



# Swordheaven

TM

## Book One

**Design:**

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# Introduction to Role Playing Games

## What is Fantasy Role-Playing?

*Swordbearer* is a fantasy role-playing game (RPG). It does not use a standard board or pieces. It can be played by any number, from two to ten or more. There are no winners and losers in the conventional sense. Furthermore, a game can continue through many meetings, to become an extended 'campaign' lasting months or even years.

*Swordbearer* is a game of fantasy. You may encounter magic, creatures, and mysterious happenings in strange, new worlds. Most importantly, it is a game of role-playing. You take the role of a character other than yourself. You imagine yourself a fantasy personage, develop a new personality through your actions and style of play. The character you play could be an heroic fighter or a stealthy thief, a noble elf or a rough-hewn dwarf, a captain of a high lord or apprentice to a malevolent wizard. You will go on hazardous adventures and quests, strive for power, and gain new knowledge of the fantasy world about you. In your adventures you will encounter powerful monsters and arcane magic.

Young children sometimes imagine sticks as swords, and chase each other in the backyard, engaging in role-playing. Here you don't actually run about slashing wildly at enemies. Instead, you imagine such scenes, guided and aided by these game rules. Miniature figures painted to appear like your character can be used, to help your 'mental picture' of the adventures. Sometimes you'll need to position and move these figures on small diagrams of battle areas, to help show complex situations.

Enjoying a role-playing game is similar to enjoying a good book, movie or TV show. In each case, you forget the cares and problems of everyday life, and let your mind wander to a 'fantasy' world. Here you can identify with and enjoy the adventures of a favorite character. In *Swordbearer* you can actually create your own favorite character, or a number of them, rather than using someone created by a movie scriptwriter or author. Of course, you can model your character after others, even include aspects of yourself. At times it is fun to pick a totally incongruous personality and play it to the hilt. In short, role-playing lets you be creative and imaginative — to be someone entirely new and extraordinary.

## Format of a Role-Playing Game

A role-playing game has a gamemaster, who acts as judge and 'god' of the fantasy world, and players, who each control one (or more) characters in an adventure. The gamemaster creates events, responds to players' decisions and actions, and generally administers the game. The players each have their own private goals, short-term and long-term, but are presumed friends and adventuring together for game purposes.

A role-playing game begins with the gamemaster and his fantasy world. The gamemaster must 'set the stage' by making notes about the general region and specific locales. He must firmly fix the background in his mind, and often into a number of folders of notes! The gamemaster must be familiar with the rules, and note any modifications or additions he (or she) is using. A good gamemaster will also develop a variety of 'scenarios', or potential situations that send players off on different adventures. To help novices, a number of gamemaster aids are available, including scenarios that provide background for specific adventures. A new gamemaster is urged to make use of these, and then gradually expand or vary the situations to create his own unique fantasy realm.

Individual players have a much easier job. They must create their characters, including both the starting characteristics and whatever skills their initial experience allows. Then, at the start of each adventure, they must outfit themselves insofar as social status allows. Characters with any fighting skills should read the combat rules and be familiar with them, while characters with any magic skills should read the appropriate magic rules and have some familiarity with the methods and spells. However, as a player you need not master all the rules at

once. The gamemaster will guide the players through the game, explaining rules as necessary, and help you grasp things as they occur.

Often the gamemaster will create a variety of non-player characters (NPCs), who interact with the players' characters. NPCs can become friends or enemies, or simply go their own way. These encounters enliven the role-playing game, and players should expect them (and gamemasters prepare in advance a variety of interesting NPCs for various situations).

Ultimately, experienced players will become gamemasters themselves, so the original gamemaster can have the fun of adventuring in someone else's fantasy world.

## How the Game Plays

Typically, the gamemaster will 'set the stage' at the start of each session by telling players where their characters begin. For example, he might say, 'You are all acquaintances who shared a meal in the Stone-tree Tavern last night, and are now gathering for breakfast. The only other person eating is a royal messenger, accompanied by two tough-looking royal guardsmen. He comes over to your table and says, 'In the Name of Prince Grundersough, lord of this land, I command you to take this copy of a royal decree and deliver it to Bethar's Keep in the Northlands.'

Thus another adventure starts, and players now decide what they will do, and tell the gamemaster. They might accept the commission, and then decide to set off and do something else, or they might argue with the messenger, etc. The gamemaster decides what the messenger and his guardsmen will do in response, etc. As characters begin to travel around the town or countryside, the gamemaster informs them of interesting events, or asks them for their travelling positions if danger approaches (so he can better judge which character will meet the danger first, and in what situation).

These game rules provide outlines and guidelines that cover the typical situations that occur during a game. Many unique things can happen, and the gamemaster must determine the exact results based on common sense, and a spirit of fair play. Players, on the other hand, must trust the judgment of the gamemaster, since disappointment and failure must occur sometimes, to help balance victory and success!

## Gaming with Metal Miniatures

It is traditional for players to use a metal miniature for their character in a role-playing game. The standard scale is 25mm, that is, if the figure were standing at attention with bare feet and bare head, a 'normal' 6' tall man would be 25mm tall.

The gamemaster need not have a metal miniature for every character who appears in an adventure or campaign. However, NPCs that may accompany the party should have appropriate figures, and it is very helpful to have figures for battle opponents also.

To regularize spacing of figures, and help when fighting larger battles with tabletop armies, we recommend that human-sized foot figures be mounted on a thin square 1 inch by 1 inch. The figure should face one of the flat sides. Bases can be thin balsa wood, bass wood, plastic, or thick cardboard coated with a plastic varnish. Bases are painted to blend into the base of the figure itself.

# 1. Introduction to *Swordbearer*

*Swordbearer* has many unique aspects not found in other fantasy role-playing games. The sections below provide an overview of these concepts. You can then read the appropriate chapter of rules for a complete description and specific rules.

Experience RPG (role-playing game) players are urged to read this introduction also. *Swordbearer* is different: you will find the guidelines and overview valuable to grasp the unique aspects, applications, and possibilities in the game.

## 1.1 Terminology & Dice Conventions

**Character:** Any one creature in the game, intelligent or not. Humans, elves, dwarves, monsters, wild animals, etc., are all characters. Some are controlled by the players (a player's character), and some by the gamemaster (NPCs — non-player characters).

**Session:** A single afternoon or evening of play, where the gamemaster personally directs the activities of the players.

**Adventure:** One or more sessions that combine into a single 'quest' or activity. Short adventures may be just one session long, while more complex adventures could take a number of sessions to complete.

**Campaign:** A series of continuing adventures in a specific fantasy 'world'. Very often players and gamemaster begin with an adventure, and from that go to another adventure (using the same characters, and often the same region), and thus work into a 'campaign' naturally.

**Time:** The gamemaster keeps track of time in the fantasy game world using a normal 'clock,' where events during a session represent hours, days, even weeks of time in the fantasy world. The gamemaster lets game events travel quickly or slowly, depending on the degree of action and the complexity of the situation. Between adventures characters may remain 'static' (doing uninteresting chores like making a living!) for one or more weeks.

**Distance:** *Swordbearer* uses medieval-era units of distance for increased flavor. These are the 'pace' (equivalent to 30' of modern distance), the 'bloc' of 20 paces (equivalent to 50 feet of modern distance), and the 'league' of 300 blocs or 6,000 paces (equivalent to 2.841 miles). Historically, the pace and league used are quite similar to those used in medieval societies of western Europe. The 'bloc' is an arbitrary intermediate measurement useful for gaming, with no relationship to historical measures.

**Dice:** A variety of abbreviations are used to indicate the type of die (die is singular) rolled in particular situations:

**d6:** Marked 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in the standard fashion.

**d10:** Roll a twenty-sided die, marked 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. The '0' is considered '10' instead.

**d100:** Roll two different-colored twenty-sided dice (d10s). The darker color is the ten's digit, the lighter color the one's digit (white is preferable to ones-digit dice). The '0' is normally read as '0', but '00' together is considered '100.' For example, a dark 8 and light 9 would be 89; a dark 0 and light 5 would be 05 (or just 5), etc. This special two-digit roll is often called a 'percentage' roll, since the chance of a number occurring, or less, equals the percentage chance of that result.

**Percentiles:** If there is a 'percentage' chance of some event, such as a 40% chance of landslide, then a d100 roll is used. If the result is less than or equal to the percentage, the event occurs, a higher chance means a roll of 01 to 40 causes a landslide, while 41 to 100 means no landslide.

**1d-, 2d-, 3d-, etc.:** Roll the number of dice indicated and add the results together. For example, 2d6 means rolling two d6 dice and adding the result, 2d10 means rolling two d10 dice and adding the result, etc.

**+, -:** Add or subtract as indicated. For example, 1d6+1 means roll one d6 then add one; 2d10-2 means to sum two d10 rolls, then subtract two from the result; d6+d10 means to add together a d6 and a d10 roll.

**-x2, -x3, etc.:** Multiply by two (x2), by three (x3), etc., as indicated. For example, 1d6 x2 means roll one d6 die, then multiply the result by two.

**./2, ./3, etc.:** Divide by two (/2), by three (/3), etc., as indicated. For example, 2d10/2 means sum two d10 rolls, then divide by two.

**( ) or [ ]:** Do the arithmetic inside the parentheses ( ) or brackets [ ] first, then perform the operation outside. For example, (2d10

+2)x3 means to sum two d10 rolls, add two, and then multiply that result by three.

## 1.2 Rounding Off

Unless otherwise indicated, round fractions to the nearest whole number. Exact halves are rounded down.

## 1.3 Characters

*Swordbearer* uses a standard system for creating all characters, including other races and monsters. The 'prime' characteristics determined by initial dice rolls are: mass (which determines strength), agility, intelligence, age, experience, and social status. Strength normally equals mass, although there are variations for some races. Age determines the dice rolls for experience, but advanced age may also mean dicing for a decline in mass, agility, and/or intelligence.

Finally, a character must determine his or her skills. First one or two of the eight 'Spheres' are selected as specialties. A character will have an advantage learning skills within his or her specialty(ies).

Basic characteristics are deliberately kept single and straight-forward. A concept such as 'wisdom' is partly represented by a character's intelligence, and partly by his or her skills (a 'wise' character would have lots of knowledge in many different areas). Things such as 'dexterity' or 'speed' are mainly included in agility, but again quickness in specific actions depends on having the right skills (practice not only makes perfect, it also makes you faster, etc.).

Players are urged to imagine a background and history for their character — something that explains how he or she arrived at this point in life. Presumably, a player's character is now ready and willing to undertake a life of adventure, which means travel, danger, and perhaps rewards. Since most people tend to live 'normal' lives, some motivation or reason should be imagined for this. Motivations for adventuring can be complex, and perhaps secret (revealed only to the gamemaster).

Non-Player Characters (NPCs) generated by the gamemaster use the same system. The results are 'every day' people. NPCs of superior ability are created by awarding additional skills, appropriate to the function of the NPC (a king's bodyguards, for example, would have good fighting skills; a high master in a thieves' guild world have exceptional stealth skills, etc.).

## 1.4 Skills

In *Swordbearer*, the skills a character gains during his or her adventures are extremely important and valuable. Unlike other fantasy role-playing games (RPGs), in *Swordbearer* a player is master of his or her fate. Any combination of skills, from fighting to magic, thievery or professions, bribery to political administration, is possible. Initial experience is a method of representing skills already learned (to some degree) before the character's life of adventure begins.

Both players and the gamemaster should study the skill spheres, and the skills themselves very carefully. In the Fighting Sphere, weapon use and weapon speed interact with the combat rules to resolve fights. In the Magic/Religion Sphere, identifying elements and knowing magic for a type of element are both important, since trying to perform magic without this knowledge is nearly impossible, just like fighting without any weapon skills is impossible.

It is expected that most players' characters will concentrate on a few critical skills, such as weapon use and speed, simply for survival. Many of the skills are designed to provide additional avenues of interest once the basics are mastered, while others are included simply to cover the gamut of applicable professions, and will mainly be used by NPCs. Many skills, especially those in the Town and Country spheres, adventurers 'pick up' as they go along. Others will become necessary as social status increases. It is virtually impossible for a character to master all the skills in a lifetime, but constant acquisition and use of new skills makes both characters and the game dynamic, changing, and full of interesting new challenges.

## 1.5 Social Status

*Swordbearer* does not use money. Instead, each character has a social status level. A character is assumed to have funds and powers appropriate to that status. All materials, employees, and potential

monetary rewards are rated by the social status they require or offer. This feature is deliberately designed to simplify bookkeeping, sidestep the complex problems of medieval economics, and focus attention where it belongs: what concrete benefits do money and power provide? The system deliberately is left flexible, so the gamemaster can decide how detailed and strict he wishes social customs.

Players in *Swordbearer* must remember their social status, and act accordingly. A character who doesn't act according to his status risks either a fall in status (for failing to live up to expectations), or worse (for impersonating someone he isn't and living beyond his or her means). A variety of detailed justifications can be imagined by the gamemaster for the penalties imposed. Typically, players will search for higher status, and this provides the starting point for many adventures.

Although the social status concept may seem alien at first, just a bit of experience with it will reveal that it represents the problems and 'consciousness' of medieval-era fantasy adventuring far better than the 'dollars and cents' of 20th century American capitalism!

### 1.6 Combat

*Swordbearer* has a system for resolving fights. The gamemaster determines when a fight situation exists, and can choose between two scales (one for long range fighting, and one for close-range fighting). The players announce the actions of their characters each period (of 20 seconds) or instant (of 4 seconds), with characters of higher combat quickness rating deciding last (and thus able to react to another's declaration). Then characters are moved, fire missiles, strike with weapons, etc., according to their announced actions.

The order in which weapons are used can be important. Characters with a higher weapon speed fire or strike before those with a lower speed. There are various exceptions for using shields, parrying with weapons, etc. Generally, in order to score a hit with either a missile, or a strike, a d100 less than or equal to the weapon use skill is needed.

If a character is hit, dice are rolled to see how many 'wound points' are suffered, and what location on the body is hit. Armor at that location may absorb/deflect one or more points. If wound points at any one location of the body add up to half or more a character's mass, that location is disabled. If the overall wound points at all locations add up to the character's mass, he or she collapses unconscious and bleeding to death. A character who survives the battle may gradually heal wounds. Various skills and certain magic spells may aid this process.

### 1.7 Wounds

Injury in *Swordbearer* is rated in 'wound points,' which occur in some location on the body (such as an arm, leg, torso, head, etc.). Combat, magic, and failure in some skills can all cause wounds, as well as random events imposed by the gamemaster. Individual wound points per se have no effect on a character. However, the accumulated effect of wounds in one part of the body can disable it, and if the overall accumulation of wound points exceeds a character's mass, he or she is unconscious and dying. Wounds can be healed by rest, but use of various skills and magic can quicken the process.

*Swordbearer* also includes some basic rules for wounds from poison, infections, and typical diseases. These are only an introduction to the subject, allowing ambitious gamemasters with advanced players to build and expand further.

### 1.8 Magic

*Swordbearer* actually has two types of magic. The first is 'elemental' magic described in this rules set. Elemental magic is the basic, classic

form of magic common to all fantasy worlds. Of course, in some areas its functions are cloaked in religious rituals, and thus not known to outsiders. In addition, a more arcane and complex branch called 'spirit' magic deals with the essence of living things. As a general rule, mastery of elemental magic is suggested (but not required) before one attempts spirit magic. More powerful forms of elemental magic, and additional varieties of spirit magic may be created by the gamemaster.

Elemental magic spells are powered by 'nodes' of an appropriate element. Nodes represent the pure essence of material that composes the world itself. Characters identify, mentally contact, and contain nodes as they find them. Characters with the skill to identify nodes can search for them, while those without this skill must rely on chance encounters. Once a character has a node, he or she can then 'align' it to himself and a certain magic spell. This 'powers' the spell, and allows the character to cast it then, or at any later time. Using a more complex procedure, nodes and spells can both be 'aligned' to material objects, such as swords, gems, crystals, rings, etc. This is called enchantment, and gives the object magical properties on a (usually) permanent basis.

There are seven different types of elements, each with their own spells, which can only be powered by nodes of those elements. A character who can identify all seven elements, knows all seven groups of spells, and has nodes of all those elements is termed a 'wizard.' Special procedures exist for linking different nodes together in a 'chain' to cast spells faster, and to work more powerful enchantments. Wizards, by controlling all elements, become exceptionally powerful in this regard.

Although this magic system may seem somewhat complex, by distinguishing between spells and the material that powers them, a gamemaster can retain far better control over magic in his or her fantasy world, and eliminate the problems that occur when characters gain access to powerful magic spells or artifacts. In *Swordbearer*, a character might know a lot of spells, but a lack of magic nodes would render him or her virtually powerless! In some cases, the search for powerful nodes could become an adventure in itself, and a secondary motivation for any character involved with elemental magic.

It is strongly recommended that both players and the gamemaster begin with elemental magic, and only later travel to regions where spirit magic is known, much less introduce additional forms of magic, or additional spells.

### 1.9 Worlds of the Gamemaster

This game system was deliberately designed to cover a wide spectrum of fantasy worlds. The basic system is flexible enough to permit many unique variations and 'custom tailored' situations. Most fantasy is set in a roughly medieval world of knights and lords, plate armor and swords, with slow communications and rudimentary economic activity. However, *Swordbearer* can also accommodate worlds such as nomads on the asiatic steppes, Japan in the era of Samurai warriors, or realms such as ancient Greece and Rome. A gamemaster should feel free to create his own world (or worlds), and with a little reading into history and historical fiction, can easily create a variety of unique aspects that lend color.

However, it is wise to remember that the gamemaster's function is to guide the players and provide for enjoyable, challenging adventures. Hair-raising dangers should include hair-breadth escapes, while rewards should come in increments, preferably leading to new and more challenging situations. Planning aspects of the region, its locales, interesting residents, and a few salient events for each adventure will go a long way toward more enjoyable games.

## 2. Creating a Character

As a player, you 'create' your character by rolling dice in six separate categories. The result of each roll determines how 'good' or 'bad' your character is in that category. These categories are mass, agility, intelligence, age, experience, and social status. Remember that your character can vastly improve his or her abilities during a game, so that 'poor' dice rolls at the start are not necessarily a disadvantage. In fact, with a weak character you will find other players expect less of you, or alternately you can take more risks (since you have less to lose!).

These rules describe how to create a human character, and are explained in detail. Actually, many races can be used for characters. A complete listing of all races and the dice rolls used for their attributes are provided in the Racial Index. The same basic procedures and methods are used for all races, unless an exception is given in the Racial Index.

The dice rolls for experience can be 'cashed in' for specific skills and knowledge for your character. See the next chapter, Activity, Skills and Experience for details. Once you have established the specific skills and abilities of your character, you will find that creating a name and personal history will be quite easy. This lends extra 'personality' and 'life' to your gaming, and is recommended.

### 2.1 Mass & Strength

**Mass** represents the overall constitution and ability to survive of a character. The greater the mass, the more difficult he or she becomes to kill. Mass is normally related to size (bigger mass suggests a bigger person), but some exceptions could exist, such as a small but stout person.

To determine the mass of a human character, roll  $1d10+1d6+2$ . That is, add together one d10 roll, one d6 roll, and two. Human mass therefore ranges from 4 to 18, with 11 as the average.

**Strength** of most characters, including humans, is the same as their mass. Some races have a strength greater or less than their mass.

### 2.2 Agility

**Agility** represents the speed, quickness, dexterity, and general coordination of a character. The higher the agility of a character, the quicker he or she can act in combat, and the better he or she can manipulate complex items (such as picking a lock, making or repairing crafted items, playing an instrument, writing or forging documents, etc.).

To determine the agility of a human character, roll 2d10. That is, roll two d10 dice and add the result. Human dexterity is therefore between 2 and 20, with an average of 11.

### 2.3 Intelligence

**Intelligence** represents the mental faculties of a character, including quick thinking, logical analysis, general wisdom, and insight. The higher the intelligence, the sooner a character can make a decision, and the more a character will understand and respond to a situation. The gamemaster may provide additional clues or information to characters

of higher intelligence, to represent this advantage.

To determine the intelligence of a human character, roll 2d10. That is, roll two d10 dice and add the result. Human intelligence is therefore between 2 and 20, with the average 11. If you wish to know the exact IQ rating of a character, multiply intelligence by 4, then add 65 and the roll of one more 6d die. Character IQs therefore vary between 74 and 151, with the average character IQ being  $112\frac{1}{2}$  (a bit above normal — player characters are somewhat special people!).

Intelligence of '0' means a mental defective, senility, or a similar mental handicap. Intelligence below zero means brain death, the character is now just a 'vegetable.'

### 2.4 Combat Quickness

This is the sum of a character's agility and intelligence. Combat quickness determines the order in which characters announce action during combat. A character with higher quickness can respond faster to situations. This means, in the game, he or she can either take action before an opponent, or wait until the opponent is committed to an action, and then respond. Quickness applies to general activities in combat ('tactics') such as whether to close for swordplay or try to remain out of reach, etc. Actual skill with weapons determines who can shoot first or strike first. Human combat quickness varies from 4 to 40, with an average of 22.

### 2.5 Age

The starting age of character can modify many other aspects, due to the greenness of youth, or the infirmity of old age. There are advantages to each, and the aging process may be slower or faster for specific races. Human age groupings and their aging process is given here (for other races, see the Racial Index).

To determine the age of a human character, roll  $[2d10 \times 2] + 10$ . In other words, roll 2d10 (two d10 dice added together), double (x 2) this total, and then add ten (+ 10) to the result. The overall end result will be between 14 and 50 inclusive, representing an age span appropriate to characters embarking on high adventure.

Depending on the age of your character, one of the following four age categories can be used, to provide a general impression: *youthful*: age 21 or less; *young adult*: age 22-31; *mature adult*: age 32-41; *older adult*: age 42 or more.

### 2.6 Experience

A character will have already learned various skills before embarking on adventures. Experience is a simple way to regulate how many skills a character has, and how good he or she may be at these skills. Experience points are 'cashed in' for specific skills, described in the chapter on Activity Spheres, Skills and Experience.

Actual experience points die rolls are based on the age category of the character:

Youthful character . . . . .	age 21 or younger . . . . .	1d6 roll for experience points
Young Adult character . . . . .	age 22 to 31 . . . . .	2d6 roll for experience points
Mature Adult character . . . . .	age 32 to 41 . . . . .	3d6 roll for experience points
Older Adult character . . . . .	age 42 or older . . . . .	4d6 roll for experience points

In addition, the intelligence of a character will add or subtract to the total experience. Consult the list below for the appropriate addition or subtraction to experience points.

intelligence 2 or less . . . . .	-1 experience point
intelligence 3 to 8 . . . . .	no change in experience points
intelligence 9 to 13 . . . . .	+1 experience point
intelligence 14 to 17 . . . . .	+2 experience points
intelligence 18 or more . . . . .	+3 experience points

### 2.7 Gamemaster Options

Often the gamemaster may use alternate systems for determining age, experience, and sometimes social status. The various alternatives are discussed in the Gamemaster's Guide Section. A standard alternative for 'balanced start player characters' is given in Intelligent Races. It is

the responsibility of the gamemaster to inform all the players of any alterations, such as those noted above.

### 2.8 Decline of Characteristics

The mass, strength, agility and eventually intelligence of a character will decline in later years. Each characteristic has an age after which decline begins. For humans, these ages are:

- **Mass** declines after age 50.
- **Strength** declines after age 40 (note that strength declines separately from mass)
- **Agility** declines after age 30.
- **Intelligence** declines after age 60.

**Dicing for Decline:** for each year a character lives past the age of de-

cline, make a separate 1d6 roll for each characteristic that could decline. A result of 6 exactly means the character is reduced by one (-1).

### 2.8.1 EFFECT OF DECLINE

When characteristics drop due to aging, wounds, etc., special situations may occur:

**Senility** occurs when intelligence drops to zero. The character is incapable of prolonged rational thought, although glimpses of intelligence may occur. Player must roll 1d10 and beat gamemaster's 1d10 roll to exercise rational thought in a situation.

**Crippling** occurs when agility drops to zero. Character needs family, friends or servants to perform normal body motions, including being carried, being fed, being dressed, etc. Character may retain some use of a few limbs.

**Fragility** occurs when mass drops to zero. Age, disease or wounds have made the character so weak that any situation adverse to the body causes death.

If any characteristic drops below zero and is not immediately healed or cured, the character dies. All declines due to aging are presumed cured.

### 2.9 Social Status

The social status represents the 'class' to which a character belongs. Even if society lacks a class or caste structure, social status still applies. It represents a character's job, money, connections by family, education, etc. In some societies it is very hard to change classes (especially upwards), but in *Swordbearer* upwards (and downwards) changes in class are presumed relatively easy — almost as easy as in 20th Century America.

Normally, social status for a human is determined with a 2d10 roll, so the result changes from 2 to 20, with an average of 11. The gamemaster may modify this for specific worlds, or to generate NPCs.

Social status is modified by age. A youthful character (age 21 or younger) must subtract one (-1) from his or her social status, while an older character (age 42 or more) adds one (+1) to social status. A character that starts at status one (1) is presumed an escaped slave or indentured servant, and may elect class zero (outcast) instead.

### 2.10 The 'Nature' of a Character

Once you determine characteristics, and use experience points to select appropriate skills, you will develop a mental image of your character. You should decide what background your character has, and what motivated him or her to start a life of adventure. Quirks of personality, temperament, and style should be noted. As you play, try to keep your activities consistent with the 'nature' of your character — your character may do rash and stupid things that you personally would never consider!

A character needs goals for both the adventure and the campaign. The gamemaster may provide or give the players' characters various goals or motivations, or the players may be invited to create their own.

### Example of Character Generation

A player decides to create a character. The 1d10 + 1d6 + 2 mass roll yields a d10 result of '1' and a 1d6 result of '1', so the mass of the character is '4'. The strength is therefore also '4'. The 2d10 agility roll results in '16', the 2d10 intelligence roll results in '12', and the [2d10 x2] + 10 age roll starts with a 2d10 result of 14, which becomes [14x2]+10, or 28+10, or 38 years of age. The character is therefore a mature adult with a 3d6 experience roll, with a +1 because the intelligence is in the 9-13 range. The experience 3d6 roll is 17, so the overall experience available is 18. The 2d10 social status roll is 5. The character's combat quickness is agility plus intelligence, or 16+12, or 28, a rather good result.

The player examines the character, and finds it is small and weak, highly agile, reasonably bright, extremely experienced, not very wealthy, but quick thinking in tight spots. Such a character is best suited for the life of a thief, magician, acrobat, gypsy, etc. The player decides to make the character a female sorceress named Wesp. The player decides she has little money, coming from a poor family, but her uncle taught her the rudiments of magic. Although beautiful, her poor clothes and lack of make-up conceal this beauty from most. She has finally decided to exploit her magic knowledge and try to make something of herself and her life.

### 2.11 Characteristic Test

At various times during an adventure, a character may need to 'test' his or her intelligence, agility, strength, etc. to perform a certain action. The action itself will have a difficulty level and value. Average difficulty is value 22, and all tests are presumed to be average unless indicated otherwise.

To make a test, the player rolls 2d10 and adds to that the characteristic tested. If the result exceeds the difficulty value, the character has 'overcome' the difficulty and the test is passed. If the result is equal to or less than the difficulty value, the character failed to overcome the test.

**Judging Difficulty** is done by the gamemaster. Below is a guide to levels of difficulty, and the appropriate values for each. All judgments should take the average human in good physical condition as the norm. Other races will have higher or lower characteristics values to reflect their increased abilities or problems, there is no need to adjust the difficulty of the test itself.

- 15 . . . very easy test
- 18 . . . easy test
- 21 . . . average test . . . (requires characteristic to 2+ to pass at all)
- 25 . . . hard test . . . (requires characteristic to 6+ to pass at all)
- 28 . . . very hard test . . . (requires characteristic of 9+ to pass at all)

**Example:** A character with intelligence 14 tries to figure out a problem of average difficulty (value 21). The player rolls 2d10 and gets a '8'. This is added to the intelligence (14+8) for 22, just enough to beat the difficulty value of 21. A roll of 7 or lower would mean the character failed the test, and thus didn't figure out the problem.

## 3. Skills, Experience and Activity Spheres

### 3.0.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The knowledge and abilities of each character are determined by the skills he or she knows. Skills are grouped together into 'activity spheres'. A character will specialize in one or two of these spheres, and will learn those skills faster. However, with only a few minor exceptions, any character can learn any skill. There are no 'character classes' that restrict avenues of advancement. Each character starts with initial levels in various skills, selected by the experience already available to the character. During the course of game adventures, characters may gain additional skills, or improve existing skills, usually through successful use of that skill.

**Activity Spheres:** There are eight activity spheres: Fighting, Stealth, Town, Country, Magic, Leadership/Administration, General Knowledge, Arts & Crafts.

**Specialization:** A character selects any one or two spheres as his or her specialties. A character receives faster advancement in skills of these sphere(s). Of course, a character can still learn skills in other spheres. Selecting just achievement, but no other advantage. Specialization spheres represent the natural inclinations of the character, family upbringing, tradition, skills used locally and early apprenticeships.

**Skill Rating:** Most skills use a rating system, which runs from 0 to 100. A '0' rating means absolutely no ability whatsoever, while 100

means absolutely flawless and perfect ability. Many skills have a maximum level below 100.

Some skills are rated 'yes' or 'no.' This means the character either knows the skills, or does not. Yes/no skills predominate in magic and general knowledge.

**Minimum Skills:** Most rated skills have a certain minimum level, based on one of the character's abilities. For example, in stalk & slink skill, the minimum rating is the character's agility. Therefore, a character with agility of 11 automatically stalk & slink skill of 11. In some cases, there is minimum, which means the minimum is 0 instead. In all yes/no skills, the normal minimum is 'no.'

**Maximum Skills:** All rated skills have a maximum level. Sometimes this is a specific level, such as '99' or '100.' Often it is a short formula that includes both a fixed number and one of a character's abilities. For example, the maximum skill level for stalk & slink is '80+[agility]', or the character's agility plus eighty. Thus a character with an agility of 11 would have a maximum skill level of 91. Another example is politician skill, where the maximum is '60+[intelligence x2]', or intelligence doubled, plus sixty. Thus a character with an intelligence of 12 would have a maximum level of (60+[12 x2]) or 84.

**Note** that if a character's abilities, social status, etc. change, then any minimums and maximums related to those abilities must also change. Since most characters start with a minimum based on some ability, and then add to it (due to experience, etc.), if the ability related to the minimum changes, the skill level itself will change by an equal amount.

**Crossover Skills:** Some skills are found in two spheres. If a character specializes in either sphere, he or she gets the benefit of specialization with the skill. In effect, the player can 'count' the skill in whichever sphere desired, to get maximum benefit. There are no other advantages to a crossover skill.

### 3.1 Selecting Skills: Initial Experience

**Specialization:** a character must select one or two spheres as his/her 'specialties.' These spheres can never be changed, nor can new ones be added later. Specialization spheres represent background, early education, and personal preferences.

**Use Initial Experience:** The experience points of a character are all 'spent' to achieve improvements in a character's skills beyond the minimum. Experience points are translated into additional skill points as follows:

'Yes' in a specialization sphere skill costs one (1) experience point.

'Yes' in an unspecialized skill costs two (2) experience points.

Adding 3d10 to an arts/crafts skill costs one (1) experience point if specialized in that sphere, and the current rating for that skill is 59 or less.

Adding 2d6 to an arts/crafts skill costs one (1) experience point if not specialized in that sphere, and/or the current rating for the skill is 60 or more.

Adding 2d10 to any other skill costs one (1) experience point if the character is specialized in that skill's sphere.

Adding 1d10 to any other skill costs one (1) experience point if the character is not specialized in that skill's sphere.

In other words, one experience point adds 2d10 to a specialized skill, or 1d10 to an unspecialized skill. In arts/crafts skills, each experience point adds 2d6, unless the character is specialized in that sphere and has a rating under 60, in which case 3d10 is added instead. If the skill is the yes/no type, 'yes' costs one experience point in a specialized sphere, two points if not specialized in the sphere.

**Maximum Initial Rating:** If a character has not specialized in a sphere, he or she cannot use experience to gain a rating higher than 40 (or 'yes'). If a character is specialized in the sphere, the maximum experience rating is 70 (or 'yes').

In the arts/crafts sphere, there is no limit to the initial rating. Non-player characters (NPCs) may also exceed these maximums in certain cases.

Do not confuse the maximum initial rating, available through experience, with the maximum overall rating — the highest level a character can attain.

**Single Sphere Specialization:** If a character specializes in one less sphere than normal (just one sphere for humans), he or she receives a bonus of 1d6 additional experience points to use in the specialized sphere(s). Initial skill is not limited to 70, it can be any amount up to the maximum. Furthermore, the overall maximum for each specialization skill increases 1d6, although it cannot exceed 99.

**Literacy:** A character who specializes in general knowledge and is social status 5 or higher automatically has the skill to read and write. For all other characters literacy is a skill that must be gained in the normal fashion.

**Experience & Magic Nodes:** If a character can both identify an ele-

ment, and knows spells for an element, he or she can spend one (1) experience point for the privilege of 'buying' nodes (of that element) with experience points. Once this privilege is 'purchased' for an element, each node cost 2/3rds of its normal power in experience (i.e., a 1-node costs 2/3 experience point, a 2-node 1.1/3 experience point, etc.). Nodes purchased are presumed contacted, contained in any container of choice, and aligned to a spell if desired. Nodes can be enchanted into an appropriate object already if desired, but each enchanted node costs its full node power in experience points (not 2/3rds of its power).

A character with doctor/druggist skill of 40 or higher can also use this option, regardless of magic skills to acquire enchanted items.

### 3.2 Occupations: Life Before Adventuring

Each player's character is presumed to have had a prior occupation, before he or she took up the life of adventure (and begins the game). Many occupations are irrelevant, but some may give a character extra advantages, listed below.

**Note:** the purpose of these occupations is to encourage variety in characters, and reward those with unique backgrounds. The occupations are also designed to provide compensating advantages to characters who do not specialize in fighting, since these characters are often vulnerable due to lower fighting skills. The gamemaster may wish to modify, expand, or even eliminate these occupations depending on the preferences of local players, and their style of play.

**Occupational Restrictions:** A character can select only one of the occupations below. If a character has fighting as a specialty (even if just one of two specialties), or is social status 17 or higher, he or she cannot select any occupation below. Instead, the character is presumed to have been too prone to violence (if a fighter) to remain in any occupation for long, or too occupied with noble obligations (if status 17 or higher) to pursue a specific occupation.

**Stealth Occupation:** A character had a former occupation as a crook, including pickpockets, thieves, spies, con men, etc. A character must specialize in *stealth* and have one or more stealth skills rated 40 or more. A stealth occupation allows the character to have objects of a higher than normal social level, but each item counts as one extra toward the maximum of ten a character can carry (see Social Status rules for details on items and status). This is because the item must be kept hidden. If the character is revealed as owning the item in a public situation (either by using it openly, an accident, or by another 'squealing' on the character), then local law enforcement will take an interest in the character. This includes all nobles (social status 17 or higher), since they have a vested interest in social order to maintain their own position (although players' characters nobles may wish to ignore it).

**Merchant Occupation:** A character had a former occupation as a merchant or shopkeeper, and was successful in this. A character must specialize in *town* and have haggling skill rated 45 or more, as well as social status 5 through 16 (inclusive). Merchants are allowed two extra items (for a total of twelve) whenever they are in populated areas, including settlements, villages, towns, cities, castles, etc. This reflects organized thinking, and the ability to keep track of things in the chaotic press of urban settings — important attributes for any merchant or shopkeeper.

**Townsmen Occupation:** A character had a former occupation in a fully urban setting, such as a local politician, bureaucrat, cook, bartender, dancer, carriage man, messenger, underworld operator, etc. A character must specialize in *town* and have a town skill (other than haggling) rated 40 or more. Townsmen have their agility increased by two (+2) whenever in a populated area, such as settlements, villages, towns, cities, castles, etc. This reflects an ease of getting about in the tight quarters and densely packed populations of such areas.

**Countryman Occupation:** A character had a former occupation in the countryside, such as farmer, hunter, gathered, shepherd, etc. A character must specialize in *country*, and have a country skill rated 40 or more, as well as social status level 2 through 10 inclusive. Countrymen can ignore any two wound points suffered. However, once the points ignored are chosen, the decision cannot be changed, nor can additional wounds be ignored until the first are healed. When a wound point is 'ignored' it does not count toward any wound effects (either in the hit location, or the body as a whole), but still affects healing rates. This reflects a countryman's greater resilience, ability to bear hardships, and generally robust constitution. See 'Wounds' for details on wounds and healing.

**Craftsman Occupation:** A character practiced a specialized art or craft, often using 'tools of the trade' of special value, such as valuable costumes for a dancer, an engraved and gilded writing case for a scribe, a priceless instrument for a musician, etc. A character must specialize in *arts and crafts*, and have at least one art/craft skill rated 60 or more. In each art/craft skill where the character is rated 60 or more, he or



she is allowed an object resulting from the skill — as a sample, heirloom, 'tool of the trade,' tools or possession related to the skill. This object should be above the character's social level, but can be used freely and without penalty (such as a powerful bow for a bowyer, valuable weapon or piece of armor for an armorer, etc.) At any time this possession (one per skill rated 60+) can be 'sold' or 'pawned' to increase the character's social status by one. However, the character must then halve the skill's rating whenever he or she attempts to use it due to the lack of proper implements. By sacrificing a social status level, the character can buy back the tools or possession, or one of similar value, and regain normal use of the skill.

**Magician Occupation:** The character practiced magic, either as an independent mage, or as a member (cleric) of a cult, religious order, etc. For this occupation the character must specialize in *magic*, and must be able to both identify and know spells for at least one element. For each element the magician both knows and can identify, the character is allowed a 1d6 roll. If the result is 1 through 4, that is the number of 1-power nodes the character has of the element. If the result is 5, the character has three 1-nodes and one 2-node. If the result is 6, the character has three 1-nodes and two 2-nodes.

These nodes are already contacted and contained. They can be aligned to a spell already (no dice roll necessary), or they can be enchanted into an object (again, no dice roll needed), as desired. These alignments or enchantments are presumed to represent past successes of the character, and/or gifts from a mentor. They can be supplemented with nodes 'purchased' by experience points (see above). All enchanted items are presumed d100 years old, with an appropriate dice roll is needed to establish the age of each.

### 3.3 Natural Weapons

Most races have one or more 'natural' weapons. If a character uses his body to fight, the natural weapon is the one the character 'naturally' uses. Fists are the natural weapon for humans, a kick is the natural weapon for horses, etc. Note that with specific training, a character can use other parts of the body as a weapon (such as humans learning to use the kick as a combat weapon).

Unintelligent characters are normally without tools, and therefore can use only natural weapons. Some may have two or more natural weapons. See 'Animals' for details on unintelligent characters and their role in the game.

Intelligent characters can use a natural weapon in fighting instead of a normal weapon.

**Weapon Use Bonus:** The weapon use skill rating for a natural weapon is the *strength plus the agility* rating of the character (not just strength alone). Experience will improve upon this minimum value. This special skill rating only applies to the natural *weapon use*, not speed. This special skill rating does not apply or carry over to any other weapon skill.

### 3.4 Using Skills

Skills can be used in one of two ways: either as a personal action (done by one character), or as an interaction (done between two, or sometimes more characters). Using a weapon to cut or thrust or smash, working at an art or craft, etc. is a personal action. Hagging, bribery, etc. are interactions. Some skills can be used as either, depending on the situation (as judged by the gamemaster).

**Personal Action Skills** are resolved by a d100 roll. If the dice roll is *less than or equal to* the skill rating, it is performed successfully. For example, if the skill is rated 27, then a roll of 01 to 27 is needed for success, while 28 to 100 is a failure. A roll of 27 exactly means the character just managed to perform the skill, lower rolls means the skill was performed better and better, so a roll of 01 would mean a flawless, admirable job. Conversely, if the roll is higher than 27, the higher the result, the more dramatic the failure. A roll of 100 exactly means a complete failure and disaster. The gamemaster will normally impose additional penalties, injuries, etc. as appropriate.

**Interaction Skills** are resolved by each character rolling d100, and adding his or her skill level to the roll. The highest result is successful. For example, if two characters are gambling, each adds his or her gambling skill to a d100 roll, the higher total wins the 'game.' If Swenfors had gambling skill 19 and rolled '78', while Lillian had skill 39 but rolled '22', then Swenfors would win 97 to 61, despite Lillian's superior skill. Note that as the difference in skills increases, the likelihood of victory (successful use of the skill, while the other is unsuccessful) also increases.

### 3.5 Experience in Adventures

Characters who use skills during a session gain experience and qualify for skill improvement. Normally, improvements occur after a session

ends, but there are exceptions. Remember that an adventure may consist of many sessions, so a long adventure could lead to considerable improvement.

**Skill Use Requirement:** a skill can only be counted as 'used' in a session if it was fairly and properly tested. This must be determined by the gamemaster, but the general rule is that the character must be at risk, or risking something of value, to test the skill. For example, weapons use or speed are only used in actual combat situations. Shooting arrows into captives, or beheading slaves will not count as a proper test. On the other hand, duels or gladiatorial combat would count. Skills such as detect danger, detect concealment, etc., only count if used in a situation of actual danger or concealment — they may be used at other times, but success (or failure) won't count as a 'fair' use for possible improvement.

Note that 'fair and proper' use of a skill does not require success. Even if a character failed with the skill, at the end of the session he or she could count its use. After all, people learn from errors too!

**Extraordinary Bonus:** if a character uses a rated skill (not a yes/no skill), is successful, and rolls an 01-05 result inclusive, the character is allowed one intermediate skill improvement check. No more than one check per skill, per session is allowed — any additional 01-05 results, specialization, etc. do not give extraordinary bonus checks.

**Standard Experience Improvement:** at the end of a session, characters who fairly and properly used a skill are allowed one improvement check for that skill. If the character is specialized in that skill or sphere, he or she gains a double improvement (two checks). Note that even failure still earns this check (or checks).

### 3.6 Skill Improvement Checks

**Immediate Check:** If a character uses a rated skill (not a yes/no skill), succeeds, and rolls an 01-05 result (inclusive), the character receives an immediate skill improvement check. No more than one immediate check is allowed per skill, per session. Any additional 01-05 results do not give additional immediate checks. Specialization gives no extra immediate checks. However, receiving an immediate check does not prevent a session check (see below).

**Session Check:** At the end of a session, a character who used a skill fairly and properly in a test is allowed one improvement check. If the skill is in a specialization sphere, a second check (after the first) is allowed. Note that even if the characters fails with the skill, a session check (or two, if specialized) is allowed.

**Improvement Check Procedure:** To check for improvement, the character rolls d100 and adds to that his/her intelligence. If the total exceeds the current skill rating, improvement occurs. If the total is equal to or less than the current skill rating, no improvement occurs (skill remains as it was).

If improvement occurs, 1d6 is added to the current skill rating. Each improvement adds 1d6, so a character's skill may gradually increase. One session could result in as many as three improvement checks: once from an immediate check, once from a session check, and once from a second session check if the skill was in a specialization sphere.

Yes/no skills never receive improvement checks. The method for learning these skills is described in the appropriate section, and summarized below for magic and general knowledge.

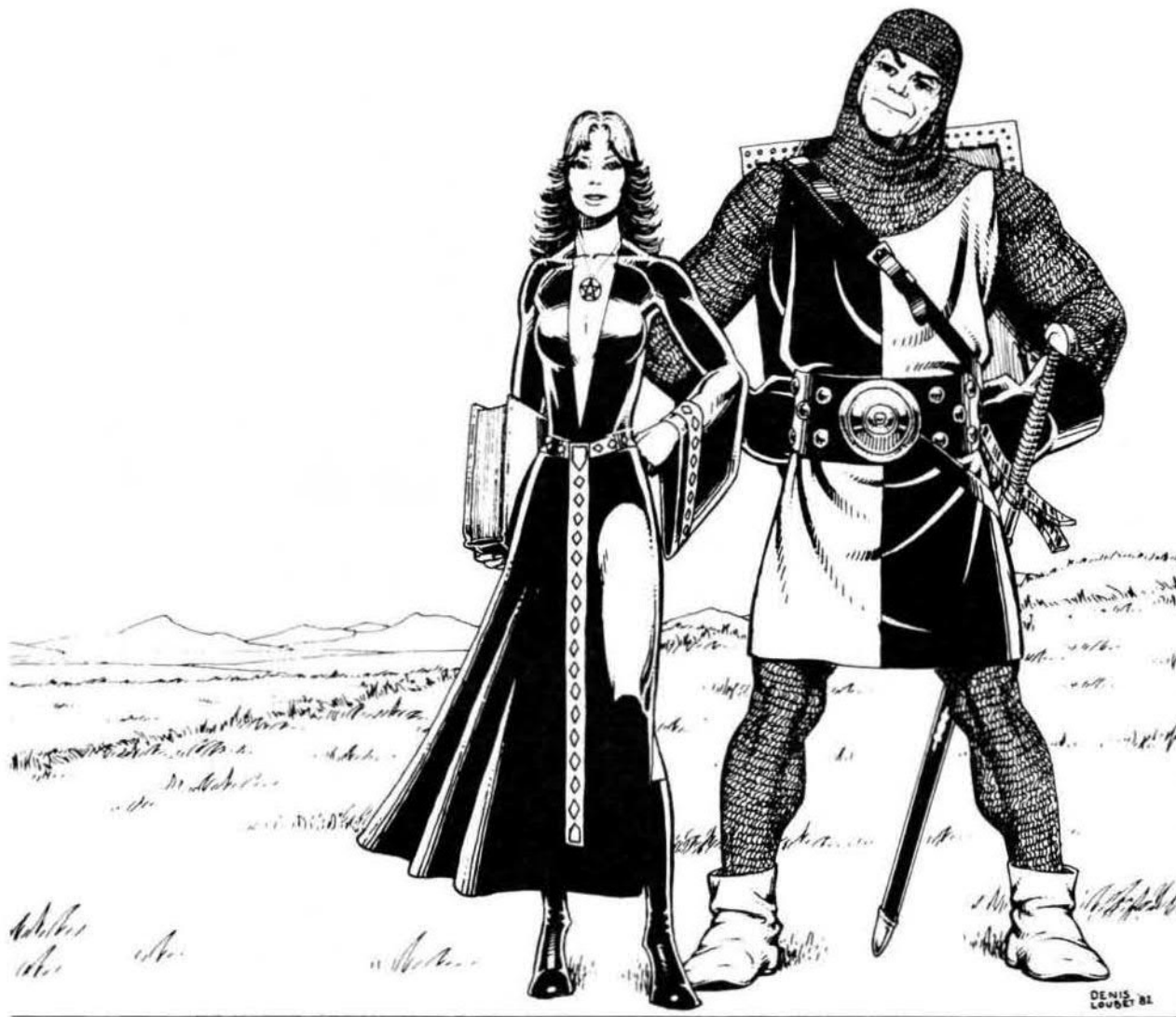
### 3.7 Special Rules for Skill Improvement

**Weapon Skills:** If a character uses a weapon, both weapon use and weapon speed checks occur (either immediate checks, or session checks, as appropriate). These checks are made separately, so a character might improve in either use, or speed, or both. Since no dice rolls are made for weapon speed, a weapon use result that causes an immediate check results in an immediate check for both speed and use.

If an improvement check is successful, improvement occurs with a 1d6 roll must be shared between the two skills. A single cause for improvement check, even if both use and speed are successful, can only result in a single 1d6 improvement roll. The results of this roll can be shared in any way desired, including giving all to use, or all to speed, or part to each.

Each separate weapon has its own improvement checks. As a result, a character could end up check for improvement many times, but no more than three per session for any one weapon (one immediate, one session, and one session if specialized in fighting).

**Arts & Crafts:** Only characters already rated at skill 1 or higher in an Arts/Crafts skill can improve it. A character with a zero (0) rating cannot improve in the skill until he or she performs an apprenticeship (see below). Once skill is gained by improvement is allowed. Sometimes an apprentice accompanies his or her master on an adventure, so time spent during the adventure may count toward apprenticeship and thus skill improvement.



**Magic:** Successful alignment of a node immediately gives a character ability to identify that element. This can occur during a session. In all other cases, knowledge of spells, or the ability to identify nodes, can only come from initial experience or activities between adventures (finding a teacher, reading appropriate materials, gaining membership in a cult or order, etc.).

**General Knowledge:** If a character makes a concerted effort during an adventure to gain information appropriate to a certain general knowledge skill, the gamemaster may reward him or her with an intelligence test after the session. Depending on the amount of information gained, the test might be average, hard or very hard. If the character specialized in general knowledge, the intelligence test will be somewhat easier (i.e., hard instead of very hard, etc.). Once a character has covered almost all of a locale or region in the course of adventures, he or she finds general knowledge of that locale or region is easy to gain (or very easy, if specialized in general knowledge).

### 3.8 Activities between Sessions or Adventures

There is often 'slack' time of a few weeks to a few months between sessions or adventures. During this time characters work at occupations, serve as apprentices, engage in study, hunt magic nodes, and/or simply rest to heal wounds. Characters should select their activities on a week by week basis, and if enough weeks are accumulated skill improvements or other benefits may occur.

**Activity Restriction:** Of the four major activities (apprenticeship, study, occupation, node hunting) no more than one may be pursued in any one week (exception: see Node Hunting). Once apprenticeship is begun, it must be continued until finished, and cannot be interrupted with another activity. Wounds and the need to heal may restrict the types of activities allowed as well. Also see Social Status & Finances.

**Apprenticeship:** A character can serve as an apprentice to learn one Arts/Crafts skill, or one Magic skill. To become an Arts/Crafts apprentice, the character must be social level three (3) to seven (7) inclusive. Characters below that level must achieve status three to become an

apprentice, those above the level must either sacrifice their social level to seven, or remain incognito successfully throughout the apprenticeship. To become an apprentice in Magic, the character must locate a suitable individual or group, and then fulfill entrance and initiation requirements. These vary at the discretion of the gamemaster, and often vary from one individual or group to another. Typical requirements are an intelligence test, payment of a proper type of node, payment of money equal to one social level (character drops a social level upon joining), making a trow pledge to a certain sort of life thereafter, acquiring an item of value first as payment (acquiring this item may require one or more adventures), etc.

Typically an apprenticeship lasts 2d10 weeks (historically, 1d6 years was more common). During this period the apprentice is the servant to his or her master. The apprentice has no opportunity for any other occupations or adventures, and is strictly limited to activities assigned and allowed by the master. The apprentice earns nothing — the master provides room and board, and in return for teaching will gain the entire fruits of the apprentice's labor.

At the end of apprenticeship, a character who learned an Arts/Crafts skill rolls 2d10 for his or her skill rating. In Magic the apprentice learns (gains 'yes' in) that particular skill. Normally, no more than one skill can be learned in a single period of apprenticeship. However, a character could prolong an apprenticeship to learn additional skills in Magic; in Arts/Crafts the character could take up that skill as an occupation (see below) in following weeks and thus gain additional experience.

**Study:** A character can study books and scrolls to gain understanding of magic or general knowledge. Naturally the character must acquire proper books first, which can be difficult at best. Study requires that the character read/write the language of the book. If not, the character must first acquire the read/write skill and then begin study. This is especially important for magic books and scrolls, which are often written in arcane languages.

The gamemaster should judge the exact learning difficulty of the item, typically very hard (if not specialized in the sphere) or hard (if

specialized in that sphere), and allow a character an intelligence test every month for success. Continuous study throughout the month is not necessary, but at least half the character's waking time that month should be spent on the task. The time required for each new test can vary, at the discretion of the gamemaster, depending on the degree of concentration the character makes toward study (for example, a character spending only a quarter of his or her time studying would need two months before a test, etc.).

Study is normally prohibited during an apprenticeship or an occupation. A character can study more than half the time if he or she has servants, etc. to look after his or her interest and welfare (finding food and preparing meals, washing clothes, and other everyday chores). About 80% of the day studying is a normal maximum for human endurance, but each day a character could study up to 100% of the time if he or she passes a hard intelligence test for that day.

**Occupation:** Most characters pursue an occupation at least part of the time between adventures, in order to maintain their social status (see Social Status, Finances). While pursuing an occupation, the character can claim the use of one skill where improvement can occur. Many occupations feature more than one skill, so the most important skill to the occupation should be chosen. The occupation should be logical and appropriate to the character's current residence (i.e., pursuing an occupation as Jeweler in the midst of an uninhabited wilderness is unreasonable, unless the Jeweler makes weekly trips to a town or city market to buy and sell goods). Occupations should be staid, dependable, and somewhat boring — exciting and venturesome occupations are the subject of adventures instead. Soldiering and police duty are reasonable occupations if the character can find a safe, quiet billet in a garrison, local militia, etc.

**Other Activity:** If a character has sufficient social status to do what he or she pleases (due to family income, servants to see to one's affairs, etc.), virtually any activity can become an occupation, including gambling, drinking, local politics, etc. These are treated similar to occupations (above).

**Node Hunting:** A character who can identify an element can spend the week searching for nodes of that element. The time spent is 'credited' toward the hours needed to find a node of that type (a time period secretly established by the gamemaster). Typically, a character can spend about 10 hours a day actually searching for nodes, since the rest is taken by sleeping, food preparation, basic living chores, etc. A character with sufficient status for servants to look after the 'details' of living could spend up to 15 hours a day searching (for nobility). Thus 70 hours a week is available, and with proper servants, as much as 105 hours per week, depending on the gamemaster's judgment of status and current situation. If a node is found during the week, remaining hours are credited toward finding the next node (if desired), and the character may attempt alignment or enchantment as part of the week's activity (contact and containment are presumed automatic).

For details regarding nodes and magic, see the chapter on elemental magic.

A character hunting nodes will find only two hours each day for this if also studying, in a full-time occupation, and/or acting as an apprentice.

### 3.9 Effect of Age on Skills

When a character suffers a loss in mass, strength, agility, or intelligence due to age, skills also decline. When any characteristic is reduced by age, every skill that has the characteristic in its minimum and/or maximum rating is also reduced. Roll 1d6 for each such skill determine the amount lost. For example, if a character's mass is reduced one, drinking skill is reduced by 1d6.

If a skill has two or more characteristics involved in its minimum and maximum ratings (climbing, for example, has both agility and strength), the skill is reduced if either characteristic suffers an age loss. If two or more characteristics for a skill suffer a loss, there is no additional penalty — skill reduced by just one 1d6 roll.

The minimum and maximum ratings for a skill may be revised, but only based on the revised characteristic(s). Skill loss (1d6 subtractions) due to age cannot drop below the new minimum level. Similarly, there may be a new maximum rating for the skill also.

### 3.10 Fighting Sphere

**Weapon Use:** (rated, min = strength, max = 80+[strength])

The ability to strike home with a selected weapon, or to parry with it. Each weapon is a separate skill, so a character may have different skill levels for different weapons. If two or more weapons belong to a common class, for every two points of skill a character gains in one weapon, one bonus skill point is received for every other weapon in that class. Bonus point awards do not, in turn, give more bonus points. Shields are a separate weapon class, in which a character can have skill,



like any other weapon.

**Natural Weapons:** many races have 'natural' weapons. The minimum skill for a natural weapon is strength plus agility, rather than just strength. The natural weapon for humans is the fist.

**Weapon Speed:**

(rated, min = agility, max = 80+[agility])

The ability to use a selected weapon quickly. As in weapon use, each weapon is a separate skill, but the character receives a bonus skill point for others in the same class whenever a specific weapon gains two skill points. A faster weapon speed allows a character to strike first in combat, to parry more effectively, and perhaps strike-and-parry, possibly even more than once. See Combat rules for details.

**Evaluate Opponent:**

(yes/no)

The ability to judge fighting skills of some other character. The observer can only evaluate characteristics and skills actually seen. In combat, this would include mass, strength, agility, and the skill in weapon use and weapon speed of the actual weapons in action. This skill can also be used to observe another outside of combat, while performing a physical activity that tests mass, strength, and/or agility.

**Learning to Evaluate:** if a character does not have this skill from initial experience, it is possible to gain it after any adventure session in which an unsuccessful (obviously) evaluation was attempted. To determine if the skill is gained, roll d100. If the result is half or less the character's intelligence, the skill is gained. Only one roll per session is allowed, and then only if the evaluate skill was attempted. For example, if a character's intelligence was 13 or less, a d100 roll of 01 to 06 would be needed to gain this skill.

**Ambush:**

(rated, min = agility, max = 80+[intelligence])

The ability to conceal oneself and prepare for combat. The benefit of a successful ambush varies, see Combat rules for details. However, a successful ambush always prevents the opponent(s) from reacting for a certain length of time, allowing the ambusher to strike first, escape, etc. The gamemaster must decide if an ambush is feasible, and may temporarily increase success of this skill depending on local conditions. Even if a character successfully uses ambush skill, the target can avoid the ambush with successful use of detect danger skill or detect concealment skill (if the ambush requires concealment to succeed).

**Detect Danger:**

(rated, min = intelligence, max = 80+[intelligence])

The ability to detect ambush, trap, or other risk just before it occurs. This skill is a combination of subliminal perceptions and a 'sixth sense' that gives the character an apprehensive feeling, without actually knowing precisely what danger approaches. The gamemaster decides the type of hint to give a player, depending on the degree of success in the dice roll. The greater the gap between the skill level and the successful roll, the greater the success, and the bigger the hint. However, the gamemaster should never give a completely accurate and detailed description. The gamemaster may give false danger senses from time to time, especially to characters who fail with this skill, or who have a low detect danger skill level.

### 3.11 Stealth Sphere

**Ambush:** (rated, min = agility, max = 80+[intelligence])

Same as fighting sphere skill.

**Detect Danger:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 80+[intelligence])  
Same as fighting sphere skill.

**Underworld:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 100-[social status])  
Same as town sphere skill.

**Conceal:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 80+[intelligence])  
The ability to hide an object, or create a hidden location within an area. Concealment includes creating and using secret compartments, hidden pockets, hidden safes, hidden objects, as well as complex disguises by a character. Concealment is used to avoid detection in general, and cannot play a role in combat (ambush skill must be applied instead). The time spent creating concealment, and the difficulty of the concealment itself, should suggest to the gamemaster how often he must check for successful use of the skill. For example, a quick concealment in an obvious spot would require the success of the skill to be checked immediately, and every few minutes thereafter, until someone notices the concealment (in addition, specific use of detect concealment skill could also reveal it). On the other hand, an exceptionally well-prepared concealment constructed during a number of days or weeks, in a good location, would require a check for initial success, and renewed checks every few months, years, or perhaps centuries!

**Stalk & Slink:** (rated, min = agility, max = 80+[agility])  
The ability to move and perform normal actions and skills silently and unobtrusively. This includes sneaking up or past people, moving without sound, striking silently in combat, picking locks or passing messages silently and without causing attention, etc. As long as a successful stalk & slink skilled character retains surprise in combat, he can inflict wounds silently, and thus could achieve a silent kill (with the continued use of this skill, in addition to continued success with weapons). Use of stalk & slink skill can be countered with detect danger skill, provided the stalk & slink action is posing a direct danger. Use of stalk & slink skill can also be countered by a nearby character who uses detect concealment skill.

**Detect Concealment:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 80+[intelligence])  
The ability to spot concealed items, such as hidden doors, secret panels, false bottoms, secret pockets, etc. This skill also allows detecting concealed actions such as use of stalk & slink, or a pickpocket. Success means the character spots the concealment, but not what is inside. For example, detecting a concealed trap will indicate one exists, but the exact danger posed or operating device may not be clear (disarm trap is needed at the least, and full analysis may require locksmith or builder skills). Detection is normally exercised over a specific area, such as wall of a room, short section of corridor, cluster of trees, etc. and takes about 1d6 minutes per area.

**Disarm Trap:** (rated, min = agility, max = 80+[intelligence])  
The ability to eliminate danger from a trap already detected (by detect danger, detect concealment, failure of conceal skill on trap, etc.). Disarming may require dismantling part of the trap, jamming it, or deliberately springing it. Failure to disarm may not be immediately obvious, or may result in the trap injuring the would-be disarmer, depending on the degree of sophistication in the trap, and the degree by which the disarmer 'missed' successful use of the skill. Disarming a trap normally takes 1d6 minutes, but complex traps may require much longer.

**Pickpocket:** (rated, min = 0, max = 2½x[agility + intelligence])  
The ability to perform an action concealed and undetected, although in close proximity to others. This includes taking items from locations (such as a table, shelf, etc.) as well as from another person (pocket, purse, etc.). If the item is protected by a lock, etc., locksmith skill success or a key is needed to pass this protection while successfully using the pickpocket skill. Concealed items must be detected before they can be taken (using detect concealment skill). Success with this skill allows the character to take the desired item unnoticed. However, if the item is bulky or easily missed, successful use of conceal skill (see above) may be necessary to remain unnoticed.

Failure with this skill means the character is unable to get the item. It also means the character is vulnerable to detection if trying to pickpocket another person. Each rolls d100 and adds his or her pickpocket skill to the roll. If the character who failed to pickpocket has a lower total, he or she is detected (fumbled the attempt badly enough to be noticed).

A character with pickpocket skill may use it to detect another pickpocket at work (in cases where the failure procedure above doesn't apply). This detection is an interaction situation, with each adding his or

her skill rating to a d100 roll — the detector needs a higher total for success. Note that in some cases detect concealment or detect danger could apply to pickpocket situations too, especially a 'reverse pickpocket' where an incriminating item is 'planted' on a character.

### 3.12 Town Sphere

**Diplomacy:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 80+[intelligence])

To talk convincingly, including skill at telling lies, making others see your point of view. This skill can be used in private conversation, with police, politicians, bureaucrats, etc. The skill does not apply in negotiations about goods or services of value, see haggling or bribery instead (below). However, diplomacy skill can be used to make a character receptive ('willing to listen') to a haggling or bribery offer.

This is an interaction skill; when a character seeks to convince another, each adds his or her diplomacy rating to a d100 roll, and a higher total is needed for successful convincing.

**Social Status Modifier:** when this skill is used, add double the social status of a character to the d100 roll (as well as the diplomacy skill). Thus characters with higher social status will have an advantage over those of lower status, and vice versa.

*Example:* Master Galbet (status 14, diplomacy 29) tries to lie about his whereabouts to Sir Rentfors (status 17, diplomacy 36), who suspects him of dallying with his daughter. Galbet rolls '64' while Rentfors rolls '55'. The respective totals are 64+29+28=121 for Galbet and 55+36+34=125 for Rentfors. As a result, Rentfors does not really believe Galbet's excuse, but Galbet came very close, leaving considerable doubt in Rentfors' mind. As a result, Rentfors will probably not take drastic action until he has additional evidence or information that implicates Galbet.

*Note:* this skill should be used when dealing with NPCs, but if the players are dealing with each other, it should not be used unless the gamemaster feels it is absolutely necessary. Instead, diplomacy between players' characters should be based on actual discussions and negotiations (in keeping with the nature of the characters) between those players.

**Haggling:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 80+½[intelligence])  
The ability to negotiate a higher or lower price for goods or services. This skill can be used in a 'major deal' to increase or decrease the value of something by one social status level. Haggling is an interaction skill, and can only be used if both parties are willing (an unwilling person could be convinced to haggle via diplomacy) — without haggling the standard price is used if one exists. Success is determined normally for interaction, although the gamemaster may rule that scores within ten (10) of each other count as a tie, especially in important transactions.

Haggling is often used in merchantile ventures, where success in buying below value and then selling above value can raise a character's social status. However, such deals take time for both buying and selling, and entail financial risk (so that if a player fails haggling in both the buying and selling, he or she will drop in social status instead). Similarly, a character could haggle to sell his or her own services with success or failure adding or subtracting one to his/her social status for the duration of the employment, due to extra pay (or insufficient pay). When players attempt haggling, the gamemaster must keep clear what is 'at risk' in the deal. Like diplomacy, haggling should be limited to deals of importance, where something is truly at stake, if characters are to claim haggling for skill improvement checks.

**Bribery:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 80+[intelligence])

The ability to purchase goods or services normally unavailable. This skill can be attempted in any interaction situation where another character is unwilling to do something or sell something normally (either normal fixed price sale or haggling sale). This is not an interaction skill, but purely a personal action; the briber rolls d100 and must get less than or equal to his bribery rating for success. If the dice result equals or exceeds double the skill rating, the bribery attempt is a dramatic failure (i.e. if the skill level is 44, then 01-44 is success, 45-87 is failure, and 88-100 a dramatic failure).

*Success in bribery* means the other character can be bribed to provide the goods and services desired. The gamemaster must decide what constitutes as appropriate bribe. Characters of lesser social status can normally be bribed with money, although those within a status level or two might require more than pocket change. Characters of greater social status usually require special services for a bribe, although occasionally a vast amount of worldly wealth is acceptable (which tends to reduce the status of the briber even further, since he or she must sell virtually all his lands, possessions, etc. to raise the cash).

**Failure in bribery** means the character resists the offer, the goods or services cannot be brought from him or her. If circumstances change materially, the gamemaster may allow another attempt (a sword at the throat can be considered a material change of circumstance, for example); remember, however that even if faced with death some characters may still resist bribery.

A dramatic failure (dice result is double or more the skill level) means the character not only resists the bribe, but is so outraged by the boorish proposal that he or she retaliates (non-nobles would appeal to nobles or employers, troopers to their officers, nobles will be insulted and seek revenge, etc.).

**Gambling:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 80+[agility])

The ability to use skill, judgment, and logic in games of chance. This skill is an interaction between characters, and represents play at dice, cards, casting lots, etc. The winner is the character with the highest d100 plus skill total (more than two could play in a game). Although minor games can be played to test another's skill, only major games where social status is at risk count toward experience and skill increases. Players who agree to such a game will spend 1d6 hours at it, with the highest winner increasing one in status, the lowest loser decreasing one in status. Gambling can also be used for specific objects, in return for services ('if you win I'll be your apprentice/servant/body-guard/retainer for a day/week/month etc.'). Whether such games count toward experience and skill increase is at the discretion of the gamemaster; generally only games with significant risk should count.

**Drinking:** (rated, min = mass, max = 80+½[mass])

The ability to 'hold your liquor' and function at full capacity. When a character's skill rating reaches 80, and the character is social status level 15 or less, the character increases one (+1) social level automatically. Note that level 16 or higher cannot increase for this reason. After each hour of serious drinking at an inn, tavern, social function, etc., a character checks his or her drinking skill. Success means the character is unaffected by drink for that hour (but must check again after the next hour of drinking). Casual drinking (just one drink) does not normally require a check.

The *first failure* when drinking means the character is slightly drunk and feeling pleasant. There are no adverse effects yet. The *second failure* means the character is now drunk: intelligence, agility, and all skill ratings are halved while drunk. The *third failure* means the drunken character now falls unconscious. Recovery from drinking effects of any sort require a proper sleep of at least 6 hours. If a character falls unconscious due to drink, he or she is impossible to awake for 1d6 hours in any event! If an unconscious person is awoken before six hours pass, he or she is still drunk until the remaining sleep time is achieved.

*Regular drinking*, successful or unsuccessful, for months can result in alcoholism. After each month test intelligence: a failure means the character is an alcoholic: he/she must drink regularly every day, and after each month of alcoholism will lose a point of mass and strength if a 1d10 roll results in a '10' exactly.

**Underworld:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 100-[social status])

The ability to establish a contact or working relationship with criminal elements or outcasts in the locale. This includes beggars, thieves, outlaws, escaped slaves, and 'wanted men' of all types, including any character with zero (0) social level. This is a personal skill (for success a d100 roll must be less than or equal to skill rating). Success means the character in 1d6 hours (sometimes longer, especially outside of densely populated areas) has located a spot to make contact, and been introduced to an underworld character. Failure means that time was wasted, and a dramatic failure (dice roll was double or more the skill rating) means underworld characters and organization now have a hostile attitude, making future attempts in the locale impossible.

**Dancing:** (rated, min = agility, max = 80+[agility])

The skill to dance at social functions, and/or professionally to entertain others. When dancing skill reaches 80, the character increases one (+1) social status level the next time he or she successfully dances at a social function.

*Social Dancing* occurs at a ball, party, etc. Success with this skill (d100 roll must be less than or equal to skill) allows a character to mix freely and meet anyone. To claim the attentions of someone through competition, determine who is more successful with another 1d100 roll added to skill rating, higher is better. Failure with this skill in social situation means the character can only approach other failures, although he or she is free to respond to approaches from successful dancers.

*Professional Dancing* occurs in any setting, but the character's skill rating must be at least four times (4x) the average status of the audience to satisfy them.

In situations where a character lacks the minimum skill, or is not formally employed, a simple test of personal skill determines success or failure. If a character is employed as a dancer, lacks sufficient skill for the audience, and then fails on stage, the character is disgraced and cannot find employment as a dancer again in that region (or possibly beyond, depending on the influence of the establishment and audience members).

**Cooking:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 99)

The ability to identify and prepare foods, and to evaluate the quality of foodstuffs and prepared meals. This skill can be used personally for oneself and/or friends, failure (d100 roll exceeds skill) means the food is barely edible, and dramatic failure (d100 roll is double or more skill) means the food is entirely inedible. This skill can be used professionally for employment, but the character's skill rating must be at least four times (4x) the average status of the clientele to satisfy them. If the character lacks the minimum skill, a test of personal skill determines whether the cooking was a success anyway, or resulted in a failure and immediate discharge in disgrace (character cannot find employment as a cook again in that region, or possibly beyond, depending on the influence of the establishment and the clientele).

A cook can use his or her skill to enhance the basic outdoor food preparation ability that comes from success in wild food, hunting, or fishing. Successful use of cooking means the food gathered will go twice as far, failure means the food is consumed at a normal rate, while a dramatic failure (d100 roll double or more skill rating) means the meal is inedible and the food is lost — the characters must create a new meal with any remaining food.

**Riding:** (rated, min = agility, max = 80+[strength])

The ability to ride and properly care for a mount, typically a horse. A riding skill check is needed each time a character attempts something special on horseback — such as jumping, fording or swimming, passing through a narrow area, or whenever the character is struck while riding, either in combat or by chance. If the check fails, the character falls off and suffers 1d6/2 smash wound points.

A character can attempt a special action mounted, such as using weapons in both hands. If the check fails, the action fails and a second check is needed to see if the character falls off. If he or she falls, suffer 1d6/2 smash wound points. See Combat, Mounted Combat, for details.

Each week of riding, this skill is also checked to determine the mount's health. Failure after one week means the mount is perpetually exhausted and doing poorly, a full day spent caring for it (successful skill check) repairs the damage. A second such failure before the first is cured means the mount collapses and dies. These checks can be avoided, and results cured automatically, if the mount is properly stabled for at least one full day each week.

### 3.13 Country Sphere

**Riding:** (rated, min = agility, max = 80+[strength])

Same as town sphere skill.

**Swimming:** (rated, min = strength, max = 80+[strength])

Ability to swim, dive, and perform special tasks in water. Each 'different' activity while swimming requires a separate check of this skill for success or failure. Those activities marked with an asterisk (\*) mean failure can cause drowning — roll the skill check again, a second failure means the character drowns. A drowning character can be saved by another if reached within one period (20 seconds). Typical swimming actions include:

- \*swimming on the surface
- \*swimming in swift or rough water (check once per minute, in addition to surface swim check)
- \*swimming under water (check once per minute)
- \*swimming downward to lower depths
- \*swimming upward to higher depths
- \*diving into water from a significant height
- rescue of a character
- carrying an object in the water
- using a weapon in the water

A variety of other actions are possible, the gamemaster must determine the relative difficulty, and whether drowning might occur.

**Climbing:** (rated, min = agility, max = 80+[strength])

Ability to climb vertical faces using hands and feet, including cliffs, trees, walls with projections, etc. For every 10 vertical feet climbed, one skill check is needed. Trees and boulders normally don't require more than ten vertical feet. One story of a building is roughly equivalent to 10 vertical feet, so significant elevations are commonly mea-

sured in 'stories'. Climbing takes 1d10 minutes per story without special equipment, 2d10 minutes with equipment. If the climber fails the skill check, a second check is made. Success on the second check means a temporary setback, time spent on that story is wasted, but character can continue. Failure on the second check means the character falls, suffering 1d6/2 smash wound points for the first story (10') fallen, and an extra 1d6 for each extra story. If climbing with equipment, each other character in the climbing group can test his or her skill, and any success saves the character from the fall. Even if all others fail, the use of equipment prevents the character from falling more than two stories downward unless the rope breaks or equipment pulls out.

**Track:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 99)

Ability to follow another outdoors, in a dirty or dusty passage, or if they leave a trail (such as bleeding, etc.). Tracking skill is checked when the tracking starts, and at each decision point (branch, fork, trail obscured, etc.). If the check fails the trail is lost. The tracker can then either give up, or spend d100 minutes searching. The search allows one final skill check to regain the trail and continue.

The size of the group being followed affects this skill. For each character in the group being followed, after the first, subtract one from the skill dice roll. Characters in the group followed who have equal or superior skill are not counted for this subtraction.

A trail can be deliberately covered at strategic points. It takes 1d10 minutes times the number of characters in the group to carefully obscure the trail. Any trackers will then have to check their skill at that point, on an interaction basis (their skill versus the skill of the group obscuring the trail — use the single highest skill value in each group).

**Wild Food:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 99)

Ability to recognize and properly prepare wild food, including rudimentary outdoor cooking. To determine the supply of food plants gathered, multiply the time spent by seven (x7). This 'multiplier' number (7) may vary in some regions, as determined by the gamemaster. Using a 7 multiplier, one hour gathering food is sufficient for a meal (1/3 day); and entire morning or afternoon provides enough for a whole day; and entire day gathers enough for a week, etc. When gathered food is eaten, then check for success in the skill — failure means the food tastes peculiar, continued eating entails a risk, check again (see below). Success at first means the food is good and nourishing.

If the first food check fails, and the characters continue eating, roll 1d6 to determine the result: 1-food good and nourishing anyway; 2-food is nourishing, but causes minor distress (cramps, headache, etc.); 3-food is neither good nor bad, has no effect; 4-food bad, suffer 1 poison wound point and get no nourishment; 5-food is very bad, suffer 1d6/2 poison wound points and get no nourishment; 6-food causes gut-spasm sickness, see Wounds, Sickness.

**Hunting:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 99)

Ability to acquire wild game for food, or professionally for saleable furs and pelts. When hunting, the character declares how much time (in hours or days, perhaps longer) is spent hunting, and then success is determined (d100 roll is less than or equal to skill rating means success). Multiply the time spent by seven (x7) for the food yield. For example, 1 hour hunting successfully provides 7 hours of food, or enough to last one person for 1/3 of the day. Three or four hours hunting successfully provides food for a day, a day spent hunting provides food for a week, etc.

Professional hunting can be pursued as an occupation between adventures, as a means of livelihood. The results of hunting (between adventures) could be sold in town during an adventure, but success in the hunting skill and in haggling is needed to make enough profit to increase social level by one, and then only if 1d6 weeks have been spent hunting.

**Hunting Restrictions:** hunting is impossible within the locale of any town or city, nor within one to two leagues of a village, hamlet, settlement, keep, etc. All hunting requires tracking skill as well, therefore, hunting skill can never rise above tracking skill ratings, if tracking is lower.

Hunting either requires special tools (traps, etc.) available at social status 7 and up, or use a weapons. If weapons are used, hunting skill is reduced temporarily to the weapon use rating, if the weapon use is lower. If weapons with less than 50 pace extreme range are used in hunting, weapon use counts only half normal since short-range (or zero-range) weapons are relatively ineffective.

**Fishing:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 80+[agility])

Ability to acquire fish for food, or to identify fish and create fishing equipment. When fishing, the character declares how much time (in hours or days, perhaps longer) is spent, and then success is determined

(d100 roll less than or equal to skill means success). Multiply the time spent by five (x5) unless using special equipment, in which case multiply by ten (x10) instead. This is the food yield. For example, 5 hours fishing (2½ hours if using special equipment) produces enough food for one day, provided the character was successful. One day of fishing produces 5 or 10 days worth of food, with success, etc.

**Special fishing equipment** takes a week of effort to make from raw materials, a day of effort using material purchased in town (if purchased by a character of social status 3 or less, it takes two days of effort). Special equipment includes nets, special traps, buoys, and similar devices to aid in the work. Already finished ready-to-use fishing equipment is available at social status 7 and higher.

### 3.14 Arts & Crafts Sphere

This realm of skilled craftsmen and creative artists relates primarily to long-term occupations. Extensive tools or a 'shop' is needed to pursue most arts or crafts. A character involved in this must invest his or her wealth in such. When working at his or her occupation, an artist/craftsman can produce goods acceptable to characters up to social status 1/4th of the skill rating. For example, a jeweler with skill 43 could produce items acceptable up to a status 10, perhaps status 11. A craftsman can attempt to please characters of even higher status, but must check for success (d100 roll must be less than or equal to skill rating). Failure means a week of work and experience is lost due to damaged self-confidence, and dramatic failure (d100 roll is double or more skill rating) means one's reputation is ruined, the craftsman receives no business for d100 weeks (secretly determined by the gamemaster).

A craftsman who successfully produces items for customers of higher social levels may advance in social status slowly, as well as advancing in skill. However, a craftsman's shop and wares are usually sufficient to only attract customers of his/her level or less. The gamemaster should judge this, with reputation and prior success (or failure) important.

Scribes, doctor/druggists, builders, miners, artists, musicians, dancers and cooks can normally carry tools with them as one item. Others need a more extensive collection of items (their 'shop' that at lower levels (status 11 or less) require a pack of wagon to carry, and at higher levels (status 12+) will occupy a shop building. Some craftsmen specialize in providing tools and equipment to other craftsmen from their warehouse or shop, such as a purveyor of musical instruments, a hardware dealer for builders, etc. These operations are more common among higher level craftsmen.

Adventuring craftsmen can take their tools, etc., with them, or leave them behind in the hands of hirelings, family members, or simply sell them and carry equivalent social status in the form of 'treasure' to re-establish their trade in a new place.

**Scribe:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With portable tools, a scribe can copy a scroll, book, chart, document, etc. A scribe need not know how to read and write, but if he can, he (or she) can take dictation and write out the result — a skill demanded only slightly more than the ability to read a message! A scribe could have a full 'shop' where paper, ink, and quills are actually manufactured, for use by other scribes. A scribe can attempt forgeries, and if successful the forgery has a 'quality' equal to the scribe's skill. Only another scribe with greater skill (and who uses that skill successfully as well) can detect a forgery. Scribes very often act as legal counsel or arbitrators, especially in the absence of nobility or powerful politicians, because scribes are those most closely acquainted with written contracts and written law.

**Tailor:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With portable tools a tailor can repair or modify clothing. Tailors normally work in a 'shop' with suitable raw materials for clothing, tapestries, rugs, etc. Many tailor shops actually have the ability to turn raw silk, wool, etc. into cloth, raw flax into thread, etc. Tailoring skill can be used to evaluate the work of others. In heavily populated regions (including any city) the tailoring trade is commonly divided into two categories. One category turns raw materials into cloth, thread, etc., while the second buy processed materials from the first, and turn it into finished clothing and other goods for sale to the public.

**Pottery & Glassblowing:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With virtually no tools a potter/glazer can make simple repairs to last a short time, but any significant work requires a 'shop' where clay is refined, glass is made, and finished pottery, ceramics, windows, etc., are produced. In cities the refining of raw materials and the creation of finished products is often divided into two different types of trade, with separate shops for each. This skill is the typical 'cottage' industry of poorer and modest folks without markets or skill for anything else.

**Jeweler:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With portable tools a jeweler can repair or modify jewelry and perform simple work with metals and gems. However, a jeweler normally has a 'shop' full of raw materials, tools, fires, etc. for creating true jewelry. This skill can be used to evaluate the work of others, including detection of fakes by jewelers of inferior skill. A jeweler can attempt to create fakes, and if successful that fake has a 'quality' equal to the jeweler's skill. Any character who rolls his/her intelligence or less with d100 will suspect a fake, but only a jeweler successfully using his or her skill can determine real from fake, and then only on items of equal or inferior quality. A jeweler who successfully uses his or her skill to detect fake items of a higher quality will have strong suspicions, but will be unable to conclusively prove the item is fake.

Due to the extreme expense of raw material for jewelry, jewelers are often incapable of producing work for customers of higher social levels, unless provided with raw materials (gem, precious metals, etc.) by that customer. On the other hand, a jeweler can 'close up shop' and move rather easily, since nearly all of his or her wealth is represented by the raw materials and finished jewelry on hand.

**Locksmith:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With portable tools a locksmith can pick locks, repair jams, or alter a lock for new keys. In a 'shop' with plenty of spare materials a locksmith can create new locks, repair smashed or destroyed locks, etc. Using the locksmith skill to pick, jam, or alter a lock requires a normal skill test. Failure means the locksmith is unable to puzzle out the mechanism without removing it and returning it to a shop for disassembly.

Locksmith skill can be applied to any tiny mechanical device, including small traps, clocks, and other delicate mechanisms.

**Doctor/Druggist:** (rated, min = 0, max = 80+[intelligence])

Knowledge of herbs, chemicals, drugs, how to find and prepare them, and the effects they have on living things. The skill can be used both to find proper materials (one skill check), and then properly distill and administer them (a second skill check). Although this skill can be used without any tools, normally a doctor/druggist has a portable kit of standard materials already properly cured and ready to use, so only one skill check is needed (for the actual use). If the doctor/druggist has a 'shop' then a wide range and great quantity of all materials is available, often including a few items with magical properties. If this skill is acquired by initial experience, additional initial experience points can be used to acquire enchanted items of any element, see Initial Experience, Magic Nodes.

The standard effect of a doctor/druggist's materials is to either cure a sickness or disease (if successful twice — once to diagnose the disease, and once to administer cure correctly), or to apply materials to double the healing rate for wounds (see Wounds rules) (if successful once — to administer curative materials). Finally, a doctor/druggist can attempt to diagnose presence of poisons in a body, and if successful can then attempt to administer the proper antidote. This antidote, if successful as well, will instantly eliminate the effect of the poison. See Wounds, Poisons, for details.

**Leatherworker:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With portable tools a leatherworker can repair leather goods, such as various types of armor, boots, belts, packs, scabbards, saddles, and some clothing. In a 'shop' the leatherworker can actually create these items. Leatherwork normally includes curing leather from raw hides in the creation process. Although normally these are bought from merchants, occasionally in areas of low population a leatherworker will deal directly with hunters.

**Armorer:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With portable tools the armorer can effect minor repairs or sharpening metal equipment and weapons, including virtually all weapons and armor (even those of wood). However, in a 'shop' the armorer can create these items. Armorers are limited to striking weapons, no missiles. They have woodworking skills sufficient for staves, spears, clubs, etc. Armorers automatically have blacksmith skills, and vice versa.

**Bowyer:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With portable tools the bowyer can refurbish or make new missile ammunition, provided raw materials are available. In a 'shop' a bowyer has the larger tools and supply of materials to create any sort of missile weapon or ammunition. This skill allows for identification of various woods, feathers, and other materials involved in the art. Bowyers may be limited in knowledge, and usually are only capable of making missile weapons common to the region. For example, it is extremely rare to find a bowyer able to make a long or composite bow properly.

Note that this skill includes making and repairing hand-hurled missiles too, including throwing knives and throwing daggers.

**Builder:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With portable tools a builder can perform a full range of construction skills, including carpentry, stonework, roofwork, painting, etc. either to repair existing structures or build new ones. Builders are often assisted by unskilled or semi-skilled labor, especially on larger projects. Major efforts often have a senior journeyman or master builder directing the work (his or her skill determines the status of clientele), with other journeymen and apprentices helping (whose skill determines the acceptability of the parts they work on).

In many larger towns or cities some builders will have a 'shop' (actually a large warehouse) where they stock a wide variety of building materials, which they import and then sell to other builders. Builders have the ability to cut trees or raw stone, and thus some make a living as lumberjacks or quarriers; however, normal practice is for builders to acquire raw materials from appropriate sites 'in the wild' as part of the building project.

Builders can include or add secret doors, hidden rooms, large devices or traps, etc., in any structure. Detect concealment skill is then used to find these features, but a character can add building skill to normal detect concealment skill when searching for such hidden items. Once the item is found, building skills alone can be used for a detailed examination. This takes 1d6 minutes. If successful, the character fully understands the object and its operation, allowing characters to bypass it or open it without difficulty or danger. If the character fails, he or she cannot puzzle out the operation of the structure, while a dramatic failure (d100 roll is double or more the builder's skill) means the character accidentally opens or activates any mechanisms involved, with results that can range from comic to fatal.

**Miner:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With portable tools a miner can perform open pit or underground mining activities. Mining skill includes the ability to tunnel underground, a skill which may have military uses! The skill also includes the ability to identify and extract various metals, minerals, and gems. Mining skill is normally checked for success or failure after each day (although it can be each week, month, or whatever if involved in long-term ventures). Failure means the work was wasted, and if a tunnel, must be repaired or reworked taking half again that time, before new work can proceed. Success means the work was done successfully. When mining is done successfully, the gamemaster must check for the possibility of finding items of value. Mining skill includes a rough ability to estimate the likelihood of finding valuable metals, minerals, or gems, in terms of a percentage chance per day, week, or month of effort. When the skill is successful, and the percentage chance of a find does finally occur, a miner must use pack mules, carts or wagons to transport the goods to a suitable market to gain an increase of one or more social levels.

**Artist:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With portable tools an artist can undertake drawing, painting or sculpture. Very often artists are commissioned to decorate buildings and walls. Artistic skill used successfully allows an accurate evaluation of the work of others, including their skill. Artistic skill can also be used to create accurate maps or drawings of items, with the success or failure of the skill determining how accurate the result is!

**Musician:** (rated, min = 0, max = 99)

With a portable instrument, a musician can play as an occupation. The skill also includes the ability to tune, repair, and even construct musical instruments. Some musicians may have a 'shop' where instruments are made and sold to other musicians. The exact instruments involved may vary (voice, flute, lute, mandolin, etc.), but assume that musical tastes are roughly equivalent, so that a skilled musician is not normally limited to a certain region or locale.

**Dancer:** (rated, min = agility, max = 80+[agility])

Same as town sphere skill.

**Cook:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 99)

Same as town sphere skill.

**3.15 Magic Sphere**

This sphere also contains religious knowledge, insofar as it is magical or arcane (exactly how religion functions is at the gamemaster's discretion).

If skills in this sphere are not gained by initial experience, they can only be acquired through apprenticeship or study. The ability to ident-

ify a magic element can occur because of a successful alignment of an elemental node (see Elemental Magic), but learning identification through study is impossible. Spirit Magic skills may be unavailable through initial experience.

**Identify Magic Element:** (yes/no)

Each of the seven magic elements is a separate identification skill. Skill in identifying an element allows a character to search for that element with some hope of success (see Node Hunting). Without this skill, a character can only chance across a magic elemental node. This skill can be gained by initial experience, successful alignment of a node, or by apprenticeship. Independent study will not suffice to learn this skill.

**Bonus if Advantaged:** if a character belongs to a race, people, or religion advantaged with a certain element, he or she can automatically identify that element. Conversely, a character disadvantaged with an element can never learn to identify it.

**Understand Elemental Magic Spells:** (yes/no)

Each of the seven magic elements has a body of standard magic spells. Each element's spells are a separate skill. Knowledge of the skill gives a character knowledge of those spells. This knowledge can be gained through initial experience, apprenticeship, or independent study of appropriate books and scrolls. Very often books and scrolls will only cover some of the basic spells, rather than all (gamemaster's discretion must be used in this).

**Bonus if Advantaged:** if a character belongs to a race, people, or religion advantaged with a certain element, he or she automatically knows the basic spells for that element. Conversely, a character disadvantaged with an element can never learn the spells of that element.

**Basic Spells:** the 'basic' spells of an element are those listed in 'Elemental Magic'. It is possible that other spells may exist (created by the gamemaster, or found in various adventures and supplements to *Swordbearer*). This skill only provides knowledge of the basic spells listed in 'Elemental Magic'. Any other spells must be learned separately by study or apprenticeship.

**Knowledge of Spirit Magic:** (yes/no)

There are five separate skills in this category, one of general spiritual knowledge needed to understand the rudiments of spirit magic, and then four additional categories of specialized knowledge that provide information on each of the four humors. Knowledge of spirit magic can be acquired by apprenticeship or study. It is not always allowed from initial experience, see the introduction to *Spirit Magic* and consult with the gamemaster regarding this.

### 3.16 Leadership & Administration Sphere

**Warlord:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 60+ [intelligence x2])

Ability to lead military units or entire armies, including knowledge and skill in training, drill formations, tactics, and strategy. The rating is used to determine whether a character's plan is understood and succeeds in battle, or is misunderstood and/or fails. Warlord ability also indicates the 'inspirational impact' of the character on troops, with the rating used to determine whether soldiers in action are inspired to greater heroism and effectiveness when the warlord is among them. Warlords are normally limited to commanding a retinue of troops appropriate to their social status, but sometimes a warlord is assigned an unusually small command if its mission is of special importance.

**Politician:** (rated, min = social status, max = 60+ [intelligence x2])

Ability to organize a political following, use political influence properly, develop an effective public image, and run a coherent system of government. Note that the rating improves each time social status improves, and vice versa. Politician skill determines whether a political activity or plan succeeds or fails, and if actually running the government (the politician is 'in office') the skill then is periodically checked (at the discretion of the gamemaster) to determine if unusual problems occur (failure means a problem occurs). Periodic checks are also used to determine popularity of the government, or the effectiveness of its public image (note that an image could be negative — a character might wish his government feared, and success with the skill means it is, indeed, feared). The type of political activity possible is determined by the social status of the character.

**Economist/Administrator:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 60+ [intelligence x2])

Ability to understand economics, including monetary transfer, mercantile and banking practices, proper money and business management, bookkeeping, administration, budgets, proper pay-out procedures, tax collections, etc. This skill also allows one to invent, operate, and/or regulate such systems appropriate to one's social status. Failure in this

skill means that economic or bureaucratic affairs fail to run smoothly, problems and disasters occur, etc., which in turn require additional checks of this and related skills. If using this skill to set up a system, failure means the system was improperly designed with flaws of various sorts that will continually cause problems until a major overhaul and redesign is begun.

The skill can be used in government, in any business ventures, and also when operating military quartermaster tasks and war materials. Social status determines the type of responsibilities and opportunities available to a character.

**Personnel Management:** (rated, min = intelligence, max = 60+ [intelligence x2])

The ability to lead and motivate others, especially employees, servants, and allies with whom the character works. Successful use of the skill allows one to avoid normal problems with loyalty, job dissatisfaction, inefficiency, or can be used to improve morale, or develop an esprit de corps. When problems do occur, successful use of the skill allows one to educe the magnitude of them at least, or perhaps (in conjunction with other skills or characteristics) talk people into working again. This skill can be very important at higher social levels, where a character routinely operates through underlings of many sorts and types.

This skill also gives one practical insights into psychology. Successful use of the skill can give some impression of the thoughts and motivations of allies, opponents, competitors, etc.

### 3.17 General Knowledge Sphere

A few of these skills are automatic to a character, others can be gained by initial experience, adventure, and/or study. In the last case, a successful intelligence test is needed, with easier tests for those specializing in general knowledge.

**Know Region:** (yes/no)

Provides general knowledge of cities, towns, trade routes, history, background, peoples, religious and general geography, as well as legends, myths, and reputations of various areas. A region is 30 or more leagues across. This knowledge allows travel without a guide along roads and trails, and enough background to avoid offending standard customs and morality. It does not provide detailed knowledge of any one area. A character will know the region where he/she was born and raised, and the region where he/she lived for the last few years. Itinerants will lack such knowledge.

**Know Locale:** (yes/no)

Provides knowledge of countryside, peoples, politics, economics, manners, morals, influential families, etc., in a small area (under 6 leagues across) typically the area around a hamlet, village, town, city, castle, etc. This allows cross-country travel without a guide and permits a character to 'blend in' among the people without special skills. Skill also allows one to locate everyday persons, and often exceptional people, without raising suspicions or asking too many embarrassing questions. A character will know locales where he/she has lived within the last few years, but locale knowledge will 'go stale' after 1d6 years.

**Speak Language:** (yes/no)

Ability to converse with another who speaks the same language. Dialects may slow down comprehension time somewhat, but if a dialect requires a special effort to learn, it considered a separate language. All characters automatically speak the language or their race or region. Knowledge of others must be acquired by experience or tutoring.

**Read/Write Language:** (yes/no)

Ability to read and write all languages the character can speak: Reading/writing need only be learned once, and applies to all languages the character can speak. If any new languages are learned thereafter, the character learns reading and writing simultaneously. Some languages exist only in writing, and must be learned by tutoring or study. Characters who specialize in general knowledge, and have social status 5 or more, automatically read and write.

**Know Race/People:** (yes/no)

Knowledge of customs, morals, class structure, traditions, mythology, dress, etc. of a racial group or separate people. A race or people is different if the above traits are significantly different from others (as determined by the gamemaster). Normally a separate race or people has a separate language as well. Knowing the race or people allows the character to understand the 'everyday' actions of others in that race of people. Without this knowledge, characters will often fail to understand



what occurs about them, what is required of them, and thus offend or insult unknowingly. Knowing a race or people gives rudimentary language skills, such as 'yes' or 'no' answers, or sign language for very simple information. Detailed information or concepts require full speaking knowledge of the language. A character automatically knows his own race or people.

### Example of Skill Selection

In the previous chapter, a sample character named 'Wesp' was created, with mass 4, strength 4, agility 16, intelligence 12, age 38, experience 18, and status 5.

The player decides Wesp will specialize in stealth and magic, the former to help her avoid fights (her low mass and strength makes her a poor fighter), while still able to do interesting, active things. Magic is selected because her wealth of knowledge. Her lack of high intelligence will make spirit magic difficult, so Wesp will specialize mainly in elemental magic.

In the stealth sphere, the player uses 3 experience points for a 6d10 roll in stalk & slink, resulting in +30, which added to the minimum (agility 16) yields a skill rating of 46. One point is used for rolls in detect concealment, for +10, plus minimum (intelligence) yields 22. Similarly, one point results in +10 for detect danger, with the same minimum for 22 also. The player realizes that Wesp's minimum weapon use skill is nearly hopeless at 4, and so spends one experience point for a 1d10 roll, getting 5, to raise it to 9 (fighting is an unspecialized sphere). The player selects the knife as the weapon skill, since even at status 5 knives can be used both as a striking and as a missile weapon.

Next, the player uses 2 experience points to gain 'yes' in read/write skill, a vital investment for a magician who will need to study books, scrolls, etc. in the future (to learn additional spells, etc.). It is also logical to spend an experience point in the scribe skill, another unspecialized sphere, which yields a basic skill of 10. This gives Wesp a potential occupation without needing an apprenticeship during the game.

In the magic sphere, Wesp's other speciality, the player selects Identify Magic Element for Wind, Light/Dark, Fire, and Metal. Note that all these are related to each other. The player selects Understand Elemental Spells for the same elements, plus Crystal. This is because learning spells can be long and difficult, while pure chance can result in aligning an element, and thus gaining identification skill. These nine magic skills, now all 'yes', consume the last nine experience points.

Overall, Wesp's skills can be summarized as: Identify Wind, Light/Dark, Fire, Metal; Know Spells for Wind, Light/Dark, Fire, Metal, Crystal; Stalk & Slink 46, Detect Concealment 22, Detect Danger 22, Knife 9/16, Read/Write (yes), Scribe 10.

Since Wesp is neither a fighting specialist, nor a noble, she can take advantage of bonuses from a previous occupation. Magician is selected, allowing her a 1d6 roll for each element she can both identify, and knows the spells. She rolls 6 for wind (giving four 1-nodes and one 2-node), 4 for light/dark (four 1-nodes), 3 for fire (three 1-nodes), and 3 for metal (three 1-nodes). She decides to select spells or enchantments after she finishes outfitting, as she may wish to enchant some of the other possessions she selects! She must also decide what containers to use for her unenchanted nodes, and what spells to align to them (if any).

# 4. Social Status & Equipment

*Swordbearer* uses a unique system of social status. Instead of paying 'dollars and cents' (or similar coin) for goods, a player can simply use his or her social status to purchase items. A character can acquire any items up to his or her social status level. Items of a higher level cannot be afforded (unless one uses haggling or similar types of guile). Major financial ventures are presented by a character deciding to risk one or more levels of status — a successful venture means status is increased that much, while a losing venture means it falls by that much.

The social status system is designed to keep players acting in the spirit of the carefree, adventuresome life of a typical fantasy hero (or villain). Although 20th Century America money often becomes an end in itself, in reality money is just a means to an end. *Swordbearer* deals with these ends, and tries to avoid the complexity and bookkeeping involved in the means!

## 4.1 Social Status Levels

An exact definition of each level of social status can vary from one fantasy world to another. The list below is based on typical medieval life in Western Europe, circa 1200-1400 AD. It is designed to illustrate how status actually functions, and what the various levels mean.

**Status 0:** outcasts who are not members of 'civilized' society. These characters can ignore normal restrictions of social status, but have no financial wealth, and normally are unable to live in civilized society. Thus they must acquire goods by theft, chance, or personal construction. If an outcast acquires sufficient wealth, he or she could attempt to rejoin society at an appropriate level of social status.

**Status 1:** slaves, indentured servants, serfs, etc. whose money is handled by his or her master; the character has virtually no personal wealth. However, by using everyday materials, characters at this level can actually acquire a rather wide variety of items. Any coins are valuable.

**Status 2-4:** peasants, migrant laborers, junior apprentices, etc. Freedom for these characters may be limited by terms of employment. Residence is normally quite plain, and often provided by employer. Pocket money is a few copper pieces.

**Status 5-7:** rich peasants, small freeman landholders, independent woodsmen or hunters, senior apprentices, poor merchants and tradesmen, mercenary troops (infantry). Normally able to afford a very plain private residence. Pocket money is a small purse (bag) of copper pieces.

**Status 8-10:** junior journeymen (lowest level of guild membership), merchants of modest means, richer tradesmen and small shopowners, mercenary cavalymen, non-commissioned officers of infantry, etc. Pocket money is a few silver pieces (each worth a purse of coppers).

**Status 11-13:** senior journeymen, well-off merchants, larger shopowners, feudal sergeants and similar retainers to nobility, mercenary cavalry non-coms and junior officers, inheritors of minor wealth. Pocket money is a purse of silver.

**Status 14-16:** guild masters, ship captains of major vessels, owners of merchant or trading houses, senior mercenary officers, warband chieftains, higher level retainers to nobility (who are almost, but not quite, nobility themselves), inheritors of significant wealth, and 'untitled' nobility (citizens just about wealthy enough for nobility, but lacking actual title and patent). Pocket money is a few gold pieces (each worth a purse of silvers).

**Status 17 or higher:** nobility with patent and title. Typically, 17 is a knight (or dame if female), 18 knight banneret (dame), 19 baron (baroness), 20 count (countess), 21 earl or marquis (marchioness), 22 duke (duchess), 23 prince (princess), 24 king (queen), 25 emperor (empress). Pocket money is a purse of gold, if the character bothers!

## 4.2 Social Status & Religion

The importance and power of religious orders can vary greatly in fantasy worlds. However, if medieval Christianity of Europe (c. 1200-1400) is used, the following pattern emerges. Bear in mind that Christianity and its organizations had as much or more wealth than many feudal lords. Many fantasy worlds have weaker religions, which results in lower levels of social status.

**Status 2-7:** novices in monastic orders, who perform most everyday duties, and aspire to full initiation into the rites of the order.

**Status 8-13:** lay brother or monk of a monastic order, who is a full initiate into the rites, duties, and privileges of the order. Many orders

and monasteries in medieval Christianity were quite rich, making this a relatively advantageous position.

**Status 14-16:** senior brother or chaplain of a monastic order, who acts as a leader of a group of monks, under the direction of the abbot.

**Status 16-18:** abbot of a monastic order, who also qualifies as an ordained priest.

**Status 19-20:** grand master of a monastic order, only applicable in very rich orders whose reach equaled or exceeded that of kingdoms.

*Lay brothers* of an order can study for the priesthood, being diverted from the monastery to this activity using the following status steps:

**Status 10-13:** brother, studying for the priesthood.

**Status 14:** father, an ordained priest, normally serving under the direction of a higher status priest in the same parish.

**Status 15:** curate of a small parish, often without any other official members of the church present.

**Status 16:** rector of a large parish and church, often with fathers, brothers, or lay brothers available.

**Status 17:** beginning of the church nobility, all titled Monseigneur; normally acting as aides for higher church nobility, or acting as rectors of extremely important churches and parishes (especially cathedrals in major cities).

**Status 18-19:** Deans, controlling a number of parishes and overseeing the work of curates and rectors.

**Status 20-21:** Bishop, directing church activities in heavily populated small areas to lightly populated large regions.

**Status 22-23:** Archbishops, directing church activities in one or more regions, or an extremely important locale (such as that of a capital city), may or may not have bishops under them.

**Status 24:** Primate or Patriarch, directing church activities in a nation or large Imperial province.

**Status 25:** Pope, directing the overall activities of the church, which spans kingdoms and empires.

*Cardinals* are a separate group involved in international aspects of the church, and ultimately in the selection of new popes, with status 21 to 24.

## 4.3 Social Status & Finances

**Economic Systems:** In the ancient and medieval world, barter was the normal means of trade and payment. Only the safe and secure trade routes of prosperous and peaceful realms resulted in the extensive use of coinage. In fact, very few states had a consistent coinage. In times of danger people invariably hoarded coinage and reverted to barter. Historically, the disappearance of coinage and precious metals (especially gold) was one of the underlying causes of the 'dark ages' in Europe. To avoid the complexities of ancient and medieval economics, *Swordbearer* uses 'social status' to represent buying power and financial worth of characters. Status could represent wealth in land, business ventures, or simply holding a treasure.

**Social Status & Money:** The social status of a character indicates what items are either 'affordable' (in a money-oriented social system) or 'proper' (in a status-oriented social system). Items significantly below the status of a character are easily acquired, with a bit of pocket change (in a money system) or easily demandable (from relatives, vassals, etc. in a status system). Items at or close to the status of a character are major acquisitions that require larger funds or complex negotiations that often take days. Items above the social status of a character can be acquired only at the risk of debt (see below).

**Livelihood & Daily Business:** To maintain his or her current status, a character must either work at a livelihood, have slaves or hirelings working for them, or be independently wealthy. As a general rule a quarter (¼) to half (½) a person's waking time must be spent at one's livelihood to maintain social status. A character can work hard for periods to build up 'free time' for adventuring. Player characters are assumed to have 'built up' a small amount of such before starting on to their first adventure. Note that between adventures most characters need to 'work' to maintain their status level and possessions. Often such work forms the basis for further adventures.

Characters from wealthy families and most nobles have both lands and a family fortune to draw upon. These characters begin at social status level 14 or 15, and among nobles especially, have hirelings, slaves, or other family members 'tending the estate,' thus freeing the character

from most daily concerns. Such characters have the additional advantage that they can 'charge' purchases in areas where their family name is known, since sellers know they can 'charge' purchases in from the family. If such characters travel to new lands, they normally try to get introductions to friends of friends, family, associates, etc. in the new area, so that their 'name' can be established and they can get some credit.

Characters with personal wealth (as opposed to family wealth) may 'cash in' all of it to provide a portable fortune, upon which he or she can draw for pocket change. However, such fortunes shrink in time unless one works to replenish it, and theft is a constant danger to anyone carrying such a 'treasure.'

**Major Purchases:** Items at, or near, the social status of a character are major purchases, and often take a few days to conclude, perhaps longer. A character can risk losing a level of status against gaining a level. For a merchant, this might involve buying a large shipment of goods, and risking a level of status on haggling when the purchase is made, and then when the goods are sold in a different town or city. The journey from buying to selling point could take weeks or months, and entail risks that become the subject of an adventure. The gamemaster must decide when such 'deals' become available, and should remember to make their culmination both time-consuming and interesting. Rapid rises in social status should be uncommon — or the world would be composed of kings!

A character can also attempt to move from one line of business to another. This normally entails selling or trading a farm, shop, etc. and getting a new one, or equivalent treasure. Success or failure could either raise or lower the social status of the character in the process!

**Treasure:** treasures are measured by their social status worth. A character who acquires a treasure acquires that status, if it is higher. If the treasure is below the character's status, it provides some extra pocket change, and little more. Treasures can be divided between characters, but each additional character who receives a share reduces the overall value of the treasure by one level. For example, if a status 5 character finds a status 9 treasure, he or she become status 9. However, if a status 6 and status 8 character find a status 9 treasure, the status 6 increases to a status 8, while the status 8 character simply gets a good bit of pocket change, but remains at status 8.

Note that if characters are employed by someone, normally the treasure goes to the employer, and the characters are rewarded by an increase of one status level each (perhaps two or three levels for very low status characters).

**Debt:** a character can attempt to acquire goods and services above his/her normal status. Major purchases, such as specific weapons and other valuable items entail a 1d10+10% risk that he or she will go into debt. Minor purchases such as daily metals, lodging, etc. have a 1d6% risk of debt per day. If the purchase is more than one level above normal status, multiply the risk by the number of levels the character is 'jumping.'

When a character goes into debt (cannot pay for something), the seller and often his or her agents will begin looking for the character. Local law officers will normally be notified as well, and any available property is normally confiscated (causing a loss in social status equal to the amount the character tried to 'jump'). Debtors were the subject of stringent laws in the ancient and medieval world, and those without property for confiscation were normally imprisoned until family, friend, or special opportunity arose for their release. Many debtors became indentured servants, even slaves, as a result (since the only thing left to pay their debt was their body!).

#### 4.4 Special Aspects of Social Status

**Incognito & Prestige:** the gamemaster may wish to distinguish between the 'real' social status of a character, and the status he or she 'appears' to have. A character living above his/her means will appear to have higher status, while another character could travel incognito and appear to have lower status. Furthermore, the actions and activities of a character will affect appearances. A high status character who resorts to thievery will lose 'appearance' status if his/her activities become known, and will lose even more (probably along with some real status) if caught and jailed. Players are naturally aware only of appearance, and may discover the reality of other players of NPCs to be different!

**Outcasts:** Status level zero (0) characters ignore all restrictions and wealth. They simply own whatever they have. Outcasts can attempt to rejoin society by collecting sufficient materials to take the appearance of a certain status level, move to some new locale or region, and begin again, at that level. Of course, if their previous life as an outcast becomes known, their apparent status may suffer (depending on how serious their former crimes).

Although no character may start as an outcast (except for NPCs deliberately generated by the gamemaster), a player can always elect

outcast status for his or her character at any time.

**Slaves:** status level one (1) means a character is a slave. Indentured servants are effectively slaves, but only for a specified period of time. Slaves are costly by most standards, and therefore the owner tries to keep them healthy to protect the investment. However, slaves are prohibited from having weapons, as well as many other types of equipment. This is reflected by the status one rating. A slave's owner may give the slave some personal possession of higher status, either as a gift, or simply to carry or use for the owner.

#### 4.5 Outfitting for Adventures

A character beginning a life of adventure can outfit himself or herself with up to ten items of gear. When first creating the character, only items at or below the character's social status are allowed. Purchasing or living above one's means cannot begin until the first session of an adventure.

The 'ten items limit' represents the need to keep, to watch, and control items, encumbrance problems, and spare cash restrictions. During adventures or between them a character can acquire items using social status, relinquish (sell) others, etc. Unlike other games, the ten items limit does not represent encumbrance alone, but many other factors, and is used for simplicity and ease of play. A few items count as 'no weight' and are free (don't count toward the ten). This is normally clothing, minor armor, and incidental tools/weapons — something a character can comfortably wear every day (or nearly so) without a second thought.

One or more of the ten items could be an animal (riding horse, pack mule, etc.), a servant, bondsman, apprentice, hireling, etc. The character can select the type of item, but the gamemaster then outfits, equips, and loads the animal or character in a manner appropriate to the given purpose. Pack animals, wagons, etc. can carry one specific type of cargo or load, but this can include general goods related to a specific type of cargo or load, but this can include general goods related to a specific skill or activity (such as a merchant's goods for sale, bowyer's tools and materials, etc.). If a player's character has slaves or hirelings, he cannot normally provide these with equipment above their normal status and station — if he or she did, the effect would be to own or hire a character of greater value, and at more expense to oneself! At very high social levels, a character might have a task-master, guard captain, or similar leader type as an 'item,' and that NPC would in turn have his own hirelings or slaves. Both the leader and his men would be NPCs arranged and controlled by the gamemaster. In some cases the gamemaster may trust the player to select appropriate outfits and generate 'fair' characters, and simply review the results.

**Hidden Items:** A player may conceal an item from casual observation (under a cloak, under normal clothes, etc.), but such an item counts as one extra item toward the 'ten item limit.' Furthermore, successful use of concealment skill is needed with the item to keep it hidden from any careful inspection. The gamemaster must rule on what items can be logically concealed.

**Special Restrictions:** In some cases, a character may be unable to exploit his full social status in an adventure. For example, a powerful lord or family patriarch the character obeys may prohibit him or her from 'squandering valuable resources on hairbrained schemes,' forcing the player's character to select only inconsequential items of lower social status. A character's status might be precarious, forcing him or her to leave valuable and powerful resources at home, and take only minor items of low status on a distant adventure. Finally, a temporary shift in political winds might cause a character to be dispossessed or exiled, reducing his or her social status by many levels until politics change again. The gamemaster will find these restrictions handy in some adventures, especially in starting games where high social status characters participate (to avoid the complexities of large retinues of followers, or dealing with large items such as wagon trains, ships, etc.).

**Adventures at Home:** A character who undertakes activities while 'at home' in his permanent residence and household has available all the items and trappings of his or her social status. The character will only have ten (or less) on or about his person at any one place in the house or near it, but within a few hours, or a day at most, any other item appropriate to social status can be acquired. Specific exceptions occur, such as a ship captain whose ship is laid up for the winter, a merchant whose caravan and goods are currently en route, etc. The gamemaster, as always, can be a reasonable judge of such matters and decide what day-to-day household activities and possessions are 'reasonable' in such cases.

**Failure Factor:** An item of a character may not perform as expected, and sometimes may fail dramatically, during the course of an adventure. This occurs if the character didn't have proper time to inspect the item, or lacked successful use of a skill needed to evaluate that item. A typical 'failure factor' is 2% to 4% (02 or less, or 04 or

less, using d100 dice roll) for such items. The gamemaster can use or ignore this possibility as a balancing factor in adventures.

#### 4.5.1 TRAVEL GEAR

Each of the items listed below is a separate 'item' toward the limit of ten items per character in an adventure. Social status required for each is listed in parentheses.

**Bedroll and/or Blanket (1):** basic sleeping materials, necessary for a good night's rest while traveling.

**Backpack or Carrying Rack (1):** used to carry a load of 10-50 pounds on the body, while leaving hands free. It can include minor items appropriate to social level as well as pocket change for up to a month. Larger treasure constitutes a separate item. If riding on a horse, wagon, etc., items can be carried on that making this item unnecessary.

**Flash & Pouch (1):** one day's food and drink, each can be refilled each day, and slung over body. Food and drink is normally of good quality (appropriate for that social level).

**Waterskin (1):** large skin or similar item to carry seven days of drink.

**Rations Pack (1):** large shoulder or hip pack to carry up to seven days of dry food, which while nourishing in the short term, is both unappetizing and not healthy as a steady diet week after week.

**Cook Gear (1):** eating utensils and cooking gear for preparing meals for a small group. Requires a pack, rack or mount to carry slung (to leave hands free).

**Extra-Warm Clothing (1):** warm furs and leathers for very cold weather; due to added bulk these count as one extra item, even though clothing doesn't normally count as an item.

**Tent & Groundcloth (4):** small tent with cloth flooring and stakes, can hold two persons comfortably, four at most. At higher status levels larger and more elaborate versions are available. A pack, rack or mount is needed to carry this.

**Mule (6):** for riding or pack work, can carry a man with gear, or as a pack animal carrying one type of load.

**Small Boat (6):** basic item is a small rowboat, with space for two men and their gear, or space for a man plus a load. Canoes are included in this class. At higher social levels larger boats become available, but require additional characters as crewman to handle them.

**Small Cart or Wagon (6):** requires a mule or draft horse to pull it; can carry double the capacity of the pulling animals. For example, a cart pulled by a single mule could carry a man with gear and one load, or two loads (but would require a man walking with the mule, carrying his own gear, out front to guide the cart). Merchants, craftsmen, etc., need a cart or wagon of appropriate size to carry their goods and equipment, plus themselves.

**Riding or Draft Horse (8):** a slow but sturdy horse; can carry one man with gear, or one type of load. Armor may be added, but some types of horse armor count as extra items.

**Warhorse or Courser (15):** can only be used to carry a rider (with or without armor on rider and/or horse). Warhorses are large, heavy horses trained to strike on command by rider, and capable of short bursts of speed. Coursers are lighter, finer, on command, but are relatively intelligent, and thus more responsive to instructions, and have a greater feeling of loyalty to a good owner.

*Note:* instead of mules or horses, other types of mounts and draft animals may be available, depending on climate, region, and the particular fantasy world involved. Social status and special characteristics may vary.

#### 4.5.2 ADVENTURE GEAR

Each of the items listed below is a separate 'item' toward the limit of ten per character in an adventure. These items require a pack, rack, or mount to carry. Social status required is noted in parentheses.

**Torches (1):** five torches with flint-and-steel to light them. Each last 3-4 hours, so the set is sufficient for a day's adventuring in darkness.

**Rope (1):** a 50-foot coil of rope, can be slung over shoulder or tied onto body (no pack or rack is needed).

**Digging Tools (1):** pick and shovel.

**Lantern (6):** lantern with supply of oil, flint-and-steel to light it. Oil is sufficient to keep lantern burning for seven full days of adventuring in darkness, or a month's use as evening illumination in a residence.

**Climbing Gear (6):** a 100-foot coil of rope (lightweight but strong) with climbing tools such as rock hammer or ice axe, wood or metal pitons and nails, shoe spikes (for climbing trees or ice), etc.

**Hunting or Fishing Tools (7):** nets for fishing, or a set of traps and snares for hunting. Tools for each are a separate item.

**Journeyman's Tools (8):** tools and implements to pursue one Arts/Crafts skill while traveling. Typical tool sets would be paper and writing implements for a scribe, needle and thread for a tailor, locksmith's

picks and tools, bowyer's tools for fletching (preparing arrows), artists' set of paints with canvas and easel, musician's instrument(s), dancer's costumes, etc.

#### 4.5.3 MAGIC CONTAINERS

A character may have a variety of containers for magic nodes. Any number and variety of containers are possible provided the character decides what they are, lists them, and informs the gamemaster of them. If the containers are small, they all count as one item (combined). Larger containers count as half an item, or a full item in some cases, at the discretion of the gamemaster. Quality of the items varies with social level.

#### 4.5.4 PERSONAL ARMOR

Each of the items below is a piece of 'military' protective clothing that reduces damage from hits to some or all parts of the body. Because these items are clothing, they normally do not count toward the limit of ten items per character. However, there are some exceptions, due to great weight and bulk. A character can wear a variety of items, including one on top another, but the armor does not add together. Instead, use the single greatest protective value for the part of the body. Concealment of armor invokes the 'extra item' penalty, and if bulky or metal, the task may be impossible unless the character is motionless and wrapped in a large cloak. Even then, closed helms and full plate would be obvious.

*Note:* The ability of armor to absorb/deflect damage may be reduced by earlier damage, increased by magic, etc.

**Shield Arm:** an arm wearing a shield must have armor of slightly reduced strength beneath it, in order to attach the shield and make it maneuverable. Thus, armor on the shield arm deflects one less (-1) wound point than normal.

**Leather Helmet (5):** padded leather head-covering, deflects 2 wound points per hit on head only.

**Open Metal Helmet (7):** metal helmet with open face, may or may not include mail or plates for ears and neck, deflects 4 wound points per hit on head only.

**Closed Metal Helmet (14):** metal helmet with closed face and/or visor that completely protects the entire head with metal, deflects 6 wound points per hit on head only.

**Padded Leather Jerkin or Coat (4):** padded and quilted leather, often boiled to hardness, to deflect 2 wound points per hit on the torso. Thigh guards and heavy boots can be added, to extend protection to legs as well (player's option).

**Leather Bracers (6):** hardened leather guards strapped to forearms and upper arms, worn with leather gloves, deflects 2 wound points per hit on arms.

**Greaves (9):** spring metal coverings for lower legs and knees, requires a minimum strength of 7 to wear, deflects 3 wound points per hit on legs.

**Flexible Metal Corselet (10):** chainmail, scale, or lamellar metal armor covering upper body and hips, requires a minimum strength of 5 to wear, counts as one of ten items, deflects 4 wound points per hit on the torso only.

**Flexible Metal Coat (12):** chainmail, scale, or lamellar metal covering upper body, hanging down to thigh, and down the arms past the elbow. It requires a minimum strength of 7 to wear, counts as one of ten items, and deflects 4 wound points per hit on the torso and arms.

**Breastplate (13):** solid metal covering for front and back of chest, with flexible metal and leather extensions to cover hips. It requires minimum strength of 6 to wear, and deflects 6 wound points per hit on the torso only.

**Half Plate (15):** solid metal plate armor for chest, with flexible extensions for hips and thighs, heavy leather boots or greaves, complemented with metal-reinforced leather shoulder guards and sleeves for upper arms, plus leather gloves. It requires a minimum strength of 8 to wear, counts as one of ten items, and deflects 6 wound points per hit on torso, 5 points per hit on legs, and 3 points per hit on arms.

**Vambraces (16):** metal guards strapped to forearms, elbows and upper arms, worn with metal gauntlets, deflects 5 wound points per hit on arms.

**Full Plate (17):** complete suit of metal plate armor for entire body, requires a minimum strength of 9 to wear, counts as one of ten items, and deflects 6 wound points per hit anywhere on the body, including the head.

#### 4.5.5 ARMOR FOR MOUNTS

Each of the items below is armor to protect part or all of a mount. Normally these do not count toward the limit of ten items per character in an adventure, but there are three exceptions noted below to represent excessive bulk and weight. Social status required for each is noted in parentheses.

**Light Leather Bards (9):** simple horse trappings with studded leather covering some vulnerable areas, deflects 1 wound point per hit on forebody or hindbody.

**Leather Half-Barding (11):** leather covering for head, forebody, and forelegs, prevents a draft or riding horse from galloping, deflects 2 wound points per hit on areas covered only. This cannot be combined with light leather bards unless the combination is counted as one of the ten items.

**Leather Housing (12):** leather covering for entire mount, including padded or quilted armor, horn plates, etc. This prevents a draft or riding horse from galloping, and a courser becomes exhausted if it gallops more than one period in this without rest. The leather housing deflects 2 wound points per hit anywhere on the mount.

**Metal Chanfron (14):** metal headpiece for a mount, deflects 4 wound points per hit on the head only.

**Metal Chest Barding (17):** metal covering for a mount's forequarters, usually a small plate surrounded by mail, scale, or lamellar armor. It counts as one of the ten items per character, prevents a courser from galloping, and cannot be worn by a draft or riding horse. It deflects 4 wound points per hit on forebody and forelegs.

**Complete Metal Barding (18):** flexible metal covering for entire mount, includes small plates on head and chest, counts as one of ten items per character, can only be worn by a warhorse, deflects 4 wound points per hit anywhere on body.

#### 4.5.6 PERSONAL WEAPONS

Each item below is a potential weapon for a character. Unless otherwise indicated, each counts toward the limit of ten items per character, and each requires a separate weapon use skill. Some weapons are classed together. The class is given in brackets [ ]. Social status needed for the weapon is indicated in parentheses ( ). See the weapons table in book II, Combat, for additional details on combat performance, including strength requirements, reach, range, damage, breakage, etc.

**Humanoid Fist [natural] (0):** Uses the arm and hand as a weapon. This weapon does not count as one of the ten items allowed per character. If weapon use rating is 25-49, damage increases one (+1) and breakage two (+2); if rating is 50-74 damage is +2 and breakage is +4; if the rating is 75 or higher, damage is +3 and breakage is +6. This reflects of superior knowledge is unarmed combat.

**Humanoid Kick [natural] (0):** Uses the leg and foot as a weapon. This weapon does not count as one of the ten items allowed a character. If the weapon use rating is 20-39, damage is +1 and breakage +2; if rating is 40-59 damage is +2 and breakage +4; if rating is 60-79 damage is +3 and breakage +6; if the rating is 80 or higher damage is +4 and breakage is +8.

**Large Quadruped Kick [natural] (0):** trained warhorses can kick on command by their riders. Other animals may kick in self defense if not ridden. See Animals, for details on skill ratings and specific weapons available to specific animals. This weapon does not count as one of the ten items allowed per character. Damage and breakage values do not change with different weapon use skills.

**Improvised Club [club] (1):** Any solid object with significant mass, including a torch, tree branch, piece of a table or chair, large candleholder, etc. The gamemaster should decide if an object qualifies as an improvised club or not. This weapon can be acquired and discarded with ease, but while being held or carried, it counts as one of the ten items allowed; note that other travel or adventure gear could also be used as improvised clubs (such as torches), and thus would not count as an additional item.

**Club [club] (2):** Wooden shaped club about 18 to 30" long, sometimes with minor metal reinforcement (still considered wooden).

**Spiked Club [club] (2):** A wooden club with metal spikes, or in rare cases sharp stone or glass spikes. It inflicts both a smash and cut with each wound point, which means a magic cure good for just one or the other is insufficient to heal that wound point. Overall, the club is 24 to 48" long.

**Giant Club [club] (2):** Wooden club with metal banding (still considered wooden) of great size and weight, normally at least 36" long.

**Staff [stave] (5):** Wooden branch or similar, shaped as a walking staff, ceremonial staff, shepherd's crook, and similar. Normally 60-70" long.

**Quarterstaff [stave] (5):** Finished wooden rod banded with metal (still considered wooden) designed primarily as a defensive fighting tool, but can be used offensively also, has excellent balance and handling properties. Normally 70-90" long.

**Knife [dagger] (2):** Short 5-9" metal blade with light handle, a point, and an edge. A knife is used for many every-day tasks, such as cutting items, eating, etc., as well as in combat. At social level 5 and above well-balanced throwing knives are available, below that all knives are very crude and cannot be used as missiles. A single knife does not

count as one of the ten items allowed, but a group of four throwing knives about the body counts as one weapon and one item among the ten allowed.

**Dagger [dagger] (4):** Larger 10-20" metal weapon with point, edge, and heavy handle-guard. The dagger is designed for combat strikes and parrying. At social level 7 and above some have sufficient balance for use as a throwing weapon also carried. One dagger is allowed free (provided social level qualifications are met). Each additional dagger counts as one of the ten items, of course.

**Shortsword [sword] (4):** Small, sturdy sword with 24-40" blade, made of metal with either a point (short thrusting sword) for trusting or an edge (short chopping sword, such as a falchion) for cuts.

**Scimitar [sword] (7):** Long, lightweight sword with a 36-48" blade that curves greatly and has a single or double edge used for cutting only. Scimitars are favored by eastern and asiatic types. Category includes super-long curved daggers as well.

**Longsword [sword] (8):** Longer, sturdy metal sword with 36-50" blade. Most combat swords fall into this category, including broadswords with straight blades and dull points, and sabers with curving blades and dull points, both designed for cutting. The bastard sword is also a longsword with a straight blade and a point for thrusting.

**Rapier [sword] (9):** an extremely light metal sword with a 40-50" superthin flexible blade with only a point. The rapier is exclusively a thrusting weapon, but due to its blade is very effective against armor when masterfully handled. If a rapier hits with an aimed blow (to a specific area of the body) any armor there deflects half the normal wound points.

**Hand-and-a-half [sword] (11):** larger sword with 48-60" blade of metal, designed for either one or two-handed use, and heavier than a longsword. Most versions are for cutting, but some designed for thrusting exist (but are rare). Very high quality types, such as the Japanese katana, can both cut and thrust.

**Greatsword [sword] (13):** huge sword with 55-70" blade or larger, of metal, with single or double edge used for cutting. This mighty weapon is designed for two-handed powerful blows.

**Hand Axe [axe] (5):** small metal weapon with bladed head and 20-30" handle, designed for cutting. Can also be thrown.

**Throwing Axe [axe] (5):** lighter version of the hand axe with a shorter handle, but also a metal weapon, designed primarily for short-range throwing, but also able to function in battle (although more prone to breakage).

**Battleaxe [axe] (6):** large, heavy metal bladed weapon with long 36-48" handle, often with double blades, designed for powerful two-handed blows in battle.

**Halberd [axe] (8):** a long-handled (60-80") weapon with a metal head that includes a blade, point and hook. It is a specialist combat weapon that sacrifices sturdiness and flexibility to achieve superior reach, and is popular in the rear ranks of spear or pike units, as well as a common weapon of ceremonial guardsmen. A halberd can be either used as a thrusting or a cutting weapon, but not both at the same time.

**Maul [hammer/mace] (3):** stone hammer of tremendous size, a primitive peasant weapon that is a powerful battle weapon provided one has sufficient strength to wield it, and it doesn't shatter!

**Hammer [hammer/mace] (5):** military modification of civilian tool, the hammer is a heavy metal implement that normally includes both a flat end for smashing, and a barbed end for punching through armor (thrusting type wounds). Handle is short, about 24-36" long.

**Great Hammer [hammer/mace] (6):** long-handled version of normal hammer, and still normally includes flat end for smashing and barbed end for thrusting (punch) through armor. Although a metal weapon, the wooden handle is about 48-60" long. The handle is usually reinforced with metal bands or bars.

**Mace [hammer/mace] (11):** all-metal smashing weapon of great weight on a short 18-30" handle. Although some versions are flanged or spiked, the smash is the main effect, and non-edged versions exist for members of religious orders enjoined against shedding blood.

**Giant Mace [hammer/mace] (11):** heavier long-handled version of the mace, often with a spiked head. The spiked version was known as the 'morning star' or 'holy water sprinkler' in medieval times (today many people associate 'morning star' with a military flail, which is incorrect). Giant mace handles are 48-60" long, metal reinforced, with metal heads. The entire weapon is considered metal.

**Whip [flail] (6):** leather weapon with one to nine strands, often barbed with metal. Whips are mainly civilian weapons, but the heavier and stronger versions can be used in combat. Whips are difficult weapons to use for a parry, so weapon use and speed are halved parrying with a whip. However, if the parry is successful, the whip pulls the weapon out of the opponent's hand, causing him or her to drop it.

**Military Flail [flail] (7):** metal weapon with a metal spiked, edged, or rounded end attached by chain to a long handle, and used as a

smashing weapon.

**Spear [spear] (4):** wooden weapon with a 60-120" shaft ending in a metal point. The spear is a classic weapon, and in some primitive situations the point will be stone, or even fire-hardened wood. Spears are normally somewhat balanced, and can be thrown. A stronger metal shod version is available at status 10, but this cannot be thrown so easily.

**Pike [spear] (7):** super-long wooden shaft weapon normally ending in a metal point (still considered a wooden weapon). The pike is typically 15-21 feet long, and is the ultimate long-range hand-held weapon. Pikes are heavy, and are normally used with two hands.

**Lance [spear] (14):** longer, heavier version of the spear, typically 12-14 feet long, designed for use by cavalymen. Lances are sometimes used dismounted (on foot), usually two-handed.

**Rock [hand missile] (0):** any small-sized roundish rock at hand, or similar items, such as bricks, paving stones, and other ad hoc missile weapons. Although rocks are normally thrown, they can be used for hand-held strikes in one or both hands instead.

**Large Rock [hand missile] (0):** any large-sized rock or similar item, such as a heavy flagstone, chest, barrel, and similar ad hoc missile weapon typical thrown with both hands by a strong man. These too can be used for hand-held strikes.

**Javelin [hand missile] (4):** short 30-40" light wooden shaft with a sharp point (often metal, although the weapon is considered wooden) designed for throwing, and balanced for superior flight characteristics. Javelins can also be used for hand-held strikes if necessary. A package of two javelins counts as one item of the ten for adventuring equipment.

**Throwing Spear [hand missile] (6):** long 60-75" heavy metal spear (sometimes with a partly wooden shaft, although considered metal) designed for short-range throwing, although it can also be used for thrusting. The throwing spear's head is made of soft metal that commonly bends when it hits. If successfully parried by a shield and the throwing spear breaks against the shield, it means the spear is bent and embedded in the shield. This renders the shield useless until minor repairs are made. A package of two throwing spears counts as one item of the ten allowed. A mixed package of one throwing spear and one javelin is allowed (social status 6 also).

**Darts [hand missile] (8):** short 12-18" wooden or metal throwing darts, designed for high accuracy at median ranges. A package of 5 or 6 darts in a small quiver or box (clips to belt or behind shield) counts as one item of the ten allowed.

**Throwing Stars [hand missile] (10):** small 2-4" diameter flat metal missiles with extremely sharp edges, designed for quick short-range use in a variety of situations. Up to ten (10) can be carried about the character's body and still count as just one item; often they are carried in small bag hanging on the waist.

**Sling [sling] (2):** leather strap used to hurl rounded stones (social levels 2-5) or cast lead egg-shaped sling bolts (level 6 or above). It cannot be used as a hand-held weapon, although the ammunition can be used individually as rocks (see above). The complete weapon includes sling strap and ammunition pouch with 20 bolts or stones. If using stones, damage is one less than bolts, and long and extreme ranges are somewhat reduced.

**Bolo [sling] (3):** stone weapon with three heads attached by leather straps, and hurled to entangle and smash enemy. The bolo wraps about the target when it hits either as a hand-held or a missile weapon, and cannot be recovered until the target is knocked out or surrenders. If the bolo misses as a missile, it wraps around the nearest object beyond or falls to the ground. Variations of the bolo use metal heads, sometimes pointed or spiked, but are still considered missile weapons equivalent to the basic stone bolo.

**Light Bow [bow] (6):** bow with a weak pull (25-40 lbs), designed for characters of low strength, or because bowyer methods in the area are underdeveloped. Weakness results in reduced range and slightly less damage ability. Arrow wounds are thrusts, and the bow itself can be used as a hand-held weapon to smash — but damage is halved. Weapon breakage applies to arrows as missiles, and the bow when used as a hand-held weapon. The complete item includes bow, waterproof travelling case, and a quiver of 20 arrows. Extra quivers of 20 arrows are an additional item each. Arrows are light, but can be used in larger bows.

**Medium Bow [bow] (7):** standard compound bow with a moderate pull (40-60 lbs.), designed for average archers. Arrow wounds are thrusts, and the bow itself can be used as a hand-held smashing weapon, but damage is halved. Weapon breakage applies to arrows fired as missiles, or the bow when hand-held for smashing. The complete item includes bow, waterproof case for travelling, and a quiver with 20 medium arrows. An extra quiver of 20 arrows is an additional item. Light bow arrows can be used with a medium bow, but the range and damage value of a light bow is used, instead of a medium.

**Long/Composite Bow [bow] (8):** special compound-composite bow, such as the English or Japanese longbow, or the Mongol or Turkic composite bow, with a heavy pull (70-150 lbs) designed for exceptional archers. These bows are rare, and cannot be acquired or used by characters without special permission from the gamemaster (since only expert bowyers spending many years can make them). Arrow wounds are thrusts, but the bow itself can be hand-held as a smashing weapon with damage 1/3rd the normal. Weapon breakage applies to arrows as missiles, or the bow itself when hand-held for smashing. The complete item includes a waterproof bowcase and a quiver of 20 arrows (part of the bowcase on asiatic-type composite bows). An extra quiver of 20 more arrows is an extra item. Light or medium arrows can be used with this bow, but the range and damage value is for light or medium bow instead.

**Crossbow [crossbow] (8):** mechanical bow that fires metal quarrels with great power, normally cocked with a belt-hook and/or stirrup, or a special lever. Quarrel wounds are thrusts, and the bow itself can be used as a hand-held smashing weapon with damage half the normal. Weapon breakage applies to the quarrels fired as missiles, or the bow when hand-held for smashing. The complete item includes the bow, cocking device(s), and a quiver with 20 quarrels. An extra quiver with 20 more quarrels is an additional item. A crossbow cannot fire arrows of normal bows, and vice versa.

**Arbalest [crossbow] (8):** a heavier, more powerful version of the crossbow. Operation is similar, except a windlass-type crank device must be attached to reload the bow, which takes extra time. Arbalest quarrels are larger and heavier than those of a normal crossbow (regular crossbow quarrels can still be used, but range and damage become that of a normal crossbow). The bow, cocking device, and a quiver of 12 large quarrels counts as two items. Each extra quiver with 12 more quarrels counts as an extra item.

**Light Shield [shield] (5):** wooden or leather shield, often with a light metal rim and/or boss, but not considered metal for magic purposes. Although the shield can be used for strikes as a hand-held weapon, its main function is to intercept hits. The shield is typically 12-30" in diameter, the smaller shield being somewhat heavier and stronger, as well as easier to use.

**Heavy Shield [shield] (12):** a large wooden or metal-faced shield, typically 30-50" in diameter, and kite-shaped, round, etc. The shield is considered metal or wood (as desired and available) for magic purposes. This shield can be used to strike, but is mainly designed to intercept hits.

#### 4.5.7 RETINUES

Higher status characters may have other (NPC) characters with them as slaves, employees, apprentices, etc. Each of these is an 'item' (counts as one of the ten allowed). Some such may themselves have other assistants and followers who come with them, so that a group with its leader all counts as one 'item.' In this way very high status lords and nobles can have large followings, and ultimately govern a kingdom or empire (through their underlings).

The gamemaster always determines the characteristics and equipment of these retinue NPC 'items.' The gamemaster may also wish to adjust the social status levels, loyalty, functions, etc. of retinues to reflect local customs, morals, expenses, etc. Retinue characters come complete with their own personal possessions appropriate to their status. If higher status items are provided to them, especially on any extensive basis, the effect is to raise the status of the slave or hireling, and thus increase the 'cost' of that item to the user (who must have sufficient social status to bear this increased cost).

The term 'slave' used here includes long-term indentured servants (i.e., indentured for 20 years to life) where the 'owner' is required to provide food, shelter and clothing. 'Slaves' in this sense are on 24-hour call, and usually become passively accepting of their situation. They cannot be expected to exercise judgment, make decisions, or be loyal — for every slave that is, there is also one who tries to oppose and sabotage the interest of their master! Slaves or indentured servants must be watched, or they will eventually flee (escape). As always good use of personnel management will reduce these problems and improve performance.

The term 'hireling' used here includes those hired to perform a specific task on a regular basis. Food, shelter, clothing, and equipment may be provided in part or whole, depending on local customs. Hirelings are only available during 'normal working hours' (which vary with the job), and are normally unwilling to do other tasks (i.e., cooks will refuse to fight, fighters will refuse to cook, etc.). Hirelings can be expected to show some independence and judgment, depending on the specific person and job. Successful use of the economist/administrator skill often allows one to acquire superior hirelings, or get more from those you have. Successful use of the personnel management skill with hirelings

avoids problems and fosters greater loyalty, but has no positive benefits in terms of increased abilities from labor, etc.

**Players as retinue:** player characters, or perhaps an entire group under a leader, could be in effect hirelings of another player or NPC. This can form the basis for many interesting adventures. The person who hired them, or has claim to their services in some way, may even accompany them to 'keep an eye on the investment.'

**Adventuring vs. Residential Retinue:** social status levels for retinue characters given below apply to adventurers. That is, the status cost reflects that needed to have the character actually accompany one on adventures. If the retinue character is simply used 'at home' for jobs, often part time, the status required might be two or three levels lower, at the gamemaster's discretion.

**Unskilled Slave (10) or Hireling (11):** capable of brute manual labor requiring no intelligence or skill. Typical jobs include bearer (for one load), oarsman or deckhand, janitor, day laborer, etc. Slaves are status 1, hirelings status 2-4.

**Apprentice (11):** a youngster assigned to a craftsman to learn that skill. To take an apprentice one must specialize in Arts/Crafts sphere, and have one skill in that sphere rated 20 or more. Apprentices are equivalent to willing slaves in attitude and are status 2-7. They come from good families (equivalent in status to apprentice's holder), and if the apprentice is grossly maltreated, maimed, or killed — especially in activities outside those normally involved in the skill learned — the family will be very angry. Loss of social status and/or expulsion from the guild can occur as a result.

**Semi-skilled Slave (13) or Hireling (14):** capable of basic tasks and adequate in a few skills related to the task (skill rating 50 or less, usually just a bit above minimum). Slaves are status 1, hirelings status 5-7. Bodyguards and toughs, stable hands, mule drivers, cooks, poorer quality scribes (often illiterate), etc. fall into this class.

**Skilled Slaves (16) or Hirelings (17):** capable of performing a skilled task well, and exercising a bit of judgment and discretion in that task. Slaves are status 1, hirelings status 8-10. Better quality bodyguards and sergeants, clerks, tutors, 'proper' manservants or handmaidens, etc. fall into this category.

**Squire (17):** a youngster from a family of noble birth (or nearly so), and himself status 11-13. Squires are assigned to one for a 'proper' education, including skill in arms as they become young men. Gross mistreatment, maiming, or death in dubious circumstances will result in considerable scandal, and usually a loss in social status. Squires are not expected to die in service, so a death can be a serious thing, especially for a squire from another noble family, unless circumstances were exceptionally heroic (falling in battle to save the lord against a particularly hated foe of all, etc.).

**Artisan (18):** hireling of status 8+ who is exceptionally skilled in an Art or Craft (rating over 60), whose job it is to produce items of high workmanship for the character. The work of artisans can be an important way of maintaining and sometimes increasing one's social status.

**Slavemaster (18) or Taskmaster (19):** these are leaders who have their own retinue of up to 10 unskilled slaves or workers. The master is normally skilled at particular types of work where the unskilled workers are needed (such as building, mining, etc.). At each higher social level, another factor of ten can be added to the retinue (i.e., 100, 1,000, 10,000, etc.).

**Guard Captain (19):** leader with decent military skills, often some warlord skill, and a retinue of 1d6+4 fighting men whom he has outfitted to serve as troopers, guards, etc.

**Master of Household (20):** leader with personnel management and/or economist/administrator skills who oversees some major area of activity within his/her employer's domain. The Master of Household includes, in his/her retinue, appropriate underlings to perform the tasks and activities involved. Typical areas of responsibility might be running merchantile operations, supervising the lands of the manor (and the various peasants or slaves thereon), managing household employees and slaves, etc. Many nobles employ one or more such household masters to attend to their estates and wealth, leaving them free. In medieval life various other titles were used for this position, and often the title and duties were quite unrelated!

#### 4.6 Encumbrance — (Optional Rule)

The ten item limit for characters is a deliberate simplification to avoid the complexities of weight, volume, and actual cost of items

compared to character strength, mass, social status, wealth, etc. The rule allows a smooth transition to larger groups with henchmen or even large retinues (and will ultimately interface with a large campaign/battle game with small 'armies' available to characters!). Which materials are classified as separate items is a game device to represent the amount of care and attention each requires, as well as cost, size, etc.

However, in some very obvious cases, possession of certain items will restrict the mobility of a character. Therefore, these optional rules can be added by the gamemaster is desired:

**Encumbrance Restriction:** for each of the following items possessed by a character, his or her agility is reduced by one (-1). Agility cannot be reduced below one (1), so that characters with very low agility may be limited in some situations:

- armor covering entire body, including at least some metal covering some part;
- full plate armor for the entire body (in addition to the above);
- complete metal barding for horse (in addition to above, applies only to a mounted character);
- each L3 or L4 weapon carried (exception: whip does not count as an encumbering item).

**Carrying a Character:** a character can carry another. If the strength of the carrier is double or more the mass of the person carried, the person counts as two items, and can be slung over the shoulder. If the strength is less, the person counts as three items, and must be half-dragged (is too heavy to be fully picked up).

#### Example of Equipment Outfitting

In previous chapters, the character Wesp, a human sorceress, was developed. Now it is time to outfit Wesp, who will need some armor, weapons, magic containers, and day-to-day necessities.

First the player selects armor for Wesp. Her social status of 5 permits a leather jerkin or coat covering the torso, legs optionally, and a leather helmet. The player notes Wesp's low mass (only 4), and decides to wear all of this armor, even though the leg armor means faster exhaustion in combat. The player decides to 'creatively interpret' the armor description to fit a metal miniature seen at a local hobby store. Wesp now has leather vest and pants studded with iron, and a leather hood that she can pull down over her head, eyes and nose for protection and concealment while 'in action.' None of this armor counts toward the ten item limit.

The only weapon in which Wesp has any skill is the knife. She hopes to use it as a missile weapon, but realizes she is very inaccurate. Therefore, she decides to carry eight throwing knives, but yet look innocuous, so the knives must be hidden. Every four knives counts as one item, and concealed the four knives count as two items. Therefore, eight knives, all concealed, count as four items.

The player must provide Wesp with various small containers for magic nodes, and these together count as a fifth item. After looking through the magic list for reflections appropriate to her social status, he decides on a small ring with a diamond chip (diamond is a reflection), a simple silver stud in her ear (silver is a reflection), a copper bracelet with silver filigree, and a small pouch carried under her clothes with a tiny teardrop of unfinished silver, and a polished oak charm (oak is a reflection). Wesp is too poor to consider custom-made clothes with diamonds or silver woven into them, a common device to prevent theft. She decides that her jewelry will be dirty, so as to not attract the attention of thieves.

The rest of Wesp's equipment would depend on the type of adventure anticipated. Upon learning that future employment and adventures would occur in a borderlands town, she selects items appropriate to life in and about a settlement, including a bedroll, flask-and-pouch (for one day's food), torches, and a rope. This leaves room for a tenth item, which she hopes might be some treasure she can find. Alternately, she could carry an item for someone else. As her social status increases, she hopes to exchange the rope for true climbing gear, and ultimately acquire a scribe's writing set (journeyman's tools, available at status 8). At the moment, she must borrow writing tools to practice her scribe occupation.

## 4.7 Basic Equipment Summary

<i>social status</i>	<i>counts as</i>	<i>name of item</i>	<i>purpose and function</i>
<i>req.</i>	<i>item?</i>		
<b>Travel Gear</b>			
1	.yes	Bedroll and/or blanket	basic materials for good sleep
1	.yes	Backpack or carrying pack	carry items without encumbrance
1	.yes	Flask and pouch	carries one day's food and drink
1	.yes	Waterskin	carries seven days of drink
1	.yes	Rations Pack	carries seven days of food
1	.yes	Cook Gear	eating utensils, gear for cooking skill
1	.yes	Extra-warm clothing	for very cold weather
4	.yes	Tent and groundcloth	holds 2-4, for bad weather sleeping
6	.yes	Mule	carries one man and gear, or cargo load
6	.yes	Small boat	carries 2 men and gear, or cargo load
6	.yes	Small cart	requires draft animal, men or loads equal animals
8	.yes	Riding or Draft Horse	carries man and gear, or cargo load
15	.yes	Warhorse or Courser	carries one man and gear (only)
<b>Adventure Gear</b>			
1	.yes	Torches	five, each burns 3-4 hours
1	.yes	Rope	50-foot length
1	.yes	Digging Tools	pick and shovel
6	.yes	Lantern	burns 7 days continuously, or 30 evenings
6	.yes	Climbing gear	100' rope, climbing tools (hammer, spikes, etc.)
7	.yes	Hunting or fishing gear	traps and snares, or nets
8	.yes	Journeyman's tools	travelling tools for an Arts/Crafts skill
<b>Magic Gear</b>			
0	.yes	Small Containers	variety of items to hold nodes
<b>Personal Armor</b>			
4	.no	Leather jerkin, or coat	-2 pts on torso, legs too if desired
5	.no	Leather helmet	-2 pts on head
6	.no	Leather bracers	-2 pts on arms
7	.no	Open metal helmet	-4 pts on head
9	.no	Greaves	-3 pts on legs, requires strength 7+
10	.yes	Flexible metal corselet	-4 pts on torso, requires strength 5+
12	.yes	Flexible metal coat	-4 pts on torso & arms, requires strength 7+
13	.no	Breastplate	-6 pts on torso, requires strength 6+
14	.no	Closed metal helmet	-6 pts on head
15	.yes	Half Plate	-6 pts torso, -5 pts legs, -3 pts arms, strength 8+
16	.no	Vambraces	-5 pts on arms
17	.yes	Full Plate	-6 pts everywhere, requires strength 9+
<b>Armor for Mounts</b>			
9	.no	Light leather bards	-1 pt forebody and hindbody
11	.no	Leather half bard	-2 pts head, forebody, forelegs
12	.yes	Leather housing	-2 pts everywhere
14	.no	Metal chanfron	-4 pts on head
17	.yes	Metal chest barding	-4 pts forebody and forelegs
18	.yes	Complete metal barding	-4 pts everywhere



# 5. Combat

During a role-playing adventure, characters may attack or be attacked by someone (or something). Anything from a fist-fight and bar-room brawl to an assault on a castle is 'combat'. The combat rules therefore cover a wide variety of situations, and are mainly intended as a guide to the gamemaster and those players who prefer to specialize in combat activities. Players with little interest in combat are advised to read through the first two sections (Combat Procedure and Combat Actions), and then 'pick up' the rest as combat situations occur, perhaps with a later reference to these rules between games. Actually, these combat rules have been deliberately simplified and streamlined. Many factors found in 'real life' have been 'built in' to the systems here, rather than adding yet more rules to burden the player.

**Time Scales:** The gamemaster has two time scales for combat. The first, and shortest, is the 'instant.' An instant represents about four (4) seconds of real time, and includes quick pauses for thinking, gulps of air, etc., as well as the usual moving about, strikes, parries, etc. The second scale is the 'period' of 20 seconds (1/3rd of a minute). There are five instants in a period. When characters are far apart, exchanging desultory missile fire at extreme ranges, etc., the gamemaster may have characters move and act in full periods, rather than instant by instant, to speed up the action.

**Distance Scales:** All ranges and movements are normally measured in 'paces' (2½ English feet). At very long ranges and/or when movement is made by periods instead of instants, the 'bloc' may be used instead. A bloc is simply 20 paces (50 English feet). Distances of 20 or more paces often have the distance in blocs noted afterward, in parenthesis. For example, '160(8)' means a distance of 160 paces, or 8 blocs.

## 5.1 Combat Procedure

**Scale Selection:** The gamemaster announces the time scale (*instants* of 4 seconds, or *periods* of 20 seconds — a period contains 5 instants, obviously), and the distance scale (paces or blocs) in use. The gamemaster will also describe the starting combat situation. Often figures are placed on a tabletop to show the relationship to each other. In long range battles, the gamemaster may use a series of d10 dice to indicate the current range in paces. For example, three dice reading, in order, 1, 8 and 0 would indicate the range is 180 paces between groups. Short range battles would use a map divided into squares. Each square represents one pace. Squares 2/3rds of an inch on a side (17mm) are recommended.

**Combat Quickness:** each character has a quickness rating. Quickness is the sum of intelligence and agility.

**Playing each Instant or Period:** regardless of whether the gamemaster uses instants or periods, the method of play is the same. The following steps are used:

(a) **Declaration of Actions:** All characters declare what they will do. The character with the lowest quickness (zero, for example) would declare first, then the next lowest, etc. In case of ties, the character with

the lowest Warlord skill declares first. As a result, a character with greater quickness will declare later, and can react to the activities of others.

(b) **Movement:** All characters are moved, simultaneously, according to their declarations.

(c) **Weapons Use:** All characters resolve any strikes by hand-held weapons, and any shots with missile weapons. Weapons are used in weapon speed order. The character with the highest weapon speed goes first, then the character with the next highest speed, etc. As a weapon is used, any parries, shield uses, dodges, and results are applied. Thus a character might be injured, or even killed, before he or she has a chance to use a weapon. Weapons with equal speed take effect simultaneously.

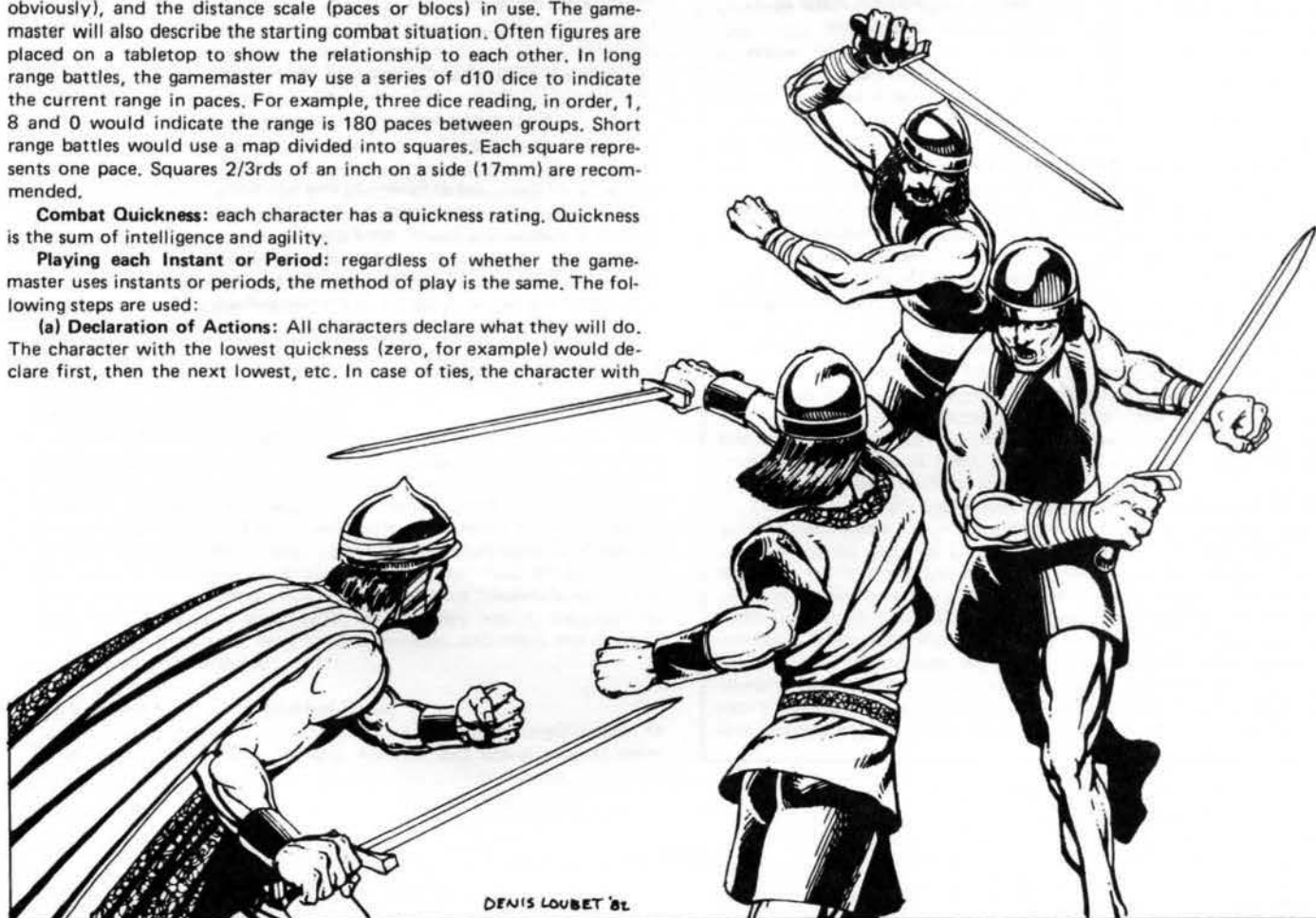
Magic spells have a weapon speed, and are cast at the appropriate instant. All other magic spells (those without 'chains' to increase speed) are cast and take effect simultaneously, after all other weapons use is finished.

(d) **Special Actions:** An activity that took the entire instant or period to complete is now considered accomplished. Naturally, the activity might be prevented if a weapon hit or a magic spell interrupts the character.

**How Weapons are Used:** using a weapon is basically simple. The character simply makes a d100 roll. If the result is less than or equal to the weapon use skill, the weapon is used successfully. If the result is greater than the weapon use skill, the weapon misses. If the result is '100' (00 roll) the result is automatically a failure, the character fumbled with the weapon.

In some situations, weapon skill may temporarily increase (making use easier), or decrease (making use more difficult). See Combat Modifiers below for details describing these situations.

If a weapon does hit, and the target does not successfully parry, block or dodge it, then a wound is inflicted. A separate chapter de-



scribes how wounds are located, damage results determined, and how they can be healed (or cause death).

## 5.2 Combat Actions

Players announce the combat actions for their character(s) at the start of each instant or period. The character with the lowest quickness announces first, then the next lowest, etc.

Basically, each character is allowed one action per instant. Thus in a 5-instant period, a character would be allowed five consecutive actions (such as the same action five times in a row, five different actions, etc.). In some cases, two or more actions can be combined, and performed in the same instant. In other cases, once an action is begun, it must be continued for two or more instants (especially true of some movement actions, where large amounts of momentum are involved). The common actions of characters in battle are given below. Players may think of others, and the gamemaster must decide the time involved. Typically these take a full instant, often a period, and perhaps longer. Remember, there is little anyone can do that doesn't require a couple seconds of calm concentration first, not to mention the time required for the action itself.

Combat Actions are divided into two basic categories: fighting actions and travel actions.

### 5.2.1 FIGHTING ACTIONS

**Strike and/or Parry:** A character strikes or parries with a hand-held weapon. A character can use two weapons (one in each hand), but see Special Combat Options, Dual Weapons for detailed rules. A strike combined with a move (travel) is a charge. A strike combined with a parry is allowed only in certain situations, see Parries & Dodges below. A weapon must be drawn to permit a strike or parry.

**Aim & Fire Missile:** It takes a character one instant to 'fire' one missile. This may take one or both hands, depending on the weapon. If only one hand is used, the other could be used to strike and/or parry (see Special Combat Options, Dual Weapons). A weapon must be 'loaded' to permit firing, even hand-hurled missiles such as stones or knives.

**Load Missile:** This action takes one or more instants, depending on the weapon. Loading includes drawing out ammunition, nocking arrows, cranking or cocking mechanisms, etc. Bows must be strung before they can be loaded.

- Load Arbalist — 3 instants
- Load Crossbow — 2 instants
- Load any other missile — 1 instant

If a character has 80 or higher weapon speed, loading time is reduced by one (-1) instant. Thus missile weapons other than arbalests or crossbows could be loaded and fired in the same instant, since loading takes no time.

**Draw, String or Sling Weapons:** It takes *one* instant to draw or sling a weapon, using a sheath, straps over the back, etc. Bows take *five* consecutive instants (one full period) to string. Characters could travel with drawn and strung weapons, perhaps even with missiles loaded, but this indicates a hostile intent to most strangers encountered, while loaded weapons have a tendency to go off unexpectedly (gamemaster may wish to impose an agility test every 30-60 minutes, failure means accidental firing). Bows that remain strung for a day or more will result in stretched and generally useless strings. The problem becomes very bad in damp weather, as wet bowstrings rapidly deteriorate. Crossbows and arbalests do not have such a serious problem, and can be strung in one or two instants anyway.

Dropping a weapon takes no time, so instead of taking one instant to sheath a weapon and another to draw a new one, a character could simply drop a weapon and draw a new one all in the same instant.

**Quick Draw:** if a character has a weapon speed of 80 or greater, and uses the weapon with one hand, he or she can 'quick draw' the weapon. Quick draws take no time (zero instants to draw), allowing the character to strike/parry the same instant he or she draws.

### 5.2.2 TRAVEL ACTIONS

**Step:** A character steps *one pace* forward or backward. A step can be combined with performing a skill, including any fighting action, with the following exceptions:

A step forward cannot be combined with a parry. A step backward cannot be combined with a strike nor with an aim-fire missile action. Note that a character who both strikes and parries cannot step forward or backward.

**Careful Walk:** A character walks at half speed, and devotes his attention to his surroundings, performing a skill, or certain fighting actions. During a careful walk, the following actions are *not* allowed (all others

are possible): a strike (except during a charge), aim-fire missiles, loading a crossbow or arbalest, stringing a bow. However a character may charge and strike a careful walk.

**Leap or Dive:** A character jumps half the distance of a normal walk (same distance as a careful walk). In a leap, he/she lands standing up, in a dive prone. Leaps or dives over or through obstacles are possible, although the gamemaster may require a strength test. Neither fighting actions nor normal skill use are allowed during a leap/dive. A successful agility test is needed to keep a missile loaded during a leap/dive. Character can leap upward or downward also.

**Trot or Short Dash:** A character moves at trot speed. The character cannot perform fighting actions, nor use normal skills, except as part of a charge. In combat, trotting does not normally cause exhaustion, although trotting for long periods may cause exhaustion.

**Casual Walk (2 consecutive instants):** A character moves at normal walking speed, cannot fight or perform other skills, charges are not allowed. Once a casual walk is begun, it must continue for at least two (2) consecutive instants. Characters may rest (to recover from exhaustion) while at a casual walk.

**Run (2 consecutive instants):** A character moves at a running speed, cannot fight or perform other skills, but may charge. Once a run is begun, it must continue for at least two (2) consecutive instants. Characters running may become exhausted.

**Gallop (3 consecutive instants):** A character moves at gallop speed (some characters, including humans, have no gallop speed and thus cannot use this action). The character cannot fight or perform other skills, but may charge. Once a gallop is started, it must continue for at least three (3) consecutive instants. Characters galloping may become exhausted.

**Crawl:** A character crawls forward, at crawling speed, and becomes prone (if not already). The character cannot perform fighting actions, nor use a skill, but can devote attention to surroundings (as in a careful walk). Crawling charges are prohibited.

### 5.2.3 BONUS ACTIONS

**Rotate:** A character can rotate in place before making an action. If trotting, running or galloping that instant rotation is limited to 60° maximum. Rotation is allowed during or after a move *only* for steps and careful walks.

**Fall Prone:** A character can fall down before or after a move instantly. Falling prone is not a separate action.

**Get Up:** A character prone can get up. This can be combined with a strike/parry action, or a draw or sling action, or a step action, but no others.

## 5.3 Movement

**Movement Rates:** Characters have different movement rates, depending on the type of travel action selected. Movement rates are not reduced by armor. Instead, as armor increases, exhaustion occurs more quickly, and various encumbrance restrictions may occur (if those optional rules are in use).

Movement rates are given in paces per instant/period, with blocs per period in parentheses ( ). Movement rates for normal humans are listed below. See, Racial Index, for complete movement rates for all types of characters.

<i>crawl</i>	<i>walk</i>	<i>trot</i>	<i>run</i>	<i>gallop</i>
2/10(½)	8/40(2)	16/80(4)	32/160(8)	- prohibited -

**Minimum Speed:** A character must move at least half the maximum speed for the move rate selected. For example, a running man must move at least 16 paces an instant (half of the 32-pace maximum). This represents momentum when moving, as well as reaction times to new situations.

**Direction:** Characters rotate before moving each instant (if desired), but thereafter must move in a straight line. The gamemaster may allow a gentle curve, or 'arc' move, instead of a straight line, but changes in direction during a move are prohibited. The only exception is a step or careful walk move, where the character can rotate during and/or after the move also. This limitation represents the fact that an instant is just four seconds, which is fully consumed by the character deciding how to move, and then doing it. Reacting to a new situation, changing direction, while keeping up movement, all during the four seconds of the instant, is quite unreasonable unless the character is travelling very slowly and carefully (careful walk, or just making a single step).

Normally characters must move in the direction they face. The exception is a 'step' move, where the character can step in any direction. Step moves are either forwards or backwards. A sidestep left or right is considered similar to a backwards step for rules purposes.

Diagonal Movement on a Square Grid: if a grid of squares is used to

represent the combat area, diagonal movement is allowed, but each diagonal move counts as 1½ paces of distance. When determining directions, a character can still travel in any direction, and should follow the squares (often a combination of 'regular' and diagonal moves) that approximate the direction. Movement and firing ranges can extend an extra half (½) pace to allow for one diagonal move.

**Race & Chase:** Although characters may have equal movement rates, when one chases another, or both race to a point, one character may gain a slight advantage. This advantage is enough to win the race, and either make a chase succeed or fail (as the advantaged character desires). To determine advantage, use the following priorities:

(a) an exhausted character is always at a disadvantage to an unexhausted one;

(b) an encumbered character is always at a disadvantage to an unencumbered one (if both or neither are exhausted).

(c) if both or neither are exhausted, and both or neither are encumbered, determine advantage by subtracting items carried from agility. The character with the highest result has the advantage; if results are equal, it is a tie. Characters can discard items in the race or chase in an attempt to gain the advantage.

### 5.3.1 TERRAIN & MOVEMENT

Climbing up or down takes one or more instants, and is a special action. Characters could leap downward, although an agility and/or mass test might be required by the gamemaster to prevent spraining ankles or breaking a leg. Movement rates are based on travel over a flat, firm surface. Many times the gamemaster may judge that certain areas are either of the following terrain types, and movement slows accordingly:

**Broken Terrain:** characters move at half speed. This includes underbrush, plowed fields, refuse piles, mud, snow, ice, and anything else that requires a character to step carefully. Step and crawl speeds are not affected.

**Bad Terrain:** characters move at quarter speed. This includes dense brush, steep slopes, wading through water, deep mud or snow, and other terrain that a character must struggle to pass through. Step and crawl speeds are not affected.

### 5.4 Flying Movement & Falls

Characters that fly use normal movement procedures and actions, which may be combined with fighting actions in the normal fashion. Flying characters have a second set of movement speeds for airborne rates, with an airborne equivalent of step, walk, trot, run and gallop. The airborne 'step' is actually termed 'glide' and represents the character travelling with firm wings (or whatever) to produce a stable aerial platform (for accurate missile fire, performing delicate tasks, etc.). In certain adverse weather conditions, gliding may be impossible.

**Altitude:** In flight, altitude is measured in 'stories' of 10 feet (4 paces) each. The term is used because 10 feet is about the height of a one-story building. Short trees are 3-5 stories tall, while large trees (including most forests) are 8-12 stories tall.

**Momentum:** Every instant a flying character must keep moving, if only to glide. If the character makes no move (travel action), he or she falls that instant!

**Climbing & Takeoff:** A flying character spends 4 paces of horizontal movement to climb each 'story.' To take off, a character must also be moving forward, and either climb from the ground level, or move forward into the air where the ground drops away beneath (such as off a cliff, roof, wall, etc.).

**Diving & Landing:** A flying character can dive one story per instant without loss of any forward motion or speed. Beyond this, for each additional story a character dives, one pace of forward movement must be spent. To land, a character simply dives down to ground level and finishes his/her move there. Any remaining forward motion must be spent either before the actual landing (at some higher altitude) or after landing by moving along the ground at an appropriate ground rate.

**Falling:** A character either falls with limbs flapping (uncontrolled fall), or in a controlled fall where the body takes a streamlined form (only possible for characters able to fly, or with extremely special backgrounds!). A character in an uncontrolled fall drops 40 stories each instant. A character in a controlled fall has a minimum speed of his/her 'gallop' flying rate or 40, whichever is less, and a maximum speed of his/her gallop flying rate or 50, whichever is more.

When a falling character hits the ground (without recovering into normal flying first), the character suffers 1d6/2 smash wound points for the first story he/she fell, and 1d6 extra for each additional story, up to 50d6 maximum. A character in a controlled fall, or who made a deliberate leap or dive downward (even if uncontrolled) can subtract 1d6 from the wound points if he or she passes an agility test.

**Note:** An easy way to show current altitude of a character is to

place d10 dice beside him or her. The dice digits indicate the altitude. For example, three d10 showing 5, 9 and 8 would indicate an altitude of 598 stories. Air on earth becomes very thin and difficult to breathe above 10-15,000 feet (1,000 to 1,500 stories).

### 5.5 Starting Combat: Ambush & Surprise

Sometimes combat starts with opponents facing each other, aware of the other's presence. Often, however, one side is unaware of the other. This may be a deliberate ambush, or simply a momentary surprise.

#### Surprise

This occurs if a character did not expect attack, and is neither informed nor detects danger. If a character does detect danger (usually a few instants early), he or she could warn others to prevent surprise to all.

If a character is surprised, he or she spends that instant doing nothing. If moving at a casual walk, run or gallop the character continues moving while surprised, since these moves continue for two or three consecutive instants.

#### Ambush

An ambush is a superior form of surprise, and requires successful use of ambush skill. It can be prevented if the target detects danger, or detects the concealment (of the ambushers). In an ambush, the attacks can continue until the ambushed characters realize they are under attack, either by detecting danger, seeing an attacker, seeing a friend hit, or hearing someone raise the alarm (such as an injured character shouting, screaming, falling with a clatter, etc.). When the ambush is discovered, the ambushed characters will be surprised for an instant, and after that they can react.

Note that surprise and ambush give attacks a temporary bonus of +25 for missile weapons use and +50 for melee strike weapon use.

### 5.6 Fighting Ranges

**In Sight:** To fire or strike at a target, the character must have it in sight. A character sees in a 180° arc forward (90° left and 90° right of his or her facing). To see in another direction, the character must rotate. Visibility is normally unlimited in combat situations, but it may be blocked by terrain, another character, or by special conditions (darkness, dense woods, etc.). The gamemaster should indicate maximum visibility if it is less than unlimited. Actually, visibility always has a limit, but in normal conditions the limit is vastly beyond practical weapon ranges.

**In Range:** Missiles can be fired up to their extreme range. However, characters should be aware that it is impossible to hit anything beyond long range unless a character has a weapon use rating of at least 50, or the target is either unaware, surprised, and/or motionless. See the Combat Modifiers below for details on missile ranges and the reduction in weapons use skills involved.

A character can strike with a hand-held weapon if the target is within a range in paces equal to the weapon length. Weapons with a length of one (L1 class) have a range of one pace, weapons with a length of two (L2) have a range of two paces, etc. Typically, in most situations characters simply move into 'striking range' of one pace and then fight it out, so all hand-held weapons would be in range. Characters that move into strike range without a charge may stop further away, but this must be stated when actions are planned, and an opponent with greater quickness could then state an intent to close the range further (or open it, as appropriate). On subsequent instants characters would then use steps or careful walks to close the range. The only way to open range from strikes is to step backwards, or to turn around and move away (in which case you'll be unable to strike, and must therefore hope the enemy will be unable to catch you!).

### 5.7 The Charge

A character beyond the striking range of all opposing hand-held weapons may charge toward an opponent. Once a charge begins, it continues until the charger makes contact, or a new travel option is available. Any step, careful walk, trot, run, or gallop move can be used for a charge.

If the charge ends with contact against the target, the characters are presumed at one pace range, regardless of the target's movement choice. A charge cannot be voluntarily ended at a further range (such as 2, 3 or 4 paces), due to the momentum involved.

A character charging is automatically allowed a strike at the target during the instant when the charge makes contact. This strike is allowed even if the move normally prohibits strikes. A charging character is not allowed to parry, but can use a shield.

A character need not charge into striking range. He or she can sim-

ply move into range normally, and with the right type of move, may be able to strike and/or parry as well.

If an opponent turns and moves away, a character who chases will typically charge in pursuit, so that if the chase is successful, the pursuer will be able to strike.

## 5.8 Fighting Procedures: How to Hit

**Order:** During an instant, characters can either fire a missile or strike with a hand-held weapon, depending on the action announced. Weapons are used according to the weapon speed skill. The fastest character (highest rated weapon speed) uses his/her weapon first (to strike or fire), then the next fastest character, etc. Hits and wound effects occur when the weapon is used. If two characters have the same speed, results take effect simultaneously. As a result, a character with a low weapon speed might be wounded and prevented from striking, due to a hit from a faster character.

**Note:** Do not confuse weapon speed with combat quickness. Combat quickness determines the order in which actions are announced, while weapon speed determines the order in which weapons fire/strike the target.

When resolving combat for an entire period at a time, resolve weapon use for the first instant in the period, then for the second instant, etc., until all five instants in the period are finished. If firing at a mov-

ing target, movement during the period can be pro-rated so that character is hit after travelling an appropriate distance.

**Accuracy:** Whenever a character uses a weapon, roll d100. If the result is *equal or less than* the character's weapon use rating, it hits. If the roll is greater than the rating, it misses. Weapon use ratings vary in some situations, see *Combat Modifiers* (below).

**Fumbles:** If a weapon use dice roll is exactly '100' (00 roll), the character fumbled with the weapon, regardless of his/her normal skill rating. The fumble table may be consulted for a special effect, or the gamemaster may impose a specific and peculiar circumstance appropriate to the situation and the characters involved.

**Riding Skills & Mounted Characters:** A mounted character fights normally, but if weapon use skill exceeds riding skill, then weapon use is reduced to riding skill level instead. Additional rules apply and many special situations are possible, see *Mounted Combat* for details.

### 5.8.1 COMBAT MODIFIERS

Various situations may increase or decrease the weapons use rating of a character. *All* modifiers that apply are used in combat. These are summarized and described below. Apply the modifiers in the order given. Different modifiers may apply in a situation, depending on whether the character is firing a missile weapon, or striking with a hand-held weapon.

missile modifier	striking modifier	situation
+25	+50	target unaware or surprised
+difference	+difference	agility difference (if it adds)
x2/3	does not apply	firing missile at medium range
x1/3	does not apply	firing missile at long range
-50, x1/3	does not apply	firing missile at extreme range
-difference	-difference	agility difference (if it subtracts)
+15	+30	target not moving
-10	-10	aimed at rider or mount (if target mounted)
-20	-20	aimed at specific part of the body

**Missile Ranges:** There are four missile ranges (short, medium, long, extreme). At medium range and beyond, weapons use skill is reduced. At medium, use skill rating is only 2/3rds normal (multiply rating by 0.67), at long range and extreme, it is only 1/3rd normal (multiply rating by 0.33). In addition, at extreme range, subtract fifty (-50) from the skill rating before multiplying by 1/3rd. As a result, characters with a use skill rating of 50 or less firing at extreme range automatically end up with a zero rating after this modification (but the rating may be improved again by subsequent modifications).

**Agility Difference:** In every combat situation, the agility of the weapon user and his/her target must be compared. The character striking or firing adds the difference in ratings if his/her agility is better, and subtracts the difference if his/her agility is worse. For example, a character with agility 12 striking a character with agility 9 will add three (+3), while when the other strikes back, he/she must subtract three.

**Target Unaware or Surprised:** When firing or striking at a target from ambush, a surprised target, or a target with its back turned (target cannot see you), this bonus is received. In the case of surprise, during the instant the target is surprised, even if he or she sees you, the bonus is still received. This is because surprise takes a few seconds for recovery, during which time the firer or striker can deliver a well-aimed attack.

**Target Unable to Move:** If the target is unable to move (knocked down, leg injury prevents movement, tied up, etc.), this bonus is received. A target motionless and either ambushed or surprised is also considered unable to move until the surprise wears off, so this bonus is received. Normally, once a target is aware of danger, the character is constantly moving about, even if no travel action is selected, and this does not apply (unless one of the above special situations occurs).

**Aiming Specifically at Rider or Mount:** When striking or firing at a mounted character, normal hits have a 50-50 chance of hitting the rider or mount. If the striker/firer elects this option (before rolling the d100 dice), the rider or mount is automatically the location of any hit, depending on which is the announced target. Normal hit location on the rider or mount is then used (unless a specific part of the body was also aimed at; for example, if firing a bow at a cavalryman, a -10 use modifier would apply if aiming at the rider only. If aiming at the rider's head, a -30 modifier would apply).

**Aiming at Specific Part of the Body:** When striking or firing a missile, the character may aim at a specific hit location on the target (head, arm, torso, leg, etc.). If the strike or missile hits, the normal hit location isn't used, instead the area location aimed at is hit. Note that this type

of aim reduces weapon use, making a hit more difficult. If the hit misses the location aimed at, it misses the target entirely.

## 5.9 Mounted Combat

**Abilities & Characteristics:** A mounted character uses his/her own characteristics in combat, including quickness, strength, skills, etc. Movement speed depends on the mount. In some cases the mount can strike (as well as the rider), using its own characteristics and skills. Wounds will affect either the rider or mount, depending on which is hit.

**Standard Procedure:** When a mounted character is in combat, the normal procedure is to use one hand to control the mount, and the other for a weapon. In addition, the weapon use skill rating (of the weapon in action) is temporarily reduced to the riding skill rating, if the riding skill is lower.

However, a mounted character has a number of options:

**No-hand Riding:** A character can control his/her mount simply with the body and legs, and use both hands for weapons, etc. In this case, a riding skill check is needed that instant, and failure means the character cannot use any weapons, and must check riding skill again to see if he/she falls (if so, 1d6/2 smash wound points result).

**Full Weapons Use:** A character whose weapon(s) are normally reduced to riding skill level may instead elect to use the weapon(s) at full weapon use rating. Again, however, a riding skill check is needed with failure prevent any weapon(s) use, and requiring a second check, where a second failure again results in a fall (1d6/2 smash wound points).

Both no-hand and full-weapon-use riding are possible, but a separate check for each is needed, and failure of both will mean two checks for falls, and if two falls result, the smash wounds for each are added together (a very bad fall!).

**Knocked from a Mount:** If a mounted character takes a strike or missile hit worth 8 or more damage points, he or she must check riding skill. Failure means the hit knocked the character from the mount, he or she suffers 1d6/2 smash wound points. Note that a hit might be parried, or cause less than 8 points due to armor absorbing/deflecting some, but the original force of the hit still requires the rider to check riding skill.

**Mounted Charge:** If a character makes a mounted charge, the strike at the end of the charge receives a +1 bonus to the damage result when it hits (if it misses, there is no bonus). Only strikes from hand-held weapons receive this bonus, never missile.

## 5.10 Parries & Shields

**Parry:** A weapon can be used to parry a successful strike by another hand-held weapon. Weapons cannot parry missiles. A successful parry requires successful weapons use (d100 roll is less than or equal to weapon use skill). There are no combat modifiers for a parry, weapon use is always at the standard level.

**Bonus Parry:** A weapon can be used to strike and to parry in the same instant. This is allowed only if the parry is used against an enemy strike of lower speed. If the parry is used against an enemy strike of equal or higher speed, the character just parries, and is unable to strike also.

Additional bonus parries are possible. A second (bonus) parry is allowed if the parry weapon has double or greater the speed of the strike, the third parry is possible only if the parry speed is triple or more that of the strike, etc.

**Body Parries:** A character can use fists or kicks to parry a weapon, but a successful parry means that part of the body takes the hit (normal hit location is not used). However, if the weapon speed for the fist or kick was greater than that of the strike, the normal damage is reduced by a 1d6 roll. This represents an especially quick parry where the full damage of the strike is deflected.

**Shields:** If a strike gets past a parry (if any are made), and in the case of all missile shots, a shield may be used to intercept the hit. If the weapon speed for the shield is greater than that of the strike or missile, the shield automatically intercepts the hit. If the weapon speed for the shield is lower, the character rolls d100 and compares it to the 'weapon use' rating for the shield. If the result is less than or equal to the use skill, the shield intercepts, if the die roll is greater, the shield does not intercept it.

Shields only absorb a limited amount of damage (see Weapon Breakage). If the strike or missile hit is intercepted, but does more damage than the shield absorbs, the remainder continues and hits the shield arm of the character instead.

Note that a shield could intercept a large number of hits in the same turn, even with a very low speed, unlike parries.

## 5.11 Weapon Breakage

**Hits:** When a weapon hits in combat, the damage it does is determined by dice roll. This amount also determines if the weapon breaks. If the damage amount exceeds the weapon breakage value, consult the appropriate column on the weapon breakage table (below). Missile weapon breakage applies to ammunition if the weapon is fired, but to the weapon itself is used to strike as a hand-held weapon (such as clobbering someone with a crossbow). Note that when a weapon breaks, it still inflicts normal damage with that hit.

**Parries:** When a weapon is used to parry successfully, damage must be determined for both striker and parrier. Normal damage application is reversed. The damage value inflicted by the striking weapon determines if the parrying weapon breaks, while damage inflicted by the parrying weapon determines if the striking weapon breaks. If a parry fails, then normal striking and damage rules apply (the striking weapon compares damage inflicted to its own breakage value), as described in the previous paragraph.

*For example, Jakor strikes with a Halberd (1d10+1 damage, 11 breakage), and Siset parries with a Lance (1d6+3 damage, 9 breakage). Siset parries successfully, so both compute damage. Jakor rolls a 9, inflicting 10 points damage. Siset rolls a 4, inflicting 7 points damage. Jakor's 10 is sufficient to cause Siset to check for lance breakage results, but Jakor's halberd is too strong and need not check for Siset's 7 points. If Siset had missed his parry, and Jakor struck home, the result of 10 would still avoid breakage possibilities. However, if Jakor had rolled one higher, he would have been vulnerable to breakage if he had struck home.*

**Shields:** When a shield intercepts a hit, if the damage points equal the current breakage number for the shield, breakage must be determined.

If the damage points exceed the current shield breakage number, breakage is determined, and in addition, the excess damage amount (that beyond the shield's value) penetrates past the shield and hits the target. Normal hit location procedure is used.

If a shield intercepts a hit of two or more damage points, but is not affected by any of the above results (or the damage was less than the breakage value), the shield's breakage number is reduced by one. This represents the gradual destruction of a shield.

*Example: a character with a light shield (breakage value 7) is hit by a greatsword, which inflicts 9 points of damage. The shield only stops 7 damage points, so hit location must be consulted for the remaining two, as they strike the character. Of course, any armor on the location hit may reduce the damage further. Meanwhile, the shield itself must consult the weapon breakage table, adding two (+2) to the 1d6 roll there. The roll is a '2', which is then modified to a 4, meaning the shield has its breakage number reduced by two, so its new breakage number is 5. If there was no weapon breakage result, the shield would still be reduced by one, since it intercepted a strike with a damage value of two or more.*

**Body Parries:** If a character uses a body parry, no special breakage for parry applies. Ignore special parry breakage, instead resolve it like a normal hit, except on the part of the body which parried (damage may be reduced by 1d6 if the parry was faster than the strike, see Parries, above).

### 5.11.1 WEAPON BREAKAGE RESULTS

When a weapons breakage situation occurs, the player rolls 1d6 and consults the appropriate column of the table. If the damage value exceeds the breakage number, add one (+1) to the roll for each point the damage exceeds it. Missiles use the strike/parrying with weapon column.

*Minor repairs* take a day of successful armorer or bowyer skill with portable tools. *Major repairs* take a week of successful skill with a full shop of equipment (an armorer's forge, spare metal or wood, etc., is often required). *Body wounds* are automatically suffered by the part of the body used in the strike (right or left arm with a fist strike, right or left leg with a kick strike, forelegs or hindlegs for a quadruped strike, depending on direction, etc.).

#### Weapon Breakage Results Table

(add one to 1d6 roll for each point damage exceeds breakage number)

1d6	Striking/Parrying with Weapon	Striking with Body	Intercepting with Shield
1, 2	weapons unaffected.	body unaffected.	shield unaffected
3, 4	weapon blunted/chipped, damage reduced by two points until minor repairs made	body wound, suffer 2 smash wound points	shield weakened, breakage number reduced by 2
5	weapon shaft/handle breaks, bends, useless until minor repairs made	body wound, suffer 3 smash wound points	shield fractured, useless until minor repairs made
6+	weapon broken or shattered into 1d6+1 pieces, useless until major repairs made	body wounded, suffer smash wound points equal to half character's mass	shield broken or shattered into 1d6+1 pieces, useless until major repairs made

## 5.12 Special Combat Options & Situations

**Airborne Fighting Ranges:** missiles fired upwards a significant distance must travel greater than normal. If the change in altitude is upwards, and the number of stories is more than 1/10th the range in paces, add 50% to the range. If the altitude in stories is more than half the range in paces, range becomes the altitude multiplied by five (x5).

For example, shooting upwards 12 stories at 100 pace range becomes 150 pace range (shooting upward more than 10 stories at 100 pace range would add 50%, or 50 more paces). If the range were only 12 paces, and altitude still 12 stories up, the range becomes 60 paces

(altitude x5).

For advanced gamemasters with a pocket calculator or computer, the following equation can be used to determine the exact range, where 'r' is the range in paces and 'a' the altitude in stories:

$$\text{exact range in paces} = \sqrt{r^2 + (4a)^2}$$

Firing missiles *downward* does *not* increase the range measurably, because gravity aids the missile firing.

**Airborne Strikes:** Flying characters may strike with any weapon at targets with the same altitude. Weapons L2 or longer can be used against a target one story higher or lower, weapons L4 size are needed against a target two stories higher or lower. Targets three stories higher or lower cannot be hit by strikes, regardless of the weapon length.

**Dual Weapon Strikes:** A character could have two weapons, one in each hand, and attempt to strike and/or parry with each. However, either the weapon speed of both is halved, or the weapon use of both is halved, whichever the character prefers. The weapons can be used to strike or parry against the same target, or against different ones, as desired. Bonus parries for each weapon are possible, if the weapon has sufficient speed.

**Strikes by Mounts:** A character riding a mount trained for war may command it to strike. This is resolved as a separate strike by the mount at the appropriate target, using the weapon use and speed skills of the mount. Note that a travel action by the mount may prohibit such a strike, unless the mount was charging.

Mounts not trained for war cannot strike while being ridden. If they don't have a rider, they may revert to wild animal status and strike when attacked, at the discretion of the gamemaster. Among horses, only the warhorse has war training.

**Dodge:** A character being struck can 'abort' his or her normal action during an instant, and dodge instead. Dodges are impossible if the character is prone, or is in the middle of a travel action requiring consecutive instants. The dodge is declared after all other actions are declared, but before any moves or strikes are resolved. The dodge declaration means the declared action is cancelled, including all travel (moves), strikes, missile shots, parries, and other activities. A prone character cannot dodge.

When a dodging character is struck at, the dodger and striker each has a higher total, otherwise it fails. If a character is being fired upon, the firer adds a 2d10 roll to his intelligence, while the dodger adds a 2d10 roll to his agility. Again, the dodger must have a higher roll for success.

If a dodge succeeds, the strike or shot automatically misses.

If the dodge fails, the strike or missile hits normally (assuming weapons use was successful). The dodger cannot use a shield or attempt a parry with a weapon. Any shoves against a dodging character are automatically successful.

## 5.13 Shoves & Wrestling

### Shove

A charging character can try to 'shove' past an opponent. This is determined at the end of an instant, after all weapons use is resolved, but before actions taking a full instant are concluded. To resolve a shove, each character rolls 2d10 and adds that to his/her strength. The charger is successful if he/she has the higher total. Success means the victim is pushed back and sideways one pace. In addition, the gamemaster may request the victim to make an agility test, with failure causing the character to fall down. This test is advised whenever the shover has significant charge momentum (more than one instant of travel), the ground is uneven or slippery, or the victim loses by a significant margin.

If a shove does not succeed, there is no special effect.

### Wrestling

A character can attempt to grab an opponent and start a wrestling match at the end of an instant, after weapons use is resolved, but before actions taking a full instant are concluded. A grab is only possible if the opponent is within one pace (L1 strike range). If the opponent is not shoving, and tries to resist, the grabber must roll 2d10 and add it to his/her strength, and beat the opponent, who adds a 2d10 roll to his/her agility. If the grabber fails, no wrestling match is possible, because the grab failed. Note that if the opponent is attempting a shove, a grab will always succeed.

Once a character is grabbed the wrestling begins. On each subsequent instant the characters are presumed on the ground wrestling, unable to make any other actions. Normal weapons and travel are prohibited by them. Instead, each character declares whether he/she is wrestling for 'blood' or to 'subdue.' Then each adds a 2d10 roll to his or her strength.

**Wrestling for Blood:** The character with the higher 2d10+strength total will inflict one (1) smash wound point for every two (2) points his/her total exceeds the opponent's. Odd points of advantage are ignored. For example, a roll of 23 to 14 means an advantage of 9, and thus 4 points of wounds inflicted. Roll for hit location.

**Wrestling to Subdue:** The character with the higher 2d10+strength total has a chance to subdue the opponent. He or she is successful if either (a) the total exceeds the opponent's total by the opponent's mass, or more, or (b) the total is double or more the opponent's total.

For example, if the totals are 23 and 14, an opponent of mass 9 or less would be subdued. If the totals are 23 and 11, any opponent would be subdued (since the victor has double or more the total of the loser).

If a character successfully subdues the opponent, the opponent is under the total physical control of the victor.

**Escaping a Wrestling Match:** At the end of an instant of wrestling, after the normal resolution procedure, one or both of the characters may attempt to escape. If both wish to escape, the match ends. If only one wishes to escape, that character adds a 2d10 roll to his or her agility, while the opponent adds a 2d10 roll to his or her strength. The escaper must have a higher total to successfully escape, otherwise the match continues in the next instant. If escape does occur, each character is backed up 1d6/2 paces instantly, and is considered prone (all before the next instant starts). In the next instant each character is allowed normal actions, including standing up, crawling away, etc.

**Multi-character Wrestling:** Two or more characters may attempt to wrestle one opponent. Normally, characters pair off one-on-one for wrestling matches. If one party has excess characters, these can join any match. Each additional character adds his or her strength to the 2d10+strength roll normally made. Additional dice are not rolled, the sole bonus is the extra strength of the additional character(s). Extra characters have no effect on escape from wrestling rolls.

## 5.14 L0 Weapons

Certain natural weapons are rated 'L0' (length of zero). These weapons can only be used in a wrestling match, when wrestling for blood. If the user is victorious wrestling (2d10+strength roll is higher), instead of normal damage computation, the natural weapon damage result can be applied instead (as the winner desires).

## 5.15 Magic in Combat

**Casting Elemental Magic Spells:** It takes a character one instant to contact an aligned elemental node and cast a magic spell. The spell is treated like a weapon in use, with speed zero (0). However, if the spell is cast 'through' other nodes, in a chain, for each additional node in the chain speed is increased by 15. Therefore, if a wizard casts a spell through all six other possible nodes, the speed is 90.

If a character casting a spell is hit by a missile or strike before he or she casts the spell, the character is distracted and cannot cast the spell that instant. This distraction occurs even if the hit fails to do damage.

**Enchanted Elemental Magic:** If a character uses an enchanted item in combat, it is used like a weapon or its equivalent. If the object has a passive or active contact enchantment, and is a weapon, appropriate weapon speed is used. If the object is not a weapon, but has passive or active contact enchantment, use appropriate weapon speed for the category nearest and most appropriate to its size and shape (if small, such as a ring or talisman, a fist; if medium-sized, such as a baton, a club; if large, then a giant club or staff, etc.).

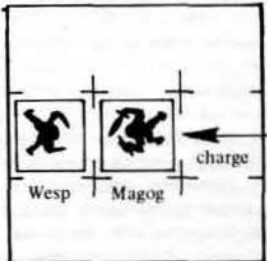
If the object has a ranged, active enchantment then weapon speed is normally zero when firing. However, the object could contain other enchanted nodes to form a chain. If those other nodes are at least as powerful as the final node, each additional node adds 15 to the weapon speed rating. If other nodes are weaker than the final node, they cannot be used for a 'speed chain' in the enchanted object. Active ranged enchantments can always be used as passive contact enchantments instead, in which case weapon speed appropriate to the object is used.



**Example of Combat**

Wesp the sorceress, featured in previous examples, found the den of a bandit chief and was looking around for loot. Suddenly, a sound startled her. Charging full speed through the doorway was Magog, the bandit chieftain himself! Obviously, Wesp's detect danger skill had failed.

During the first instant of combat, although Wesp's quickness of



28 was superior to Magog's 24, Wesp was unable to do anything but turn and look surprised — because she was surprised! Magog's charge move, at the run, brought him crashing into Wesp at one (1) pace range, scimitar slashing. Wesp had a knife in her hand (she was using it to poke around the room), but due to surprise could not use it. Therefore, comparative weapon speeds (to see who strikes first) are irrelevant, since only Magog can strike.

Magog's weapon use is 62, and speed is 41 with his scimitar. Magog therefore has a base 62% chance for a hit. However, modifiers will apply. First, Magog's agility is 12 while Wesp's is 16, so Magog suffers a -4 for the agility difference. Magog has surprised Wesp, worth +50. Due to this advantage, Magog decides to try for a quick knock-out, and aims his strike at Wesp's head, a -20 penalty for aiming at a specific body area. No other modifiers apply. Therefore, Magog's actual percentage is hit is  $62 - 4 + 50 - 20$ , or 88. He rolls a '67', and therefore hits Wesp in the head.

Magog's strength is 12, while the scimitar held in one hand only requires a strength of 6. Therefore, Magog gets a +1 damage bonus for being five (or more) strength above the minimum. The normal  $1d6 + 1$  cutting damage becomes  $1d6 + 2$ . The die roll is 3, the actual damage inflicted is 5 points.

**Note:** If Wesp had not been surprised (i.e., her detect danger skill functioned successfully, allowing her to react the same instant Magog charged), her superior quickness would have allowed her to select some move, such as running behind furniture, etc., that might prevent Magog from making contact in a straight-line charge from the doorway. Furthermore, since Magog was moving faster than a walk, he would be committed to a number of instants movement (until he crashed into a wall, or Wesp), and only able to turn up to  $60^\circ$  at the start of each instant's move. If Wesp could not find a way maneuver herself out of reach, she could attempt to parry or dodge, or to use a magic spell that she hopes has a faster speed than Magog's scimitar.

**5.16 Exhaustion in Combat (Optional Rule)**

Characters that run or gallop for more than a period (5 instants) in combat may become exhausted, especially if wearing heavy armor. The amount of continuous running or galloping allowed before exhaustion occurs is:

- One period (5 instants, beyond which exhaustion occurs) — if the character is completely covered by metal armor (of any sort, including mail).
- Two periods (10 instants, beyond which exhaustion occurs) — if the character has metal armor somewhere other than the head, and/or has any armor on legs.
- Three periods (15 instants, beyond which exhaustion occurs) — if the character has no metal armor other than head and has no armor on legs.

**Effect of Exhaustion:** Character cannot run or gallop, and all strikes with hand-held weapons have an extra minus one (-1) applied to damage points dice roll.

**Recovery from Exhaustion:** Character must spend a full period resting. During this time the character must be stationary or travelling at a casual walk, performing no fighting actions. The character can be under missile fire, and use a shield. A character cannot rest in a period where he or she is hit by a strike (even if the strike does no damage) from hand-held weapons.

**5.17 Armor & Weapon Speed (Optional Rule)**

Armor on characters tends to slow weapon speed. Only arm and torso armor affect weapon speed.

**Arm Armor:** for each point (of wounds) this armor can absorb/deflect, weapon speed is reduced by five (-5). If striking with a kick, leg armor is used (instead of arm armor) to compute speed loss.

The weapon speed reduction for arm armor applies to use of the shield, which is slowed by armor on the shield arm. A character may voluntarily reduce armor on the shield arm, to keep weapon speed for shield higher.

**Torso Armor:** for each point (of wounds) this armor absorbs/deflects, weapon speed is reduced by one (-1).

Arm and torso penalties combine. If a weapon is used one-handed, armor on that arm is used. If a weapon is used two-handed the armor on either arm, whichever is heavier, is used to compute arm armor speed loss.

*For example,* if a character has a breastplate (intercepts 6 damage points on torso) and leather bracers (intercepts 2 damage points on arms), weapon speed is reduced 16 altogether. If a character is wearing a complete suit of plate (intercepts 6 damage points everywhere), weapon speed is reduced 36 altogether.

**5.18 Courage in Combat (Optional Rule)**

Not every character is totally courageous in combat. While players can make decisions for their own characters, the gamemaster must decide when an NPC selects discretion over valor, and whether they conduct an orderly withdrawal or simply flee in panic. The courage system below provides a general method, but the gamemaster should feel free to make modifications appropriate to specific situations.

**Courage Classes:** NPCs should be rated as either 'warriors' (with a fighting speciality) or 'non-warriors.' Elite warriors of exceptional bravery, such as chieftains, heroes, berserkers, etc. are considered '+1' warriors if very good, or '+2' warriors if truly exceptional. Unintelligent omnivorous or carnivorous animals are always considered warriors, other animals are non-warriors. Omnivorous or carnivorous animals that are hungry are '+1' warriors, and if enraged or defending something important (such as their young, their lair, etc.) they become '+2' warriors.

**When to Check Courage:** One side or the other must check courage when the following situation(s) occur. The check is made immediately, and takes effect at the end of that instant.

- when an NPC suffers his or her first wound, or is given an exceptionally dangerous task, that particular NPC must check courage (others on the same side need not check);
- when two or more NPCs, or 10% of side's original strength (whichever is more) fall wounded or killed during the same period; all surviving NPCs on that side must check their courage;
- when an NPC is knocked out or killed, and survivors on that side are now less than half their original strength; all surviving NPCs on that side must check their courage.

**Courage Check Procedure:** To check courage for a side, roll 2d6 dice once for all warriors on that side, then roll 2d6 dice again for non-warriors. If the side has scattered groups not in sight of each other, each separate (out-of-sight) group checks separately. The 2d6 roll is modified depending on circumstances; the most common are listed below:

+1, +2	warrior of exceptional bravery (see courage classes above), applies only to that figure
+1	side has not yet suffered any dead or unconscious
-1	side has suffered more casualties (knocked out or dead) than opponents
-1	side has tactical disadvantage*

\*tactical disadvantage is determined by the gamemaster, and includes being outranged by enemy missiles or weapons length, facing an enemy with generally superior equipment, an enemy with a superior position, an enemy using an unusual or terrifying weapon, an enemy has achieved surprise or ambush, an enemy with magic that cannot be matched or defended against, etc.

**COURAGE TABLE**

Modified 2d6 roll	Result for Warriors	Result for Non-Warriors
3 or less	flees	flees
4 or 5	withdraws	flees
6, 7 or 8	still courageous	withdraws
9 or more	still courageous	still courageous

**Withdrawal:** NPCs attempt to break off combat and depart in an orderly manner. As many as necessary will step back, to cover the rest



who trot backwards to set up a rearward defense, to provide missile fire support, or a second line, to cover the withdrawal of the first group, etc. If players do not pursue, NPCs will all move off rapidly.

Once withdrawal starts, it continues until either they begin to flee, or they are out of sight of the enemy. Once out of sight they automatically group together and rally, and then decide a new course of action (which might be a new attack if a strong leader is present to convince them).

**Flee:** NPCs panic and run (gallop if possible) away, as quickly as possible. Any encumbering weapons are discarded, along with any armor that can be conveniently discarded if that also improves their ability to withstand exhaustion. Other bulky items may be discarded too (at the discretion of the gamemaster). Once in flight, the NPC will probably become exhausted, and be reduced eventually to trot movement.

Once flight starts, it must continue until the NPC is beyond sight and hearing of the enemy. Then compute the number of extra minutes the character continues to flee before rationality returns and he/she can stop, rally, and begin to rest. This is  $2D10 + 20 - \text{intelligence}$ . NPCs that flee will not return to action unless a leader successfully uses both personnel management and warlord skills to organize a new attack.

**Effect of Leadership on Courage:** If a leader has any warlord skill, he or she can check this skill whenever his/her side must check courage. If the warlord skill is used successfully, the courage check need not be made. If an individual character (due to first wound) must check courage, again a successful check of the warlord skill prevents the need for the normal courage check. A warlord in flight cannot exercise his or her

skill, but the skill can be used while withdrawing. If a side has two or more warlords, only one character per group can use the skill — normally the one with the higher social status, but sometimes an even higher lord has appointed another as the 'battle leader' for the group.

If a character has personnel management skill, each time non-warrior(s) of a side must check courage, the personnel management skill can be tested first. If the skill is used successfully, the non-warrior(s) are considered warrior(s) (+0 quality) instead. A character can only apply personnel management skill to non-warriors when trying to affect courage, and only those in his or her personal retinue. As a result, some other non-warriors in the group, in another character's retinue, might not receive the benefit even if the skill is successfully used. If the appointed 'battle leader' of the group uses this skill successfully, it is normally applied to all characters in the group (at gamemaster's discretion).

### 5.19 Efficient Weapon Length (Optional Rule)

Striking weapons are best used at their designed length (an L4 weapon at 4 paces distance, L3 at 3 paces, etc.). If a weapon is used at a shorter range, it is less efficient, and will tend to do less damage. Therefore, for each pace shorter than designed distance, subtract one (-1) from normal wound points inflicted (if a hit is scored). Weapon breakage is still calculated normally, using full damage values.

Using this rule, characters may be allowed to use weapons in wrestling, just like natural weapons. Range is considered zero (0) paces, so an appropriate subtraction to normal wound points must be made.



5.20 Weapons Data Summary

WEAPON class	name	(material)	social status	Min. Strength		weapon length	MISSILE RANGES				damage die	wound roll type(s)	breakage number		
				1-hd use	2-hd use		short	medium	long	extreme					
shield	Light Shield	wood or leather	5	4	2	L1	x	x	x	1-2	1d6-4	S	7		
shield	Heavy Shield	wood or metal	12	8	4	L1	x	x	x	1	1d6-3	S	10		
club	Improvised Club	varies	1	8	3	L1	x	x	x	2-4	1d6-1	S	4		
club	Club	wood	2	6	2	L1	x	x	x	2-3	1d6	S	8		
club	Spiked Club	wood & metal	2	15	9	L2	x	x	x	2-4	1d6+1	C&S	8		
club	Giant Club	wood	2	18	13	L2	x	x	x	2-4	1d6+3	S	12		
stave	Staff	wood	2	11	5	L2	x	x	x	2	1d10-3	S	7		
stave	Quarterstaff	wood	5	9	4	L2	x	x	x	2	1d10-2	S	9		
dagger	Knife (throwable)	metal	2(5)	2	1	L1	(2-4)	(5-9)	(10-14)	(15-20)	1d6-2	T	4		
dagger	Dagger (throwable)	metal	4(7)	3	1	L1	(2-3)	(4-6)	(7-9)	(10-12)	1d6-1	T	6		
sword	Shortsword	metal	4	4	2	L1	x	x	x	2-3	4-5	T or C	9		
sword	Scimitar	metal	7	6	3	L2	x	x	x	2	3-4	1d6+1	C	8	
sword	Longsword	metal	8	8	4	L2	x	x	x	2	3-4	1d10	T or C	11	
sword	Rapier	metal	9	3	1	L2	x	x	x	2-3	4-5	1d6	T	7	
sword	Hand-and-a-half	metal	11	13	7	L2	x	x	x	2	3-4	1d10+1	C and/or T	12	
sword	Greatsword	metal	13	18	13	L2	x	x	x	2	3-4	1d10+2	C	13	
axe	Hand Axe	metal	5	12	6	L1	x	x	x	2	3-4	5-6	1d6+1	C	8
axe	Throwing Axe	metal	5	10	4	L1	2-3	4-5	6-9	10-15	1d6+1	C	7		
axe	Battle Axe	metal	6	17	12	L2	x	x	x	2	3-4	1d6+3	C	10	
axe	Halberd	metal & wood	8	18	11	L3	x	x	x	x	3-4	1d10+1	T or C	11	
hammer/mace	Maul	stone	3	23	16	L2	x	x	x	x	2-3	1d10+3	S	13	
hammer/mace	Hammer	metal	5	12	6	L1	x	2-3	4-5	6-9	1d6+1	S or T	8		
hammer/mace	Great Hammer	metal	6	18	13	L2	x	x	x	2	3-4	1d6+3	S or T	10	
hammer/mace	Mace	metal	11	12	6	L1	x	2	3-4	5-6	1d6+2	S	10		
hammer/mace	Giant Mace	metal	11	18	13	L2	x	x	x	2	3-4	1d10+2	S	12	
flail	Whip	leather	6	4	1	L3	x	x	x	x	3-5	1d6-1	C	8	
flail	Military Flail	metal	7	19	12	L3	x	x	x	x	3-5	1d10+1	C or S	11	
spear	Spear	wood	4	13	6	L3	x	3-4	5-8	9-15	1d6+1	T	8		
spear	Pike	wood	7	25	12	L4	x	x	x	x	x	1d6+3	T	9	
spear	Metal Shod Spear	metal & wood	10	15	9	L3	x	x	x	3	4-7	1d6+2	T	10	
spear	Lance	wood	14	14	9	L3	x	x	x	3-4	5-7	1d6+3	T	9	
hand missile	Rock	stone	0	2	1	L1	2	3-9	10-18	19-30	1d6-3	S	4		
hand missile	Large Rock	stone	0	20	12	L1	1	2-4	5-12	13-20	1d6+3	S	9		
hand missile	Javelins (2)	wood	4	7	x	L1	2-8	9-25	26-60	61-100	1d6	T	6		
hand missile	Throwing Spears (2)	metal	6	8	6	L2	2-4	5-8	9-15	16-25	1d6+1	T	4		
hand missile	Darts (5-6)	wood or metal	8	4	x	L1	2-12	13-30	31-50	51-75	1d6-2	T	6		
hand missile	Throwing Stars (10)	metal	10	1	x	L1	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	1d6-1	C	8		
sling	Sting (20 stones)	leather/stone	2	4	x	missile	3-20	21-50	51-70	71-100	1d6-1	S	never		
sling	Sling (20 bolts)	leather/metal	6	4	x	missile	3-20	21-50	51-80	81-120	1d6	S	never		
sling	Bolo	stone/leather	3	8	3	L2	2-8	9-20	21-30	31-40	1d6+1	S	7		
bow	Light Bow (20 arrows)	wood	6	x	6	L2	2-24	25-60	61-102	103-150	1d6-1	T	3		
bow	Medium Bow (20 arw)	wood	7	x	10	L2	2-40	41-100	101-170	171-250	1d6	T	4		
bow	Long/Composite Bow	wood	8	x	12	L2	2-48	49-144	145-240	241-360	1d10	T	4		
crossbow	Crossbow (20 quarrels)	wood/metal	8	x	8	L1	2-40	41-80	81-180	181-300	1d6+2	T	5		
crossbow	Arbalest (12 quarrels)	wood/metal	8	x	13	L1	2-50	51-150	151-250	251-400	1d6+4	T	5		
natural	Humanoid/Fist	arm	0	2	1	L1	x	x	x	x	1d6-3	S	2		
natural	(for every 25 in weapon use, add one to damage and two to breakage number)														
natural	Humanoid Kick	leg	0	3	x	L1	x	x	x	x	1d6-4	S	2		
natural	(for every 20 in weapon use, add one to damage and two to breakage number)														
natural	Quadruped Kick	fore/hind qtrs.	0	x	9	L1	x	x	x	x	1d10-2	S	8		
natural	(for every 5 mass over minimum, add one to breakage)														
natural	Small Claw	arm or leg	0	2	1	L1	x	x	x	x	1d6-2	C	4		
natural	(for every 30 in weapon use, add one to damage and two to breakage number)														
natural	Large Claw	arm or leg	0	10	x	L1	x	x	x	x	1d10-2	C	8		
natural	(for every 5 mass over minimum, add one to breakage)														
natural	Fangs	head	0	4	x	L0	x	x	x	x	1d6-1	T	5		
natural	(for every 6 mass over minimum, add one to breakage)														
natural	Tail	tail	0	5	x	L2	x	x	x	x	1d6	S	6		
natural	(for every 5 mass over minimum, add one to breakage)														
natural	Stinger	tail usually (striker's strength has no effect on damage)	0	x	x	L2	x	x	x	x	1d6	poison	6		
natural	Deadly Stinger	tail usually (striker's strength has no effect on damage)	0	x	x	L2	x	x	x	x	1d6+3	poison	9		

Weapons Data Summary — Key

See the Weapons Data Summary charts for complete information, below is an explanation of the various columns, categories and ratings on the chart.

An entry of 'x' on the chart means that data is not applicable, or the weapon cannot be used in that form.

**Weapon class:** Each weapon belongs to an overall class. Experience in weapons use skill and weapon speed skill 'carry over' from one weapon to another in the same class, in that 50% of the skill rating gained is awarded to each other weapon in the same class. See Skills chapter, Fighting Sphere, Weapon Use and Weapon Speed.

**Weapon name:** Specific name of the weapon involved. Often these names are generic titles. For a full physical description of the types of weapons included, see Social Status & Equipment Chapter, Personal Weapons.

**Weapon material:** The dominant material (or materials) of the weapon, used to determine the effect of spells, and the material involved for enchantment purposes (see Magic Enchantment Chapter, The Object,

and Elemental Magic Spells Chapter).

**Min. Social Status:** Minimum social status required for purchase of the weapon, or possible legal ownership; see Social Status & Equipment Chapter, Social Status & Finances for details.

**Min. Strength:** Minimum strength required of the character for one-handed ('1-hd') and two-handed ('2-hd') use. Note that if character's strength exceeds the minimum, a bonus to damage may be received (see Wounds Chapter, Damage Dice & Wound Points). A character without the required minimum strength cannot use the weapon. Exception: For natural weapons each point below the minimum strength required reduces damage by one point.

**Weapon Length:** The length rating of the weapon, which corresponds to its effective 'reach' (or range) when striking in combat. An 'L1' length means a range (reach) of one pace, L2 is two paces, etc. Note that the overall length of the weapon may be different from its effective reach in battle. For details of this effect, see Combat Chapter, Fighting Ranges, In Range.

**Missile Ranges:** Range in paces for the weapon at short, medium, long and extreme range categories. All ranges should be rounded to the nearest whole pace. An 'x' indicates the missile cannot be fired at that range. Note that many weapons not designed for missile use could be used as missile weapons, but only at certain (usually very inaccurate) range categories!

**Damage Die Roll:** The die roll used to establish the damage (wound) points caused by a weapon hit. A separate roll is made for each hit, with an appropriate amount added or subtracted as indicated. See Wounds Chapter, Damage Dice & Wound Points for details.

**Wound Type(s):** If a wound does occur, this indicates the type of wound caused: S-smash, C-cut, T-thrust, B-burn. Note that a spiked club indicates a wound classed as both cut and smash (which means if magic is used to heal part or all of the wound, two spells are needed, one to counteract the smash, and one the cut). Some weapons allow a choice of cut or thrust. If the weapon has both point and edge, the user has a choice with each strike. However, many versions of the weapon only allow cutting or thrusting (such as a cutting or thrusting long-sword). See weapon descriptions and use gamemaster judgment in such cases (see Social Status & Equipment Chapter, Personal Weapons).

**Breakage Number:** If the weapon does this amount of damage when striking the target, or if parried by a weapon doing this amount of damage, or greater, there is a chance that breakage may occur. Consult Combat Chapter, Weapon Breakage, and use the appropriate table.

### 5.21 Fumble Table (Optional)

When a character rolls '100' (00 exactly), roll 2d6 with appropriate modifications and consult the table below. The fumble table below is relatively simplistic. Enterprising gamemasters may wish to create more complex and potentially humorous results to enliven the game.

### FUMBLE TABLE

2d6 roll	Result
2 or less	Hit oneself with own weapon
3	Stumble
4	Hit friend with weapon (no effect if no friends in range)
5, 6	Distracted
7	Weapon Entangled
8	Drop Weapon
9	Stumble
10	Weapon Entangled
11	Drop Weapon
12	Stumble
13, 14	Drop Weapon
15+	Stumble

#### Dice Roll Modifiers for Fumble Table

-3	all flails
-2	all L1 weapons except hammers/maces
-1	all hammers and maces
+1	all L3 weapons except flails
+2	all L4 weapons except flails

**Hit Oneself:** Roll for wound points inflicted upon oneself, instead of upon the enemy.

**Hit Friend:** Nearest friend within range is hit by accident, roll for wound points on him or her.

**Distracted:** Character's attention is diverted, can do nothing during the next instant except intercept with shield and/or parry, and then only if the character passes an intelligence or agility test (character's choice).

**Weapon Entangled:** Weapon is caught in clothing, underbrush, or furniture, has no effect for the rest of this instant. Weapon will be useless next instant also, unless a successful strength test is passed to free it.

**Drop Weapon:** Weapon falls from character's hand(s) and to the ground - ignore this if using a natural weapon.

**Stumble:** Character stumbles and must test agility this moment. If successful, no further actions this instant, but otherwise no effect. If a failure, character falls to ground, drops any weapon(s) in hand, and cannot do anything until next instant.

## 6. Wounds

A character may suffer a wound in many situations. Typically, a strike or missile hit in combat causes a wound. However, magic spells and everyday mishaps can also cause wounds. All wounds use the same system of location and effects.

Generally, when a wound occurs, first determine its location, then the severity (by rolling the proper 'damage dice' then adding or subtracting, as indicated in damage). Finally, determine the accumulated effects of wounds on the character. Wound points accumulate in each part of the body until that part becomes disabled. In addition, the overall total wounds to a character may eventually disable the person as a whole. In rare cases, a single potent wound could disable.

### 6.1 Hit Location

A 1d10 die roll is used to determine where the hit occurs on the body of the character. Each character belongs to a basic racial type, which determines the form of the body (see Racial Index). For example, men, dwarves, and elves are all humanoids; horses, mules, camels, dogs, and wolves are quadrupeds, kobolds, lizards, and crocodiles are lizards, etc.

If a character is mounted, there is a 50-50 chance that either the mount or rider is hit. An appropriate die roll is first made to see which is hit, before consulting the appropriate table.

#### 6.1.1 HIT LOCATION TABLES

1d10 roll:	.1	.2	.3	.4,5,6	.7,8	.9,10
Humanoid	head	right arm	left arm	torso	right leg	left leg

1d10 roll:	.1,2	.3,4	.5,6	.7,8	.9,10
Quadruped	head	forebody torso	fore legs	hindbody torso	hind legs

1d10 roll:	.1,2	.3	.4,5	.6	.7,8	.9,10
Lizard	head	forebody torso	fore legs	hindbody torso	hind legs	tail

1d10 roll:	.1	.2,3	.4,5	.6,7	.8,9	.10
Insect	head	grasping legs	torso	fore legs	hind legs	tail (*torso)

1d10 roll:	.1	.2	.3	.4,5,6	.7,8	.9	.10
Winged	head	right arm	left arm	wings	torso	legs (right leg)	tail (left leg)

\* if body has no tail, consider result torso instead.

† if body has no tail, consider result right or left leg as indicated (if it has a tail, 'legs' result indicates both legs).

**Cover:** A character may be hiding behind a wall, door, table, throne, bush etc. which protects some part(s) of the body. The gamemaster determines what is protected, bearing in mind a character must expose a head to see, and the torso along with an arm to strike or use a missile, etc. Protected body areas, if hit, will result in the hit striking the cover instead. Minor or light cover may only absorb one or two wound points, with the rest of the blow landing on the character. Heavier, objects may absorb the entire blow. Again the gamemaster decides, and can even assign breakage numbers to objects for specific situations. As a guideline, consider brush or bushes, branches, etc. to have a breakage of 2, light wooden items (chairs, etc.) of 3, heavy wooden items (tables, etc.) of 5, and metal reinforcing on any of these adding 3 to 5 extra to breakage.

**Superior Elevation:** A character on a superior elevation (above an opponent) cannot be struck in the head, although he or she is still vulnerable to missile hits in the head. A character on a lower elevation has no special situations. Any 'head' hits are treated as misses against superior elevation characters. Superior elevation must be at least 1 pace of vertical elevation, such as a character mounted, on a table, on a stairway, etc. (just being a few inches taller isn't sufficient).

## 6.2 Damage Dice & Wound Points

After the hit location is determined, damage dice are rolled to see the exact number of wound 'points' inflicted. Wound points are a method of gauging the power of the wound; the greater the wound points, the worse the wound.

In combat, each weapon has a damage dice roll, often with a certain amount added or subtracted. For example, a longsword uses a 1d10 damage die, while a greatsword has 1d10+2 (meaning a 'd10' roll with two added), while a whip has 1d6-1 (meaning a 'd6' roll with one subtracted, so if a '1' is rolled the whip does no damage at all).

In other situations, the rules or gamemaster determine what damage dice roll is used. Sometimes the result of a dice roll is halved. As usual, any fractions are rounded off (halves are rounded down).

**Increased Combat Damage:** All combat weapons have a minimum strength requirement for one-handed and two-handed use. If a character's strength is greater than the minimum, for every 5 extra points of strength, add one (+1) to the damage dice result. Fractions of 5 points strength get no additions. The only exception is bows and crossbows, where increased strength provides no damage increase (instead, one must search for a more powerful bow).

## 6.3 Armor

Armor worn by a character will absorb/deflect a certain number of wound points. See the social status and equipment lists for descriptions of various types of armor, the parts of the body they protect, and the damage the armor absorbs/deflects.

**Damage to Armor:** Each time armor absorbs/deflects a blow whose damage is 2 or more wound points, the armor itself is damaged. Each 'damage' (hit of 2+ points) reduces armor protection by 1 point on that part of the body. Armor can be repaired by an armorer (or leatherworker, if leather) with portable tools, at the rate of 1 point per hour of successful skill use.

This system causes a rather rapid decline in armor protection. If a gamemaster wishes a more complex, but more realistic alternative, use the following: After a hit and any wounds are computed, roll 1d6. If the original damage value of the hit exceeds the roll, then the armor on that location is reduced by one. If the damage value is equal to or less than the roll, it is too weak to affect the armor, which remains at its current level.

**Natural Armor:** Some creatures have natural armor in the form of a thick hide, chitin plates, exoskeletons, etc., on certain parts of the body. Natural armor is included in descriptions of special races, animals, or monsters as appropriate. Natural armor is in addition to any armor worn by a character or animals. Natural armor cannot be damaged and reduced like normal armor.

**No Armor Protection:** Armor cannot protect against acid, fire, boiling oil, etc. in most situations. The gamemaster must judge each of these as appropriate. Armor is normally designed to protect only from cut, thrust, or smash wounds.

## 6.4 Accumulating Wounds

For each character, keep a record of the total wound points in each part of the body. Also keep an overall total of the wound points suffered by the character. For example, a man might have 2 wound points on his right arm, 1 on his head, and 3 on his torso, for an overall total of 6 wound points on his body.

## 6.5 Types of Wounds

There are four types of wounds: cuts (C), thrusts (T), smashes (S),

and burns (B). When a character is wounded, note the type as well as the wound points. Smashes also represent broken bones and sprains, and are the most common non-combat wounds.

**Cuts** are broad surface cuts, with increased wound points indicating larger and deeper cuts.

**Thrusts** are deep punctures in a small area. If the thrusting weapon or object breaks in the process of making the thrust, a part of the object will be embedded in the wound (magic healing therefore requires an extra Excise spell).

**Smashes** are impacts that break bones, damage internal organs, etc., even though the skin may not be broken.

**Burns** are caused by fire, acid, boiling oil or water, etc. They affect large surface areas of the body, but do not penetrate deeply. Increased wound points represent deeper, more permanent burns.

## 6.6 Effect of Wounds

The effect of wounds is determined by comparing the number of wound points to the mass of the character. Wound points do not reduce or eliminate mass, the mass remains constant regardless of the number of wound points (exception: permanently disabling wounds may reduce mass and strength, but these are always special cases). Instead, the *comparison* between wound points and mass cause various effects, up to and including death.

**Instant Death:** If the wound points of a *single* missile or strike exceed a character's mass, the character is instantly killed and falls to the ground. This represents beheading, cutting a character in two, or similar extremes.

**Fatal Wounds:** When the accumulated wound points for the entire body of the character exceed his or her mass, the character collapses (after the end of the instant or round of combat). The character is unconscious and rapidly bleeding to death. The character can be saved only if medical and/or magical attention is given within the next minute, and continues until treatment reduces damage points to half or less the overall mass. If attention halts before this is achieved, and not resumed within a minute again, the character dies. Note that a great many minor wounds scattered over the body may add up to a fatal level, without any disabling wounds.

**Disabling Wounds:** When wound points to any one part of the body equal at least half the character's mass, that part of the body is disabled. Disabled arms cannot be used, not even for passive actions such as holding a shield. A disabled leg causes the character to fall down and be limited to crawling. A quadruped that loses its forelegs or hindlegs to a disabling wound suffers the same. A disabled torso means the character is in shock, falls to the ground, cannot use any items or move, but can still talk (haltingly) and use magic. A disabled head means the character suffers a concussion and falls unconscious for 1d10 minutes.

**Serious Disablement:** When a *single* missile or strike causes a disabling wound, it means serious disablement and possible disfigurement, depending on location. Make an 'SD' notation with the proper body area listed. If the character survives, the specific disablement and its permanent effects are determined.

**Minor Wounds:** Any wound that is less than half the character's mass is a minor wound. These have no effect in themselves, but the wound points will accumulate to a disabling or even fatal level.

## 6.7 Healing Wounds

In effect the mass of the character represents the number of wound points he or she can receive in one combat before falling unconscious and coming close to death. Since the body has natural healing ability, a character can recover from wounds, then have another adventure and receive a new set of wounds!

**Binding:** Wounds must be attended in a basic fashion (binding them with cloth, splinting a broken bone, stitching a large gash, etc.). Fatal wounds must be bound within a minute. Rudimentary attention by another is sufficient to stave off death and begin the healing process. With fatal wounds *constant* care is needed until sufficient wound points have healed to eliminate the 'fatal' status of the accumulated wounds. Any character is presumed to have rudimentary knowledge of binding wounds, with no special skills needed.

**Healing Time:** It takes one day to heal the first wound point, two more days to heal the next, three more days to heal the third, etc. Thus, to heal three wound points would require six days. Healing continues until all wound points are healed. Until completely healed, a wound still 'exists' and additional wounds will add to it.

**Healing Modifications:** Successful application of doctor/druggist skills heals wounds in half the time — in effect, each day of healing counts as two (see Activity Spheres & Skills chapter for details).

If a character is involved in vigorous activity during a day, it only

counts half toward healing. Vigorous activity is anything other than sedentary sitting about or careful walking. If a character fails to receive nourishing food and reasonable water during a day it cannot count at all toward healing.

**Magic:** Various magic spells can be used to heal various types of wounds. Usually the effects are instantaneous.

### 6.8 Permanent Effects of 'SD' Wounds

Wounds that cause serious disablement will leave a permanent mark on the character. Depending on the location of the wound, consult the appropriate section below and roll 1d6 for effect.

**Magic Spells** can be used to cure permanent effects from a serious disablement. However, a separate and additional spell must be used, and double the normal node power for the spell is required (thus a special alignment is needed). The specific spell used must match the type of disabling wound that caused the permanent effect (cut, thrust, smash, or burn).

#### Example of Wound Effects

Wesp the sorceress, in combat with Magog the bandit, suffered a 5-point cut to her head (see the previous series of examples for details on Wesp, and the battle with the bandit). Since Magog had deliberately aimed the strike at her head, and hit, no hit location procedure is needed.

Wesp was wearing a leather hood-type helmet, which absorbs/deflects 2 points of damage. Thus, the strike's damage effect is reduced from 5 to 3. Wesp has a mass of four, so the wound both disables the head (wound equals or exceeds half the mass), and is serious (because a single strike inflicted half-mass effects). Wesp is knocked unconscious, and a permanent effect must be determined. The 1d6 roll is '3', meaning that the bandit's scimitar cut off one of Wesp's ears, permanently damaging her hearing. Her detect danger skill, originally 22, is halved to 11, and its maximum possible rating (originally 80, plus her intelligence of 12, for 92) is reduced by twenty to 72.

Presuming her mangled ear stub is bound eventually, and no further injuries occur, it will take Wesp six days of complete rest before she can get about normally. Of course, she might wear the bandage on her head far longer, and continue to feel pain for weeks or months — six days is simply the time needed to become 'functional' again.

#### 6.8.1 HEAD — PERMANENT WOUND EFFECTS

(roll 1d6 for result).

**1: Eye Put Out:** all weapons use, all weapons speed, and all detect danger skills are reduced by ten (-10); maximum rating possible for each is also reduced by ten (-10). All other Fighting, Stealth, and Arts/Crafts sphere have the current and maximum possible ratings reduced by five (-5).

**2: Mouth or Jaw Destroyed:** cannot bite or chew properly, cannot use fangs as a weapon. Strength is reduced by one (-1) due to diet problems (mass unaffected); drinking, musician, and haggling skills are reduced by twenty (-20).

**3: Ear Lost & Hearing Damaged:** detect danger skill halved, maximum possible rating reduced by twenty (-20).

**4: Throat Injury, Breathing Obstructed:** halve the current rating of all the following skills: weapon speed, haggling, drinking, swimming, glassblowing & pottery, warlord, politician; exhaustion occurs after instants of activity, instead of periods.

**5: Face Disfigured:** lose two social status levels, reduce haggling, politician, and personnel management skills by twenty (-20), and reduce the maximum possible rating of these skills by ten (-10).

**6: Brain Damage:** subtract 1d6+1 from intelligence, reducing skills and/or maximum levels as appropriate. Roll 1d6 for each town, country, arts/crafts, general, magic, and leadership/administration skill; if a '6' occurs the character has lost that skill due to forgetfulness. The character can relearn these skills.

#### 6.8.2 ARM — PERMANENT WOUND EFFECTS

(roll 1d6 for result).

**1: Finger Lost:** reduce any three skills of the player's choice that require manipulation with fingers; each skill is reduced ten (-10), but maximum possible ratings for each are unaffected. Weapons use and speed are manipulation skills.

**2: Thumb Lost:** reduce by forty (-40) any four skills of the player's choice that require manual manipulation; a skill must be rated at least 40 to be selected (if four do not exist at that level, select skills whose rating is closest to forty). Weapon use and speed are manipula-

tion skills.

**3: Hand Lost:** character is now one-handed. The arm without a hand can have a hook instead. It cannot hold any weapons, but the remaining hand can be used to strap or unstrap a shield to the handless arm. The following skills are halved but the maximum possible rating is unaffected: fishing, tailor, leatherworker, armorer, bowyer, builder, miner, artist, musician, plus all other arts/crafts if right-handed person lost right hand, or left-handed person lost left hand.

**4: Bone Heals Badly:** one hand has only half the normal strength. When that hand alone holds a weapon, character's strength is half-normal; when both hands hold a weapon, character's strength is ¾ normal. Climbing and mining skills are reduced by ten (-10).

**5: Muscles Heal Badly:** arm is generally weak, same effects as (4) above, and in addition the strength of the character is reduced by one (-1), mass is unaffected.

**6: Arm Lost:** strength and mass of character both reduced by one (-1), lost arm stump cannot be used for any purpose, all the following skills are halved, and maximum possible rating is reduced by ten (-10): swimming, climbing, tailor, leatherworker, armorer, bowyer, builder, miner, artist, musician, fishing, and all other arts/crafts if right-handed person lost right arm, or left-handed person lost left arm.

#### 6.8.3 LEG — PERMANENT WOUND EFFECTS

(roll 1d6 for result).

**1: Toe Lost:** cannot run or gallop for a month after the wound heals, dancing and climbing skills reduced five (-5).

**2: Foot Heals Badly:** cannot run or gallop for more than one instant at a time; character has a limp, dancing and stalk & slink skills halved, and maximum possible rating for each is reduced by twenty (-20).

**3: Knee Damaged, Never Heals:** same as (2) above, but in addition climbing and swimming skills are affected.

**4: Leg Bones Heal Badly:** same as (2) above, but in addition climbing and swimming skills are affected, and the strength of the character is reduced by one (-1).

**5: Foot Lost:** character cannot trot or gallop (but may run), walks with wooden foot and cane or crutch (occupies one hand); regional travel takes twice as long. The following skills are halved, and the maximum possible rating is reduced by fifteen (-15): ambush, stalk & slink, dancing, swimming, climbing, hunting, mining.

**6: Leg Lost:** character cannot trot or gallop, runs at half speed, walks with wooden leg, must use crutch to move at all (requiring one hand). The following skills are halved, and the maximum possible rating is reduced by twenty (-20): ambush, stalk & slink, swimming, climbing, hunting, mining. In addition, overall strength and mass of character is reduced one (-1).

#### 6.8.4 TORSO — PERMANENT WOUND EFFECTS

(roll 1d6 for result).

**1: Lung Damaged, Persistent Cough:** halve the current rating and reduce maximum rating by twenty (-20) for the following skills: ambush, stalk & slink, pottery & glassblowing, musician. A character cannot run or gallop more than three instants at a time, and then must trot (or less) for an instant before running/galloping again.

**2: Stomach Injured, Recurrent Nausea:** halve drinking skill; wild food and hunting food only produce half the normal effect, since the other half cannot be eaten or digested due to diet problems. Character's strength reduced by one (-1) but mass unaffected.

**3: Kidney Damage:** must drink water at least every two hours, or gradually increasing pain reduces all skill ratings by 2 per hour. Drinking skill is halved, and maximum possible rating reduced by thirty (-30). If the character is or becomes alcoholic, strength and mass are each reduced one (-1) per month of alcoholism.

**4: Liver Damage:** all poisons do double damage; drinking skill reduced to one quarter, and maximum possible rating reduced by forty (-40). If character is or becomes alcoholic, strength and mass are each reduced one (-1) per month of alcoholism.

**5: Weakened Heart:** strength reduced by two (-2), mass reduced by one (-1).

**6: Back Injured:** strength reduced by one (-1), and reduces both current and maximum possible rating by five (-5) for the following skills: all weapon use, all weapons speed, dancing, riding, swimming, climbing, hunting, fishing, armorer, bowyer, builder, miner.

#### 6.8.5 FORELEGS/HINDLEGS — PERMANENT WOUND EFFECTS

(roll 1d6 for result).

**1: Foot or Hoof Broken, Heals Badly:** after each instant or gallop, character cannot move faster than run (unable to gallop) in the next instant, for a maximum speed of gallop-run-gallop-run, etc. Kick damage in this direction reduced by one (-1).

2: *Leg Broken, Heals Badly*: cannot gallop at all, kick damage in this direction reduced by two (-2). Cannot carry any metal barding. Strength reduced by two (-2).

3: *Knee Damaged, Never Heals*: cannot gallop at all, strength reduced by two (-2), cannot carry any riders of mass 11 or higher, and can carry only half the normal load.

4: *Foot or Hoof Lost*: cannot gallop or trot, runs at half speed with peculiar gait that prevents use of any weapons by rider. Cannot carry any metal barding, and cannot carry riders of mass 11 or more, nor beyond half the normal load.

5: *Deformed Foot or Hoof*: cannot gallop or trot, leaves peculiar tracks that cannot be concealed, allowing double tracking skill to anyone following. Cannot carry any metal barding, but can carry normal riders and loads otherwise.

6: *Leg Lost*: cannot trot or gallop, runs at half speed, cannot carry loads or riders, nor any metal barding, strength and mass reduced by three (-3).

#### 6.8.6 WINGS — PERMANENT WOUND EFFECTS

(roll 1d6 for result).

1: *Wing Weakened*: reduce strength by one (-1), cannot use flying gallop rate.

2,3: *Wing Broken, Heals Poorly*: cannot use flying gallop rate, travelling speed airborne takes 10% longer per league (round up to nearest quarter hour).

4: *Wing Badly Broken, Heals Poorly*: cannot use flying gallop rate, all other flying speeds halved, takes 20% longer per league to travel (round up to nearest quarter hour), strength reduced by one (-1).

5: *Wing Joint Damaged*: cannot use flying gallop rate, all other flying speeds halved, takes 20% longer per league to travel (round up to nearest quarter hour), strength reduced by two (-2).

6: *Wing Lost*: unable to fly, overall mass and strength both reduced by two (-2).

#### 6.8.7 TAIL — PERMANENT WOUND EFFECTS

(roll 1d6 for result).

1: *Stingers or Spikes Injured*: cannot strike in combat for an additional year after wound heals, or until next molt (if creature molts). After that breakage number is reduced by one (-1).

2,3: *Scars Hamper Muscles*: when swimming, flying, or using gallop speed in combat the rate is reduced by 10%; general travel speed is unaffected. Strength reduced by one (-1).

4,5: *Tail Mangled, Heals Badly*: cannot gallop on ground or in air, swimming and trotting speeds (on ground or in air) halved, strength reduced by one (-1), damage value of any natural weapons in tail is reduced by two (-2), including poison effects.

6: *Tail Lost*: unable to fly, all other speeds faster than a walk are halved, takes 10% longer per league to travel (round up to nearest quarter hour), strength and mass both reduced by two (-2).

## 7. Poisons & Diseases

### 7.1 Poisons

Poisons are rated in 'poison wound points' and cause damage within the body like other wounds. However, poisons do not affect specific hit locations. Instead, the poison accumulates in the body as a whole. Poison and normal wounds are entirely separate, they never add together.

**Effects of Poisoning:** When poison wound points exceed half the character's mass, he or she becomes seriously ill, strength is halved, and intelligence is lowered by one (-1). Recovering from the poisoning brings strength and intelligence back to normal (any recovering that reduces poison wounds to half or less of the mass is sufficient). When poison wound points exceed a character's mass, the character dies. Even the quickest poisons take a few seconds for full effect. Therefore characters nearby with appropriate magic are able to effect a cure (normally using a purify [water] spell).

**Natural Poisons:** Small insects and spiders with poison inflict one poison wound point with each bite. Common poisonous snakes will inflict two wound points per bite. These bites cannot penetrate leather or plate armor, but can pass the links of chainmail. Of course, insects or snakes might get inside armor plate or leather clothing! A character can use hunting (trap & snare) skill to acquire these insects and snakes, and then cooking or doctor/druggist skill to distill poisons from them, each one caught providing one or two points of pure poison. These poisons can then be mixed together for a strong batch, but after the batch is prepared, subtract 1d6 for loss of effect in the distillation process. The poison can then be put on weapons, or into food or drink with a strong taste (to disguise the poison). Poison of this sort loses power after 2d6 months, and thus cannot be stored too long.

**Poisoned Weapons:** A weapon with poison will do normal damage. In addition, the character suffers poisoning equal to the power of the poison (in poison wound points). Thus a character would receive two types of damage. If armor absorbs/deflects all the wounds of a poisoned weapon, the character hit is not poisoned.

Poisoned weapons lose their power if immersed in water, held in a fire, contacted by a sundrop (light) node (alignment is unnecessary, just a touch of contact is sufficient), exposed to direct sunlight for a day, or cleaned with a cleanse (water) spell. If a poisoned weapon strikes and is not parried, a bit of the poison is wiped off, poison strength is reduced by one (-1).

**Advanced Poisons:** A natural poison is obvious to any character who successfully uses doctor/druggist skill to examine the poisoned food, drink, weapons, etc. Advanced poisons require the doctor/druggist skill to prepare. They can be detected only by magic or extensive laboratory work (by a doctor/druggist). Although advanced poisons of any power can be created, a character cannot afford one whose power is higher than his or her social status. Often, successful use of underworld skill

is needed to contact a doctor/druggist willing to provide an advanced poison. Advanced poisons can be used on a weapon just like a normal, natural poison.

### 7.2 Cures from Poisons

Normal healing rates do not apply to poison wounds. Instead, the number of days needed to heal one point of poison wounds is computed by adding together the total strength of all poison wounds. For example, if a character has 3 poison wounds, it will take 1+2+3, or 6 days, to cure the first wound point. Then, with only two wound points left, it will take 1+2, or 3 days to cure the next wound point, etc.

If a character has both poison and normal wound points, both heal at half the normal rate (each day counts as a half day toward normal wound healing, and a half day toward poison wound healing).

Successful use of doctor/druggist skill can increase the healing rate, as in normal wounds.

**Antidotes to Poison:** A doctor/druggist is familiar with natural poisons, and can use his or her skill doubled to successfully provide an antidote. Advanced poisons require use of doctor/druggist skill at normal rating to successfully find an antidote. A sample of the advanced poison is necessary or success possibility is halved. If the first attempt to find an antidote fails, the doctor/druggist may be convinced to spend 1d6 days searching for an antidote, after which one final attempt is allowed. If that fails, the character can always try another doctor/druggist! A successful antidote immediately eliminates all the wound points caused by that poison.

**Immunity to Poison:** Every time a character is poisoned, there is a chance he or she may develop a natural immunity to it. Roll 1d6: a '1' means immunity occurs. The current poison wounds still take effect, but any future poison of that type will have no effect unless given in a more powerful dose, and then the power is reduced by the strength of the immunity.

For example, a character decides to poison a friend. The character traps three snakes, cooks them to distill the poison (normally worth 6 poison wound points). When the batch is finally mixed up a 1d6 roll is subtracted. A '2' results, meaning the batch really has the strength of 4 wound points. This is then concealed in a drink of strong wine, given the friend during the advanced stages of a drinking session. The friend's mass is seven (7), so the 4 wound points make him seriously sick, but do not kill him. The friend then checks for immunity and rolls a '1'. He is still sick with 4 poison wound points, but future snake poison will do no harm to him if 4-power or less, and if 5-power or more, four will be subtracted from the power of the poison before it takes effect. The friend, incidentally, realizes he was poisoned, seeks out a magician, and

gets a purify (water) spell cast on him to remove the poison. However, the magician makes him trow-pledge (see wood spells) to undertake a certain dangerous quest in payment, and so starts another adventure . . .

### 7.3 Infections

Any time a character is wounded, it may become infected. After each wound, roll a 1d6 die. If a '1' occurs the wound is infected, circle or underline that wound on the character's record. Each infected wound point counts as two when computing time needed to heal, thus making the healing process longer for infected wounds. A simple infection has no other effect.

**Curing Infections:** A cure (light/darkness) spell will cure all infections in the body. A character can use doctor/druggist skill and apply standard remedies to each infected wound. These are so common the normal skill rating is doubled. However, each wound must be treated separately, and treating the infection is different from treating the wound (where doctor/druggist skills will also prove useful, see description of that skill). The skill might be successful with some wounds, but not others, might help just the infection, or just the wound itself.

**Note to Gamemasters:** Infection is a minor and somewhat tedious aspect to wounds. Many gamemasters, especially in early adventures, may wish to ignore it. The main purpose of the rule is make wounds more realistic by prolonging wound effects. Recovery becomes a more complex job, and helps encourage the proper development of medical skills or appropriate magic.

### 7.4 Disease

The gamemaster may wish to introduce diseases into a game, especially for more advanced players who seem to be 'too' successful! Diseases may be contracted from standard natural causes. In addition, the gamemaster may wish to allow contagion from already diseased characters, or contagion from a 'carrier' who hosts the disease without showing the effects of it. In some fantasy worlds, various types of monsters may be carriers of certain diseases.

**Types of Diseases:** Listed below are six diseases so common that almost every character would know of them (if he or she bothered to read this section of the game!). However, the gamemaster may wish to create other, more exotic diseases that only successful use of doctor/druggist skill can identify (same technique as searching for poison antidotes, see above). Successful identification means the doctor/druggist can attempt the cure automatically.

**Curing Diseases:** Standard diseases often have standard cures, known by all. Doctor/druggist skill can also be used to effect a cure if the skill is successfully applied to a standard disease. Normal skill rating is used, unless disease is very common in locales or regions the doctor/druggist knows, in which case double the normal skill rating. If a doctor/druggist successfully identifies an exotic disease, a cure can be attempted also. Normally doctor/druggist cures are medicines to take internally or externally, as appropriate. Some exotic diseases may require exotic cures. Finally, magic spells can be used to cure diseases. Typically a cure (light/darkness) spell will work, although this varies somewhat from disease to disease. In exotic diseases, characters may be left to guess what spell will have what effect, although study by characters already knowledgeable of spells in the proper area of elemental magic will often reveal the proper spell. Special types of magic or specific worlds often include disease-curing spells.

### 7.5 Typical Diseases

**Lung Rot:** Caught by breathing the air of a tomb or similar long-enclosed place where dead things have lain for a long time. The disease reduces the mass and strength of the character one (1) point per year. Characters with the disease are short of breath, they cannot hold their breath to swim underwater, failure of any swimming skill means automatic drowning, and before any running or similar exertion, they must pass a strength test. The standard cure is 1d6 months of bed rest while nursed by others with good foods. This will stop the disease, but cannot cure the damage to mass and strength already done (if the disease has been in effect for a year or more). A refresh (wind) spell will halt the effects of the disease for a day, allowing full breath, but cannot repair damage or cure the disease. A cure (light/darkness) spell will cure the disease, but not repair the damage. A purify (water) spell will repair the damage, but not cure the disease.

**Gut Spasm:** Caught by eating fouled food, including unpreserved food that has gone bad (which typically takes only a few days). The disease prevents any eating, causes stomach pains, and reduces strength by two points each day. Any day that ends with strength at or below zero requires a 1d6 roll: 3 or less means the character falls into a coma and dies in 1d6 hours. The standard cure is eating or drinking a poison of 4 wound points or more (including poisons to which the character has immunity). If the character survives the poison, eating can be resumed and strength returns at 1 point per day. If the strength was negative, it may take a few days before the character escapes the danger of death. A cure (light/darkness) spell will immediately cure this disease, but strength can only be regained by eating (1 point per day) or by a refresh (wind) spell that returns all strength immediately. Refresh simply restores strength, it does not cure the disease.

**Sleeping Sickness:** Caught by insect bites. The insect carriers of this disease live on the surface of fresh water, including springs, rivers, lakes, and especially stagnant fresh water in marshes and swamps, or damp jungles. The disease causes continual intense drowsiness. For the first week the character cannot concentrate for more than ten minutes at a time. This may hinder use of magic, and prevents gaining any new skills that require mental abilities to learn and perform (such as general knowledge, magic, etc.). After a week the character begins suffering sleeping 'fits' as well. Each hour the character rolls 1d6 x10 for the number of minutes he or she falls asleep. Only a refresh spell, or the pain of two or more wound points, will awaken the character. Finally, after a month with the disease the character lapses into a semi-coma and is sleeping all the time; roll a 1d6 die after each day, a '1' means the character dies. The standard cure is 2d10 days of complete rest in bed. A cure (light/darkness) spell will also cure the disease instantly.

**Strength Drain:** Caught by drinking immersion in foul or stagnant water. Risk is especially high in dead-region water, such as marshes or swamps covering graves, old battlefields, or in decaying jungles, etc. This disease begins in 1d6 hours, and each hour after that the character loses one strength point. When strength reaches zero, the character falls unconscious and will die in 2d6 hours. The standard cure is eating a wild pepper, which grows only in the grasslands or sandy areas, and requires successful use of wild food skill to find. A cure (light/darkness) spell will cure the disease. A refresh (wind) spell will return the character to full strength for a complete day, but then the disease starts over again unless cured.

**Flesh Parasites:** Caught by contact with dead things partly decomposed, especially dead animals. Some varieties live in fresh water in very hot, damp climates (such as tropical jungles). The disease prevents a character from wearing any sort of armor, and is unsightly. The following skills are halved while the character has the disease, and improvement in these skills is not possible while suffering the disease: all Arts/Crafts sphere skills, stalk & slink, ambush, disarm trap, pickpocket, dancing and politician. The standard cure is burning out the parasites one by one (typical disease has 1d10 parasites on the body), with one point of burns suffered for each removed. All need not be removed at once, but the disease remains in effect until all are gone. Some varieties are killed by salt water if the character bathes in this within 1d6 hours of getting the disease. An excise (metal) spell will remove all parasites.

**Blood Poisoning:** Caught as a side-effect of an infected wound. For each infected wound, roll 1d6: a '1' means blood poisoning occurs (if not using infection, for each wound roll 2d6, a total of '2' means blood poisoning). Every two hours of this disease causes one point of poison wounds. This continues until the disease is cured or the poison wounds cause death. A standard cure anyone can use is rubbing moldy food into the wound, but this can only be attempted once per day, and only has a 50-50 chance (1-3 result with 1d6 roll) of success. Regardless of success or failure, for each attempt another 1d6 roll must be made, and a '1' here causes gut spasm. Doctor/druggists have their cures for blood poisoning too. This disease is so common normal skill rating is doubled. A purify (water) spell will cure the poison wounds of this disease, but will not cure the disease itself, which immediately start poisoning again. A cure (light/darkness) spell will entirely cure the disease, but cannot heal the poison wounds already suffered. A cure followed by a purify spell will entirely cure the disease and heal the poison wounds.

# 8. Elemental Magic

## 8.1 Introduction to Elemental Magic

On the many planes of existence, throughout all the realms, sages and philosophers have come to agree that the world is composed of seven basic elements. These are fire, metal, crystals, water, wood, wind and light (darkness is the opposite of light, and considered part of that element). Magisters have demonstrated that all other natural 'elements' are actually composed of these essences in combination. Any material object can be explained as a mixture of these basic elements, although in many cases the exact mixture is yet undiscovered (game-master can decide whether to let players 'discover' them).

Each of these seven basic elements has magic properties. Characters can learn to identify the 'pure' elements when they occur, and use the magic properties. Actually, many other types of magic exist, but the basic form rooted in the nature of the world itself is this 'elemental' magic.

In practical terms, to use elemental magic a character must possess the pure 'essence' of that element and harness its magic power for use in a specific spell or spells. This pure essence is called a 'node'. Some nodes are more powerful than others, and are appropriately called double nodes (2-power nodes, or simply 2-nodes), triples nodes (3-nodes), etc. The more powerful nodes cannot be split apart into separate smaller nodes, but the power can be used in increments, for various spells at various times.

The process of harnessing a node has four basic steps. First the character must find and identify the node. Once discovered, the character must then use his mind to make contact with the node. Once contact is achieved he or she can then contain the node in a proper device or material to transport and preserve it. Finally, the node must be aligned and used, which avoids the need to contain it for safekeeping. Once aligned to a spell, a node can be realigned later to a new spell (unless enchanted, see Enchantments chapter).

The ability to identify each type of node is a separate skill. Knowledge of the basic spells is also a separate skill, for each element which require considerable study or work to master (see skills). Often apprentices and 'starters' in magic know spells for some of the elements, but have no practical skill in identifying nodes. They acquire skill at identifying nodes as they chance across them, then successfully contact and align them. In other cases, special cults or religious orders may specialize in one magic element, and perhaps others.

## 8.2 Nature of the Elements

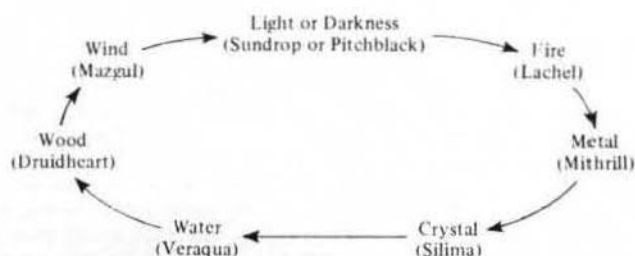
The seven basic elements take eight forms (light and darkness are two forms of the same element). A node will contain the pure essence of one element. Each element has a common name, a specific name for the pure essence, and natural material that is the reflection of the pure element. Reflections are mainly used to control and store pure nodes.



Common Name of Element	Name of Pure Essence (node)	Reflection of that Element
Fire . . . . .	Lachel . . . . .	Flame of a pure beeswax candle
Metal . . . . .	Mithrill . . . . .	Silver
Crystal . . . . .	Silima . . . . .	Diamond
Water . . . . .	Veraqua . . . . .	Springwater
Wood . . . . .	Druidheart . . . . .	Oak
Wind . . . . .	Magzul . . . . .	West wind
Light . . . . .	Sundrop . . . . .	Sunlight
[Darkness] . . . . .	[Pitchblack] . . . . .	[Deep Shadow]

**Dominance:** Each element dominates one other element, and is dominated by one element. This relationship forms a 'chain', termed the 'circle of dominance' by magicians, illustrated below. Note that dominance applies only to the next element in the circle. For example, water dominates wood, and water is dominated by crystal. Crystal and wood have no special relationships to each other.

Elemental Dominance Chart



Light and darkness (sundrops and pitchblacks) are both forms of the same element. They cannot exist together, but instead cancel each other equally. Thus a single node of sundrop put with a single node of pitchblack will instantly destroy both. However, a character could have both nodes (in separate containers), and use either for any purpose that uses either light or darkness. Some characters will have a preference toward light or darkness, usually based on their living habits (day or night).

**Advantage & Disadvantage with Elements:** Some races have an advantage with a certain element. This includes being born with the innate ability to identify and contact that element, and automatically learning the basic magic spells and associated knowledge of the element as they grow up. However, for each element a race is advantaged with, it must be disadvantaged with some other element (normally an unrelated one, not one which has dominance or is dominated by the advantaged element). A race disadvantaged with an element never learns to identify it, cannot contact it, and cannot align it. In short, the race is 'blind' to that element, although extremely ancient and wise members might have some inkling that the element exists on a theoretical level.

Some races may be disadvantaged with just light or darkness. This does not count as a proper disadvantage, since the race could still use the other form of the element. However, a disadvantage with one form is considered to cause an advantage with the other, and vice versa. Advantage with light sometimes means the character is totally blind at night (cannot see at all), while advantage with darkness gives perfect sight in anything but pitch dark, but causes blindness in bright sunlight.

## 8.3 Elemental Nodes

### 8.3.1 IDENTIFYING ELEMENTAL NODES

All characters will stumble across a naturally visible elemental node from time to time. The flames in a fireplace might seem to acquire a life of their own, or rays of sunlight may seem to dance in the air, or ice might shine with unearthly light, etc. These are simply nodes that have become especially obvious. Any character can attempt contact, containment and alignment regardless of knowledge and skills. Of course, a more skillful and experienced character has greater chances for success (as the following sections will illustrate). Originally, the first magicians were simply people who noticed these nodes, guessed their importance, and learned to use them by trial and error.

In addition, a character who has actually gained skill in identifying

nodes can actively search for them, rather than relying on chance encounters. Once the search is begun, the gamemaster secretly determines how long it will take to find the node. Some regions may have reputations for having more or less nodes of some types, making search time more or less valuable. See Skills, Activities between Adventures, Clerics & Magic, Finding Nodes.

The actual event of identifying a node is instantaneous — the character suddenly realizes a node is present near him. Normally a character uses eyesight to see a node, but any of the five natural senses can be used, as appropriate (blind characters may hear one, for example), and a character with skill in identifying that element will have a 'sixth sense' that tells him or her when a free node of that element is close.

### 8.3.2 CONTACTING NODES

Once a character finds a node, he or she can ignore it or attempt to contact it. If the node is ignored, it will disappear (sooner or later), since pure elements are never static, but instead seem to move about (philosophers have theorized that it is the world moving, while nodes remain in place, but the issue is moot).

Contact requires a character to 'tune in' his or her mind to the essential nature of the pure element, manifested by the node. Contact does not mean physical contact. Instead a mental rapport is established between the character and the element. If a character attempts contact and fails (by not spending enough time to gain full contact), the node is destroyed, and the character suffers a wound point for each power level in the node (for example, a 2-node fire element would inflict 2 wound points of burn if contact fails, see Wounds, for details).

The process of establishing this mental contact takes varying amounts of time, depending on the situation:

**First Contact (1d6 x 10 minutes):** The first time a character attempts to contact a node of an element, it takes 1d6 times 10 minutes (10 to 60 minutes). If the character can identify the element, including any character advantage with the element, see Contacting Identified Node below instead. The First Contact time here represents the need for the character to find the proper state of mental awareness.

**Contacting Identified Node (1 minute):** If a character is able to identify an element, the first contact with any new node takes one (1) minute. This includes all characters advantaged with that element. If a character cannot identify that element yet (lacks that skill) see First Contact instead.

**Contacting the same Node again (1 second):** If a character has already contacted a specific node before, making contact with exactly the same node again only takes one second, regardless of whether the character can identify the element or not. Complete and total attention is needed to make and maintain contact, so no character can concentrate on more than one node at a time. Contact may be maintained as long as the character wishes, or until his/her attention is distracted. In combat situations, contact will keep the character's attention for the full instant, although a spell could be cast in the same instant (see Spell Casting below and Combat, Magic in Combat).

**Proximity:** Once contact is made, a character acquires a mental 'picture' of the node. As long as the character knows exactly where the node is (remembers how it was contained, and where the containment was put), he or she can contact the node again, regardless of distance. However, if the node is moved at all, even a short distance, the character will be unable to achieve contact because the memory is incorrect. For example, magicians often store nodes at home, in their workshop, and then contact them mentally when a spell is needed (eliminating the need for bulky or complex containers while traveling). However, if an over-zealous servant should move the container, or a natural disaster affects the workshop (earthquake, flood, etc.) then the node will no longer be in the proper place, and the magician will be unable to contact or use it until he or she returns home and discovers the current location of the node. If some nodes can still be contacted, the magician might use a spell (such as a Vision spell) to see the new location without actually travelling back there. To reduce dangers and risks, magicians often have many secret hiding places scattered about the countryside, even in far distant locations, where they have hidden nodes in special containers.

**Evaluating a Node:** When a character succeeds in making a complete contact with a node, he or she may be unable to evaluate the power of the node. A character can only evaluate nodes up to the highest power (of that element) he or she has already aligned. If a character cannot evaluate a node's power, then it remains unknown until it is aligned (if it is not aligned successfully). For example, a character that has already aligned a 1-power water node, upon contacting a new water node, can determine if it is a 1-power node or not. However, if the node is more powerful, the character won't know how much more powerful.

### 8.3.3 CONTAINING NODES

Any node can be retained in the reflection of any node. For example, silver is the reflection of Mithrill (metal) and could contain a Mithrill node. A silver box could also contain a Lachel node, or a Veraqua node, or any other element. The same container can be used for two or more nodes of the same type, if desired. Different elemental nodes are allowed in the same container only if one dominates another. For example, crystal and water could be in the same container, or metal and crystal. A container could even have metal, crystal and water, but could not have just metal and water alone, since neither metal nor water dominates the other. An exception is sundrop and pitchblack which can never be held in the same container.

**Containment Process:** The actual method of containment is simple. Once contact is made, the container is maneuvered to the location of the node, and placed around it. The node, being magical, can pass through the material provided the mental contact is holding it. Contact is then released, and the element is now within the reflection. For example to contain a Veraqua (water) node found in the eddy of a waterfall, a character could pass a diamond ring into the eddy, and move the diamond to the node, then drop contact. The node is now within the diamond, and upon lifting the ring from the water the glimmering of Veraqua can be seen within the diamond (if one has skill identifying water elements). Obviously, some containers are more useful than others. When in contact with a node, the node itself can be 'nudged' mentally a few inches to a container, but this requires extra mental concentration for 1d6 minutes of time, and is mainly useful for complex containment, such as maneuvering a node from springwater to a candle flame (since normal superimposition would put out the candle!).

**Typical Containers:** A character is responsible for imagining and describing the type of container used to hold each node (or nodes), and these must be approved by the gamemaster. Containers can be small and designed for the purpose (see Social Status, Magic Containers), or everyday items can be pressed into service where appropriate.

Containers in common use include a beeswax candle or similar clean-burning fire — provided it remains lighted; a box of silver or oak; any container to hold pure springwater; a bag or box opened and closed only into a west wind; a bag or box only opened and closed in bright sunshine or total darkness; a cut and polished diamond, such as one in a pendant or ring; etc.

If a container is broken or destroyed, any node within is released. It can be held only if immediately contacted. Otherwise the node is lost, even if aligned (it becomes unaligned). Examples of breakage or destruction include opening a bag or box of west wind, sunlight, or deep shadow at the wrong time, breaking open a silver or oaken box, fractures on a cut diamond, putting out a flame, etc.

**Avoiding Containment:** As long as a character remains 'in contact' with a node, no containment is needed to keep control. While a character can perform mindless 'rote' actions while in contact (such as walking home on a familiar path), any distraction at all will break contact. If contact is lost, the node is lost unless already contained.

Note that a character in contact may immediately begin alignment and perhaps even cast spells, provided he or she is continuously 'in contact', without a break. Also note that any hit in combat, even if no wound points are inflicted, is sufficient to break concentration and thus break contact.

### 8.3.4 ALIGNING NODES TO SPELLS

A character can align a node to a spell whenever he or she is in contact with the node. A double, triple, or higher power node can be aligned to a stronger spell, and/or two or more spells, provided the overall power requirements of the spells do not exceed the power of the node. If a spell requires a 2-power node or higher, one node of at least that power must be aligned to the spell. Two or more smaller nodes cannot be combined to provide sufficient power.

**Purpose of Alignment:** A magic spell can only be used (cast) if a node is aligned to that spell. The node provides the 'power' that makes the spell function. A character contacts his or her aligned node to cast that spell. Alignment is the process of 'powering' a spell, getting it ready to cast. Normally a character aligns nodes well in advance of use. Most magicians have a group of aligned nodes they can contact, to cast spells quickly. In rare or desperate situations a magician may align and then cast immediately.

**How to Align a Node:** The pure element of a node determines which spells can be aligned to it. Only spells of that element can be aligned to the node. To align the node, a character simply determines the percentage chance for successful alignment and rolls d100 dice. If the roll is equal to or less than the alignment percentage, alignment occurs. The node is now attached to that spell. If the dice roll is higher than the per-



centage, the alignment fails and the node is lost (destroyed). There is no risk of backlash or wound in alignment failure with basic spells (unless a random alignment is attempted, see below, or the gamemaster has imposed special rules, perhaps for special spells). A character's player should keep track of which nodes have spells aligned to them.

If a character aligns part of a high-powered node to one spell, in the same alignment the rest of the node's power can be aligned to other spells or left unaligned. Later, the unaligned part can be aligned in a separate alignment attempt. However, the full power of the node is still used to resolve the alignment attempt, and if the attempt fails, the entire node is lost, including the part previously aligned.

**Resolving an Alignment Attempt:** To determine the percentage (%) chance for alignment, the character counts up the total power of all nodes he currently has aligned, but not yet used in enchantments. This number is termed 'c' — the current aligned node total. Then the power of the node for alignment, termed 's' for strength of the node, is used with 'c' in the equation below. If the character was unable to evaluate the power of the node, the gamemaster must secretly compute the equation, ask for the player's d100 roll, and inform him or her whether the roll was sufficient to allow alignment. If the alignment was successful, the aligner automatically learns the power of the node. The alignment equation is:

$$5c - 25s + 75 = \text{percentage chance for alignment success}$$

The maximum chance for alignment success is 99%. If the result of the equation is greater than 99, consider the result 99 instead.

For simple alignment situations, where a character has only 20 power or less in nodes aligned, and is dealing with a 6-node or less, you can simply cross-reference 'c' (current power of aligned nodes) with 's' (strength of node to be aligned) on the Alignment Table to get the per-

centage chance of success. The alignment equation can be used as a double-check, and for more advanced situations beyond the limits of the table.

**Success in alignment** depends greatly on the total power of nodes the character has aligned and not yet used. This represents the value of increased contact with the 'planes' of elemental magic, more nodes making a character 'closer' to pure elements, and a better magician. Note also that a character need not actually have the node near him or her to align it. Successful contact is possible at great distances. Similarly, nodes counted toward total power ('c') can be at a distance. The only requirement is that the character must be able to contact every node counted for 'c' total, even though actual contact does not occur.

**Realignment:** A character with an aligned node can establish contact, and then attempt to realign the node to a new spell. The standard alignment procedure is used, as if the node were unaligned. If the attempt is successful the node is now aligned to a new spell instead of the old spell; if the attempt is a failure, the node is destroyed. This allows a character to use the node for a different spell.

**Time in Alignments:** Alignment is a purely mental process. It is possible only if the character has knowledge of spells for that element (knowledge of spells includes knowing how to align nodes to those spells). The entire alignment process takes about one (1) minute of time. During this period the character's mind is in continuous contact with the node, and thus cannot take any action that requires conscious thought. If the character is interrupted during the minute spent for alignment, the alignment attempt automatically fails.

**Alignment & Identification Skill:** When a character successfully aligns an elemental node, he or she automatically acquires the skill to identify that element (if he or she doesn't already have that skill). Successful alignment is, in fact, a common way for a character to gain the skill to identify elements.

#### NODE ALIGNMENT TABLE

'c' Total power of all unused nodes already aligned and owned by the character	's' Power of the node the character is attempting to align:					
	1-node	2-node	3-node	4-node	5-node	6-node*
0	50%	25%	none	none	none	none
1	55%	30%	5%	none	none	none
2	60%	35%	10%	none	none	none
3	65%	40%	15%	none	none	none
4	70%	45%	20%	none	none	none
5	75%	50%	25%	none	none	none
6	80%	55%	30%	5%	none	none
7	85%	60%	35%	10%	none	none
8	90%	65%	40%	15%	none	none
9	95%	70%	45%	20%	none	none
10	99%	75%	50%	25%	none	none
11	99%	80%	55%	30%	5%	none
12	99%	85%	60%	35%	10%	none
13	99%	90%	65%	40%	15%	none
14	99%	95%	70%	45%	20%	none
15	99%	99%	75%	50%	25%	none
16	99%	99%	80%	55%	30%	5%
17	99%	99%	85%	60%	35%	10%
18	99%	99%	90%	65%	40%	15%
19	99%	99%	95%	70%	45%	20%
20*	99%	99%	99%	75%	50%	25%

\*If 'c' is greater than 20, or 's' is greater than 6-power, use the alignment equation to compute percentage chance of success:

$$5c - 25s + 75 = \% \text{ chance of success (maximum 99\%)}$$

#### 8.3.5 ALIGNING NODES TO UNKNOWN SPELLS

A character can attempt to align a node even if he or she does not know all the basic spells of that element. In such situations, the character causes the node to randomly align itself to any basic spell. This allows the character to learn that spell (if he or she doesn't already know it). Thus a character can learn basic spells by experience.

**Alignment Failure:** If a character was making a random node alignment, and the alignment attempt fails, the node is lost and the character suffers poison wounds equal to the power of the node. This represents mental damage.

**Alignment Success & Loss of Node:** If a character made a random node alignment, and the attempt succeeds, there is a 20% chance the node will align itself to magic beyond all known or knowable planes. If this occurs, the node is lost, but the character suffers no adverse effects.

**Alignment Success & Random Spell:** If a character successfully makes a random node alignment, and avoids loss of the node, the gamemaster randomly selects a spell. Any spell of that power, or less, may be selected. The gamemaster assigns a number to each spell and rolls a d10 die (if the roll results in a number unassigned to a spell, ignore it and

roll again). The gamemaster may add some new spells, and allow random alignment for these also. Once a spell is acquired through random alignment, the character will thereafter know that spell.

### 8.3.6 STEALING NODES

A character who has the skill to identify an element automatically senses any nearby character or node that is in contact (within 20 paces or so — the size of a large room). By sensing the contact, the character can 'break in' on this contact and attempt to steal the node. Only unaligned nodes, or nodes being realigned, can be stolen. Nodes already aligned are both matched to a spell and matched to the character who created the alignment. They cannot be stolen.

When a character 'breaks in' on contact, the character who concludes his or her contact activity first gains the node. However, if activities are about the same length of time (such as a character re-contacting a node for a second, then spending a minute aligning or realigning, while a second 'breaks in' and contacts the new node for a minute), the character who currently has aligned the greatest total power of that element gains control of the node. The other character loses contact with it. The character who loses contact will fail in his or her activity. For example, a character attempts to align a node, only to have it stolen by another. The alignment attempt automatically fails. Two characters might discover a node at the same time, and spend the same amount of time trying to make the first contact. One will fail, but as with simple failure to align a known spell, no wound results.

If the characters struggling for a node have equal aligned power in that element, each rolls 2d10 dice and adds that roll to his/her intelligence. The higher total gains control — if a tie, roll again.

When a character steals a nearby node, he or she can contain it, align it, etc. However, if the node is far away (only the character from whom it was stolen is nearby), unless the character knows exactly where the node is located, this contact will be the last. The character who stole the node must use it (align it to a spell and use the spell, or use the node to cast 'through' it to some other spell), or voluntarily release it. If the node is voluntarily released, it is lost (considered destroyed).

The dangers of theft, and the problems that occur when many magicians search for nodes in the same area, have caused most magicians to adopt a solitary life in remote areas. Religious orders, cults, etc., use strict rules to protect their members and their nodes. Even then they often have 'sacred' areas within the temple grounds where actual contact and alignment occurs, areas normally prohibited to outsiders. The gamemaster should take into account these practical considerations when introducing NPCs with magic into a game.

## 8.4 Casting Elemental Spells

**Basic Procedure:** A character can cast a magic spell if he or she has a node already aligned to the spell. To cast, the character simply contacts the node and thinks of the spell and its target or purpose. This all takes about one instant (4 seconds). Thus, in combat it takes one instant to cast a spell. 'Weapon speed' in combat is normally zero, but casting 'through' additional nodes (see below) increases speed.

For simple spell casting, using one node, the node is aligned to the spell being cast, and also powers that spell. Thus the node is at risk of consumption (see Loss of Nodes, below). Casting is a mental process, like a contact or alignment. All the character needs is a clear mind and the ability to concentrate. In combat, any missile or strike hit(s) — even if no damage is done — breaks concentration and prevent spell casting (unless the spell had a higher weapon speed and was cast first). Some spells may require physical actions too. Such special requirements are always listed in the description of the spell.

**Range:** Spells can be cast as far as the caster can see. The target must be in plain sight, or its exact position in space known (such as directly behind, or completely within and filling an object, etc., which itself is visible). For example, casting at a man inside a house is not sufficient — the man has room to move around within the house. Casting at a man within a coffin is possible, since there is no room to move within a coffin.

Some spells have a more limited range. Some may even require physical contact or function. Such exceptions are always listed in the description of the spell.

Another sense can be used to replace sight when targeting a spell. However, the other sense must be just as accurate. Touch or taste are usually so, while hearing or smell in normal humans are rarely accurate enough to allow spell casting. A vision (crystal) spell could be used to see the target, and then the spell cast, if the target is beyond normal vision.

### 8.4.1 CASTING THROUGH NODES

A character may cast a magic spell 'through' other dominant nodes. To do this, he or she contacts any aligned or unaligned node that dom-

inates the actual node aligned to the spell to be cast. For example, light dominates fire, so a character casting a fire spell (already aligned by a fire node) could contact a light node, and cast 'through' that light node to use the fire spell node.

A character can use dominance of elements to cast through a number of nodes to reach a spell. For example, wind dominates light, so a character could contact a wind element, cast 'through' it to a light node, and in turn cast through that to reach the fire node aligned to the actual spell. A character can cast through any number of different elements to reach a spell, up to a maximum of casting through each of the six elements to reach the seventh (going completely around the circle of dominance).

Casting through nodes gives two advantages: increased casting speed and avoiding consumption of the node aligned to the spell itself. The node at the start of the chain powers the spell, and is at risk of consumption. The node at the end of the chain is the one aligned to the spell used. It is at very little risk.

To cast 'through' nodes, a character must be able to contact all the nodes in the 'chain'. Actual contact time is spent only with the first (powering) node. The additional nodes are involved without any extra contact time. The simple *ability* to make contact is all a character needs. Nodes a character can't contact may not be used.

Each node in the 'cast through' chain must at least equal in power the spell being cast. For example, if a 2-power spell is cast, then each node in the chain must be at least 2-power.

**Speed Advantage:** In 'cast through' chains (when a spell is cast through another node or nodes) for each additional node cast through (beyond the first, or powering, node) a weapon speed of 15 is awarded. For example, a spell cast through one node to reach a second has a weapons speed of 15. A spell cast through five nodes to reach a sixth has a speed of (5x15) or 75. If a spell is cast through six nodes to reach a seventh, the maximum possible, weapon speed is 90.

A character is still limited to one spell per instant, regardless of the weapon speed of that spell (exception, see Multiple Casting below).

### 8.4.2 MULTIPLE CASTING

A large and powerful node could have more than one spell aligned to it. Some or all spells in the same node can be cast at the same instant. If this powerful node is at the end of a 'cast through' chain, the weakest node in the chain determines the amount of power the final node can use for spells. This may limit the number of spells that could be cast.

Note that only spells of the same element can be multiple-cast, since all spells must be aligned to the same node. Any other nodes must be in prior positions of a 'cast through' chain, with the first node of the chain powering all the spells at the end of the chain (subject to nodal power limitations, of course). Even in a 'cast through' chain for multiple casting, you *cannot* combine nodes of lesser power to equal the power of the final aligned node.

For example, if you make a multiple cast of Bendback (3-node metal spell) and Shield (1-node metal spell) from a 4-node of metal aligned to both these spells, and cast through a chain of light and fire, both the light node (which powers the spell, as it is the first in the chain) and the fire node must be 4-nodes.

**Target Limitations:** Targets for multiple casting are limited. Only *one* of the following options may be selected when targeting a multiple-cast group of spells:

- all spells are targeted onto the spell caster himself/herself.
- all spells are targeted to a single other individual or object.
- one spell is targeted onto the spell caster, and one spell is targeted onto a single individual or object. Thus no more than two spells can be cast at once, using this option.
- multiple spells of the same type are cast onto multiple individuals or objects. One of the individuals may include the spell caster if desired. This option is only allowed if all spells are the same. For example, the same defensive spell could be cast on the caster himself/herself plus one or more other members of the party with him/her. In another case, a powerful magician could have a powerful fire node with a number of burnthru spells. All these spells could be cast at once, and targeted one onto each of a horde of attacking enemies.

### 8.5 Alertness to Magic

Whenever a spell is cast, there is a 'flux' in the elements of nature around the node and around the spell caster. This occurs in the instant of casting and afterwards disappears, even if the spell continues to last for a number of seconds, minutes, hours, or days.

Unintelligent animals feel this flux and become very nervous and excited. Intelligent characters also feel the flux, and will know that magic is in use. If a character has the skill to identify the element used in a spell, that character can identify the direction of the flux. If within 20

paces of its source, the character will know exactly what sort of node or nodes are in use, and may be able to steal it (if a node in a chain is unaligned).

## 8.6 Wizards

A 'wizard' is an honorary title applied to any character who possesses and can contact all seven elements. This implies skill in identifying all seven elements, and knowledge of spells for all seven elements, but such skills are not required. A wizard has the ability to select any element, and using dominance, 'cast through' to any other node, provided nodal power requirements for a specific spell are still met. Note that a character disadvantaged with an element cannot contact it, and thus will never become a wizard. The exception is a character just disadvantaged with light or darkness, since part of the element is still available for contact.

## 8.7 Loss of Nodes

**Normal Consumption:** When a spell is cast without using a chain (or special preservation procedures), the node aligned to the spell may be 'consumed' (used up). Roll 1d6. If a '6' results, the node is consumed and lost. Any other result means the node is unaffected and remains aligned to the spell, ready for another cast. The act of casting the spell breaks mental contact between the character and the node, but casting a new spell could begin on the next instant.

**'Cast Through' Consumption:** When a spell is 'cast through' a chain of nodes, the first node in the chain powers the spell (even though the last node is the one aligned to the spell). Therefore, the first node in the chain is vulnerable to consumption, with a 1d6 die roll, and a '6' result meaning the first node is consumed.

In addition, each of the other nodes in the chain has a 1% chance of consumption. A separate d100 roll is made for each, with '01' meaning it is consumed. Obviously, this chance is very small. Thus, one extra advantage of a 'cast through' chain is that the aligned node remains intact (99% of the time), ready for casting again on the next instant.

**Character Unconsciousness:** If a character is knocked unconscious, or otherwise loses the ability to use his/her mind, any node currently contacted is lost automatically. This includes an aligned node in con-

tact, as well as unaligned nodes. For example, in combat a disabling hit on the head would knock out a character. If he were trying to cast a spell that instant, and had a lower weapons speed, unconsciousness would result in the loss of the node. If he were attempting a 'cast through' chain the first node (powering node) in the chain would be lost, since that was the node contacted. The other nodes in the chain would remain safe.

**Character Death:** If a character is killed, the same penalties as unconsciousness apply. In addition, all other nodes the character had aligned to himself/herself are lost. Unaligned nodes and enchanted nodes are not affected. These remain in their containers (or within materials if enchanted) until found by someone else.

## 8.8 Preserving Nodes

Spell casting normally has a chance of consuming an elemental node. However, a special procedure can be used to eliminate any chance of node consumption, either in a normal cast, or in a 'cast through' chain.

First, the spell caster must have actual possession of the node on or near his/her person. He/she makes contact, and then spends 1d6 minutes of time 'enhancing' and 'stabilizing' the contact with a continual and total mental effort. This effort involves various mnemonic devices, such as saying certain words, making certain motions, and perhaps using certain chemicals or substances to activate senses of taste, smell, and/or hearing.

When the 1d6 minutes is completed, at that instant (and no later or earlier) the spell can be cast with no risk of consumption. This is because the magician has managed to make the node completely stable within the framework of reality. However, this stability only lasts an instant, so if the spell is not cast then, the time spent enhancing and stabilizing is wasted.

This system can be used when casting through a chain of nodes. However, only the first node in the chain is stabilized and has no chance for consumption. The other nodes in the chain still have the normal 1% chance of consumption.

*Note:* Some gamemasters may alter requirements for achieving perfect stability in their worlds, such as requiring certain substances, increasing or decreasing the time span, and/or allowing such practices only at certain times of the day or year.

# 9. Magic Enchantments

## 9.1 Introduction to Enchantment

Enchantment is the process of binding a node with a spell into an object. The spell becomes a 'permanent' attribute of the object. This allows characters ignorant of magic to use the object, and thus cast spells. It is also useful to magicians who don't want to consume nodes so rapidly casting common spells. Enchanted nodes may be consumed eventually, but they last far longer than those in simple containers.

**Types of Enchantment:** There are three types of enchantment: passive (the easiest but least useful), active contact (more difficult), and active ranged (most difficult). In passive enchantment, the spell affects only the object it is bound into, nothing else. In active contact enchantment, the spell can affect anyone or anything the object touches. In an active ranged enchantment, the object's user can aim it and cast the spell at anything in sight. Some spells may not function in certain types of enchantment (the nature of the spell may restrict the types of enchantment possible). Certain enchantments can alter the meaning of a spell.

### 9.1.1 THE OBJECT

**Permissible Objects:** Enchantment can only be put into inanimate, unintelligent, unaware objects. Living items such as people, plants, etc. cannot be used for enchantments. Obviously, characters cannot be enchanted. However, in (Spirit Magic) certain exceptions and options are noted.

**Elemental Object:** Many objects belong to a single elemental 'class', such as fire, metal, wood, etc. Although the object is not pure enough to be a node container, it is so dominated by the element that it belongs to that one class. This is true of many weapons, such as a spear belonging to the wood class (despite minor metal or stone parts), a sword belonging to the metal class, etc.

If the object and spell are in the same elemental class, the enchant-

ment simply requires one node to carry the spell, which is enchanted directly into the object (see procedure below).

**Carrier Nodes:** If the object belongs to one elemental class, and the spell to another, extra 'carrier' nodes must be enchanted into the object, so the spell can dominate the object. One node is needed for the spell, another node for the object. If the spell's element does not naturally dominate the object's element, additional 'carrier' nodes are required, to establish a chain of dominance so that the spell dominates the object. For example, putting flash (light) spell into a sword (metal) requires a light/dark node for the spell, a fire node carrier, and a metal node carrier (for the metal sword), to establish the light/dark-dominates-fire-dominates-metal relationship. All carriers are enchanted into the object, like the spell.

Carrier nodes may be of any power, including lowly 1-power nodes. The node of the spell must be the full power required for the enchantment, and therefore is commonly a very powerful node. The 'carrier' nodes may actually have their own spells, in addition to functioning as carriers, and thus do 'double-duty' in the enchantment.

If the continued use of a spell consumes a node within the enchanted object, the loss of the node may break a 'carrier' chain for some other spell. In this case, the broken chain prevents use of that enchanted spell until a new, replacement carrier node is enchanted into the object.

**Complex Materials:** When an object is composed of many materials, one element may be dominant in the object, such as wood in a spear, metal in a sword, etc. In these cases, treat the object as being that element entirely for the enchantment and spell effect purposes. Characters may fashion (or have fashioned) unique objects from special elements (such as rock crystal cut in the shape of a dagger, etc.), and the gamemaster must judge their qualities (and price) accordingly.

In many cases, the elemental materials in an object are uncertain or

unclear to a character. The gamemaster determines how much study is required to learn the composition of the object, and which magic elements are involved (revealed to the character when his or her studies are successfully completed). Enchantment then requires a 'carrier' node for each element in the object. The spell must dominate all these carrier nodes, using the chain procedure. For example, an object of wood and metal, with an enchanted fire node, would also require a crystal and water node enchanted into it (fire dominates metal, which dominates crystal, which dominates water, which dominates wood).

## 9.2 Enchantment Procedure

**Basic Procedure:** The enchanter (a character trying to accomplish an enchantment) must physically have both the objects and the node(s) involved. The enchanter contacts the node(s), maneuvers them into the object like containment, and then aligns the node to the spell and object simultaneously. If the enchantment requires a chain of nodes, the enchanter begins with the least dominant node, and then one after another adds nodes that dominate the last, until the final spell node is aligned into the object.

Enchantment takes one hour, and must be done as a continuous process; it cannot be stopped, then started again later.

**Enchantment Success:** In enchantments nodes are simultaneously aligned to spells and the object (even carrier nodes), so the node counts as one power higher than normal for alignment success computations. Therefore, the equation to compute alignment success for enchantment is:

$$5c - 25s + 50 = \% \text{ success (maximum 99\%)}$$

Where 'c' is the current total of aligned nodes (non-enchanted) and 's' is the normal strength of the node involved, like normal alignment concepts and abbreviations.

**Enchantment Failure:** If the alignment of any node fails in an enchantment, the node is lost. If the enchanter has another suitable node available for immediate contact, he or she can continue with that. However, if the enchanter must pause, even if only a few instants, the process ends and only those nodes aligned are part of that chain. Nothing more can be added. A new chain with new nodes could be started, but those already enchanted cannot be used as part of the new chain.

**Nodal Power Requirements:** Passive enchantments require nodes of normal power for that spell (1-, 2- or 3-power nodes, as appropriate). Active contact enchantment requires nodes of *double* the normal power for that spell (2-, 4- or 6-power nodes, as appropriate). Active ranged enchantment requires nodes of *triple* the normal power (3-, 6- or 9-power nodes).

In a chain, nodes that carry spells must be of sufficient power for that enchantment. Other 'carrier' only nodes can be 1-power, or any greater power. A node can both act as a 'carrier' in one chain, and carry a spell as well (in the same chain, or part of a different chain enchanted into the object *during the same process*).

**Making Potions:** A special type of passive enchantment is the making of a potion. The same procedure is followed as for a normal passive enchantment of an object, except that the potion-maker must also succeed with the Doctor/Druggist skill. The skill roll is made during the first potion enchantment of the day. If the skill fails, the node is lost. If the skill succeeds, the Druggist may attempt to enchant 1d6 potions of the **same type** during that day, without the need for an additional skill test. Of course, the enchantment procedure must be followed separately for each potion being made. No more than one type of potion may be enchanted in a day. The material being enchanted to form a potion must be something that can be consumed by the intended user, though it need not be ordinary food or drink.

A potion must be kept in the reflection of any node, just as with containment of a node. A potion that is not so contained will lose its potency (and the node be lost) in a number of days equal to the node strength of the node used during the enchantment. Silver bottles sealed with beeswax are the most popular form of container for potions.

Potions are one-use magical items that work only on the person consuming the potion. Only a single 'dose' is contained within each potion. There is no way to sample a potion with a small taste to discover its properties; the potion is either consumed wholly or remains intact. Successful use of the Doctor/Druggist skill permits identification of a potion; failure means misidentification of the potion.

## 9.3 Enchanted Nodes and Objects

### 9.3.1 ENCHANTED NODES

Once a node is enchanted into an object, it is permanently bound into that object. The node cannot be removed, recovered, or used for

anything else. The node cannot be realigned, ever. The node automatically 'spreads' itself throughout the object. Therefore, if the object breaks in half, the node breaks in half (including all carrier nodes in a chain, which would also break in half, etc.). A broken object only remains enchanted if the surviving nodal power in that piece is sufficient for the spell (including any necessary carriers, which must be at least 1-power each, after the break). Normally nodes of just sufficient power are used, so any break will reduce the nodes below necessary power and make the enchanted properties inoperable. If the object has all its parts reassembled and is repaired, the nodes again combine their strength and the enchanted properties return. Obviously, if the object broke into many pieces, it might or might not require finding all the pieces to make the object operable again.

Nodes within an enchanted object do not count toward a magician's total, when considering the number of aligned nodes a magician owns. Once a node is enchanted, it is no longer the property of a character, and now 'belongs' to the object.

### 9.3.2 USING ENCHANTED OBJECTS

**Passive Enchantments** (normal power spell): The spell is bound into the object, and only affects that object. Passive enchantments never affect the user, and never affect anything the object touches or is aimed at. For example, a passive temper in a sword gives the sword temper, making it almost unbreakable. However, neither a user, nor anything touched by the sword will get any magical benefit. The one exception is the making of a potion through passive enchantment. When the potion is consumed, the spell acts on the person drinking the potion, and the node is immediately lost. Objects with passive enchantments can be used as weapons, but all normal combat rules apply. The spell 'in' the object may enhance one or more combat properties, such as making breakage nearly impossible (temper in metal, heartoak in wood), increasing damage (keenness), etc. Many spells are virtually useless in a passive node.

Passive enchantments last as long as the node remains full power and intact in the object. Normal time limits for a spell are ignored once a passive enchantment is accomplished.

**Active Contact Enchantments** (double power spell): The spell is bound into the object, and affects whatever the user contacts, on demand. This could include the object itself. The user need not know any magic himself or herself. For example, a character using an object with 'torch' active contact enchantment can touch something and perhaps set it afire using the torch spell. Active enchantments occur when the user thinks of the spell while using the object. This 'remembering' takes no real time or effort, it is simply declared. In combat the object could be used as a weapon, with extra abilities on any hit, including a hit that does no normal damage. A successful parry prevents hit contact. Active contact enchantments are possible on individual missile weapon ammunition, such as sling bolts, arrows, quarrels, etc. The spell takes effect when and if the missile hits.

Active contact enchantments do not affect or harm the object containing the enchantment, but provide no special protection to the object either. For example, a wooden spear could have a burnthru active enchantment, and although it sets fires on contact, the spear itself is not burned up by the spell. Of course, if the spear was used to set a fire, and then left in that fire long enough, the spear itself might eventually catch fire like any piece of wood! The spear could be protected from fire and burning with another spell (such as a passive extinguish — although unwise because progressive burnings still will gradually weaken it — or by passive insulate).

Active contact enchantments remain in the object as long as the node remains full power and intact. However, when the object makes contact and activates the spell's effect, that effect (on something or someone else) only has normal duration, usually just a minute or two.

**Active Ranged Enchantments** (triple power spell): The spell is bound into the object, and affects whatever the user aims at, on demand. The character need only see (or hear, smell, touch, taste, etc.) accurately to use the spell. The user of the object need not know any magic himself or herself, but like active contact, need only know the spell is in the object, and remember it at the right time. Active ranged enchantments never miss their target, as long as the user is correct about the target location. If the user is unsure of the target's exact position, accuracy equals the percentage of 'sureness' of the user (the gamemaster normally judges this). An active ranged enchantment may be used as an active contact enchantment if desired.

Active ranged enchantments neither affect nor harm the object containing the enchantment, and provide no special protection to it either. Of course, the spell could be cast on the object containing the enchantment, if desired.

Active range enchantments have a weapon speed rating of zero (0) when fired — the spell is slow in acting. However, if the spell was en-

chanted into the object by a chain of carriers, for each carrier node whose strength *equals or exceeds* that of the spell node, add 15 to the weapons speed of the object. Active ranged enchantments are always 'loaded'; unlike other missile weapons, there is no loading time or activity required. Furthermore, no dice rolls to hit are required (unless target location is uncertain, see above).

Active ranged enchantments remain in the object as long as the node remains full power and intact. However, when the object is 'fired' and the spell hits another, that effect only has normal duration for the spell, usually just a minute or two. If the active ranged enchantment is a defensive or protective spell, and is 'fired' at the object itself, it still only lasts the short time period, but of course the object could 'fire on itself' again.

### 9.3.3 CONSUMING ENCHANTED NODES

Nodes enchanted into an object are far more stable than normal nodes. The usual consumption rules do not apply to enchanted objects. Instead, enchanted objects are rated by their 'age' into three classes: new, old, and ancient. Each time an enchanted object is used, a d100 roll is made, and the table below consulted. Note that the possibility of consumption varies with age. An object can also 'advance' in age with use, as indicated on the table below:

<i>d100 roll</i>	<i>Enchanted node consumption effect</i>
01 . . . . .	node consumed regardless of age
02 . . . . .	node consumed in new or old object only (unaffected if ancient)
03 . . . . .	node consumed in new object (unaffected if old or ancient)
04-99 . . . . .	node is unaffected
100 . . . . .	object's age advances one level (new to old, old to ancient)

New applies to any object less than a year old, old applies to any object between 1 and 100 years old, ancient applies to objects over 100

years old. This is only a general guideline, since objects may age faster with repeated use.

**Consumption Effects:** When an enchanted node is consumed, the node actually aligned to the spell is lost, and the capacity of the object to hold the spell is also lost. Replacing the node has no effect; an entirely new enchantment is needed.

If a node was enchanted into an object as part of a chain, then the final node in the chain (the node aligned to the spell itself) is lost. If this node was also the middle part of yet another chain in the same object, a replacement node only for that other chain can be enchanted into the object, and only if the effort is begun immediately. This replacement node can act only as a step in a chain. It cannot hold a spell itself.

### 9.4 Gamemaster Options in Enchantments

**Limiting Powers:** The gamemaster may wish to improve additional limits on enchantments. For example, in his or her world, enchanted nodes might require a 'recharge' time of 1d6 minutes, hours, or even days before they can be used again. Conversely, the gamemaster may wish to adjust the consumption possibilities table (above) so that any node is consumed on a 01-02, new or old nodes on 03-04, new nodes on 05-06, etc.

**Modified Enchantments:** The gamemaster may wish to allow an enchanter to reduce the power or effect of a spell, but make its duration longer.

If the gamemaster allows modified enchantments, he/she must carefully consider each request. To maintain play balance and fairness, it is strongly recommended that modified spells be permitted only if the net effect is weaker than the normal version of the spell. The worst danger in any fantasy role-playing game is escalating magic that overpowers all other aspects of the game.

#### Example of Elemental Magic

Wesp the sorceress has a diamond ring, a silver ear stud, a silver filigree bracelet, and a pouch containing a silver teardrop and oak charm. These five items are her magic containers. Initially, she started with four 1-power wind nodes, one 2-power wind node, four 1-power light/dark nodes, three 1-power fire nodes, and three 1-power metal nodes. These came from her prior occupation as a magician, and thus have already been contacted, and may be aligned or enchanted if desired (unlike a newly found node, which must be contacted, contained, aligned, and perhaps enchanted while being aligned).

Wesp considers enchanting one of her knives with an active-contact eavesdrop spell (2-power wind node spell). However, she realizes that to 'carry' this enchantment into the metal blade she will need a light/dark, a fire, and a metal node in the knife. All these must be 2-nodes to get a speed bonus — if she will accept zero speed, they could be 1-nodes instead. Since Wesp isn't too concerned about speed in eavesdropping (it's unlikely to be used in battle, where speed is important), 1-nodes will do. She would prefer these nodes to serve some useful purpose, as well as being carriers. However, 1-power light/dark and 1-power fire nodes, in a passive node, are useless to her knife (in her opinion). The metal temper spell, in passive node, is useful for increasing the breakage number (making breaking more difficult). Wesp decides that eavesdropping isn't so important that she wishes to use all these extra nodes, just to get an enchanted spell. Therefore, she simply tempers the knife and does nothing else.

With her remaining nodes, Wesp decides to align them to spells, put them in her containers, and use them as needed. Although she would like to enchant them, 1-power nodes can only be used for passive enchantments, and there is very little in that category that interests Wesp.

The spells she selects are Longspeech (2-node wind), Resuscitate (1-node wind), a second Resuscitate (another 1-node wind), Refresh (1-node wind), and Eavesdrop (1-node wind); for light/dark she chooses Flash (1-node light), Blackflash (1-node dark), Shadow (1-node dark), Cure (1-node dark); she also has Heat (1-node fire), Ex-

tinguish (1-node fire), Cauterize (1-node fire), Shield (1-node metal), and a second Shield (1-node metal). Wesp selected some duplicate alignments for useful battle spells, so in case the first node were exhausted, she should have another in reserve.

Wesp also must assign her nodes to her containers. The diamond ring received resuscitate and flash; the silver ear stud longspeech, resuscitate (the second one), refresh, and eavesdrop; the silver filigree bracelet got cauterize and shield; the silver teardrop heat, extinguish, and shield; and the oak charm blackflash, shadow, and cure. Although Wesp could have assigned all nodes of the same element to a single container, she avoided this since the theft of one container would wreak havoc in her ability to 'cast through' with chains, as all nodes of a middle link in the chain might be missing! Instead, the ring, bracelet, and teardrop each have spells of two different elements. Of course, one must dominate the other. She avoided having three different elements in a container, since if the 'middle' one in the dominance chain was exhausted and lost, the other two would no longer be in the chain, and would be lost as well. Note that she had to put the flash-spelled light node in one container, and the other darkness spells in a second container, since both light and darkness nodes cannot be put in the same container without destroying each other.

Although all these nodes are in different containers, in different places, as long as Wesp remembers the location of each container, she can still use the various nodes in the chains.

As an aid to potential combat situations, Wesp makes some notes on the typical combat 'cast through' chain combinations she plans to use. One is resuscitate (in ring or ear stud) to flash (in ring), blackflash (in charm) or shadow (in charm), allowing her to (hopefully) temporarily blind opponents or hide herself in shadow. This chain has a speed of only 15, with the resuscitate vulnerable to exhaustion. Another combination is resuscitate or refresh, via cure, then via heat, to shield, for a total speed of 45. She plans this to armor her body quickly in case of attack. She plans no chains to her fire nodes, since he doesn't imagine how she could use heat, extinguish, or cauterize in the middle of an instant of combat!

# 10. Elemental Magic Spells

This chapter lists the basic spells for each element, their effects, duration, and specific limitations if used for enchantment.

## 10.1 Fire (Lachel) Spells

The 'Understanding Elemental Magic – Fire' skill gives a character knowledge of all the following spells, and how to align them to fire (Lachel) nodes, and/or enchant them into objects. The amount of nodal power needed for each spell is listed in parentheses. Active contact costs double and active ranged enchantment costs triple the listed nodal power.

**Heat (1-node):** This spell causes uncomfortable warmth to any object in range. Effect on characters is similar to a sunburn, with normal hit location procedures unless caster touches the target at the desired point. Highly combustible materials can be ignited with this spell, but only in ideal conditions.

Passive enchantment causes the object itself to be perpetually warm, and if left long enough to set combustible materials afire. There is no nodal consumption, and the effect is permanent. Active and active ranged enchantments can be used to cast this spell normally, although in active (contact) enchantment limits the effect to contact only.

**Extinguish (1-node):** This puts out a burning fire. The spell actually renders materials non-combustible for a few seconds to stop the fire. The spell does not prevent the fire from being re-started. If a large fire is burning, this spell extinguishes fire in an area about 3 paces square.

Passive enchantments cause the object to extinguish itself, only after the fire begins (and thus does some damage). Active contact and active ranged enchantments are both possible.

**Cauterize (1-node):** This heals one cut (C) or thrust (T) wound (any number of wound points from one strike or hit) on the character, but leaves one wound point of burns in its place. The healing occurs instantly, and is somewhat painful. Thrust wounds where the weapon breaks off in the character cannot be healed without use of excise (metal) spell also, or successful attention of a doctor/druggist to remove the broken object.

Passive enchantment is not possible. Active contact enchantment and active ranged enchantment are both possible, although active contact limits the range of the spell to contact only.

**Torch (2-node):** This sets fire to normally combustible materials. The caster must touch the target. Note that flesh and metal are not combustible, and therefore unaffected by this spell. Cloth, leather, wood, dried plants, and even hair are combustible unless very wet. A character with burning hair or clothing suffers one (1) burn wound point per instant in that location, except during the first instant (during which the fire is starting). Taking off clothes or smothering a fire requires at least 1d6/2+1 instants, with an extra instant to unbuckle metal armor over that location (open helms do not apply this penalty).

Passive enchantments cause the object itself to burn if combustible, but it will eventually burn itself up. Active contact and ranged enchantments are allowed, the latter giving the spell range ability, but normal hit location procedures are used against character targets.

**Insulate (2-node):** This can be cast onto any character or object. This spell gives magic protection against all fire and heat for two (2) minutes.

Passive enchantments insulate the object (only, not anything within) permanently from any fire or heat. Each time insulation is actually used, consumption could occur. Active contact and ranged enchantments have normal 2-minute effect.

**Burn thru (3-node):** This inflicts a small, hot burn on the target. If cast at a range against a character, normal hit location is used; if cast while in contact, the area contacted is affected. Combustible items hit by this spell immediately start burning (as in torch above). Non-combustible items suffer 1d6/2 points of burn wounds, or 1d6/2 damage points to a weapon (which has no effect unless it equals or exceeds the breakage number).

Passive enchantment will cause a naturally combustible object to burn itself up. Other objects burn forever without being consumed, and with no nodal consumption. Such objects can have insulated handles attached, to be temporarily handled (although they will burn unless precautions are taken), etc. Active contact and ranged enchantments are allowed, but the spell is restricted to contact only in the contact version.

**Fireproof (3-node):** This spell can be cast only onto non-living inani-

mate objects. The spell protects the object, and anything contained within the object from all fire and heat for one complete day. Note that if armor is fireproofed, body locations protected by the armor are also protected by the fireproofing.

Passive enchantment causes the object to provide continuous fireproofing, although each use of the fireproofing requires a check for consumption. Active contact and ranged enchantments have the normal 1-day effect on the target.

## 10.2 Metal (Mithrill) Spells

The 'Understanding Elemental Magic – Metal' skill gives a character knowledge of the following spells, how to align them to metal (Mithrill) nodes, and how to enchant them into objects. The amount of nodal power needed for each spell is listed in parentheses. Active contact enchantments cost double, active ranged enchantments cost triple the listed node power.

**Shield (1-node):** When cast onto any item or character, this spell provides additional protection that absorbs/deflects up to 3 wound points from any metal weapon's hit, and 1 wound point from any weapon of some other material. The spell lasts two (2) minutes.

Passive enchantment gives the object a permanent shield, but each hit causes a check for consumption. Active contact and active ranged enchantments have the normal 2-minute effect on the target.

**Temper (1-node):** This can be cast onto any metal object. This spell gives the object superior strength, doubling its normal breakage number. The spell lasts two (2) minutes, and is counteracted by a shatter spell (metal). Shatter returns the object to normal breakage value.

Passive enchantment gives the object a permanent temper, but each normal breakage situation causes a check for the consumption of the enchanted node. Active contact and active ranged enchantments have the normal 2-minute effect on the target.

**Excise (1-node):** This spell can be cast onto any item embedded within the body of a character, or within any other object. The spell instantly removes the object without causing any injury to the character or object(s). If many objects of the same type (parasite, gravel, broken weapon, etc.) are all embedded in the body, one spell will remove all of the same type at the same time. This spell cannot remove natural substances, and thus cannot be used to 'disassemble' a character from a distance. However a device made of many different parts could be disassembled by excise, provided each part could be specifically identified (size, shape, material, etc.).

Passive enchantment has no effect. Active contact and active ranged enchantments have normal effects, but cannot remove natural substances, and this cannot be used to 'disassemble' a character from a distance. However a device made of many different parts could be disassembled by excise, provided each part could be specifically identified (size, shape, material, etc.).

**Keeness (2-node):** This can be cast onto any cutting or thrusting metal weapon. The spell adds two (+2) to the normal wound points damage inflicted on any die roll, by making the blade or point very sharp. However, a normal dice roll is used when computing breakage (without the +2 modifier). The spell last two minutes.

Passive enchantment gives the object permanent keeness, but for each hit where damage occurs (even on a parry, or if parried) the chance of consumption must be determined. Active contact and active ranged enchantments have the normal 2-minute effect on the target.

**Shatter (2-node):** This can be cast onto any metal object. The object instantly shatters into 2d6 fragments. If the object is currently protected by the temper (metal) spell, shatter removes one temper spell effect for two (2) minutes, but has no further effect (another shatter would shatter the object, unless protected by a second, separate temper, etc.).

Passive enchantment causes the object to shatter, or removes one temper permanently (including a passive temper enchantment). Active contact and active ranged enchantments have the normal effect on the target (fragmentation or remove temper where present – for 2 minutes).

**Bend back (3-node):** This turns any metal weapon or object back against its owner. The spell can be cast against a target in sight (or similarly accurate sense). The owner is forced to attack himself or herself with the weapon/object, which strikes as frequently as the owner's speed allows, with the owner's own skill for two (2) minutes. These

strikes keep one or two hands occupied (depending on what was holding the object at the time), but do not consume combat instants or APs for the character, thus allowing parries, movement, etc. where possible. Before each strike, the owner can attempt to throw away a bend back spelled object, and succeeds if he or she passes a hard agility test (normal test if the owner knows metal spells).

Passive enchantment causes the object to be 'cursed' with bendback, resulting in bendback effects to anyone who attempts to touch, grab, take, or possess the object in any way. Active contact enchantment means the bendback is applied only if the enchanted object makes contact with the metal object to be bendback-spelled. Active ranged enchantment allows normal effect of the spell using ranged enchantment procedures for casting.

**Transmute (3-node):** This is cast onto any metal object. The spell changes the metal of the object into any other normal, non-magical metal desired by the caster such as lead into gold, tin into steel, etc.). The gamemaster secretly determines the duration of the spell with a 1d6 roll:

Spell Lasts: (roll 1d6)		
1-one second,	3-one hour,	5-one year,
2-one minute,	4-one day,	6-forever

The spell caster can put additional nodal power into the spell, and each extra 1-node of power (in the node of the spell) adds one (+1) to the duration die roll result. Therefore, a 8-node transmute spell causes a +5 to the die roll, insuring the spell lasts forever. The object has all the properties of the new metal for the duration of the spell.

Passive enchantments only last for the normal duration diced, and thus are no different from the normal spell except that a passively enchanted metal object is immune to the effects of any other transmute spell as long as the enchantment lasts. Active Contact and active ranged enchantments allow for normal effect of the spell, with duration determined by nodal power normally. For example, active contact with 1d6 requires a 6-node, active contact with a 1d6+1 requires a 7-node, active contact with 1d6+2 requires an 8-node, etc.

### 10.3 Crystal (Silima) Spells

The 'Understanding Elemental Magic — Crystal' skill gives a character knowledge of the following spells, how to align them to crystal (Silima) nodes, and how to enchant them into objects. The amount of nodal power needed for each spell is listed in parentheses. Active contact enchantments cost double, active ranged enchantments cost triple the listed node power.

**Gemfind (1-node):** When cast by a character, that character has an infallible sense of direction toward the nearest precious gem. A vague idea of distance (very close, relatively near, or far) is included. Semi-precious stones of little market value are ignored. Although the effect occurs for just an instant, the character can remember the direction for the next few minutes.

Passive enchantment causes the object to point toward the precious gem, like a compass needle, with no chance of node consumption. Active enchantments apply the gemfind to a character for the appropriate effect, each use invoking consumption. If the enchanted object is itself a gem, or permanently attached to a gem, the gemfind ignores that gem, as well as all on the body of the character using the spell (in the case of normal or active enchantment).

**Reality Reflection (1-node):** This spell when cast will conceal existence or use of elemental magic for two minutes. The first such use of magic will cause the spell to expire, even if two minutes are not yet up.

Passive enchantment conceals the existence of the node and any one other node enchanted into the object. Only days of intense study by someone able to identify the element will detect the node. Active enchantment allows the spell to be cast normally.

**Keepwarm (1-node):** When cast onto an object or character, this spell provides protection against normal freezing cold for a full day. In extreme cold (sub-zero arctic conditions) temperature effect is moderated to 'normal' cold weather. Keepwarm is negated by a chill or frostbite spell, but only for the duration of those spells, and vice versa to a degree (see chill and frostbite for details).

Passive enchantment causes an object and any contents of that object to be permanently protected from freezing, but each day it is exposed to freezing conditions check for consumption. Enchantment is temporarily counteracted by a chill or frostbite spell, permanently by a chill or frostbite enchantment (passive). Active contact and active ranged enchantments apply the keepwarm spell normally to the target.

**Salve (1-node):** When cast onto any object or character, the spell heals all but one point of burn wounds or damage to any one location (including body locations for characters). The last point of burns can-

not be healed by this spell, and thus it cannot be used to 'clean up' the one point of residual burns after a cauterize (fire) spell. Salve can only cure existing burns, and will not protect against burns, fire, or heat. Caster must contact location to cast the spell.

Passive enchantment causes an object to repair itself when burned, except for one point, which reduces strength, breakage, etc. by one as a result. Each 'repair' causes a consumption check for the node. Active contact and active ranged enchantments apply the salve normally, with active ranged enchantment allowing a ranged use of the spell per enchantment rules (as if the user were at the target).

**Chill (2-node):** When cast, it causes the target to feel extremely cold. A chilled character has his or her agility, combat quickness, and all weapon speeds halved (including weapon speed for casting a magic spell). A chilled object becomes very cold to touch, and a character must pass an agility test to keep on holding it (but if the test is passed, there is no further effect). Chill remains in effect for two (2) minutes. Chill is counteracted by a keepwarm spell, and has no effect if one is already in place except to eliminate the keepwarm for 2 minutes. Cold-weather clothing also protects characters from a chill.

Passive enchantment causes an object to be permanently chilled, so anyone grasping it must pass the agility test noted above, and each subsequent minute must pass an intelligence test to keep holding it (representing willpower in the face of cold). The object cannot be handled for long periods of time (such as an hour or more) because hands eventually grow numb. Active contact enchantment restricts effect to contact, active ranged enchantment has normal ranged effect, with the spell having the normal effect on the target in both cases.

**Clarity (2-node):** When cast, it allows the caster to see through any illusions powered by a magic node of equal or lower power. Clarity spells can use 3-power nodes or greater to overpower the other spells, if desired. The spell lasts for two (2) minutes. Clarity counteracts the illusion involved in the following spells: transmute (metal), vision (crystal), eyedust (wind), fear (wind), flash/blackflash (light/dark), shadow (light/dark), blindeye (light/dark).

Passive enchantment will make an object transparent, but not invisible. Active contact and active ranged enchantments apply the spell to the target character (giving the target the benefit of clarity). A user can use active contact (or active ranged) on himself with the enchanted object.

**Frostbite (3-node):** When cast, the target checks for hit location. That point is frozen solid for two (2) minutes, and then instantly thaws, suffering 1d6 smash wound points. If caster touches the target, the point touched receives the frostbite, no hit location is needed. Keepwarm already in place on the target cancels the effect of frostbite, but that keepwarm is also cancelled for two minutes. Keepwarm applied after the frostbite causes instant thaw. Frozen parts of the body are totally out of action (cannot be used), as if a disabling wound occurred there; while frozen any additional wounds or damage have half (½) effect. Frozen head or torso is still only a disabling wound, with appropriate wound points suffered in the thaw.

Passive enchantment will freeze an object, giving it a permanent chill (see passive enchantment of chill above), as well as making any non-solid object quite solid. Active contact and active ranged enchantments apply the spell normally to the target. Note that an active contact enchanted object must actually touch a character to take effect, if parried it has no effect (unless the parrying weapon will be affected by a little cold — weapon is not actually chilled, though).

**Vision (3-node):** Caster may see (but not hear) with perfect clarity to any place within one league, or any longer distance if the caster can remember the exact location he or she would be looking from (i.e., had been there before, and taken pains to remember the place). The spell lasts for two (2) minutes, or less if the caster wishes to return to 'normal' vision sooner.

Only active contact enchantment is possible (among enchantments) for this spell. It allows anyone holding the enchanted object to look into it, and see vision-spelled sights. This is, in fact, the origin of the famous 'crystal ball' device.

### 10.4 Water (Veraqua) Spells

The 'Understanding Elemental Magic — Water' skill gives a character knowledge of the following spells, how to align them to water (Veraqua) nodes, and how to enchant them into objects. The amount of nodal power needed for each spell is listed in parentheses. Active contact enchantments cost double, active ranged enchantments cost triple the listed node power.

**Quench (1-node):** When cast onto a character, this spell provides all water needed by the body for an entire day, and quenches all thirst up to the end of that day as well. If the character has gone without water, this spell also brings him or her 'back to normal' by providing the necessary water.

Passive enchantment can be used to produce a quench potion, which takes effect when consumed. Active contact and active ranged enchantments cast the spell upon an appropriate target in the normal fashion.

**Purify (1-node):** When cast onto any item of food or drink, or onto any character or animal, the spell instantly removes all poisons and toxins. However, the spell has no effect on diseases except blood poisoning, and similar poisoning diseases. Purify will repair any poison wound points already inflicted on a character.

Passive enchantment in food or drink is possible, to insure its perpetual purity, but then the food or drink must be used all at once (in place of normal food or drink), and since the enchantment is passive, aside from assured lack of poisons, the eater or drinker gains no benefit. A purify potion will purify the character drinking it. Active contact enchantment or active ranged enchantment can be used to cast the spell on appropriate targets normally, as well. Purify cannot protect against future poisonings.

**Gills (1-node):** When cast onto a character, this spell allows breathing and speech underwater. The spell lasts two (2) minutes.

Only active contact and active ranged enchantments are possible for this spell. These cast the spell upon an appropriate target in the normal fashion.

**Current (2-node):** When cast onto water in the vicinity, the caster creates a current of speed one league per hour (about 6 paces per instant, or 30(1½) per period, or roughly 2½ mph modern). Any minor currents or tidal flows are cancelled, but the spell is too weak to reverse direction of flow, create or stop waves, whirlpools, waterspouts, floods, etc. Instead, this could be used by the caster to speed or slow a boat, calm waters to make fording or swimming easier, etc. The spell lasts one (1) hour.

Passive enchantment to a specific area or liquid is possible, but unless contained will have no permanence (as rivers, lakes, or oceans) have the water in an area constantly shifting and moving, causing the enchanted node to split apart and disperse. Active contact and ranged enchantments cast the spell upon a target in the normal fashion.

**Slipside (2-node):** When cast onto a character or animal, the spell causes him or her to fall down unless an agility test is passed each combat instant. Success means the character remains standing. If the character tries to move, an additional agility test is needed to stay standing each instant the character moves. The spell lasts two (2) minutes.

Passive enchantment of an object makes it frictionless when in contact with another passively-slipside-enchanted object (i.e., the two objects slide against each other with no effort). When in contact with anything else, it acts normally.

Active contact enchantment makes an object slippery for all to handle, to move upon, climb, etc. An agility test is needed for each action. If a character remains in continuous contact for 2 minutes with the object the effect disappears until contact is broken. Note that changing contact from one body part to another body part counts as a new contact. Each new time a character is affected, check for consumption.

Active ranged enchantment allows the user to target the spell within normal range, with appropriate normal effect on the target.

**Choke (3-node):** When cast onto a character, the spell puts water into his or her lungs for one period (20 seconds, or five instants). This causes the character to cough, choke, grásp, and feel like he/she is drowning. No actions are possible, and mental concentration is completely disrupted unless a hard intelligence test is passed. Two consecutive periods of choke will cause a character to fall unconscious and drown, unless the character successfully uses swimming ability to stay alive (although still suffering choke effects). A choke spell is immediately cancelled by a resuscitate (wind) spell, unless the character is already dead.

Passive enchantment can be used to make a choke potion. Active contact and ranged enchantments apply the normal spell effect against an appropriate target. A resuscitate (wind) spell will cancel the effect of an enchanted object's use, but cannot affect the enchanted object itself.

**Flow (3-node):** When cast onto any object or character, the target turns into a semi-liquid that can move through any crack or opening that would permit water to pass. Inanimate objects simply turn to 'mush' with no rigidity or strength, but can be formed, pushed or pulled by the holder to move as a liquid. When a character flows, any item on his or her body, including those held, will also flow, but new items picked up during the spell remain hard. The spell lasts two (2) minutes.

If a frostbite (ice) spell is cast onto something while it flows, it will freeze in that position. If frozen in a small opening, when the flow and frostbite have worn off, the object will attempt to return to normal shape, and will suffer appropriate injury in many cases (in addition to thaw damage from frostbite). The gamemaster must determine the actual injury and damage.

Passive enchantment of an object makes it permanently a 'mushy' thick liquid, without strength or solidity. There is no node consumption; the effect is permanent. Active contact and ranged enchantments apply the spell to appropriate targets in the normal fashion, for the normal time period of two (2) minutes.

## 10.5 Wood (Druidheart) Spells

The 'Understanding Elemental Magic — Wood' skill gives a character knowledge of the following spells, how to align them to wood (Druidheart) nodes, and how to enchant them into objects. The amount of nodal power needed for each spell is listed in parentheses. Active contact enchantments cost double, active ranged enchantments cost triple the listed nodal power.

**Heartoak (1-node):** This spell can be cast onto any wooden object. The spell gives the object exceptional strength, doubling its normal breakage number. The spell lasts two (2) minutes. A chop spell will cancel a heartoak spell. Multiple heartoaks on the same object will double again the breakage number, and each drop will remove one heartoak effect.

Passive enchantments give the object appropriate strength, with a chance of node consumption occurring each time the object absorbs a blow (even if the blow was insufficient to cause normal breakage). If multiple heartoak enchantment are on a single object, only one node is checked for consumption with each blow absorbed. Active contact and ranged enchantments apply the normal spell effect against an appropriate target.

**Warp (1-node):** This can be cast onto any wooden object. The spell causes the object to waver and deflect in its path when used. In combat, a warped weapon has its weapon use skill reduced by 30 (weapon speed is unaffected). In other situations, travel is bent or twisted to a modest angle (wooden wagon on a road would swerve off, boat would bend off course, etc.), and normal use of a tool is only possible if an agility test is passed first. The spell lasts two (2) minutes.

Passive enchantment gives a object a permanent warp, making it 'cursed'. Each time the object is used, there is a chance of node consumption. Active contact and ranged enchantments apply the normal spell effect against an appropriate target.

**Splint (1-node):** This can be cast onto any character. The spell heals all but one point of any smash wounds on any one location of the character's body. The spell can be used to repair damage on a living tree, but has no effect on inanimate objects (not even wooden objects — see woodgrow instead, below). Splints are instant and permanent.

Passive enchantment is possible in a potion, for a one-use healing of the user, in that body part which has the most smash damage. Active contact and ranged enchantments apply the normal spell effect against an appropriate target.

**Woodgrow (2-node):** This can be cast onto any wooden item or joint. If the item is broken, it causes the wood fibers to grow together again, effecting a permanent repair that is 'good as new'. It can also cause any wooden item to join to another object, including non-wood (wood fibers grow onto the object), but this new joint only lasts two (2) minutes unless with another wooden object, in which case the joint is permanent.

Passive enchantments of joints make them permanent, no checks for nodal consumption are required, even if the wood is joined to a non-wood item. Active contact and active ranged enchantments apply the normal spell effect against an appropriate target.

**Chop (2-node):** When cast onto any wooden object, living or dead, this spell cuts the object in two, along any line or place desired by the caster (provided the cut is a relatively simple one). The spell takes effect instantly, and is permanent, although repairs could be made later. If protected by a heartoak spell, each chop spell counteracts one heartoak spell.

Passive enchantments have no additional effects. Active contact and ranged enchantments apply the normal chop spell effect against an appropriate target.

When chop is used against a wooden object protected by a passive heartoak enchantment, the chop will cancel one heartoak effect for two (2) minutes, instead of having the normal effect. Once all heartoaks are eliminated, normal chop effects can occur.

**Bonebreak (3-node):** This can be cast onto any one target location of a character. If the caster touches the target, the point touched is the target location. If the caster does not touch, dice for hit location. The spell shatters some bones in that location, inflicting smash wound points equal to one third (1/3) the mass of the character. Bonebreak can be used against a living tree, and will cause a small area to turn to 'mush,' destroying strength and internal structure. If the area is properly selected, the tree may well fall down.

Passive enchantment is not possible. Active contact and ranged enchantments apply the normal effect against an appropriate target.



**Trow (3-node):** This spell can be cast when a pledge is to be made (a pledge is something affected parties agree to). The spell seals the pledge if made within the next minute. Characters in a trow-pledge must keep their pledge to the limit of their ability, or else they will actually take root and become a tree. This may oblige characters to risk death. A trow-pledge can be ended or reversed by using another trow spell to break it, which breaks the power of the pledge for all characters involved. If a character has become a tree due to breaking a trow-pledge, the trow spell that ends the pledge also allows the character to regain human form. A trow-pledge ends if all conditions are met by all parties, or if a time limit or area limit (if one is specified in the pledge) expires. Note that a trow has no effect unless used at the time characters make an agreement.

**Unique Trow (4-node):** The same as a normal trow, except that only the original spell-caster can reverse (dispell) this trow-pledge. If the original caster dies or is otherwise unavailable, the pledge cannot be reversed.

Passive enchantment may be used to form a trow potion. Both parties must drink from the same cup to apply the spell. Active contact and ranged enchantments apply the normal spell effect against an appropriate target.

## 10.6 Wind (Mazgul) Spells

The 'Understanding Elemental Magic - Wind' skill gives a character knowledge of the following spells, how to align them to wind (Mazgul) nodes, and how to enchant them into objects. The amount of nodal power needed for each spell is listed in parentheses. Active contact enchantments cost double, active ranged enchantments cost triple the listed nodal power.

**Eavesdrop (1-node):** This can be cast on any character. The spell improves the hearing of that character, allowing him or her to hear clearly any sounds within normal eyesight, including breathing or rustle of clothing, as well as conversations normally too soft or distant for hearing. It also gives hearing far greater accuracy, so that without eyesight (in darkness, if blind, etc.) anything within normal earshot can be located with perfect accuracy. Note that if using a vision (crystal) spell a character could see much further, and then eavesdrop to hear as well! This spell lasts two (2) minutes.

Passive enchantments may be used to provide a non-specific sound trigger for an action by the enchanted object. Active contact and active ranged enchantments apply the spell effect to a character contacted, or within range, as appropriate.

**Refresh (1-node):** This can be cast on any character. This spell gives a character a 'Second wind' which counteracts all exhaustion and temporarily adds four (+4) to the character's strength, as well as allowing the character to carry up to four extra items. The spell lasts two (2) minutes, and any exertions under the spell do not count toward exhaustion. Therefore, at the end of the spell, the character will feel refreshed and normal. More than one refresh spell at a time has no additional effect.

Passive enchantment can be used to make a one-use refresh potion. Active contact and active ranged enchantments apply the spell effect to a character contacted, or within range, as appropriate.

**Resuscitate (1-node):** This restores breathing, restores a victim of drowning (if the victim is reached before he or she dies - which takes place 1d6 minutes after the drowning begins), and will completely counteract the effect of a choke (water) spell. Note that the spell only clears the lungs and restores breathing, it does not restore life per se. The spell can be used to clean the lungs of a character who suffers smoke inhalation, inhales poison dust, etc., provided the inhalation has not yet worked actual damage (any damage cannot be counteracted). The spell takes effect instantly, but cannot protect against future problems.

Passive enchantments have no effect except as a resuscitate potion. Active contact and active ranged enchantments apply the spell effect to a character contacted, or within range, as appropriate.

**Longspeech (2-node):** This can be cast on any character. The spell allows the character to 'project' his or her voice in any one direction, up to the limit of eyesight (or another sense if better). The voice projected can be a whisper or a yell - anything within the normal volume for the character. The sole effect of the spell is to allow the voice to carry without weakening, so a character can talk to another far away, in a whisper, normal voice, etc. If combined with eavesdrop, the character could then listen to the reply as well. Range could be further extended by using a vision (crystal) spell to see the other. The spell lasts for two (2) minutes.

Passive enchantment has no effect except as a longspeech potion. Active contact and active ranged enchantments apply the spell effect to the character contacted, or targeted in range, as appropriate.

**Slowfall (2-node):** When cast on a target, it acquires the special property of falling very slowly for the next two (2) minutes. Instead of falling at the normal rate, it falls at a standard velocity of one story (10') per instant. Regardless of how long or far the character or object falls, if it hits the ground while the spell is in effect, no more than 2d6 smash wounds can be suffered, at the most.

This spell applies to any airborne character, including those jumping or leaping. In jumps or leaps that would normally take just an instant, the character slows in midair, and completes the move during the next instant (i.e., the action takes 2 instants), but all chances of stumbling, dropping items, etc. is eliminated.

Passive enchantment permanently applies this effect to an object, although each time the effect actually is invoked by a situation, node consumption must be checked. Active enchantment allows casting of the spell from the enchanted object in the normal fashion.

**Eyedust (2-node):** This can be cast into the air, to cover an area up to six paces square (6 paces per side) and about one story tall. All characters except the caster have dust in their eyes, and there weapons speed and weapons use skill ratings are halved (½). Non-combat activities that require coordination require an agility test, although normal activity done slowly and cautiously is possible without a test. Eyedust is an illusion, and can be counteracted if a character has a clarity spell in effect, or casts it on himself/herself. Eyedust lasts for two (2) minutes.

Passive enchantment has an effect only if cast on air in an enclosed area no bigger than 6x6 paces (size of a small to moderate room). Node consumption is determined each time a character enters, at the rate of once per character entry. If the room is exposed to a breeze, node consumption is checked every two minutes. Active contact enchantment means the dust, when cast, spreads out from the enchanted object, so the object is automatically in the center of the 6x6 pace area (after casting, though, the object and/or user could move, while the eyedust remained in that place). Active ranged enchantment means the dust can be cast normally, to any place within normal range. Active enchantments cast the eyedust for two (2) minutes at a time (that is, the spell when cast lasts as long as the normal spell).

**Fear (3-node):** This can be cast onto any character. This spell makes the character become terrified, with an immediate impulse to flee. However, if the character passes an intelligence test at the start of each period in combat, or once each minute when not in combat, as long as the character successfully tests he or she avoids the effect of the spell. Any failure in this test causes the character to flee immediately to safety. Once the character flees, he or she cannot use intelligence to stop fleeing until the spell wears off. Then the character can begin testing intelligence again, once per minute, with success halting the flight. While in flight a character's mind is in turmoil and badly confused, which prevents concentrating on anything. The spell lasts two (2) minutes.

Passive enchantment has no effect. Active contact and active ranged enchantments apply the spell effect to the character contacted, or target in range as appropriate.

**Soar (3-node):** This can be cast onto any character or object. A character acts as if moving on air, travelling at up to double his/her normal ground rate. Objects and items carried by a character don't affect this ability provided they are carried when the spell goes into effect. Objects later acquired have normal weight and will drag a character downward. Regional travel with this spell is at ¼ hr per league.

Objects given this spell become weightless, and can be towed without effort (other than air resistance), and can be blown by any prevailing wind or breeze.

The spell lasts 15 minutes.

Passive enchantment of an object makes it permanently weightless. Active contact and active ranged enchantments simply permit the user to apply the spell effect to an appropriate target.

## 10.7 Light/Dark (Sundrop/Pitchblack) Spells

The 'Understanding Elemental Magic - Light/Dark' skill gives a character knowledge of the following spells, how to align them to light (sundrop) or dark (pitchblack) nodes, and how to enchant them into objects. Either light or dark nodes can be used for each spell, but remember that light and dark nodes cancel, and thus cannot be used in the same spell, chain, or both within the same enchanted object. The amount of nodal power needed for each spell is listed in parentheses. Active contact enchantments cost double the listed nodal power, active ranged enchantments cost triple the listed nodal power.

**Flash/Blackflash (1-node):** This spell casts an intense light (flash) or darkness (blackflash) out 6 paces from the caster that temporarily can blind others. The caster is unaffected. Characters facing toward the flash/blackflash are blinded for two instants, those facing away for one instant. However, if a character passes both an intelligence and an agility test, he or she avoids the flash/blackflash effect and continues



normally. A clarity (crystal) spell will counteract the effect of a flash/blackflash.

Passive enchantment with flash causes an object to permanently acquire a very dim glow that illuminates in a one-pace radius perpetually (no chance of node consumption). Passive enchantment with blackflash makes an object permanently black, without any reflections or gleams, and again with no node consumption.

Active contact enchantment allows the spell to cast out from the object, instead of the character, with effects as described above. Active ranged enchantment allows the user to target the spell out to normal range, with the flash/blackflash extending from that target point.

**Shadow (1-node):** This can be cast into any area. The spell provides greater darkness that will conceal one character or animal, or an object of equivalent size. This is an illusion and can thus be counteracted by a clarity (ice) spell, and does not affect the character with the shadow at all. The shadow is cast on a place and cannot be moved. If trying to fire or strike at a character in shadow, weapons use ratings are halved. The shadow lasts only two (2) minutes. The spell can only enhance natural shadow, and cannot be used in an area in bright sunlight.

Passive enchantment of an area in perpetual shadow is possible, to provide concealment for any character in that area. Active contact and active ranged enchantment allows the user to cast the spell at any appropriate target point, with the normal effects listed above.

**Cure (1-node):** This can be cast onto any character or object. The spell removes all disease from a character, or all diseases carried on an object, unless the disease is one specifically designated as not being affected by a cure spell. This spell will also cure any infections in wounds, making them normal wounds again. The spell does not affect poisons. The spell takes effect instantly, and if cast on a character cures the whole body at once. The spell does not protect against future contamination. The spell cannot cure wound points per se, so any wound points or debilitating effects caused by the disease remain until healed naturally (or by other magic).

Passive enchantment of an object prevents it from ever carrying a disease or becoming contaminated. Active contact and ranged enchantments allow the user to cast the spell at any appropriate target point.

**Blindeye (2-node):** This spell is cast on a character, and causes total

blindness for one (1) minute. Mental abilities and other senses (including hearing and smell) are unaffected, and there is no permanent harm to the body. This spell is actually an illusion, and is counteracted by a clarity (ice) spell.

Passive enchantment may be used in a potion. Active contact or ranged enchantment allows the user to cast the spell at any appropriate target point.

**Heavyweight (2-node):** This can be cast onto any character or object. The spell temporarily doubles mass and weight of the object, so that if carried as an item it counts double. Heavyweight characters have their mass temporarily doubled (with a temporary doubling of all wounds in effect as well), strength is unaffected, and agility is halved. When the spell wears off, all wounds are halved along with the mass, while agility returns to normal. The spell lasts one (1) hour, and is cancelled by a Lightweight spell (see below).

Passive enchantment of an object makes it permanently of double mass and weight. Active contact and ranged enchantment allows the user to cast the spell at any appropriate target point.

**Lightweight (3-node):** This can be cast onto any character or object. The spell temporarily halves mass and weight of the object, so that if carried as an item it counts half. Lightweight characters have their mass temporarily halved (along with any existing wound points), but strength is unaffected. Agility is increased by one (+1). When the spell wears off, all wounds are doubled along with the mass, while agility returns to normal. The spell lasts one (1) hour, and is cancelled by a Heavyweight spell (see above). Passive enchantment of an object makes it permanently half mass and weight. Active contact and ranged enchantment allows the user to cast the spell at any appropriate target point.

**Immune (3-node):** This can be cast onto a character. This spell gives total immunity to all diseases for one (1) day. The spell has no effect on diseases already contracted (use cure, above, for that), and does not protect against poisons (see purify, a water spell). The immunity affects the entire body, not just one location.

Passive enchantment may be used to make a one-use potion. Active contact and ranged enchantment allows the user to cast the spell at any appropriate target character.

## 10.8 Elemental Spells Summary

<b>Fire Spells</b>		<i>pure element - Lachel</i>	<i>reflection - flame of a pure beeswax candle</i>
1	.Heat	uncomfortably warm (use hit location if ranged), can set highly combustible item afire in ideal conditions	
1	.Extinguish	puts out fire (renders materials non-combustible), maximum area is 3 paces square	
1	.Cauterize	heals any one cut or thrust wound, but leaves 1 pt burns in place instead	
2	.Torch	sets combustibles afire (use hit location if ranged), burning clothes/hair cause 1 pt burns/instant in that location	
2	.Insulate	gives protection against all fire and heat for 2 minutes	
3	.Burnthru	sets combustibles afire, non-combustibles 1d6/2 pts burns or damage (use hit location if ranged)	
3	.Fireproof	gives complete protection from all fire and heat for 1 day, on non-living objects only	
<b>Metal Spells</b>		<i>pure element - Mithrill</i>	<i>reflection - silver</i>
1	.Shield	adds protection, -3 pts from metal weapon hit, -1 pt from any other weapon material hit, spell lasts 2 minutes	
1	.Temper	doubles breakage number, lasts 2 minutes, cancelled by shatter (metal)	
1	.Excise	removes item embedded in body of character, without any injury effects	
2	.Keenness	adds two (+2) to damage by cut (C) or thrust (T) metal weapon, lasts 2 minutes	
2	.Shatter	shatters metal object into 2d6 fragments, cancelled by temper (metal)	
3	.Bendback	turns metal object against owner for 2 minutes	
3	.Transmute	turn one metal into another, 1d6 for time, 1=1 sec, 2=1 min, 3=1 hr, 4=1 day, 5=1 yr, 6=forever (+1 per extra node)	
<b>Crystal Spells</b>		<i>pure element - Silima</i>	<i>reflection - diamond</i>
1	.Gemfind	direction and vague distance to nearest precious gem	
1	.Reality Reflection	conceals existence or use of magic for 2 minutes	
1	.Keepwarm	protects against normal cold for 1 day	
1	.Salve	heals all burns but 1 point on any one body location, caster must contact location	
2	.Chill	suffer cold for 2 minutes, agility, quickness, and weapon speed halved, cancelled by keepwarm (crystal)	
2	.Clarity	see through illusions of equal or lower power (in terms of nodal strength)	
3	.Frostbite	point frozen for 2 minutes, only suffer half damage during this time, then thaw and suffer 1d6 points smash damage	
3	.Vision	see up to one league, or beyond to a known location, for up to 2 minutes	
<b>Water Spells</b>		<i>pure element - Veraqua</i>	<i>reflection - springwater</i>
1	.Quench	provides all water for 1 day while quenching all thirst, repairs any dehydration	
1	.Purify	removes poisons and toxins from item or body	
1	.Gills	allows normal breathing and speech while under water, lasts 2 minutes	
2	.Current	water flow of 1 league per hour (6 paces per instant, 30 (1½) per period, or approximately 2½ mph)	
2	.Slipslide	target character must pass agility test to stand, another to move, each instant, lasts 2 minutes	
3	.Choke	target chokes for 1 period (20 seconds), rendered totally helpless and mentally unable, second will kill (test vs. swimming)	
3	.Flow	turn to semi-liquid and move as water, lasts 2 minutes	
<b>Wood Spells</b>		<i>pure element - Druidheart</i>	<i>reflection - oak</i>
1	.Heartoak	doubles breakage number, lasts 2 minutes, cancelled by chop	
1	.Warp	deflects path of wooden object, -30 to weapon use skill, lasts 2 minutes	
1	.Splint	heals all but one wound point of smash on any one body location, can be used on living tree also	
2	.Woodgrow	joins permanently two wooden parts, if joining wood to non-wood it only holds for 2 minutes	
2	.Chop	cuts wooden object along one line/plane, cancelled by heartoak	
3	.Bonebreak	shatters bones on target location, damage is mass/3 wound points	
3	.Trow	seals pledge (4-node unique trow can be reversed only by original caster)	
<b>Wind Spells</b>		<i>pure element - Magzul</i>	<i>reflection - west wind</i>
1	.Eavesdrop	hear anything in sight, for 2 minutes	
1	.Refresh	counteracts all exhaustion, +4 strength, can carry 4 extra items, lasts 2 minutes, no exhaustion afterwards	
1	.Resuscitate	restores breathing, counteracts choke (water) spell or drowning, etc.	
2	.Longspeech	project voice in any one direction, up to maximum vision range, for 2 minutes	
2	.Breeze	moderate wind, flying speed either 50% or 150% normal, fall at half speed (-1 per die roll in falling damage)	
2	.Eyedust	covers area 6 paces square, 1 story tall, halves weapon speed and use in area, agility test for other acts, lasts 2 minutes	
3	.Fear	flee unless pass intelligence test each period (combat) or each minute (non-combat), lasts 2 minutes	
3	.Soar	'fly' (move on air) at double the normal ground rate, lasts 15 minutes (¼ hour)	
<b>Light and Darkness Spells</b>		<i>pure element - Sundrop/Pitchblack</i>	<i>reflection - sunlight/deep shadow</i>
1	.Flash/Blackflash	blinds outward for 6 paces, 2 instants facing toward, 1 instant facing away (avoid by agility and intelligence test)	
1	.Shadow	conceals one character already in natural shadow, lasts 2 minutes	
1	.Cure	removes all diseases from character (including infections), does not cure wounds inflicted by that disease	
2	.Blindeye	total blindness on character for 1 minute	
2	.Heavyweight	doubles mass and weight (character's mass is doubled, agility halved), lasts 1 hour, cancelled by lightweight	
3	.Lightweight	halves mass and weight (character mass halved, agility +1), lasts 1 hour, cancelled by heavyweight	
3	.Immune	total immunity to all diseases for 1 day (no effect on diseases already contracted)	

# 11. Spirit Magic

## 11.1 Introduction

**Warning:** Spirit Magic is an advanced and powerful level of magic. Knowledge of elemental magic by the players is presumed. Many of the general concepts in elemental magic also apply to spirit magic. However, *Swordbearer* uses a highly 'rational' and logical magic system which can seem very complex. Players are MOST STRONGLY urged to play a few adventures with just elemental magic, before any spirit magic appears. Gamemasters with beginning players will normally prohibit initial experience use for acquiring spirit magic skills. As a result, players can only learn spirit magic during or between adventures, and then only if the right teachers and/or books are found.

Novice gamers are encouraged to pass over spirit magic until after their first few adventures, and to attempt spirit magic only after they understand how elemental magic functions.

**Magic Similarities:** Spirit magic has many similarities to elemental magic, although some are superficial. First, both types use 'nodes' that can be 'seen' only by the mind, and used only by mental effort — and then, only by minds with the proper training (skills). In elemental magic, there are seven 'elements,' while in spirit magic there are four 'humors'. Unlike elemental magic, spirit nodes are either 'alive' (within a living character) or 'dead' (released when a character dies). A character when living may have two or more nodes, always of the same humor, within him or her. When a character dies, these convert into an equal number of 'dead' nodes. Many animals and unintelligent monsters, and a few special plants, have spirit nodes in them (although sometimes only one node, and sometimes a variable number, or only a chance of a node being present). As in elemental magic, any interruption of mental concentration (including combat hits) stops the use of spirit magic.

Living spirit nodes within a character can be 'bound' with an elemental node, to give the character's own body the ability to cast elemental spells, as if the body itself was enchanted.

Dead spirit nodes, if contacted and contained properly, will carry within them a spirit magic spell. A special and lengthy Rite is needed to discover the spell. Once discovered, the node with its spell can be temporarily aligned to a living spirit for a casting of the spell (alignment and casting are one continuous procedure, unlike elemental magic where it is two separate procedures). Alternatively, some dead spirit spells can be permanently 'bound' into a living spirit, giving the living character special magic properties.

Details on all these procedures and the various restrictions involved are given in the following sections of the chapter.

## 11.2 Living Spirit Nodes

Characters, including many unintelligent animals or monsters, and a few rare plants, have living spirit nodes in them. The nodes are usually

located in a specific place within the body (which becomes the container for the nodes when they and the character die). Typical humans have three spirit nodes in their heart. All the nodes within a character will belong to one of the four 'humors' (Vitriolic, Phlegmatic, Choleric, or Melancholic). The nodes are insubstantial, and can only be discovered and manipulated by skills of the mind.

**Using Living Spirit Nodes:** Each spirit node in a character can be used for one specific purpose or spell. Different nodes can be used for different purposes simultaneously, provided the character's mind is still concentrating on one at a time. One node cannot be used for more than one purpose at a time, and thus the number of nodes 'free' often determines the number of spells available, and/or the chance of success.

**Loss of Spirit Nodes:** A character may temporarily lose a spirit node because the node is 'exhausted' by working some type of spirit magic. A node automatically recovers from exhaustion when the character has a good rest (at least 6 hours of sleep). Sometimes a node is permanently lost (destroyed) or stolen; this loss cannot be corrected by any means except a Restore Spirit (melancholic) spirit spell.

For each node a character has lost (temporarily or permanently) mass, strength, intelligence and agility are all reduced by one. In addition, each skill is reduced by ten (-10). If a character's mass drops below zero (to a negative number) he or she dies. If strength or agility drops below zero, the character is unable to move or perform bodily functions, but is still alive (barely). If intelligence drops below zero, the character temporarily becomes a mindless vegetable (mind stops functioning), but no permanent damage will result (if and when the nodes are recovered, intelligence can rise again). Skills that drop below zero are simply considered at zero instead. The skill can still be used (although failure will be automatic), in the hopes that luck or adventure experience will eventually rebuild it. When a lost node is returned to a character, reduced characteristics and skill are restored to their normal level (add back the amount previously reduced).



**Lack of Spirit:** If a character loses all his or her spirit nodes, in addition to the above effects, he or she also loses all direction, purpose, and ability to look toward a future. The character simply lives from day-to-day, trying to satisfy immediate wants and needs only. The character cannot plan in advance, will forget all ulterior objects or goals, and generally acquires a distracted and somewhat vacant attitude.

**Death of a Character:** When a character dies, his or her spirit nodes also die (at the same instant), and are released as 'dead' nodes. A character without any spirit nodes will not release any dead nodes when he or she dies.

Spirit nodes reside in a specific part of the body. If this body part is cut away and removed, or destroyed, the spirit nodes are all lost, causing the character to suffer from 'lack of spirit' above. In many cases, the node is within some vital part of the body (such as the brain, heart, etc.) that will cause death if removed or destroyed.

### 11.3 Spirit Humors & Skills

The ability to identify spirit nodes and understand how to operate the spell of spirit magic are special skills. Spirit nodes are grouped into four classes called 'humors'. The knowledge of each is a separate skill. Knowledge of a humor gives both the ability to identify nodes and knowledge of the spells for that humor (unlike elemental magic, where identification and spell knowledge are separate skills). All spirit magic skills are part of the magic sphere.

In addition, before a character can learn or use any spirit magic, he or she must first learn the skill of 'spiritual knowledge.' This skill has little direct benefit, but is required before any 'humor' skills can be learned.

No spirit skills (including spiritual knowledge) may be gained by initial experience in character generation unless the gamemaster specifically allows such. The individual skills are described below:

#### Spiritual Knowledge: (yes/no)

Learning this skill is necessary before a character can learn any other spirit magic skills. Knowledge of this skill reveals to a character to which humor his own spirit nodes belong, and permits understanding of any writings on spiritual matters if written in a language the character can read. The skill can be learned from books, scrolls, etc., and/or a teacher, like any magic skill. Anyone possessing this skill is known as a Spiritualist (or, if you prefer, a Spirit Master).

#### Vitriolic Humor: (yes/no)

The ability to identify vitriolic nodes, and knowledge of how vitriolic spells function. This humor is associated with the color red, and denotes a lively, active, even passionate attitude. Vitriolic spirits are life-oriented, extending at times to the truths (and falsities) of life.

#### Phlegmatic Humor: (yes/no)

The ability to identify phlegmatic nodes, and knowledge of how phlegmatic spells function. This humor is associated with the colors green or blue, and denotes a slow, dull, or sluggish attitude, often with great inertia and solidity. Phlegmatic spirits are associated with strength, solidity, and resistance to change or activity.

#### Choleric Humor: (yes/no)

The ability to identify choleric nodes, and knowledge of how choleric spells function. This humor is associated with the color yellow, and denotes an angry, irritable, even unstable attitude. Choleric spirits are often hostile, and are used to enhance power and activity over physical, mental, and/or insubstantial aspects of the world.

#### Melancholic Humor: (yes/no)

The ability to identify melancholic nodes, and knowledge of how melancholic spells function. This humor is associated with the color black and is sometimes known as the 'necronomic humor'. It is associated with gloom, depression, even death. Melancholic spirits deal with life and death, and to some extent the metaphysics beyond both.

*Note:* Although specific systems for determining the type of humor in each character are provided, the gamemaster may require that certain characters have certain humors, if he feels the personality or style of a character strongly matches a specific humor. Most characters have aspects of each humor, and thus could have a spirit of any type. Additionally, the gamemaster may change the probabilities of human types found in various races, animals or plants.

### 11.4 Dead Spirits

The instant a character dies, each of his/her living spirits also dies. During the instant of death the freshly dead spirits are released from the body. Unless they are identified and contact starts immediately (in

the same period), the released dead spirits leave all known planes and disappear forever.

Using procedures for identifying, contacting, and containing dead spirits, a character can keep them available and use them for various types of spirit magic. The gamemaster should bear in mind that dead spirits will automatically disappear if containment is broken, and often disappear as the result of various spirit magic spell effects.

### 11.5 Identifying Spirits

**Live Spirits:** When a character gains the spiritual knowledge skill, he learns to identify and contact his own spirit. This includes learning the humor of that spirit. A character with spiritual knowledge and skill in the appropriate humor can identify the spirit nodes (both quantity and humor) in another character, but this takes a minute of concentration. This is normally part of contact or alignment of special spirit spells.

**Dead Spirits:** A character must have spiritual knowledge skill, and skill in the appropriate humor, to identify when a live spirit is dying, and when it finally dies. Dead spirits within containers can also be identified.

**Range of Identification:** A character with 'spiritual knowledge' skill can sense the existence of living spirits (but not the number of nodes) in any character, animal or plant within normal eyesight. If the character, animal or plant is not within sight, spiritual nodes cannot be sensed. However, magical devices can be used to extend normal eyesight (such as the crystal spell Vision).

### 11.6 Dead Nodes

#### 11.6.1 CONTACTING DEAD NODES

When a character identifies that a spirit is dying, he or she may attempt contact with the spirit node(s) during the period following the instant of death. If contact is not made during the period directly following death, the dead nodes disappear and are gone forever.

**Contact Procedure:** To attempt contact, the character must be touching the dying or dead body. The spiritualist goes into a trance-like state of total mental concentration that lasts 1d6 x 10 minutes (10 to 60 minutes). This time is reduced to 1d6 x 10 seconds (10 to 60 seconds) if the dying character voluntarily offers his or her spirit (see below). If the character is interrupted in any way during this period, the contact automatically fails. At the end of the time period, contact success or failure is determined. If successful, the character may place the contacted node in a container (the container can be prepared as part of the contact procedure, see Containing Dead Nodes, below). If a failure, the node is lost and the character is unaffected (except that he or she wasted all that time).

If a character gains possession of a container with a dead node inside (by gift, purchase, theft, etc.), he or she can attempt contact, just like contacting nodes in a dead body.

The number of dying nodes within the dead body does not affect the contact time, but success or failure is determined separately for each node. Therefore, if a dying body or container had multiple nodes, it is likely that the contact will be successful with some, but fail with others.

**Contact Success & Failure:** The chance of success varies depending on whether the character, when dying, voluntarily offers his or her spirit to the character trying to contact the dying nodes. A voluntary offering is possible only if the character has intelligence, and deliberately states (or thinks, if unable to talk) as his/her dying wish that the spirit nodes be given to the character trying to make contact. A character who dies mindless, distracted, etc., cannot offer his/her spirit node. Even if the spirit is not voluntarily offered, there is still a chance of success. Success also depends on the intelligence of the character trying to make contact. The percentage chance for success is:

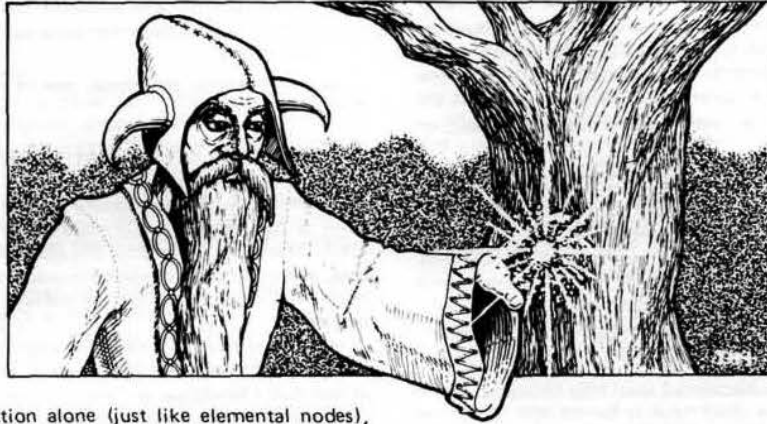
voluntary offering of spirit: . . . . . 20 + spiritualist's intelligence =  
% chance of success

any other situations: . . . . . intelligence of spiritualist =  
% chance of success

#### 11.6.2 CONTAINING DEAD NODES

When a dead spirit node is contacted, it must be contained immediately or lost. The proper containers is the part of that race's body where the spirit resided while living. For example, human spirit nodes (when living) are in the heart, so a human heart will provide a container for any human spirit nodes. Maneuvering the spirit into the container is part of the contact process and takes no additional time. Contact may also include taking the container from the dead body if a container is not already available. Contacting a spirit node already in a container entails no extra work, since the node is already within a container.

**Moving Spirit Nodes:** Spirit nodes, once in a container, can be moved by carrying the container. Spirit nodes can be moved very small



distances by mental concentration alone (just like elemental nodes), and thus transferred from one container to another.

**Container Restrictions:** Only spirit nodes of the same race and humor may be within the same container. For example, a human heart holding a human choleric spirit node could hold only other human choleric nodes. If nodes of different humors or races are maneuvered into the same container, it will break instantly with all the nodes being lost.

**Preserving the Container:** Most containers for spirit nodes are flesh of a body, and thus apt to decay over a period of days or weeks. When the flesh decays far enough to fall apart (or any container is broken), the node is released (and lost). Successful use of doctor/druggist skill with easily obtained materials allows one to preserve a flesh container, using embalming techniques. Some body materials, such as horn or bone, decay slowly or not at all in certain climates. This is left to the discretion of the gamemaster.

**Elemental Containers:** A container for an elemental node, with at least one unaligned elemental node within, also may be used to hold dead spirit nodes. This is done during contact with the dead spirit, with the extra step of aligning any one elemental node to the spirit node. The spirit node becomes contained within the elemental node if the alignment is successful, and the elemental node can be held in a normal container (for that elemental node). An elemental node containing a spirit cannot be aligned to any elemental spell. Different elemental nodes can contain different spirit nodes (including different races or humors), and all can survive within the same container for elemental nodes. This is because the elemental node contains the spirit, not the elemental container. If the elemental node is lost, the spirit node is also lost. Obviously, this technique can be used only by a character who has knowledge of some elemental magic. It is a very useful way of carrying spirit nodes.

### 11.7 Spirit Spells in Spirit Nodes: Discovery

Each dead spirit node has within it one type of spirit magic spell (or 'spiritual function'). This can be discovered by a special rite. Once a character performs this rite, he or she can use the node for an alignment spell-casting, or to bind the spell into a character (including himself/herself). If the dead spirit node is given or taken by another character, that character must perform his or her own rite of discovery to learn the spell in that node (although the spell will remain the same). Each character must perform the rite because the rite includes a deep mental contact with the node and its spell. Without this deep contact the character cannot truly tap the magic of the node.

**The Rite of Discovery:** This takes an entire day, during which the character can perform no other actions or activities, and cannot be distracted. The character must be able to touch the container frequently throughout the rite. The character must have skill in spiritual knowledge and know the dead node's humor even to attempt the rite.

At the end of the day and the rite, success or failure is determined by the character making an intelligence test. The 2d10 roll used in the test may have extra amounts added. Different situations that add are listed below. Use all that apply:

- +1. . . . . character performing rite knows all five spirit magic skills
- +1. . . character performing rite successfully uses Doctor/Druggist skill
- +1. . . . . character performing rite successfully uses any one of the following skills (may try more than one, to get one success);  
Jeweler, Pottery/Glassblowing, Artist, Musician, Dancing

The term character in the list of adds above includes not only the character performing the rite, but any assistants or helpers in his/her retinue who also spend the entire day aiding in the rite. Only retinue members can aid in the rite. Since considerable practice is required be-

fore one can be of any real use, someone hired for the day or encountered by a chance meeting will not have sufficient experience.

**Successful Rite:** If the rite of discovery is successful (intelligence test is passed), an appropriate die roll is made to see which spell is within the dead spirit node (or the gamemaster may simply indicate the spell, because a previous rite has already determined the nature of the spell). The character performing the rite is told the spell.

**Failed Rite:** If the rite of discovery is a failure (intelligence test is not passed), there is a 50% chance the spirit node is lost as a result. If the spirit node is not lost, the character could try the rite over again some other day. There is no risk to the living spirit nodes within the characters involved in the rite; only the dead spirit node is at risk during the rite, and then only in the event of failure.

**Living Nodes:** No rite of discovery is possible using living spirit nodes. As a result, it is impossible to determine what type of spell may be 'within' a living node. The node must die before a rite of discovery is possible.

### 11.8 Spirit Spells: Alignment Spell-Casting

Dead spirit nodes whose spells are discovered may be 'aligned' temporarily with a character's personal living spirit node(s) to permit casting a spell. Unlike elemental magic, alignment of dead to living spirit nodes is strictly temporary. It only will last for an instant if alignment is successful, so during that instant the spell must be cast. In effect, alignment and casting are all one procedure in spirit magic. Each time a spirit spell is cast it must be aligned to the user. Alignment is never permanent.

**Alignment Procedure:** It takes one (1) full minute to align a dead spirit with discovered spell to a caster's own living spirit node or nodes (three periods, or 15 instants). Alignment always takes this long, regardless of previous successes or failures. The aligner must know where the dead spirit node is located, either by having it in contact, in sight, or at a further location exactly and precisely remembered (as with elemental nodes). The aligner may use one or more of his/her own living nodes (not otherwise bound or in use) in the alignment. The more living nodes the aligner uses, the better the chance of alignment. To determine the chance for success in an alignment, use the following formula:

$$20n + \text{Intelligence} = \text{success \% (maximum is 99\%)}$$

Where 'n' is the number of living nodes a character uses in the attempt. In other words, success percentage is 20% per living node, plus the aligner's intelligence as a bonus. As always, a d100 roll is made, with the percentage number or less meaning success. The type of dead node has no effect on success.

An alignment attempt is only possible if a character has already performed a rite of discovery for the dead spirit node involved, has spiritual knowledge skill, skill in the dead spirit's humor, and skill in his/her own living spirit's humor. Dead and living spirit humors need not match (a melancholic humored character could align and cast a choleric dead node/spell).

No more than one alignment is possible at a time. One alignment must be finished before another is started. This is because the minute for alignment, followed by the instant of spell casting itself, requires the complete and total mental concentration of the character.

**Successful Alignment — Spell Casting:** If the alignment is successful, the dead node's spell is cast. The aligner decides how and where the spell is cast. Normally, spells can be cast at anything the aligner can see or knows the exact position of, as in elemental spell casting. If the aligner/caster is uncertain about the location, the gamemaster may allow casting with only a percentage chance that it succeeds in hitting the intended target (i.e., if the aligner/caster is 80% sure a character is be-

hind the wall and leaning against it, then the spell will have an 80% chance of hitting that character, the other 20% of the time landing off target with no effect). This is similar to elemental spell casting.

**Alignment Failure:** If the alignment fails, no spell may be cast. The caster may attempt alignment and casting again in the future, but exhaustion from alignment (see below) may require him/her to wait, or use different living nodes.

**Exhaustion from Alignment:** Any alignment attempt, success or failure, normally results in temporary exhaustion of the aligner's living spirit nodes used in the attempt. Only those nodes actually used in the alignment attempt are exhausted. Exhaustion lasts until the character has a good rest (see Living Spirit Nodes, loss of spirit nodes).

## 11.9 Binding

### 11.9.1 BINDING DEAD & LIVING SPIRITS

A dead spirit node with a rite-discovered spell may be bound into a character's living spirit node. One dead node is bound into one living node. Most spells have a special effect when 'bound' into a living node (as opposed to just aligned to a living node). The character into whom the dead node is bound acquires special 'bound' magical properties of the spell. Binding lasts until the living node dies, is taken or destroyed, or a deliberate breaking is successful. In all cases, when the binding is undone in any way, the dead spirit node (with its spell) is permanently lost.

**Requirements:** To perform a binding, a character must have a dead spirit node (wherein he discovered the spell through the rite of discovery, see Discovery above). The character must also have skill in spiritual knowledge, in the humor of the dead node, and in the humor of the living node to which it will be bound. A character may perform a binding on another, instead of himself or herself. However, the other character must allow the binder complete and total mental control, either voluntarily or due to the effect of a Charm spell (Choleric humor), for the entire period of the binding procedure. In this case the binder must understand (have skill in) both his own living spirit humor and the humor of the other character (if they are different).

**Procedure:** An entire day is needed to perform a binding. The container with the dead spirit must be touched frequently to the body of the living spirit throughout the period. The character(s) involved cannot be disturbed or distracted in any way. At the end of the day, the binding is complete. Complete bindings are always successful, but the character to whom the dead spirit is bound may suffer adverse effects (see below). These adverse effects are permanent changes to the character and cannot be 'cured' by any known magic, nor do they disappear if the binding is broken. If the permanent effect kills the character, renders him or her mindless or helpless, etc., it's tough luck — binding dead to living spirits can be dangerous!

**Using Bound Spells:** Bound spells normally are used only by the character in which they are bound, at any target within range (if active), or on the character himself/herself (if passive). Each time the spell is used there is a 1% chance the living spirit node (in which the dead node and spell are bound) will be lost permanently.

**Adverse Effects of Binding:** Roll 1d6 and consult the list below. Only the character whose spirit is bound is affected.

1 - *No Effect:* Character survives the binding without any adverse effects.

2, 3 or 4 - *Spiritual Weakness:* Character's spirit node that was bound is temporarily exhausted. The character suffers the effect of an exhausted node. In addition, the magic bound into the node cannot be used until the character recovers from the exhaustion. Roll 2d6 for the number of days the exhaustion remains in effect, with a roll of exactly '12' indicating it remains in effect for an entire month of 30 days.

5 - *Body Transformation:* One location on the body suffers serious disablement. See Wounds chapter for how to determine specific location and serious disablement tables for exact result. In addition to being rendered permanently disabled, the gamemaster may rule (about 20% of the time is recommended) that it transforms into a grotesque shape also, often as if the body part belonged to another creature. However, the part is still not functional, regardless of its appearance. As a result, a character with a dead spirit bound into him or her has a chance of finding himself or herself locked into a new and more hideous aspect!

6 - *Characteristics Change:* One basic characteristic of the character is altered. Roll 1d10 to determine which characteristic is affected and how:

- 1,2 - character's mass is permanently reduced by a 1d6 roll.
- 3,4 - character's strength is permanently reduced by a 1d6 roll.
- 5,6 - character's intelligence is permanently reduced by a 1d6 roll.
- 7,8 - character's agility is permanently reduced by a 1d6 roll.
- 9,10 - character's age is permanently increased by a 2d6 roll, with any

characteristic reduction due to aging determined immediately, but no additional experience gained from this aging (it happens too fast!).

**Note:** Character reductions due to the above effects will also affect skills.

### 11.9.2 BINDING ELEMENTAL NODES & LIVING SPIRITS

An elemental node may be bound into a living spirit node, much like a dead spirit node is bound into a living node. This allows the character to cast the elemental node's spell from his or her body on an instant. There is a 1% chance the elemental node will be consumed when cast, and no chance of the spirit node being consumed. The living spirit becomes the container for the elemental node. No special container is needed.

**Requirements:** To perform this binding the character binds an aligned elemental node to himself or herself. The binding requires skill in spiritual knowledge and his/her own humor. In addition, the elemental node must be aligned to a specific spell, requiring knowledge of that element's spells. Both alignments must be done at the same time (elemental node to spell, and elemental node to spirit node).

**Procedure:** The binding procedure is the same as binding dead nodes into living spirits. The binding takes an entire day. Although binding will be successful, the overall procedure is successful only if the elemental node alignment to spell is also successful. This can be difficult, since for purposes of determining alignment success, the elemental node counts double its normal power (thus making the alignment harder).

If the elemental alignment fails, any adverse binding effects on the character occur. The elemental node is lost and the living spirit node is still free.

**Type of Elemental Spells:** Only an elemental cast spell may be bound into a character. Enchantments cannot be bound into a living spirit node.

### 11.9.3 BOUND NODE MAGICS IN BATTLE

A living spirit node with either spirit magic (from a dead spirit node) or elemental magic (from an elemental node) can cast spells in battle. The casting takes one instant, with the weapons speed equalling the combat quickness of the character. Elemental node 'chains' cannot be bound into spirits (since no more than one node can be bound into one spirit node), but even the elemental node benefits from combat quickness as weapon speed (instead of using zero speed — the normal for magic cast without a chain to increase speed).

### 11.9.4 BREAKING BOUND NODES

A living spirit node, with either spirit or elemental magic bound into it, may have the magic 'broken' out again. If successful, the living spirit node is freed from the binding (and thus can be bound to some other node, used for alignments or simply left free). If the breaking fails, the living spirit node is destroyed. In either success or failure, the dead spirit or elemental magic node bound is destroyed and lost. Thus breaking will always free a character, but may cost him or her the living spirit node in the process.

To break a binding, the character attempting the breaking must have spiritual knowledge skill. In addition, he/she must have knowledge of the living spirit's humor (skill in that humor). If breaking a dead node, he/she must have skill in the dead node's humor; if breaking an elemental node, he/she must have the skill to both identify and know spells for that element. As with the Rite of Discovery, members of the spiritualists retinue can participate in the breaking of a binding. Breaking takes one (1) day of total concentration from all involved.

Success in saving the living spirit node, when breaking a binding, is determined by this equation:

$$10n + \text{intelligence of bound character} = \% \text{ chance of success} \\ (\text{maximum is } 99\%)$$

Where 'n' is the number of free (unbound) living spirit nodes used by all characters combined in the breaking attempt. If additional characters are involved, they must remain together with the bound character throughout the day. The other characters must have spiritual knowledge skill to participate. Just as with binding dead and living spirits, the character who is to have a bound node broken must perform the act himself or herself, possibly with the help of others, or must allow the person in charge of the breaking complete and total mental control, either voluntarily, or due to the effect of a Charm spell (choleric humor) or similar involuntary but complete control.

All characters involved in a breaking, regardless of success or failure, will have their living spirit nodes (those used) exhausted for 1d6 days after the breaking. This also applies to the character whose living spirit binding was broken, including the unbound node (if it was saved). The

'1d6' days roll is made separately for each character, but applies to all spirit nodes used by that character.

### 11.10 Control of Spirit Entities

Some spirit magic spells allow a caster to 'conjure' up quasi-living things such as elementals, poltergeists, ghosts, zombies, or skeletons. These spiritual entities may be under control automatically, or an intelligence test may be needed at the start of each period (20 seconds) to control them, depending on the type of entity conjured. Control requires complete mental concentration by the caster. Concentration is disrupted if the caster attempts to do something else or is hit (even if not wounded).

The controlled entities can be given only one order at a time. If they have high intelligence they might understand provisional orders ('do this if . . . .') with multiple options. When the first order is completed, a new order can be given, if the entity is still under control. Instead of a

sequence of specific orders, an entity can be given one permanent order, such as to guard a room, tomb, object, etc. Unless the spell has provisions to regain control after it is lost, the entity will obey such orders forever. For example, choleric entities such as the elemental, poltergeist, or ghost cannot be put back under control, once the control is relinquished. Melancholic entities such as a zombie or skeleton do allow a regaining of control if the entity is brought back into sight.

The words used to instruct entities must be clear, precise, and specific. These entities have a habit of misinterpreting orders. Due to the 'law of perversity' in magic, they may end up doing the opposite of what the controller intended — just because he or she wasn't careful in giving those instructions. In cases where intelligence tests are needed every period (20 seconds), after a time for the player to prepare and ponder, the gamemaster should actually time the instructions issued, and allow only 20 seconds worth of instructions to be given, or some similar device to represent real-life limitations.

#### Example of Spirit Magic

Wesp the sorceress finds a sage to teach her spiritual knowledge and the spells for the four humors. A few years later, she is ready to attempt her first spirit node contacts, containments, and spells. Wesp knows she is a vitriolic human with three nodes in her heart, but her own humor will have no effect on the basic work she is planning at the moment.

First, she goes to the local market and buys a cage of a dozen hawks. Each hawk (see Animals chapter) has a 50% chance of a spirit node in its beak. She carefully kills the first hawk, rolls d100, and gets 71, meaning it has no spirit node. However, she removes and cleans the beak. It will serve as a container for any nodes she does find in the remaining hawks. She then goes to the next hawk and kills it, rolls a 33, and finds a spirit node. It is just one node, and is choleric humor.

Now Wesp must attempt contact with the node. She goes into the trance and rolls a '4' (for the 1d6 x 10 minutes computation), meaning the trance lasts 40 minutes. When this time is elapsed, she uses her intelligence as the chance of success in contact, as the hawk certainly didn't volunteer its spirit! Wesp's intelligence is 12, so she has only a 12% chance of successful contact. She rolls an 02, and is successful — a stroke of very good luck. She now mentally maneuvers the spirit node into the dead hawk's beak. The node is now contained.

Wesp plans to spend the entire following day in a Rite of Discovery. She has been studying the last few years, and is still rather poor, with no retinue to aid her in the rite. However, her teacher is still nearby and volunteers to help his pupil. The teacher is both a skilled Doctor/Druggist and a skilled Musician.

Wesp performs the rite as planned. Her teacher tests both his

Doctor/Druggist and Musician skills. He succeeds in the former, but fails in the latter. At the end of the day, Wesp makes the intelligence test to determine success. She adds one to her roll for knowing all five spirit magic skills, and adds another because an involved character used Doctor/Druggist skill successfully. Wesp rolls a '10' (on 2d10), adds her intelligence of 12, and the 2 bonus points, for a total of 24, just enough to pass a normal intelligence test. The Rite of Discovery was successful. Now she makes a 1d6 roll to see which spell she discovered in the node. The roll is a '4', which means Charm for the choleric humor.

Charm can only be alignment-cast; it cannot be bound into one of Wesp's own spirit nodes. Although Wesp has no immediate need to cast a charm spell, she reviews the mechanisms for alignment-casting, so she will be familiar with the technique if a situation does occur.

Alignment-casting takes one minute and requires her to know the location of the hawk's beak with the node (she plans to carry it on her person). She plans to use all three of her own spirit nodes in the casting. The success equation is  $20n + \text{intelligence} = \text{success \%}$ , where  $n$  is the number of her own nodes used, or three in this case. Wesp's intelligence is 12, so the equation would become  $20 \times 3 + 12$ , or  $60 + 12$ , or 72% chance of success. However, whether she succeeds or fails, the attempt will exhaust all three of her spirit nodes until she has a night's rest. The exhaustion of all three nodes means a -3 to her mass, strength, intelligence and agility, and a -30 to all her skills (reducing many to zero). None of her basic characteristics are reduced to zero by this, so it is safe, if debilitating, to alignment-cast this spell. Wesp decides she will reserve Charm only for very important occasions, since once all three nodes are exhausted, her mass of 4 becomes 1, and thus any wound will kill her!

### 11.11 Spells of the Vitriolic Humor

When a Rite of Discovery is performed on a dead spirit node of this humor, roll 1d6 to determine the spell within the node: 1-Illusion, 2-Familiar, 3-Were-Creature, 4-Resurrection, 5-Energy, 6-Restore Spirit. These are described below:

#### (1) Illusion

This spell can be alignment-cast or bound into a character's spirit.

**Alignment-cast Illusion:** When successfully cast, the caster creates an illusion at any point within range. See illusion functions below for the effects possible.

**Binding Illusion:** The character with this spell bound to him/her may take the form of an illusion — the normal appearance of the body is replaced by the illusion, which even if not convincing, will obscure the normal appearance. Since the illusion closely surrounds the real body, any combat magic effects on the illusion actually take effect on the real body of the character too, even though the illusion might not show this. If a character demands an illusion from a bound dead spirit node, when the illusion ends (see below) the bound living node is exhausted until a normal sleep (6+hrs) is finished.

**Effects of an Illusion:** An illusion can be any character or object the creator can think of, including any race, animal, or monster. The creator describes what the illusion does, and what effects occur against it, and controls it like a character. An alignment-cast illusion must be kept in sight. If the illusion gets beyond sight, it goes out of control, and the gamemaster decides what it will do, based upon the nature of the illusion. Illusions are trans-dimensional entities with a tenuous link to this world, mainly through the mind, and there is great debate whether they are actually 'living' or 'real' somewhere else or not (the game-

master may adjust effects accordingly!).

An Illusion lasts for a specific period of time, after which it disappears. Roll 1d6 to determine time:

1-one period (20 sec.), 2-one minute, 3-30 minutes, 4-one hour, 5-six hours, 6-one day (24 hours).

An illusion is rated for its 'strength' when created. Illusionary strength is a 2d10 roll plus the character's intelligence. Whenever any other character encounters the illusion, he/she rolls 2d10 and adds his/her intelligence, which represents perception of an illusion:

**Perception exceeds Strength** — illusion is not convincing, has no substance, character may ignore it, sees it as a semi-real mist just a trifle too thick to see through; character can determine what the illusion was supposed to be.

**Perception equal to or less than strength** — illusion is visually convincing at a distance, is believed to be real. However, touch, taste and smell senses are not deceived, so at contact the illusion becomes unconvincing. The illusion cannot project any objects or power that will convince this character either, and thus cannot harm the character.

**Perception half or less than strength** — illusion is physically convincing (instead of just visually convincing). A character believes it entirely real, and the illusion can act on or harm the character as if it were real; effects of any actions by the illusion remain to the character even after the illusion disappears. Of course, the illusion can be harmed like the real thing, and perhaps even killed (even if alignment-cast). The illusion is, for all purposes, 'real' in this case (exception: if a binding illusion, the illusion takes any harm normally, and the harm also goes 'through' to take effect on the 'real' character within, as if it had hit that character directly; depending on armor, etc., the results may be greater or lesser than the effect on the illusion).



Perception of illusions will vary from character to character. However, even if one has superior perception, the other still must act and suffer based on their own perceptions. Although they can make decisions based on information provided them, the actual results of their actions (including the ability to harm, and be harmed) still depends on their own perceptions. An illusion does not end just because a character perceives it as an illusion. Some spells (e.g., clarity) permit a character to perceive an illusion without requiring the perception roll.

### (2) Familiar

This spell can only be bound into a character's spirit. The binding also requires a living animal or monster without intelligence, but with a living spirit. The animal/monster must be kept quiet during the binding (either because it is domesticated, or from successful use of Doctor/Druggist skill), but the animal (or monster) must remain alive. When the binding is finished, the animal is now the character's familiar.

A familiar has a 'mental link' to the character. With an instant's concentration, the character can command a familiar to do anything (even if suicidal). The familiar is completely loyal, and cannot be bound to anyone else. These commands do not entail a chance of node exhaustion — they are 'free' and automatic.

In addition, a character may use the mental link to actually move his/her intelligence into the mind of the familiar, or from the familiar back to his/her own body. Each time intelligence is moved, there is a 1% chance afterward of permanently exhausting the bound spirit node (both living and dead). Intelligence can move any distance. When intelligence leaves the character's original body, the body collapses and appears to be dead (but isn't). Meanwhile, the familiar acquires the full intelligence of the character, including the ability to speak (although lack of proper mouth and voice structure may cause slurring, etc.). The familiar can use the character's skills, insofar as it has a body for proper manipulation (where necessary). When intelligence is moved back to the character's body, it returns to life on that instant, and the familiar reverts to its normal role. Intelligence transfer takes only one instant.

If the familiar is wounded or killed, the character will feel the pain, but won't suffer any actual injury. If the character is in the familiar's mind at the time of death, the character's intelligence automatically returns to his/her own body. Even if the familiar dies, the living spirit is still bound, and can only be freed by successfully breaking the original binding.

If the character is killed, the familiar dies at the same instant — even if the character's intelligence is currently in the mind of the familiar. When the character's intelligence is in the familiar, normal bodily functions of the character halt, but damage points from wounds still accumulate, and can result in normal death (however, suffocation will not kill the character, because the body doesn't need to breathe — it is in a form of 'suspended animation').

### (3) Were-creature

This spell can only be bound into a character's spirit. The binding requires that an animal or monster with a living spirit but no intelligence be killed during the binding (at the end of the day of binding). The dying nodes must be let go, as the animal's form merges with that of the character, which is impossible if the dead spirit nodes remain. When the procedure is finished, the animal body dissipates by magic and flows into the body of the character.

This spell allows a character to change himself/herself into the bound animal (or monster). The change occurs whenever the character thinks of it, and takes one period (20 seconds). During the change, the character is completely motionless, helpless, unthinking, unaware, and hardly breathing. There is a 1% chance afterward of permanently exhausting the bound spirit node either when changing to were-form, or changing back.

When changed to were-form, the actual physical form and all characteristics of the character become that of the animal or monster. In were-form, the character has only one (1) point of intelligence, and thus forgets all skills, background, etc. The character vaguely remembers his/her other nature, and remembers basic drives, purposes and intents (especially recent imperatives). The character cannot do any original thinking or new reasoning in were-form, except for the ability to change back again whenever it seems desirable.

A were-form can be wounded or killed normally, and all magic has a normal effect. If the character changes back to normal form, each point of wounds and all magic effects carry over, one-for-one. Therefore, the main advantage of a were-form is that the creature may have abilities the normal body lacks (such as wings, powerful natural weapons, greater mass or agility, etc.).

During the new moon (occurs one day in every 28) the character must remain entirely in his/her own form, were-form is impossible (if in were-form, he/she instantly changes back at the start of this day).

During the full moon, which also occurs one day in every 28, and 14 days after the new moon, the character must remain in were-form the entire day (if in normal form, he/she instantly changes at the start of that day). Forced changes for new and full moon do not invoke the 1% chance of spirit node exhaustion.

If the spirit node bound to this spell is exhausted (due to bad luck on a voluntary change) the character is now trapped in the current form (could be the were-form) for the rest of his/her life. However, automatic changes during full and new moons still occur, even after the node is exhausted, and the character has no control over them. If the bound spirit node has the spell broken out of it, these mandatory changes no longer occur.

### (4) Resurrection

This spell can only be alignment-cast; it cannot be bound into a character. When successfully cast on a character (including oneself), all wounds, injuries, temporary or permanent disabilities in both body and spirit are completely repaired and returned to full, normal levels. Characteristic reductions due to age are not erased, but losses due to binding spirit spells are erased.

If a character dies, but one or more of his/her spirit nodes (now dead) is recovered (contacted or contained), this spell can be used to bring that person back to life, and make those spirit nodes living again. Spirit nodes not recovered when the character dies are permanently lost. Furthermore, this spell must be cast within a few hours of death, while the body is still fresh and flexible.

When this spell is successfully cast, the dead spirit node containing the resurrection spell is consumed in the process, and lost forever. Therefore, this is a 'once only' spell with a node (when successful).

### (5) Energy

This spell can be either alignment cast or bound into a character's spirit. Alignment casting can be done on any character in range, including oneself. Binding allows one to cast the spell in an instant upon oneself when desired (and is thus much faster than alignment casting, although more restricted in targets!). In either case, the casting causes temporary exhaustion of the living spirit node(s) involved when the spell ends. If cast from binding on oneself, there is a 1% chance the living spirit node will be permanently instead of temporarily exhausted.

The effect of this spell is to double the normal agility of the character throughout the period. This increases combat quickness and all skills where agility figures into minimum and/or maximum rating — increase is by the normal agility value (i.e., by the amount agility is increased).

The duration of this spell is determined by a 1d6 roll when it is cast: 1-period (20 sec.), 2-one minute, 3-30 minutes, 4-one hour, 5-six hours, 6-one day (24 hours).

### (6) Restore Spirit

This spell can only be alignment-cast, it cannot be bound. When successfully cast on a character (including oneself), the character has one lost spirit node returned. This can be either a temporarily or permanently lost node, as desired, and the node returns free and ready for any normal use. This spell cannot add extra spirit nodes, it can only be used to restore a loss.

When this spell is successfully cast, the dead spirit node is consumed in the success, and is lost forever. Therefore, this is a 'once only' spell with that node (when successful).

## 11.12 Spells of the Phlegmatic Humor

When a Rite of Discovery is performed on a dead spirit node of this humor, roll 1d6 to determine the spell in the node: 1-Immunity, 2-Solidity, 3-Elemental Attraction, 4-Disease, 5-Barrier, 6-Magic Resistance.

### (1) Immunity

This spell can be either alignment-cast on any character, or bound into the spirit of a character. If bound into a character, the spell works only on that character.

This spell immediately cures any and all diseases of the character. If bound into a character, it works continuously without consuming the node, and thus makes him or her completely immune to all diseases (hence its name).

### (2) Solidity

This spell can be either alignment-cast or bound into the spirit of a character. If bound into a character, the spell effect can be demanded at any instant, but only for that character (to whom the spell is bound). If alignment-cast on oneself, or using a bound spell, the living spirit node involved becomes exhausted only when the spell wears off, and exhaustion lasts until a good sleep occurs (as in normal exhaustion of a

spirit node).

When this spell is cast, roll 1d6 to determine how long the effect of the spell will last:

1-one period (20 seconds), 2-one minute, 3-10 minutes, 4-one hour, 5-six hours, 6-one day (24 hours).

If the spell is bound into a character, the character may voluntarily select a shorter time period than that of the die roll, but once a time period is initially chosen, it cannot be changed (not even for a bound spell character).

The effect of this spell is to double the mass of the character for the duration of the spell, and reduce agility by one (-1). Any wounds already present are doubled when this spell goes into effect, but new wounds apply normally. The actual size of the character does not change. He or she becomes much 'thicker' and heavier, and is better able to survive wounds. When the spell wears off, mass returns to normal and all wounds are halved, while agility also returns to normal. Of course, exhaustion of the spirit node means that if the character cast the spell on himself/herself or it was a bound spell, that when return occurs the exhaustion reduces characteristics and skills until a good rest occurs.

### (3) Element Attraction

If a dead spirit node has this spell, during the Rite of Discovery make a 1d10 roll to determine which element is attracted (affected by this spell): 1-Light, 2-Dark, 3-Fire, 4-Metal, 5-Crystal, 6-Water, 7-Wood, 8-Wind, 9 or 10 is the spiritualist's choice of any in the list (1-8), except an element in which the character is disadvantaged.

Element Attraction can be used either as an alignment-cast spell or bound into a character's living spirit.

*Alignment-Cast Element Attraction:* The spell lasts for one hour. During this time, the character can identify nodes of that element, and ignores any normal disadvantages with it. All nodes of that element the character has contained and/or aligned are double their normal nodal power for enchantments. Successful elemental enchantments result in double-power effects forever, but the item has double the normal consumption chance with each use (see Magic Enchantments, Consuming Enchanted Nodes for details). If a character casts this spell upon himself/herself, exhaustion of the living spirit node involved occurs when the spell effect ends (after the hour). Note that enchantments take one hour, so this spell could be applied to only one elemental enchantment.

If a character who casts the spell, or the character upon whom it was cast (if different) fails an alignment or enchantment with the attracted element at any time during the spell duration, the dead spirit node with this spell is consumed and destroyed.

*Bound Element Attraction:* The character is automatically advantaged with the attracted element (can identify it, and knows basic elemental spells), even if normally disadvantaged! Whenever handling nodes of that element, the node counts as double its normal power, but has double the normal chance of consumption. The character can elect to use the nodes at normal power with normal consumption if desired. Whenever the effects of this spell are used, the living spirit node to which it is bound becomes exhausted one hour later, but can recover normally (with 6+ hours sleep).

A character with this spell bound into him/her can also have an alignment-cast element attraction, for the same element, cast upon him/her. In this special case, nodes of that element are triple power, and have triple the normal consumption chance. Multiple alignment-casts or multiple binding of the same element do not cause this, only an alignment-cast with a binding.

### (4) Disease

This spell can only be alignment-cast. When it is cast at a character, the caster must make an intelligence test. If the test is successful, the caster may select one of the diseases below to cast on the target. If the test is a failure, a 1d6 roll is used to determine which disease is cast on the target. Diseases are: 1-Lung Rot, 2-Gut Spasm, 3-Sleeping Sickness, 4-Strength Drain, 5-Flesh Parasites (1d10 appear), 6-Blood Poisoning if the character is wounded, or becomes wounded before his/her next good sleep (of 6+ hours). Note that if Blood Poisoning occurs, the victim will be unaware the disease exists until wounded; the victim automatically realizes blood poisoning has set in if already wounded.

### (5) Barrier

This spell can be alignment-cast or bound into a character. In the latter case, casting is automatic, but the living spirit node that is bound will be exhausted by the cast (recovers with a normal rest).

When cast, this spell creates a barrier 3 paces tall and 3 paces long, the thickness of paper, and apparently made of bluish-green smoke. Moving through this barrier in either direction is exceptionally difficult,

and takes a full instant of effort followed by a successful hard strength test, during which nothing else can be done. Missiles cannot penetrate the barrier (hit it, stop, and fall), and all weapons use and speed for strikes through it are at 1/10th normal skill. Spells are not affected by the barrier, and may be cast normally in either direction. Normally the barrier is cast either as a wall, or as a cylinder surrounding a character with a 1 pace diameter (just sufficient to fit one character inside). If 'enclosed' like a cylinder, it automatically acquires a top and bottom. The barrier cannot be moved.

When the barrier is cast, the caster rolls 1d6 to see how long it will last:

1-one period (20 sec.), 2-one minute, 3-10 minutes, 4-one hour, 5-six hours, 6-one day (24 hours).

Note that characters can breathe through this barrier, and move things through it, although with difficulty.

### (6) Magic Resistance

This spell can be alignment-cast or bound into a character. In the latter case, casting is automatic upon an instant, but the living spirit node bound with it is exhausted by the cast (recovers after a normal rest).

When cast on a character, he or she can resist the effect of any one spell currently in effect, or any one spell that is cast on the character between now and the next time he or she sleeps (for any period of time). This does not include resisting the permanent effect of binding a dead node into his or her living spirit. The effect of this spell is ended whenever one spell is resisted or the character goes to sleep, whichever comes first. Note that a character with this spell bound into him/her could cast it upon himself/herself at the start of each day, and thus be resistant to one spell throughout waking hours. The caster has two ways to specify the action of this spell: 1 - resist the next spell cast on the character after magic resistance is cast, or 2 - resist the next spell of a certain type, designated at the time this spell is cast, even if other spells are cast on the character first.

## 11.13 Spells of the Choleric Humor

When a Rite of Discovery is performed on a dead spirit node of this humor, roll 1d6 to determine the spell within the node: 1-Elemental (roll 1d10 for type, see below), 2-Poltergeist, 3-Ghost, 4-Charm, 5-Berserker, 6-Insanity.

### (1) Elemental

During the Rite of Discovery, a 1d10 roll is made to determine the type of elemental: 1-Light or Darkness (Crescent), 2-Fire (Flamma), 3-Metal (Chalbis), 4-Crystal (Gelu), 5-Water (Haima), 6-Wood (Widu), 7-Wind (Aura), 8, 9 or 10-may select any one type listed in 1-7 results, but only if able to identify that element (i.e., cannot select an element the character performing the rite is unable to identify).

Elementals may be called forth by alignment-casting only. This spell cannot be bound to a character's spirit. Conjuring an elemental using this spell also requires a node of the appropriate element. The size of the elemental node used (1-power node, 2-power node, or whatever) determines the size of the elemental. See the Monsters list, Elementals, for complete details on each elemental, effect of size on characteristics, etc. The elemental node used in the conjuring is consumed when the elemental is successfully conjured (the node becomes the elemental, in fact), but the dead spirit node can be used again and again for this spell, provided exhaustion and rest between uses occurs normally. Two or more elemental nodes cannot be used in conjuring an elemental, just one.

When an elemental is conjured, it appears anywhere within sight of the caster/conjurer. The caster/conjurer must make an intelligence test, and if successful has control of the elemental for a period (20 seconds). Additional tests for additional periods are possible. During this time the elemental can be ordered to perform tasks by mental concentration of the caster/conjurer, see Control of Spiritual Entities rules. If an intelligence test fails or an error or problem occurs in the orders, the elemental becomes free. A free elemental has specific habits, depending on its type. You never can regain control of a free elemental.

From the instant an elemental is conjured, its life span is limited. Roll 1d6 to see how long it is before the elemental's size is reduced by one. When size is reduced, roll 1d6 again to see how long before the next size reduction, etc. When a size 1 elemental is reduced (to zero) it disappears entirely. The length of time an elemental remains at its current size is:

1-one period (20 seconds), 2-one minute, 3-one hour, 4-one day, 5-one week, 6-one month.

## (2) Poltergeist

This insubstantial and invisible force may be conjured only in an alignment-casting. It cannot be bound to a character's spirit. A poltergeist, if successfully conjured (alignment-cast) appears anywhere within sight of the conjurer/caster, and a 1d6 roll is made to see how long it remains present:

1-one instant (4 seconds), 2-one period (20 seconds), 3-one minute, 4-ten minutes, 5-one hour, 6-six hours.

A poltergeist has a strength equal to ten times (10x) the number of living spirit nodes used in the successful conjuring/casting (if, for example, three living spirit nodes were used, it would have a strength of 30). It has an agility of '1' always. At the start of each period (20 seconds) a successful intelligence test allows the caster/conjurer to control the poltergeist and issue instructions. See Control of Spiritual Entities for details. A poltergeist can use its strength to move and break items, but its low agility means that its weapon speed (if moving a weapon to make an attack, for example) is one (1). Furthermore, a poltergeist has no experience and thus nothing but the minimum skill in anything. However, in situations where brute force is needed, a poltergeist is a handy helper.

If the caster/conjurer loses control of a poltergeist, or the conjuring/casting was unsuccessful in the first place, the poltergeist remains, but now moves and uses its strength at random. A random poltergeist will sense living beings, and tends to be attracted to high intelligence. The exact activities of the poltergeist are determined by the gamemaster, who may find a 1d6 roll about every minute (or few minutes) helpful: 1-direct attack with handiest object, 2-pushes and shoves, 3-pushes and breaks nearby objects, 4-pushes and breaks objects in the background, 5-rumbles about menacingly, 6-temporarily quiet.

Random poltergeists rarely travel far. Instead they tend to remain in the same room, area, etc. until some new living being comes for its pleasure, or it disappears.

## (3) Ghost

This insubstantial and invisible force may be conjured only in an alignment-casting. It cannot be bound to a character's spirit. A character with an especially significant possession of a now dead being may attempt to conjure the ghost of that being, which requires both a successful conjuring of a ghost, followed by the successful conjuring of that particular character (for the second conjuring, use the same chance as the first). If this specific conjuring is attempted, the living spirit node(s) used are exhausted for twice as long (until after two sleeps, each of 6+ hours). Regardless of type, when a ghost is conjured, roll 1d6 to see how long it remains present:

1-one instant (4 seconds), 2-one period (20 seconds), 3-one minute, 4-ten minutes, 5-one hour, 6-six hours.

When a ghost is conjured, make appropriate dice rolls for intelligence and experience, with the latter translated into skills by the gamemaster. If a specific character's ghost is conjured, that character's skills and intelligence (at death) are used instead. A ghost is able to communicate and make sounds, but is seen only as a dim mist (and then only in ideal conditions) and can exert no physical force — it has zero mass, strength and agility. On the other hand, ghosts can pass through objects freely, and can 'walk' or otherwise travel on air, through water or ground, etc.

The conjurer/caster needs a successful intelligence test at the start of a period (20 seconds) to control a ghost, including demanding information, advice, etc., which the ghost must provide. Additional tests for additional periods are possible. See Control of Spiritual Entities for details. Once the conjurer/caster loses control, the ghost can travel and act on its own. If a specific character was conjured, the actions of the ghost should be consistent with that character (as determined by the gamemaster). In other cases, the gamemaster must determine the attitude of the ghost, like any other NPC. How the conjurer/caster treated and dealt with the ghost while controlling it may well influence the attitude of the ghost. Ghosts are generally unhappy about being awakened by a conjurer/caster, and the gamemaster should reduce normal NPC reaction rolls by one (or more, if the ghost was mistreated too) to reflect this.

Although a hostile ghost cannot inflict any physical harm, it can be a tremendous nuisance — making noises to scare off or attract others, startling characters with weird sounds (requiring a successful intelligence check if they are to continue performing some skill or action properly), etc.

## (4) Charm

This spell can be alignment-cast only. It cannot be bound to a character's spirit. Successful use of a charm casting allows the user to completely convince and control one target character (designated at the time of casting). The target character must be in sight (or exactly

sensed otherwise). For the duration of the spell, the target believes anything the caster says, is completely loyal to the caster, and is generally blinded to any disabilities, inconsistencies, or ulterior dangers in what the caster may say or do. In effect, the caster acquires a 'golden tongue', while the charmed character becomes totally gullible.

The caster may use charm to request an obviously suicidal action, but the target (at the gamemaster's discretion) is then allowed a chance to make an intelligence test as the basic urge for survival surfaces — if the test is successful, the target casts off the charm spell. Extremely obvious suicidal acts (such as jumping from a tower, or into the sea in full armor) might be an easy test, while more sophisticated and indirect acts (such as leading the storming party toward a castle keep) might involve a hard or very hard test.

The duration of a charm spell is determined when the spell is cast, with a 1d6 roll:

1-one period (20 seconds), 2-one minute, 3-ten minutes, 4-one hour, 5-six hours, 6-one day (24 hours).

The caster should not know how long the charm spell will remain in effect, except that it will be either short (1-4 result) or long (3-6 result).

A character who is victimized by a charm spell may not realize what happened when the spell wears off. If the actions performed by him while under the spell are generally in keeping with his/her character, only a very hard intelligence test (when the spell wears off) will result in the character understanding he or she was charmed. As the actions were more and more outrageous, the intelligence test becomes easier — the gamemaster's assistance in judging this is necessary.

## (5) Berserker

This spell may be alignment-cast or bound into a character's spirit. If bound into the spirit, the spell may be demanded at any instant, but when it wears off (see time span of effect, below), the bound living node is exhausted until normal sleep (6+ hours) gives recovery. When successfully cast or demanded, time span of the spell is determined with a 1d6 roll:

1-one period (20 seconds), 2-one minute, 3-three minutes, 4-ten minutes, 5-thirty minutes, 6-one hour.

When this spell is in effect on a character (if bound to a character, it can affect only that character), the character's normal strength is doubled. In addition, the character gains one extra point of armor (reduces damage by one point) throughout the body. This represents the ability of berserkers to ignore normal pain or injury to some degree.

While this spell is in effect, a character must pass a hard intelligence test to use any skill where intelligence figures (either as a minimum or maximum limit), or perform any activity where intelligence tests are involved or careful rationality is required. If the hard intelligence test is passed, the character can now attempt the action (which might require another intelligence test of some sort). If the hard intelligence test is failed, the character cannot attempt that action, and if some activity seems necessary, will instead take direct, physical action (such as pushing aside an obstructing NPC, rather than trying to reason with him or her). In short, a berserker has a strong tendency to act rashly and in a very straight-forward manner, despite normal inclinations or style.

## (6) Insanity

This may be alignment-cast or bound into a character's spirit. If bound into the spirit, the spell can be cast any instant in which the character successfully outthinks the target (caster and target each roll 2d10 and add it to their intelligence, caster 'out-thinks' if his or her total is higher). When the bound spell is cast, the caster's living spirit node becomes exhausted until normal sleep (6+ hours) gives recovery.

When successfully cast, a 1d6 roll is made to determine length of its effect:

1-one instant, 2-one period (20 seconds), 3-one minute, 4-ten minutes, 5-one hour, 6-one day (24 hours).

When cast on a character, his or her intelligence is temporarily reduced by a 2d10 roll for the period of time indicated. If intelligence is reduced to zero, the character is obviously insane, and has a difficult time even attempting rational thought. If intelligence is reduced below zero, the character is completely insane, a mindless wreck, with no hope of rational thought.

A mindless character who specializes in fighting will perceive any approach or act as hostile instinctively, and will grab the most available weapon and fight. Long and close friends may be recognized as allies about half the time, but recent acquaintances will inevitably be seen as enemies. If there is no character about, the insane one will settle down in a good defensive position (especially if sleepy, or having recently eaten), or will prowls about looking for something to kill and eat (especially if hungry at all).

A mindless character who didn't specialize in fighting will be ter-

rorized by the approach of any character. The only exception is a long and close friend who approaches very carefully, in a totally open and friendly manner. In such a case, the mindless character will usually see the friend as a master and protector. When terrorized, the natural impulse of the character is to flee in the opposite direction (no matter how stupid that might be!), and once out of sight of the 'terror' he or she will search for a dark, warm hiding place (under bushes or in a tree, if necessary).

Each time this spell is cast, there is a 1% chance the caster becomes insane instead of the target.

### 11.14 Spells of the Melancholic Humor

When a Rite of Discovery is performed on a dead spirit node of this humor, roll 1d6 to determine the spell within the node: 1-Skeleton, 2-Zombie, 3-Lich, 4-Vampire, 5-Drain Spirit, 6-Insight.

#### (1) Skeleton

This spell can be either alignment-cast or bound into a character's spirit.

**Alignment-cast Skeletons:** When successfully cast, the character can use this spell to animate and control a number of skeletons equal to his or her intelligence (if intelligence is, for example 11, then 11 skeletons could be animated and controlled). Control continues and is automatic as long as the caster concentrates completely and totally on the skeletons. Once control lapses for any reason, the skeletons return to death, and a new spell is needed to animate them again.

**Bound Skeleton Control:** If this spell is bound into a character's living spirit, it means he or she can animate and control a number of skeletons equal to his or her intelligence. The skeletons are active whenever the character concentrates on them, and lapse to inanimate whenever concentration lapses. Whenever control of a skeleton lapses (i.e., the skeleton was under control, and then released), the controller must take an intelligence test for each skeleton. Failure of this test means that skeleton instantly and permanently turns to dust. Whenever the character has fewer skeletons available than current intelligence, he or she is free to find new skeletons, disinter them, and make them available.

**Skeleton:** A 'skeleton' is an intelligent or unintelligent creature that died long ago and whose bones have been preserved. Graves in dry soil will tend to preserve skeletons. Dead creatures or characters that were not buried will tend to have scattered bones, and thus cannot be used. If the corpse was preserved upon death and remained in a dry tomb, it is possibly a mummy — a specialized type of skeleton.

Skeletons, when animated, are mindless things with normal strength, normal agility, but only half their normal mass. They will have skills, etc. appropriate to their former life, but any skill that includes intelligence as a minimum or maximum is lost. A character controls all the activities of skeletons, who are blindly obedient to his or her will. Orders can be issued to skeletons only when they are in sight. Out of sight, they will perform their last order mindlessly as long as the controller continues to concentrate. If a successful intelligence test is passed by the controller, bound skeletons will follow the last order endlessly. When the order is completed, they mill about until given a new order by the controller, who must get them back into sight again.

Skeletons may have armor, weapons, and other possessions appropriate to their former life. Most non-metal pieces will have disintegrated or become brittle, which halves the ability of armor to absorb wounds, and halves the breakage number of weapons. All-metal items are corroded or rusted and weak, armor is reduced by one, weapon breakage is reduced by one. The exceptions are metal objects that are gold-plated; these will not corrode. Skeletons are extremely uncomfortable around new equipment of any sort, and will not handle it. They use only their ancient artifacts, despite the inferiority of such. Mummies, if disinterred within a few centuries of death, may have metal and non-metal items in good states of preservation, with normal capabilities.

Mummies are extremely vulnerable to fire. If touched by flame, they will catch fire and disintegrate during the next instant. Naturally, they are deathly afraid of fire, and even when under control cannot be induced to attack someone carrying fire, or to move through a burning area. If not currently in sight and under control, they will always flee in terror from fire.

Each time this spell is cast, there is a 1% chance the skeletons will turn on and attack the caster.

#### (2) Zombie

This spell can be either alignment-cast or bound into a character's spirit.

**Alignment-cast Zombie:** When successfully cast, the character can use this spell to animate and control a number of zombies equal to his or her intelligence. Control continues and is automatic as long as the caster concentrates completely on the zombies. Once control lapses,

the zombies return to death, and a new spell is needed to animate them.

**Bound Zombie Control:** If this spell is bound into a character's living spirit, it means he or she can animate and control a number of zombies equal to his or her intelligence. The zombies are active whenever the character concentrates on them, and lapse to inanimate whenever concentration lapses. When control lapses, the character controlling must make an intelligence test for each zombie. Failure means the zombie instantly putrefies to slime and goo. Whenever the character has fewer zombies than intelligence would permit, he or she is free to find new ones, disinter them, and make them available under his or her control.

**Zombies:** a 'zombie' is any intelligent or unintelligent creature that recently died. The creature must be currently in a state of decay and putrefaction, where some muscles and tissue remain, along with all major limbs. Zombies cannot be used if they have turned to skeletons. Generally, potential zombies must be less than a month to a year dead, depending on interment conditions.

Zombies, when animated, are mindless things with normal strength and mass, but only half their normal agility. They have skills, etc. appropriate to their former life, but any skill that includes intelligence as a minimum or maximum is lost. A character controls all activities of zombies, who are blindly obedient to his or her will. Orders can be issued only to zombies in sight. Bound zombies will perform their last order mindlessly when out of sight, provided the controller continues to concentrate, or passes a hard intelligence test that forces them to obey without concentration. When the order is complete, they mill about until commanded again, but cannot be given a new order until they are within sight of their controller again.

Zombies have armor, weapons, and other possessions appropriate their former life. These items are generally in good repair (unlike skeleton weapons), as decay and disintegration is not very far advanced. Zombies will accept and use new equipment if provided by the controller, or ordered by him/her to pick them up.

Each time this spell is cast, there is a 1% chance the zombies will turn on and attack the caster.

#### (3) Lich

This spell can only be bound into a character's spirit. If this is done, the character himself or herself becomes a Lich. A Lich is immortal — the body cannot die. With progressive age, the body will become weaker and weaker, as mass, strength and agility decline. Intelligence cannot decline from the point where this spell is bound into the character's spirit. Eventually, a Lich that is very old will appear virtually mummified and hardly have the strength to move. Such a Lich will be at the mercy of anyone stronger. For this reason, Liches tend to concentrate and treasure magic of all sorts, since only that can make up for their lack of physical ability.

If a Lich's body is damaged or cut up, it will gradually reassemble and repair itself. Each point of wound damage will repair itself in one hour (2 points of wounds repair in 2 hours, etc.). Parts that are cut off will gradually find their way together again, moving at a crawling rate (about 15 paces per minute, or about 7 hours per league over smooth terrain). However, the more pieces that are cut off and scattered, the slower they reassemble, so that a Lich that is burned, crushed into a fine dust and then scattered to the four winds, might take thousands of years to reassemble.

When a Lich is created, his or her spirit moves into the brain, and the intelligence of the Lich, its ability to communicate, work magic, etc., is now entirely centered in the brain. In situations where a Lich would normally be 'dead', the brain simply stops working until the Lich reassembles and repairs itself sufficiently to regain consciousness again.

One way to eliminate a Lich is to inflict a disease upon it. If the disease advances to the point where it would normally cause death, the Lich becomes unconscious, and it may turn out that the Lich's repair ability is more than cancelled by the disease. As a result, the Lich will remain unconscious until someone cures the disease.

#### (4) Vampire

This spell can only be bound into a character's spirit. The spell allows a character to avoid aging by 'consuming' the living spirit of others. Each living spirit node 'consumed' means the Vampire can live for one week without any aging effect whatsoever. In addition, during the week, the Vampire has quick healing and the option to enter suspended animation (see below for a description of each). If a Vampire consumes a number of living spirit nodes, each node consumed adds one week to these abilities.

**Consuming Living Spirits:** A Vampire has this unique ability. To do it, the Vampire must render its victim helpless and then slowly drink its blood. For each hour of drinking, one living spirit node is consumed (the victim loses that node). In addition, one wound point is inflicted

on the victim. This is a poison wound to the body in general. Once all living spirit nodes are consumed the Vampire gains nothing from additional drinking, but can do so if it wishes to kill the victim by poisoning (by inflicting one additional poison wound per hour). Aside from loss of some or all of its spirit nodes, the victim suffers no special effects, and if later released, will have a vague memory of honor, and little else.

Living spirits that are bound to dead spirit nodes, when consumed, cause the immediate release and loss of the dead spirit node; the Vampire gains nothing from consuming bound nodes.

**Quick Healing:** A Vampire that benefits from this ability (it occurs only during a time when the Vampire is living on consumed spirits) heals one point of wounds per hour. In addition, while quick-healing is in effect the vampire never falls unconscious or dies. However, if fatal wounds are still present when quick-heal effects wear off, the Vampire could die. Quick healing does not give parts of the Vampire's body the ability to reassemble. If the body is scattered, it will only heal if intact parts of the Vampire (if mobile) or someone else actually puts the pieces together while the Vampire still has this ability.

**Suspended Animation:** A Vampire still benefiting from a consumed spirit may voluntarily enter suspended animation. When entering the state, the Vampire simply lies down, as if going to sleep, and mentally decides how long the suspension will last. It must last at least 12 hours, and can last any longer period (even centuries). During this period, the Vampire is unconscious, cannot move, but will not age (the consumed spirit effect remains). When the suspended animation ends the Vampire simply 'awakens' and carries on life as if no time had occurred. If the Vampire is disturbed during suspended animation, he or she will 'awaken' if an intelligence test is passed.

**Notes:** The Vampire abilities noted here are somewhat less than those of myth and legend. Most Vampires acquire additional magic abilities, notably Charm (Choleric Humor) which greatly aids in acquiring 'victims'. The gamemaster may adjust the benefits acquired from various types of victims (nodes from other races may count half, nodes from virgins may count double, etc.).

#### (5) Drain Spirit

This spell can be alignment-cast only. If successfully cast, it destroys one living spirit node in the target character. If the target has more than

one living spirit node, a random die roll is used to establish which node is lost (for example, if three nodes are present, use a 1d6: 1,2-first node, 3,4-second node, 5,6-third node). The character casting the spell does not gain the node, he or she simply causes its loss from another.

If the node lost has a dead spirit node and spell bound into it, the character who loses the bound spirit node also loses the benefit of that spell. As a result, a Lich, Vampire, etc. might suddenly lose his or her unique attributes, and the accumulated weight of 'reality' will catch up with the victim (often causing death to an old Lich, and denying the Vampire any benefit from its former attributes, etc.).

#### (6) Insight

This spell can be alignment-cast or bound into a character's spirit. In the latter case, it can be used on demand, but after the use the character's bound living spirit node is exhausted (recovers after a normal 6+ hour sleep).

When this spell is cast, a 1d6 roll is made to see how long it remains in effect:

1-one period (20 seconds), 2-one minute, 3-ten minutes, 4-30 minutes, 5-one hour, 6-three hours.

While in effect, the casting character is able to understand the true feelings and attitudes of another character. Only one other character at a time can be 'sensed' in this way, but the caster can direct his attention from one to another during the time limit. In normal conversation, this allows the caster to sense truth and falsehood, determine what interests (or disgusts) another, etc. As a result, diplomacy, haggling, bribery, underworld, gambling, scribe, doctor/druggist, warlord, politician, and personnel management skills are doubled. Any other skills that are directed at a single person, and require normal communication, interaction or sensitivity may be doubled (upon approval by the gamemaster).

In combat, a character with insight can sense an opponent's actions before they occur. As a result, the opponent automatically has poorer combat quickness and weapons speed (in all weapons) than the character with insight, regardless of true values. Weapons use skill is unaffected.

In magic use, this spell automatically gives the character the ability to identify all magic elements, except those he or she suffers a disadvantage with. This spell has no effect on spirit magic.