves.

With increased contact with Nogoton, certain members of the Saffron League saw a means to make more money by selling slaves to them. With their contacts in different markets, it was a simple matter to buy slaves in Moarn, and then transport them to the City States of Döärn. In effect, the League has become the middle-man in a growing slave trade, centered in Fox Point. Here, in the ware-

houses owned by the League, slaves bought elsewhere, and then brought and sold and moved to buyers in other markets. The League employs mercenaries to actively guard these warehouse, and ensure that word does not leak out of this activity.

The League is active in many other criminal areas, and though most of the fifteen plantation owners do not take part, they do benefit. Due to the charter signed, all members of the League share the profits from all business dealings. This profit sharing includes any criminal activity, and since certain members of the League deal in drugs and other nefarious activities, the entire League has profited quite significantly. Some members may not like the types of businesses the League has taken on, but they like the money they get from them. As long as the saffron trade does not suffer, anything goes. Often the interests of the Saffron League conflicts with that of The Guild (see below). Many times, both groups have competed in the drug and smuggling trade, and the two groups have been carrying on a secret war for years. Now with Salina Scaringella courting the League for a partnership, a few of the members of The League have become at odds.

For some, joining with The Guild in any type of alliance would severely limit the flow of capital into the League. Some fear that if the partnership takes place, it would give The Guild access to the rich saffron market. These fears are groundless, since unknown to Salina, the League wants to put The Guild out of the picture. By working with Salina, they will eliminate all their rivals, and then can easily deal with Salina once The Guild is gone. This process has been slow, but it is only a matter of time before some agreement is reached.

THE GUILD

Centered in Gravina, but slowly spreading out into the other cities of the Merchant League, is the group known simply as The Guild. With the growing wealth of the merchant class in the nation, there are always those looking to claim and take this wealth for their own. From prostitution to gambling, there are certain areas of interest that criminal cartels control, and fight to keep under their control. Crime is the secret business of Gravina, and the five crime families known only as The Guild control much of the crime in the city. The Guild has slowly become entangled in numerous skirmishes with the Saffron League, as well as coming into conflict with many people who have grown to resent the hold they have on aspects of Gravina city life.



C **HAPTER**

9

**MUNDANE
THREATS
GREAT
&
SMALL**

The world that **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** is set in is a diverse place. There are numerous groups lurking in and out of the shadows, working their plans and attempting to leave their mark. From the northern barbarian tribes to cultists devoted to dark and Elder Gods, these threats are varied. This chapter is devoted to these threats, and can be used by Gamemasters in two ways.

The first way is rather obvious, these threats serve as ready to use NPCs. They are suitable as threats and can be used with very little effort. In many cases, these threats can form the basis of an adventure built around them.

The second way these threats are useful is that they serve as an example of the characters that can be created using these rules. In some cases, they can serve as ready-to-run Heroes when a new player is stumped as to what type of character she wants to play.

BANDITS

Brawn 7, Quickness 8, Toughness 6, Wits 11, Will 6, Vitality 32, Sanity 30

Skills: Archery [+10], Defend [+8], Melee [+8], Stealth [+12], Track [+11]

Gear: Leather Armor, Shortbow, 20 Arrows and Shortsword

Found in areas outside of the major population centers, bandits are small groups ranging between ten and fifty individuals – any more than fifty, and the bandits would be considered a mercenary company. Bandits make their living roaming the tracts of wilderness, raiding merchants, and living off the fruits of others' labor.



BARBARIANS

Brawn 9, Quickness 6, Toughness 9, Wits 6, Will 10, Vitality 45, Sanity 30

Skills: Melee [+11], Survival [+8], Tactics [+7], Track [+10]

Gear: Chainmail, Small Helmet, Large Shield, Handaxe or Longsword

Though much of the region is civilized, the lands beyond the borders of the Merchant League are not civilized as such. To the far North lie numerous regions inhabited by tribes of barbarians who live, hunt, war, and survive in those areas.



From time to time, war parties surge east and crash into the lands of the civilized Merchant League to plunder its wealth and claim what is not rightfully theirs.

CAIM'S KNIVES

Brawn 6, Quickness 11, Toughness 7, Wits 6, Will 10, Vitality 35, Sanity 40

Skills: Acrobatics [+12], Athletics [+7], Dodge [+11], Intimidation [+10], Melee [+7], Observe [+8], Stealth [+12], Subterfuge [+12].

Gear: 3 Daggers, Dark Clothing.

The Cult of Caim has slowly grown and festered in Gravina, much to the dismay of both the authorities and The Guild. Caim is a dark God worshipped in the south, and the faith's tenets center around death and darkness. The faith preaches that Caim feasts on souls, and it is through this feasting that He brings darkness to all. The cult is divided into two sects, one of which takes orders from the other. Caim's Knives form the bulk, and these dark-hearted individuals collect souls via murder and assassination.

CAIM'S VEIL

Brawn 3, Quickness 7, Toughness 7, Wits 12, Will 12, Vitality 25, Sanity 60

Skills: Empathy [+14], Intimidation [+16], Herbalist [+14], Lore [+13], Magic (Fright [+14], Protection [+14], Strike True [+14]), Resist [+12], Sense [+15], Study (Religion) [+14]

Gear: Dagger, Knife, Robes

The priests of Caim's sect of the Veils lead the faithful, and send the Knives to collect the souls. Rumors abound of more powerful Veils existing, but those who have encountered them have not lived to tell such tales.

CITY WATCH

Brawn 5, Quickness 6, Toughness 5, Wits 7, Will 5, Vitality 25, Sanity 35

Skills: Brawl [+6], Defend [+6], Empathy [+7], Melee [+6], Streetwise [+7]

Gear: Chainmail, Small Helmet, Shield, Longsword

Though the major cities of the Merchant League have their own soldiers (see their stats below), they are not employed in patrolling and protecting the cities. The job of City Watch is a thankless one, and often corruption runs wild within its ranks.



CULTISTS

Brawn 5, Quickness 6, Toughness 5, Wits 7, Will 4, Vitality 25, Sanity 35

Skills: Diplomacy [+6], Lore [+7], Melee [+6], Sense [+7], Study [+8]

Gear: Knife

Dark cults can be found throughout the region, and these cults worship even darker and fouler Gods.

FATE WEAVER

Brawn 3, Quickness 10, Toughness 4, Wits 12, Will 7, Vitality 15, Sanity 60

Skills: Astrology [+14], Diplomacy [+8], Divination [+14], Empathy [+9]

Gear: Robes, Knife, Staff

Fate Weavers are men and women who have been touched by Iaoth's grace, who are able to divine fate. More than mere fortune tellers, they are able to pierce the cloak of fate to detect and reveal reality and truths.



MERCENARIES

Brawn 8, Quickness 6, Toughness 5, Wits 6, Will 6, Vitality 30, Sanity 30

Skills: Brawl [+10], Defend [+7], Melee [+10], Streetwise [+9]

Gear: Chainmail, Shield, Longsword, 2 Knives

Mercenaries form the bulk of the available hired muscle that is found in the Merchant League. Companies have a minimum of fifty members, and sell their skills to the highest bidder. Mercenaries are employed heavily throughout The Vintage as well as in the Region of the Amber Petals. While attempts have been made to list all the active companies, no one really knows how many exist. However, there are some who've made a name for themselves, and these groups even have fame or infamy:

- *The Red Banner*
- *Warriors of the Rolling Hill*
- *Arrowheads of Ioa's Rage*
- *The Dawn's Iron Hooves*
- *Agents of Vengeance*
- *Order of Hawk and Rose*



PIRATES

Brawn 7, Quickness 9, Toughness 7, Wits 6, Will 7, Vitality 35, Sanity 30

Skills: Athletics [+8], Melee [+8], Profession (Sailor) [+8]

Gear: Shortsword, Dagger

Pirates are a fact of life, and the ships that sail the Azure Sea that offer fruit ripe for the picking are too numerous. Rumors persist that many pirates are based out of Bluff, but these are just that - rumors. Beidha and Nipur are hotbeds of piracy; in fact, the notorious Braber'el Maq, the Pirate King, is rumored to lead a fleet of sixty pirate ships from a port hidden in Beidha.



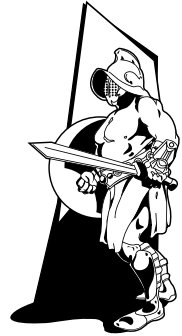
PIT FIGHTER

Brawn 9, Quickness 7, Toughness 9, Wits 6, Will 6, Vitality 45, Sanity 30

Skills: Brawl [+10], Defend [+8], Intimidation [+8], Melee [+11]

Gear: Full Helmet, Small Shield, Shortsword, Knife

Scattered throughout the League and located in the darker, remote alleyways of the major cities, fight clubs exist where the wealthy gamble and watch warriors battle to the death. These fight clubs are frowned upon, but exist and thrive nonetheless.



PRIEST OF ADONAEI

Brawn 5, Quickness 7, Toughness 6, Wits 8, Will 8, Vitality 25, Sanity 40

Skills: Diplomacy [+10], Empathy [+8], Heal [+11], Physick [+11], Study (Theology) [+9].

Gear: Robes, Staff

Most people in their day-to-day lives require healing at one time or another. The clergy of Adonaei are available to help those in need – for a price.

POACHERS

Brawn 5, Quickness 11, Toughness 5, Wits 7, Will 5, Vitality 25, Sanity 35

Skills: Archery [+13], Melee [+7], Observe [+8], Stealth [+12], Tracking [+7].

Gear: Leather Armor, Shortbow, 20 arrows, 2 Knives

Found mainly in The Vintage, poachers make a living hunting off the private lands owned by the wineries and the upper class. Throughout the region, much of the nobility and the wealthy have summer manors and estates that allow them to escape the heat and congestion of the cities. These summer “homes” have private grounds and preserves which are hunted only by the residents and those they invite. Poachers sneak onto these lands and take what they can.

REAVERS

Brawn 9, Quickness 6, Toughness 10, Wits 7, Will 10, Vitality 45, Sanity 35

Skills: Animal Handling [+8], Defend [+10], Intimidation [+9], Melee [+10], Ride [+8]

Gear: Chain Mail, Spear, Shortbow, Longsword

Hailing from lands found to the west, Reavers are warriors who seem to be hell-bent on capturing and stealing as much as they can. Worshipers of various dark Gods, they have clashed multiple times with not only the Saffron League, but various wineries of The Vintage. Rumors abound that Reavers are worshippers of the dead, or perhaps are dead themselves, due to their skin being a chalky white.



SAFFRON LEAGUERS

SLAVERS

Brawn 7, Quickness 8, Toughness 8, Wits 11, Will 10, Vitality 37, Sanity 55

Skills: Bureaucracy [+12], Diplomacy [+12], Bargain [+11], Melee [+7], Merchant [+12].

Gear: Luxury Clothes, 3 Knives, Shortsword

SLAVE HUNTERS

Brawn 10, Quickness 10, Toughness 10, Wits 6, Will 6, Vitality 50, Sanity 30

Skills: Defend [+11], Empathy [+8], Intimidation [+9], Melee [+12], Tracking [+10]

Gear: Leather Armor, Longsword

The Saffron League is a growing threat whose tentacles have slowly stretched into not just most parts of the Merchant League, but neighboring kingdoms as well. This organization has slowly become a power in the region, not only due to the saffron trade, but also the slave trade. Though slavery is frowned upon in the region, it is an institution in not only Nogoton, but Nipur, Beidha, and the City-States. The League scours the world, capturing people so as to sell them into slavery. Slavers are the ones who travel to the markets selling not only saffron, but their human merchandise as well. Slave hunters, on the other hand, work to acquire the needed slaves to sell in other areas. In addition, they serve as guards for slavers, as well as leaders for the security details that protect the saffron shipments.

SOLDIERS

Brawn 7, Quickness 7, Toughness 7, Wits 7, Will 7, Vitality 35, Sanity 35

Skills: Brawl [+7], Defend [+9], Intimidation [+8], Melee [+9]

- Cavalry also have Animal Handling [+9] and Ride [+9]
- Archers also have Archery [+10]

Gear: Chainmail, Small Helmet, Shield, Longsword

- Cavalry: Plate Armor, Full Helmet, Shield, Lance, Longsword
- Archers: Chainmail, Shortsword, Longbow and 20 Arrows

Each city of the League has its own standing army which is employed in the defense of the city during times of war. Depending on the situation, armies vary in size, type as well as skills.



9

SORCERERS OF NOGOTON

Brawn 4, Quickness 5, Toughness 3, Wits 12, Will 11, Vitality 15, Sanity 60

Skills: Diplomacy [+12], Divination (Card Reading) [+15], Lore [+14], Magic (3 Spells at [+14] each), Resist [+11], Sense [+13], Study (Esoteric Magic) [+14]

Gear: Leather Armor, 4 Daggers

This country of Nogoton, which is ruled by a magic class, has been growing in power for years. They scheme and plot in the shadow-darkened towers, and no one knows what exactly they plan. Nogoton has embassies in every major city of the League, and their representatives are both welcomed and feared. Many fear that the leaders of Nogoton are working to corrupt the land, and some whisper the growth of narcotics in Gravina is a result of this manipulation. Furthermore, the spread of Shub-Niggurath cults are seen by many as more evidence of this decadence.



THIEVES

BEGGAR

Brawn 4, Quickness 11, Toughness 4, Wits 8, Will 8, Vitality 20, Sanity 40

Skills: Bargain [+10], Brawl [+6], Melee [+6], Streetwise [+11]

Gear: Clothing, Dagger

There are two types of beggars in the cities, one type of which are the most common - the poor, the sick and lame, who have no place to go but the streets. The other type of beggar is more sinister; these are the ones who use the cloak of the downtrodden to beg, as well as to observe for other thieves, making their work easier.

CUT PURSE

Brawn 5, Quickness 10, Toughness 5, Wits 10, Will 6, Vitality 25, Sanity 50

Skills: Dodge [+11], Melee [+6], Streetwise [+8], Stealth [+12], Subterfuge [+12]

Gear: Leather Armor, Dagger

Common on the streets of the major cities, cut purses form the bulk of most criminal gangs. As their name implies, they seek to separate a person from their money.

MUGGERS

Brawn 8, Quickness 5, Toughness 8, Wits 5, Will 8, Vitality 40, Sanity 25

Skills: Brawl – Punching [+9/+10], Intimidation – Bluster [+8/+9], Melee [+9], Streetwise [+9], Stealth – Shadowing [+9/+10], Subterfuge [+6].

Gear: Leather Armor, Club

Prowling the streets, muggers are thieves who prey upon the weak and take what they want through force.


RACONTEUR

Brawn 5, Quickness 9, Toughness 5, Wits 9, Will 7, Vitality 25, Sanity 45

Skills: Bargain [+10], Diplomacy [+12], Melee [+8], Performance [+12], Stealth [+10], Streetwise [+10]

Gear: Clothing, 3 Knives, Shortsword

Con men, charlatans, and grifters, raconteurs are a cut above the common thief, due to their use of charm and personality. They know all, seem to have contacts everywhere, and would rather use the soft arts of charm to acquire someone's wealth than the more treacherous arts of other thieves.



CHAPTER

10

CREATURES

Unlike the Mundane Threats found in Chapter 9, the threats found here are creatures. Creatures for the purpose of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL** cover both animals as well as what are known as monsters. The creatures found here are ready to run. Their traits are set, and their abilities and skills ready; everything you need is here. For Gamemasters wanting to create their own creatures, rules for that will be found in **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL: EXPERT**.

CREATURE BASICS

Creatures are dangers that those who live in The World, and this part of it, the Merchant League, face from time to time, and they offer opportunities and challenges that GMs can use to base adventures. Most creatures want nothing more than to be left alone, so they will only attack when threatened. Some creatures, on the other hand, have evil lurking within their hearts, and will attack no matter the situation. These evil creatures offer GMs many opportunities to pose challenges to the player characters.

Three types of creatures – *Natural*, *Otherworldly*, and *Infernal* – exist in the world of **SHADOW, SWORD & SPELL**. These creatures encompass the monstrous threats that characters will face during their adventuring lives.

Natural creatures are part of the natural physical world, and run the gamut from common animals to werewolves and even giants. Natural creatures also include zombies, skeletons and the like. Otherworldly creatures are creatures native to other planes of existence; this means that it is difficult for them to stay in the natural world. In order to manifest in the physical world, Otherworldly creatures must expend Plasm, which is the force that fuels everything these creatures do. Otherworldly creatures, since they do not have physical bodies, do not have the Vitality Ability; instead, their Plasm acts as this Ability. The final type of creature is Infernal, and, as

So a question that always comes up is why are werewolves, zombies and the like considered Natural Creatures? It is a matter of perspective and design philosophy. Natural creatures have Vitality and though they might be “monsters,” they exist in the physical world. Otherworldly creatures are ghosts, spirits, and the like, and thus they have Plasm which enables them to interact with the physical world. Finally, Infernal creatures are ones that come from dimensions beyond the scope of man, and are the embodiment of malice, corruption and “evil.” Because of this, they have Taint. In the end this is your game, and if you think that all undead should be Infernal or Otherworldly, nothing is going to stop you from handling them this way.

with Otherworldly creatures, they are not native to the physical world, existing in realms outside the scope of man. Infernal creatures have Taint, which is the power that fuels them and the abilities upon which they can call.

READING CREATURE ENTRIES

All Creature entries have five parts, and all Creatures follow this same format.

Name: The name of the Creature.

Abilities: Just like the stats all characters have, Creatures have similar stats.

Skills: Just as with characters, Creatures have Skills as well.

Traits: The “powers” that the Creature has. Everything you need for each trait is listed in the entry.

About: What the Creature is.

CREATURES GREAT & SMALL

BANSHEE

Brawn 1, Quickness 14, Toughness 7, Wits 5, Will 12, Plasm 60

Skills: Stealth [+12]

Traits:

- **Fear -4:** The Banshee is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Insubstantial:** 2 Plasm/Round. Allows the creature to shift its body from a solid state to a gaseous state. In this state, all physical attacks pass through the creature harmlessly, causing no damage. In addition, while in this state, the creature is unable to make any physical attacks.
- **Manifest:** The creature is able to enter into the physical world.
- **Moan:** *Moan of Death* – Causes damage and if the victim fails a Will Test, he loses 12 Vitality and 12 Sanity. Range is 40-foot radius, 4 Plasm to use.
- **Plasm:** The creature is able to tap into a source of power fueling its abilities. This power, once drained, ends the creature's hold and ties to the physical world, and it must rest to regain more Plasm. When creatures with Plasm manifest in the physical world, they expend Plasm. Every minute the creature is in the physical realm, it costs them 1 Plasm. Once the creature's Plasm is reduced to 0, it must leave the physical realm and return to its home realm, and must rest while it regains its Plasm which is regained at a rate of 12 Plasm/Day.



- **Undead:** Immune to smoke, heat, cold, diseases, poison, and fear, and cannot die from suffocation.
- **Unfathomable – Touch:** *Death's Icy Grip* – The touch of a Banshee is painful, and its icy grip causes 6 Vitality in damage, and the loss of 3 Vitality per Round for 12 Rounds. In addition, an Opposed Test between the target's Toughness and the Banshee's Will is required, and Failure causes the victim to lose 6 points of Toughness (12, if a Dramatic Failure). This lost Toughness is regained at a rate of 1 point/week. If Toughness is reduced to 0, the target dies.

Banshees are the ghosts of women who have been killed because of violence against them. So angry are they with the circumstances of their deaths that they return in the form of a ghost seeking vengeance on all men. Some cultures view Banshees as the harbingers of death, whose arrival is a truly ill omen of death.



BAT

Brawn 1, Quickness 6, Toughness 1, Wits 3, Will 5, Vitality 5

Skills: Brawl [+7], Observe [+5], Stealth [+6]

Traits:

- **Flight:** 60 feet/Round.
- **Night Vision:** Bats are able to see in the dark as easily as they see in full daylight, and ignore all penalties while fighting in the dark.
- **Size (-3):** 1 foot long.
- **Swarm:** Creatures that Swarm have Vitality, and in addition, creatures cause damage based on their numbers; this damage takes into account biting and the like. The damage for Swarms is as follows: 1-25 Creatures 1d12 Damage, 26-50 creatures 2d12 Damage, 51-75 creatures 3d12 Damage and 76-100 creatures 4d12 Damage.

Bats are nocturnal creatures many link to the supernatural. They are seen as creatures that desire blood, and many consider their appearance to be a sign that the supernatural is close by.

BEAR, BROWN

Brawn 7, Quickness 6, Toughness 6, Wits 3, Will 4, Vitality 30

Skills: Brawl [+8], Observe [+4], Survival [+7]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Hug:** In order to use this ability, the bear must make a successful Brawl Test to grab its opponent. Those trapped can try to break out by making a successful Brawn Test. For every round trapped in the hug of the bear, the victim suffers a cumulative -1 to the Test. For example, if the opponent has been in the bear hug for 3 Rounds, he would suffer a -3 to the Test. The damage from this ability is equal to the bear's Brawn+Toughness.
- **Scent:** Bears are able to smell an opponent within 60 feet, 120 feet upwind, and 30 feet downwind.
- **Size (+1):** 8 feet long.

Native to the frontier and the northern portions of The World, Brown Bears are not as ferocious as their size makes them appear to be. This is not to say that if cornered, or in danger, a Brown Bear is not deadly; they are, and many Brown Bears have killed an unsuspecting warrior.

BEAR, BLACK

Brawn 10, Quickness 5, Toughness 9, Wits 3, Will 4, Vitality 45

Skills: Brawl [+10], Observe [+5]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Hug:** In order to use this ability, the Bear must make a successful Brawl Test to grab its opponent. Those trapped by the Bear in this manner can try to break out by making a successful Brawn Test. For every Round trapped in the hug of the Bear, the target suffers a cumulative -1 to the Test. For example, if the opponent has been in the bear hug for 3 Rounds, he would suffer a -3 to the Test. The damage from this hug is equal to the creature's Brawn+Toughness.
- **Scent:** Black Bears are able to smell an opponent within 60 feet, 120 feet upwind, and 30 feet downwind.

Native to the northern portions of The World, Black Bears, despite their small stature, are the most dangerous of the bears found in the wild.

BOAR

Brawn 5, Quickness 4, Toughness 5, Wits 2, Will 8, Vitality 25

Skills: Brawl [+5], Observe [+5]

Traits:

- **Fierce:** The Boar is naturally aggressive or becomes angry when threatened. Creatures with this ability must make a Will Test once they takes damage. If the Test is failed, the Boar becomes enraged. As a result, its Brawn and Toughness are temporarily raised by 2 points each, and its Vitality is temporarily increased by 15 Points. In addition, both its Will and Wits are temporarily reduced by 2 points each. Fierce lasts for 1d12 Rounds, and while in this state, the Boar is immune to all Fear Tests and ignores any modifiers associated with lost Vitality. As soon as the Fierce state passes, the Boar's Abilities return to normal, and the boosted Vitality disappears.
- **Gore:** The Boar is able to use its tusks to attack an opponent, and does Brawn+4 in damage.

Though many have not encountered them in the wild, Boars can be quite deadly and pose a risk to the unsuspecting traveler.



BOAR CROC

Brawn 15, Quickness 10, Toughness 15, Wits 8, Will 12, Vitality 65

Skills: Athletics [+12], Brawl [+12]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Fear -3:** The Boar Croc is able to cause Fear in its targets. When faced by this creature, a Hero's Will is reduced by 3 points for the purpose of the Fear Test.
- **Fierce:** The Boar Croc is naturally aggressive, and becomes angry when threatened. Creatures with this ability must make a Will Test once they takes damage. If the Test is failed, the creature becomes enraged. As a result, its Brawn and Toughness are temporarily raised by 2 points each, and its Vitality is temporarily increased by 15 Points. In addition, both its Will and Wits are tempo-



rarily reduced by 2 points each. Fierce lasts for 1d12 Rounds, and while in this state, the Boar Croc is immune to all Fear, and ignores any modifiers associated with lost Vitality. As soon as the Fierce state passes, the Boar Croc's Abilities return to normal, and the boosted Vitality disappears.

- **Head Butt:** The Boar Croc's skull is thick, allowing it to use its head as an effective weapon. The damage a Head Butt causes is equal to its Toughness.
- **Natural Armor:** Their thick hide gives them AV 5.
- **Size (+5):** 20 feet long.

The Boar Croc is native to the Jungles of Moarn, as well as other tropical areas. Nearly 20 feet in length, it attacks from its hind legs. It has an armored snout filled with three sets of dagger-like teeth, and three tusks jut out above and below the creature's jaw.

CAT, LARGE

Brawn 3, Quickness 6, Toughness 3, Wits 3, Will 4, Vitality 15

Skills: Brawl [+10], Observe [+5], Stealth [+8]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Night Vision:** The creature is able to see in the dark as easily as it sees in full daylight, and ignores all penalties while fighting in the dark.

Large cats include cougars, mountain lions, and other big cats that can be found throughout The World. These cats tend to keep to themselves, and hunt in areas devoid of a human presence.



CAT, SMALL

Brawn 1, Quickness 4, Toughness 1, Wits 2, Will 3, Vitality 5

Skills: Brawl [+3], Stealth [+5], Observe [+4]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Night Vision:** The creature is able to see in the dark as easily as it sees in full daylight, and ignores all penalties while fighting in the dark.

Small cats are a common sight among the farms in rural areas and houses in the urban parts of The World. Cats serve an important role – they keep mice and rats under control. Black cats, however, are seen as being creatures of evil and the tools of witches.



Dog

Brawn 2, Quickness 4, Toughness 2, Wits 2, Will 6, Vitality 10

Skills: Brawl [+6], Observe [+4]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Scent:** Dogs are able to smell an opponent within 40 feet, 80 feet downwind, and 20 feet upwind.

Whether as a hunting dog, or a watchdog, Dogs are found in many parts of The World, and serve as constant companions to many.

GHOST

Brawn 10, Quickness 10, Toughness 10, Wits 6, Will 9, Vitality 50

Skills: Brawl [+10], Observe [+11]

Traits:

- **Fierce:** The Ghost is naturally aggressive, and becomes angry when threatened. Creatures with this ability must make a Will Test once they takes damage. If the Test is failed, the creature becomes enraged. As a result, its Brawn and Toughness are temporarily raised by 2 points each, and its Vitality is temporarily increased by 15 Points. In addition, both its Will and Wits are temporarily reduced by 2 points each. Fierce lasts for 1d12 Rounds, and while in this state, the creature is immune to all Fear and ignores any modifiers associated with lost Vitality. As soon as the Fierce state passes, the creature's Abilities return to normal, and the boosted Vitality disappears.
- **Hypersensitivity:** The Ghost is particularly sensitive to its surroundings, and gains a +2 bonus on Investigation and Observe Tests.
- **Leaper:** The Ghost has the ability to leap incredible distances. Ghosts gains a +5 bonus on all Athletics Tests involving jumping. The distance a Ghost can leap is equal to Brawn \times 2 feet.
- **Light Sensitivity:** The Ghost's eyes are unable to adjust to bright light. Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight) blinds the Ghost for 10 Rounds, and it suffers a -1 TN on attacks, Investigation Tests, and Observe Tests as long as it remains in the brightly lit area.
- **Night Vision:** The Ghost is able to see in the dark as easily as it sees in full daylight, and ignores all penalties while fighting in the dark.
- **Scent:** Ghosts are able to smell an opponent within 60 feet, 120 feet downwind, and 30 feet upwind.
- **Stench:** The Ghost has a terrible odor, and this smell is so powerful that it makes contact with the creature troublesome; any within hand-to-hand range of the creature suffer a -1 to all Tests.
- **Undead:** Immune to smoke, heat, cold, diseases, poison, fear, and cannot die from suffocation.
- **Weakness:** No tolerance for natural light, and light causes them to suffer a -1 to all Tests. Sunlight kills them instantly.

Though their faces resemble that of a human – albeit missing the nose – Ghosts are pale in skin tone, and their legs are hooved (resembling those of a kangaroo). Ghosts live underground, away from the light, and are a war-like race of the dead who hunt in packs and prey on all. Rumors abound that this was a race of men that are now cursed. Others maintain they are the undead who've been brought back to life but lack a soul.

GHOST

Brawn 0, Quickness 11, Toughness 7, Wits 7, Will 9, Plasm 45

Skills: Sense [+11], Stealth [+12]

Traits:

- **Drain:** Drains Vitality equal to Will if the Ghost successfully touches an opponent.
- **Fear –2:** Ghosts are able to cause Fear in their targets. The Fear modifier is applied to the target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Insubstantial:** 2 Plasm/Round. Allows the Ghost to shift its body from a solid state to a gaseous state. In this state, all physical attacks pass through the Ghost harmlessly, causing no damage. In addition, while in this state, Ghosts are unable to make any physical attacks.
- **Rejuvenation:** Ghosts are able to replenish their Plasm by successfully draining Resolve from an opponent, and turning it into Plasm, which is done on a one-for-one basis.
- **Telekinesis:** Ghosts are able to move objects without touching them by expending Plasm. They are able to move a number of objects equal to the amount of Plasm the Ghost spends (1 Plasm per object; thus, if the Ghost wants to move 10 objects, it costs 10 Plasm). Furthermore, the Ghost is able to move up to $(\text{Will} \times 10)$ lbs. in weight. This weight can be incorporated in one object or a number of objects that can be moved a number of feet equal to $(\text{Will} + d12)$. If used as a weapon, the object in question does damage equal to the Ghost's Will.



- **Undead:** Immune to smoke, heat, cold, diseases, poison, fear, and cannot die from suffocation.
- **Unfathomable – Illusions:** Ghosts are able to create illusions that they can use to frighten people, and drive them away in fear. Examples of illusions include rattling chains, phantom footsteps, bleeding walls, and paintings whose subjects seem to come alive. Illusions can affect as many people as the Ghost wants, but it costs 1 Plasm per person to do so. Thus, if the Ghost wants eight people to see bleeding walls, it costs the Ghost 8 Plasm to do so. The Duration for the Illusions is 10 Rounds. An illusion forces an opponent to make a Fear Test, with the Ghost's Fear modifier, with Failure causing him to be frightened.

Ghosts are the restless spirits of the dead that haunt the living to exact their vengeance on them. Ghosts have haunted the land for many years. They haunt battlefields and old buildings, spreading fear and misery whenever some poor fool crosses their path.

GHOUL

Brawn 10, Quickness 6, Toughness 8, Wits 6, Will 7, Vitality 45

Skills: Brawl [+10], Stealth [+8]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Disease:** The bite and the touch of a Ghoul causes *Curse of the Grave*.
- **Fear –2:** The Ghoul is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Night Vision:** The Ghoul is able to see in the dark as easily as it sees in full daylight, and ignores all penalties while fighting in the dark.
- **Undead:** Immune to smoke, heat, cold, diseases, poison, fear, and cannot die from suffocation.

Haunting graveyards and battlefields, Ghouls are creatures that feast on the dead. Digging into the earth, Ghouls make graveyards their home, where they feast on corpses and worship their dark foul Gods. As to the origins of Ghouls, some speculate that they can trace their origins back to the ancient times before The World was old while others feel that these creatures have always existed. One rumor exists that those who eat the dead (cannibals) transform into Ghouls.



GIANT

Brawn 14, Quickness 6 Toughness 14, Wits 7, Will 13, Vitality 70

Skills: Brawl [+12], Survival [+8], Throw [+12], Track [+10]

Traits:

- **Fear -3:** The Giant is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Second Wind:** The Giant can shrug off minor wounds with ease. Once per day, Giants can heal themselves of a number of points of Vitality damage equal to their Toughness score.
- **Size (4):** Giants average 16 feet in height.
- **Stomp:** Able to stomp creatures smaller than themselves, and cause damage equal to their (Toughness $\times 5$) due to their immense size. Stomp can only be used against creatures that are at least 2 Ranks smaller than the creature in question (humans are considered Size 0).

Some rumors hold that Giants were the first race to be created. Their society decayed, and what remains of these creatures are brutes that prefer to live a life of solitude. They raid and pillage when the mood strikes them, though some harbor feelings of desire to regain the hold the race once had.



GORILLA

Brawn 11, Quickness 7, Toughness 9, Wits 4, Will 10, Vitality 45

Skills: Athletics [+9], Brawl [+10], Observe [+10]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Fierce:** The Gorilla is naturally aggressive, and becomes angry when threatened. Creatures with this ability must make a Will Test once they take damage. If the Test is failed, the creature becomes enraged. As a result, its Brawn and Toughness are temporarily raised by 2 points each, and its Vitality is temporarily increased by 15 Points. In addition, both its Will and Wits are temporarily reduced by 2 points each. Fierce lasts for 1d12 Rounds, and while in this state, the creature is immune to all Fear and ignores any modifiers associated with lost Vitality. As soon as the Fierce state passes, the creature's Abilities return to normal, and the boosted Vitality disappears.
- **Hug:** In order to use this ability, the Gorilla must make a successful Brawl Test to grab its opponent. Those trapped can try to break free by making a successful Brawn Test. For every Round trapped in the hug of the Gorilla, the opponent suffers a cumulative -1 to the Test. For example, if the opponent has been in the gorilla hug for 3 Rounds, he would suffer a -3 to the Test. The damage from this ability is equal to the creature's Brawn+Toughness.



Though many types of apes and monkeys can be found in The World, the Gorilla stands above and rules over all. Though close to 6 feet in height, these animals are massive in girth, and extremely volatile in temper.

GUGS

Brawn 16, Quickness 8, Toughness 14, Wits 7, Will 12, Vitality 75

Skills: Brawl [+12]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Combat Fear (Ghouls):** They suffer a -1 to all Tests when fighting Ghouls.
- **Fear -2:** The Gug is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Horrific Visage:** The Gug has a terrifying appearance, and those looking upon it are struck with fear that shakes their resolve. This ability is always "on", meaning that whenever your Hero comes into contact with the Gug,

they are affected by the creature's appearance. The effect of this horrific visage is such that an opponent must make a Will Test, with Failure causing them to lose 1 Sanity (4 Sanity on a Dramatic Failure).

- **Size (3):** They average 14 - feet in height.
- **Stomp:** Able to stomp creatures smaller than themselves, and cause damage equal to their (Toughness \times 5) due to their immense size. Stomp can only be used against creatures that are at least 2 Ranks smaller than the creature in question (humans are considered Size 0).
- **Weakness:** Mute, no voice.

Standing 14 feet tall, these giants live in the Underworld, and prey on Ghosts (see above). Their hands measure 2 feet across, ending in formidable hooked talons. Their heads are equally large, and their mouths are filled with sharp teeth. Their pink eyes are protected by bony protuberances, and their body is covered with thick, coarse hair. Gugs are speechless, and only communicate through facial expressions.



10

HORSE

Brawn 8, Quickness 6, Toughness 8, Wits 2, Will 5, Vitality 40

Skills: Athletics [+10], Brawl [+9]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Kick:** Kicking damage is equal to Brawn +2.

The Horse is the predominant form of transportation in The World. Therefore, not only are they very important to the livelihood of many, but they are found virtually everywhere.



LION

Brawn 12, Quickness 11, Toughness 12, Wits 4, Will 12, Vitality 42

Skills: Brawl [+12], Stealth [+10], Track [+12], Survival [+8]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Fear -2:** The Lion is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Fierce:** The Lion is naturally aggressive or becomes angry when threatened. Creatures with this ability must make a Will Test once they takes damage. If the Test is failed, the creature becomes enraged. As a result, its Brawn and Toughness are temporarily raised by 2 points each, and its Vitality is temporarily increased by 15 Points. In addition, both its Will and Wits are temporarily reduced by 2 points each. Fierce lasts for 1d12 Rounds, and while in this state, the creature is immune to all Fear and ignores any modifiers associated with lost Vitality. As soon as the Fierce state passes, the creature's Abilities return to normal, and the boosted Vitality disappears.
- **Night Vision:** The Lion is able to see in the dark as easily as it sees in full daylight, and ignores all penalties while fighting in the dark.
- **Size (2):** Lions are 10 feet long.

Found throughout the plains and savannas of The World, the Lion is the undisputed king. One of the largest cats in existence, Lions are extremely territorial and are deadly hunters.

MUMMY

Brawn 13, Quickness 10, Toughness 13, Wits 15, Will 18, Vitality 65

Skills: Magic (2 Spells with 4 Power Ranks in each), Sense [+12]

Traits:

- **Disease:** The touch of the creature causes *Mummy Rot* (see page 86).
- **Fear -5:** The Mummy is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Horrific Visage:** The Mummy has a terrifying appearance, and those looking upon it are struck with fear that shakes their resolve. This ability is always *on*, meaning that whenever your Hero comes into contact with the Mummy they are affected by the creature's appear-



ance. The effect of this horrific visage is such that the opponent must make a Will Test, with Failure causing them to lose 1 Sanity (4 Sanity on a Dramatic Failure).

- **Spellcaster:** The Mummy is able to work magic.
- **Stench:** The Mummy has a terrible odor, and this smell is so powerful that it makes contact with the creature troublesome, and any within hand-to-hand range of the Mummy suffer a -1 to all Tests.
- **Undead:** Immune to smoke, heat, cold, diseases, poison, fear, and cannot die from suffocation.

Kingdoms to the south entomb their dead rulers, and mummify them. Some of these rulers were so evil that their spirits live on, even through their bodies have been mummified.

RAT

Brawn 1, Quickness 3, Toughness 1, Wits 2, Will 7, Vitality 5

Skills: Brawl [+9], Stealth [+3]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Disease:** Rats carry the disease Camp Fever (see page ??), and any target attacked by a Rat must make a successful Toughness Test, with Failure resulting in their contracting Camp Fever.
- **Fear -1 to -4:** Rats are able to cause Fear in their targets. The Fear modifier and is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test. Depending on the number of rats in a swarm the Fear number increases as follows: Up to 25 Rats (-1), 26-50 Rats (-2), 51-75 (-3) and 76-100 (-4).
- **Night Vision:** Rats are able to see in the dark as easily as they see in full daylight, and ignores all penalties while fighting in the dark.
- **Swarm:** Creatures that Swarm have Vitality, and in addition, creatures cause damage based on their numbers; this damage takes into account biting and the like. The damage for Swarms is as follows: 1-25 Creatures 1d12 Damage, 26-50 creatures 2d12 Damage, 51-75 creatures 3d12 Damage and 76-100 creatures 4d12 Damage.

The disease ridden Rat can be found on nearly every ship, along every wharf, and in nearly every building in The World.



RAVEN

Brawn 1, Quickness 4, Toughness 1, Wits 2, Will 6, Vitality 5

Skills: Brawl [+4], Observe [3]

Traits:

- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Flight:** Fly 40 feet/Round.

Many equate the Raven with witches, as being their agents of the supernatural. Flocks of these birds are always perceived as a bad omen (except for some tribes and societies that worship very old deities), but some tribes think that the Raven brings trickery and death.



REVENANT

Brawn 10, Quickness 10, Toughness 10, Wits 5, Will 10, Taint 50

Skills: Brawl [+11]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Disease:** Successfully touching a victim, the Revenant bestows them the *Curse of the Grave* (see page ??).
- **Drain:** The bite of a Revenant drains 5 Vitality per Round from the victim.
- **Fear -2:** The Revenant is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Infernal:** This ability is usually found in creatures that originate from other-worldly realms, called the Infernal Realms, and confers to the creature an aura of evil that requires all within 10 feet of it to make a Fear Test. Upon failing this Test, the person feels uncomfortable, as well as having a desire to get away as quickly as possible. Infernal creatures are immune to normal weapons, but weapons that have been blessed by a religious figure cause them double damage.
- **Taint:** Revenants have Taint, which is the evil of the creature that seeps into the natural world. Taint fuels the Revenants when they manifest in the physical world, as well as acting as their Vitality. Once the Revenant runs out of Taint, it is forced to leave the physical world and return to its native plane where it must "rest" for a number of days equal to its Will. In addition, it costs Taint to stay in the physical world, and every minute a Revenant must expend 1 Taint to stay fixed in the physical world.
- **Undead:** Immune to smoke, heat, cold, diseases, poison, fear, and cannot die from suffocation.
- **Weakness:** Fire causes a Revenant double damage; removing the heart of a Revenant kills it instantly.

When an evil warrior dies, sometimes the spirit lives on to terrorize the living. Either due to a promise made to a dark God, or summoned by a necromancer, Revenants are the elite warriors of the undead.

SCORPION, GIANT

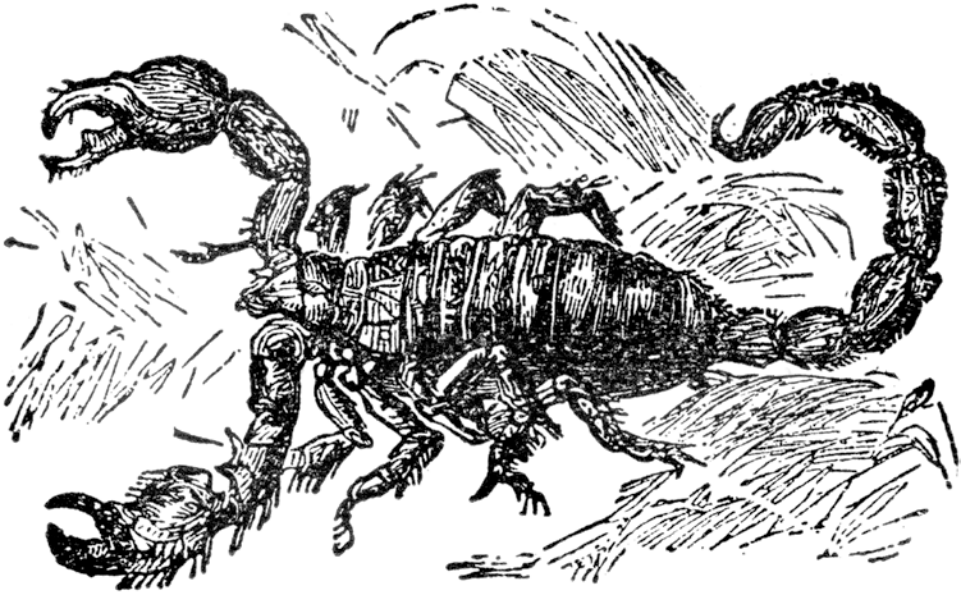
Brawn 10, Quickness 6, Toughness 6, Wits 3, Will 10, Vitality 40

Skills: Brawl [+10], Survival [+8]

Traits:

- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Fear -2:** The Giant Scorpion is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Natural Armor:** Their thick hide gives them AV 5.
- **Poison:** The Giant Scorpion's tail is poisonous, and does damage to any opponents struck by it. Anyone successfully hit by the creature's tail must make a successful Opposed Toughness Test or will be poisoned, suffering damage equal to the Degree of Success multiplied by 5.
- **Size (1):** Giant Scorpions are 8 feet long.
- **Tail:** Its tail is tipped with a vicious stinger which secretes poison.

Though Scorpions are common in the deserts of The World, Giant Scorpions are creatures whose origins scholars do not agree about. Aggressive, some are found in caves, or in service as pets to evil rulers.



SERPENT, GIANT

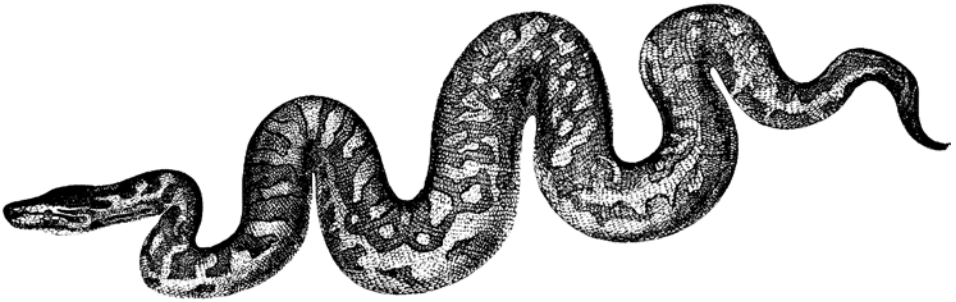
Brawn 11, Quickness 8, Toughness 8, Wits 4, Will 10, Vitality 45

Skills: Brawl [+11]

Traits:

- **Elasticity:** The Giant Serpent is able to bend and twist its body in unnatural ways, allowing it to squeeze into and through very tight spaces. Consequently, the creature can squeeze through an opening or passage one-fifth as wide and tall as its height, in feet, it does so very slowly compared to its normal movement rate.
- **Fear -2:** The Giant Serpent is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Squeeze:** In order to use this ability, the Giant Serpent must make a successful Brawl Test to grab its opponent. Those trapped can try to escape by making a successful Brawn Test. For every Round trapped in the grip of the creature, the opponent suffers a cumulative -1 to the Test. For example, if the opponent has been in the squeeze for 3 Rounds, he would suffer a -3 to the Test. The damage from this ability is equal to the Giant Serpent's Brawn+Toughness.
- **Size (3):** Giant Serpents average 14 feet in length

Found in dark and fetid swamps and jungles, these Serpents are some 14 feet long, and have sparked numerous myths and legends. While some confuse them with dragons or other mythical beasts, their origins are perhaps more basic, perhaps even being the result of creation by an Alchemist (see *Chapter 6*) or the spawn of a dark God.



SERPENT PEOPLE

Brawn 9, Quickness 9, Toughness 9, Wits 10, Will 11, Vitality 45

Skills: Brawl [+9], Defend [+10], Melee [+12], Observe [+12], Resist [+11], Sense [+13], Track [+11].

Traits:

- **Horrific Visage:** Serpent People have a terrifying appearance, and those looking upon them are struck with fear that shakes their resolve. This ability is always “on”, meaning that whenever your Hero comes into contact with Serpent People, they are affected by the creature’s appearance. The effect of this horrific visage is such that the opponent must make a Will Test, with Failure causing them to lose 1 Sanity (4 Sanity on a Dramatic Failure).

Found in the eastern jungles, the upper halves of the Serpent People resemble that of a human, while their lower halves resemble a snake. Some speculate that Serpent People were once one of the first races to inhabit The World, and that they warred with the Giants. Others, however, whisper that they are the servants of a darker God, and they plot from their jungle ruins the downfall of humankind.

SKELETON

Brawn 7, Quickness 7, Toughness 7, Wits 0, Will 0, Vitality 35

Skills: Brawl [+8]

Traits:

Claws: Claws do d12+Quickness damage.

- **Fear –1:** The Skeleton is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target’s Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Night Vision:** The Skeleton is able to see in the dark as easily as it sees in full daylight, and ignores all penalties while fighting in the dark.
- **Undead:** Immune to smoke, heat, cold, diseases, poison, fear, and cannot die from suffocation.

One of the most commonly encountered creatures of the supernatural, Skeletons are mindless creatures often used by black magicians as servants and guards.

SNAKE, POISONOUS

Brawn 1, Quickness 4, Toughness 1, Wits 1, Will 2, Vitality 5

Skills: Brawl [+4], Stealth [+6]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Poison:** Damage 1d12 to Toughness, does half damage on a successful Toughness Test.

Found in the swamps and woodlands of the world, poisonous snakes come in a variety of colors and sizes. There are some snakes that have more powerful venom than others, but none of those have been seen (and if they have, no one has lived to tell the tale).

SPIDER, GIANT

Brawn 8, Quickness 12, Toughness 8, Wits 7, Will 9, Vitality 50

Skills: Athletics [+15], Brawl [+9]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Fear -4:** The Giant Spider is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Horrific Visage:** The Giant Spider has a terrifying appearance, and those looking upon it are struck with fear that shakes their resolve. This ability is always "on", meaning that whenever your Hero comes into contact with the creature, he is affected by the creature's appearance. The effect of this horrific visage is such that the opponent must make a Will Test, with Failure causing them to lose 1 Sanity (4 Sanity on a Dramatic Failure).
- **Poison:** Damage 1d12 to Toughness, but only half damage on a successful Toughness Test.
- **Size (2):** Giant Spiders are 10 feet in length.
- **Web:** Web can be thrown up to 50 feet and if caught in the web, the victim can try to break free. This requires an Opposed Test between the target's Brawn and the web's elasticity (TN 14). Failing the Test results in the victim become more entangled, and their Brawn is reduced by one point for the purposes of trying to break free. For every failure on this Test, Brawn is reduced by 1 additional point, until it reaches 0. Once reduced to 0, the victim is completely entangled.

Spiders are common throughout The World. They come in all the standard colors and sizes. However, some spiders have been tinkered with by Nyarlathotep, who has raised these creatures to be nightmares for those who face them.

TIGER

Brawn 11, Quickness 10, Toughness 11, Wits 4, Will 10, Vitality 35

Skills: Brawl [+14], Observe [+10], Stealth [+14], Track [+13]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Fear -2:** The Tiger is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Night Vision:** Tigers are able to see in the dark as easily as they see in full daylight, and ignore all penalties while fighting in the dark.
- **Size (1):** Tigers average 8 feet in length.

Where the Lion (see above) is the king of the plains, the Tiger is the king of the jungle.

VAMPIRE

Brawn 10, Quickness 6, Toughness 10, Wits 9, Will 7, Vitality 50

Skills: Brawl [+8], Intimidate [+10], Diplomacy [+10], Sense [+10]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Drain:** A Vampire drains 1d12 points of Vitality. To continue draining Vitality, the Vampire must make a Brawl Test every round; success results in their continuing to drain 1d12 points of Vitality.
- **Fear -3:** The Vampire is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Insubstantial:** A Vampire can transform into mist, which allows them to float or seep through any cracks. While in this gaseous state, all physical attacks pass through the Vampire, causing no damage. Furthermore, while in this state Vampires are unable to make any physical attacks.
- **Night Vision:** Vampires are able to see in the dark as easily as they see in full daylight, and ignore all penalties while fighting in the dark.
- **Rejuvenation:** A Vampire is able to heal damage suffered, and regrow lost limbs. The Vampire can regain d12 Vitality as an Action. To regrow a missing limb takes d12 days.
- **Shape Change:** As an Action, a Vampire can transform into a bat or wolf. While in this form, their Traits remain unchanged; they simply take the form of the animal.
- **Spawn:** When a victim bitten by a Vampire loses all their Vitality, they must make a Will Test; if they Fail the roll, they become a Vampire in d12 days.
- **Summon:** Vampires can summon a swarm of bats (50 in total), or a pack of wolves (8 in total). To do so counts as an Action, and requires 1d12 Rounds for the creatures to arrive.
- **Undead:** Immune to smoke, heat, cold, diseases, poison, fear, and cannot die from suffocation.
- **Weakness:** Garlic repels Vampires; in addition, Vampires cannot cross running water. Driving a wooden stake into the heart of a Vampire automatically causes them to shift into mist form, and removing the head of the Vampire kills him instantly.

One of the greatest evils ever to walk the earth, Vampires are thralls of evil, who live to inflict pain on the living.



WEREWOLF

Brawn 11, Quickness 11, Toughness 11, Wits 5, Will 9, Vitality 55

Skills: Brawl [+11], Observe [+10], Tracking [+8], Stealth [+13]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Disease:** Successfully biting a victim, a Werewolf bestows upon them the disease *Lycanthropy* (see page XX).
- **Fear -3:** The Werewolf is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Lycanthrope:** This trait is more of a disease and those afflicted are immune to normal weapons, but suffer double damage when attacked with silver weapons. Those with the Lycanthrope trait are unable to control their transformation, and on the night of the full moon, they assume a hybrid human/wolf form.
- **Scent:** Werewolves are able to smell an opponent within 40 feet, 80 feet downwind, and 120 feet upwind.



The Werewolf is one of the most feared among the creatures of the supernatural, and is cursed with the disease of *Lycanthropy* (see page 86). Some who contract this disease are unable to control the transformation, true Werewolves change their shapes at will, and can assume the form of the wolf or a hybrid shape between wolf and human. Regardless of the shape they take, their Abilities, Skills and Traits remain the same. Werewolves are hunters, and their favored prey is humans. They crave the blood and flesh of humans, and at night transform into a wolf to hunt down and kill their prey, then eat them with relish.

WOLF

Brawn 6, Quickness 7, Toughness 6, Wits 4, Will 6, Vitality 15

Skills: Brawl [+10], Observe [+5], Stealth [+7], Tracking [+5]

Traits:

- **Bite:** Bite does d12+Brawn damage.
- **Fear -1(solitary)/-4(pack):** The Wolf is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Scent:** Wolves are able to smell an opponent within 40 feet, 80 feet if upwind, and 120 feet if downwind.

Proud, fierce, and known for their hunting prowess, the Wolf is feared by all. Among those who dwell in the rural parts of The World, the Wolf is seen as an agent of evil. Others, notably those who dwell in tribal societies, honor the Wolf for its hunting prowess and strength.

WRAITH

Brawn 8, Quickness 8, Toughness 8, Wits 8, Will 12, Vitality 40

Skills: Brawl [+8]

Traits:

- **Claws:** Claws do d12+Quickness damage.
- **Drain:** The touch of a Wraith drains Toughness. Each Round a Wraith touches a target, the victim loses 1 Vitality. To break the grip of a Wraith requires a successful Brawn Test.
- **Fear -2:** The Wraith is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Horrific Visage:** The Wraith has a terrifying appearance, and those looking upon it are struck with fear that shakes their resolve. This ability is always "on", meaning that whenever your Hero comes into contact with a Wraith, they are affected by the creature's appearance. The effect of this horrific visage is such that the opponent must make a Will Test, with Failure causing them to lose 1 Sanity (4 Sanity on a Dramatic Failure).
- **Night Vision:** The Wraith is able to see in the dark as easily as it sees in full daylight, and ignores all penalties while fighting in the dark.
- **Undead:** Immune to smoke, heat, cold, diseases, poison, fear, and cannot die from suffocation.

When an evil person dies, their spirit is intercepted by Azathoth, who sends it back to carry out the work of causing pain and suffering.



ZOMBIE

Brawn 8, Quickness 2, Toughness 9, Wits 1, Will 1, Vitality 40

Skills: Brawl [+8]

Traits:

- **Claws:** Claws do $d12 + \text{Quickness}$ damage.
- **Damage Reduction:** Zombies suffer half damage from all blunt weapons.
- **Fear -1:** The Zombie is able to cause Fear in its targets. The Fear modifier is applied to a target's Will Test when they make a Fear Test.
- **Night Vision:** The Zombie is able to see in the dark as easily as it sees in full daylight, and ignores all penalties while fighting in the dark.
- **Undead:** Immune to smoke, heat, cold, diseases, poison, fear, and cannot die from suffocation.

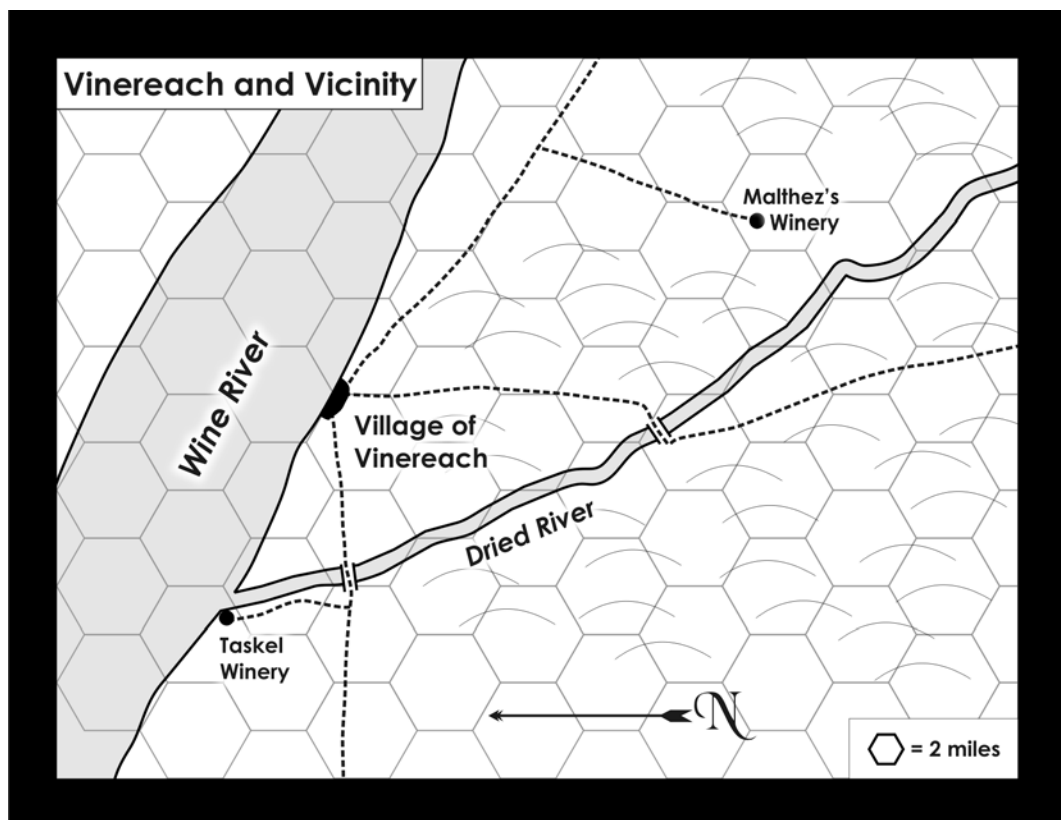
Zombies are the hungry dead that shamble through the night feeding on, or destroying, whatever living thing they find. Zombies are created by foul wizards and serve as their servants.



CHAPTER

11

IT'S IN THE
WINE



GM's BACKGROUND

Sickness has gripped the village of Rolling Falls, having started years ago when a *Red Pox* outbreak ravaged the village. A skilled herbalist by the name of Geoff Malthez arrived when the epidemic reached its peak, and was quickly able to bring the outbreak under control. As a result of his actions many were saved, and Geoff became an important fixture in Rolling Falls. When he opened a small apothecary, many flocked to his shop for cures and medical advice.

The year after the Red Pox epidemic, the village was plagued by *Scarlet Fever*. Once again, Geoff used his knowledge of herbal remedies, and many lives were spared. Strangely, it seems that every year at the start of Spring, a new epidemic afflicts the village, and before Geoff can find a cure, it claims the lives of at least twenty people. Disease and sickness seem to be affecting Rolling Falls and the surrounding wineries

with remarkable frequency. While This sickness was concentrated primarily in the Spring, it now occurs year round. People are constantly ill, and Geoff seems unable to do anything to prevent it. Hope seemed to arrive four months ago when an Adonael priest by the name of Matthias Thiele arrived in the village.

Geoff and Matthias worked well together, and managed to cure many people. Still, they had no luck in finding the root cause of all this illness, and the two speculated that a malignant force was at work. A month ago, Matthias began his own search for the epidemics' origins. His research into these origins led him to a startling discovery, but before he could tell Geoff, the priest disappeared.

Jens Trissenaar, a wealthy winemaker and power broker in the region, grew tired of the sickness plaguing Rolling Falls. Living ten miles west of the village, Jens and his winery had been relatively unaffected by the recent troubles. Unlike other wineries, Jens distributes his wines directly, and does not rely on the wine brokers in Rolling Falls to sell his vintages. Seeing that the sickness had started to take a toll not only on his business, but on the village, Jens sent a few of his men to look into the matter and find out what was going on. The reason for Jens's suspicion was that he came to believe that all the troubles were not natural. He had heard rumors about creatures being seen at night, sneaking through the vineyards. In addition, his workers found numerous strange tracks not only on Jens's property, but also throughout the surrounding countryside. Furthermore, reports of a growing rat population that was plaguing Rolling Falls and the wineries around it were troubling. His men never returned, as their search though the countryside led them to something that resulted in their deaths.

The cause of all the troubles is Geoff Malthez himself. Despite appearances, the herbalist is not what he seems, and in truth he is a dedicated worshipper of Mulciber. For five years, Geoff has worked to further his God's desires, and has been effective in spreading new diseases and illnesses. Aiding the priest is a small sect known as The Den of the Dripping Wounds, who work tirelessly to spread disease and death.

The Den of the Dripping Wounds is a religious cult founded by those touched by Mulciber, and they are led by a priest known only as Sknket. For the cultists, getting a disease is not a curse but a blessing. All who suffer from disease and sickness are welcome in the cult, and those who join the cult vow to show their devotion to their God by causing as much sickness as possible. Though the cult is small, those knowing of it fear it, due to the members' dark work. Furthermore, the most blessed in Mulciber's eyes are lepers, and many lepers are found in this cult spreading their God's diseased touch.

Sknket is even more special, due to the fact that he is not human. Once a sorcerer in the far off Jungles of Moarn, Sknket worshipped the god Seth, and was working his way up the rungs of the hierarchy of Seth's Children. Sknket was interested in poisons and disease, which made him unpopular with his fellow sorcerers. He created numerous vile concoctions that brought death to many. All was going well for Sknket until strange dreams began to plague him. In those dreams, a large, bloated toad-like figure, covered in filth and slime, visited him.

Neither male nor female, but a form of corruption, it whispered in Sknket's ear about his greatness. The creature, over a period of many months, continued to visit the sorcerer in his dreams. As time passed, the creature's message began to change, and it told Sknket that Seth did not appreciate his work, and that another god, Mulciber, did. Disturbed by his dreams, Sknket kept his thoughts to himself and attempted to lose himself in his work. Sadly this did not work out, and the dreams continued. Gradually, they began to change, and Sknket was told his destiny lay in the west across the Azure Sea. Two weeks later, Sknket departed the jungles swathed in robes for these new lands.

Arriving in the city of Gravina, his dreams led him to a rundown warehouse where he discovered a hidden temple. It was here that Sknket met Geoff, and the human introduced him to the teachings of Mulciber. Geoff left the city, and for the next three years, Sknket studied and rose up through the ranks of the cult. When his dreams resumed once more, again Sknket made his way north, and arrived at Geoff's door. Reunited, the two pledged their devotion to Mulciber, and went to work. Sknket located himself at the winery Geoff had recently purchased, and from here he not only established



a growing cult devoted to the worship of Mulciber, but also worked with Geoff in creating new ways to spread sickness. Geoff had a master plan, one on which he had worked tirelessly for ten years. The plan? Devise a way to spread sickness to as many as possible. Though his success in Rolling Falls has proven successful, he is still far from his overall goal. It was then that inspiration struck, and it arrived in the form of a bottle of wine. Realizing that all rungs of the social ladder consume wine, he decided it would serve as the perfect tool to corrupt, for many people would grow sick and die in Mulciber's name. From Rolling Falls, a central location in *The Vintage*, Geoff now had the chance to unleash virulent illness on all. Geoff went to work, devising new diseases and plagues.

He experimented in secret and worked hard to devise a disease that would be undetectable. After two years, he finally succeeded when he created Mulciber's Grape. This is a liquid that carries the dreaded Black Plague (another version of *Consumption* see page 85) and, when added to a wine, corrupts it and changes it to a carrier of death. All of his experiments with Mulciber's Grape were successful, but Geoff had no easy means of poisoning the wine shipments leaving from the village. That was when he decided to buy a winery on the outskirts of Rolling Falls and produce his "Vintage of Sickness", as he calls it. With Sknket's aid, as well as the small cult the snakeman leads, Geoff has been able to make his plans a

reality. The group had worked hard, and were now ready to unleash their foul creation on the world. It was the discovery of this winery by Matthias Thiele and Jens Trissenaar's men that led to their deaths.

The years of sickness have taken a toll on Rolling Falls. Numerous people have died, and numerous deserted wineries dot the countryside. The wine that once flowed from this area has dwindled to a small trickle, and many have quit the business and left. Those who have stayed have been damaged both physically and emotionally. But this has changed recently, and the village plans to ship the first consignment of wine in almost two years.

Ivan Lernen, who is the only wine seller left in Rolling Falls, is going to ship the wine via his barge down the Wine River to Crossroads. Noteworthy here is the fact that the bulk of the shipment is made up of the first vintages produced by Geoff Malthiez. His winery has flourished since he bought it a few years ago, and his successes have done much to renew Rolling Fall's hopes that the bad times are finally over. An undercurrent to all of this is the fact that Jens Trissenaar also plans to ship his wine as well. This has caused the heated feud between Ivan and Jens to restart.

11

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

The most effective way to get the player characters involved is to have them start the adventure in Crossroads, and while in the city, have them contacted by a representative of the Wine Seller's Guild. This group controls the wine market, and is a powerful consortium of ten wine merchants who have a monopoly over numerous small wineries and their products. Though the larger wineries in The Vintage have the ability to sell directly to the market, the smaller ones need aid in this regard, and that is where the Wine Seller's Guild comes in. While many wineries have complained about the Wine Seller's Guild, it has held the monopoly for a number of years, and has brought great wealth to the represented wineries.

The Wine Seller's Guild, noticing the recent lack of production coming from the Rolling Falls region, has grown concerned. For the past two years no winery has shipped any products, and no word from the region has reached the group. Deciding to investigate, the Wine Seller's Guild felt it was too risky to send their own agents, and since it would be too costly to replace any agents who might die in the investigation, they have taken the more conservative approach of hiring the characters to travel to Rolling Falls and look into the lack of shipments. The characters are to be paid 200 SC each, with half payable in advance, and the other half payable once they return to Crossroads with information regarding the status of wine shipments.

All the characters know is that there has been nothing heard from Rolling Hills for some time, and that there have been no wine shipments in just as long. The characters are to travel to the region, and return with any information they discover.

PART ONE: WELCOME TO ROLLING FALLS

Located in the hilly northwestern region of The Vintage, the area around Rolling Falls experiences weather conducive to the growth of some of the richest grapes. These grapes are used in the production of a variety of wines that have brought tremendous wealth to the area. Cutting through this region is the Cork River, which flows east to merge with the Wine River. The Cork River is the main route that the local wineries use to ship their vintages to the Wine, and then on to Crossroads.

The village of Rolling Falls is a picturesque village, which despite its small size, is very wealthy from the wine trade. Up until five years ago, the village had a population of just under three hundred people, most of them living on the outskirts of the wineries. The five years of illness and poor health have taken their toll, and now only about sixty folks live and work in the area. Many of the wineries are deserted now, their vines growing untended, and their winery buildings standing vacant as their owners have either died or fled.

Approaching the village, the characters notice many buildings standing abandoned, and numerous graves dotting the hills to the east. A well-traveled road leads to the center of the village, which up until a year ago, was a hub of activity. A well-worn road meanders its way to the riverside, where the docks and warehouses are located. The docks, like the village center, were once a busy place, but the lack of wine shipments has turned the area into one that is deserted.

East of the village center stands a lone inn, known as The Flowing Goblet, which has seen better days. Before the troubles began, this large, three-story brick building was known for its luxury. It was the preferred resting place for wealthy wine merchants, and the cost of staying here was high. Now the inn stands neglected, with sagging roof and flaking paint. The inn fits the general mood of the village – one of depression and dismay.

The characters reach the village by mid-afternoon, and notice a few people walking about. An Observe Test (–1) will allow the characters to notice that many of the villagers walk hunched over and keep to themselves. Attempting to talk to someone (a successful Diplomacy or Streetwise Test), the characters will notice that the villagers are either suffering from sickness, or look to have suffered from a bout of illness. Regardless of whom they talk to, the characters are warned to leave Rolling Falls as soon as they can. Asking why, the villager in question will state that Rolling Falls is cursed, and all who come here never leave alive.

Asking around other parts of the village (successful Diplomacy or Streetwise Tests), the characters will hear the same thing: Rolling Falls is cursed, and for the past five years, the village has been experiencing a rash of illnesses. No one has been left untouched, and all that live within the village have either been afflicted with sickness or have seen a loved one suffer. The characters learn the local herbalist, Geoff Malthez, has had some success curing the ill, but all the sickness is too much for one person to handle.

The characters also learn (a successful Diplomacy or Streetwise Test (–1)) that

there was a priest in the village nearly four months ago, but he disappeared a month ago without a trace. There is little else the characters can learn from the villagers. Exploring the village, the characters will see that many houses are deserted. The warehouses are mostly empty, but were used to store wine waiting to be loaded on barges for shipment. Though the docks are well built, by the looks of them, they don't seem to have been used for a long time.

Walking by the docks, the characters will notice that a barge is moored there, and that it is in the process of being loaded. Talking with the workers reveals that this is the first shipment of wine that Rolling Falls has produced in close to two years. If all goes well, the wine shipment should set off sometime tomorrow evening or in the early morning of the day after. The characters also learn through a successful Diplomacy or Streetwise Test (–2) that the bulk of the wine in this consignment is the first vintages from Geoff Malthez's winery. The dockworkers state that if it were not for Geoff, this shipment would not have been possible.

The characters learn that Geoff is a local hero, largely due to his healing skills. Geoff's skill has saved many lives, and it is this goodwill of the villagers that has pushed him to ship wine to Crossroads for the first time in some time. A Diplomacy Test allows the characters to learn Geoff has been in the village for five years, and has done much good for the villagers. From his shop, he sells numerous herbal remedies, and he also administers to the sick. If the characters attempt to visit his shop, they will see that he is not there, and that the door is locked. Asking around the village (a Streetwise Test), the characters can learn he owns a small winery northeast of the village.

The only other place of interest is the inn, The Flowing Goblet. The inn is quite rundown, and when the characters step inside, they will see the interior matches the exterior. The Flowing Goblet has seen better days, but a few people can be seen sitting at several of the many tables. The owner stands behind the bar, and upon seeing the characters enter, rushes over to introduce himself as Franco Gesell.

Originally from Fox Point, Franco settled in the region about ten years ago, when he was forced to flee his home due to a small misunderstanding. Franco has strange tastes, and enjoys pleasure in all forms. He also has a fondness for small children, and it was discovered that Franco's obsession had led to several deaths of children. Even for the decadent people of the Saffron League, this was too much. Franco was forced to leave his home before being burnt at the stake. Franco feels he is cursed, and has sought to live in a remote area far away from the temptations of the flesh. Eventually settling in Rolling Falls, he bought the

FRANCO GESELL

Brawn 5, Quickness 5, Toughness 4, Wits 11, Will 7, Vitality 20, Sanity 55

Skills: Bargain [+10], Bureaucracy [+12], Merchant [+10], Profession (Innkeeper) [+12], Socialize [+8].

Disorders and Aliments: Horrific Visage, Addictions – Dark Hobbies and Pleasures.

Notable Gear: Dagger

Flowing Goblet from the former owner's widow. Franco is still plagued by his desires, but has managed to gain some control of them. Still, he is an extremely creepy individual, and loves to stare at women, often being slapped for inappropriate touches.

Two years ago, Franco contracted a case of *Red Pox*. It was a long two months over which time many feared Franco would not recover. Geoff was able to save Franco's life, but the sickness left its mark. Once a large, overweight man, Franco has lost quite a few pounds, and his skin hangs loosely from his body. His face is a sea of pockmarks, and his visage is repulsive.

Franco will offer the characters a great deal on their rooms, and as soon as they are sitting at a table in the center of the common room they can talk with the inn owner. Franco is talkative, and he questions the characters about why they are in Rolling Falls. Telling them of their mission, Franco will respond that Rolling Falls has been experiencing numerous troubles. He tells the characters that the village has been plagued by sickness, and that despite the skills of Geoff, the village has still suffered greatly.

BERNARD MANZEL

Brawn 7, Quickness 7, Toughness 5, Wits 8, Will 4, Vitality 35, Sanity 40.

Skills: Animal Handling +11, Bargain +7, Brawl +8, Ride +8.

Notable Gear: Club

Before the characters can ask him anything further, a man enters the inn, and Franco welcomes him as he approaches the characters' table. Introducing himself as Bernard Manzel, he states that he is the personal assistant to Jens Trissenaar. Bernard comes bearing greetings from his master, and informs the characters that Jens would like to invite them to his winery. If the characters ask what this is all about, they can learn Jens has a business proposition for them, and that he also wants to extend his home to the characters as a place to stay. If they inquire as to who Jens is, Bernard states that he's an honorable man, and the owner of the largest winery in the region. Franco also interjects that Jens is very wealthy and is a common fixture in the Rolling Falls area.

Bernard is not lying, as a successful Empathy Test will reveal. Bernard tells the characters a coach awaits them outside, and then assures them that their belongings will be transported to the winery. If the characters do not want to go with him, Bernard whispers to them that the village is not safe. When they inquire about this, Bernard will apologize and state that Jens will be able to tell them more. Bernard escorts the characters outside, where they see a large coach waiting for them, as well as a wagon and two porters. As they are escorted to the carriage, Bernard tells the porters to load the wagon and make the return trip to the winery.

The ride to the winery takes just under thirty minutes, and the coach will travel south through the hilly wine country. Bernard makes small talk with the characters during this trip, explaining to them that at one time these hills were covered with vines. He goes on to lament that the hills now teem with overgrown vines and

deserted wineries. Talking with Bernard, the characters learn more of the same that they heard in Rolling Falls: sickness is plaguing the area for some reason, and has done so for the last five years.

Eventually, the coach reaches Trissenaar's winery, and turns on to a path leading to its gates. Passing through the gates, the coach continues to roll through the hills. The characters spot people working in the fields, picking grapes and loading wagons with baskets of them. Inquiring about how the winery has managed to survive despite all the troubles, Bernard explains to them that Jens has done so well because he avoids the village. Ever since the sickness first began, Jens and his workers have stayed away from Rolling Falls as much as possible. Jens also relocated his workers here, and though a few became sick, the winery has been mostly spared.

The path snakes up a large hill, and at the top stands a large house. From here, the characters have a view of the Cork River, and the private docks of Jens Trissenaar. To all appearances, the winery looks to be successful and well run. The coach stops, and Bernard escorts the characters inside the house.

Ushered into a large, ornate sitting room, the characters are told to make themselves comfortable. Before they can do so, a tall, imposing middle-aged man enters. He is dressed like a farmer, and looks to have spent a lifetime working in the fields. Introducing himself as Jens Trissenaar, he welcomes the characters to his home. When the characters ask why they were invited to his home, Jens answers that Rolling Falls is not safe. He tells them that for the past five years sickness and disease have plagued the village. When the characters ask if this is the reason for the lack of wine shipments, Jens confirms this on a Streetwise or Diplomacy Test. He tells them that the sickness has claimed many lives, and many wineries have been forced to close due to the small workforce.

Jens goes on to say that he does not know how and why this all began. Five years ago, the village was being ravaged by a case of *Scarlet Fever*, which claimed the lives of many. That was when Geoff Malthez appeared; with his arrival, his skills in healing saved many lives. Quickly he got everything under control and was treated as a hero. It seems that every year a new bout of illness plagues the village. Geoff always manages to stop it somehow, but not before many lives are lost. Geoff did have help in his battle against the illnesses six months ago, in the form of an Adonael priest named Matthias Thiele.

Matthias was a wandering priest who had dedicated his life to helping the sick. As soon as Matthias arrived in Rolling Falls, he went to work and quickly healed many people. Matthias was a great help and did plenty of good. However, it seemed to Jens that Geoff was not all that happy with the help. Strangely, Matthias disap-

JENS TRISSENAUR

Brawn 10, Quickness 7, Toughness 8, Wits 6, Will 6, Vitality 45, Sanity 30.

Skills: Animal Handling +7, Bureaucracy +12, Craft (Winemaker) +12, Merchant +10, Profession (Winemaker) +12, Ride +8.

Notable Gear: Dagger

peared one month ago, and no one knows where he went. A Streetwise or Diplomacy Test will cause Jens to state that Geoff claimed that Matthias was called away, but this struck Jens as strange, since Matthias had no ties to anyone and was a simple, wandering priest.

Jens states why he wanted to meet the characters: he thinks there is something more ominous going on in Rolling Falls. It seems strange to him that so much has happened to such a small village in such a short period of time (the past five years). A Streetwise Test will have Jens state that it is not widely known, but several wine warehouses have been broken into. Only one or two barrels have been stolen at a time, and nothing else has been taken. These robberies have all taken place over the past two years, and no one knows who is behind the break-ins.

Jens tells the characters that he had some of his men discreetly look into not only the robberies, but the sicknesses as well. A Streetwise Test has Jens tell the characters that he thinks there is some force at work, but that he doesn't know if the two events are linked. His men went to look into matters three weeks ago, and two days later, they simply disappeared. This has made Jens even more suspicious, and he fears that some evil force is at work. He wants to hire the characters to try and find the missing group of men.

Jens laughs when the player characters ask him about the upcoming wine shipments, and a Streetwise Test allows them to learn that Ivan Lernen, the self-proclaimed most important wine merchant in Rolling Falls, is funding it. Jens does not trust Ivan, and the two have never gotten along. This is due to the fact that Jens sells and distributes his own wines himself. Another Streetwise Test (-1) allows the characters to learn that the bulk of Ivan's shipment consists of Geoff's vintages, which actually marks the herbalist's first vintages. Ivan is angry with Jens because he plans on shipping a large consignment himself tomorrow. Ivan feels that Jens is doing this to upstage him, but Jens downplays this. He explains that he does not like Ivan, but that he is not that petty.

Jens knows nothing else, and offers to provide the characters room and board while they look into what is going on. He warns the characters that something is wrong in the village, and says that hopefully they will find out whatever it is. By this time it is near dusk, and Jens invites them to stay for dinner. Nothing else happens until later that night, and thus the characters are free to explore Jens's winery. The winery is well run and if asked about his success, Jens simply states it is due to his offering the best wine and growing the best grapes. The rest of the evening passes uneventfully, and Jens retires early.

Around midnight, the characters are awakened by screaming coming from outside. Looking out their windows, they will see flames coming from the wine storehouse, and the entire winery staff working desperately at fighting the fire. They can tell that Jens and his men are fighting a losing battle. Upon seeing the characters, Jens presses them into the bucket brigade that has formed to fight the fire. As the sun begins to rise, the fire is finally out and the ruins smolder in the morning sun.

Jens is extremely angry, and the characters soon learn from him that this was

the storehouse for the wine that was going to be loaded and shipped south that afternoon. Jens is angry because the loss of the wine will set him back financially, though he will recover from it although it will take him at least a year to do so. Questioning various people about what happened, the characters can learn that the fire started an hour after midnight, and a watchman saw the blaze and sounded the alarm. There were two watchmen on duty, but one of them is missing. Jens speculates that it is the missing watchman who set the fire.

Searching the area, the characters will not see anything near the smoldering storehouse remains. However, fifty yards northeast from the fire, the characters will find the body of the missing watchman. His throat has been cut, and a Track (-2) Test reveals that the body was dragged here. Searching the area, and making another Track (-1) Test, the characters will find about eight sets of tracks. Examining them closely, the characters can tell that the attackers traveled on foot. If followed, these tracks lead to a dry creek nestled between two hills, and the characters can see evidence of horses having been kept there.

The tracks lead to an equal number of horse tracks, which then travel southeast, following the creek bed. It is obvious that whoever made these tracks killed the watchman, and also set fire to the storehouse. If they do not do it themselves, Jens asks the characters to follow this lead. The trail is easy to follow, and never deters from the dried creek bed.

PART TWO: WINERY OF DEATH

The tracks the characters are following lead to the southeast. As the characters ride through the hills of the Rolling Falls region they ride past many deserted farms and wineries. The tracks stick to the dried creek, and they do not deviate from a southeasterly direction. Two hours after leaving Jens's winery, the characters notice that the trail they have been following now veers around and heads directly north. The trail continues north for two hours, and leads to another winery. The winery is small, and the characters notice that there does not appear to be anyone present. Sneaking onto the grounds of the winery is easy, as there are no guards.

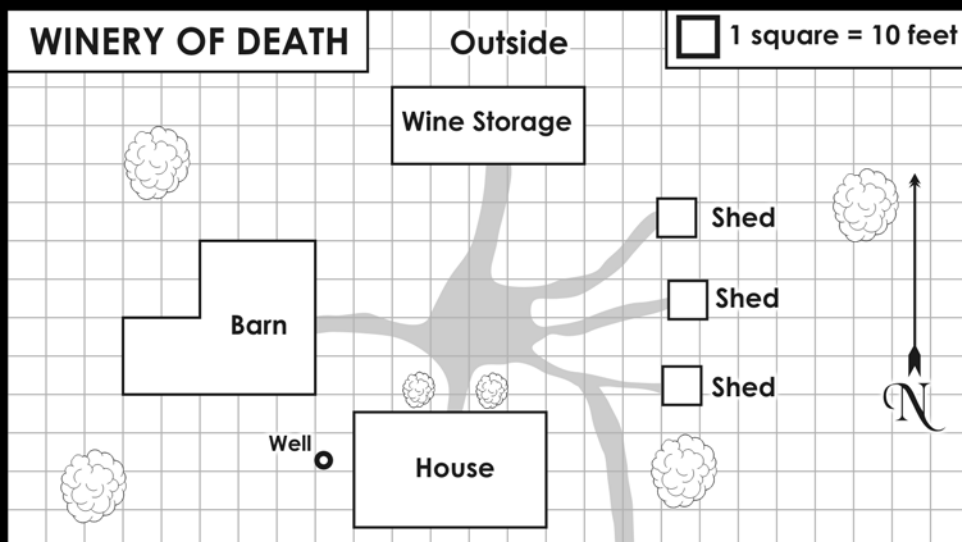
The winery looks abandoned, and the small crop has already been harvested. The winery is actually the lair for Sknket and the Cult of the Dripping Wound, and it is they who are responsible for setting the fire at the Trissenaar Winery. The buildings are what you would expect to find at a winery, and they contain nothing out of the ordinary. The wine storage area looks to have been recently emptied out. Searching the grounds and making a successful Track Test, the characters will notice that many heavily loaded wagons were here.

The house looks to be deserted, and peering through the windows the characters can see no one walking around. They do see that the house looks to be a large garbage pit, and numerous trash piles fill the rooms. The closer the characters get to the house, the more they will notice that it smells. The front door is locked (-2 to Subterfuge Tests) and so is the back door (-3 to Subterfuge Tests). Once the doors to the house

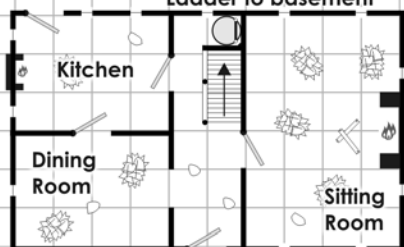
WINERY OF DEATH

Outside

1 square = 10 feet

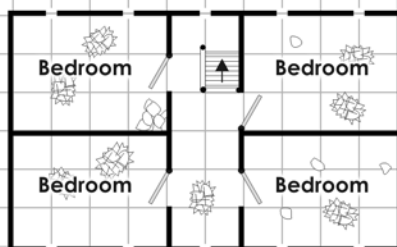


Ladder to basement



House 1st Floor

1 square = 5 feet

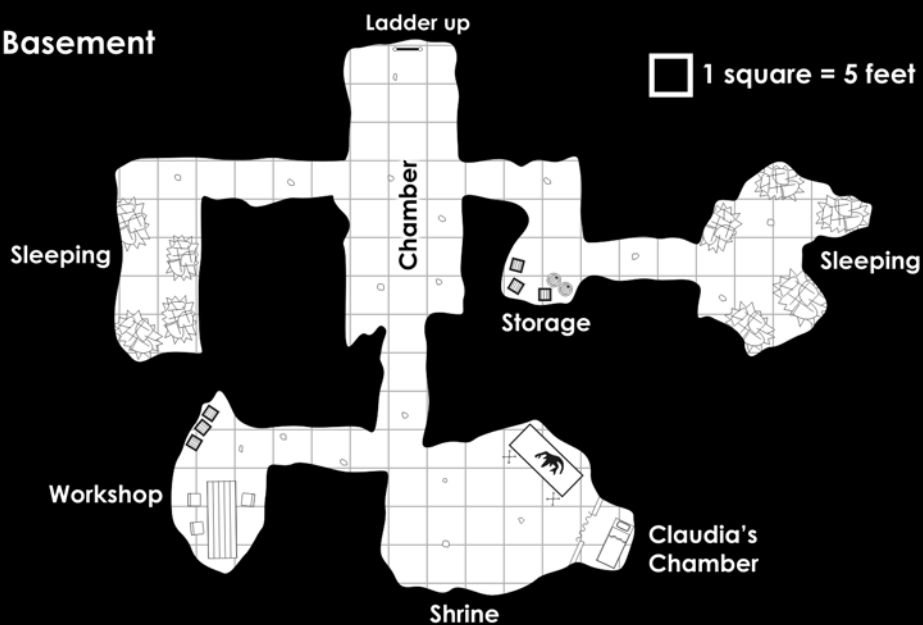


House 2nd Floor

Basement

Ladder up

1 square = 5 feet



are opened, the characters can search the building.

Searching the house, the characters can hear rats scurrying among the trash piles, and see clouds of flies undulating amongst these piles. The smell is something awful inside the house, and a Will Test that fails will cause the character to suffer nausea and a -1 to all actions until they can get fresh air (Dramatic Failure has them not only become ill, but lose 5 Sanity). If the characters search the kitchen, they will see a large pile of bones; closer examination of the bones indicates they are human, and look as if the marrow has been sucked out. Seeing this, the PCs need to make Fear Tests, with Failure resulting in their losing 2 Sanity, and a Dramatic Failure results not only in them losing the Sanity points but also fleeing from the house in terror for a number of Rounds equal to their Will.

The door in the hall is locked (-1 to Subterfuge Tests), but will open to reveal a ladder that descends 30 feet down a very dark shaft. Examining the shaft, the characters can see that it looks to have been roughly dug by hand. The ladder leads down to a small chamber through its ceiling. Small, green glowing rocks dimly light the interior of the chamber. The room is filled with some refuse, and the smell here is unbearable as well.

As soon as the first player character enters the chamber, two cultists standing guard here surprise them. The cultists fight to the death, and call for reinforcements; within two Rounds, three more cultists emerge from one of the east rooms and join in the fight. It will take the characters several Rounds to get into the chamber, as only one player character can go down the ladder at a time.

By the sixth Round of combat, there will be a total of seven cultists in the chamber, and Sknket will be leading them. Combat proceeds until either Sknket is killed or the cultists' numbers are reduced by half. Killing Sknket causes the other cultists to panic, and they will attempt to flee up the ladder or surrender. Re-

CULTISTS

Brawn 5, Quickness 6, Toughness 5, Wits 7, Will 4, Vitality 25, Sanity 35.

Skills: Diplomacy +6, Herbalist +8, Lore +7, Melee +6, Sense +7, Study +8.

Disease: Each cultists suffers from one disease, see pages 84-87.

Notable Gear: Short Sword, Dagger

SKNKET

Brawn 9, Quickness 9, Toughness 9, Wits 10, Will 11, Vitality 45, Sanity 50.

Skills: Alchemy (Poison) +12, Brawl +9, Herbalist +12, Melee +12, Resist +13, Sense +13.

Traits:

- **Horrific Visage:** Sknket has a terrifying appearance, and those looking upon him are struck with fear that shakes their resolve. This ability is always "on", meaning that whenever your Hero comes into contact with Sknket, he is affected by the snakeman's appearance. The effect of this horrific visage is such that the opponents must make a Will Test, with Failure causing them to lose 1 Sanity (4 Sanity with a Dramatic Failure).

Notable Gear: Staff, Rags

ducing the cultists' numbers by half causes the rest of them to surrender, which angers Sknket no end.

Once combat is over, and the cultists are either captured or slain, those who surrendered can be questioned, and the characters can learn that they were sent to set Jens's wine storehouse on fire. Asked why they did this, the cultists state that they were following orders, but they refuse to say who was giving the orders. The characters will learn that the group has poisoned the wine shipment scheduled to leave Rolling Falls this night. The cultists state that the wines carry Mulciber's infectious touch, and soon His dark embrace will cover all.

Questioning Sknket, if he survives the fight, the characters can learn that the cultist is a snakeman who came to The Vintage because of the visions Mulciber gave him. If the characters ask if he is responsible for all the sickness and death in Rolling Falls, Sknket responds that he has merely continued the work that was being done prior to his arrival. He is but a humble servant of Mulciber, and soon His sweet embrace will encompass all. When asked about his responsibility in Matthias Thiele's disappearance, Sknket simply answers that he was an unwelcome outsider who should have stayed away. Inquiring about the group of men Jens sent to investigate what has been going on will turn up that that Sknket knew of Jens' suspicions. Jens is a troublemaker, and very soon his meddlesome ways will come to an end. His men were not all that skilled, and were not prepared for what they found. They were easily dispatched, and made a very fine meal. When he is asked about the poisoned wine, the characters will learn that the entire shipment is poisoned, and when it leaves tonight, the barge will carry another cargo – death.

There is nothing else the characters can learn here. It is up to the player characters to decide what to do with the cultists. Searching the house, the characters will find little of interest, but searching the cultists' den, the characters will find a note that has been partially burned. A successful Wits Test enables the characters to make out a few words. The note talks about the poison being a success, and includes instructions on how to brew it. The note also has the name "Malthez" on it, but since there is no context to that name in the note, the characters have nothing to go on for the moment.

PART 3: EVIL REVEALED

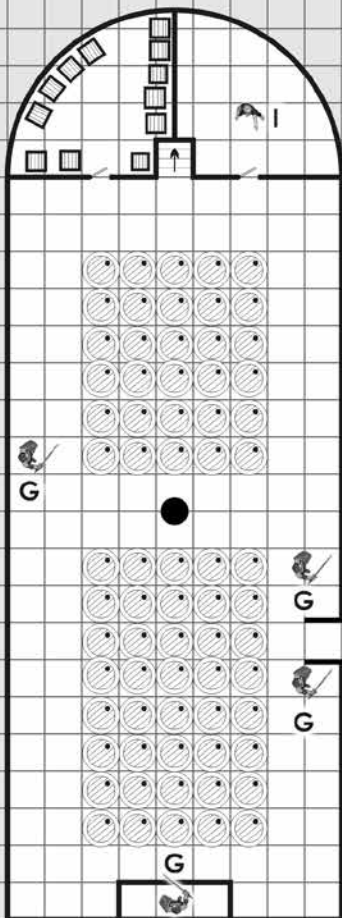
When the characters learn that the wine consignment which has been poisoned is scheduled to leave the docks this night, they should realize they need to stop it. The village is a two-hour ride north of Geoff's winery, and by the time the characters reach the village, it will be close to dusk. Alerting the villagers about the poisoned wine is useless; no one will believe them. After all, the shipment is the first good news they have had in months, and if the characters persist in their claims of poisoned wine, the villagers will attempt to drive the characters out of town.

The most effective way of stopping the shipment and preventing the contaminated wine from leaving the area is to destroy it. After all, the wine is deadly, and if it leaves Rolling Falls many innocent people will die. The characters need to

IVAN'S BARGE  1 square = 10 ft

Wine River

Warehouse



G

G

G

G

G

G



Warehouse



RSC

destroy it, and the most effective way to do so would be to either sink the barge or to light it ablaze. The barge is easy to find, since it is the only one moored at the docks. It is guarded by six men who are located on the docks as well as on the barge itself. For the location of the guards and layout of the area refer to the following map.

IVAN LERNEN

Brawn 4, Quickness 5, Toughness 4,
Wits 13, Will 9, Vitality 20, Sanity 65

Skills: Bargain +12, Bureaucracy +12

Notable Gear: Short Sword

GUARDS

Brawn 7, Quickness 7, Toughness 7,
Wits 7, Will 7, Vitality 35, Sanity 35

Skills: Archery +9, Defend +9, Intimidation +8, Melee +9.

Notable Gear: Chain Armor, Long Sword, Heavy Crossbow

Ivan Lernen has hired the guards, and they will stand watch until the rest of the barge crew arrives. The barge is scheduled to sail two hours before midnight, and the crew of six is currently at the inn, drinking and spending the night relaxing.

Ivan Lernen is on the barge, and he is very worried. Ivan is a gray-haired, balding little man who wears thick glasses. Currently he is haggard and going through a crisis, due to his being an unwitting pawn in Geoff's scheme.

The only reason he is doing this heinous deed is because he is being blackmailed. Ivan will be reluctant to answer questions. If the characters treat him kindly and do not yell at him, Ivan will talk and tells the

characters what is bothering him. He will plead with them to help him, and tells them about the blackmail. He knows that the wine is poisoned but is being forced to deliver it, because the life of his only daughter, Veronica, is at risk.

In a rush, Ivan explains that Geoff Malthez is the one who has poisoned the wine, and that he wants to kill others. Six months ago, Ivan's daughter became ill, and Ivan went to Geoff for help. Geoff told him that he had poisoned Veronica, and that the only way she was going to live was if Ivan did him a favor. Geoff wanted Ivan to organize a wine shipment, and to deliver a large consignment of poisoned wine. If Ivan did not do this, or if he told others about the wine, Veronica would die.

Ivan knows that Geoff is evil and that the workers at his winery are cultists. On a successful Diplomacy or Intimidation Test (–2), Ivan tells the characters that Geoff worships the dark god Mulciber, and that he is dedicated to spreading disease and sickness. Ivan has carried this secret around with him for six months, and has been helpless to do anything.

Ivan knows that Geoff is evil, and that the man has caused much harm since he came to Rolling Falls. Ivan does not want to deliver the wine shipment, but he has no choice. His daughter's life hangs in the balance.

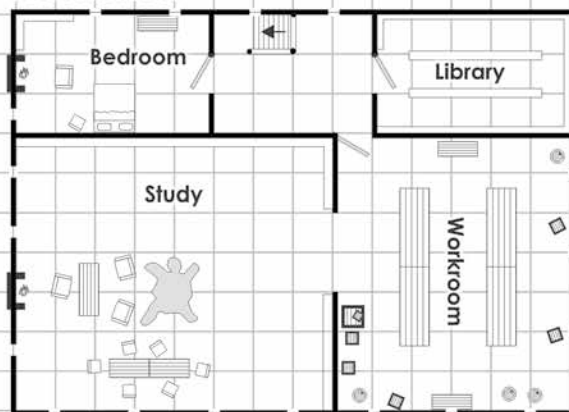
Ivan is telling the truth, and through a successful Empathy Test the characters can learn he is being truthful. The characters should now have enough information to figure out that Geoff is behind everything. Ivan begs the characters to help him, and if the characters state they will deal with Geoff, Ivan relaxes significantly. He tells the characters that if they can bring Geoff to justice, he will destroy all the

Geoff Malthez's House 1 square = 5 feet

Ground Floor



Second Floor



MASTER LEGEND

	Barrel		Door, Illusionary		Tent
	Bed		Fire		Trap Door, Ceiling
	Bed, Double		Keg		Trap Door, Floor
	Bench		Ladder, Ceiling		Vase
	Chair		Ladder, Floor		Wagon
	Chair, Stuffed		Meat Hanging		Water
	Chest		Mist		
	Couch		Plants/Brush		
	Crate		Sack, Grain		
	Curtain		Shelf/Cabinet		
	Debris/Hay		Stair, Arrow is Up		
	Door		Stones		
	Door, Secret		Table		

GEOFF MALTHERZ

Brawn 4, Quickness 4, Toughness 4,
Wits 12, Will 11, Vitality 20, Sanity 35

Skills: Alchemy (Poison) +12, Heal
+12, Herbalist +14, Magic (Fright +12
and Protection +12).

Notable Gear: Dagger

wine. As soon as the characters leave for Geoff's house, Ivan quietly tells his guards to begin dumping the wine into the river.

Geoff's house is easy to find, and is a small wooden building. Most of the first floor is devoted to Geoff's shop, and the only way in is through the locked front door (−3 to Subterfuge Tests). For the layout of the house refer to the following map.

Geoff can be found working in his study on the second floor. Talking with Geoff, the characters will learn that he has been

working in secret for the past five years. He has toiled in Mulciber's name spreading sickness and disease. It was Geoff who contacted the Den of the Dripping Wounds and Sknket, and the two have worked together in unison.

Geoff will put up a fight, but he can be captured so as to stand trial for his crimes. However, if he is killed, the characters can still find enough evidence to prove that he was responsible for all the illnesses affecting the people of Rolling Falls. Veronica, who is with Geoff, will be used as a bargaining chip in order to get away safely. He will threaten to kill the girl, unless the the heroes let him go, if they agree to this, he will flee with her, and she will be found outside of town. Stopping Geoff, Veronica is unharmed, though badly shaken.

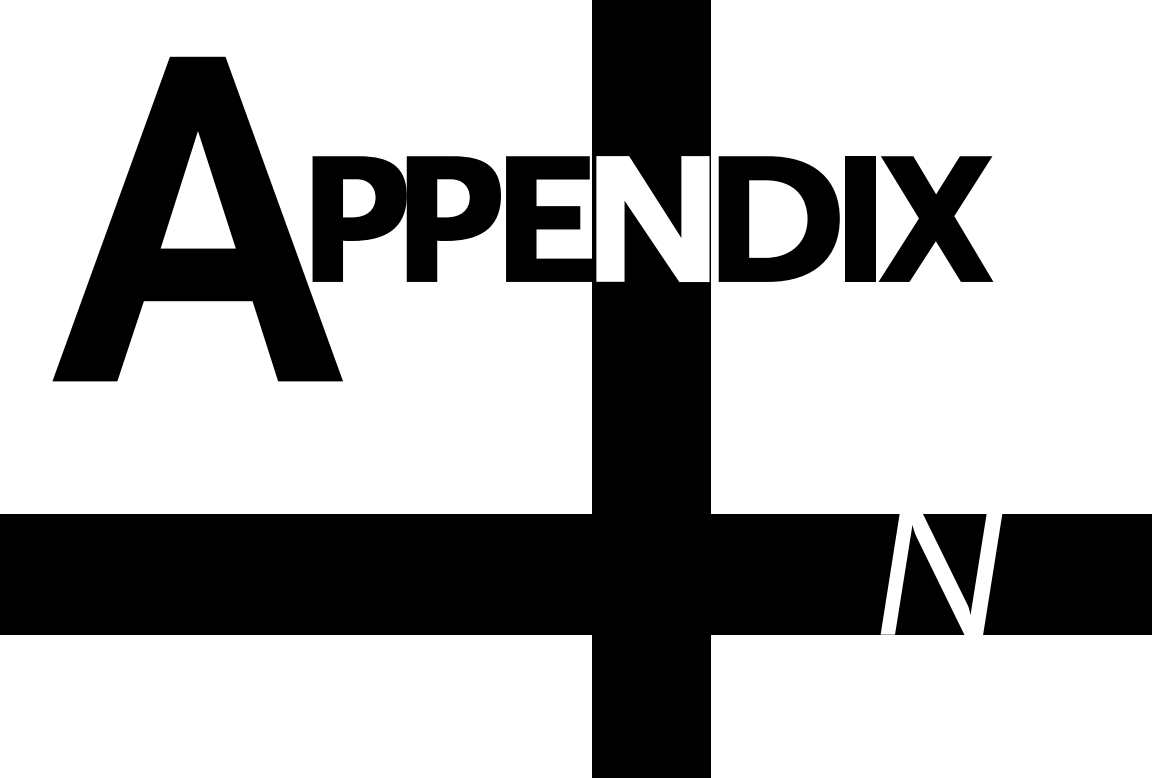
AFTERMATH

Successfully stopping the wine shipment, and revealing the evil of Geoff, has the characters viewed in a somewhat positive light. Somewhat, because the town was depending on the shipment of wine to bring in much needed money. Still the root of the village's problems was found, and the villagers are relieved to know that the problems have been ended.

Jens, who is very grateful that the evil has ended, rewards the heroes with a 25 SC as a way of showing his gratitude. As for the winery that served as the laboratory for Geoff's work, Jens has bought it, and plans to burn it to the ground.

XP REWARDS

Defeating Geoff Malthez 2 XP each
Stopping the wine shipment 1 XP each
Capturing Sknket 1 XP each



APPENDIX

N

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Shadow Sword & Spell

CHARACTER SHEET (FRONT)

NAME: _____

BRAWN

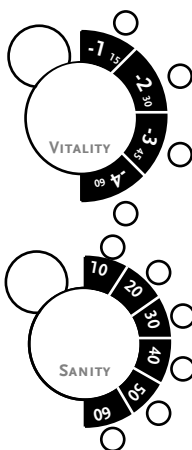
QUICKNESS

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WILL

MOVE



INITIATIVE



ARMOR VALUE



ACTION POINTS



BACKGROUND & MODIFIER

SKILLS

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NAME: _____

BRAWN

QUICKNESS

TOUGHNESS

WITS

WILL

MOVE



INITIATIVE



ARMOR VALUE



ACTION POINTS



BACKGROUND & MODIFIER

SKILLS

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SHADOW SWORD & SPELL

CHARACTER SHEET (BACK)

WEAPON	DV	DEFEND	RANGE	RoF
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POSSESSION	
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ABILITIES	
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NOTES

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WEAPON	DV	DEFEND	RANGE	RoF
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POSSESSION	
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ABILITIES	
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