

WHITEHACK

Second Edition Booklet Version

WEAPON 2

Special Abilities

AV

MV

ST

STR

DEX

CON

Quality Rules for Fantasy Tabletop Role-Playing
Campaign Setting and Two Adventures Included
Playable with Pencil and Paper

Christian Mehrstam

WHITEHACK

2nd Edition Booklet Version

Christian Mehrstam

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To convert a First Edition character to the new rules,
recalculate AC and read the class table to get the AV and a new ST.
If a Strong character has an ability that is no longer in the game,
the player picks a new ability from the new list.

The Referee should simply use the new rules.
If she has made custom monsters,
she may recalculate their ACs.

WHITEHACK is a complete tabletop fantasy role-playing game in the oldest rules tradition of the hobby. This is the second edition, in which the game has been thoroughly revised and extended. If you are new to tabletop role-playing and feel a bit lost, try a different reading route: Read the introduction to Chapter II, the introduction to Chapter III and the examples of play starting on page 21. Then continue from here. Welcome!



CHAPTER I

CHARACTER CREATION

Where we explore the choices involved in creating a new character.

IF you are in a hurry, just transfer a pregenerated character to a copy of the character sheet (p. 9f.). If you have a few more minutes, start by rolling dice for your character's basic attributes. Then pick a character class, roll hit points, add groups, buy equipment and give the character an identity (name, age, gender etc.). Now you are ready to find adventure!

If you are the Referee, you have a bit more to do—but we will cover that later (pp. 24–57).

THE DICE

Whitehack uses two twenty-sided dice (d20) and three six-sided dice (d6). If you need to roll and add several dice, it says for example 3d6. If something is subtracted or added to that, it says something like 2d6+4 or d6–1 (though 1 is always the minimum result).

If the rules say to make a *positive* or *negative double roll*, roll two separate d20s and pick the one that is best or worst, respectively.

THE ATTRIBUTE SCORES

The basic attributes are numbers which represent the strength, dexterity, constitution, intelligence, wisdom and charisma of the

character. Roll 3d6 for each attribute. The scores are raised as the character progresses, but low scores can also be beneficial (p. 10).

Strength lets the character move with more weight and is helpful in any situation that depends mainly on muscle. Characters in the Strong class get melee bonuses from high strength.

Dexterity is a combination of coordination, nimbleness and quickness, useful in a great many situations in the game. A score of 13 or more gives you a +1 bonus to initiative in battle, +2 if you have 16 or more.

Constitution is the health and endurance of the character. High constitution gives a better chance of surviving and recovering from damage, a bit more so for characters in the Strong class.

Intelligence represents memory, reasoning and the ability to understand difficult concepts or read written spells. You gain one extra language if you have an intelligence of 13 or more, two for 16 or more.

Wisdom determines a character's insight, perception and good judgment. Characters in the Wise class get extra magic abilities if they have high wisdom.

Charisma gives a character a chance of influencing other people, which is often useful in the game.

CHARACTER CLASSES

There are three basic character classes in this game: The Deft, the Strong and the Wise.

Reading Character Class Tables

Level: This is the character's experience level.

XP: This is the number of Experience Points (XP) needed to advance to that level.

AV: This is the Attack Value, representing the character's prowess in combat.

HD: This is the number of d6 Hit Dice at that level. Players re-roll their characters' HD each level to obtain a number of Hit Points (HP). If you roll poorly, you are allowed to keep the result from the previous level.

Level	XP	HD	AV	ST	Slots	Groups	Raises
1	0	1	10	7	1	2	—
2	1,500	2	11	8	1	2	1
3	3,000	2+1	11	9	1	3	1
4	6,000	3	12	10	2	3	2
5	12,000	3+1	12	11	2	4	2
6	24,000	4	13	12	2	4	3
7	48,000	4+1	13	13	3	5	3
8	96,000	5	14	14	3	5	4
9	192,000	5+1	14	15	3	6	4
10	384,000	6	15	16	4	6	5

Table 1: Deft Advancement

ST: This is the Saving Throw number, used to avoid all sorts of hazards and terrible things.

Slots: This is a space for some of the special abilities of the classes.

Groups: This is the number of groups that the character gets mechanical benefits from.

Raises: At even levels, one attribute may be raised one point.

The Deft

Deft characters rely on superior technique and skills honed to perfection. The Deft may for example be thieves, wandering monks, spies, marksmen, rangers or assassins. They must choose a vocation (pp. 10ff.) at level 1. When properly equipped, and when rolling for a task or an attack that is in line with the vocation, they always use a positive double roll. Deft characters don't mark the vocation group next to a specific attribute.

When they try to do damage from an advantageous position in combat ("combat advantage," +2 AV and damage), deft characters may switch their double positive roll benefit for double damage, if their vocation is relevant to the situation. For example, a duellist might do this in a duel, and an assassin might do it when striking from the shadows.

Deft characters draw inspiration from other people skilled in the same areas and can attune themselves to certain objects or

animals. This gives them extraordinary possibilities which the Referee and the player agree upon on a per situation basis—hard tasks should succeed automatically while nigh impossible ones should require standard task rolls. A monk attuned to her walking staff may at one instance use it to parry arrows, at another instance as a throwing weapon. A ranger might have a well trained dog. An archer can have a master famous for her trick-shots. As they advance, deft characters get slots for such things, each usable once per day. They choose what is in their slots (i.e. teachers, objects, animals), but may also have an equal number of "inactives." Switching inactives into slots requires a day spent in practice.

If a deft character wears a shield or armor heavier than studded leather, she loses her slot abilities and the option to switch positive double rolls for double damage. She has -2 AV with non-attuned two-handed melee weapons, but gets +1 to damage and AC from an off-hand weapon if she has a combat oriented vocation.

The Strong

Strong characters rely on their melee combat skills combined with bodily strength. They can for example be warriors, guards, brigands, knights, bounty hunters or barbarians. Whenever their attack puts an enemy at zero

or negative hit points, they may use the momentum of that action to attack another, adjacent enemy. This requires a separate roll.

Strong characters may use the same combat options as everyone else (p. 18), but they also have slots for stronger melee options, all mutually exclusive during a single round. There are eight options that can be learned as the character advances:

1. By forsaking all other actions (attack, move and other), they may protect an adjacent character by letting all attacks until their next turn target them instead (each enemy is allowed a save against the effect).
2. As a bonus effect after a successful attack, they may push an opponent backwards ten feet (save negates) and move into the space formerly occupied by the opponent.
3. When fighting huge opponents, like dragons, the Strong can cling onto the monster and even climb it with a successful dexterity roll, gaining double combat advantage (+4 AV and damage) as long as they hang on. Re-rolls may be required at the Referee's discretion.
4. They may work up (1 round of concentration) a battle frenzy that gives them +2 AV and damage, but at the same time -3 AC. When the battle is over, they must save or continue their attacks for another round, picking whomever stands closest as target.
5. Their tactical skills allow them to bestow a +4 AV bonus on an ally, once per battle. This requires giving a short instruction.
6. By taking a small verbal action, they may encourage their friends who stand close enough (15 feet radius), giving them +1 AV and +1 ST. This ability can be inverted to put fear in enemies in the same radius, giving them -1 AV and ST.
7. They can forsake their move and make a one-handed melee attack and a one-handed ranged attack in the same round, provided they have suitable weapons.
8. During a round, they can parry and look for an opportunity instead of attacking. They get +2 AC in the parrying round, and double combat advantage in the next round against one of the enemies they have parried. They can parry two consecutive rounds to get triple combat advantage (+6 AV and damage). If they take damage in any round that they parry, the opportunity is lost and they get no combat advantage in the following round.

Each strong character may also hold a single power acquired from a killed enemy, like a special attack or trick, a substance extracted from a monster's body or even a supernatural ability, transferred somehow through the act of killing. The character must deliver the killing blow, and the power must relate to a monster keyword (pp. 36ff.). The power can

Level	XP	HD	AV	ST	Slots	Groups	Raises
1	0	1+2	11	5	1	2	—
2	2,000	2	11	6	1	2	1
3	4,000	3	12	7	1	2	1
4	8,000	4	13	8	2	3	2
5	16,000	5	13	9	2	3	2
6	32,000	6	14	10	2	3	3
7	64,000	7	15	11	3	4	3
8	128,000	8	15	12	3	4	4
9	256,000	9	16	13	3	4	4
10	512,000	10	17	14	4	5	5

Table 2: Strong Advancement

be exchanged as new monsters are killed and is usable through a per situation agreement between the player and the Referee a number of times equal to the character's level. It does not occupy a slot.

Strong characters get +1 AV if they have a strength attribute of 13 or higher and +1 damage as well if they have 16 or higher. An equivalent bonus to hit points is given for constitution scores: +1 at 13 constitution and +2 at 16. They can make a number of free attacks (p. 18) equal to their level.

Strong characters may use any armor and any weapon. They have ST bonuses against poison and death (+1) and special melee attacks (+4).

The Wise

Wise characters have an exceptional aptitude for tasks that require a strong or agile mind. They may be wizards, priests, alchemists, exorcists, demonologists, druids, runecarvers, bards or even mad scientists.

Wise characters can do things that are (or that others perceive to be) magic. This is done through miracles—spells, prayers, songs, familiari, summonings, formulæ, experiments etc.—as per the specific vocation of the Wise. Each miracle is written as a few descriptive or evocative words, like “Telekinesis,” “Banish undead,” “Pyrotechnics,” “Frog familiarus,” “Fist of the God,” “Song of Truth” or “Pa-

trok, Demon of Passage.” It is usable through a per situation agreement between the Referee and the player, based on the miracle wording and the character's vocation.

Magic is taxing. Each miracle use has a cost of 1–14 HP that the Referee decides, but the player can negotiate a lower cost by including rare ingredients, drawbacks, extra casting time, drugs, etc. Normal rules for damage apply, but you may not attempt magic that can give you a negative HP score. Very powerful or reckless magic also requires a save. If it fails, the miracle fizzles. On a roll of 20, the character is reduced to zero HP and the miracle has some unintended catastrophic effect of the Referee's choosing. (See also pp. 19f. for indepth information on HP costs.)

Wise characters gain slots for miracles and permanently choose *two* miracles for each – one miracle that is active (i.e. in the slot), and one that is not. Switching miracles into slots takes a day of study, concentration and preparation. Wise characters with wisdom scores above 13 gain one extra inactive miracle in total, two for 16 or higher.

The healing rate of the Wise is *twice* the normal rates, but they get no hit points back from spells, medicine or skilled treatment (they may need that for other things than hit points though).

While wearing shields or armor heavier than leather, wise characters pay double for all their miracles. They have -2 AV when us-

Level	XP	HD	AV	ST	Slots	Groups	Raises
1	0	1+1	10	6	1	2	—
2	2,500	2	11	7	1	2	1
3	5,000	2+1	11	8	2	2	1
4	10,000	3	11	9	2	3	2
5	20,000	4	12	10	3	3	2
6	40,000	4+1	12	11	3	3	3
7	80,000	5	12	12	4	4	3
8	160,000	6	13	13	4	4	4
9	320,000	6+1	13	14	5	4	4
10	640,000	7	13	15	5	5	5

Table 3: Wise Advancement

Identity

Class:
Level / XP:
Languages:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23

WHITEHACK

2nd Edition Booklet Version

Equipment —>

WEAPON 1

WEAPON 2

Special Abilities

AV

MV

ST

AC

HP

STR

DEX

CON

INT

WIS

CHA

ing two-handed melee or missile weapons, except for the quarterstaff, the crossbow and the musket. They get +2 ST against magic and mind influencing abilities.

GROUPS

Though you do not have to choose all of them right away, each new character belongs to at least two groups and will eventually belong to more. Groups are broad definitions of skills, contacts and information that the character possesses. Having a relevant group when attempting tasks that require training, means that you don't get the same penalties that characters without such a group do.

All groups are written next to an attribute on the character sheet. This means that the group has an even greater weight (use a positive double roll) when making task rolls using that specific attribute—again if the group has any relevance for the roll. As deft characters get this advantage for all task rolls relative to their vocation group, they do not mark it next to any attribute.

When a character reaches a new level, one group may be moved to another attribute.

An attribute can have two groups, but for each attribute with a score of 5 or less, the character gets one extra affiliation group (see below). For each attribute that is raised above 5, one such bonus group is lost.

Nine Dogs, level 1 Strong Pit Fighter

Str 13, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 7 (Pit Fighter), Cha 6 (Bleeder Cult); ST 5, HP 9, AC 4, MV 25, AV 12; Melee Special 8; Common; Flail, Gauntlet (Off hand), Chainmail, 42 gp.

Ogil, Level 1 Deft Twisted Antiquarian

Str 15 (Twisted Dwarf), Dex 11, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 5 (Twisted Dwarf, Trade & Barter); ST 7, HP 5, AC 1, MV 25, AV 10; Attuned: Library, (Axe); Twisted Ability: "Identify"; Common, Dwarven, Goblin; Axe, Leather Armor, Small Library, Chest, 10 gp.

Saffron, Level 1 Wise Black Hats Alchemist

Str 6, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 13 (Alchemist, Black Hats), Cha 13; ST 6, HP 6, AC 1, MV 30, AV 10; Miracles: "Weird Bombs," "Crow Familiarus," "Mysterious Elixir!"; Common; Quarterstaff, Cloth Armor, Black Hat, Tame Crow, Book of Recipes, 1 gp.

Faleah, Level 1 Strong Watcher Bard

Str 10, Dex 9, Con 8, Int 17 (Watcher), Wis 11, Cha 11 (Bard); ST 5, HP 7, AC 5, MV 25, AV 11; Melee Special: 6; Common, Draconic, Elvish; Greatsword, Longbow, 10 Arrows, Splint Mail, 11 gp.

Howl, Level 1 Deft Kobold Assassin

Str 6, Dex 12, Con 15 (Kobold), Int 8 (Kobold), Wis 13, Cha 10; ST 7, HP 1, AC 3, MV 25, AV 10; Attuned: Dog, (Crossbow); Common, Draconic; Studded Leather, Dog, Crossbow, 9 Bolts, Poison (2 doses, d6 after 2 rounds, save for half), Mask, 10 gp.

Kalynna, level 1 Strong Paladin

Str 16, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 7, Wis 13 (Evil), Cha 8 (Paladin); ST 5, HP 8, AC 7, MV 20, AV 12; Melee Special 1; Common; Sword, Full Plate, Shield, 7 gp.

Reekwin, Level 1 Wise Twisted Thief

Str 12, Dex 8 (Thief), Con 7 (Twisted Elf), Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11 (Twisted Elf); ST 6; HP 5, AC 3, MV 30, AV 10; Twisted Ability: "Super Hearing"; Miracles: "Patrok, Demon of Passage," "Winged Feet"; Common; Short Sword, Lockpick, Studded Leather, 32 gp.

Myrvyn, level 1 Deft Impostor

Str 11, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12 (Cultist), Wis 6, Cha 11; ST 7, HP 4, AC 0, MV 30, AV 0; Attuned: Makeup Box, (Pistol); Common; Pistol & Ammunition, Cloth Armor, Makeup Box, Wardrobe, 12 gp.

Table 4: Pregenerated Characters

Gobbo Dar, Silva, Ulsak, Elbet, Thunder Foot, Regin, Snuffit, Oddo, Horst, Ugga, Uno Saar, Haxander, Stravka, Saffron, Edelhart, Galvina, Beryl Chard, Rapokes, Thorne, Elwydd, Clivia, Laveri, Raffle, Adelina, Hrain of the Ice, Apok, Gonk, Leander, Lebert Creth, Mercutio, Rathid, Adursi, Furio, Reekwin, Charah, Cletus, Elbaran, Alehir, Beppo, Luena, Morne, Restar, Blind Renly, Alibede, Arznak, Lugan, Aima, Cogius, Tunka Jinn, Ruberg, Nan the Black, Aleigh, Eyemash, Madon, Graline, Satis, Mahuda, Skira-Na-Nog, Grimare, Makim, Malavac, Segon, Amoryn, Ana, Corsan, Malla, Shadh, Curmia, Shamona, Shrike, Walks-With-Mountains, Arannas, Spero, Dearn, Harah, Argone, Medori, Hirra, Spire, Hobail, Strahe, Holdus, Horge of Ode, Milyn Bel Fara, Ealla, Mogus, Huran, Moire, Teonor, Bavelyn, Edrax, Edred of the Woods, Morcan, Imnel, Moredi, Thiana, Belus, Zork, Tiarlyn, Mohab, Solar Quex, Myrvyn, Torix, Nardil, Bladeg, Blain, Nimroin, Junit, Niniks, Kalynna, Odham, Unfela, Kathall, Ogius, Faleah, Fitz, Donne, Caliban, Finrim, Obura, Yrin, Jar, Drak, Ben-Sarah, No Nose Jennie, Magg, Taria, Ishtur, Mardahal, Droog of Three Willows, Solu, Xotav, Flavio, Agrippa, Rufus.

Table 5: 135 Character Names

In the game world, a character may side with or even be in many groups. But she will not belong to them in a game mechanical sense until they are written next to attributes.

Species

The first type of group is the character's species. It must be chosen at character creation and is defined by physical and broad cultural traits. Species groups are relative to the norm of the game world—if you don't have a species group, it means that the character is the most common species, in most cases human. Common fantasy species groups are dwarves, elves, halflings and goblins. Choosing one of those would mean that the character has some of the most common physical and cultural traits of that species. It does not mean that the species as a whole is culturally the same. Further group choices can delve deeper into cultural and sub-cultural variations.

Species groups are special. You note them after two attributes, but they can also be used negatively at the Referee's discretion, as in "dwarves aren't built to swim fast—make a double negative roll." If only one of the character's parents was another species than the norm, mark the species group next to a single attribute.

Vocations

The second type is the character's vocation. This can be wizard, barbarian or something similarly adventurous. But it can just as well be wood worker or swine herder—literature is full of ordinary people becoming heroes.

Often, a player will want to choose a vocation in line with the character's class, but it isn't necessary. Creating a deft wizard would effectively give you a character whose own magic is petty, but who is extremely knowledgeable about magic in theory and good at reading spells from books and scrolls. Conversely, a wise knight would be physically weaker than her peers, but still a good tactician with magic to back her up in battle.

Vocations aren't temporary occupations. Normally, a character is allowed only one vocation but may discover it later in her career.

Affiliations

The third type is the character's affiliations. Such groups can be guilds, schools, tribes, companies, secret societies, churches or some other social structure. They may provide friends, special knowledge, languages, equipment, refuge and aid, and in rare cases even with specific skills (as in "the Black Hats jealously guard the secret of weird ex-

plosives from other thieves' guilds"). They will also give the character enemies. Affiliation groups can be exchanged but must always be plausible in the game world.

In certain campaigns, affiliation groups such as Good, Evil, Lawful etc. designate moral attunement to gods and other powers. Characters without such groups are simply ambiguous and complex in their morals.

GOLD & EQUIPMENT

Roll 3d6 and multiply by 10. This is the number of gold pieces (gp) that your character gets to buy starting equipment. One gold

piece (gp) is worth 10 silver pieces (sp) or 100 copper pieces (cp). Your game world may use other coin. The lists do by no means exhaust this endless subject—add to them as you see fit, and decide on prices.

Equipment Weight

A "normal" level of miscellaneous equipment is assumed to weigh thirty pounds, not including armor, shield or weapons. Treasure is added, with each twenty coins and gems weighing one pound. Encumbrance affects movement, and individual weapon weights are used to settle tied initiatives (pp. 16f.).

<i>Gear</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Gear</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Backpack (30 pound capacity)	5	Mule	20
Bandages (5)	2	Oil (lamp), 1 pint	2
Boat	60	Pole, 10 ft	1
Bottle (wine), glass	1	Raft	10
Cart	50	Rations, dried (day)	3
Case (map or scroll)	3	Rations, trail (day)	1
Checkers (game)	5	Rope, elven (50 ft)	70
Compass	50	Rope, hemp (50 ft)	1
Crowbar	5	Sack (30 pound capacity)	1
Dice	2	Saddle bags	10
Flint & steel	5	Saddle	25
Grappling hook	5	Scroll, empty	5
Hammer and wooden stakes	3	Shovel	5
Helmet	10	Skiing gear	15
Holy symbol, wooden	2	Sled	20
Holy symbol, silver	25	Sleeping bag	2
Holy water, small vial	15	Snare	1
Horse (riding)	60	Spell book (blank)	100
Horse (battle trained)	120	Spike, iron	1
Laboratory (portable)	130	Tent	15
Lantern	10	Tinderbox	10
Lockpicks	20	Torch (bundle of 6)	1
Map	20	Waterskin	3
Mirror (small steel)	5	Wolfsbane & Garlic	10

Table 6: Gear

Weapon	Damage	Weight	Special	Range	RoF*	Cost
Axe/Sword	1d6+1	6				10
Club	1d6-2	3	Can be improvised			—
Crossbow	1d6+1	8	Two handed	70	1/2	30
Dagger	1d6-2	1		15	1	3
Darts	1 HP	1/3		20	3	1
Flail	1d6	9	Ignore shield AC			8
Greatsword/Battle Axe	1d6+2	15	Two handed			15
Halberd/Pole Arm	1d6+1	20	Two handed, Reach†			10
Javelin	1d6	2	d6-2 damage in melee	40	1	2
Longbow	1d6	5	Two handed	70	1	40
Mace/Warhammer	1d6	10	+1 AV vs. metal armor			5
Morning Star	1d6	20	Same as above, ×3 crit dam.			8
Musket‡	1d6+2	10	Two handed	30	1/4	150
Pistol‡	1d6+1	3		20	1/3	100
Quarterstaff	1d6-1	4	Two handed, Reach†			1
Scimitar	1d6	5	+1 AV while riding			8
Shortbow	1d6-1	4	Two handed, Ride and use	50	1	25
Shortsword	1d6-1	3				8
Sling	1d6-2	1/2	Use with regular stones	30	1	2
Spear	1d6	8	Reach†			2
Throwing Knife/Axe	1d6-2	1	-1 AV in melee	25	1	2
Unarmed	1 hp	—	Grapple (p. 18)			—

Table 7: Weapons

CALCULATING ARMOR CLASS

Note the AC value of the character's armor, with any bonuses (like from a shield or a magic object) or penalties factored in. For example, a character wearing chainmail and a shield has AC 5. Unarmored characters have AC 0.

LANGUAGES

All characters are able to understand and speak the most common language as well as the most common language of their own species in the campaign region of the game world. Usually, this means that humans speak a single language, while characters with a species group also speak a language common to that

Armor	AC	Weight §	Cost
Shield	+1	10	5
Cloth	1	10	10
Leather	2	15	15
Studded leather	3	20	20
Chainmail	4	40	30
Splint mail	5	50	40
Full plate	6	60	50

Table 8: Armor

* RoF = Rate of Fire, measured in shots/round(s).

† Reach: enemies within 10 feet are in melee range.

‡ Firearms do not fit in every campaign. The examples given represent a pre-industrial level of technology.

§ Magic armor can weigh less, at the Referee's discretion.

species. Unless the player has chosen a group that makes it inappropriate (like “barbarian”), all characters are considered literate.

Additional languages come from two other sources: 1) A group that the Referee decides comes with a language, like Thieves’ Cant for a thieves’ guild or some sacred language for a church. 2) Bonus languages from high intelligence. Common choices for bonus languages are Draconic, Goblin or dead languages in old scrolls and books. In both cases, the Referee can decide that a language acquired after level 1 requires time to learn.



CHAPTER II

THE GAME

*Where we look at the process of playing
and the game rules.*

ONCE you have a character, the Referee will present a game world situation that the character is in, telling you what she can see, hear, smell etc. The game may start with your character opening the Lost Tomb of Tunka Jinn, with a murder mystery in the cave city of Ode, or with something else, somewhere else. That is up to the Referee.

But you choose how your character reacts to that situation, where she goes and what she does. Perhaps she uses a miracle and sends her familiar ahead to scout the tomb, or seeks out the local thieves’ guild to see if they know who may be behind the murders? You control your character’s feelings and choose her words when she talks to other characters belonging to co-players or the Referee. As a result of your choices, the Referee presents a new situation—you encounter undead tomb guards, you are ambushed by thugs, etc.

The rules challenge you by telling you how to handle certain events. They deal with combat, but also with other tasks, experience, movement, damage, magic and other important parts of the game. There are also things

that the rules don’t cover. This is by design. It lets you and the Referee find your balance and gives you space to negotiate. It also urges you to collaborate on game world creation, as the use of groups and many class powers will inevitably say something about the setting. Always remember that you are creating a collective narrative on the game world’s conditions, where each agreement serves as a precedent for the next. Even during the course of a single session, you will develop your own borders and content for the open spaces, making this *your* game in *your* world.

GAINING EXPERIENCE

Characters are awarded experience points (XP) for killing monsters, accumulating treasure and completing quests. Monsters have XP values decided by the Referee, and one gold piece is equal to one XP. These two XP categories represent the experience the character gets from staying alive and getting ahead—by force or through cunning—in a dangerous fantasy world.

Quest XP represent the experience characters get from achieving specific goals, not just staying alive. Discovering the force behind the incursion of kobolds might be a quest goal. To topple a queen and put someone else on her throne might be another. In an adventure, there are often a few smaller quests to complete, as well as a major quest. In a typical low level adventure, the quest part is about half of the total XP gained. As the characters advance in level and take on harder missions, this quota may increase. But sometimes you fail and get no quest XP at all. At other times, quest XP may be all you get.

SAVING THROWS

A hostile miracle, a trap or some other hazard can allow a saving throw, to see if the character is lucky or experienced enough to avoid it. Roll a d20. If the result is equal to or below the character’s ST, the save is a success. Otherwise it is not (some saves can also be “fum-

bled,” see Task Rolls below). Anyone resistant or vulnerable to a certain hazard uses positive or negative double rolls, respectively (p. 5).

TASK ROLLS, SKILLS & QUALITY

When a character deliberately takes on a risky and challenging task, the Referee tells the player to roll a d20. If the result is equal to or under the appropriate attribute, the task is successful. Otherwise it is not. The Referee can take the face value of a successful die as an indication of the *quality* of success. The higher the successful value, the better. Rolling your attribute score exactly counts as a critical success—“a crit.” Conversely, rolling 20 is the worst possible failure, a fumble.

Difficulty, Help & Extreme Scores

If the Referee decides that a task is more difficult than what is normal for its type, like moving silently up a very creaky stair, or if it is easier, like when a character gets help from others, she may tell the player to subtract or add two or more to the attribute used.

Sometimes, this or some other modification will result in extreme attribute scores. You may not roll for scores below 1. From 20 and up, rolling 20 counts as a normal failure. Any points above 20 may be added to the quality of success. You crit on 19.

Skills & “Trained Rolls”

The attributes do not tell everything about a character’s ability to complete a task. Her species, vocation and even affiliations indicate what predispositions, experiences and special knowledge she has. When a group is written next to an attribute, the character gets to make positive double rolls for that attribute—if the group seems relevant for the task. For instance, a wise character with the vocation “priest” written next to charisma would get a positive double roll when trying to calm an angry crowd. A character with no groups or “assassin” written in the same spot

would not, as assassins aren’t trained to talk to crowds. A wise character with “priest” written next to intelligence wouldn’t either, because that is not the relevant attribute (an angry crowd usually doesn’t listen to reason).

Some tasks require a “trained roll,” because they are of a type that makes it less likely that anyone without proper training can complete them. Picking a lock, scaling a sheer surface, knowing details about some summoning ritual, guessing the value of an ancient weapon, tracking an animal etc. could be such tasks. Check the groups. If a character has a relevant group written *some-where* on her sheet, the player rolls a d20 just like for a regular task. If that group is written next to the relevant attribute, she gets a positive double roll. But if none of those cases are true, the task requires a negative double roll.

Pairs

Getting a pair in a successful, positive double roll means that the character manages to get some additional benefit other than succeeding. Getting a pair in an unsuccessful negative double roll means getting some additional detrimental effect other than failing.

Contests

In contests, both parties roll and compare their results in this order: Successful positive pairs, crits, normal successes, failures, fumbles and failed negative pairs. Each category wins over the next. Within the successful categories, the highest quality wins. Within the unsuccessful ones, the highest roll wins.

Though you usually roll for the same attribute, that isn’t always the case. Two parties trying to convince a third might for example use logic (intelligence) or charm (charisma).

AUCTIONS

Longer contests like chases or games of checkers can be played as auctions. The participants roll a d6 each, but hide the results.

They make bids that they promise to beat with the quality in a successful task roll, adding the d6 to the relevant attribute. For instance, someone in a chase with dexterity 12 and a d6 roll of 3 might bid 2, meaning that she promises to roll 15 or below, but also more than 2. Any other contestants have to bid higher or make a final bid of 1 (a "one-bid"). When all have made their final bids, the d6s are revealed and the one with the highest bid rolls first. If she succeeds, she has won the contest, but if she fails, the second highest bidder has to roll. The person with the lowest bid does not have to roll in order to win if everyone else fails. You have to make a bid to participate, and you have to have a theoretical chance of beating it. If there are several people with a one-bid, they roll like in a regular contest (p. 9).

The auction mechanism can be made chaotic (everyone calls out their bids in any order), or more organized (the Referee or some dice roll decides the order of the bids). Auctions can also be role-played, by adding a description to each bid: "I take a short-cut over the crumbling bridge—7!"

Which is the optimal bid? Is someone bluffing? Auctions are fun, tricky and time-saving! Consider using them for non-lethal battles like duels to first blood. You can also use them for harmful battles, maybe with groups of lesser enemies, by deciding beforehand on an amount of damage that the losers will take. Other than the regular attributes, you can base auctions on STs and AVs, and sometimes even on HP.

TIME

Sometimes the Referee will rule that minutes, hours or months pass in the game world, but there are two important terms: "round" and "turn." A round is about ten seconds, and the turn is a character's place to act in that round. When the rules say "until her next turn," it means until the character acts in the next round. (In some modules, though, "turn" designates something else, pp. 28ff.)

Burden (lbs)	Human or Elf	Halfling, Dwarf or Goblin
0-75	30/6	25/5
76-100	25/5	20/4
101-150	20/4	15/3
151+	15/3	10/2

Table 9: Average Movement Rates

Movement Type	Adjustment
Careful	Average Rate -10/-2
Normal	Average Rate
Running	Double Average Rate

Table 10: Movement Type Adjustments

MOVEMENT RATE

Rates for base movement (MV) are listed in feet/grid squares per round in tables 9 and 10. You may want to make adjustments for species that differ significantly in size—some examples are also in the tables. The Referee can demand a strength roll to see if a character can move at all with very heavy burdens.

Any character carrying 76 pounds or more can choose to *strain* herself to get to move as per the weight category above the one she is in. Make a standard strength roll. If it is successful, you get one round of boosted movement. If it is a failure, the character gets tired and can't move during the next round.

COMBAT

When the party comes into contact with enemies and either side wants to fight, the combatants act and results take effect in order of initiative (below). When everyone has acted, a new round begins with the same order. This continues until the battle is resolved.

Determining Initiative

At the beginning of combat, everyone rolls initiative with a d6—high roll wins, modified by high dexterity (p. 5). The Referee can

choose to roll once for groups of creatures (who then act on the same turn). If two combatants have tied initiatives, missiles go before melee and lighter weapons go before those that are heavier or need to be drawn. This is usually only relevant if at least one of the tied combatants is attacking the other.

Any combatant that does nothing but wait during a round gets to change her initiative to 6 in the next and all consecutive rounds.

Anyone can choose a lower initiative instead of the one rolled. In the first round after this choice, she can let her actions happen just before others' on that initiative.

Surprise

The Referee may decide that someone is surprised when the battle begins. Surprised characters are only allowed to move and ready weapons last in the first round, and do not roll initiative until the second round. Others have combat advantage against them.

Actions During a Round

In a round, you may attack, make an average move and perform some small action like dropping or readying a weapon.

These actions are interchangeable from left to right, but not the other way. You can, for example, sacrifice your attack to make two moves and a small action, but you can't sacrifice a small action to get an extra attack. Some actions and abilities require a full round.

The Attack Roll

To attack, you add or subtract any bonuses or penalties to the character's AV and make a task roll. To hit, the roll must be successful

and have a quality above the opponent's armor class. For example, someone with AV 14 and a +1 sword fighting an AC 3 goblin hits on 4–15. Modifiers for equipment can be factored in on the character sheet, making the operation even simpler.

All rules for task rolls apply, including the opportunity to use surplus points (i.e. for a modified AV above 20) to raise quality. Crits do double damage, stacking with the deft double damage. Fumbles have disastrous effects that the Referee chooses, but you are allowed a save to fail normally instead of fumbling. Deft characters sometimes use two dice in attacks: A successful pair means a hit and combat advantage in the next round.

For modules with an older armor system, use table 11 to tell the Referee the best legacy AC your character hits. The Referee may also use a module specific AV bonus (p. 29).

Melee Attack

A melee attack is an attack with a close combat weapon like a sword, claw or dagger. Two combatants within five feet of each other are considered to be engaged in melee combat.

Missile Attack

Missile attacks are attacks with ranged weapons such as a sling or throwing axe. The weapon range in Table 7 (p. 13) is the close range. The attack gets -1 AV for each exceeded increment of the close range value, up to a maximum of -4 (longer shots are impossible).

When firing into a melee, you must beat the AC of your target by 4 or more in order to hit it. If you beat it by less, you hit someone else in the melee, at the Referee's discretion. A miss is still a miss, though.

Whitehack AC	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Descending AC I	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9
Descending AC II	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8
Ascending AC	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Table 11: Legacy AC Conversion

Some missile attacks target areas. Hitting a certain spot is a task roll. Hitting a moving target's spot is a missile attack against AC 0. Anyone in the target area gets to save to avoid damage. The area of effect is normally 15x15 feet, or 9 grid squares. The squares can be arranged into a cone for breath weapons. For ray weapons, count the number of squares crossed in the line of fire.

Free Attacks

A fighting character or creature needs to be on guard. Casting a spell, quaffing a potion, taking something out of a backpack and similar actions give every ready enemy in melee range a free regular attack, regardless of turn. You can only make one free attack per round, no matter how many opportunities you get. The strong class are excepted: they can make a number of free attacks equal to their level.

To disengage in combat, you must move backwards at a careful pace, still facing your opponents, or you will give away free attacks.

Combat Advantage

Some situations and positions in battle will give the character or her enemy combat advantage in the form of +2 AV and +2 damage. The Referee decides when this occurs, but in general, being flanked gives the flanking foes this advantage, as does higher ground, sure footing vs. loose footing, striking from behind or attacking a surprised enemy. Sometimes, the Referee may even grant a double or triple combat advantage in the form of a +4 or +6 bonus to both AV and damage.

Deft characters have a special option to switch their positive double roll for double damage when they strike with combat advantage in a way that relates to their vocation.

Conditions

Magic, abilities or situational circumstances can daze, stun, blind, hold, deafen, confuse etc. a character or monster. Positive effects

can be cover, invisibility, blurring, increased speed etc. The Referee interprets conditions the way she sees fit, using combat advantage, free attacks and penalties or bonuses to AC, damage, move, initiative or AV.

Special Combat Options

The Referee makes rulings over whatever the players want their characters to do, but a few formalized options are suggested below:

Charge: Charge 15 feet in a straight line to attack with combat advantage. You get -3 AC until your next turn.

Fight defensively/offensively: Take -2 AV or -2 damage, or -1 AV and -1 damage, to get +1 AC. Take -2 AC and get +1 AV and +1 damage. All effects last until your next turn.

Grapple: Make a regular unarmed attack, but forsake your damage to hold your opponent. The opponent must win a contest against your strength to break free.

Trick: Attack and exchange your damage roll for one of the following effects, each negated by an enemy save: *Push* the enemy five feet backwards or diagonally backwards, and follow into her former space if you like. *Feint* to make two attacks with combat advantage in the next round. *Disarm* the enemy so that her weapon drops 2d6 feet away. *Trip* the enemy so that she must rise before attacking or moving in the next round, giving you combat advantage.

Protect: Make a task roll against your AV (i.e. not an attack). If you succeed, the next attack on an adjacent friend targets you instead. Enemies may save to avoid it.

Press: Take a penalty to your AV when using a special combat option. Give your opponent the same penalty to her save. If you fail or if the save succeeds, the enemy gets combat advantage against you in the next round.

Magic in Combat

Performing miracles during combat is often a bad idea, as it takes too much time and effort. Only the fastest of miracles can be per-

formed and take effect in the same round. The wise character must be fully concentrated on her miracle with no other actions allowed, and any adjacent foes get free attacks. If she takes damage while working her magic, she must save or have her concentration broken, which ruins the miracle completely.

DAMAGE & DEATH

When a character is hit, you subtract the damage from her hit points. If an attack reduces her HP to zero, she is knocked out until she has positive HP again. If an attack gives her negative HP, she is knocked out and must save or die. Until she heals to a positive HP score, any further damage means she dies without another save.

Characters (not creatures) have a special option: Once per battle, when an attack would damage them, they have the *option* to save. A successful save reduces the damage by d6 points, representing an adrenaline rush that enables the character to shrug off some damage from a single attack (it does *not* heal any previous damage). If the save fails, however, the character takes full damage from the attack, and if she has HP left, she is still knocked out for two rounds. If she gets negative HP, she dies without another save.

When you would save to reduce damage or to avoid death, you can make a constitution task roll instead, to the same effects. This is usually a better option at lower levels, but at higher levels, the chance to save is greater than the chance of making a constitution roll for all but the hardest of characters.

Ghost Form & Resurrection

Death is not necessarily absolute and permanent. The Referee is advised to allow a player to continue playing her character in ghost form for the remainder of the session where the character died, giving advice to her comrades ("it's as if I could still hear Ulsak, even though he's dead!") and even fighting undead and incorporeal opponents. In ghost form,

the character retains all her abilities and full hit points. She may not pass through walls and closed doors—that is an advanced ability available to monster ghosts only. The ghost form can only be hit by things that can hurt the undead (exorcism, certain magic weapons, incorporeal attacks etc.), but she cannot affect anything directly in the world of the living. Should the ghost form be destroyed before the session ends, the player has no choice but to make a new character or remain out of play.

In a fantasy world filled with magic, there are ways of bringing back the dead. This shouldn't be just a ritual, but an adventure with great risks, spanning at least a session

Poison & Drugs

The Referee notes effects of poisons or drugs in her descriptions, including consequences of successful or failed saves against them.

For example, a dose of Quicksilver or Godberry gives the wise a one hit point miracle for free, but the character must also save or become addicted to the same number of doses that she has used that day. Rolling 20 means that she has overdosed and takes that number of d6s as damage. The character must abstain and save three days in a row to get clean. Addicts pay double for their miracles when in withdrawal. The price in gold for a dose varies with the campaign world.

HEALING & INJURIES

In addition to the various magical means of restoring hit points, a character who has not gone below zero HP will recover one HP every evening and morning, two if she succeeds at a constitution task roll. Forty-eight hours of rest will restore hit points completely.

The Referee can allow a character to bind 1d6-3 HP worth of wounds immediately following a battle, with a trained task roll. Fumbling means that the patient loses one HP instead. Note that the character can only recover hit points lost during that battle.

If the character has reached negative HP, she is injured and must either be treated by someone with a healer vocation or get a permanent disadvantage. Until either of those conditions are met, the character will heal at her usual rate, but only to HP 1. However, if someone has purposely hit her to knock her out and not to kill, the character heals normally even from negative HP.

This means that a player can choose for her character to take a permanent disadvantage (two lost fingers, a limp, a scar) when a healer is hard to find and the character needs to get back on her feet fast in order to survive. The disadvantage is noted next to an attribute on the character sheet and can be used by the Referee to demand negative double rolls.

MAGIC

Magic does not have to be actual magic. An apothecary's or a scientist's experiments may seem magic to ordinary folk. Then again, actual magic is an integral part of most fantasy worlds. Its origin might be divine, natural, demonic or something else.

Look at the example of play on the next page. It shows how magic is dealt with in *Whitehack*. The player says what she wants the magic to do, based on the character's vocation and the specific wording of a miracle. The Referee makes a ruling if that is possible and how much power it would take, and comes to an agreement with the player.

Hit Point Costs for Magic

The Referee must decide how plausible it is (if at all) for someone with the character's vocation and miracle wording to achieve the effect the player wants. If the vocation and wording are spot on, the cost in hit points should be lower than in the case of a far stretch. For example, a Wise Summoner with the miracle wording "Summon Earth Elemental" should get a lower HP cost to summon an earth elemental than a Wise Wizard with the much more general miracle word-

ing "Master of the Elements." This also allows for the players to deliberately choose more specific or more general wordings.

The Referee must also decide how powerful the desired effect is. Some miracles may be hard to achieve because they alter reality a lot or because the setting works in a way that puts restrictions on the use of magic. Other miracles are powerful because they have large areas of effect, long durations, targets that don't get to save, instant casting times or something similar.

When suggesting a cost, the Referee uses a special scale: 1, 2, d6, d6+1, d6+2, 2d6, 2d6+1 and finally 2d6+2 HP (the highest possible cost is about half the average HP of a level 10 Wise character). All costs that include a die may also include a save, and if the player wants to negotiate the cost, this must be done before rolling for the cost or saving. Both saves and negotiations are explained in the Wise class rules (p. 8).

Using Scrolls, Potions, Wands etc.

Scrolls, potions, wands and many other magic objects can be used by someone who cannot create magic herself.

Potions can be quaffed, which requires no skill, or thrown at someone, which is a missile attack or missile area attack roll (p. 18). The same goes for attacks with powders and ray wands. Crushing a vial up to five feet away should never require a roll, though. It hits the intended space automatically.

Reading a spell from a scroll requires a successful roll for intelligence. It is something that takes training, so anyone without such training makes a negative double roll. The Referee might say that some scrolls are easier or more difficult to read. If you know the language, it is easier. If you don't, it is a lot harder. Many scrolls are written in ancient versions of the languages that the characters know.

A scroll can draw some or all of its required power from the reader. Examining the scroll before hand is a good idea, since

it can tell you what the spell does and hint about its hit point cost. For some scrolls, this may require a task roll in itself.

Some magic objects—weapons, wands or other—can require a trained wisdom roll in order to activate all or some of their abilities. They can draw their power from the user and be examined, just like scrolls.

Some sort of identification or detection miracle (if such miracles are possible in the setting) may be used to properly identify magic objects before hand.

Cursed Objects

Cursed objects are magic, but with wholly or partially negative effects. They are harder to identify—a secret modification can be included by the Referee in the player's trained identification task roll. For powerful cursed objects, a secret extra HP cost can be added to any identifying magic. A character can even be killed this way.

Cursed objects often require a save to be rid of. Some of them have “bleeding” hit point costs, meaning that you may all of a sudden have to pay extra HP, hours or even days after using them.

Creating Your Own Magic Items

Some wise characters have miracles like “Scribe Scroll” or vocations like rune carver, apothecary or scientist. In any such case, the crafting of a magic item works like any other miracle, but it generally has a step higher hit point cost. The Wise use long rituals, special equipment and expensive ingredients in order to reduce it.

For a few more charges in the same object, the HP cost multiplies (i.e. two charges doubles the cost). Many charges or permanently active enchantments require “permanent” hit points *and* a save. The HPs don't regenerate but can be supplanted when the player rolls hit points for the character at the next level. If a character fumbles her save, she is irreversibly reduced to zero HP. Permanent

objects also require a steady mind. At the Referee's discretion, they may not be created when a character is on the verge of moving on to a new level.

GAMEPLAY EXAMPLES

Anyone can imitate, and the principle of RPG narration is probably easier to learn from examples than from rules! The following sections demonstrate core game mechanisms.

An Exorcist Performs a Miracle

Referee: *When you step into that corridor, you hear a moaning sound, and as you look up, a green light is spreading from the end of the corridor. You hear scraping sounds too.*

Player (playing a wise exorcist): *I hold my holy symbol firmly in one hand and my short sword in the other, but I don't back down.*

Referee: *Three creatures emerge from the shadows. Two of them are obviously zombies—you've seen that kind before. The third, however, doesn't have the same slowness about her. Her clothes are in rags, sure, but her skin has a greenish hue and her eyes shine with undead power.*

Player: *Ouch. Well, this is it. I'm gonna use my miracle “Banish undead” on them.*

Referee: *That sounds like an appropriate miracle for an exorcist to use in this situation. What do you want it to do?*

Player: *I want my miracle to destroy them, you know, like turn them to dust or something.*

Referee: *Ok, but pulverizing monsters is powerful magic. I will let you destroy the zombies if you insist, but you'll have to pay d6 HP and make a save. Since you're only level 2, that's not a great idea. Even if you succeed, you would only have a few HP left and the third undead would still be free to act.*

Player: *What if I just scare the zombies off?*

Referee: *That sounds more sensible to me. If you use some holy water, an they get to save to avoid it, it's a single hit point. Sounds ok?*

Player: *Sure! I sprinkle some holy water, brandish my symbol and shout: “In the name of the Bleeder, return to your evil shadows!”*

Referee: [Rolls zombie saves.] Their moans take on a different pitch, and they shy away from the power in your words. Only the third creature continues to approach. She seems to be grinning.

Player: Oh crap. Well, I'm gonna charge it!

Referee: You're about fifteen feet away, so that's fine. Roll initiative!

Creating a Miraculous Set of Glasses

Player: I want to create a pair of glasses for seeing invisible things. I'm a Pseudo-Scientist with the miracle wording "Optical Wonders." I want it to be a permanent object.

Referee: Ok. Well, the wording is ok, if a bit general. For no special ingredients or anything, I would say 2d6 permanent HP and a save. What you want to make is a powerful artifact.

Player: Ouch. That is steep. But what if I get hold of some children's eyes on the black market? And what if I can get an interview with Blind Dog Zarkov in the Asylum?

Referee: Great ideas! If you can also get hold of a proper lab, and if you add some negative side effect like temporary poor vision after using the glasses, I'll lower it to d6+1 HP and give you a +2 ST bonus for the save. How far are you from the next level?

Player: I still have about 4,000 XP until level 6.

Referee: Ok. So tell me about that Asylum!

The Task of Climbing a Wall

Player: I want to climb the castle wall, but I have no rope. Can I just look for something to grip on the actual wall?

Referee: That would be climbing a sheer surface. I'd say that's a trained roll, meaning you have to have a relevant group somewhere on your sheet, or you will have to make a double negative roll.

Player: Hm. I do have the Black Hats thieves' guild, but it's an affiliation group, and I have it written under intelligence.

Referee: How do you suppose it comes into play?

Player: Maybe there is someone in the guild who once climbed this wall and told me about a good spot to try and maybe also a climbing route.

Referee: That is actually a very clever idea. I won't allow for a double positive roll, because you're not climbing it with your brain, but you sure can make a regular roll—equal to or under your dexterity.

Player: Ok. [Rolls 7 under her dexterity 14.] Yay! I'm over the wall!

Referee: What's the name of that thief who had climbed before?

Player: Umm ... that would be Old Horge. He used to be a burglar back in the day.

Referee: Ok. He thinks you owe him one.

Belonging to the Wrong Species

Referee: Ok, so your plan is to jump onto that wyvern taxi, dispose of the driver and then continue flying until you can find a good hiding place someplace near Stone End—the southern part of Ode?

Player: Yes, that's exactly right!

Referee: I'm am invoking your species group negatively. Wyverns aren't particularly fond of twisted riders to begin with, and twisted elves are even worse. In this case, the wyvern driver also happens to be a member of the Fish Haters. They despise dagonites but are suspicious towards anyone who's not an uncursed human. He spots you and eyes you suspiciously from the beginning, so if you try to pull your stunt he will be ready for it. You need to make a negative double roll for strength.

Player: Ok. But now it is established that wyverns don't get along with the twisted and that Fish Haters are generally ... like racist?

Referee: Yes and yes. Every time you invoke a group, it will say something about the game world. Sometimes you suggest things, at other times I do. This way we collaborate on game world creation.

Auction in the Alley

Referee: So you chase the thief into the alley. I think it would be suitable to run this as an auction. Ok?

Players: Ok. Do we bid separately or together?

Referee: You bid as if you were competing against one another as well, so if one of you bids 5, the other has to bid higher.

Player 1: *Hm. Weird! That means that one of us may ruin things for the other. Where's the advantage of being two?*

Referee: *You are two, and if one of you wins, you both do. That is all the advantage you get. Should you really screw up, well, then I guess your characters got in each other's way. Since you are running, the attribute used is dexterity. Now roll your hidden d6s.*

Player 2: *[Rolls a d6 but hides the result.] I bid 5. I rush to get to her quickly and tackle her to the ground.*

Player 1: *[Rolls a d6 but hides the result.] I bid 8. I take a shortcut through another alley, trying to surprise her.*

Referee: *[Rolls a d6 but hides the result.] Hm. I think I am going to rest with a one-bid. This woman knows the twisted alleys better than you do, so she is careful and turns things over in your way rather than trying to outrun you.*

Player 1: *So, obviously no need to bid more. Time to reveal the d6s?*

Referee: *Yes. I rolled 1, hehe.*

Player 1: *Well, I rolled 6 and have dexterity 17, so that's 23. If I roll 19 or less, I get to add 3 to the quality from the surplus! [Rolls 4.] I can't believe it!*

Player 2: *I kinda bluffed. I have dexterity 7 and rolled a 1. So I have to roll 6, 7 or 8 to win. [Rolls 15.] No! She gets away.*

Referee: *Hehe. Yes, she does. Instead of catching up, you run into one another when you come out of that shortcut. The thief stands a few feet away, grinning at you two lying on the ground. Then she turns, runs into a side alley and is gone.*

Fighting Suits of Armor

Referee: *Lucky saves! You both avoid the pit trap, just barely! You land on the other side, weapons drawn. In front of you lies the throne room, but so far the throne is empty. The tapestries are moldy rags, and the floor is covered with a layer of thick dust. Nobody's been in here for centuries, it would seem. By the walls stand four suits of armor, holding halberds. You can hear your own hearts beating and, faintly, the wind howling outside. Other than that, the room is completely still and quite.*

Player 1: *Completely? Are you sure? None of those awfully suspicious suits of armor move even a little tiny itty bit?*

Referee: *[Grins.] Funny you should mention that! All of a sudden, the armor suits turn their helmets toward you, simultaneously. You can see red eyes lighting up. Anyone wanna parley?*

Player 2: *Yeah, right! [Rolls initiative, adding 1 for Dex 13.] I act on 5. I'm gonna shoot!*

Referee: *My my, aren't you in a good mode! [Rolls initiative once for the animated armors.] They act on 5 too, but they have heavy halberds, so with your pistol you go first. The closest two are about 25 feet away.*

Player 1: *[Rolls initiative.] I act on 1.*

Player 2: *Ok. So I fire my pistol at one of them. That's beyond close range, so I've got AV 12, not 13 like usual. [Rolls 3.] I guess that's not enough to beat their armor, huh?*

Referee: *Plink! The bullet bounces off the armor or misses, what ever makes you feel better.*

Player 2: *Um. Just in case, I'm gonna back off ten feet into a corner of the room if I can.*

Referee: *You can. And good call. Because now it's their turn. They aren't super fast, but they aren't slow either. And the halberds give them reach. They move about 20 feet, which is enough for the two closest ones to attack.*

Player 1: *What? Attack me?*

Referee: *Yup. The sound of them rushing straight at you is deafening, like CLOINK! CLOINK! CLOINK! And then they just swing.*

Player 1: *Can I at least fight defensively?*

Referee: *You could with a better initiative. You freeze for a second—in fear, from the surprise, or maybe you are simply admiring the tapestries! [Rolls 18 and 10.] One of them misses you, hacking splinters from the floor, but the other one hits. [Rolls d6+1.] That's 6 damage.*

Player 1: *Ouch! I'll only have 2 HP left!*

Referee: *Not necessarily. You can save to shrug off d6 damage from one attack per battle, remember? Or roll for Con if that's better.*

Player 1: *[Rolls 13, over her Con 12.] Nooo! That means I'm knocked out for two rounds!*

Player 2: *Uh oh.*

— END OF PLAYER SECTION —

THE rest of this booklet is for the Referee. It deals with play style, settings, campaigns, adventures, Referee tools, rare classes, play beyond levels, monsters and artifacts. Chapters VI–VIII contain an example setting and two adventures, playable separately or in sequel.



CHAPTER III

RUNNING THE GAME

Where rookie and veteran Referees may find advice and useful ideas.

RUNNING a game of *Whitehack* means relying, to a degree, on your knowledge of the fantasy megatext and making your own decisions for things that aren't in the rules. Sometimes, you may have to come up with a description of the dragon yourself, and decide whether she attacks the party or stays put on her treasure pile. Will this be a chore? No, but it requires a bit of confidence. Just relax. Nobody ever comes "clean" to a game or a genre. *Whitehack* is embedded in the abundance of fantasy and RPG tropes in the collective consciousness of our time. So are you.

While the rules provide structure and means of resolution, their main purpose isn't to help. Children learn to make things up together long before they can read, playing games of make-believe. You may need a reminder, but you don't need written rules for that.

On the contrary, the rules are mainly there to make things more challenging. The game text imposes restrictions on story telling and purposely presents oppositions for the gaming group to handle. Tell the players that in *Whitehack*, the goal is still to tell a story (of sorts), but now you are deliberately risking failure by abiding by the written rules, the dice and the internal logic of your game world. Tell them also that the participants in this game don't hold the same kind of power over the story. You are the Refer-

ee, and you prepare the outlines of the story in the form of a written adventure. They, on the other hand, are players with the power to make their characters discard or follow your ideas. Tell them that the fun in this play style is to succeed in telling something together, despite these restrictions and oppositions. You can fail trying, but you can also get better at it.

Whitehack is for those who like to balance Referee power and player freedom, but just as much for those who like to prepare stories, to get into the mind of their characters, to engage in strategic combat, to collect and paint miniatures and terrain, to hang out with their friends or to sit by and watch others do most of the playing! The game is supposed to bring people together, not set them apart.

SETTINGS

The typical fantasy campaign setting has vast stretches of wilderness hiding ancient ruins and terrible monsters roaming dungeons that sometimes connect with deeper, underground realms. There are usually some struggling villages, monasteries, castles and communities scattered at enough distance to make it dangerous traveling between them. Further off lies at least one city, filled with intrigues and all sorts of conflicts, and ships and caravans depart from that city towards distant and exotic lands. People believe in a vast array of gods, who are at odds with one another and struggle for influence over mortals. When you die you end up in a place filled with shadows and undead, but you can return if your friends find some means to bring you back. The whole thing is usually post-apocalyptic—the world is old and has seen many civilizations rise and crumble—and the starting situation is fragile: What little order exists risks being destroyed by evil or chaotic forces, like warring orc tribes or a returning witch king.

A setting such as this makes it easy to find strong purposes for adventuring and provides a wealth of opportunities for varied

play. This, and the chance to play warriors, wizards and thieves (maybe as an elf, dwarf, halfling or goblin), is enough reason to play for a lot of people. You don't need to come up with something else to make *Whitehack* work. In fact, as long as everyone agrees to this approximate backdrop, you don't need to describe anything about your setting in advance. You can go right ahead and prepare an adventure. A setting unique to your group will develop anyway, over time, as you play with *Whitehack* rules.

Hacking Your Notion of Normal

The expression "normal fantasy" may sound contradictory, but it really isn't. Like many other popular genres, mainstream fantasy relies on things being familiar. Any player has a number of components—like dwarves having beards and living below ground—that she feels need to be in the world, or she is not getting what she came for. If you want to hack your group's notion of what is normal, concentrate on a select few important aspects of the setting and leave the rest!

Try hacking things like common foes or humanoids, how death works, the nature of gods, magic, the general technological level, the climate or means of traveling. For example, a curse that has left dwarves, elves and halflings looking like marred deviations in the human gene pool and brought a new ice age upon the world (hacking humanoids and climate) can give you a grim mutant campaign about prejudice, persecution and survival. An invasion by insectoids with advanced technology (hacking technology level and common foes) could make a campaign with a colonial theme inspired by history and science fiction.

Switching or Mixing Genres

Genres are formalized answers to historical social needs, not just containers for stereotypes, tropes and typical trappings. Turning a crossbow into a raygun or letting the adven-

turers travel space instead of the sea doesn't necessarily make your game science fiction, and the inclusion of a few tentacled monsters won't turn it into cosmic horror. Genres run much deeper. For example, science fiction answers the need to shed new and sharper light on common beliefs and conceptions. The genre does this by contrasting our world to fictional worlds that differ from it in some significant respects, which are usually technological or scientific in nature. While you can achieve similar things in fantasy through metaphor and allegory, it is still fantasy. But *Whitehack* is not a bad choice if you do want to try other genres. It is also perfect if you want to mix genre elements into something new. Tabletop role-playing was invented in such an endeavor.

Playing with History

Instead of letting present day or future technology "invade" traditional fantasy, you may want to consider letting fantasy invade history. What if the plague in Sicily in 1347 has supernatural causes (in reality it arrived from Crimea), and the adventurers try to put an end to it? What if an unknown deep sea empire collapses during the Napoleon Wars, and its scaled, amphibian inhabitants end up in Northern Europe with the knowledge of magic? There is a huge advantage in combining the freedom of fantasy with historic background, especially when you can use as much or as little of that background as you want. Also, history is a very common interest that you are likely to find in your gaming group to some extent.

Using a Literary Setting

Another interesting way of going about settings is to place your adventures in a fictional world created by the author of one of your favorite fantasy books. Most such books have maps, and the feel of the world and the details are already there. If you can find a book that everyone has read or is willing to read,

this can be a great idea! The fact that you love some book series doesn't automatically make it a good world to play in though. Can it provide enough variation in its environments, encountered foes and adventure types? Does it provide strong purpose for adventuring? Will the books' storylines constrict or enrich gameplay? Consider your books carefully from a *game* perspective first.

ADVENTURES

Reading or writing an adventure prepares you for improvisation, even when it is a single track story with a predefined end. Your mind will explore alternative character actions and game world reactions that aren't in the text. What will happen next? What if the characters do that instead? What if an NPC resets that trap? Just remember not to get too attached to your own answers. What you are experiencing is the potential of something that has yet to be created. You cannot dictate player choices.

Each adventure format has its advantages. The predefined story is usually more evocative to read or write and uses a limited set of adventure phases. A dungeon map with keyed rooms is so easy to use you barely have to read it in advance. A mind-map with NPC agendas and a list of trigger events can be really useful for a city adventure. Examples of all these techniques can be found in chapters VI–VIII. There is no reason to be dogmatic though: Mix it all up and find your own style! And remember you don't need to write huge amounts of text (if you don't feel like it).

Using RPG Story Phases

The mainstream fantasy adventure has a prelude or "hook" to draw the characters in. Unless it contains a true choice, you can skip it, jump right into the action and let the players explain why the characters are there. After the prelude comes a preparation phase where the characters gather information or equipment. This is followed by the traveling

to and exploration of some dangerous place. Then comes the climactic confrontation with a major enemy, after which the adventure ends, possibly with a phase where the heroes have to deal with the consequences of their actions. There is usually a recurring phase for resting, socializing and character development. Add some competition, a time limit and factions with different interests in the whole affair, and you have solid material.

You can rearrange or exclude some phases to get different kinds of adventure. For instance, the mystery adventure is mostly about gathering information, while the dungeon crawl is about exploring and confrontation. City adventures often end up being about intrigues, factions and chain reactions to character actions. The aftermath adventure begins after the lord of the dungeon is dead—now you have to get home alive and figure out how to get rid of the cursed loot!

Playtime limits for the phases are great at conventions. When the characters are done with a phase in advance, add the remaining time to the next phase. If they fail to finish a phase in time, take over and narrate what happens until the next phase.

Constructing Dungeons

Draw an entrance, a corridor and a few rooms, then key the rooms and fill them with monsters, traps and treasure. Call this "The Troll Lair" and let the characters hear of it while resting at a nearby inn. Done! Just change the title and the back story to suit your needs. But there are also a few tricks to good dungeon design.

Your dungeon doesn't have to be huge, but it should have a couple of entry points, at least one of which is hidden. If the dungeon has two or more levels (a good idea), one of the entrances can be at a lower level than the others. This gives the characters tactical choices and rewards them for taking time to research or examine the dungeon closer before going in. The simple troll lair that we started with could for example connect to

some older cave system that the locals know about and that the characters can explore in order to take the trolls by surprise.

Similarly, there should always be several ways to get about in your dungeon, not just one corridor to each room and one stair to each level. Let your corridors connect and run in circles, and let there be several stairs and chutes leading down and up, some of them by-passing a level or two. Let there be secret passageways for the characters to find. Put chasms, crumbling bridges, elevators, slopes and elevation shifts in the dungeon, but also some landmarks, so that the players don't get too confused. Also consider the dungeon from a tactical perspective: Where can the characters rest in relative safety? What points are defensible if they need to retreat?

A good dungeon has its own ecology. Whatever lives there normally needs to sleep and eat, and what is eaten needs to come out. Larger dungeons usually have factions that are at odds with one another, and clever players let their characters take advantage of such situations. Remember that not everything in a dungeon needs to be killed!

Traps can be really simple, like "the stair has a d6 damage arrow trap, save negates," or be more complex with exact descriptions. There should be a way for the characters to find and disarm the trap—a good Referee finds ways to subtly indicate that traps may be ahead. You should also think about traps in relation to the dungeon residents and competing adventurer parties: Some traps are likely inactive or sprung already, and some traps may be reset.

Mind Maps, Agendas & Events

Handling city intrigue and other adventure types that hinge on NPC agendas is easy if you use a mind map. Make a node each for the agendas of all major NPCs and organizations that play a part in your plot. As you will see, NPC stats are really short in *Whitehack*, so you can put such information in each node

as well. Connect the nodes with arrows, noting the type of connection. For example, one node may be "employed by" another node, who in turn is "afraid of" a third node. Nodes may be connected differently in opposite directions, like when one node thinks of another as a friend, while she is in fact an enemy.

Once you are done with the mind map, make a list of events that you think both the characters and your NPCs and organizations could react to. Try to find events that require some kind of response without constricting the characters to a single acceptable choice. For example, if the characters are knights with a strict chivalric code but also in need of gold for some higher goal, a huge reward for a dubious or villainous deed will give the players an interesting moral choice, since there are others who are sure to collect the reward if the characters don't.

Now you are done. All you need is to put things in motion using one of your events. As the party responds, it will trigger one or several nodes, and their actions will in turn affect other nodes, urging the party to respond again. If things slow down, use your events.

Random Tables

Preparing interesting (non-generic!) random tables for encounters, events, treasure, traps and spells is time consuming and requires more creativity than you will actually use in the adventure. *But it is worth it!* Randomizing parts of the adventure is fun both for you and your players, and it takes the onus of decisions away from you. It also gives your adventure more replay value, should you want to use it again.

CAMPAIGNS

A campaign is defined by a series of adventures that are connected. Some campaigns are strong stories with a clearly defined start, middle and end, while some are little more than episodes in the lives of a bunch of adventurers. Since *Whitehack* is powered by the col-

lision between collective narration and game world simulation—heroes tend to die more often than not!—the former is what many players dream of while the latter is by far easier to achieve. Then again, can't a strong story be appreciated by the players even though no single *character* lives through it from start to finish? And conversely: Will a loose set of episodes not connect in the minds of the players, forming a (kind of) monomythic story where their characters progress from having little skill to becoming strong enough to take on tremendous monsters?

Adventures can be linked by more than plot. Let the characters return to places they have been before. Let them meet NPCs more than once during different parts of their careers. If a vanquished enemy flees, let her return in an adventure later on. Let the characters own houses and businesses. The sense of a meaningful story in a role-playing game is very much reinforced by game world consistency (not to be mistaken for status quo). But you don't have to plan everything ahead.

Burden (lbs)	Normal Rate (ft/turn)	Halfling, Dwarf or Goblin (ft/turn)
0–75	120	90
76–100	90	60
101–150	60	30
151+	30	30

Table 12: Crawling Rates

Terrain Type	Max Rate	Bad Weather	Night Travel
Plains	24	12	18
Mountains	12	6	6
Forest, Desert	18	12	12
Sea, Lake, River	48	24	36
Under ground	6	6	6

Table 13: Typical* Miles per Day Travel Rates

* Waterways require ships. Vehicles, unless exhausted, normally do nothing for the other terrain type rates, but can make traveling safer and more comfortable.

Save your notes as you play, and re-use them later on. Nothing shouts "CAMPAIGN!" as much as a player choice having consequences twenty session later, *but you don't have to know which consequences in advance.*

Perhaps the matter of campaigns boils down to a question whether the typical fantasy fiction you find in novels and movies is also the ideal *role-playing game* fantasy fiction. Whichever answer seems right to you, play honestly and don't take the freedom of choice away from your players.

A TRADITIONAL TOOLKIT

Whitehack can run both old and modern material in this rules tradition. Focus on the monster HD entries in any module and simply use them with *Whitehack* rules. Use the names of spells and special abilities as miracle wordings. If you think the legacy AC values seem extreme, give all characters a module specific AV bonus (+1 or +2 is usually enough). In modules for levels 11+, you may also want to lower monster HDs a bit.

The unified "roll high under" rolls in this edition and the special rules for tracking corruption (below), also bring *Whitehack* closer to many percentile and "1–20" systems, making it a viable choice for a wide range of excellent material in various genres from the late seventies up to present date.

Crawling Dungeons & Hexes

The term "turn" has a different meaning in old school modules. In dungeons, a turn is the time it takes to search a room, pick a lock, disarm a trap etc., approximately 10 minutes. You are generally supposed to roll for random encounters every second turn. A 1 or 1–2 (depending on the circumstances and the party's actions) on a d6 means an encounter takes place. You also move a certain distance in the dungeon during a turn, as shown in table 12. If you want to get the most out of such a module, you need to track 10 minute periods.

In the wilderness, however, a turn can be a varying amount of time. For longer travels or exploration tours, many old school modules have maps with overlays of numbered hexagons. The Referee has the full map with a key telling her what the characters may encounter in each hex (or she can use random tables), while the players have an incomplete map that they fill in as they go. To move between hexes, the players tell the Referee the travel direction (N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW). The amount of hexes you can move in one go depends on the means of transportation, the terrain, the scale of the map and, finally, the length of the wilderness turn. For example, on a map where the hexes are 6 miles, and the characters move at a maximum rate of 12 miles per day (see table 13), a wilderness turn of half a day is a solid choice.

If the party doesn't have a guide or some other aid, the Referee can make a hidden, trained roll for the party's highest intelligence or wisdom, to see if the characters get lost. In such a case, the Referee chooses an adjacent hex to the one where the characters would have ended up on a success. The discrepancy between the "player route" and the actual route may increase further, or be corrected, in future wilderness turns.

Miniatures & Terrain

Though it is not required in order to play, *Whitehack* has full rules for the use of miniatures and grids (1 inch = 5 feet). For many players, especially if they are into collecting and painting miniatures, such game aids contribute a lot to the fun of the game.

There is a traditional tool-kit that you may want to consider: Use a battle mat as your grid, and domino tiles to quickly outline the terrain. Let each character and major villain or monster have her own miniature, but use coins for lesser minions. This tool-kit has the advantage of being comparatively cheap, and it is very fast in play. It is, to a degree, three-dimensional, and it is easy on the Referee. Don't make it your job to handle the domi-

noes. Just say: "Give me a room of about 20 × 20 feet with an altar in it," and let the players create it.

Reaction Rolls & Morale Checks

NPCs are normally hostile, friendly, brave or cowardly at the Referee's discretion, but in traditional modules, their reactions depend on rolls of dice. A *Whitehack* reaction roll is a charisma task roll for the character who is the most noticeable in the party. Usually, this is the most active character, the one who does the talking or the one who is first in the marching order. The quality of success indicates how favorable the NPC reaction is. A failed result indicates open or hidden hostility. Similarly, you may check monster morale (p. 37) at the first "monster side" casualty and again when their numbers are halved.

Hirelings & Retainers

Hirelings and retainers that the characters bring along for different purposes like holding torches, carrying gear or fighting by their side, play a greater role in traditional modules. In *Whitehack*, you get the kind of help that is willing to follow you into dungeons and danger through affiliation groups (pp. 11f.), and it is the Referee who decides how many will come, if they require some kind of compensation and how loyal these companions are. All such hirelings and retainers are HD 1 NPCs (see Chapter IV). If you need to check morale, let the player with the affiliation group roll for charisma.

Combat in Ships & Other Vehicles

In some worlds, combat with vehicles like ships, steam powered war machines or something similar can be very important parts of the game. The simplest way to handle this is to allow each vehicle to have hit points, movement, AC, ST and weaponry just like a character, and maybe also special attack or repair options.

The characters engaged in the battle are allowed control over one or several of these things each. For example, one character may be steering, another character may be shooting and a third may be in control of some secret weapon and the repair system. The respective players make the executive decisions for their characters' parts: Where does the vehicle go? Who does it attack? When does it use the secret weapon or start the repairs? For some things, the characters' stats can be used. For example, unless the description of the vehicle says otherwise, any character shooting can use her AV and any character steering can use one of her attributes (usually intelligence or dexterity).

Tracking Corruption

Corruption of different kinds are key parts of several popular settings. It can be madness, radiation, the influence of chaos or something else. In *Whitehack*, this is dealt with using *corruption levels* (CL). Characters get one or more CLs when some condition in the game world is met. Getting trapped in a room with high radiation levels or getting

CL	Effect
1-3	A minor effect, either in behavior or looks. It can be hidden from cursory examinations and goes away after a day or two.
4-6	A major effect that cannot be hidden, but goes away after a day or two.
7-10	A major effect that goes away only after several weeks. The player is obliged to save at this level.
10+	A major effect that is permanent. The player is obliged to save at this level. If CL exceeds 10+ level, the character is lost to corruption. Roll a new character.

Table 14: Effects of Corruption

bit by a creature of chaos could be such conditions. After CL has been raised, the player has the option of saving. Failing or fumbling the save means that the character's CL has noticeable consequences. Radioactivity can cause the skin of a character to mutate, chaos or madness can give her some sort of phobia, etc. The gravity of the effect depends on the current CL when the save is failed, as per table 14. CL is reset to zero after failing, but not after fumbling. If the save is successful, however, there is no effect, and CL is lowered by 1d6. The player also has the option *not* to save, provided CL is not too high. In that case, nothing happens and CL remains as it is. The player cannot save until CL has risen further.

Corruption may also be advantageous. Some creatures, objects and places react to a stigma or high CL. Imagine a portal that only works for the sufficiently corrupt, or a demon sorcerer who will only trade knowledge with characters under enough chaotic influence.

Traditional Magic

Magic in this game tradition is rigid, while in *Whitehack*, the boundaries for a certain miracle wording are never completely set. Though the rulings on HP costs and the increasing number of precedents within the gaming group will soon develop into something steady enough, some modules may become too easy or too hard when you play them with characters that know other magic than the modules were written for.

If you intend to play a lot of such material, consider using table 15. It shows at what level various magic effects become available in the default magic system of the game tradition, or in *Whitehack* terms, which magic is traditionally considered powerful and which is not. Use the table to set different costs. For example, a character who wants to teleport across a chasm should pay more HP than one who wants to fly, because in table 15, teleporting is level 9 while flying is level 5. The difference in cost may be reduced (or increased) by other parameters such as vocation, wording,

side effects, casting time, ingredients etc., but the type of magic will none the less be factored in. A low level character will not have the HP to interpret her miracle wordings in a high level way, at least not to the point where it will ruin the module. This way, you can have both the freedom of *Whitehack* and the rigidity of traditional magic.

Another way of dealing with traditional magic is simply to allow players to fill their wise character slots with written, predefined spells that they find on their adventures. You could call such miracles "true miracles," and say that each such spell is a singular magic effect that cannot be replicated by means of a regular miracle and can only be known by a single magician at any one time. Give true miracles a zero HP cost, but put some time re-

strictions (like once a day) on their use. This will turn any trusty old spell into a very desirable artifact, well worth sacrificing a miracle slot for. It will also make the magician a target for anyone who wants to steal her true miracle. If you feel that the other classes should have access to true miracles as well, there is nothing to stop you: Make them usable for everyone, at the permanent cost of a special ability slot.

RARE CHARACTER CLASSES

The loss of a loved character can put a damper on any game, not just for the player who controls the character, but for everyone. Yet, character death should be allowed for the game to be challenging and for the risks to

Lvl Traditional Magic Effects

1	Charm Person, Cure (Cause) Light Wounds, Detect Chaos (Law), Detect Magic, Hold Portal, Light (Dark), Protection from Chaos (Law), Purify (Putrefy) Food and Drink, Read Languages, Read Magic, Sleep.
3	Bless (Curse), Continual Light, Detect Invisibility, Detect Thoughts (ESP), Find Traps, Hold Person, Invisibility, Levitate, Locate Object, Open Locks ("Knock"), Phantasmal Force, Speak with Animals, Web, Wizard Lock.
5	Alter Time, Continual Light (Dark), Crystal Ball, Cure (Cause) Disease, Darkvision, Dispel Magic, Fireball, Fly, Invisibility, Lightning Bolt, Locate Object, Protection from Chaos, Protection from Normal Missiles, Remove Curse, Water Breathing.
7	Charm Monster, Confusion, Cure (Cause) Serious Wounds, Dimension Portal, Hallucinatory Terrain, Massmorph, Neutralize Poison, Plant Growth, Polymorph, Protection from Chaos (Law), Remove Curse, Send Invisible Eye ("Wizard Eye"), Speak with Plants, Sticks to Snakes, Wall of Fire or Ice.
9	Animal Growth, Animate Dead, Cloudkill, Commune (With Higher Power), Conjure Elemental, Contact Other Plane, Create Food and Drink, Dispel Chaos (Law), Feeblemind, Hold Monster, Insect Plague, Passwall, Possess ("Magic Jar"), Raise Dead, Send on Quest ("Quest"), Telekinesis, Teleport, Transform Rock-Mud, Wall of Stone or Iron.
10+	Anti-Magic Shell, Control Weather, Death Spell, Disintegrate, Invisible Stalker, Move Earth, Move Water, Project Image, Quest, Reincarnation, Transform Stone-Flesh.

Table 15: Traditional Magic

Level	XP	HD	AV	ST	Slots	Groups	Raises
1	0	1*	10	9	1	2	—
2	1,200	2*	10	10	1	2	1
3	2,400	3*	10	11	1	2	1
4	4,800	4	11	12	2	2	2
5	9,600	5	11	13	2	3	2
6	19,200	6	11	14	2	3	3
7	38,400	7	12	15	3	3	3
8	76,800	8	12	16	3	3	4
9	153,600	9	12	17	3	4	4
10	307,200	10	13	18	4	4	5

Table 16: Brave Advancement

feel real. But you may offer the player a special choice when this happens. Let her make a new character using the regular rules, or a character in one of the *rare classes*.

The rare classes play differently from the regular classes and produce characters that are uncommon in the game world. If you don't offer this opportunity all the time, it will be worth more. You can even restrict character creation a bit. For example, if a level 7 character dies in an epic battle with troglodytes near the end of the adventure, instead of telling the player to run her character in ghost form (p. 19) or create a completely new character, you could allow her to create the party's guide in the Brave rare class, the minstrel they just saved in the Fortunate rare class or the frozen giant in the sarcophagus in a rare Species as Class based on Frost Giants.

The Brave

Any character may show courage, but the ability to stand fast in the face of despair defines the Brave and makes up for their lack of skills and prowess. They are underdogs and unlikely heroes: failed apprentices, gardeners dreaming of dragons and elves, wannabe bards, peasants taking up arms against an oppressive ruler, or something similar.

Every time a brave character loses an auction or fails at a task roll or a save (not attacks), she gains a "comeback die"—a d6. This die

can be added to any attribute, to ST or to AV, or to supplant a damage die, in a later situation when rolling for something else. If more than one comeback die is used, only the best one counts, and if a roll fails despite comeback dice, those dice are lost and the roll generates no new ones.

Brave characters also have the power to say "no," denying an enemy a successful attack, miraculous effect or fear effect directed at them. This power may be used once per session, and effectually turns a Referee roll into a failure or nullifies a power of one of her monsters. The player must explain how it is plausible in the situation, and what her character does to avoid or resist the enemy.

In addition to these features, brave characters have slots for special quirks. There are eight quirks to choose as the character levels:

1. The Brave always make double positive strain rolls (p. 16) to move fast despite a heavy load.
2. They heal normally from negative HP and can use comeback dice for the damage shrugged off on a successful save (p. 19).
3. Choose a party member at the beginning of the session. When the character acts to protect that party member, add one free comeback die to the roll.
4. They have +4 ST against cursed objects and may use comeback dice to reduce HP costs from using cursed objects.

Level	XP	HD	AV	ST	Slots	Groups	Raises
1	0	1	10	6	1	2	—
2	1,500	2	10	7	1	2	1
3	3,000	2+1	11	8	1	3	1
4	6,000	3	11	9	2	3	2
5	12,000	3+1	12	10	2	4	2
6	24,000	4	12	11	2	4	3
7	48,000	4+1	13	12	3	5	3
8	96,000	5	13	13	3	5	4
9	192,000	5+1	14	14	3	6	4
10	384,000	6	14	15	4	6	5

Table 17: Fortunate Advancement

5. Enemies always choose to attack someone else first, at the start of a battle—if there is anyone else to attack! This ability can be inverted if and when the player wishes.
6. Once per session, their courage fills any use requirements that an object, place or passage may have in the form of class or vocation, species and affiliation groups.
7. A god of the Referee's choosing will hear one prayer once per session. Most of the time (but not always), it should be the god the character prays to, and the Referee decides in what way the prayer is heard. This does not result in divine debts (p. 35).
8. Any improvised weapon (like a stone or a branch) does at least 1d6 damage.

Brave character may raise or lower attributes at even levels. They can use any weapon, but armor heavier than cloth incurs a -2 attribute penalty on all task rolls. The Brave also get two rolls for HP at levels 1–3 (marked with asterisks in the table), and the player picks the best roll. Finally, they emit a distinct aura: Very perceptive people and creatures will always sense the courageous quality of the Brave.

The Fortunate

Fortunate characters are born with the advantages of nobility, fame, destiny, wealth or a combination thereof. The Fortunate can

for example be royal heirs, rich and influential merchants, star performers or religious icons. Once per game session, they may use their good fortune in a major way, like hiring a large ship, performing the will of a god, getting a personal audience with the queen or being hailed as a friend by a hostile tribe.

Fortunate characters have a defining standing that is noted in the Identity section of the character sheet and works like an occasional group booster. For example, a Fortunate Flower Monk with a "Reincarnated Master" standing might have unique tattoos, training and physical traits that boost the role of her groups in a number of situations. When the Referee thinks that the standing is relevant to a situation, affiliated factions are a bit more helpful (and their enemies a bit more vengeful), vocations are beneficial regardless of what attribute is used, and the character's species gives benefits or drawbacks regardless of attribute.

As the only class, the Fortunate are also allowed to have retainers that can grow in strength, like a chambermaid, a cook, an apprentice or a squire. The Fortunate start the game with one retainer and gain slots for additional ones. At the Referee's discretion, retainers are loyal unless mischievous by nature (like a trapped evil spirit) or severely mistreated. They do their best to carry out the orders of their masters, sometimes within the confines of a written or otherwise es-

established contract. They are NPCs with HD, AC, keywords etc. (see Chapter IV) and are played by the Referee, but the player may switch into the role of a retainer for a certain part of an adventure: "As D'bra lies unconscious from that illspout attack, I'm going to play her cook instead."

Fortunate characters may give XP gained from acquired gold to their retainers in order to raise the retainers' HDs. The cost follows the fortunate XP curve. For example, a HD 3 Squire needs 6,000 XP to reach HD 4. The Fortunate may however *not* use their class power to get experience or give XP to others (like buying and then selling a ship).

The Fortunate may use any weapon or armor without penalty. They also get to a single minor signature object. It may be of special material, superior quality or even magic, but it gives no bonuses and has no other special abilities. It does however have plot immunity: It can never be lost, destroyed or be made irretrievable by the Referee unless the player wishes it to happen.

Species as Class

Some species benefit from a written description rather than relying on a mainstream fantasy backdrop, because they have rules restrictions or exceptions like immunities, different food or sleep needs, ability to breathe water and such things. The species may also have restrictions as to what character classes and vocations they can be and what social groups they can belong to, effectually turning the description into a "species as class" concept. (This is *not* to imply that all of that species are the same—merely that a certain type of individual is suitable as a character in your campaign.)

There are no rules for this, as it is supposed to supplant the freedom of oral agreements on species groups (p. 11). The player makes the character, but it is the Referee who makes the species description. The most important thing is judging the power of the species benefits and drawbacks. If needed, you should

set a bonus or penalty to XP. The Dagonite and the Marionette below are two examples that can be customized for your campaign.

The Dagonite

Dagonites are amphibian refugees from a collapsed deep sea empire, far away from the campaign region. They generally look like fish-humans or walking frogs, and are somewhat taller than dwarves. Dagonites worship Dagon, an ancient sea god of prosperity. Their culture is technologically more advanced than the fantasy world average, capable of such wonders as breach loaded pistols, glasses, chronometers and typewriters. It is taboo for them to talk about their lost home.

Dagonites can breathe both air and water. They are vulnerable to freezing cold and draught, and have poor but near 360° vision. They must take the Deft or the Wise class, and must have a vocation related to either crafting, summoning or runecarving. Deft Dagonite Locksmith or Wise Dagonite Demonologist would be suitable choices. Prejudice against dagonites is usually a huge problem when trying to find affiliation groups. Dagonites have normal XP rates.

The Marionette

Marionettes, sometimes called "scarecrows," are man sized, servant puppets infused with souls from dead humanoids. They were originally made to serve as adjutants or field medics in war, but in times of peace, butler and worker versions have also been produced for the rich. Marionettes have bodies made of cloth, leather and wood, strengthened with powerful runes. Their carved masks are often immobile works of art, and as marionette technology also requires eyes made out of gemstones, marionettes are precious targets for thieves. They speak through a "ghost box" (p. 36) behind the face mask.

Marionettes don't require food, sleep or air and are immune to poison and disease. They are also resistant to cold. However, mar-

ionettes can be exorcised just like undead creatures and have no or fragmented memories from their earlier lives. They are also under very heavy magic restrictions as to what they can do: 1) They can only hurt humans in self defense. 2) They must obey orders from their contracted master. 3) They must try to survive, unless it conflicts with (2). The magic restrictions weaken over time, however. A marionette is allowed a -4 save to temporarily break them.

Marionettes follow the same rules for healing as Wise characters (p. 8), but their bodies must also be mended to function properly. Deft marionettes are usually attuned to individual toolkits for this purpose.

Marionettes are only allowed to take the Deft or Strong classes and the Butler, Medic, Slave and Adjutant vocations. They need twice as much XP per level, which is harsh, but leveling reduces one of their drawbacks a lot. Affiliation groups usually become available through the marionettes' masters.

BEYOND LEVELS

What happens beyond level 10? Does the game have to end? Of course not! First of all, taking a character from level 1 to level 10 is no small feat, so you needn't worry about it for a good while unless you specifically want to start a high level campaign. But for characters that do reach the highest level and fights on, there are two extra rules that you may use.

Divine Aid & Debts

At level 10, the gods themselves start to take notice of the characters, if they haven't done so before. A character may "lock" an affiliation group to a specific god or power, in exchange for some kind of divine aid. The god will require service in return, and until that debt is paid, the group remains unusable. Failure to obey a god when you are indebted may result in more groups or even ability slots being locked in the same manner, at the Referee's discretion.

Basically, this mechanic means that the characters are able to perform incredible feats, more than they could before, but at a cost that constantly creates more trouble and adventure for them. If you let the players bargain for the services and debts, you will also give them some influence over what is usually the Referee's domains, which is suitable for high level play in *Whitehack*. This bargaining may include writing blank checks though—"the god will require you to act on its behalf later on, in some way to be disclosed at a proper time and place." Remember that gods rarely play nice.

Playing with Aspects

Starting with level 10, you may also allow the player control over some aspect of the game world. Inns, Bureaucracy, Books, Weather, Guards, Passageways, Spies, Politics or News may be such aspects, but there are an endless amount of other possible ones. Let your player suggest them for you! Being in control of an aspect means that the character has some significant attachment to it, like having a position in politics, owning a lot of inns or being in charge of a major library. It also means that before each game session, each player is responsible for preparing something—a cool inn, a new law, a piece of news etc.—that she can introduce at a point of her choosing in your adventure. The rule is that she introduces it in a manner that relates to her character, but you handle it from there, the way you see fit (though you may let the player advise you). For example, a player may say that her character's spies bring news of a new mountain pass being discovered, which could facilitate the adventurers travels significantly. You have to accept what she tells you as a fact, but you are still the Referee if the party tries to go through that pass.

In the beginning, aspects usually translate to characters getting advantages and showing off their power. Soon enough though, many players start inventing things that they think will let you create cool challeng-

es for the group. This is simply because they realize part of the fun in a Referee's responsibilities. The mechanic will also keep you on your toes: You have to roll along with what the players come up with!

You can let each character continue earning XP. For each 300,000 XP after level 10, let the players choose if they want to exchange their aspect, add a new aspect or bring an additional piece of material each session for aspects they already have. You should also allow each player to move groups amongst the character's attributes, to exchange a class ability for another, to reverse a previous attribute raise in order to raise some other attribute instead, or to re-roll the character's hit points. Character levels should remain at 10, though.



CHAPTER IV

MONSTERS

*Where we encounter some gruesome foes
and their stats and rules.*

THERE is very little detail given in *Whitehack* about the most iconic monsters. You may use them directly, or flesh them out as you see fit. Should you not recognize a few of the entries in the table on the next spread, whatever you imagine from the names and keywords will be fine.

Reading Monster Entries

AC: See Chapters I and II for information on AC (pp. 13, 17).

HD: This is the number of hit dice (d6) used to determine a creature's hit points. If there is a positive modification, you apply it once only. "<1" means HD 1, but the creature has a single hit point. If there is a given range, you choose any HD within that range.

MV: This number is the monster's movement rate. It is handled just like movement rates for characters, except a normal weight

HD	XP	HD	XP	HD	XP
<1	15	6	1,200	12	2,400
1	30	7	1,400	13	2,600
2	75	8	1,600	14	2,800
3	150	9	1,800	15	3,000
4	300	10	2,000	16	3,200
5	600	11	2,200	17	3,400

Table 18: Monster XP

load has already been factored in. If there are alternatives, like 25/40, it means that the creature has multiple ways of moving. The first number is its land movement, the second its water or air movement.

Special: This is the place for keywords for monster abilities. Use them either to improvise on the fly, or to make written variations. Do the same for the abilities that the Strong class can extract from killed monsters (see Unzel, p. 41). Remember, a monster that has "Acidic," "Paralyze" or something else listed doesn't have to be exactly the same as another member of its species. If you interpret the keywords differently for two individuals of the same species—that is perfectly fine (and keeps your players alert!). If a monster has miracle wordings, she pays HP for using them just like a character. All monsters listed see better in the dark than humans.

Monster STs, AVs, Damage & XP

Monsters have STs equal to HD+5 but always fail on a roll of 20. Those who have resistances or vulnerabilities save with positive or negative double rolls against those things, respectively.

Monsters have AV equal to HD+10. If they are unarmed (i.e. use natural weapons), they do a base d6 damage, though very deadly monsters may get a damage bonus at the Referee's discretion. Normal rules for misses, crits etc. apply, but higher HD monsters are granted the choice of additional attacks: HD 5+ monsters can make two attacks per

round, HD 10+ get three and HD 15+ get four. Whenever a monster makes multiple attacks, her last attack during that round is made at AV 10, and she must forsake her move.

The base experience points awarded for monsters are listed in Table 18. The Referee is free to adjust it for monster variants and individuals. For higher HDs, simply multiply by 200.

Monster Attributes, Task Rolls & Morale

Monsters and non-player characters don't have attribute scores or morale values. For task rolls, auctions and contests, use AV for what you think should be the monster's good attributes and ST or even raw HD for what you think should be the poor ones. Do the same for high and poor morale values when playing old school modules. Some monsters can have one or more extremely low attributes compared to a human. How smart are Rocs or Black Puddings? Set such attributes to 1.

BOSS MONSTERS

What can be considered a "boss fight" need not depend on a specific enemy species, but can just as well depend on the modus of the situation. For example, fighting a dragon as a result of rolling poorly on a random encounter table may be a "regular" fight, while the fight with a goblin shaman at the climax of the adventure may be considered a boss fight—despite the fact that the dragon's default stats (p. 38) make her a much more dangerous foe than any goblin.

Bosses emit a certain aura of danger that triggers an extra reserve in player characters. They each get a recharge when going into a boss battle, either in the form of a previously "used up" slot or class ability, or in the form of a 2d6 HP recharge (which can't take HP above the character's current maximum).

Any character whose HP would be reduced to a negative number by a boss must save to stay at 1 HP (i.e. not zero) or die. Un-

less healed, any further damage during the boss fight, even if it is a single point, means instant death, without save.

Bosses get an extra move, special action or extra attack at full AV each round. They may put it in *any place in the initiative order, except first*. After this extra action they may designate who acts next, which may be an ally or an enemy. After that character or monster has acted, initiative returns to its regular order.

Boss Stages

In addition to these special rules, bosses sometimes have *stages*, which are conditioned and designed by the Referee. A stage is a version of the boss with its own HD, AC, MV, keywords, appearance and XP value. The most common condition for a change of stage is that the HP of the previous stage have been reduced to zero. For example, a boss necromancer may have a second, shadow stage that only appears after its human stage has been vanquished. A boss is not truly dead until all its stages have been defeated.

EXAMPLE MONSTERS

Here are a few examples of how to flesh out monsters. They are all used in chapters VII and VIII.

First Tribe Orc

AC: 5 HD: 4 MV: 25

Special: Great climber, stealthy, all-round resilient. Two strong abilities.

The First Tribe is an ancient mountain orc tribe, now all but extinct. Legend has it their bite caused the orc equivalent of lycanthropy: Bitten enemies would turn into orcs each new moon and eventually permanently, adding to the numbers of the First Tribe. The fact that the tribe has very few remaining members puts the truth of this in doubt.

First Tribe orcs are tough and experts at stealth and climbing. They fashion their armor from hardened leaves, wooden chips

<i>Monster</i>	HD	AC	MV	<i>Special</i>
Amphibian	1-4	3	25/40	Breathe air and water, extremely fast swimmer
Basilisk	6	5	20	Petrifying gaze
Bear	5+10	3	30	—
Black Pudding	10	3	15	Very acidic, cold immunity, magic splits it in two
Boar	4	2	35	Charge attack
Bugbear	3+1	4	25	Stealthy
Carrion Creeper	2+4	2	20	Paralyzing bite
Cockatrice	5	3	15/40	Petrifying bite
Demon	3-9	2-7	30/40	Magic resistance, 1-3 miracles, fire breath
Dog	<1	1	30	Great sense of smell, pack runner
Doppelganger	4-7	2-5	30	Change appearance, magic resistance
Dragon, black	6-12	5-6	30/40	Acid immunity and breath
Dragon, red	8-14	7-9	30/40	Fire immunity and breath, miracles
Dragon, white	4-10	4-6	30/40	Cold immunity and breath
Dryad	2	4	30	Charm ability
Dwarf	1+1	5	20	Stonework insight
Elemental	8	6	40	Elemental miracles
Elf	1+1	4	30	Exceptional hunter, innate miracle ability
Floating Skull	3	6	30	Intelligence, many languages, bite attack
Fungus	3	2	5	Tentacles, induce rot disease
Gargoyle	4	4	20/40	Statue disguise, claws, hunt in pairs
Gelatinous Cube	4	1	15	Acidic, paralyze
Ghast	4	5	25	Paralyzing bite
Ghoul	2	3	20	Mind magic immunity, paralyzing touch
Giant	1-7+7	0-5	40	Cold immunity
Gnoll	2	4	25	Pack runner
Goblin	1	3	20	Dirty fighting, improvised weapons
Golem	12	0	20	Normal weapons immunity, fire and cold
Grey Ooze	3	1	1	Acidic, only slashing or piercing can damage it
Griffon	7	6	25/40	Cunning
Harpy	3	2	10/25	Charm ability (song)
Hive Rat	<1	0	15	Hive mind, miracle ability in swarms
Hobgoblin	1+1	4	25	—
Homunculus	2	3	15/40	Sleep bite, convey vision and hearing to master
Human Fighter	2	5	30	—
Hydra	7	4	15	Regenerate head
Illsprout	1	5	25	Evil plant creature, poisoned thorns, plant bad seed
Insectoid	3	6	30	Hive mind

Table 19: Monster Stats

<i>Monster</i>	HD	AC	MV	<i>Special</i>
Insect Swarm	<1	0	20	Must be killed with area damage
Invisible Stalker	8	6	25	Invisibility
Kobold	1	3	30	Omnivore
Kobold Mage	2	1	30	Same as regular kobolds, plus miracles
Kraken	12	5	40	Eight tentacles
Liche	9-15	9	25	Miracles, paralyzing touch (no save), fear
Lizardman	2+1	4	25/30	Hold breath
Lurker	10	2	5/10	Climb, hide, smother
Mimic	7-10	2	20	Imitate object, sticky grasp, bludgeon attack
Minotaur	6+4	3	30	Never lost in labyrinths, berserker rage
Mummy	5+1	6	20	Disease, fire vulnerability, normal weapon imm.
Ochre Jelly	5	1	15	Acid strike, dissolve dead victims
Ogre	4+1	4	25	—
Ogre Mage	5+4	5	30	Miracles
Orc	1	3	25	—
Orc Shaman	3	2	25	Miracles
Piercer	1	6	1	Drop from ceiling
Morlock	1	1	25	Heat detection, vulnerability to light
Rust Monster	5	7	20	Rust normal weapons and armor upon touch
Roc	12	5	50	—
Sea Serpent	17	7	60	—
Shadow	3	3	25	Draw strength
Shrieker	3	2	—	Scream when something comes near
Skeleton	1	2	25	—
Skeleton, Giant	5	2	35	—
Skeleton Mage	3	1	25	Miracles
Spectre	6	7	30	Incorporeal, drain levels
Spider, giant	2+2	3	30	Poison, web
Troll	6+3	5	30	Regeneration
Vampire	8	7	30	Transformation, enslaving bite, resurrection
Werewolf	3	4	30	Lycanthropy, only hurt by silver
Wererat	3	3	25	Lycanthropy, control rats
Wight	3	4	25	Draw levels, normal weapons immunity
Will-o-Wisp	<1	9	30	Only hurt by magic weapons, shock attack
Wolf	2	3	40	—
Worg	4	3	40	Cunning
Wyvern	7	6	25/40	Poisonous sting
Zombie	1	1	15	Rot disease

Table 19: Monster Stats

and enemy ears, resulting in a half weight equivalent of chainmail. They are cannibals and prefer to use shields and spears in battle. Their tribe symbol is a white new moon.

Rock Snail

AC: 4 HD: 10+15 MV: 30

Special: Hot slime, cold immunity.

Rock snails are enormous snails, measuring around 60 feet from tail to head and with huge stone shells. They are tamed young and trained not to use their shells, which are carefully excavated by stone masons to house up to two dozen travelers for weeks. Rock snails are the most reliable and safe way to travel glaciers and the snowy wilderness, as they are powerful enough to best white dragons and hostile orc tribes. They are practically immune to cold and can be trained to let their slime (which can also be spit) melt through ice and all but the hardest of rocks.

Spike Rat

AC: 0 HD: <1 MV: 10

Special: Scream, explode, poison.

Spike Rats are the peaceful hedgehogs of the Shadow Realm. When threatened, they curl up into balls, and if hit, their spikes explode, doing 1 HP damage—save negates, normal area of effect. The spikes are poisonous to various degrees and to various effects, at the Referee's discretion (see pp. 18f. for area attacks and poison). Spike Rats make loud, bone-chilling screams as they explode.

Talking Head

AC: 3 HD: 1+1 MV: 25/20

Special: Understand all languages, split gaze, shoot beams, tool-set. Can be played as a Species as Class character.

The Talking Head is magic construct trying to find its way out of the Shadow Realm. It is made of metal, etched with runes, and has a conical shape that vaguely resembles a head. It hovers a foot above ground and has

shining, yellow crystal eyes whose gaze can be directed as searchlights in simultaneous separate directions. It has a way of speaking that is hard to understand and sounds like the chirrups of a strange bird. Dirt and pieces of shadow vegetation cover it.

The Talking Head is not overly intelligent (as ST, which is 8) but understands and "speaks" any language, spoken or written. It has a small, built in tool-set that it can use to manipulate objects and mend itself, and it can fly short distances. It also has a built in wand that can shoot magic rays of d6-1 damage every other round. Should it get out of the Black, The Talking Head can be played as a Species as Class Deft Explorer character.

The Twisted

This is a template that can be applied to any monster, human or humanoid.

The twisted are victims of a terrible curse. Most have been disfigured, a lot or just a little. Some seem to have been changed on the inside instead, becoming indifferent, cunning, ingenious or suspicious. Ordinary people and animals fear, exile, enslave, persecute or even kill the twisted. It is a powerful social stigma that some say is the true nature of the curse.

Elves, dwarves and halflings change more than others. Their typical traits deteriorate so that they can barely be separated from each other or from twisted humans.

Twisted characters mark their stigma as a negative group on one attribute. It counts towards the maximum group total: If the character has already reached her maximum number of groups, a vocation or affiliation group must be removed. In the case of twisted elves, dwarves and halflings, the twisted group supplants the species group, which means that it is marked next to two attributes. In return, they get a minor supernatural ability. It works through a per situation agreement between the player and the Referee. Each use raises CL by the amount that the ability has been previously used that day.

Twisted monsters or animals are altered at the Referee's discretion, gaining weaknesses, strengths or both.

Unzel (White Dragon Boss)

AC: 4 and 0 HD: 6 and 3 MV: 30/40 and 5
Special: Boss rules, two stages, speaks Draconic only.

Unzel is special white dragon. She has the ability to cover herself in a thick coat of magic ice when she feels her life is in danger. She does this if her HP goes below 10. When in ice stage, she can only use breath attacks, loses her flight ability and moves very slowly. Her breath attacks change from the regular cone of cold into ice projectiles that hit a single target for d6+2 damage. Unzel's ice stage must be killed (i.e. 3 HD worth of HP must be hacked away) before you can get back to attacking her normal body. The ice can also be removed instantly if submitted to a lot of fire, like from an attack with lit lamp oil. Unzel will try to flee rather than fight once her ice form is killed.

A Strong character who kills Unzel may sample some White Dragon saliva to put on her blade, arrow heads or needles. She gets her level number of doses. Each dose is enough for a single hit, adding 3 points of cold damage. Optionally, the character can get a "Dragon Sense" ability, sensing the direction of gold within 300 ft.

Whitecloak

AC: 0/5/1 HD: 1 MV: 30/25/30
Special: 1 strong ability, 1 miracle or nothing.

The Whitecloaks is a religious order with political ambitions. The members believe that the curse (above, pp. 45ff.) is a test of perseverance. Those who endure shall be rewarded by the God of Law in the afterlife. They organise correction camps for the twisted, who they believe to be morally corrupt, and sometimes show off examples of "cured" individuals. But the camps are closed for outsiders, and many of the twisted never return.

The Whitecloaks are growing in numbers fast, recruiting mostly among the poor. They offer their services as peacekeepers, work to outlaw any but their own beliefs and want all magic users to be tested for the curse.

There are three types of Whitecloaks. Most are unarmed and unarmored missionaries. The knights are the armed peacekeepers. They are equipped with chainmail, shields and swords. The priests are learned and sometimes wise. They wear cloth armor and daggers. All wear variants of the white cloak that has given the order its name.



CHAPTER V

MAGIC ARTIFACTS

Where we look at the why, what and how of magic artifacts, with some examples.

CONSTRUCTING a magic item can be a simple matter of enhancing some ordinary thing, like a +1 sword or lockpick. There is nothing wrong with such ideas, but you may be better off saying that "plus things" are items of exceptional quality—not magic. Make them available for an appropriate amount of gold and adjust your foes and obstacles accordingly. Maybe you can change the magic lock in your adventure into a superior lock that requires a superior lockpick?

When magic objects are rare, they become more desirable. On the next spread is a list of concepts to develop further. Some are traditional, some are not. Remember that an item may draw HP from the user, and that cursed objects are dangerous to use and hard to identify or discard (pp. 20f.).

EXAMPLE ARTIFACTS

The "why?" of a magic artifact comes first. For example, for a theme of sacrifice and gain, you could introduce a powerful weapon with some nasty drawback. Once you

Item (* = Cursed)	Concept
Amulet of Divine Debt*	Wearer takes on an ancient divine debt (p. 35).
Amulet of the Scroll	Understand any non-cursed scroll.
Antidote Potion	Allow an extra, double positive save against poison.
Bag of Holding	Can hold 1,000 lbs, but always weighs 50 lbs unless empty.
Bolt of Armor Piercing	Disregard non-magical armor.
Boots of Age	Old wearers appear young. Young wearers appear old.
Boots of the Bard	No magic can hold you. The boots hum softly.
Circlet of Leadership	Make double positive rolls when dealing with crowds.
Crow Hat*	Owner is constantly followed by 3d6 crows.
Dead Language Quill	Can write any dead language regardless of writer knowledge.
Disease Transfuser	Cure one person by transferring the disease to another.
Door Detection Device	Apparatus with a glass bulb that blinks 3 ft from doors.
Dragon Armor*	AC 8. Save or stop for close examination when you see gold.
Dust of Appearance	Sprinkle to reveal all invisible creatures or objects.
Elven Chainmail	Disregard double HP cost for performing miracles in armor.
Endless Water Flask	Contains an infinite amount of water.
Flute of Withering	All plants within 100 ft wither. Knocks out plant creatures.
Gauntlet of the Ram	4d6 unarmed damage against constructs only.
Glove of Iron Control	Control movement of up to 12 HD in sight that wear plate mail.
Gloves of the Ogre*	You get Str 18 and Int 6.
Guiding Sphere	A hovering sphere of soft light that moves towards an exit.
Healing Potion	Heal d6+1 damage.
Helmet of Telepathy	You can hear the thoughts of others—and they can hear yours.
Instamagic Reflector	Point it at something to create an image on paper. 24 charges.
Jaded Figurine*	Save each day or be totally blasé about everything.
Krugal's Map*	Treasure map. A rain storm follows the owner.
Light Eater	Cricket construct, eats light in 20 ft radius, can spew it out.
Potion of Gigantism*	Save or gain an inch of height every day.
Potion of Liquid Floor	Crush on floor to turn it liquid for 1 round.
Potion of Monster Love	The first monster you see follows you around for 3 days.
Potion of No Shadow*	Your shadow disappears into the Shadow Realm.
Ring of Possession	Possess target for 10 minutes, save negates.
Scarab of Protection	Crawls into ear to give magic resistance for 10 minutes.
Scroll of Demon Binding	Read to bind any demon for 10 minutes.
Scroll of Identification	Read to identify a magic object.
Shadow Goggles	Put on to see into the Shadow Realm. d6 charges.
Silver Spear*	4d6 vs. werewolves, all dogs within a mile bark at wielder.
Spider Climb Gloves*	These gloves stick to <i>everything</i> .

Table 20: Magic Item Concepts

Item (* = Cursed)	Concept
Smoke Elixir	Turns the imbiber into smoke for 10 minutes.
Staff of Humility*	-1 HP cost for miracles, but save or fail any miracle.
Staff of Last Breath	Holds a wielder's last HP. Save or die if the staff breaks.
Sword of Fear	All, including wielders, must save or cower at the start of battle.
Tiara of Divine Adulation	Wearer attracts the love of a random god (Referee's choice).
Tome of History*	Gives historical expertise, which you cannot stop talking about.
Troll Sword*	+2 AV and damage, but the sword emits an incredible stench.
True Holy Symbol	Scares d6 regular skeletons and/or zombies.
Wand of Resurrection*	The resurrected turns into a vampire after three days.
Wand of Sound	Transforms victim into a sound for 10 minutes. d6 charges.
Watcher Steel Weapon	Dispels magic if a contest damage vs. HP cost is won.

Table 20: Magic Item Concepts

have a reason and a general idea, try answering a few questions: Where is the object and how to get there? Who and what is guarding it? Who else wants it? Who knows how it works? What must be sacrificed to use it? Are there long term effects of using it? Does it have a quirk (for comic relief)? How may the artifact affect the game world on a larger scale?

The first questions will make the artifact memorable and provide the Referee with places, NPCs and events, but the last question is where the true power lies. Artifacts can be important inventions. They can kill gods, spawn alien species or bring about new means of transportation or communication.

The examples below focus mostly on the last question, but some of the other questions are also answered in chapters VI–VIII. Use them as they are or change them if you like.

Archibald, the Eternal Torch

The Eternal Torch is an ancient artifact made by the engineers of a powerful witch king. A will-o-wisp (p. 39) has been magically chained to a rune covered bone “torch.” It emits an eerie light from a blue flame at the top. The flame is quite cold and can be covered in cloth without damaging the fabric.

This torch is a faulty prototype, though. His name is Archibald (HD <1 Will-o-wisp). He is in fact not entirely bound to the runes—he can escape them and run free for short periods of time. He speaks an archaic dialect of Common, but he will only talk if his true nature is revealed or if he finds an “owner” he likes. Owners that he dislikes run the risk of getting betrayed and attacked when they are at their weakest. Archibald is a bad to the bone genius of crime. He loves blue cheese.

Kvo Crystal

Kvo crystals are often cut like gems and set in elaborate jewelry, but they are magic by nature. The crystals have the ability to store thoughts and memories of a bearer who has learned to open her mind to them. Once filled, the crystals can only be read. Writing or reading a crystal takes a trained roll for wisdom. Some crystals are polluted and require a save for the user to avoid insanity or other negative mind effects.

Dagonite Needle Pistol

The Dagonite refugees (p. 34) brought a couple of important inventions with them, one of which is the needle pistol. It isn't magic,

d20	Rumor
1	A mechanical skeleton of some kind has been found in the ice way up north. It had a strange, dead creature in it.
2	Children disappear in Whale Crossing. I bet it's that sunken elven temple!
3	Deep down below is an older city with strange statues and masked creatures.
4	Did you hear about that kvo crystal that was stolen from the museum?
5	Did you know that Isela Moro and the Council Head are having an affair?
6	Down south is a city that floats on the sea.
7	I know who's painting those strange symbols all over the city!
8	If you find that tunnel and go far enough into it, time will turn backwards!
9	One of the Ode Council members is a traitor to the city!
10	Some ape creature wrecked the Stone End antique shop. The owner is missing.
11	Some ghost ship sailed into the River Harbor, and now it's closed!
12	The Bel Fara family is planning an attack on the House of Three.
13	The lost city of Anthór has been found in a hidden mountain valley.
14	The scientisophists are challenging all priests to try their lie detector!
15	The water in Homsel has gone salty. It's those damned dagonites, I swear!
16	The western farms are pestered by illsprouts. They can't find their mother tree.
17	The Whitecloaks are burning "heretic books" in the villages north of Ode.
18	The Witch King's old planarium is working again. No one knows why.
19	There's a new insectoid queen in that old Frozen Forest hive!
20	They found a blue body in the Land Harbor, frozen rock hard. I bet something came in from the cold—pray it's not one of the Snow Queen's spies!

Table 21: White Curse Rumors

but it seems like magic to all but the smartest human engineers. The weapon is quite heavy, breach loaded and powered by air that compresses as you open and close the gun. It doesn't pack the same punch as a bow, cross-bow or black-powder gun, but the ammunition can be poisoned. Damage 1d6-2, Weight 5, Range 20, RoF 2/1.

Ghost Box

A ghost box is a dead voice transmitter. Each box has one or several spirits bound to it. As physical distance means little to the dead, two ghost boxes bound to the same spirits produce the exact same sound, even if they are many miles apart in the world of the living.

Ghost boxes are usually beautiful wooden cubes with the side of approximately one foot (somewhat smaller boxes are used in marionettes). They are used for pleasure by the very rich—singing or reading spirits being the most popular. But they can also be used for all sorts of communicative purposes. A single box is worth thousands of gold pieces.

Shadow Mark

A Shadow Mark is a palm-sized, ebony colored and randomly shaped mass of fossilized parasites from the Shadow Realm. It has a 1 in 20 chance to form when an infected host dies, and glows with an intensity proportional to the proximity of a shadow portal, starting at 300 ft.

The parasites are incorporeal when alive. Whenever a humanoid character bleeds in the Shadow Realm, she must save or be infected. The cure for shadow affliction is hitherto unknown. As far as anyone knows, the parasites are mostly benign. All they do is to color the blood of their hosts black.



CHAPTER VI

THE WHITE CURSE

Where we lay out the basic structure of an example campaign.

ONCE upon a time, an evil Witch King ruled the lands. He demanded that his people forsake the gods and worship only him. So the people turned against him, piercing his body with arrows and swords.

The Witch King's blood seeped into the ground, and his malevolence spread. It warped and twisted everything it touched, causing great upheavals as the land revolted. And when everything settled, it brought a terrible cold. The people called this the White Curse, and learned to endure it. But the Witch King's spirit also endured. As time passed, he grew stronger in afterlife, ever yearning to return and take revenge. The twisted lands began to hear his call.

Now, the veil between living and dead grows thin. Horrible shadows slip into the world, and old artifacts of the Witch King's making start to awaken. Will you pick a side to either fight evil or work for the Witch King's return? Or will you just try to make enough gold to buy a bit of comfort in this cursed land?

Watchers, Cultists or Something Else?

In *The White Curse* campaign, you can play the Watchers, a secret society sworn to lift the curse and prevent the return of the Witch King. You will hunt down shadow creatures,

try to expose the lurking Witch Cult and work against the spreading evil. You will also delve into the mysteries of the past, in order to better understand the curse and learn how to undo it. Playing the Watchers means playing a heroic campaign.

If you choose to play adepts of the Witch Cult instead, you will be loyal servants of an undead master, sworn to see him return from his shadowy exile. You will work with the horrid messengers from the Shadow Realm, topple just rulers, rediscover evil artifacts in sunken ruins and help spread the curse. You will kill meddling Watchers and backstab your friends to advance in the Cult's hierarchy. This choice is not intended for immersive angst, though. Cultist campaigns are meant to be played with black humor.

A third option is to "just" play adventurers, or some faction of the Referee's design.

STARTING SITUATION

As the campaign begins, three hundred years have passed since the death of the Witch King. To most his demise is just a myth, created to explain some hard facts of life: It's damned cold, there are monsters outside, and sometimes your kids are born twisted. These facts are harder for some than others, though. All elves, dwarves and halflings have been struck by the curse. Their ancient cultures lie in ruins, and their bodies have been warped so that little separates them from twisted humans. From the southern seas come hundreds of dagonite refugees (p. 34), leaving behind an underwater empire destroyed by the cold.

The Underground & the White

The curse has truly changed the land. Earthquakes have buried cities, toppled mountains, turned the flow of rivers and ruined dwarven kingdoms. The old roads and caverns of the underground are treacherous, and you may run into sunken buildings that nobody has entered for centuries.

A perpetual winter has transformed the wilderness, which is now simply called “the White.” It is full of goblins, orcs, wild animals and monsters, sometimes made larger and more dangerous by the curse. From the ruins of old come fiercer beings still, seizing the chance to gain power: Great wyrms have been sighted on numerous occasions.

It takes courage, proper equipment and skill to brave the White. It is best to find a ship and travel along the coast or on the large lakes and their connecting rivers. The waters hold monsters too, though, and drifting ice and even icebergs make ship losses common. When there are no waterways, getting aboard a rock snail or following a caravan with some proper giant guides are good if not entirely safe choices. Travelers stick to the known routes, even when they run below ground.

Civilization

Decent folk seek refuge near rivers, hot lakes, in villages protected from the wind and in Ode, a large mountain city. But you can't hide from the curse. It seems to make people more

cunning and greedy, and sometimes prone to violence. Selfishness and an urge to get ahead no matter the cost is getting a firm grip on society. Uncursed humans look down on other species, persecute the twisted and discriminate amongst themselves primarily on the basis of social and economic status.

Human communities are crowded and rife with intrigue and social strife. Noble families and all kinds of organizations are fighting for political influence, and the Whitecloaks are trying to outlaw all other religions. All sorts of guild wars and commercial feuds spread fast to mines, forest stockades, glacier camps and other important pocket civilizations in the White. The economical struggle also boosts class oppositions and crime.

The arrival of the dagonites and the awakening artifacts from the Witch King's era result in the rediscovery of long forgotten technologies. Prototypes of new ghost boxes and marionettes are being made. Explosives and black powder weapons are becoming more common. Dagonites make typewriters and build printing presses. Scientists are in-

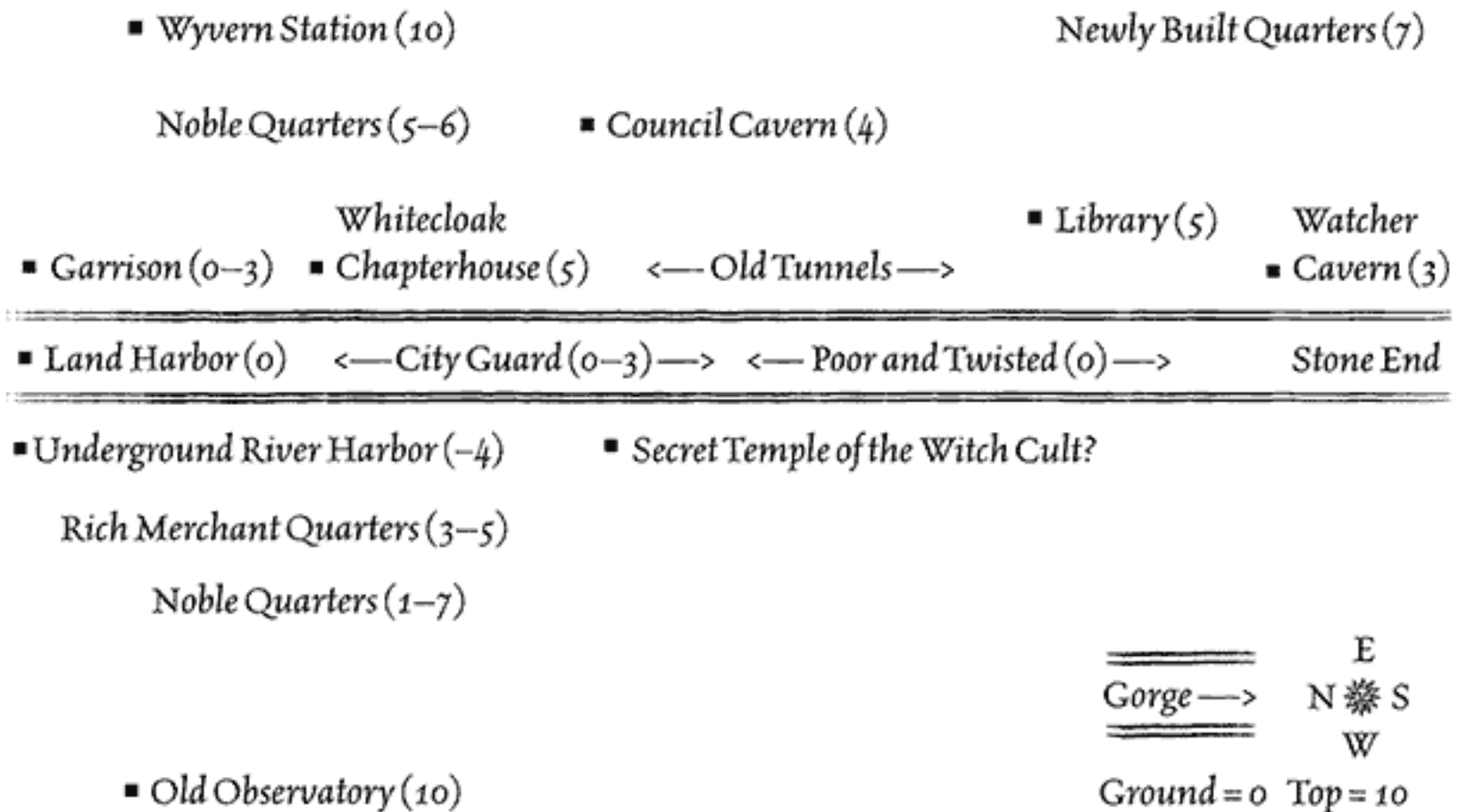


Table 22: Schematic Layout of Ode

<i>Merchant Groups & Guilds</i>	<i>Political & Religious Groups</i>	<i>Other Groups</i>
Black Hats Thieves' Guild	The Bleeder Cult	The Dagonites
House of Kelven (mining)	The Council	The Fish-Haters
The Street Performers	The Flower Monks	The Ice Farmers
The Water Nomads	The House of Three (nobles)	The Scientisophists
Trade & Barter	The Whitecloaks	The Twisted of Ode
Venerable Sailing Company	The Witch Cult	The Watchers

Table 23: White Curse Affiliation Groups

trigued by the indications of a parallel Shadow Realm. However, these things are concerns mostly for the very rich.

Ode

Ode is an old city built on the terraces and into the cliff walls of an enormous, jagged gorge in the southern mountain range. The gorge runs from the north to the south and is three miles deep and half a mile from the bottom to the mountain plateau. It has narrow roads on its western and eastern sides, which are 10–200 feet apart and connects with hanging or masoned bridges, cable ways and even ferries (tame wyverns). Stone and sometimes wooden buildings rise from natural terraces, but much of the city consists of crafted caverns and an endless number of known and forgotten tunnels. Stairs, ladders and elevators are everywhere.

Ode is governed by a Council in which the richest, most noble and most influential have a seat. They meet in a huge cavern near the center of the city. The Council controls the city watch, stationed in brick towers throughout the gorge. But the watch is corrupt, and the city has several thriving thief guilds. The Black Hats is the most famous one due to its members' extensive use of explosives.

The Whitecloak chapterhouse lies on the edge of Ode's broadest terrace. It is a fortress-like brick building. The Land Harbor for caravans and rock snails is close, and further west lies an underground River Harbor.

d6 Encounter

- 1 The Whitecloak Lieutenant Storm is threatening Lucidor, a HD 3 Street Performer Bard, for heckling her in one of his poems. Lucidor refuses to stand down or alter a single line.
- 2 A twisted elf begs for the character to buy her family heirloom for 1 gold. It is a brooch which she claims makes the owner "immune to the breath of dragons!" (it actually works, but she doesn't think so).
- 3 A noble of The House of Three demands that the street be "cleaned" before he passes. His servants ask the characters to "remove themselves."
- 4 A wyvern taxi crashes ten feet away. The wyvern has been shot but is still alive. The driver is killed in the crash. People speak of a guild war between wyvern taxi drivers and sedan chair runners.
- 5 The giant guide Angalan the Hunchback, a HD 3 Frost Giant, is on his way to the Land Harbor. He is teased by some children, who throw rocks at him. When the characters arrive he is close to going berserk.
- 6 Robbers from the Black Hats thief guild try to mug the characters. They threaten them with pistols and use a smoke bomb to escape if pursued.

Table 24: Random Encounters in Ode

The poor and the twisted live at the garbage littered bottom of Ode, sharing some of the oldest tunnels with giant rats, grey ooze and black puddings. The Witch Cult has its secret temple here, headquarter for Cultist characters and their Masked Priest.

The Watchers have a secret library near Stone End. It documents their doings since the Witch King era. The unofficial leader of the Watcher society is the very old Librarian.

Religion

People of different cultures worship similar gods, though sometimes under different names. It is said that a god's power is relative

to the size of its following. Open worship of any non-human gods has recently been forbidden throughout the land by the Council of Ode, though they cannot enforce it outside the city. Only Dagon is excepted, due to the demand for dagonite technology.

Amongst humans, the harsh and unforgiving Ded, God of Laws, has several large churches and knightly orders, the Whitecloaks (p. 41) being one example.

Ded has a traitor son whose name has been banished from existence. He is still worshipped in mystic blood cults under the name of the Bleeder. Bleeder cults are outlawed in Ode and many pocket civilizations, and their priests are feared by all.

d6 Encounter

- 1 The characters run into the Talking Head (p. 40). He tries a half dozen languages and dialects before finding one that the characters can understand. He is exploring "this time space continuum," looking for a way out.
 - 2 Two standard HD 3 Shadows attack the party for d6 strength points on each hit. Anyone who loses strength must also save or be infected with parasites (pp. 44f.). At zero strength, a character becomes a shadow herself. Shadow wounds heal like any other wound.
 - 3 The party comes upon two regular zombies and Barbosa, a HD 18 Zombie with a crossbow and three rot diseased homing bolts. He offers the characters their lives in exchange for a poem about the sun.
 - 4 A thunderstorm breaks out and approaches quickly. As it reaches the characters, they can see a tremendous creature, looking like a crossbreed between an elephant and a baboon, running with the storm as if chased by or chasing it. Around its head and in its track follow a swarm of living leaves with eyes.
 - 5 The party comes upon a large shipwreck, with no water in sight. The wreck is surrounded by black trees, and bone colored butterflies are everywhere. The ship is plagued (all without a stigma or CL above zero must save or die within a week), but contains a dagger that can turn a victim to stone (save negates).
 - 6 The party spots a lone traveler at a distance. It is Morgrave, a HD 4 AC 1 Agent for Elsa Bel Fara (a noblewoman in Ode). He is returning to the city and does not like to chat or to be followed. He guards the secret of two shadow portals. One exits in the mountains above Ode, the other in a sunken elven temple several weeks to the north. Both gates are within a day's travel in the Black. In Morgrave's scrollcase lies a "letter" promising allegiance from the northern barbarian tribes, as well as two scrolls with the miracles "Paralyze" and "Create Portal" (Cursed). He carries a pistol, a shortsword and a shadow mark.
-

Table 25: Random Encounters in the Shadow Realm

Ded's wife was the Goddess of Summer, loved by all but now called the Lost Goddess. She has a small but devout following, most notably the Flower Monks. They try to preserve her power until she finds her way back to the land.

The Shadow Realm

The Shadow Realm, also called "the Black," is just that: a shadow of the world of the living. It is void of color and filled with undead, shadows and other frightful creatures. The Witch King is a force to be reckoned with in there, but there are older and more powerful beings still, and they have their own agendas.

The Shadow Realm is just as much phenomenon of time as it is one of space and dimension. It currently follows the lay of the land as it used to be, before the cataclysmic death of the Witch King. There are mountains, rivers, lakes, roads and buildings in there that are ruined or do not exist in the world of the living any more. There are no nights or days, and winds and weather changes are rare (and usually ominous). Most of the time, there is just a perpetual autumn, gloomy but comparatively warm.

Flora and fauna in the Black are strange. Fungi, moss, poisonous fruit trees and white grass abound, and the animal creatures in there are barely recognizable to a visitor from the land of the living. Sometimes, you may

encounter objects or individuals that seem to come from another world entirely. Scholars and scientists that study this subject say that the Shadow Realm *moves*, and that it has never been this close before. But the world is old and filled with mysteries. There are old inscriptions on stones, weapons and magically preserved tomes that tell of means to travel the Black. Ancient entrances and exits are hidden throughout the land, and those who know where to look can find them.

RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN

The White Curse campaign is designed to be played with the full *Whitehack* rules. Corruption (p. 30) in this setting comes from the Curse, of course, potentially resulting in twisted stigma. Wounds from twisted monsters, visiting places where the Curse is strong and using cursed objects are examples of conditions that may raise CL by set or random amounts. Use vehicle combat (pp. 29f.) when you need it, and allow for rare class choices (pp. 31ff.) when appropriate. Magic can be diverse or conservative, as you see fit, but consider disallowing or raising the HP costs for "combat magic" like fireballs and energy bolts—there are already explosives and firearms in the campaign.

Although there is a lot of winter in this campaign, it has varied environments: Ode, the underground, the White and its pocket

NPC	HD	AC	Move	Special
Commoner	<1	0	30	May be suspicious, cunning, greedy or violent.
Twisted	1	0	30	Disfigured commoner, possible humanoid traits.
Special Twisted	2	0	30	Twisted humanoid, minor supernatural ability.
Ode City Guard	2	3	30	Short sword, shield and crossbow.
Council Member	4	0	30	Rich, connected, servants, private guard.
Black Hats Thief	1	1	30	Deft thief, attuned to bombs.
Giant Guide	3+7	2	40	Cold immunity, Strong ability 4 (berserk).
Dagonite Refugee	3	0	30/20	Amphibian, cold vulnerability, glasses, 1 miracle.
Marionette Butler	5	2	25	See pp. 34f.

Table 26: White Curse Special NPCs

-
- Uggā is spotted with a clearly visible shield when attacking a Whitecloak, a commoner, a guard, a council member or the characters.
 - Twisted and poor march through the streets chanting “We’re no orcs! We’re no orcs!” They try to lynch a Whitecloak missionary.
 - Uggā drops a body through the chute.
 - Shem kills her husband and escapes.
 - A Whitecloak officer gets drunk and reveals his true orders to someone the characters know.
 - Fifteen new aspirants are to arrive at the chapterhouse on a “God Day” of religious festivities.
-

Table 27: The Chapterhouse Events

havens and the Shadow Realm are very different places, suitable for different kinds of adventures like intrigue, mystery, dungeon crawls, exploration, quests and afterlife rescue parties. Using Ode as a base for the campaign is a good idea though, as it will make you alternate hectic city adventures with the familiar and slower pace of exploration and quests.

Traveling in and between environments is not something you need to cut from your sessions. Rock snails and ships can be used as places for claustrophobic adventures, like “the murdered passenger” or “a monster in the cargo.” Seeking a new route through the White is a simple but viable idea for an adventure. The Shadow Realm is designed to give you some time traveling and the fantasy equivalent of science fiction warp drive—a day’s walk in the Black is dangerous, but it can let you exit a hundred leagues away in the world of the living.

Apart from what has been outlined above, the geography and even the name of the land is up to you! Start small and expand when you need to, or simply place the campaign in an existing world that you like. If you are drawing a map, don’t fill in *all* the white areas from the beginning. Let the players give you suggestions—for all sorts of things, not only maps. “What does it look like in the inn?” “Who is your contact?” “Draw me a map of your headquarter!” Develop their answers (a player will not be sufficiently challenged by her own creations). A city like Ode is best built in this manner. “The Chapterhouse Murders” below is a good place to start.



CHAPTER VII

THE CHAPTERHOUSE MURDERS

Where we lay out an introductory adventure in the White Curse campaign.

KRAG, son of the First Tribe chief, is an albino. For long forgotten reasons, pale and twisted orclings are ritually killed at birth, but as the tribe numbers are dwindling, Krag has been spared. The tribe learns that there is a cure for faulty offspring in Ode. They send Krag and his sister Uggā to steal this cure.

The orcs manage to sneak into Ode, but Krag gets clever and presents himself for the Whitecloak correction program, to gain entrance to their chapterhouse. Surely, that is where the humans keep their cure! But when he doesn’t come back, his sister gets worried—and hungry! She finds a garbage chute into the chapterhouse and goes looking for Krag, meat and ears for her armor.

When the adventure starts, several people have been killed in and around the chapterhouse, and the Whitecloaks are routing out and harassing twisted folk all over the city. The murders are the talk of the town.

If the characters are Watchers, the Librarian will ask them to look into the murders. The Whitecloaks are certainly no allies of the Watchers, but the situation is dangerous. If the characters are Cultists, the Masked Priest will demand that they put an end to this af-

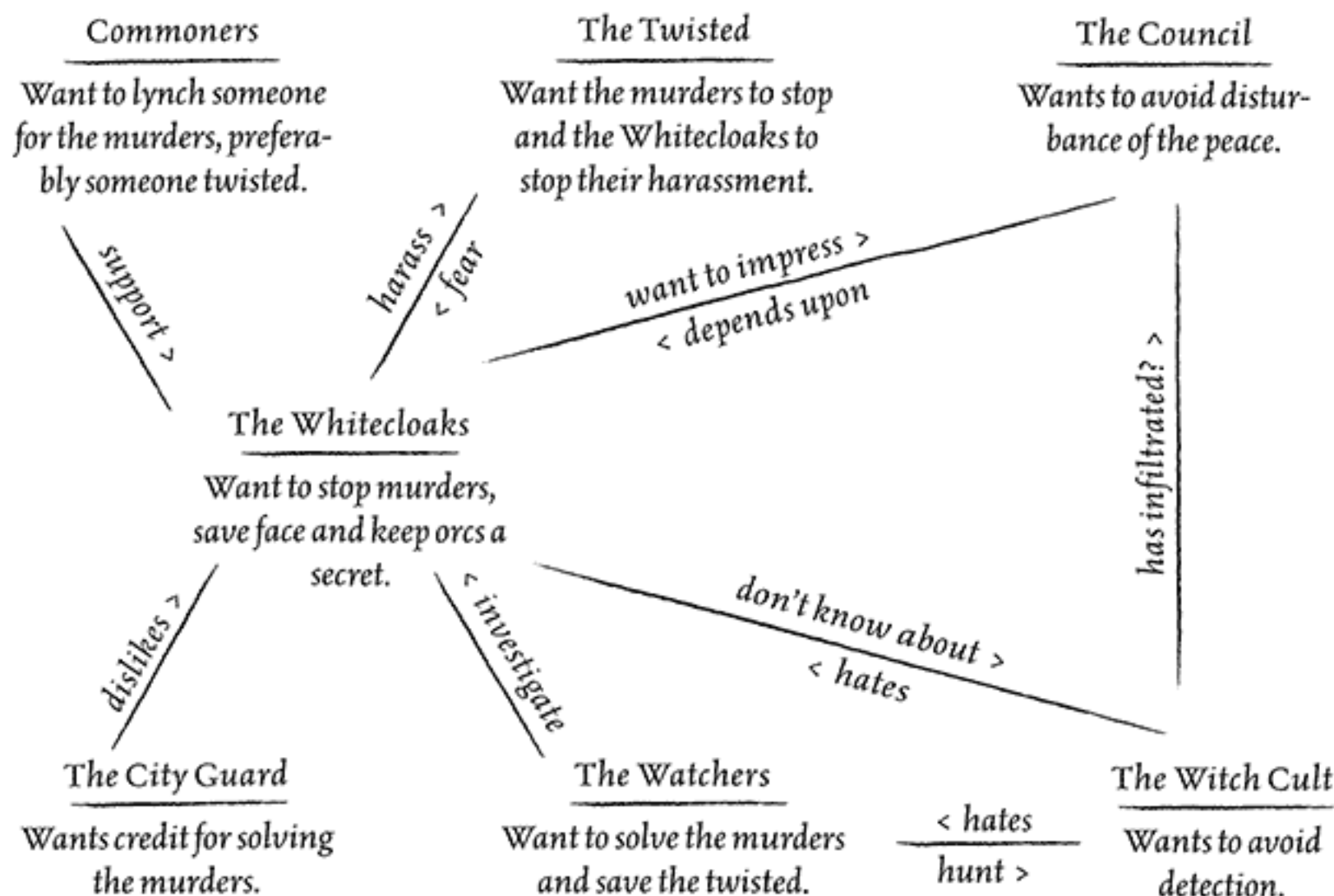


Table 28: The Chapterhouse Mind Map

fair, one way or the other. All this fuzz with Whitecloaks on the very doorstep of the secret temple is putting the cult at risk.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

You need to read this chapter through, of course. See if there are things you want to add or remove. Then have the players choose or create characters that are either Watchers, members of the Witch Cult or something else that you think suits the plot.

This adventure is designed to help you build your version of Ode. Let the players draw their headquarters. Ask them about their affiliation groups and build from their answers. Have them draw a rough map over the Chapterhouse block, adding things you feel should be there too. You needn't overdo this, but try to get into the habit of letting the players help with ideas for the game world.

Ideally, there should be places they can learn about and have their characters explore, but also an emerging world that they help create.

All the techniques mentioned in the sections on adventures in Chapter III have been used here and in the following chapter (the major section headings in the adventures denote phases, and the random tables are in Chapter VI, to be used for more than these adventures). As for the rules, use as much or as little as you need. The veteran may use most of the Referee tools. The rookie will do fine with task rolls, simple attacks, saves, magic, healing and basic monster rules.

GATHERING INFORMATION

The characters will ask around, visit different parts of the city and perhaps seek help from affiliation groups. As not everyone is willing to answer questions right away, expect

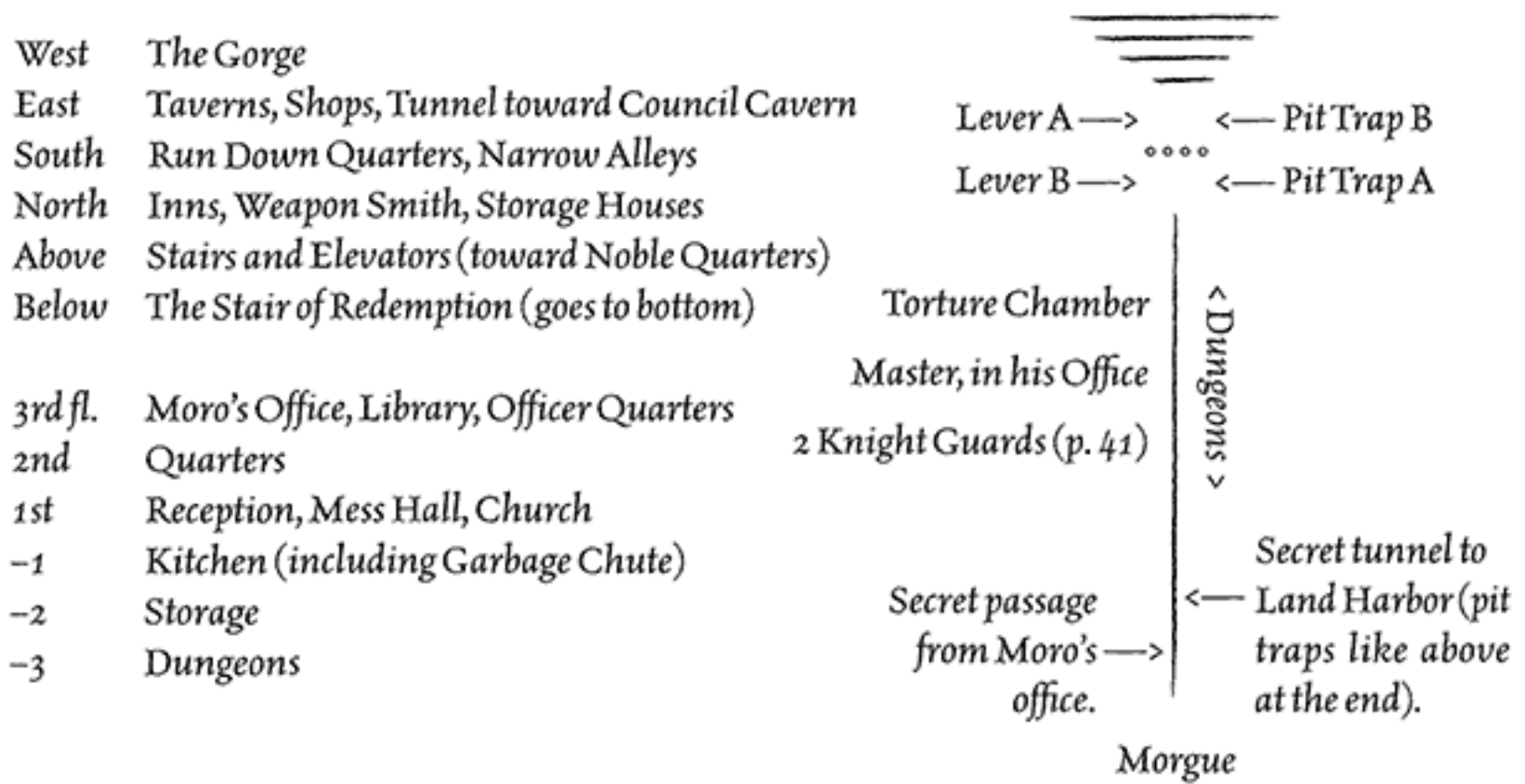


Table 29: Layout of the Chapterhouse

the players to try threats, bribery, burglary, abductions and interrogations. The twisted, the city guards and the Whitecloaks are likely targets. The characters can also stake the chapterhouse to catch the murderer, or infiltrate it to eavesdrop and investigate.

What People Know

Everyone knows that the Whitecloaks are looking for a twisted killer, but the order members have secret instructions to look for someone who “looks like an orc.” The ones they take into custody all have disfigured faces. Only officers know that the search is for an actual orc, a companion to some weird albino orc who presented himself for the correction program but bit one of the guards.

The city guards know very little and are upset about it. They have investigated the murders outside the chapterhouse and found bite marks on the victims and limbs missing (but not ears). This is also known to the frightened poor and twisted in this area. Esmer, a deaf hunchback, has seen a monster with a spear and a painted shield feeding on a victim. She has tried to tell her friends and even one of the knights—a Lieutenant Storm (regular Whitecloak Knight, p. 41, see also table

24, p. 47). She is infatuated with her, but Lt. Storm doesn't understand her signs. Neither do Esmer's friends among the twisted.

The guards who received and put Krag in chains have valuable information about him, but two of them have already left with Krag on a rock snail bound for the Whitecloak correction camp north of Ode (see Chapter VIII). The third guard, Shem, lies at home sick after having been bit by Krag.

In Ode, the fact that Krag has left the city is known to Grand Master Isela Moro, who leads the Whitecloaks, to the master of the chapterhouse dungeons and to a few of the twisted in his custody. They saw a caged Krag get transported through a tunnel towards the Land Harbor. Everyone else who knows about Krag thinks he is still in the dungeons.

Grand Master Moro does *not* know about the supposed “orcanthropy” of First Tribe. She thinks that Krag has actually been struck by the curse and is eager to know if the order's experiments have any effects on orcs. At the same time, she doesn't want anyone to know about Krag until he is successfully corrected. This other orc must be found right away! The Whitecloaks would also lose face as peacekeepers if it became known to the Council that they haven't reported orcs in the city.

Since this affair is important to the Whitecloaks, there are also parties that would like to see them fail. Other religious orders, the city guard and enemies in the Council could be examples of this, at the Referee's discretion.

The Third Guard

Shem lives with her family in a cave in the newly carved top layer of Ode. There is more snow up there, and cold, icy winds. Most families who live in this layer are rather poor, but at least they have work. Quite a few have recently arrived to the city.

Shem is in a bad shape with an infected bite in her hand, high fever and a peculiar tooth-ache (her teeth are slowly growing). Her husband is very worried about her. She has not been examined by anyone and has not received orders to keep her information secret. She or her husband can be persuaded to describe how she got bitten when handling an orc who appeared at the gates and asked to enter the correction program. "Pale as wax he was, like a pig. Had weird armor with ears in it and a painted new moon on a shield. Screamed he was of some first tribe."

Infiltrating the Whitecloaks

Sooner or later, the characters are going to want to visit the chapterhouse. Security is very high. The party can sneak in, but if caught, they will be murder suspects. However, the organization is large with visiting members from other places. An unknown person looking like a devout worshipper of the God of Law doesn't immediately raise the alarm, although she might be questioned.

The party can learn more about the killings and Krag in there and perhaps examine the murder victims. They are kept in the morgue near the dungeons three stories below the ground level. The entrance to this level has pit traps (2d6 damage) on both sides of a barred gate (see table 29). Each trap needs to be disarmed by pulling a lever on the other side. There is a similarly guarded way in

from the Land Harbor and an unguarded, secret passageway leading from Moro's office all the way down. The murder victims have spear wounds, bite marks and are all missing one or both ears.

Isela Moro, HD 6, AC 5 (Splint Mail), MV 25; Strong Ability 5; Sword, Marionette Butler.

Master of Dungeons, HD 4, AC 0, MV 30; Miracle: "Control Locks"; Whip, 2 Dogs.

CATCHING UGGA

Ugga still hides in the same garbage chute she came in through. It runs from the chapterhouse wall out over the terrace edge, and seems impossible to climb into. But not for a mountain orc. Ugga has hacked away a few bricks in the chute (they can be found in the garbage 150 feet below, together with some recently gnawed human bones). She has created a ledge that hides her and lets her sleep during the day. She comes out every night to feed and explore the chapterhouse. If not caught by the characters, she will eventually reach the dungeons, find out about Krag and leave through the tunnel where the twisted prisoners saw his cage disappear. In that case, Ugga can turn up in *Pale Orc* (Chapter VIII).

Ugga's bite does not turn people into orcs, and she recognizes this ability only vaguely from the tribe's legends. If caught, she is unafraid and proud to tell her story.

Ugga, HD 4, AC 4, MV 30, Strong abilities 3 and 6, Spear, Shield, Leaf Armor, Kvo Crystal broken in half. Unbeknownst to Ugga, the whole crystal contains the knowledge of albino orcanthropy (pp. 37ff., 57).

HANDLING INFORMATION

A skilled historian, the Librarian, the Masked Priest or a character that makes a trained history roll knows of the First Tribe, its orcanthropy and its supposed extinction. But proof of two such orcs being in Ode is very dangerous information. The affair may result in assassination attempts on the characters, mass panic, mass killings of twisted ("kill'em fast—

they're turning into orcs!") and chapterhouse quarantine. The curse makes people greedy for gold and power, and there is a lot at stake for the Whitecloaks, the city guard and the Council. The factions are likely prepared to go to great lengths to protect their interests.

This part of the adventure can take a session or be over in minutes. It depends on the players' decisions. Try to keep up with what they do, and use the mind map and the events in tables 27 and 28 to figure out how various people respond. Whatever happens though, once the Librarian and the Masked Priest learn of the orcanthropy, they will give orders that lead to the sequel adventure in Chapter VIII. The Watchers must kill the orcs and any infected bite victims. The Masked Priest wants them alive.

XP REWARDS

Everyone gets 1,500 XP for solving the murders and another 1,000 for finding and handling the information about orcanthropy.



CHAPTER VIII

PALE ORC

Where we lay out a sequel adventure for levels 2–3 in the White Curse campaign.

BOTH the Watchers and the Witch Cult have learned that the Whitecloaks have taken a First Tribe orc (Krag) prisoner. Supposedly, the orc can create new orcs by biting people, making him extremely dangerous. He is now being transported on a rock snail to the Whitecloak correction camp north of Ode. The Watchers have orders to intercept the snail and kill the orc and any infected bite victims, while the Cultists have orders to secretly bring the orc back alive to their temple.

This adventure is pretty straight forward, suitable for one-shots and convention play (with or without phase time limits). If you

are aiming for a campaign, play *The Chapterhouse Murders* in Chapter VII first. It will let you build a city base for your adventures.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Like the adventure in the previous chapter, the section headings in "Pale Orc" denote RPG story phases (p. 26). One takes the characters to a dangerous place, the other two lets them explore it and confront a major enemy. This is a small dungeon crawl with a classic boss. If you wish, you can run the adventure using traditional turns and reaction rolls, and let the characters have hirelings (pp. 28ff.). If the party decides to explore the Black, don't forget the random encounter table (p. 48).

The adventure doesn't have to end with the third phase—you can create an aftermath phase! Cultists need to smuggle Krag back into Ode, perhaps through a secret labyrinth under the mountain. Watchers need to hunt down and kill bite victims, or maybe deal with the Witch Cult's plans for Krag.

THE SNAIL

Tracking the rock snail is easy—it is getting to it first that is hard. The Referee controls the side (Watchers or Cultists) that the players have not chosen, using characters from the pregens in table 4 (p. 10). Take two NPCs if there are three players, three if there are four or five players.

The hunt for the snail is to be played as an auction. Depending on the choice of traveling means, base the auction on the group's lowest strength (walking), dexterity (riding or skiing) or highest charisma (driving another rock snail). Give each player the opportunity to make a bid for the whole group, but let the bids be discussed amongst the players if they want to. Each bid is supposed to be role-played as per the auction rules.

The winners will have the choice to either investigate the snail or follow the tracks that lead off into the White. Both options have their advantages. The losers will arrive about

twenty minutes (two traditional dungeon turns) after the winners, and battle may ensue. As the parties know of one another, surprising the other side is hard.

Investigating the Snail

The snail has followed one of the main routes into the White until it was ambushed in a mountainous region a week north of the city. The cold is not too bad, and no snow falls until the characters reach the site of the ambush.

Under a new moon, the snail lies wounded near the route. Dead kobolds and Whitecloaks lie outside and inside its shell. The snail is covered with kobold arrows, and bloody tracks lead off into the wilderness.

A careful examination reveals that a few human victims seem to have died instantly from some kind of cold shock. The snail also has a gash likely to kill it if it is not treated. It could not have been made by kobolds.

The snail is frightened, and unless calmed it will withdraw into the shell crushing anyone in there (save or die). There are corpses inside. A few of the kobolds have poisoned needles sticking out of them, while three of the Whitecloaks are dead with no sign of what killed them. A trained medicine roll will reveal asphyxiation to be the most likely cause. One of the Whitecloaks was trying out a dagonite needle gun on behalf of the order. When she and her comrades barricaded themselves in the snail, the kobolds sent their mage to take care of the situation, and he used a suffocation miracle.

The place is thoroughly looted. There is a cage with a broken lock in one room. A single ear from Krag's armor lies on the floor.

The Born Again Kobold

One of the kobolds in the snail starts to moan and stir. As the characters approach, he turns, hideously disfigured and with a bite wound in his side. The body is transforming to the obvious horror of the kobold. Within five

rounds, he has turned into a frightened and confused orc. He will only repeat two words in Draconic: "Pale orc! Pale orc!"

LAIR OF THE WHITE DRAGON

After an hour, the party happens upon a ruined watchtower. The tracks disappear abruptly. Searching the area automatically reveals a large stone with a rune on it. A successful, hard wisdom roll when examining the area will also reveal a caved in tunnel running towards an empty tower ruin (no roof) with a cellar and a well. The tunnel can also be found with a trained history roll: The tower is a thousand years old from what is known as The Lost Empire. Its type commonly had an underground escape route.

The Rune Stone

The blood comes from a white dragon named Unzel. She, her kobold minions and Krag (their prisoner) are on their way back to their lair, which is indeed in the watchtower—just not in this version. The rune on the stone is magic and, if read aloud, will transport anyone in front of it into the Shadow Realm. The rune is quite common. Any kind of scholar or any being with a longer lifespan (dwarf, elf) will know it to be the sign for something like "black," "dark," "shadow" or "dusk." And any one of those words will work. But only a trained scholarly roll for intelligence will reveal "dusk" to be the exact word, as well as the correct pronunciation in the ancient Imperial Tongue (archaic Common). Unless uttered correctly, the rune will start to shine as it transports the party, revealing the presence of the characters to a nearby HD 3 Shadow in the Black. There is also a 6 in 20 chance that they are discovered by Unzel's kobold sentry.

Tower in the Black

The Shadow Realm is dark, gloomy, free of snow and comparatively warm. There is a smell of metal and churned wood in the air,

and small flakes of ashes fall over the characters. A tree nearby carries strange fruit (3d6 godberries, p. 19), and in the very far distance, a low, massive sound like from a gigantic horn can be heard. The tower is still a ruin here, but it is less decayed: The ground floor walls are still intact, and most importantly, the cellar and the escape route have not caved in.

If the characters entered the Shadow Realm unnoticed, light comes from the watchtower and they hear the sounds of kobolds partying. If they were discovered by the sentry, the watchtower is dark and silent. Unzel and the kobolds have not discovered the escape route, though. The opening is just 30 feet away from the stone with the magic rune.

The Underground Escape Route

The opening is easy to find for someone who knows where to look, but it will not reveal itself on a cursory glance from a bypasser. It is behind a tree trunk at the bottom of a large boulder. You need to crawl to get in, but once in, you can stand upright in a 10 foot wide corridor with a paved floor. There is a moldy smell coming from further ahead and a faint sound of water. You need a light unless you have some kind of supernatural vision.

The tunnel system follows the layout in table 30. The first intersection has two obvious tunnels, one sloping downwards, the other upwards. The left wall in the intersection has a very large boulder sticking out from it, and is partly destroyed with a lot of shards on the floor. You can get into a third tunnel behind it, if you search thoroughly.

The two sloping tunnels have a guard patrol, consisting of three regular skeletons named Marl, Agnes and Bore. They are undead Shadow Realm copies of an original, real world guard patrol. They have been here much longer than they can remember, stuck in the same triangle loop, constantly debating in hushed (and spooky) voices if they shouldn't try the "other tunnel, after

all?" They never do, though. If the characters run into them and try to talk to them, they may help on a favorable charisma roll. They know that the route they are going does not lead to any tower—"Tower? What tower?"—and they may give hints about the remaining boulder trap: "There's a place where you aren't supposed to step, we know that all too well, don't we Agnes?"

The remaining boulder trap consists of a large boulder behind a very thin tunnel wall. If you step on the wrong stone, it will crash out of the wall, roll toward the chasm and crush anyone who fails a save, doing 3d6 damage. The trap for the other slope has already been sprung, by Agnes, some 100 years ago. That is the boulder sticking out of the wall in the intersection.

The third tunnel leads to a secret door in the tower cellar, right behind Unzel's treasure pile. You can also get to the tower by climbing down the chasm under the bridge, then follow the stream. Eventually, you will stand right under the tower well.

DEALING WITH UNZEL, RAP & CO

Unzel is spent from the battle with the snail, and her kobolds are a bit drunk from the Whitecloaks' wine. She is curious about Krag and keeps him alive but in chains.

The characters can either negotiate with Unzel or fight her. She is described in Chapter IV (p. 41) but has only 13 HP left in her regular stage. Unfortunately she speaks Draconic only, and if none of the characters do, things can get out of hand quickly. The kobolds are also fluent in Common and can translate—if the players manage to think out of the box and involve them.

There are 4–5 standard kobolds. Their leader is Rap (HD 2). She is infected with parasites (pp. 44f.) and has a dagonite needle gun (poisoned darts, +1d6 damage, save negates) stolen from the corpse of a Whitecloak captain. There is also a cowardly kobold mage with the miracles "Suffocate" and "Handsome Disguise." Place the dragon and

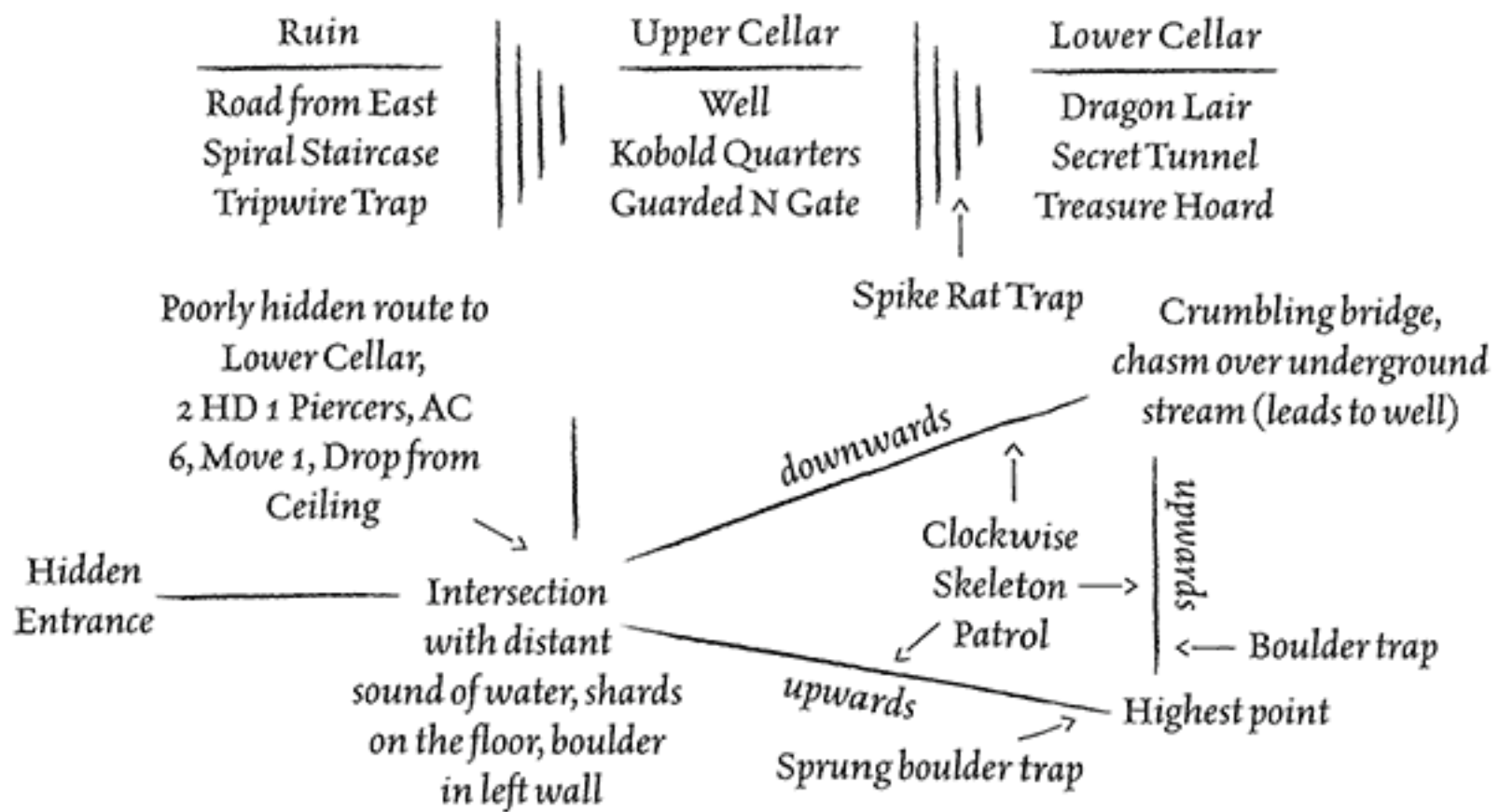


Table 30: Tower in the Black

her minions as seems appropriate. If they are still partying, there are no traps in the tower, but there is a sentry. If they have been alerted, there are two booby traps: A falling block of stone by the upper entrance to the ruin (d6+2 damage) and a trapped spike rat (p. 40, 1d6 poison on a failed save).

If the competition is still around, alliances can get interesting—especially if either party has Howl (pregenerated character, p. 10) or Ugga in it. It may be possible to convince the kobold mage to switch sides. If pressed, Unzel will attempt to get Krag to fight for her, promising him human meat and freedom.

The Treasure Hoard

The dragon has little treasure: 70 gp, 310 sp and 55 cp. There is a superior quality shield (AC+2), a silver chamber-pot (15 gp) and Archibald (p. 44). The returning strength of the Witch King has woken Archie from a long sleep. He is the brain behind Unzel's brigandry. He sits in a torch holder over the hoard and advises her when nobody else is around. He will glow intensely and if need be speak to avoid being left behind.

Dealing with Krag

Krag's bite *can* create new orcs if the victims survive. As he usually kills what he bites, he has no idea of this power. Nor has his tribe. Humans hunted the tribe down to the last family in ancient history. To be able to hide amongst other tribes, they started killing their newborn albinos, who are the only ones with orcanthropy. The family secret was kept in a kvo crystal. Unfortunately (or fortunately!) the crystal broke at some point in history. The knowledge was lost, but the custom of killing albinos prevailed.

If Krag learns of his orcanthropy, he will try to escape rather than fight for the sake of his tribe, biting anyone he can in the attempt.

Krag, HD 5, AC 5, MV 30; Strong abilities 4 and 6; Orcanthropy (save negates); Leaf Armor, the other half of Ugga's kvo crystal.

XP REWARDS

Everyone gets 1,000 XP for completing the mission. The wounded snail is 1,000 XP. The wounded Unzel is 150+850 XP (two stages).

— END OF REFEREE SECTION —

6 20 1 14 20 19 2 8 14 14 6 1 16 13 19 18 16 10 7 8 18 11 7 3 13 2 7 8 14 12 7 4 11 4 1
 10 19 20 16 11 10 10 10 13 1 11 9 15 3 16 9 4 5 15 17 4 14 11 1 3 11 2 12 3 3 6 7 10 14
 15 20 18 6 9 5 15 19 17 16 18 19 7 16 12 18 20 1 7 13 14 11 19 18 1 6 1 10 1 2 12 2 13
 17 7 9 9 9 20 1 14 7 18 4 17 14 15 12 4 16 12 14 3 10 7 5 7 11 10 1 10 3 1 2 20 13 10 15
 4 8 20 14 12 5 1 8 3 5 20 2 5 10 10 6 9 13 12 13 9 17 14 2 20 15 1 2 13 5 3 19 11 1 13
 8 12 17 15 6 6 9 8 19 13 3 13 14 2 18 4 9 8 9 11 11 1 3 17 7 9 20 5 7 17 5 2 8 6 13 5 13
 5 9 17 16 9 17 9 7 16 6 1 15 8 17 10 11 12 19 11 8 7 9 2 15 19 1 17 20 14 4 13 3 7 18 3
 16 9 4 13 17 13 10 3 3 20 13 4 11 5 6 11 5 20 9 1 10 8 6 8 12 4 9 13 12 16 15 4 16 12 9
 1 17 7 5 19 1 12 4 9 16 13 16 8 8 5 14 6 15 20 19 6 20 18 2 19 4 14 8 16 13 8 2 3 14 19
 5 8 12 6 8 17 3 17 1 20 18 5 5 16 6 11 10 7 10 12 6 13 4 10 13 19 11 16 12 6 8 6 11 15
 19 10 2 7 2 4 20 20 14 5 13 8 12 2 2 8 20 5 4 15 6 2 1 5 16 18 9 15 11 5 20 13 9 6 2 14
 20 8 15 3 13 20 17 11 10 19 20 6 15 19 17 6 19 15 9 20 12 1 19 4 19 17 10 18 7 15 13 10
 11 20 16 7 20 10 7 4 12 3 1 5 8 20 10 2 12 17 19 5 8 8 14 7 5 19 9 12 3 17 17 14 3 1 14
 14 12 16 13 9 10 11 2 13 20 18 7 13 12 20 14 6 2 19 4 15 17 8 20 18 18 14 7 18 16 20
 19 5 9 9 9 7 6 9 2 9 13 15 10 6 3 15 18 11 15 16 13 17 1 9 13 17 5 18 6 18 15 1 5 19 12
 2 16 10 5 20 3 20 19 12 14 18 15 14 5 15 14 6 13 16 11 16 17 15 6 19 15 16 16 12 20 3
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 12 10 1 6 12 8 4 19 4 18 17 13 2 1 16 14 3 14 1 3 11 19 1 5 10 3 20 15 2 19 17 19 11 18
 11 4 9 17 7 1 4 10 7 12 5 18 3 9 4 17 15 15 9 4 4 10 2 3 17 8 2 11 16 13 16 9 4 3 19 6 4
 18 14 10 13 2 13 4 10 16 15 5 15 10 5 4 5 6 10 1 6 6 16 14 5 9 16 16 7 17 18 2 18 6 6 11
 5 8 6 7 19 16 20 9 15 20 4 4 3 11 6 7 12 12 7 1 15 17 4 11 19 15 15 8 15 13 10 10 15 14
 8 1 6 7 8 2 18 5 14 18 10 2 18 18 17 8 18 14 18 18 2 10 20 13 14 18 11 10 9 13 1 13 3
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 17 8 18 3 2 7 14 5 11 7 20 18 10 10 13 3 9 14 1 17 12 3 17 20 11 7 10 4 2 12 13 19 3 15
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 18 17 4 7 20 16 14 16 2 4 19 7 16 10 14 13 10 17 18 20 15 4 7 15 7 9 18 8 14 20 12 19
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 4 19 14 15 2 6 12 19 17 13 19 9 9 8 8 8 8 6 9 2 17 4 20 12 11 12 12 18 18 18 2 12 12 7
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 14 8 14 19 2 12 4 3 5 14 4 1 3 15 20 6 12 3 9 20 17 12 8 12 7 20 16 8 20 4 16 5 20 1 18
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 4 3 15 20 11 15 10 2 18 12 5 6 3 8 10 9 3 11 3 16 14 17 3 17 18 11 16 11 4 12 5 16 6 6
 2 4 14 2 12 13 6 18 15 12 10 8 12 14 10 7 9 1 19 5 4 19 8 10 19 3 11 9 10 11 1 10 4 5 5
 16 15 4 2 7 9 5 19 4 3 13 10 1 10 4 8 6 2 7 9 15 17 19 3 19 16 3 3 7 13 2 1 18 12 17 7 2
 13 14 2 9 11 6 8 9 11 8 15 12 15 9 16 1 1 17 3 11 19 4 20 1 11 17 8 2 17 9 13 12 2 3 10
 1 13 2 4 11 11 9 12 1 6 13 5 20 8 3 19 16 9 7 13 18 1 13 4 16 2 15 19 1 9 3 9 3 2 1 6 17
 7 8 13 6 8 2 6 20 20 10 4 12 4 3 17 17 15 8 16 6 18 16 11 2 11 10 14 19 9 12 20 15 1 14
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Table 31: Paper d20 (Spin Pencil and Point)

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 3 2 3 2 3 4 1 5 2 5 4 6 2 4 5 1 4 5 1 3 4 2 3 2 6 5 4 2 3 2 2 1 3 5 6 4 5 6 5 1 5 6 5 2 4 2 3 3
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Table 32: Paper d6 (Spin Pencil and Point)

- The characters seem weak or die too often.
cf. pp. 6ff., 17, 19f., 28, 32ff.
- First make sure you are using the rules correctly by reading about damage, death and healing on pp. 19f. If you are playing a module for another system, remember you can add a module specific AV bonus (p. 28). In some modules, characters and monsters also have more HP. Make sure you are not using those values directly—you should plug the HD values into *Whitehack*. If the problem persists, raise HP for all characters by adding their respective class HDs for level 1 to each level HD. For example, a level 3 Wise Druid gets HD 3+2, instead of HD 2+1.
- It is hard to agree on things.
cf. pp. 6ff., 14, 20ff., 32ff., passim.
- First try different ways of agreeing: Take turns deciding, do rock-paper-scissors, vote, roll dice, etc. If the problem persists, give the players an “override marker” each. If someone dislikes a ruling, she can override it using a marker, but if she does, the Referee may use that marker later on, against any player, to force a re-roll of any kind. This will soon result in a group discussion about what is reasonable. Listen carefully!
- Magic is too open-ended.
cf. pp. 20ff., 30f.
- First make sure you use the rules correctly. Miracle wordings are chosen *once each*, and every use and cost serves as a precedent for future uses. Be sure to also read p. 30f. If the problem persists, make a list of powerful and petty magic effects such as table 15, but for *your* setting.
- Tracking weight is a hassle.
cf. p. 12.
- Make sure you *only* track the weights of armor, weapons and treasure. A “normal” amount of utility objects always weighs 30 pounds (p. 12). If the problem persists, allow ten objects per character plus five in a backpack, sack or similar container, counting heavy objects as two or more. For every uneven number of additional objects, the character moves down a category in table 9 (i.e. moves slower).
- The characters have too much or too little gold.
cf. p. 14.
- What counts as rich or poor is a game world matter. If the characters level too fast or too slow, adjust the rate with quest XP, not with gold. If the characters lack incentive to go on adventure because they are too rich, have them *pay* their gold to use it as XP. They may pay for training, rare tomes, tutors, membership in affiliation groups etc.
- Monster keywords are too un-specific. How to know how to run regular monsters, or what abilities Strong characters can get from a kill?
cf. pp. 36ff., 41.
- A monster’s hard corners are the HD, AC and MV entries. Keywords can be used as characteristics (immunities, traits, abilities etc.) or just as inspiration. When in doubt and if it is possible, treat the keywords as miracle wordings to lessen the impact of overpowered keyword uses. As for Strong abilities, listen to what the player wants. It is usually good material. For example, a Strong character that slays a minotaur could learn a powerful headbutt or how to sniff her way out of a labyrinth. If she kills a gnoll chieftain she could learn a special warcry. Try to find powers that suit the monsters they came from. But you shouldn’t let this happen all the time. Save it for special monsters, like bosses, or for first kills. A Strong character who kills her first goblin may learn some dirty fighting trick, but when she kills her umpteenth goblin, she likely learns nothing.

Ability: Some kind of trait that lets a character do something unusual. Each class has special abilities.

AC: Armor Class. A measure of how hard the character is to hurt.

Adventure: A prepared (written) RPG adventure, which usually turns out a bit differently when you sit down and play.

Affiliations: The character's contacts, such as organizations or powerful beings.

Attack rolls: Rolling dice to attack someone in combat.

Attribute: A character attribute. There are six attributes in the game—Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma.

Auctions: Longer contests where you make bids. Auctions are resolved through task rolls in order of highest bidder. You have to roll over your bid but under or equal to an attribute. The last bidder does not have to roll in order to win if everyone else fails.

AV: Attack Value. Roll under or equal to AV, but over AC, in order to hit an opponent.

Campaign: A series of adventures that are more or less related.

CL: Corruption level. In some campaigns, you may be subject to radiation, insanity etc.

Class: The character type, such as Deft, Strong or Wise.

Contests: Contests, like when you compare strength, are resolved through opposite task rolls.

Crits: Rolling your value exactly in a task or attack roll means a spectacular success. Critical attacks do double damage.

Double rolls: Sometimes you roll two dice and pick the best or the worst of the outcomes (positive or negative double rolls).

Fumbles: Rolling 20 in a task or attack roll (and some saves) means a terrible failure. You may save to avoid fumbling an attack roll.

Groups: Each character belongs to groups that define her. There are three kinds: Species, Vocations and Affiliations.

HD: Hit Dice. Roll to obtain HP. If you get a lower number than the last time you rolled for HP, you may keep the previous result.

HP: Hit Points. A measure of a character's ability to stay alive and to perform miracles. HP can be reduced by damage points.

HP Cost: The cost in HP for performing a miracle.

Inactives: Abilities you have but cannot currently use, as they are not in any slot.

Initiative: Roll a d6 and modify for high dexterity in order to go first in combat.

Level: The character's level of experience, 1–10.

Miracle: A magic effect.

Miracle Wording: A phrasing of a miracle, such as "Magic Light" or "Voice of Doom," that is the basis of what you can do with it.

MV: Move. The amount of feet or grid squares the character moves in 10 seconds.

Quality: The face value of the die in a successful roll.

Rare Class: A class you can only pick under certain circumstances. The Brave, The Fortunate and Species as Class (of different kinds) are examples of this.

Round: A 10 second period of time.

Saving Throw: Roll under or equal to the saving throw number (ST) in order to avoid things like traps.

Setting: Where the adventures take place.

Slots: Spaces for a character's class abilities. An ability is usable when it is in a slot.

Special attacks and combat options: Special ways of attacking, such as Feint or Trip.

Species: Dwarf, elf etc. Without a species, the character is in the game world norm group.

Species as Class: A detailed species with restrictions of class.

ST: See Saving Throw.

Task rolls: Challenging tasks require a roll under or equal to a relevant attribute.

Trained roll: Task rolls that require specific training (a relevant group).

Turn: Your turn in the initiative order during a round.

Vocations: What the character does in the game world, like a Fighter or a Thief.

XP: Experience Points. To rise in level, earn XP from killing monsters, acquiring gold and finishing quests.

Italicized pages 36–57 are potential spoilers for player readers.

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