

# MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

SLEUTHING IN THE MIDDLE AGES



AN OLD SCHOOL ROLE PLAYING GAME  
BY SIMON WASHBOURNE



# MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

## SLEUTHING IN THE MIDDLE AGES

### OLD SCHOOL RPG

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

# WHAT IS A ROLE PLAYING GAME?

**A** roleplaying game (RPG) is, at its heart, a game of make-believe. The players all work to create a story by talking to one another, usually when describing the actions of their character and listening to each other, usually when the result of those actions is being described.

The players create the characters in the game. These characters undertake adventures, just the same as characters in a novel or a movie. Only rather than the scenes and dialogue being predetermined, the players get to speak for their characters and decide what their characters will do and don't need to write it down – it all happens, develops and grows as the game is played.



The situations that the characters become involved in are usually set up by one of the other players who takes the role of the Game Master (GM). The GM designs the adventures, details the towns and areas where the adventures take place and populates it by creating and speaking the parts of the people that the characters meet during the course of their adventures.

You can play RPGs freeform, that is to say without rules or with very few rules and without dice or any other method of randomly determining the results of actions that characters might take. This makes

the game closer to impromptu theatre or storytelling. However, most RPGs have rules for character creation and for determining the course of actions through the use of dice. The Medieval Mysteries RPG uses this latter method.

Thus, a RPG is a game in which the players assume the roles of characters who have all sorts of adventures, the outcomes of which are subject to a degree of chance. In these games there is no winner like there is in a board game. The only aim of the game is to create your own epic story of wonder and excitement and to have fun doing

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so. There isn't even necessarily an ending to the game because even as you complete an adventure, another one might arise in which the same cast of characters can feature. In this way, characters can grow with their experiences and develop in skill and depth.

### The core mechanic

Whenever you attempt an action that has some chance of failure, you roll a twenty-sided die (d20). To determine if your character succeeds at a task you do this:

- ❖ Roll a d20.
- ❖ Add any relevant modifiers.
- ❖ Compare the result to a target number.

If the result equals or exceeds the target number, your character succeeds. If the result is lower than the target number, you fail.

- ❖ A natural 20 on the die is always a success. Sometimes this can also be a special

success, called a critical success.

- ❖ A natural 1 on the die is always a failure. Sometimes this can be a particularly bad failure, called a fumble in combat.

### Dice

Several different types of dice are needed to play the Medieval Mysteries RPG. Dice with 4, 6, 8,

10, 12 and 20 sides are used. There are various notations in the rules telling what type and how many dice should be rolled during play. These notations may appear cryptic to first-time role players, but they are easily learned. Usually the type of dice is designated with a 'd' followed by a number, so d4 represents a 4-sided die and d10 represents the 10-sided die and so on. It is also possible to generate random scores for which no die exists. The most common are d2 and d3 respectively, both of which can be made by rolling a d6 and dividing by 2 or 3 and dropping the fraction. To roll a d2 using a 6-sided die, the results 1-3 would be a score of 1 and the results 4-6 would equal 2.

When the rules require it, rolls of more than one die will be expressed by a number in front of the 'd', representing the number of dice to be rolled. For example in character creation you need to roll three

six-sided dice, which would be shown as 3d6.

A notation after the type of dice would represent either an addition to, or a subtraction from, the number generated by the dice. So, 2d6-2 would mean you roll two six-sided dice and take 2 from the result. 1d4+1 would mean that you



10, 12 and 20 sides are used. There are various notations in the rules telling what type and how many dice should be rolled during play. These notations may appear cryptic to first-time role players, but they are easily learned.

Usually the type of dice is designated with a 'd' followed by a number, so d4 represents a 4-

## WHAT IS A ROLE PLAYING GAME?

roll a four-sided dice and add 1 to the result.

### What is the Medieval Mysteries RPG?

Medieval Mysteries is a historical role-playing game set roughly in the early middle-ages. It is inspired by many works of fiction, including the Cadfael novels of Ellis Peters, the Crowners John novels of Bernard Knight and the Matthew Bartholomew novels of Suzanne Gregory. A listing of other authors and inspirational works appears at the end of this publication.

In this game, generally speaking one of the characters will be the primary investigator and the other characters will

be sidekicks, friends, colleagues, apprentices, bodyguards, clerks, squires and assistants. How he or she became a sleuth depends on the game, the player's choice of character class and other factors. The character could simply be personally involved in the first investigation and display such a knack for solving mysteries that he or she is approached by other parties as and when they need help.

The character could be an appointed agent or representative of the church or the king, like a spy or an archdeacon's summoner. Maybe, the character's job is to investigate crimes, like a coroner or



sheriff. There are other possibilities and it's up to you, the GM and other players to decide what suits you.

The Medieval Mysteries RPG is a more cerebral role-playing game than many. The characters are expected to use their brains more than their brawn. That isn't to say there is no conflict in this game. The medieval period was a dangerous time, and anyone poking around and asking too many questions is going to run into trouble every now and again. But the game isn't one where the characters 'go on adventures'. Most of the action will take place in and around the city where the characters live. So, characters will get to know the locality pretty well, developing friendships, contacts, maybe even families. In other words the characters have a proper 'home-life' too.



## CHAPTER II

# CREATING A CHARACTER

Each player in Medieval Mysteries RPG needs to create a character to use during the game. The GM doesn't need just one, he needs several or more, but we'll come on to that later in these rules. To start with, you need to think about the type of character you want to play. You may want to base your character on a favourite character from a movie, TV series or book, you may already have a picture in your head of the type of person you want to play, or you may simply like the look of one of the classes from the character classes



section.

Once you have your idea, you need to roll dice to generate your six attributes. These attributes are important in defining your character, his strengths, weaknesses and outlook. Once you have generated scores, you assign the numbers to the attributes. Naturally, it makes sense to place the scores in a manner that reflects your character concept and character class.

### Attributes

Attributes represent a character's physical and mental traits. All characters in Medieval Mysteries RPG have six attributes: Strength (Str), Dexterity (Dex), Constitution (Con), Intelligence (Int), Wisdom (Wis) and Charisma (Cha). Each attribute has a numeric score ranging from 3 to 18. Each attribute also has a corresponding modifier, which is a bonus or penalty added to or subtracted from certain die rolls during the game. The times these details are used are set out throughout the rules.

There are three types of attributes: primary, secondary and tertiary. Of the six attributes, the first primary attribute is determined by the player's choice of character class; the player selects his second primary attribute and then chooses two as secondary and two as tertiary. The distinction is important when determining the outcome of many actions in the Medieval Mysteries RPG.

When a character uses a class ability or a chosen skill, such as a forester attempting to move silently or a merchant trying to haggle the best price for some goods, an attribute check is rolled to determine if the action is successful. Many class abilities have an attribute check associated with it. If the class ability or skill's associated attribute is one of the character's primary attributes, the character has a greater chance of successfully completing the task.



## CREATING A CHARACTER

The same principle holds true for Attribute checks are explained in greater detail later. For now, just remember that the selection of primary, secondary and tertiary attributes significantly affects the possibility of success for many actions in the game. Those attribute checks associated with a primary attribute are more likely to succeed than those actions performed with a secondary attribute and even more so than



those performed with a tertiary attribute.

### The six attributes

Each ability partially describes your character and affects some of his or her actions.

#### Strength (Str)

Strength measures your character's muscle and physical power. Strength also limits the amount of equipment your character can carry, your character's

ability to make powerful attacks or lift and move heavy objects. The modifier affects melee combat and damage and all checks for which strength is the primary influence. Characters can military press 10x their strength and dead lift 15x their strength. You apply your character's strength modifier to:

- ❖ Melee attack rolls
- ❖ Damage rolls when using a melee weapon or a thrown weapon. (Exceptions: Off-hand attacks receive only one-half the character's strength bonus, while two-handed attacks receive one and a half times the strength bonus)
- ❖ Strength checks (for breaking down doors and the like)

#### Dexterity (Dex)

Dexterity measures hand-eye coordination, agility, reflexes and balance. It is useful for getting out of the way of attacks, for hitting things with bow fire and for many other abilities where speed and nim-

bleness are most important.

You apply your character's dexterity modifier to:

- ❖ Ranged attack rolls, including those for attacks made with bows, crossbows, throwing axes, and other ranged weapons.
- ❖ Armour Class (DC) provided that the character can react to the attack.
- ❖ Saving throws, for avoiding rock falls, traps, and other attacks that you can escape by moving quickly.

#### Constitution (Con)

Constitution represents your character's health and stamina, the character's ability to withstand pain, suffer physical damage, avoid fatigue and fight off sickness or poison.

You apply your character's constitution modifier to:

- ❖ Each roll of a Hit Die (though a penalty can never drop a result below 1 - that is, a character always gains at least 1 hit point each time he or

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she advances in level).

- ❖ Saving throws, for resisting poison and similar threats.

If a character's constitution score changes enough to alter his or her constitution modifier, the character's hit points also increase or decrease accordingly.

### **Intelligence (Int)**

Intelligence determines how well your character learns and reasons. It represents mental aptitude, the character's ability to learn quickly, apply that learning effectively and the capacity of a character for deductive reasoning. You apply your character's Intelligence modifier to:

- ❖ The number of languages your character knows at the start of the game.
- ❖ Intelligence determines whether a character has extra skills beyond those normally available for his or her class at the start of the game.

An animal has an Intelligence score of 1 or 2. A creature of humanlike



intelligence has a score of at least 3.

### **Wisdom (Wis)**

Wisdom describes a character's willpower, common sense, perception, and intuition. While Intelligence represents one's ability to analyse information, wisdom represents being in tune with and aware of one's surroundings.

You apply your character's wisdom modifier to:

- ❖ Saving throws where willpower is important.
- ❖ Checks made to spot hidden or distant things
- ❖ Checks made to hear distant or slight sounds

### **Charisma (Cha)**

Charisma measures a character's force of personality, persuasiveness, personal magnetism, ability to lead, and physical attractiveness. This ability

represents actual strength of personality, presence or spirit, not merely how one is perceived by others in a social setting.

You apply your character's charisma modifier to:

- ❖ Checks that represent attempts to influence others
- ❖ Saving throws against fear or morale effects

### **Generating attribute scores**

Attribute scores are generated by rolling 3d6. The player adds the totals on all three dice together to create a total score of between 3 and 18. The process is repeated six times. Once the six scores are generated, you assign one score to each attribute. The scores may be assigned in any order or to whichever attribute you like until all six attributes have a score.

A second option for the Medieval Mysteries RPG character creation is to distribute a set of scores between the attributes. This way, every player starts with the same set of scores. The recommended set of scores for this method of character creation is 15, 14, 13, 12, 10 and 8.

## CREATING A CHARACTER



In the Medieval Mysteries RPG, attribute scores don't change very often. At 4th level and every four levels thereafter, one of the character's attribute scores increases by 1. The player chooses which attribute goes up. Sometimes an attribute might fall, as a result of disease or injury. If an attribute changes to a point where the modifier also changes, the modifier changes straight away. Attributes in Medieval Mysteries RPG rarely exceed 18 and only do so where a character is of a high level.

### **Primary, secondary and tertiary attributes**

There are three types of attributes in Medieval Mysteries RPG primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary attributes are those physical or mental abilities a character is

particularly well trained, disciplined or experienced in using. Secondary attributes are those where the character is less experienced or disciplined and tertiary ones are those that a character is only average at using. After generating attribute scores, you need to decide which of your attributes will be primary, which will be secondary and which are tertiary.

Characters have two attributes of each type, primary secondary and tertiary. Each class provides one of your characters primary attributes that cannot be changed, so a cleric player character always has wisdom as one of his primes, for example. The cleric would then have one more prime, selected by the player. Then the player chooses two attributes to be secondary and the remaining two are his tertiary attributes by default.

### **Attribute checks**

The distinction between attributes is important. Almost all non-combat related actions in The

Medieval Mysteries RPG that have a chance of failure and for which the GM deems a roll is necessary to resolve, require an attribute check to determine the outcome.

Every check has an associated attribute. Whenever one of these checks is made, the player rolls a d20. The attribute (and level) modifier is added to the result. If the final result is equal to or greater than a number generated by the GM, called the challenge class, then the attribute check is successful. The challenge class is determined by two factors. The first is the challenge base. This depends on whether the attribute being checked is primary, secondary or tertiary. If the attribute is primary, the challenge base is 12. If the attribute is secondary, the challenge base is 15. If the attribute is tertiary, the challenge base



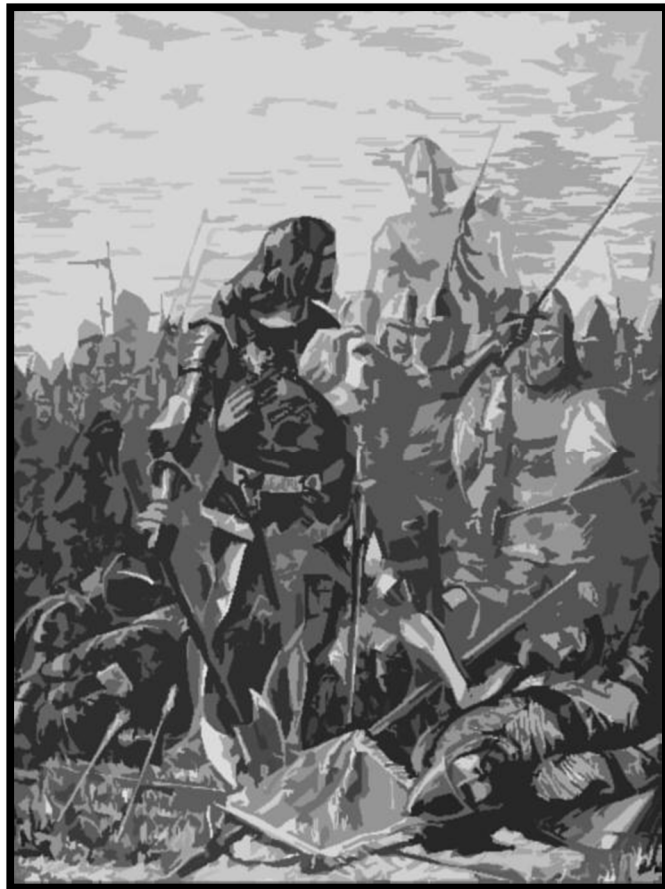
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is 18.

### Modifiers

The GM then adds any modifiers to the challenge base that are appropriate. These modifiers usually range between 0 and 10, but can go higher. The sum total is the challenge class and the player needs to roll higher than that to succeed his action. For example, a forester is tracking an outlaw through a forest. The player rolls a d20 (getting 15), adds the forester's level (2) and the attribute modifier (1) for a total of 18. The challenge base is 15 as wisdom is the forester's secondary attribute (in this example) and there are no other modifiers, in this instance, so the forester is keeping well on the outlaw's tail.

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Modifier</i>
1	-5
2-3	-4
4-5	-3
6-7	-2
8-9	-1
10-11	0
12-13	+1
14-15	+2
16-17	+3
18-19	+4
20-21	+5



# CHAPTER III

## CHARACTER CLASSES

Each of the character classes represents a broad archetype of typical investigators and sleuths and their associates, officers, colleagues and assistants found in medieval mystery fiction. Whilst each class is bound by certain limitations and abilities, the classes should not be viewed as restrictive. Every rogue isn't necessarily going to be an uneducated peasant. Some will be con men, wandering peddlers, entertainers and even down on their luck gentry, turned to criminal activities to earn their crust. Some clerics



will be ex-soldiers, physicians, scholars or even nobles. Your choice of character helps get an immediate handle on the characters abilities, but it is up to you as a player to breathe some life and personality into the numbers and statistics.

There are nine character classes in the Medieval Mysteries RPG as well as the option to take a dual-class or multi-class. All of the players should consult with each other and with the GM throughout character generation, because the style of game in the Medieval Mysteries RPG is very different to the normal type of fantasy or medieval role-playing game that you might be used to. Characters do not 'go an adventures' for example and as a rule will stay in or near their hometown. For another thing, the characters will have jobs and responsibilities that do not allow them to just suddenly drop everything and go off on some quest.

A group of characters in this roleplaying

game needs to be constructed quite carefully, with regard to the other characters in the group, so that everyone knows what their role is in the group and why they all work together. For example, it is probably best to have one character who is the primary investigator (although this isn't strictly necessary). The others are then his or her assistants, bodyguards, officers, clerks or associates. For instance, if the primary investigator is a crowner, his specific duties entail that he looks into cases of unexpected death, murder, arson and so on. He is naturally the primary investigator. He needs a clerk to accompany him and record all the details of his investigations, the fines imposed and so on, so naturally this falls to someone who can read and write like a cleric or a scholar. If another player wants a fighter character, the crowner could employ him to act as an officer and bodyguard. If a player wants a rogue character, the crowner could make use

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his 'street' skills in his investigations.

Another campaign possibility would be to have characters all of the same class, like all clerics, for example. They could have slightly different positions within the clergy, but it would certainly be a reason they know each other and do their sleuthing as a team. Each cleric character can be constructed slightly differently, so as to give them their own specialties. For example one could be a monk apothecary, another could be a scholar (librarian), there could be a friar with some slightly dubious skills and one could be the team's strong-arm, for when things go wrong - a proctor or an ex-soldier perhaps.

### CLASS DESCRIPTION TERMINOLOGY

#### **Prime attribute**

Each character class has one primary attribute that is most closely associated with that class. This is the primary attribute. It cannot be changed.

#### **Hit Die (HD)**

This is the type of die rolled to determine the character's hit points. To the number generated by the die, you add a modifier based on the character's constitution. You stop rolling for extra hit points after level 4 and simply add the number to your character's constitution modifier for each additional level. Your character always receives a minimum of 1 hit point per level, whatever his or her constitution modifier.

#### **Weapons**

These are the weapons that can be used without penalty by characters of that class. If a character uses a weapon that is not on the list, he uses it with a -4 penalty to all attack rolls to hit.

#### **Abilities**

This is a list of abilities possessed by members of the character class. Some abilities are not gained until a certain level is achieved, some are automatic and some require an attribute check. The description in the text tells you all about this.

#### **Skills**

Besides class abilities, each character class has a choice of skills. Once chosen, the skills become 'class abilities' and all attribute checks are made as appropriate for a class ability. Each character also gains an additional skill at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12.

#### **Level**

Characters advance in levels as they complete their adventures and gain experience. As they gain levels, their chance to hit, hit points and defence bonus improve. They may also gain new abilities or extra uses of an ability they already have. The experience required by each class to gain levels differs.

#### **Bonus to Hit (BtH)**

This is the modifier that is added to a 'hit roll' when making a melee, ranged or firearm attack.

#### **Experience point table (EPP)**

This is the number of experience points that members of that class use to determine how many experience points (XP) they need to go up to the next level.

## CHARACTER CLASSES

### APOTHECARY

The apothecary is a dispenser of medicines and remedies and most extend these skills into those of physician and doctor too. Medicine wasn't a very scientific technique in the middle ages.

Many physicians and apothecaries still considered that illnesses depended on the phases of the moon, the humours and so on. Bleeding was a commonly practised method to cure most ailments.

This class really represents the few, more enlightened of the apothecaries and doctors of the time - those who believe that clean water, a good diet and so on are vital to good health. They combine sensible advice with some of the most effective techniques of the day and, combined with some of the herbal remedies that actually work, make these physicians highly sought after.

Apothecaries are intelligent, educated men, often having learned their arts in the minor clerical orders (or, lat-

er in the period, at university) before taking a more secular path. An apothecary character is automatically able both to read and write. Apothecaries can get a bad press, because of the charlatans and rogues who travel from village to village selling coloured water and proposing ridiculous treatments as the next 'great cure' for all ailments.

Most operate apothecary shops in cities and towns but others prac-

tice the trade but do not operate out of a shop. In addition to dispensing medicines, they provided some surgical, midwifery, dental, and general medical services.

### **Apothecaries as investigators**

Apothecaries are astute, patient and educated and this makes them very good investigators. Of course, during the course of their work, they will often be dealing with patients who were the victims of various crimes and this may lead them into investigation work too. They are also very good supporting characters, being able to read and write and knowing what they do of ailments, injuries, dead bodies, and poisons.

### **Skills**

Apothecaries can choose 3 (+ Int mod) skills from the following list as class abilities; Gossip, heal, knowledge (choose any), languages (choose any), listen, notice, search, sense motive.

### **Abilities**

Literate (Int): Apothecaries are educated



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men and need to be able to read & write. Any character of this class is automatically considered literate in any language he or she can speak. An attribute check would normally be required to read works of a very complicated nature, badly written work or old and faded writing.

**Medicines & potions (Int):** Provided an apothecary has access to the raw materials and equipment necessary to mix the substance, he can create a number of different types of salve, potion and remedy for various ailments and injuries. Apothecaries need ceramic containers and phials by the hundreds in which to store simple ingredients and compounds for sale. The ingredients that he used would include plant, animal, chemical and mineral materials. He would break them up and mix them with a mortar and pestle. The medicines and their uses are as follows:

**Herbals** The apothecary knows how to make lotions and herbal remedies for any number of minor illnesses of the day that people may contract. Any character given one of the herbals receives a +2 bonus to

his save against a disease or illness that he has contracted. This bonus increases to +3 if the Physician is 4th level, +4 at 8th level and +5 at 12th level.

**Sleeping Draught:** An apothecary can make a potion that, when drunk, will knock a person out for up to 12 hours (the apothecary can determine the efficacy of the draught, up to his own level in hours). If given to a person against his wishes, the recipient gets a constitution save to avoid the full effects of the draught, which has a modifier equal to the level of the apothecary. Even if the recipient does save, he will still feel drowsy and less effective (-1 on attribute checks, attack rolls and armour class).

**Poisons:** An apothecary can identify poisons on a successful attribute check and can make both poisons and antitoxins. The poison's strength is equal to the level of the apothecary, plus his Int modifier. This is the challenge modifier to the recipient's constitution save to avoid the full effects of the poison. For an antitoxin to be effective the physician needs to make a successful Int

attribute check, once he has identified the poison that he is trying to negate.

**Pain relief potion:** At 2nd level, the apothecary can make potions that dull the pain from painful wounds. These potions, when drunk negate the effects of negative modifiers on attribute checks and attack rolls from painful wounds (see the combat chapter).

**Care & attention:** If the apothecary spends at least an hour a day with a recovering patient (changing the bandages, checking for infection and cleaning the wound, making the patient comfortable and getting him to take food and water), he can add a hit point to the hit points that the patient will recover naturally from bed rest. For example, in the first 7 days a patient will recover 1 hit point per full day of bed rest. An apothecary will improve this recovery rate to 2 points per day, as long as he spends an hour a day with the patient. At 4th level, this increases to 2 hit points, at 8th level 3 hit points and at 12th level the recovery rate is increased by 4 hit points. An apothecary will also add to the recovery check of a



## CHARACTER CLASSES

character who is suffering from infected wounds (see the Game Rules section for more details about this). He will add +1 at levels 1 to 4, +2 at levels 5 to 8, and +3 at level 9 and above.

Perform minor surgery (Int): This ability, gained at 8th level, enables the apothecary to perform minor surgery and repair small wounds. Large gashes can be sewn shut, broken bones can be set and sprains treated. This sort of work takes some time to perform (including preparation, sterilising tools and equipment, cleaning up the wound and so on) and the ability can be used only once per day. At 10th level, the apothecary is sufficiently skilled and speedy to perform 2 such procedures each day. A successful check results in 2d6 points of damage being restored to the patient after completion. If the check is not successful, only 1d6 hit points are recovered.

### **Apothecary stats:**

Prime Attribute: Intelligence

Hit Die: D6

Starting money: 40-240 pennies

Armour: Padded, leather jerkin

Weapons: Club, dagger, staff, light crossbow

Abilities: Literate, medicines & potions, care & attention, perform minor surgery

### **Apothecary level progression table:**

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	D6	+0	0
2	D6	+1	900
3	D6	+1	2700
4	D6	+1	5400
5	+1	+2	9000
6	+1	+2	13500
7	+1	+2	18900
8	+1	+3	25200
9	+1	+3	32400
10	+1	+3	40500
11	+1	+4	49500
12	+1	+4	59400



## CLERIC

Clerics are men and women who have taken holy orders and joined the church, in one capacity or another. The cleric character class represents all non-fighting holy men and women, including priests, monks, nuns, friars and even hermits. Fighting clerics like Knights Templar and so on are better represented as nobles or fighters.

Priests held a special place within the Church in the middle ages. Only a priest could administer the sacraments, was subject to special Church law and was generally exempt from secular law, and gained his special status through a special ceremony. All this served to set priests apart from society as a whole. Within the priesthood was a tremendous range of social standing. A village priest might be only a local village boy who was sent off to a monastery to learn his duties, as poor as his parishioners. On the other hand, a bishop was also a priest, and he might be the son (often a second son) of a nobleman, wealthy and powerful. A priest might

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even be illiterate, though literacy was far higher in the clergy than in the general population. All player character clerics are considered literate.

Monks lived together in a monastery under the rule of an abbot. Some monks copied manuscripts in the monastery's library, or taught other young boys to read and write, or to do the laundry for the monastery.

Other monks worked in the fields like peasants, planting grain for the monastery and harvesting it, and taking care of the monastery's pigs and sheep and cattle. Monks were not allowed to marry or have children or own any property of their own. Sometimes men joined monasteries later in life, either because they felt drawn to a religious life, or because they were so poor or sick that they wanted someone to take care of them. The main orders in England were Benedictines, Cistercians, Cluniacs, Augustinians, Premonstratians, and the Carthusians.

Nuns are similar to monks other than the fact that they are female. Nuns all lived together, either in a dormitory or in their own little rooms (called cells). Like monks, they prayed many times a day and went to Mass every day. Nuns were not usually as well educated as monks either, though they did sometimes learn to read and write. Mostly nuns spent their days the same way other women did. Poorer nuns worked in the gardens and in

the fields, while nuns from wealthier families, whose families had given money or land to the convent, spent their time spinning, weaving, or doing embroidery. Like monks, nuns never married or had children, and they did not own any property of their own. The leader of the nuns was called an abbess.

A friar is a member of one of the mendicant orders. Friars follow a vow of poverty like a monk, but their vow meant that they could possess no fixed revenues and therefore lived upon the voluntary offerings of the faithful; hence their name of mendicants. The main denominations of friar are The Dominicans (Black Friars), the Franciscans (Grey Friars), the Carmelites (White friars) and the Augustinians.



### **Clerics as investigators**

Player character clerics will often have a lot of time on their hands and being learned and educated will be keen to become involved in murder investigations to enliven their otherwise dull lives. A cleric

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character who is loyal to his Bishop could be chosen as a church agent, to lead an investigation into mysterious deaths, disappearances, thefts or cases of possible heresy. Other times a cleric could be a useful assistant to the main investigator, especially with his or her writing skills, access to church records and church gossip. Often a cleric can gain the confidence of people otherwise reluctant to talk and gain entry to places that other characters cannot enter.

### Skills

All clerics can choose 4 (+Int mod) skills from the following list as class abilities; Diplomacy, gossip, heal, interrogate, knowledge (choose any from religion, local area, law, nature, wounds & corpses), languages (choose any), listen, literacy, notice, perform, search, sense motive.

### Abilities

Priest only: Ordination (Int): As men of the cloth, priests are universally respected (and feared by the truly pious) and therefore clergymen gain a +2 bonus to any diplomacy, interrogate or gossip

check. They can also perform the sacraments including Mass, Marriage and Confession. After performing such sacraments, anyone who was present will receive a +1 morale or luck bonus to any saving throw they are required to make during the next 24 hours.

Monk or Nun only: Scribing (Int): Monks and Nuns can copy text exactly. This means that they can gain a bonus of +4 on any forgery check, whether to spot a fake or to make one.

Friar only: Worldly: Friars mix with more colourful characters than other clerics and due to the way they live and the people they associate with, they can choose an additional skill of either stealth, pick lock or pick pocket as a class ability.

Sanctuary (Cha): In the middle ages ordinary 'god-fearing' people were very wary of harming priests and monks in case it brought down God's Wrath upon them. Whenever a cleric is about to be attacked, he can use this ability and with a successful attribute check, the would-be attacker has a change of heart and decides not to attack the cleric after all, maybe

turning away or attacking somebody else. Of course, this only works if the cleric is not taking any aggressive action himself.

Literate (Int): Clerics are educated men and need to be able to read & write. Any character of this class is automatically considered literate in any language he or she can speak. An attribute check would normally be required to read works of a very complicated nature, badly written work or old and faded writing.

God's Wrath (Cha): The cleric can rant and rave at his enemies, reading or reciting suitable fire-and-brimstone passages from the bible. Any God-fearing enemy hearing this will be upset by this tirade and suffer a -4 to all charisma checks. In addition, affected foes must save vs. fear at the -4 penalty or suffer a -1 to attack rolls to hit. The ability lasts a number of rounds equal to the cleric's level. The number affected increases as the cleric gains levels. At 4th level, up to 25 people are affected. At 8th level, the number increases to 50, and at 12th level it increases to 100.

Faith: The cleric can trust to faith once per

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day and re-roll any failed roll, to try to turn a failure into a success. He or she can use this ability twice per day at 6th level and above.

### Cleric stats:

Hit Die: D6

Starting money: 20-200 pennies

Armour: Padded, leather jerkin

Weapons: Club, dagger, staff, light crossbow

Abilities: Ordination, scribing or worldly, sanctuary, god's wrath, faith

### Cleric level progression table:

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	D6	+0	0
2	D6	+1	900
3	D6	+1	2700
4	D6	+1	5400
5	+1	+2	9000
6	+1	+2	13500
7	+1	+2	18900
8	+1	+3	25200
9	+1	+3	32400
10	+1	+3	40500
11	+1	+4	49500
12	+1	+4	59400

## CROWNER

The crowner (or more properly coroner) is appointed by the king as his representative in a county to meet several specific purposes. One of these is as an investigator of all unexpected deaths, murders, rapes, cases of arson and finds of treasure trove. His job in these cases is to record them, determine the cause, try to find the guilty party (if there is one) attach any fines or amercements to individuals or villages for not performing their obligations under the laws of the case and so on. The coroners other duties are to keep an eye on the sherrifs, who were notorious for syphoning off monies collected in taxes for the king and other dishonest activities.

The crowner is selected for his incorruptability and his proven loyalty to the king. The former comes from the fact that crowners were generally only chosen from nobles or respected individuals who had sufficient income as to put them above corruption. The crowner also reports directly to the king and accordingly, crowner

characters are respected by many (except the sherrif) and therefore have certain priviledges, autonomy and a great degree of authority in their county.

### Crowners as investigators

Crowners make excellent primary investigators and, if there is a crowner in the group it would be hard to see the character as anything other than the primary investigator, or at least one of them. They have the abilities and skill selections that make them more than able to look into murders and other mysteries and they are capable fighters and can therefore look after themselves if confrontation arises. However, they often can't read & write and therefore still need a literate clerk to record things for the justices and there are other areas where they might need companions or associates to help out.

### Skills

Crowners can choose 3 (+Int mod) skills from the following list as class abilities; Diplomacy, gossip, intimidate, interrogate, knowledge

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(wounds & corpses, nobility & royalty), languages (any of choice), listen, literacy, notice, search, sense motive.

### Abilities

**Crowner's horse:** Crowners are automatically able to ride a horse and will have at least one horse of their own of a suitable type for riding to war. In addition to their starting money, crowners begin play with a fully outfitted riding horse (saddle, blankets, saddlebags, bit & bridle, harness, horseshoes & meal). The mounts are hardier than most, having 2d8+6 hit points.

**Brow Beat (Cha):** With a successful intimidate check, any 0-level NPC will be so cowed by the crowner, that he will take time out to assist the crowner in his immediate endeavour even if it means dropping what he is currently doing and at a productive cost to himself, within reason (The GM will decide what is reasonable). This could be simply something like 'look after my horse, peasant' or 'give that to me' or 'come with me' to something a bit more involved. At 5th level, the ability can be used



on a 1st level NPC and thereafter on NPCs of at least 4 levels below that of the crowner.

**Find Truth (Wisdom):** The crowner is very skilled in distinguishing truth from untruth. This adds +2 to his sense motive, interrogate and gossip skill checks, for the purposes of filtering fact from fiction or to determine whether somebody is lying to him.

**Read suspect (Wisdom):** Using this ability, the crowner is able to find information about a specific person, by detailed observation, and deductive reasoning. A crowner must spend 1d3x10 minutes observing his suspect before a check is allowed. A successful check results in

knowledge of the approximate level of the person, distinguishing habits and mannerisms, approximate wealth, whether he seems nervous or is acting suspiciously and other details that the GM might see fit to provide. With a -5 penalty, this ability can also be used, to a more limited degree, on a dead body.

**Hue & Cry:** A crowner is able to raise the hue & cry. What this means is that the crowner can declare anyone as being a murderer, thief, traitor or outlaw call upon the local population to form a posse to help to seek the accused and restrain him or her when caught. Once the cry goes out, within an hour, the crowner will have a mob of 3d6 + the crowner's charisma bonus (if any) 0-level characters, bearing staffs, pitchforks, cudgels and similar 'weapons'. In each of the next three hours 1d6 further 0-level characters will join the posse each hour. After 5 hours from the start of the hue & cry, if the accused hasn't been found, the mob will begin to dissipate, losing 2d6 of their number per hour until they have all returned to their homes. The Hue &

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Cry can only be raised once in a day.

**Hunch:** At 6<sup>th</sup> level, the crowner is so skilled at his investigations that he gains an almost psychic insight into what happened. Once per day, the player can ask the GM for a clue or a lead that will aid his investigation in some way, if he is stuck. He can ask two such questions at 12th level.

### Crowner stats:

**Prime Attribute:** Wisdom

**Hit Die:** d8

**Starting money:** 60-360 pennies

**Armour:** Any

**Weapons:** Any

**Abilities:** Crowner's horse, find truth, read suspect, brow beat, hue & cry, hunch

### Crowner level progression table:

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	D8	+0	0
2	D8	+1	1100
3	D8	+2	3300
4	D8	+2	6600
5	+2	+3	11000
6	+2	+4	16500
7	+2	+4	23100
8	+2	+5	30800
9	+2	+6	39600
10	+2	+6	49500
11	+2	+7	60500
12	+2	+8	72600

## FIGHTER



Fighters come from a range of different backgrounds and they may specialize in different styles or aspects of fighting, but they share one thing in common; fighters are men (and a few women) whose primary skills, abilities and training are in warfare and combat. A character who is a fighter may be a poor landless knight, a Welsh archer, a mercenary-for-hire, the constable in the sherrif's castle, the sergeant-at-arms of the

local militia or even a bouncer or bodyguard at the local tavern. If he wields a weapon for his keep and has no other means of support, then he is likely to be a fighter.

Fighters tend to be strong enough to use a variety of weapons, and trained to move around without difficulty in heavy shields and armour. Many can ride to some degree, even if they don't necessarily fight from horseback. When faced with a problem, generally speaking the true mark of a fighter is that he will draw his sword as soon as look at any other options.

### Fighters as investigators

Fighters, by their very nature as men of action are not generally best suited to the role of the primary investigator. They do have their uses as a support to the teams' primary investigator though - as bodyguards, and backup when going into a hostile situation, to make arrests or even to intimidate witnesses and suspected criminals.

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### Skills

Fighters can choose 2 (+Int mod) skills from the following list as class abilities; climb, craft (choose any one), gossip, heal, intimidate, jump, language (choose any), notice, ride.

### Abilities

#### Weapon specialisation:

At 1st level, a fighter can choose one weapon in which to specialise. Any weapon can be selected, including ranged weapons. The weapon selected is often endemic to the fighter's culture or society, though needn't be. The GM and player should consult to see which weapons are available for specialisation, bearing in mind culture, social status, location and availability. Fighters can choose only one weapon in which to specialize. Once chosen, the weapon cannot be changed. For fighters between 1st and 6th level, this gives a +1 bonus to hit and to the damage caused, when attacking with that weapon. At 7th level and higher, the bonus is +2 to hit and to damage.

**Combat dominance:** At 4th level, the fighter gains an extra attack with any weapon when fighting opponents of 1st level or lower. The

fighter must direct all his attacks in a combat round toward opponents that meet these criteria. The fighter can split available attacks among opponents as desired.

This ability improves as the fighter gains levels. The fighter gains an additional attack for every four levels gained after 4th level. So an 8th level fighter is allowed a total of three attacks against such opponents. In addition the fighter can use combat dominance against opponents of higher level as he gains levels. At every four levels, the minimum level of opponent goes up a level, so at 8th level, he can use multiple attacks on 2nd level opponents and at 12th level he can use it against 3rd level opponents. This ability cannot be combined with extra attack.

**Extra Attack:** At 10th level, the fighter gains one additional attack each combat round with any weapon.

#### Fighter stats:

**Prime attribute:**

Strength

**Hit Die:** D10

**Starting money:** 30-240 pennies

**Armour:** Any

**Weapons:** Any

**Abilities:** Weapon specialization, combat dominance, extra attack

#### Fighter level progression table:

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	D10	+1	0
2	D10	+2	1000
3	D10	+3	3000
4	D10	+4	6000
5	+3	+5	10000
6	+3	+6	15000
7	+3	+7	21000
8	+3	+8	28000
9	+3	+9	36000
10	+3	+10	45000
11	+3	+11	55000
12	+3	+12	66000



## MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

### FORESTER



Foresters are those men that make their living out of doors, on the land and in the royal forests. Although the name forester has very specific official connotations in the middle ages, for the purposes of the Medieval Mysteries RPG it encompasses all verderers, foresters, woodwards and even poachers, who are skilled in the ways of

woodcraft and outdoor living.

The forester is an officer, similar to a gamekeeper, directly responsible for enforcing the harsh forest laws and taking offenders to the forest courts. Foresters were nominated by the Forest Warden, but received no salary. Sometimes they even paid for the privilege of the job, because of the possibilities for extortion. The Foresters badge was a horn.

Woodwards, on the other hand were employed by private landowners to protect the vert and venison, but outside the royal forests. Although they were servants of the landowner, they still had to adhere to the same oaths and codes as the foresters. Their badge was a billhook. Verderers had a similar role, but organised the foresters and reported directly to the king. Poachers run a severe risk of being caught, as offences against the vert, or the king's deer and other game (even

creatures like squirrels and crows caught in the royal forest) carried severe penalties.

#### Foresters as investigators

Foresters are not a natural choice as a primary investigator, though they are a good choice as an associate, especially when investigations take place outside the city.

#### Skills

Foresters can choose 3 (+Int mod) skills from the following list as class abilities; Climb, craft, gossip, handle animal, heal, intimidate, jump, knowledge (local area, law, nature), languages (not Latin), literacy, listen, notice, search, stealth, swim, track.

#### Abilities

**Awareness (Wis):** Foresters are particularly adept at noticing broken twigs or branches, unnatural silence or alternatively unnaturally noisy creatures and so on. When out of doors and in their own environment, they can add +2 to all notice, search, track and listen checks.

**Traps:** A forester is able to detect and build sim-



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ple traps in the wilderness. When passing within 25' of a trap, a forester is entitled to a notice check to spot it. When actively searching for traps, he receives a +2 bonus to the check. He can set simple traps in the wilderness, including snares, pits, log-falls and similar devices. On a successful attribute check, he successfully builds and conceals the trap. Snares can capture and hold creatures up to medium height and pit traps can deliver d4 points of damage (halved if the creature makes a successful dexterity saving throw). They can be made to do extra damage if lined with wooden spikes. Foresters can easily disable traps they find (no check needed).

**Conceal (Dex):** Foresters are especially good at concealing themselves out of doors, where there is plenty of natural cover. They receive a bonus of +2 to stealth checks, when they are hiding in cover and not moving, whilst in the wilderness.

**Ranged weapon specialist:** Foresters tend to be decent marksmen. They can add +1 to their attack rolls to hit with any bow or crossbow.

They can also fashion a simple short bow and arrows, quarterstaff or cudgel from the natural materials around them.

### **Forester stats:**

**Prime Attribute:** Constitution

**Hit Die:** D8

**Starting money:** 20-120 pennies

**Armour:** Padded, leather jerkin, leather coat, ring mail, studded leather.

**Weapons:** Club, bow long or short, dagger, broad sword, hand axe, long sword, short sword, falchion, staff, wood axe, spear, light crossbow

**Abilities:** Awareness, traps, conceal, ranged weapon specialist.

### **Forester level progression table:**

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	D8	+0	0
2	D8	+1	1000
3	D8	+1	3000
4	D8	+2	6000
5	+2	+3	10000
6	+2	+3	15000
7	+2	+4	21000
8	+2	+5	28000
9	+2	+5	36000
10	+2	+6	45000
11	+2	+7	55000
12	+2	+7	66000

## MERCHANT

Merchants are traders, businessmen, money-lenders and possibly even craftsmen. Some will have come to their business ventures from other backgrounds and professions, and others were born into it, perhaps inheriting a family business. Some traders sell their own goods from shops in towns and cities; others might travel around buying goods from here and there, selling for a profit in other places. Many of the richer merchants will have contacts in ports, both in England and overseas and some will even own their own ships.

Merchants are burgesses, meaning they are freemen and some of the wealthier ones will hold positions of importance in the town. Often they hold lands too and can be wealthier than the nobility. For this reason, merchants tend to be conscious of their status and like to dress as finely as their pockets and their stations allow.

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### Merchants as investigators

Merchants probably make very good primary investigators, but unless money is involved they probably aren't interested. They are probably best as support characters - they are often literate and certainly good gossips; especially those that do a lot of traveling. They might even have money of their own that they can throw around to obtain



more information and they are useful to identify murder weapons and other objects found at crime scenes.

### Skills

Merchants can choose 4 (+Int mod) skills from the following list as class abilities; Appraise, craft (choose any), diplomacy, gossip, handle animal, knowledge (any from law, local area, nobility & royalty, trade & traders, the world), languages (choose any), listen, literacy, notice, ride, sense motive.

### Abilities

#### Bargain (Cha):

This is the skill of negotiation for a price - whether that is by barter (exchange of goods) or simply haggling on a price to lower (or increase if selling) it. With a successful diplomacy check, at 1<sup>st</sup> level they can reduce the price of standard equipment and weapons from the list by 3/4 of the listed price. At 4<sup>th</sup> level, they can buy equipment for 2/3 of the listed price and

by 8<sup>th</sup> level they can bargain the costs down to 1/2 the listed price of goods. Finally at 12<sup>th</sup> level, merchants can get standard goods for a third of the list price. For other items like rare items and religious artifacts and relics, the GM will have to make his own judgment as to what would seem reasonable.

**Money Wise (Wis):** You cannot fool a canny merchant. They can spot shaved coins, separate real silver and gold coins from fake metals and can also tell how many coins are in a purse without needing to open it and sometimes even just by looking at it. A notice check is needed.

**Contacts (Cha):** Merchants conduct their trade with a large number of people and are therefore privy to gossip from very many places. Whenever they fail a gossip check, they can have another check adding +2 to the roll if they have the opportunity to go off and visit one of their other contacts 'who might know a bit more'.

#### Identify item (Int):

Merchants can choose a specialist trade item, with which they receive a +2 modifier to their

## CHARACTER CLASSES

appraise checks. Suggested choices could be jewellery, gems, gold, silver, tin, bronze, weapons, armour, clothing, spices, books, cloth, religious items and so on.

### Merchant stats:

**Prime Attribute:** Charisma

**Hit Die:** D6

**Starting money:** 40-240 pennies

**Armour:** Padded, leather jerkin, leather coat, studded leather.

**Weapons:** Club, dagger, broadsword, short sword, long sword, staff, light crossbow

**Abilities:** Bargain, money wise, contacts, identify item

### Merchant level progression table:

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	D6	+0	0
2	D6	+1	900
3	D6	+1	2700
4	D6	+2	5400
5	+1	+2	9000
6	+1	+3	13500
7	+1	+3	18900
8	+1	+4	25200
9	+1	+4	32400
10	+1	+5	40500
11	+1	+5	49500
12	+1	+6	59400

## NOBLE

Nobles still hold great power by this time and are still pretty much the embodiment of the feudal system representing a mix of military might, wealth, land ownership and political ambition. Although there is clearly a shift in thinking, the common man generally still knows his place.

Nobles are skilled in political manoeuvrings, plotting and conniving, diplomacy and backstabbing. At this time, the nobility is also still looked upon for military leadership, for the only reason that they have the wealth to raise armies and outfit them with armour and weapons. Lower ranking nobles, those without the wealth to do this, are still often better equipped than the average soldier and often serve as officers.

Nobles as investigators  
Some nobles are empowered to investigate crimes on their land, where they are not murders or arson that a crowner is required to investigate. Therefore, whether they are good at it or not, characters who are nobles can make for enjoyable pri-

mary investigators, even if they might require a few associates and helpers. Other nobles are occasionally asked by the king or the church to investigate certain mysteries or to do a bit of spying work. This would usually be in cases where the noble in question is deemed competent and loyal enough to carry out such duties.

### Skills

Nobles can choose 2 (+Int mod) skills from the following list as class abilities; Diplomacy, gossip, heal, intimidate, interrogate, knowledge (choose from religion, law, nobility & royalty, the world), languages (choose any), literacy, perform, sense motive.

### Abilities

**Noble's horse:** Nobles are automatically able to ride a horse and will have at least one horse of their own of a suitable type for riding to war. In addition to their starting money, nobles begin play with a fully outfitted riding horse (saddle, blankets, saddlebags, bit & bridle, harness, horseshoes & meal). The mounts are harder than most, having 2d8+6 hit points.

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**Landowner:** The noble character is automatically assumed to hold his own land. This land will be a small estate (initially) comprising his manor house and a small village, including a mill, fields and a small area of woodland for hunting and so forth. The noble is responsible for the serfs and so on who live in the village and work his fields. He will have a few servants, such as an ostler (for his horse), a cook, a couple of maids and maybe a woodward or two to run his woodland. He is also likely to have at least a handful (roll 2d3) of 0-level men-at-arms, under a 1st level sergeant-at-arms. A steward will be responsible for the day-to-day running of his house. After taxes, paying his staff and upkeep, the land will produce a small income of 20-1200 (2d6 x 100) pennies per year.

**Brow Beat (Cha):** With a successful intimidate check, any 0-level NPC will be so cowed by the noble, that he will take time out to assist the noble in his immediate endeavour even if it means dropping what he is currently doing and at a productive cost to himself, within rea-

son (The GM will decide what is reasonable). This could be simply something like 'look after my horse, peasant' or 'give that to me' or 'come with me' to something a bit more involved. At 5th level, the ability can be used on a 1st level NPC and thereafter on NPCs of at least 4 levels below that of the noble.

**Dispense justice:** The noble is considered a legal representative by the medieval system that is only just beginning to change. At 4th level, the character is authorised to administer justice, arbitrate disputes and perform legal functions within his own manor. The noble's decisions are legally binding on all but members of the clergy and upon other nobles. Decisions can however, be overturned by nobles of at least 2 levels higher than the character.

### Noble stats:

**Prime Attribute:** Charisma

**Hit Die:** D8

**Starting money:** 50-300 pennies

**Armour:** Any

**Weapons:** Any

**Abilities:** Noble's horse, landowner, brow beat, dispense justice



### Noble level progression table:

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	D8	+0	0
2	D8	+1	1100
3	D8	+1	3300
4	D8	+2	6600
5	+2	+3	11000
6	+2	+3	16500
7	+2	+4	23100
8	+2	+5	30800
9	+2	+5	39600
10	+2	+6	49500
11	+2	+7	60500
12	+2	+7	72600

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### ROGUE

In any city or any town there are those types who like to live their lives on the other side of the law. They might find that circumstances lead them to a life of crime or they might choose such a life, but one way or another they end up stealing or conning people out of their money and possessions.

Some rogues are highwaymen; others are thugs. Some prefer picking pockets in busy markets and taverns and others break into houses. There are others who travel from village to town peddling shoddy or stolen goods. For the most part though, they are thieves, liars, cheats and swindlers of one sort or another. Because of their skills, some rogues find themselves sought after as spies, information gatherers and even as assassins.

Rogues as investigators  
Probably best as supporting characters, rogues have a number of extremely useful skills and have access to the

parts of the city that most of the other types of character cannot gain access to. Rogues operating on the side of the law do have to be careful though, not to give the game away otherwise they could end up with half the underworld after them.

#### Skills

Rogues can choose 5 (+ Int mod) skills from the following list as class abilities; Appraise, climb, disguise, forgery, gossip, intimidate, inter-

rogate, jump, knowledge (choose from local area, underworld, wounds & corpses), languages (choose any except Latin or Norman French), listen, notice, perform, pick lock, pick pocket, search, sense motive, stealth, track.

#### Abilities

**Back attack:** A rogue can use stealth to sneak up on someone and catch him or her unaware. If a rogue is able to attack an unaware opponent from the rear,

he gains a bonus to hit and damage with small melee weapons, such as knives, clubs and saps. He must make a successful move silently check to sneak up, or otherwise be successfully concealed behind his foe. He then gets a +4 bonus to hit. A successful hit means he causes double damage. At 5<sup>th</sup> level damage is trebled from a back attack and at 9<sup>th</sup> level the damage is quadrupled.

**Traps (Int):** A rogue may use this ability to find, disable or set traps. Each use requires a separate check and each check may be made



## MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

only once in a given circumstance. To find a trap, the rogue must spend time searching an area to deduce possible trap locations. It takes a round to find a trap in a specific area, such as on a lock or door handle. To disable a trap, the rogue must first have found the trap. A successful check means that he has disabled it. Failure means that he set it off and could suffer the effects. To set a trap he or she needs to make a successful check. If the check fails, the trap will not trigger at the intended moment. Resetting a previously disabled trap gives the rogue a +5 to his or her check.

**Sneak attack:** At 4th level, a rogue has learned to adapt back attack skills to more general situations. When an opponent or victim is aware of the rogue, but unsuspecting of attack, a rogue can use the sneak attack ability. For example a rogue could be having a conversation with a victim while hiding a dagger up his sleeve, intending to knife him at some point. Or he could be waiting in a tree with a loaded crossbow, waiting for the perfect

opportunity to fire. A rogue making a sneak attack gains a +2 bonus to hit and a +4 bonus to damage. Ranged weapons can be used as long as the target is within 30'. A rogue cannot shoot with deadly accuracy beyond that range.

### **Rogue stats:**

**Prime Attribute:** Dexterity

**Hit Die:** D6

**Starting money:** 30-120 pennies

**Armour:** Padded, leather jerkin, leather coat, studded leather.

**Weapons:** Dagger, club, short sword, hand axe, broad sword, staff, sling, short bow, light crossbow

**Abilities:** Back attack, traps, sneak attack

### **Rogue level progression table:**

<b>Level</b>	<b>HD</b>	<b>BtH</b>	<b>EPP</b>
1	D6	+0	0
2	D6	+1	900
3	D6	+1	2700
4	D6	+2	5400
5	+1	+2	9000
6	+1	+3	13500
7	+1	+3	18900
8	+1	+4	25200
9	+1	+4	32400
10	+1	+5	40500
11	+1	+5	49500
12	+1	+6	59400

## SCHOLAR

Scholars are skilled and knowledgeable scribes, clerks, archivists or teachers. They study the nature of the world, the mysteries of theology and the nuances of the law. They are most at home among books, or disputing with one another over obscure points of philosophical interpretation, but their knowledge sometimes has a wider application, and they can find themselves involved in one side or another of a political debate or testing the finer points of law in an awkward criminal case.

While all characters can, in theory, study, none match the scholar for depth and breadth of knowledge. The scholar is always learning, and forgets little of what he knows. Most scholars obtained their education in the church which, in the middle ages was virtually the only place where there are any books to learn from. Therefore they still often have some ties to the church, even if they parted ways on differences of opinion on theological or economic matters.

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Scholars as investigators

Scholars can be skilled primary investigators, with their range of knowledge and ability to read and write. They are also very useful secondary investigators who can ably support a less studious investigator, as a crowner's clerk, for example. Some scholars are selected as agents of the church or the crown in their own right, provided they are loyal.

### Skills

Scholars can choose 6



(+Int mod) skills from the following list as class abilities, of which at least 3 must be knowledges and/or languages; Appraise, diplomacy, forgery, gossip, heal, interrogate, knowledge (choose any), languages (choose any), listen, notice, perform, search.

### Abilities

**Literate (Int):** Scholars are educated men and need to be able to read & write. Any character of this class is automatically considered literate in any language he or she can speak. An attribute check would normally be required to read works of a very complicated nature, badly written work or old and faded writing.

**Research (Int):** Even if a scholar knows nothing about a subject, as long as he has access to a library and 1d4 hours to study, he can dredge up some useful information and receives a check. Where he does have the knowledge already (but failed his initial check), he only needs half an hour to research the topic, after which time he can receive between +2 and +6 to his check, depending on the size and quality of the library, and gets

to roll again, for specific information that he missed originally.

**Scribing (Int):** Like monks and nuns, scholars can copy text exactly. This means that they can gain a bonus of +4 on any forgery check, whether to spot a fake or to make one.

**Trained memory (Int):** If a scholar takes the time to memorize something, he or she can recite it perfectly at any later date with a successful check. The time taken depends on the thing to be memorized, but as a rule of thumb it takes three times as long to memorize a piece of text as it takes to simply look over it.

### Clear Explanation

**(Int):** From 4th level a scholar can explain what he knows with such clarity and enthusiasm that even the ignorant can follow it and make use of the ability. In game terms, the scholar may explain any of his skills (not just his Knowledge skills) to someone with whom he shares a language, and that person may use the skill as if he had it at half the level as the scholar. He may use the skill at any point up to one round per level of the scholar, plus his own Int modifier after

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the scholar has finished explaining how to use the skill. For example if the scholar is 4th level and the character has an Int bonus of +1, he can use the skill any time up to 5 rounds after he received instruction and does so as if he were 2nd level. Unless he later trains in the skill, he soon forgets how to use it.

### Scholar stats:

**Prime Attribute:** Intelligence

**Hit Die:** D6

**Starting money:** 30-120 pennies

**Armour:** Padded, leather jerkin.

**Weapons:** Club, dagger, staff, light crossbow

**Abilities:** Literate, research, scribing, trained memory, clear explanation

### Scholar level progression table:

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	D6	+0	0
2	D6	+1	900
3	D6	+1	2700
4	D6	+1	5400
5	+1	+2	9000
6	+1	+2	13500
7	+1	+2	18900
8	+1	+2	25200
9	+1	+3	32400
10	+1	+3	40500
11	+1	+3	49500
12	+1	+4	59400

## Multi-classing

### Overview

Sometimes a player has an idea for a character for which two classes seem more appropriate than just the one. A noble who joins the clergy or a fighting man who falls on hard times and becomes a rogue are just a couple of the possibilities. In this instance, the option is for a GM to allow his player to have a multi-class character



### Multi-class

A multi-class character is one that starts off at 1<sup>st</sup> level with two classes. When a player wishes to have a true multi-class character, the following rules apply

- No more than two classes may be taken.
- To advance a level the character must earn enough

experience points to advance in both classes at the same time. For example, a 1st level cleric/noble would require 2000 experience points to advance to a 2nd level cleric/noble.

- The character must take the prime from both of his classes. For example a cleric/noble must have both wisdom and charisma as prime attributes. Characters may still choose their secondary attributes as they wish.
- The character uses the best bonus to hit and bonus to defence charts available to him. A 1st level cleric/noble would use the noble's bonus to hit (there is no difference at earlier levels, but the noble's BtH is better at higher levels).
- The character averages his hit points by rolling for both classes, adding the results together and dividing the total by two (rounding fractions up). Any constitution modi-



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fier the character may have is applied to the final total, with a minimum of 1. For example a cleric/noble rolls 1d6 and gets a result of 4 for his cleric class. The player also rolls 1d8 for his noble class and gets a 5. The total is 9. Divide this by 2 (rounded up) to get 5. If the character has a constitution of 12 (+1 modifier) the final total would become 6 additional hit points. At first level, the split class character automatically gets maximum hit points, so he gets  $(6+8)/2 = 7$  hit points (plus any con modifier) as a 1st level cleric/noble.

- The character may use any weapons available to both of his classes.
- The character gets a number of skills to choose as class abilities equal to the lower number of the two classes. However, he or she can choose skills available to either class.

- The character gains all other benefits and penalties of both classes such as a cleric's ordination and the noble's horse and land.

### Dual-class

A dual-class character is one that starts off life in one character class and then, later on switches his class to another one.

- No more than two classes may be taken.
- The character must advance to at least 2nd level in his first class before switching to his second class.
- The character's second class must be one for which he already has a prime attribute.
- If all of the above criteria are met then the character may abandon his first class and begin to gain experience points in his second class. He may not, however, return to his original class at a later date since such class changes usually stem



from life altering events.

- The character uses the best bonus to hit chart available to him. A 2nd level fighter who begins to advance as a apothecary would continue to use the fighter's +2 bonus to hit until he became a 8th level apothecary, at which point he would begin to use the apothecary's +3 bonus to hit.
- The character may use any weapons available to both of his classes.
- The character retains all the benefits of his original class that he had at the point where he switched classes. So a 2nd level fighter who switched to being an apothecary would retain weapon specializa-

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tion but would not gain combat dominance or extra attack. From then on he gains apothecary abilities as he rises in level as an apothecary. The character adds his hit dice from both classes together but may still never have more than four total hit dice. A 2nd level fighter/2nd level apothecary, for example, would have 2d10 hit dice from his fighter class as well as the 2d6 from his apothecary class. Once the character reaches a total of five levels (2nd level fighter/3rd level apothecary) he would begin to gain hit points according to his current class upon attaining the next level of experience i.e. +1 hit point per level.

### Completing your character

#### Persona

The appearance and demeanour of your character is entirely up to you and how you picture him or her. Describing your charac-

ter as simply a forester, doesn't really paint a picture of him. Saying that he is a stocky, longhaired woodsman with several days' stubble on his weather-beaten face gives a better picture. Adding to this description his usual style of clothing embellishes the picture further. "He wears a battered hat, pulled down over his eyes and a threadbare tunic that's seen better days, though that it partly hidden by a patched and torn cloak billowing slightly in the breeze". Now you can almost see him walking into town after a few days out on the trail.

The look of the character creates the initial impression. However, that isn't all there is to completing the picture. You need to think about what he is actually like – is he as mean and tough as he looks? Does he have any strange habits or foibles? Does

he like to drink, or is he a devout churchgoer? Is he interested in money, fame or something else entirely? Once you start to add a few of these details, then you begin to get a feel for whom he and what he is about. Don't bust a gut over it though. You don't need pages and pages of background details, just one or two things that help to give the GM and other players an idea of what your character is like. Once you start playing, you can add further details actually in character and during the game itself.

Often it is worth developing one thing that your character wants to do, especially if you talk this through with the other players (or the GM, if it is supposed to be a secret). This could be something as simple as a character wants to get even with someone who has wronged him in the past, or it could be that someone for some reason is hunting him? It might be that the character is aiming to carve out a reputation for himself, seeking wealth or power by lawful or unlawful means or any one of a number of other goals. These



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aims will give your GM some ideas for scenarios and adventures in which you have a vested interest and will therefore make the game even more exciting.

### **Name**

A character's name is a highly evocative way to help conjure up the right image of your character. Obviously, you need to choose a name that suits the historical time frame and that is suitable for the style of game that you are playing. If you are playing a light-hearted game, or playing in a 'Hollywood' not-quite historical style, then you can probably get away with taking a few more liberties. If in doubt, ask the other players or the GM. There is a list of example character names later on in this publication.

### **Equipping your character**

Once you have finished all of the

details of your character, it is time to equip him or her. Some choices of weapon are largely dictated by the character class that you have chosen. However, your choices need to reflect the character. You might think that a specific weapon does more damage than another one, therefore it is better and therefore you want it. However, sometimes just deciding that, for whatever reason, your character prefers one type over another adds to the character and is a character-driven decision, rather than one dictated by what is best in the rules. He might, perhaps be biased towards one type of sword, because that is the one he was given by his father before he died or he might prefer it just because he read somewhere that it is the fanciest or best made or for some other reason. Think about some of the reasons that you buy one make of car over another, even if one costs more or is faster or has better mileage and so on. These are all decisions that your character would make when buying his own gear.

## CHAPTER IV

### SKILLS

Every character class gets an initial choice of between 2 and 6 skills from a class list, at 1st level. The skills selected are then considered class abilities and when used, the character's level is added to the d20 roll to determine success. Each character also gains an additional skill at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12. These can come from their class skills or, if they are receiving training or tuition, can be from the main skill list. The player needs to state that he is receiving training in the new skill when he reaches the level prior to the level that he can receive the extra skill. So, upon attaining 2nd level, a fighter character might want to take training in literacy. He is assumed to be practising and learning (from an NPC scholar or cleric or other character) for the whole of the time it takes to get the 3rd level.

When your character uses a skill, you make an attribute check to see how well he or she does. The higher the result of the attribute check, the better. Based on the circumstances, your result must match or beat a particular number (a challenge rating or the result of an opposed attribute check) for the check to be successful. The harder the task,



the higher the number you need to roll.

Circumstances can affect your check; a character that is free to work without distractions can make a careful attempt and avoid simple mistakes. A character who has lots of time can try over and over again, thereby assuring the best outcome. If others help, the character may suc-

#### Skill list

Appraise (Int)  
Climb (Str or Dex)  
Craft (Int) (Armourer, blacksmith, bowyer, carpenter, goldsmith, leatherworker, potter, tailor)  
Diplomacy (Cha)  
Disguise (Cha)  
Forgery (Int)  
Gossip (Cha)  
Handle Animal (Cha)  
Heal (Wis)  
Intimidate (Cha or Str)  
Interrogate (Cha)  
Jump (Str or Dex)  
Knowledge (Int) (Religion, local area, law, nature, nobility & royalty, trade & traders, the underworld, wounds & corpses)  
Languages (Int) (Cornish, German, Irish, Latin, Middle English, Norman French, Welsh)  
Listen (Wis)  
Literacy (Int)  
Notice (Wis)  
Perform (Cha)  
Pick Lock (Dex)  
Pick Pocket (Dex)  
Ride (Dex)  
Search (Wis)  
Sense Motive (Wis)  
Stealth (Dex)  
Swim (Str)  
Track (Wis)

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ceed where otherwise he or she would fail.

A skill check takes into account a character's training (level), natural talent (ability modifier), and luck (the die roll). It may also take into account what armor he or she is wearing and any encumbrance. The chapter headed 'Game rules' explains how skills are used in greater detail.

### Skill descriptions

#### Appraise (Int)

This is the skill of determining the value and craftsmanship of common or well-known objects. Appraising a rare or exotic item requires a successful check with at least a -5 modifier. If the check is successful, you estimate the value correctly. You can even determine the maker, if local or well known, with a -10 penalty. You might also want to ascertain other details about an item, such as its age, materials used to make it and so on. All of these may involve a higher challenge rating at the GM's discretion. If you have a craft that is relevant to

the item being assessed, you can add +2 to his attribute check. It normally takes at least a minute to appraise the approximate worth of an item and rather longer for other details.

#### Climb (Dex or Str)

Climbing requires either dexterity or strength (character's choice). It is the skill of getting up a



wall, tree or steep slope/cliff face without falling. You can climb 10' per round with a successful check. A failed check means you slipped and fell at some point, possibly suffering some damage.

#### Craft (Int)

Craft is actually a number of separate skills. You could have several

crafts each purchased as a separate skill. A craft skill is specifically focused on creating, making or repairing something. Having a craft usually denotes that the character is or has been a craftsman at some point in his or her life. You can practice your trade and make a decent living, earning about 4-40 (4d10) silver pennies per week of dedicated work, plus 1 penny per level attained. You know how to use the tools of your trade, how to perform the craft's daily tasks, how to supervise untrained helpers, and how to handle common problems. (Untrained laborers and assistants earn about two pennies per day). The basic function of the Craft skill, however, is to allow you to make an item of the appropriate type. The CR depends on the complexity of the item to be created.

#### Diplomacy (Cha)

This skill covers the art of talking, persuasion, mediation, listening, reasoning, debate and even general etiquette. Make a check whenever

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you want to talk somebody out of or into an alternate course of action from one already proposed, persuade somebody to do (or not to do) something or to get across a point in a debate. It can be used to make an appeal in court, to swing the case in a different way. If backed up with a bit of hard cash, diplomacy can also be used to bribe someone, if they are of the type that would succumb to such tactics.

### **Disguise (Cha)**

You are an expert at impersonating other individuals or characteristics of general types of people. This effort usually requires a few props, a little make-up and 1d3x10 minutes of preparation for a general impersonation, if the character is to pass inspection from reasonably close. From a distance, a character can simply alter his or her gait, general stance and pull up a hood to appear pretty much someone else, to all intents and purposes. Where specific individuals are being impersonated, at least 1 month's preparation time must occur to

avoid being detected. A disguise can include an apparent change of height and weight of no more than one-tenth of the original build and size of the character. The following penalties are applied to a disguise check, where appropriate: sex difference -2, age difference (per ten years) -2. The GM makes the check secretly, so the character is uncertain of his or her success.

### **Forgery (Int)**

This is the skill of the character to write (or copy) documents and manuscripts with the intention of passing them off as the real thing. The character may need to get hold of some old parchment to duplicate something that is old, or use methods of staining and so on, to 'age' the forgery. He may also need to get hold of coloured inks, for example, to duplicate illustrated manuscripts of the type that monks write. The skill also encompasses the ability to spot a forgery (using the notice skill, with a bonus of +2).

### **Gossip (Cha)**

Just about everyone likes to gossip in the

middle ages; it is one of the main ways of passing on and receiving news and forms a major part of the evening's entertainment for most people. Gossip happens everywhere, in the tavern over a pint of ale, at the marketplace, at the banquet in a lord's manor, out in the fields and in the cloisters of the abbey. Sometimes the information turns out to be true and other times it is idle tittle-tattle. But gossip makes for a useful source of information about everything and everybody.

You can make a gossip check when you want to know something about a person, place or thing that is of the type that would be passed around in idle chatter. This represents information you just happen to 'know'. If you fail the check or the GM deems that your character wouldn't already know the information, you can go to a tavern or wherever the information might be found and see if you can find out, by gossiping. Sometimes this might require the expenditure of a quarter or half penny on ale in the alehouse, to loosen a few tongues.

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A character can add a further +2 to the gossip check if the information is about something that might specifically pertain to his or her class. So, if the gossip were about a clergyman, then a cleric character would get a +2 bonus. If it were about something that occurred in the 'seedy' area of town, then a rogue would gain a +2 to his check.

### **Handle Animal (Cha)**

A character with this skill has an affinity for dealing with animals. He knows animals pretty well and can calm them if they are afraid or angry, he can train certain animals to do a few simple things, and he knows how to look after them, feed them and give them the best care. If he also has the Heal skill, he also has a few veterinary skills. The character might simply be a farmer with skills of animal husbandry, or could have a job as an ostler, falconer, master of the hounds and so on.

A character may choose a type of animal in which to specialize (dogs, birds of prey, horses, cattle) and receives a bonus of +2

whenever dealing with that type of animal. Animal handling also allows the character to spot the good from the bad (receiving a +2 on notice checks when buying them). Characters with the handle animal skill can also gain +2 to their ride checks, which would make +4 if they also specialize with horses.

### **Heal (Wis)**

This is the skill of providing immediate



first aid to an injured person. By cleaning and bandaging a wound, with a successful check, an injured character will recover 1 hit point, will stabilize if below 0 hit points and the wound will not become infected, as long as the cleaning and dressing was applied within an hour of the character becoming injured. A character with the heal skill can add +2 to any knowledge (wounds & corpses) checks made to

assess the injuries on a dead body.

### **Intimidate (Str or Cha)**

By strength of personality or by sheer impressive size and physique (the player's choice which), a character with this skill can intimidate another. There are several uses of this skill. One might simply be to make another character back down, if for example he is getting aggressive. Another use might be to scare someone into giving information that other, more diplomatic methods have failed to acquire. Another might be to force somebody to do something that he or she wasn't intending to do. Depending on the circumstances, this ability could be used against more than one opponent, especially those of significantly lower level or 0-level folk.

### **Interrogate (Cha)**

This is a way of questioning people for specific pieces of information. It differs from gossip, because gossip tends to be stuff that is quite well known and has been 'doing the rounds'. Interrogation

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tends to be a way of getting secrets from individuals who'd rather not share those secrets. Sometimes interrogation is subtle and the victim isn't aware that he is giving away the information and other times it is clear what is happening, but the victim is unable to stop himself.

### **Jump (Str or Dex)**

A character with this skill is particularly adept at leaping over and across obstacles. The player can choose whether to use strength or dexterity as the base attribute for his or her jump checks.

### **Knowledge (Int)**

Each time you choose a knowledge, you can choose another subject which you have studied, learned or just picked up and which you know quite a lot about. This is more in depth than the sort of stuff you might pick up when gossiping in the taverns.

### **Languages (Int)**

Slightly different from the other skills in that you can choose it multiple times and each time adds another language to your repertoire. The common language in England in the time was Middle English. If they are of Norman heritage, they speak Norman French.

### **Listen (Wis)**

The character has an acute sense of hearing and may have even trained him or herself to specifically take notice of certain sounds and noises. For example, a musician can tell different notes and pitches. Its main use though is in detecting sounds like the footfall of an intruder about to commit foul murder, or listening at a door to conversation between two suspects.

### **Literacy (Int)**

In the middle ages, generally only the clergy could read and write and not all of those could do. For game purposes all apothecary, cleric and scholar characters have the literacy skill for free at the start. Anyone who is literate is assumed to be able to read and write all the

languages that he knows.

### **Notice (Wis)**

This is a general awareness of one's surroundings, things that appear odd or out of place and so on. It is a skill that you don't 'use' as such; it is constantly 'on'. Whenever there is a chance that you might have noticed something unusual, you can make a check to see whether you notice it or not. If specifically looking for something, you would use search instead.

### **Perform (Cha)**

This is the skill you need to entertain, whether that is by playing an instrument, singing, reciting poetry or even dancing. You choose what your style of performance is. Using the perform skill successfully might earn you food and lodging for a night, might earn a few pennies in the marketplace or might even hold a crowd's attention as a distraction, if needed for some reason.

### **Pick Lock (Dex)**

You can use this skill to open any sort of mechanical lock that would normally require a key



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to open. This ability usually requires a pin or some other narrow tool. Only one attempt is allowed – if the check fails, the lock has defeated the character.

### **Pick Pocket (Dex)**

This is the skill needed to remove the contents of a pocket or a pouch (or the whole pouch, or take something from a person, like a ring) without being noticed. The level of the targeted victim affects the chance of success. The skill also allows you to perform deft ‘sleight of hand’ tricks, like hiding a coin, performing the pea under the beaker trick and so on.

### **Ride (Dex)**

Just about anyone can stay on a horse, if it is just trotting along. However, this is the skill to ride a horse properly. It enables you to perform jumps, break-neck chases and other skills on horseback. This skill is needed to be able to fight from horseback.

### **Search (Wis)**

You can examine a specific area for clues, evidence or other things like catches on a hidden door or secret compartments in chests and

drawers. It is particularly useful for investigators when searching for clues at a crime scene or on a dead body. This skill does not generally enable you to find complex traps unless you are a rogue.

### **Sense Motive (Wis)**

You can use this skill to tell when someone has an agenda they are hiding from you. It is a combination of their body language, mannerisms and speech patterns that provide tell-tale clues.

### **Stealth (Dex)**

You use this skill to be quiet and unnoticed when you don’t want to be seen or heard. It is the art of sneaking up on someone, of hiding in the shadows and of using available cover to go unseen. You receive positive modifiers in the darkness or when there are things to use as cover, but it is almost impossible on a clear day, in the open.

### **Swim (Str)**

Using this skill, you are able to cross rivers, remain above water or swim around under water as needed. In a strong current, there

might be higher penalties, as there would be if you are carrying something or something heavy.

### **Track (Wis)**

You can follow the trails and tracks of people and animals across all sorts of terrain following the signs of their passage (not simply boot marks, but broken twigs, hairs caught on brambles and so on).

## **Languages and literacy**

All characters are presumed to speak Middle English or Norman French, depending on whether they are of Norman or Saxon stock (players choice, nobles will be Norman). A character with an intelligence bonus can also speak another language for every point of bonus, so with a +3 intelligence modifier he can speak an additional three languages. Others must be chosen as skills.

Clergymen, scholars and physicians can automatically read and write and are therefore literate. Other characters are literate only if they choose the Literacy skill as a class ability.

## CHAPTER V

# EQUIPMENT

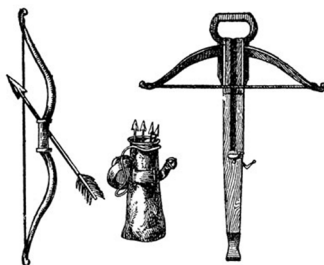
First of all, you need to determine how much money the characters start with. In the early part of the period covered by The Medieval Mysteries RPG, there were only silver pennies used as coinage. The shilling, mark and pound were used only as accounting measures. Later on pounds and shillings were used as actual currency, as were half pennies and farthings. However, for game purposes, we will stick with pennies. These were often split into two or four for small transactions. Sometimes they were also shaved or 'clipped' by unscrupulous rogues.

An average labourer could expect to receive 2 pennies a day for his hard work. Therefore, every character begins the game with a few pennies with which to buy some stuff that their character has at the start of the game. It

is assumed that they begin with a set of clothing appropriate to their class.

### Class starting money table

<b>Class</b>	<b>Pennies</b>
Apothecary	4d6x10
Cleric	2d10x10
Crowner	6d6x10
Fighter	3d8x10
Forester	2d6x10
Merchant	4d6x10
Noble	5d6x10
Rogue	3d4x10
Scholar	3d4x10



### The equipment tables

It's not possible to list everything you could need in a game, so the price lists are simply to give some examples, so that you can work out prices yourself of other items and services you might want to include in your games of the Medieval Mysteries RPG.

All prices mentioned are very approximate as they changed much over the period, as did the forms of money used. It is important to note that many people still relied on barter.

Fancier versions of the same items will cost a lot more. Of the weapons, swords in particular can be a lot more expensive in much better quality versions - up to five times the price. Clothing can be up to three or four times as much as is listed too, for higher quality garments. Hence the reason most peasants had only one set of clothing, which they patched, darned repaired and even handed down to make them last longer. Where there is no weight for an item, it simply means the weight is negligible.

Part plate & full plate is available only later in the period covered by the Medieval Mysteries RPG. Characters would not wear heavy armour most of the time anyway.

## EQUIPMENT

### Weapons; Melee

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Cost (pennies)</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Range*</i>	<i>Weight (lbs)</i>	<i>Enc</i>
Axe, woodsman's	12	1d8	-	7	3
Axe, hand	8	1d6	10'	4	2
Axe, Two-handed	20	1d12	-	16	3
Club	1/2	1d6	10'	3	2
Dagger	4	1d4	10'	1	1
Fist	-	1d2	-	-	-
Flail, Light	12	1d8	-	5	3
Flail, Heavy	18	1d10	-	16	4
Halberd	20	1d10	-	15	5
Hammer, Light	4	1d4	20'	2	2
Hammer, War	12	1d8	-	8	4
Mace, Light	10	1d6	-	6	3
Mace, Heavy	24	1d8	-	10	4
Morningstar	16	2d4	-	8	3
Sap	1	1d3	-	1	1
Spear	6	1d6	20'	4	2
Spear, long	10	1d8	-	9	4
Staff	1	1d6	-	4	4
Sword, bastard	50	1d10	-	10	4
Sword, broad	24	2d4	-	6	3
Sword, falchion	40	2d4	-	7	3
Sword, scimitar	30	1d8	-	4	3
Sword, short	20	1d6	-	3	3
Sword, long	30	1d8	-	4	3
Sword, Two handed	65	2d6	-	15	5

### Weapons; Ranged

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Range*</i>	<i>Weight (lbs)</i>	<i>Shots</i>	<i>Enc</i>
Arbalest	100	4d4	150'	12	1/3	5
Arrows (20)	4	as bow	as bow	3	-	4
Arrows (12)	3	as bow	as bow	2	-	3
Bolts (12)	2	as x-bow	as x-bow	1	-	2
Bow, Long	150	1d12	100'	3	1	4
Bow, Short	60	1d8	60'	2	1	3
Crossbow, Light	50	1d10	80'	6	1/2	3
Crossbow, Heavy	75	2d6	120'	9	1/3	4
Sling	1/2	1d6	50'	-	1	1

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### Armour

<i>Armour type</i>	<i>Cost (pennies)</i>	<i>Armour Class</i>	<i>Weight (lbs.)</i>	<i>Enc</i>
Padded gambeson	20	+1	10	2
Leather jerkin	28	+1	8	1
Leather coat	35	+2	12	2
Leather armour	40	+3	15	2
Studded leather	100	+3	20	2
Scale mail	300	+4	35	4
Mail byrnie (shirt)	600	+4	25	3
Mail hauberk (coat)	1000	+5	40	4
Splint mail	800	+6	45	4
Part plate*	2400	+7	50	4
Full plate*	4000	+8	60	4

### Clothes & accessories

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost (pennies)</i>	<i>Weight (lbs)</i>	<i>Enc</i>
Belt	1	1/2	-
Blanket, heavy	1	3	2
Boots	4	4	-
Cap	1/2	-	-
Cassock	4	2	1
Chemise, linen	1	1	-
Cloak	1	3	-
Dress	5	3	-
Gloves	8	-	-
Habit	2	3	1
Hat	1	-	-
Hose	1	1	-
Leggings	2	2	-
Mantle	5	4	1
Robe	3	4	2
Sack	1/2	1	-
Satchel, leather (for books)	3	2	2
Shirt	1	1	-
Shoes	3	1	-
Surcoat, knights	10	2	-
Skirt	2	2	-
Tunic	2	2	-
Vestments, clerical	10	8	3

## EQUIPMENT

### Horses, tack & livestock

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost (pennies)</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost (pennies)</i>
Bit/bridle	2	Mule	50
Cow	35	Ox	35
Cart, farmers	30	Pig	25
Donkey	16	Pony	60
Feed/day	1/4	Saddle	40
Harness	3	Saddle blanket	1
Horse, Destrier	800	Saddle bags	8
Horse, Nag	60	Sled	40
Horse, Riding	300	Wagon	70
Horse, Palfrey	150		

### Goods & services

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost (pennies)</i>	<i>Weight (lbs)</i>	<i>Enc</i>
Candles (8)	1	1	1
Chair	1	12	3
Chest, with lock	10	25	4
Farmer's price, bushel of wheat	3	3	2
Farmer's price, pound of wool	4	1	2
Ink, 1 vial	16	-	-
Loaf of bread	1/4	2	1
Mortar & pestle	1	2	1
Pot, clay	1/2	2	1
Pot, iron for cooking	2	4	2
Parchment, per sheet	1	-	-
Rent, field per acre	1/month	-	-
Rent, two story shop in the city	50/month	-	-
Spinning wheel	35	35	8
Tavern, tankard of ale	1/4	1	1
Tavern, food & somewhere to sleep	1	-	-
Tavern, good food & good room	4	-	-

## MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

### Encumbrance

There are several ways to deal with what a character can carry before he or she is weighed down with too much stuff. One is to ignore set rules altogether and just leave the players and GM between them to use judgement and common sense to determine when a character is getting ridiculously overloaded.

Most players are reasonable and if their character has a sword, bow, dagger, mail hauberk and clothing, then they are quite happy. Anything else they can put in their horse's saddlebags. Other players may need the GM to intervene from time to time, if using this approach.

The other method is to use the weights and encumbrance values in the equipment listings. This is how you do it.

### Determining Encumbrance

Each character has an encumbrance rating (ER) of 10 + the character's strength modifier, if any. All items and equipment have an encumbrance rating (Enc).

For many items, this rating is in the equipment lists. Simply add up the enc. value of all items carried by the character. This is the character's encumbrance rating. Don't count clothes (hat, shirt, boots etc.) that the character is wearing, but if he is 'wearing' a sword, that is counted.

There are five categories of encumbrance; none, light, moderate, heavy and overburdened. The following table indicates the amount that can be carried and in which category that level of encumbrance falls.

<b>Encumbrance category</b>	<b>Enc</b>
<b>None</b>	0 to 1xER
<b>Light</b>	1xER to 2xER
<b>Moderate</b>	2xER to 3xER
<b>Heavy</b>	3xER to 4xER
<b>Overburdened</b>	4xER to 5xER
<b>Maximum</b>	5xER

The Enc value of items is a rough measure of the size, weight and how cumbersome the object is. If you need to determine the rough enc of

other items, you can simply look at the equipment lists for a similar object and work it out from there. The GM, as always, has the final word.

### Effects of Encumbrance

There are penalties to lugging too much stuff around and this comes in the form of slower movement rates and a reduced armour class. The penalties are set out below

<b>Encumbrance category</b>	<b>Penalties</b>
<b>None</b>	No effect
<b>Light</b>	Reduce move by 1/4 and -1 to armour class
<b>Moderate</b>	Reduce move by 1/2 and -2 to armour class
<b>Heavy</b>	Reduce move by 3/4 and -4 to armour class
<b>Overburdened</b>	Move reduced to 1 foot and -8 to armour class

## CHAPTER VI

# THE GAME MASTER

**T**he GM has a bit of a job on his hands. He must prepare the game session so that the characters have plenty to do. He might decide to start with a simple murder mystery in a small town or village. This could be a way of bringing the characters together and giving them a common goal. The murdered person could even be a friend, colleague or family member of one or more of the characters.

### Characters should work together

This is a great way to get the characters working together. You could decide that some or all of the characters are already a team, having been employed to perform specific duties. If one character is a noble, the others could be his stew-

ards, servants, constables and so on. The initial set up is quite crucial in The Medieval Mysteries RPG, far more so in many other role-playing games, where the player characters are simply generic 'adventurers'.

### Characters need a vocation or job

This leads into another point. The characters also need to have some sort of job, or vocation. This is where the GM and players need to work together to come up with suitable careers or backgrounds. If you all get talking the ideas start to flow and you can get involved in the whole group's characters. This helps give the feeling that you already

know each other, rather than just being a disparate bunch of people thrown together for the purposes of the game.

Clerics are quite straightforward - you simply need to choose a local monastery, abbey, friary, the cathedral or a village church, depending on the type of cleric. This doesn't mean that they cannot have interesting past lives though, that might come back to haunt them.

For an apothecary or merchant, you need to set them in a town or city with their own shop and so on. A noble needs his own lands - you need to determine where these lands are and some basic details about them.

A fighter could be in the employ of another character as a sergeant-at-arms, a merchant's bodyguard, simply a mercenary looking for employment or a veteran who has now settled down with a wife and children, but does the odd bit of strong-arm work here and there.



## MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

### Investigations & campaigns

Once you have discussed, as a group, everyone's characters, their backgrounds and so on it does make scenario design far easier. You know what the players want from the game from what they have written on their character sheets and from what they have talked about. You can make plots and mysteries that engage them and that involve them. Sometimes you can use their backgrounds to make far more interesting scenarios than you could without such character histories.

### Start small

Once you start the first scenario, you can begin to get the players engaged in your version of medieval England. You probably want to start small, in fact this is recommended. Most of the literature on which this game is based is set mainly in just one county or even just in and around one main city and this would seem the

best thing to do with your own games. You could include one or two jaunts to far off places once in a while later on, as the characters become more familiar with the game, just to spice it up a bit, but don't overdo this. Ordinary people didn't tend to travel too far in the middle-ages. The good thing about role-playing in the medieval period is that



there are plenty of historical sources to fall back on to give ideas for adventures.

### Planning mysteries

Some GM's like to wing their adventures completely and others like to have everything planned out in the finest detail. In *The Medieval Mysteries RPG*, it is probably best to do some pre-planning but to leave

yourself some room for manoeuvre, because inevitably the players will follow a different course of investigation than the one you write down. They may even jump to some conclusions that you hadn't thought about, but that you prefer to the one you have written. The difficulty is always how much to pre-prepare and how much to fill in the gaps as you go. This partly depends on how comfortable or experienced you are as a GM, how well you know your players and what you would expect them to do in a situation, and how familiar you are with the genre and medieval history generally. It may

take a few gaming sessions before you find your own level.

### What is the mystery?

One of the first steps is to decide what the mystery is. Most will be murders of some sort or another, but you could vary the game with a few robberies or a case of arson or even a case of rape. Some mysteries



## THE GAME MASTER

will use several of these elements. You don't even need to rely on medieval historical fiction for your scenarios. There are other sources you could plunder for good ideas. Some other historical detective fiction, like Sherlock Holmes, Campion and Poirot can be tailored to suit. Modern mystery fiction is also a good source of material. There are plenty of movies and television series that are perfect for adaptation to your gaming needs.

### **Who did it and why did it happen?**

Once you have determined what it is that the characters will be investigating you need to begin to sketch out a few ideas for who committed the crime and why they did it. Sometimes the 'who' comes before the 'why' and sometimes it is the other way around. You probably need to ask yourself a few questions like:

- ❖ Was it a single individual, or was more than one person involved?
- ❖ Why did they do it - what was the motive?
- ❖ How did they do it - what was the weapon used, if it was a

murder, for example?

- ❖ What did they do immediately after they committed the crime - for example, did they try to cover it up or make it look like someone else did it, or did they just run away?
- ❖ Did anyone else witness the crime? Are the witnesses reliable?
- ❖ What is the felon doing now?

Some of these questions will come easily and others less so, but you probably need to jot down a few notes as you go. Try to keep it simple too, especially in your first few games. The players will undoubtedly complicate things enough as soon as they get going.

### **How is the crime discovered?**

A key element is to determine how the body is found, the robbery spotted or the rape reported. It is worth giving serious consideration to this as you don't want all of your scenarios to begin in exactly the same way. You want to mix things up a bit, by having different approaches to the discovery of the crime. A few possibilities are:

- ❖ The crime is discovered after the event by one of the characters
- ❖ The crime is discovered by one of the characters as it is being committed
- ❖ The crime is discovered by another individual, who reports it to the characters
- ❖ The lord, patron or superior to the primary investigator requests that the characters investigate the mystery on his or her behalf
- ❖ The crime is discovered as a result of an investigation into another (lesser) mystery
- ❖ The perpetrator himself reports the crime, but accuses someone else

### **Looking for clues**

Once the crime is out in the open, the characters will have to start digging around to find some clues. This is a vitally important stage in The Medieval Mysteries RPG, and really what the game is all about. Characters want to get to use their abilities, so you need to let them. They want to feel they are getting somewhere, so you need to let them. If they fail a roll, don't neces-

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sarily just tell them they have drawn a blank, but don't give them all the details that they would have got if their check was a success.

You need to develop some interesting NPCs for the characters to question, interrogate, threaten, cajole or persuade. These NPCs can be friends, family members, lovers, enemies or acquaintances. You need to know what clues are available at the crime scene, at other associated crime scenes, with the witnesses and with the perpetrator.

So, if it was a murder and you have decided the murder weapon (a knife) is still in the body, you need to know who the knife belongs to. Then the investigators have a lead that they can follow. Did the knife belong to the victim? Did it belong to the murderer, or did he just steal it from the original owner? How will the original owner react when the characters start to question him? Was the knife stuck in the guy to throw the investigators off the scent, when in reality the victim was poisoned or strangled?

As you can see, this is just a fairly simple idea, which can go off in all sorts of interesting directions. If you have thought this stuff out beforehand, it can make running the whole thing a lot easier when the characters start sleuthing.

### Non-player characters

Non-player characters (NPCs) are a highly important feature of The Medieval Mysteries RPG. These are the characters that the players can interact with during the course of their adventures. Some will go on to become firm friends and may even occasionally help the characters out in some tricky situations. Others will drift in and out of game sessions and some may appear only once, perhaps because something bad happens, like they get killed.

Most often though, NPCs are the character's enemies. They are dangerous and often of a higher level than the player characters. Sometimes they will have followers of their own (generated as folk). A nobleman or fighter could be a mercenary officer with a sergeant and a few spearmen and archers, an outlaw could be a forester with a gang of thugs, a merchant could be a weapons trader with a couple of 'heavies' or swordsmen for protection.

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The GM should try to give his NPCs as much attention as the players give to their own characters. NPCs shouldn't be pushovers either. If you've gone to the trouble of creating them, you don't want them killed the minute they meet the player characters! Much better for them to get away and become a thorn in the side of the characters – someone who the characters can begin to hate or at least respect.

These NPCs can also go up in level too. If one has been around as long as the characters and they have gone up levels, it is likely that their enemies will have had adventures of their own in the meantime. The characters could even hear about the NPCs exploits during their adventures, even if they don't meet up in that particular session. It all helps to create a believable and evolving, rather than static environment and gives the illusion that the world exists beyond the character's escapades. There are some sample NPCs that the GM can use directly or as inspiration for ones of his or her own creation in the 'Animals, folk & NPCs' section.

### Rewards

As characters complete their investigations, win their battles, bring criminals to justice, outwit their opponents, bring their information to their patrons, survive their adventures, defeat their enemies and garner the spoils of war, they gain experience. They end the adventures stronger, wiser and more capable. To reflect this, the GM awards experience points to the players on an individual basis or as a group.

### Experience points

After characters defeat the bad (or good) guys, collect gold and do other adventurous things they earn experience points (XP). The GM can award these points as he sees fit, but the following suggestions are recommended

### Foes

The GM adds the value of all foes overcome during the adventure. The points for animals, folk and NPCs are set out in the appropriate description later in these rules.

### Money

Although not all GMs will award experience for making money some will. This is especially



important to characters for whom making money is particularly important – merchants could get experience whenever they sell goods for a healthy profit, rogues get experience for loot made from robberies and mercenaries from looting and so on. The

## MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

amount of the award is up to the GM and will depend on how much money he has available to his characters, but it should be something like an experience point per shilling.

### **Story**

The GM should assign an experience point value to each adventure and award that total to each character who completed the adventure.

### **Role-playing**

The GM can also award specific experience point bonuses to characters for good role-playing, in a specific situation or over the course of the adventure. 50 to 500 points is a good base, depending on the character's current level.

### **Gaining levels**

Characters can gain a level if they earn enough experience points. This equates to becoming better and more experienced at the character's career. With new levels, the character gains more abilities and a greater chance of success at those he already has. Hit points increase as does bonus to hit and bonus to armour class.

To gain a level, the character must accumulate enough experience points to meet the number of points required for the next level. The experience table used is set out in the character class descriptions. A character starts off at 1st level with 0 experience points. To reach second level he needs to amass 900, 1000 or 1100 experience points. This may take one adventure or may take several, depending on the length of the adventure, the overall goals and how well the characters do. The GM should ensure that enough experience is available for characters to advance in levels after one to three adventures, certainly at lower levels, just to give the players a feeling that their characters are advancing and becoming a little more reputable.

Once a character has the required number of experience points, he immediately gains his new level and with it increased hit points (by rolling the appropriate die and adding constitution modifiers), and any increase to BtH. He also gains any new abilities or skills. At

every four levels, he can also choose an attribute to increase by one point.

### **Alternative system**

As usual The Medieval Mysteries RPG is a game about choices and what works for the players. Some players can't stand keeping track of their experience points and find it a chore that detracts from their enjoyment of the game. If this is the case, or simply if the GM prefers to do things this way, the GM can simply award a new level gain whenever he feels it would be appropriate for the characters to advance. This can be based on a set number of adventures, say after every three completed adventures or, it can be based on something less defined. The GM might want to throw some higher-level opponents at the characters or might have a storyline that needs the characters to advance at a certain rate so that they can continue to be effective. This is a much more story-based system than the mechanical system presented above and will suit some groups more than it suits others.

## CHAPTER VII

# THE GAME RULES

**T**here are many situations during the course of a game of The Medieval Mysteries RPG where the characters will want to do things and there is a chance that they will fail. The type of thing that we are talking about here are things like leafing through a set of old parchments to find some inconsistencies in the writing, a break-neck horse-chase down a country lane, listening in on a conversation on the other side of a closed door, leaping across a wide chasm, sneaking up behind an enemy to clobber him on the back of his head, trying extract some information from a taciturn mercenary and so on.

### The system

In these situations, an attribute check is used to see whether the action succeeds or fails.

The attribute check is made by the player rolling a d20 and adding the attribute modifier of one of the character's six attributes. The attribute used is the one most appropriate to the action that is being attempted. Sometimes the character's level is added to the die roll too. If the total score exceeds the target number, the character succeeds.

Only those actions that have a significant chance of failure need to be resolved in this way. There are plenty of things that characters should do automatically, without needing to resort to an attribute check. Stopping to look up a rule or modifier and rolling dice can disrupt the narrative flow of the game and is really to be avoided wherever practical or possible. But sometimes, the dramatic tension can be heightened by judicious use of the attribute check and a dice roll is ideal in these situations.

### The base target number

When it is clear that an attribute check is need-



ed, the GM must identify the attribute to be checked. Sometimes the player might disagree and, if they can put a reasonable argument for why a different attribute should be checked, this is perfectly acceptable. In the case of class abilities and skills, the attribute is listed in the class description or in the skill list. In the case of saving throws, these are usually self-evident and are set out in more detail later.

The target number is determined first of all by finding the base number. The base is always one of 12, 15 or 18. The actual number depends on whether the attribute being checked is the character's primary, secondary or tertiary attribute.

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### **The challenge level**

The next step is to determine the challenge level. If the action is being taken against an opponent, then the challenge level is simply the level of the opponent. So if a character is sneaking up on somebody, the challenge level would be the level of the person being snuck up on. In other situations where there is no opponent, the GM has to use a bit of judgment as to the relative difficulty of the task and apply his own challenge level. As a rule of thumb, challenge levels of 0 to 5 is suitable for easy tasks, 6 to 10 for moderate tasks, and very difficult tasks are rated 11 to 15. Truly awesome tasks bring about a challenge rating of over 15 but this should really be reserved for only very spectacular efforts. If in doubt, it is better to set the challenge level lower rather than higher as it is better for the game to have player characters succeed rather than fail.

### **Saving throws**

Saving throws are similar to attribute checks, only they occur as a result not of actions taken by the character but as a result of actions against the character or

something acting against the character, often passively. So a saving throw is an attribute check for the character to avoid damage or some other harmful effect, caused by specific situations or effects.

A player making a saving throw for his character rolls a d20 and adds the appropriate attribute modifier, in the usual way. The GM selects the appropriate attribute using common sense. For example, to avoid a rock-fall, you need to have sharp reflexes and so dexterity would be used. To resist the worst effects of alcohol or poison, constitution should be checked. If the attribute being checked is a primary attribute the challenge base is 12. It is 15 and 18 for secondary and tertiary attributes respectively. To this challenge base the GM adds modifiers based on the situation, the level of the NPC causing the saving throw, the level of the trap or the strength level of the poison.

When a saving throw is failed, the character suffers some or all of the effects. Some effects are

described in these rules, for example damage taken from a fire is halved when the saving throw succeeds. The GM could say the same thing with a rock-fall, after first determining the level of the rock-fall in numbers of d6 or d10, for example.

### **Combat overview**

Much of the excitement in playing The Medieval Mysteries RPG occurs when some form of combat takes place. Whether this is a tavern brawl amongst a bunch of mercenaries just come into the town, a jousting tournament between the local lord and a foreign knight or a wagon train of peddlers and merchants protecting themselves against a violent gang of robbers and cutthroats, combat is often the climax of very many role-playing sessions. Managing combat is often a challenging affair as the GM must not only know the rules but must also know how to apply the rules fluidly to maintain a sense of excitement through description and action.

The combat rules in The Medieval Mysteries RPG have been kept deliber-

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ately simple. Much room for interpretation has been left to the GM, as there cannot be rules for absolutely everything that might happen in a fight. The rules have been designed to organize the action of the combat to a certain degree but to allow the narrative flow of the combat from both players and GM to have an important role.

### **Basic outline of combat rounds**

Combat is broken down into segments called combat rounds. Each combatant normally gets to act once per round. Each participant acts during a round in order established by the roll of a d20 (plus or minus modifiers). This is called initiative. The character with the highest initiative acts first, and then each character in turn performs an action until the last character has acted. Once all participants have acted, the round is over and a new round begins, with the character that had the highest initiative from the last round.

### **Combat round**

One combat round is 10 seconds long. During this round, all the characters and non-player characters should get a chance to do something. Generally only one action is allowed, such as firing a bow, punching someone or mounting a horse. The types of actions are discussed ahead.

It is important to remember that each round is an abstract measurement. The actions and activities that occur in a round are not meant to take place during specific segments of

time, with the rest of that time the character doing nothing at all. The action is all happening together, with characters moving, talking, yelling, reaching for their weapons, jumping, cursing, dodging, stumbling, getting distracted, looking out for friends, listening, and so on. All this happens in a round, in a fluid burst of activity and should be narrated as such.

### **Surprise**

Before combat begins, the GM determines if one or the other party is surprised. Surprise is a situation in which the characters happen upon

their enemies and neither is aware or expects the other. Surprise may also occur where one party is deliberately trying to surprise the others – like in an ambush, for example. Before any surprise roll is made, The GM determines if surprise is possible. A group that is aware of another's presence cannot be surprised. If a party can be surprised, a wisdom attribute check is made by the individual in the group with the best



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chance of succeeding at it, or by each member of the group individually. If the check is successful, that party or individual is not surprised. Failure indicates surprise.

When a party or individual is surprised, their opponents automatically gain the initiative for the first round of combat. Once every member of the party that gains the surprise has had a chance to act, initiative is determined for the second and subsequent rounds.

### Initiative

An initiative roll determines the order of action in a combat round. Every combatant participating in the fight rolls a d20 to determine their initiative at the start of the combat. Once this is determined, the order stays that way throughout the fight. Those with the highest initiative get to do what they want to do first and then the next highest and so on. To the d20 roll, characters add their dexterity modifier and their level. This is because faster characters act more speedily and more experienced characters are able to weigh up a situation quicker and act more

decisively. Sometimes the GM may want to make a group initiative roll for non-player characters, especially where there are a lot of them, maybe only making a separate one for the leader or an important NPC.



### Combat actions

In a combat round, characters could carry out a wide variety of actions. Every possible thing they could do can be categorized in one of six types of action that may be performed in combat that have a chance of failure. The six possible actions are attack, opportunity attack, move, use an ability, re-focus or a non-combat action.

### Attack

A character is allowed one attack each round unless they possess a special ability allowing them to exceed the limitation, such as the extra attack of the fighter character class when they reach 10th level. Attacks include melee

attacks; either armed or unarmed and ranged attacks with throwing weapons or already loaded crossbows.

### Opportunity action

A character with a high initiative can withhold his action to see what happens around him before taking his action at a later point in the combat round. On his initiative, he simply states that he is awaiting his opportunity and does nothing else. At any point from then until the end of the round he can take his action whenever he likes or whenever an opportunity presents itself. He cannot alter this at the end of the round to re-focus instead. Once he has declared he is awaiting an opportunity, he is preparing himself to react and if an opportunity doesn't arise to do anything, then he loses his action for that round.

### Move

If no other action is taken, a character can move a distance equal to their full movement rate. Full movement also includes jogging (twice normal move rate) and running (quadruple normal move rate).



## THE GAME RULES

### **Use an ability or skill**

A character may perform a class ability each round. Some abilities take more than a round to complete. An ability may involve movement but in most cases movement will not exceed the normal rate. Abilities are described more fully in the character class section.

### **Re-focus**

As long as the character does nothing at all during the round, he may re-roll his initiative at the beginning of the next round and act according to the new initiative roll if it is higher than the original, otherwise reverting to the original.

### **Non-combat action**

These are things that a character might do that could have a bearing on the combat but are otherwise not really combat orientated nor do they involve the use of an ability. The action could be as simple as reloading a crossbow, standing still, talking, picking something up, watching and waiting or opening a door. Such actions typically have no chance of failure, but they do take time. No

matter the type of action attempted, it is up to the GM to decide how long any action takes and whether it can be completed in a single round.

### **Movement in the combat round**

Once initiative or surprise is determined, each combatant is allowed an action. One of the allowed actions is movement. Most characters and other people have a standard move rate of 30 feet. Some classes can move further than this at higher levels with their class abilities. Movement, like the combat round is an abstraction. It is a matter of establishing the distance that can be moved in a given period of time. Movement can be in a straight line, a curve, around a corner or twists and turns. Movement can be increased by dashing (double the movement rate), or running (quadruple the movement rate).

An attacker can move up to half their movement rate and attack. No attack is allowed if a character exceeds half his or her movement rate. The exception is when a charge is at-

tempted. Charging allows for an attack at the end of the full move, but there are special rules for charging too. The GM can decide to reduce movement rates due to terrain, obstacles, injuries or other circumstances. Generally, movement rates should not be reduced by more than three quarters. The GM should always allow at least a 5-foot movement in a combat round, unless the character is restrained or otherwise unable to move.

### **Charging**

Charging is a way of trying to improve the effect of any melee or unarmed attack on the target. A successful charge attack inflicts a +2 bonus to the damage inflicted on a successful attack. However, it opens the character up to being hit easier and therefore it also causes a -2 penalty on his defence bonus for all attacks in the round. The charge must be announced prior to the character moving.

When charging, the character is considered to be dashing or running. The character must minimally move the full distance of their

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movement rate (normally 30 feet) and the charge must be in a straight line to the target.

### Melee combat

Melee occurs when two or more people engage in hand-to-hand combat and are wielding weapons of some kind. The attacker rolls a d20 and adds his basic to hit bonus (from his class and level) plus any strength modifier. If the total is greater than or equal to the defender's armour class, the attacker has hit the defender and inflicts damage as determined by the type of weapon being used. Unarmed combat is considered melee combat too, but is detailed below.

A melee attack, just like all movement and other stuff that goes on in a combat round is an abstraction. Though the character usually only makes one melee attack in a round, it should not be considered only one swing or stab of his weapon. A melee attack consists of a series of thrusts, parries, attempted attacks, feints, backing off, ad-

vances and so on, that sometimes results in damage to the defender. The damage from the blow could actually be seen as a series of nicks and cuts, bruising or even fatigue.

### Ranged combat

When your character fires a bow, sling or crossbow (or throws an axe or some other weapon) at another, the ranged combat rules apply. Dexterity is the attribute that modifies a ranged attack to hit roll. If the total of the d20 roll plus the character's basic to hit bonus and dexterity modifier is greater than or equal to the defender's armour class, the attacker has successfully hit the defender and inflicts damage as determined by the bow or other weapon used.

### Thrown weapons

Thrown weapons include knives, hand axes, light hammers and

spears. The strength bonus to damage is included on all successful hits with thrown weapons, but not with firearms.

### Range increments

Ranged weapons have range increments and they have a maximum effective distance equal to three times the listed range increment, as set out in the equipment (weapons) table. The listed range increment is considered to be close range. Weapons fired or thrown at up to this range are used without a range penalty to the "to hit" attack roll. At beyond close range and up to twice that range, is considered medium range and beyond that and up to three times the close range is counted as long range. Medium range attracts a -2 penalty on to hit attack rolls and long range attracts a -6 penalty.

### Unarmed combat

Brawling is melee combat where no weapons are being used, i.e. unarmed combat. In most cases, the success of these attacks is determined as normal



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with a d20 roll and by adding the characters to hit bonus and strength modifiers. If the total is equal to or higher than the defender's armour class, the attacker has successfully hit the defender and inflicts damage as determined by the class ability.

There are also special unarmed attacks of an entirely different nature and effect, such as grappling, pummelling, and overbearing. Each type follows the same basic principle but with different modifications to the "to hit" roll and to the damage inflicted. For example, characters that wish to punch or kick and are not trained are in effect attempting a pummelling attack.

### **Grappling**

This type of attack involves grabbing and holding a defender, like wrestling or in a 'bear-hug'. Grappling is directed at holding an opponent and subduing them. The attacker rolls a d20 as normal, and adds strength and basic to hit bonus modifiers. The opponent's armour class is increased (or reduced) for grappling attacks by his strength modifier (if he has one). If the resulting armour

class of the opponent is equalled or beaten by the total roll plus modifiers of the attacker, then he has successfully grappled his opponent. The defender is held and cannot act except to attempt to break free. The defender can break free by making his own grappling attack.

### **Pummelling**

This involves the use of fists, feet, knees and elbows to inflict damage on an opponent, with the intention of knocking them out or otherwise incapacitating them. As usual the attacker rolls d20 to hit adding strength and basic to hit modifiers. If the total exceeds the defender's armour class, the pummelling inflicts d2 hit points of subdual damage. Damage is modified by strength.

### **Overbearing**

This type of attack is used to knock an opponent down. This tactic is used in wrestling and other types of hand-to-hand combat as well as when an animal charges into somebody. As usual, the attacker rolls d20 and adds appropriate modifiers. If a hit is successful, the defender



gets to make a strength saving throw to remain on his feet. If not successful, he is knocked prone for the remainder of the round. In addition, the defender takes d2 points of subdual damage. An attacker making an overbearing attack is at -2 to his armour class for the combat round as he is more exposed than usual.

### **Situational modifiers**

Situational modifiers are nebulous and, for the most part, those that the GM deems appropriate. There are often situations that crop up where it is impossible to set a rule or the rules would be unwieldy. In these circumstances, the GM must use reason, common sense or narrative development to determine what modifier should be applied the "to hit" roll. It is even possible to ask the players what modifier

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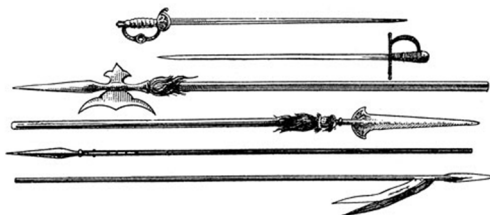


they think might be appropriate in the circumstances and to explain their reasoning for it. It depends on your group though, how often you use this approach.

In general, combat to hit modifiers can be broken down into three categories: easy, difficult and heroic. For tasks that are easy, up to a +/-5 modifier could be applied. Difficult tasks would range from +/-6 to 10 and heroic would range from +/- 11 and higher.

Some situational modifiers can be applied with regularity as they can occur quite frequently. These are listed below and can be used as a guide to help in making

decisions about other unusual situations. Concealment includes those circumstances where nothing physically blocks the attack but there is something that interferes with the attacker's view and/or accuracy. The modifiers are cumulative. In all instances, the attacker must know of the defender's presence, even if the exact location is not known. The GM should add to the list as new situations crop up, to maintain consistency in the game.



### Situational modifier table

Situation	Modifier
Defender prone or blind	+5
Defender prone & defenceless	+10
Defender at lower elevation	+1
Defender stunned or cowering	+2
Defender invisible/attacker blind	-10
Melee attack from mount or unstable platform	-2
Ranged attack from mount or unstable platform	-4
Defender 1/4 concealed* (light fog or smoke)	-2
Defender 1/2 concealed* (dense fog or smoke)	-4
Defender 3/4 concealed* (near darkness)	-6
Defender completely concealed (total darkness)	-10

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### Armour class

Armour class is representative of the type of armour the defender is wearing as well as his ability to avoid being hit in combat. It results from a combination of agile avoidance of incoming attacks or even an ability to absorb the shock of a damaging blow, or to 'roll with it'. Armour class begins at 10 for all characters. A person with an average dexterity and wearing no armour is automatically armour class 10. Armour class can increase through a high dexterity and through buying better armour. Armour class modifiers are detailed below.

### Shields

Each type of shield adds +1 to armour class whilst being used. The shield size determines how many opponents the +1 modifier applies against. Small shields are useful only against one opponent. Medium shields against two and large shields are useful against up to three opponents. Shields are no use against attacks from behind.

### Dexterity

Dexterity modifies a character's armour class

if that character can physically react to the attack. Characters lose their dexterity modifier when they are surprised, unaware of an attacker or when they are restrained or otherwise rendered immobile. Dexterity does not apply when attacked from the rear, unless the character knows the attacker is there and about to attack him.

### Armour

Metal armour provides better protection than lighter armour, such as leather or padded cloth. The better the armour protection, the higher the armour class modifier. Plate armour provides the best protection, but this isn't available until later in the period and is only likely, even then, to be worn in battle or at tournaments.

### Cover

Cover confers an armour class bonus as follows:

Type of cover	Armour class bonus
1/4 cover	+2
1/2 cover	+4
3/4 cover	+6
full cover	+10

Although cover is used primarily against ranged weapons and firearms, it can occasionally be used in melee combat. In some cases, the GM may rule that the character seeking cover may not attack.

Situation and circumstance: There may be occasions when the GM feels that an armour class adjustment is appropriate. When applying additional modifiers, common sense and fairness must be exercised. If in doubt, err in favour of the player characters.

### Combat manoeuvres

Characters can attempt all sorts of additional actions in combat other than just shooting their missile weapons or attacking and so on. There cannot be rules for everything that a character will do, but a GM can make judgments based on some of the manoeuvres set out below and what seems reasonable in the circumstances.

### Dodge

The character sacrifices his normal action to use his best means to dodge up to three attacks in that combat round. It

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can be used against only those attackers that the character is facing and aware of. The character gains +2 to his armour class while dodging. A dodge can be declared at any time in the combat round as long as the character hasn't taken any other action.

### **Disengage**

Disengaging is an attempt to get out of a hand-to-hand combat situation. This is dangerous as it exposes the character to attacks. If disengaging a character can take no other action. He may move as far as possible away from his enemy, but suffers a -2 to his armour class and the opponent gets a free attack as the character tries to get away. The armour class adjustment applies to all attempts against the character in the round, ranged or melee.

### **Disarm**

A fighter, crowner, noble, forester or rogue can attempt to disarm an opponent in melee combat. The attacker must successfully hit an

armour class of 18 plus the level of the defender to successfully disarm them. For example, a fighter would need to hit an armour class equivalent of 23 to disarm a 5<sup>th</sup> level character. The defender can add his dexterity bonus (if any) to his effective armour class.



### **Evade**

This is a desperate attempt to get out of the way of an attack. This allows a one-off defence bonus against one opponent of +4.

### **Flank attack**

This is a side attack that is not directly be-

hind the defender. This confers a bonus of +1 to hit, as it is harder to defend against.

### **Rear attack**

Attacks from behind gives the attacker a +2 bonus to hit, either with melee weapons or bows.

### **Two-Weapon fighting**

Characters can attempt to fight with two weapons, such as a sword in one hand and a dagger in another. This is not a common fighting style at this time, but it is an option. This is very difficult. When using two weapons, the character must state which is his primary hand, meaning that the other is referred to as his 'off-hand'. The character is able to use or fire both weapons in a round, but the attack with the primary hand is at -3 to hit and the attack with the off-hand is at -6 to hit. The character's dexterity modifier affects these attacks, but strength will only be used to determine damage (for melee attacks). This can be used with the fight-

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er's combat dominance and extra attacks.

### **Hit points**

Hit points represent the amount of damage, physical and mental, that a character or non-player character can take before passing out or dying. A character's hit points are a mere abstraction. It is generally a representation of the overall health of the individual. The higher the hit points, the healthier the character is.

Hit points are determined by the character's hit die and level. The character class tells you the type of die to use to determine how many hit points a character has. At each level, the hit die type is rolled and added to the previous total. The constitution modifier is added to or subtracted from the die roll. At 1<sup>st</sup> level, characters automatically begin with the maximum hit points for their class. At 5<sup>th</sup> level, all classes simply acquire hit points at a specified rate without a die roll. Constitution modifiers are applied to this. In all cases, characters gain at least 1 hit point at each level.

Hit points can be reduced by weapons, exhaustion, poisons, fire and other things. These are covered in greater detail in the following section. Once damage has been taken, healing is needed for hit points to be restored. Hit points can never exceed the level they were at before taking the damage.

### **Healing**

In general, hit points heal at a rate of one point per day as long as the character is resting, well fed, kept warm and comfortable and the wounds have been cleaned and tended to. After seven days, the rate of healing speeds up to include the character's constitution bonus, if any (but not penalty). After 14 days the rate of healing doubles and after thirty days, it triples. Rates of healing can be improved by medicines, diet, and level of care or other factors that the GM deems applicable.

### **Falling to 0 hit points**

In general, when 0 hit points is reached, the character passes out. The character is not dead, but incapable of

acting due to blood loss and damage. The character will recover consciousness after d6 hours after which, they can move at half their normal move rate but cannot participate in combat or take any other strenuous action.

### **Falling below 0 hit points**

When a character falls below 0 hit points, the character is severely wounded and loses 1 hit point per combat round from blood loss after the round in which he or she was damaged. The character requires immediate medical attention and provided aid is administered before the damage reaches -10, the character is stabilized. Once stabilized, the character stops losing hit points but then requires 24 hours of bed rest and the attention of a doctor before the actual healing process can begin. With appropriate rest and medical attention, the character will recover back to 0 hit points after 24 hours. Then he begins to recover in accordance with the rules for falling to 0 hit points, above.

### **Dying**

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A character that reaches -10 hit points is dead through trauma and blood loss. The character is then buried at the local graveyard, at his family crypt or in a burial pit. It is then time for the player to create another character. Hopefully this won't happen too often.

### **Damage**

When characters successfully hit their opponents they cause them damage, which comes directly from the foes hit points. When characters are themselves struck in combat, the damage caused to them comes of their own hit points. The damage caused depends upon the type of weapon used and this is detailed in the equipment section of these rules. The damage is applied immediately. For some characters, the damage from a weapon will be enough to kill straight away but for others the same amount of damage might leave them with plenty of hit points remaining, especially where one character is of a higher level than another.

### **Weapon damage**

The amount of damage inflicted is determined by the weapon being used and can be seen of the equipment (weapons) table. Damage from melee weapons is adjusted by the strength modifier of the character using the weapon. Some animals use their claws, hooves and teeth to cause damage. The amount of damage is listed in the Animals, folks & NPCs section.

### **Subdual damage**

Subdual damage is not usually fatal. It represents the bludgeoning damage that a person might receive when struck in a fistfight or a brawl, rather than the type of damage knives, swords and arrows might cause. It probably hurts and may knock a person out but only sometimes draws blood and usually heals quite quickly.

Fists, feet and some of the improvised weapons cause subdual damage.

An attacker can use weapons (apart from bows and crossbows) to deliver subdual damage rather than regular damage. This would be where the blunt end of the spear, a club or a quarterstaff is being

used. In this case, the damage is rolled for normally but applied as subdual damage rather than normal damage. For every 5 points of subdual damage caused though, 1 point is always regular damage.

Subdual damage heals faster than normal damage, as it is not normally fatal. It heals at a rate of 1 hit point per 10 minutes. At a GM's discretion, a character who takes enough subdual damage to reach -10 hit points has taken so much punishment to cause damage to their internal organs, resulting in death. If not, they still require 24 hours of bed rest and do not begin healing until they regain consciousness.

### **Falling damage**

When a character falls from a height of 5 feet or more, he suffers falling damage (or more specifically hitting the ground hard damage). Falling from heights can be particularly deadly.

If a character falls from a height of 6 to 10 feet, he needs to make a dexterity check. If the check is successful, the character lands safely. If the check fails, the charac-



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ter suffers 1d6 points of damage. From heights of greater than 10 feet, damage is 1d6 extra per 10 feet fallen. The damage for each 10 feet fallen is cumulative. For example, if a character falls 18 feet, he takes 1d6 for the first 10 feet and 2d6 for the second 10 feet, for a total damage of 3d6. If a character falls from a height of 45 feet, he takes 1d6 for the first 10 feet, 2d6 for the next, 3d6 for the next and 4d6 for the last 10 feet, for a total damage of 10d6.

### **Drowning damage**

When a character is in water and fails a swim check, he can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to his constitution. After that time, if he fails another swim check to get his head above water, he starts to drown. Damage is d6 hit points per round under the water and is considered subdual damage. If the character reaches -10 then he has drowned.

### **Infection**

Every wound a character receives that is the maximum for that type of weapon, (e.g. a natural 4 received from a dagger) has a chance of

infection. Make a constitution saving roll, with a challenge rating based on the amount of damage received less 6. So, with the dagger, the modifier will be -4 (assuming no damage bonus from a high strength) +6, = +2.

If infection sets in, the day following receiving the wound, the character immediately gets a fever and loses 3 from all attributes. He needs warmth, bed rest, plenty of liquids, clean bandages and constant attention. Without these things he or she is likely to die. At the end of each day, make a further constitution saving throw (based on the reduced score). For each one of the above requirements he or she is receiving, he gets a positive modifier to the check. So, for example if he is being well cared for with every possible convenience, he gets +5 to his roll. The presence of an apothecary, especially one of high level, will add to his or her chances of surviving the infection.

For a success, he has thrown off the fever. Improve all attributes by 1. Thereafter, his attributes will increase by 1

each day until the fever is gone. Then the wound will begin to heal, in accordance with the healing rules.

For a failure, attributes fall by 1 and the fever is worsening. The next day, he can get another attribute check and so on. If a physical attribute (strength, constitution, dexterity) falls to 0, the character will die. If a mental attribute falls to 0, (Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma) the character will go mad.

### **Stunning**

A character will suffer a potential stun if a hit exceeds his constitution attribute. First of all, make a constitution saving throw (add level) to avoid being stunned. Failure means the character is knocked over and stunned for d6 rounds.

### **Fumbles**

These occur in combat when a natural 1 is rolled on the d20. If this happens, you automatically miss the target and need to roll the dice again. To avoid a mishap, you need to roll an 8 or higher. Add your dexterity modifier and level to the roll. Another 1 is always a fumble. If

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the result is a fumble, consult the table below:

<b>D20 Roll</b>	<b>Effect of fumble</b>
<b>1-4</b>	You drop your weapon. It is near enough to retrieve.
<b>5-7</b>	Your weapon breaks. It is no longer useable.
<b>8-12</b>	You stumble and are at -1 to your armour class until your next initiative round.
<b>13-14</b>	You slide and are at -2 to your armour class until your next initiative round.
<b>15-16</b>	You slip and fall over.
<b>17-18</b>	Your weapon flies out of your hand, landing 20' away.
<b>19</b>	If you are within 5' of a colleague, you knock into him or her, putting them off their next attack. If not, you stumble. Refer to the result for 8-12 above.
<b>20</b>	If you are within 5' of a colleague, you could actually hit him or her. Roll to hit and damage as normal. Otherwise drop weapon as in 1-4 above.



### Critical hits

A critical hit is a hit that strikes a vital area of the target's body. This results in additional damage over and above that of the normal dice roll made for damage. Critical hits potentially occur on a natural roll of 20. That is to say, when rolling to hit, the dice itself comes up with a 20 on its face. If this happens the player rolls the dice again. If the result of the second roll is a hit, then a critical hit results. If the second die roll results in a miss, then damage is simply the

maximum for the weapon.

Critical hits result in the damage caused being the maximum for the weapon and the critical hit will also cause an extra effect, which is determined from a further d20 roll on the Critical Hit table, below. Note that because damage from critical hits is automatically the maximum for the weapon, the wound is also potentially infected too.

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## Critical hit table

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D20 Roll	Effect of critical hit
1	Hand hit, finger broken. Drop anything in hand. Cannot use for 2 weeks.
2	Hand hit. D4 fingers sliced off. Dexterity reduced by 1 per finger lost.
3	Arm hit, and broken. Drop anything in that hand. Cannot use for 4 weeks.
4	Arm hit, artery severed. Drop anything in that hand. Lose 1 hit point per round until staunched, with a heal check.
5	Leg hit and broken. Drop to the ground and can't for 4 weeks. Reduce move rate by 5' permanently.
6	Leg hit and artery severed. Drop to floor and unable to move until staunched with a heal check.
7	Body hit, ribs broken and knocked out. - 4 attack penalty, reducing to -3 the next week and so on until recovered. Any armour worn is damaged and needs repairing at 25% of the full cost of the armour.
8	Body hit, bleeding internally, -1 hit point per round until tended to, with a heal check. Any armour is damaged and will cost 25% of the full cost of the armour to repair.
9	Body hit, serious internal injuries. -2 hit points per round until staunched with a heal check at -2. Constitution reduced by 1 permanently. Any armour worn is destroyed.
10	Spine damaged, knocked to the ground. Cannot walk until healed (4 weeks). - 1 strength, permanently. Armour is damaged costing 25% of full cost to repair.
11	Groin hit. The pain is such that you can do nothing for an hour. You won't be having (more) children.
12	Internal organs ruptured and blood pouring out of stomach wound. Knocked to ground and cannot do anything. Suffer 3 points of damage per round until attended to. Armour suffers severe damage and is beyond repair.
13	Head hit. Will result in a nasty scar. -1 charisma, permanently.
14	Head hit. Addled your brain a bit. -1 intelligence, permanently.
15	Head hit. Lose sight in one eye. -2 on any future notice or search checks.
16	Head hit. Lose hearing in one ear. -2 on any future listen checks.
17	Head hit. Knocked completely senseless. It will take a full day to come around. -1 intelligence permanently and suffer forgetfulness. -1 wisdom, permanently.
18	Head hit. Skull cracked and knocked to the ground. Bleeding badly. Lose 1 hit point per round until attended to.
19	Head hit. Loosens quite a few teeth. -1 to any persuasion related checks, permanently.
20	Killed outright in a completely nasty way -heart pierced, neck severed, guts sliced open, brain bashed in, etc.

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### **Narrative of combat**

It helps greatly if all of the players know how combat works, but it is not strictly necessary for them to. The GM does need to have a clear understanding of the rules though and a good judgement for those occasions (and there will be lots of them) where the rules don't cover a specific point.

Combat is something that occurs in the Medieval Mysteries RPG, although it isn't as frequent as it might be in most other role playing games. You would feel short-changed if you watched a western movie and there wasn't a single gunfight or saloon brawl in it, or a space opera movie without a spaceship battle. You might have several game sessions where combat doesn't occur and that can be fun, but occasionally you want to have dangerous confrontations that might result in injury or even death.

Whilst it is incumbent upon the GM to set things up so that the players can have fun, the players themselves

should also share in this responsibility. The rules are not there to get in the way of a good story and so the GM must engage the players and the players (through their characters) should likewise maintain a sense of drama and try not to get too bogged down in the nitty-gritty.

There are several ways



to engage the players and keep up the sense of drama and excitement. Vivid descriptions can capture a group of even the most lacklustre of players. You can use ideas gleaned from movies, fiction and even historical records to give the combat a sense of danger and action. You can allow the players to take over some of the

description of what happens, if this doesn't overstep the success or otherwise of their die rolls, especially if you know one of the players is very good at describing this sort of action. If the players start describing things, then it means they are involved in what is going on. If the players are describing parts of the action that relate to their own characters, that means less work for the GM and more time to consider what happens next as a result. If a player describes his intended action with a sense of style, drama and within the tone of the game you are playing, the GM could even consider giving a bonus to the dice roll for whatever action the character is attempting.

Running a combat in a narrative fashion can be tricky at times but it is fun. Engaging the players and keeping their attention is one of the most rewarding experiences a GM can have. But to be able to do so, the GM does need understand the rules and when to bend them.

## CHAPTER VIII

# LIFE IN MEDIEVAL TIMES

**T**he Medieval Mysteries RPG is first and foremost a game, not a history lesson. It is not completely historically accurate, it is not intended to be and, it would be impossible to make it so. The fiction that inspired this game is accurate only to a point - that point is where, for the sake of the story; the historically accurate has to fall by the wayside.

As a GM or a player, you have to enjoy the game you are playing. If history takes away from this and becomes a chore, then you are welcome to drop the history in favour of your story. A case in point is the role of women in history. Generally speaking, women were second-class citizens and were unable to aspire to the heights that men were

able to attain. There were some, of course but not many. For the purposes of this game, female characters have the same options and chances as the male characters. They may not always get the same reactions from some of the NPCs though and society in general remains male dominated.

### **The Three Orders of Society**

*“...some pray, others fight, still others work”*

*“...from the beginning, mankind has been divided into three parts, among men of prayer, farmers, and men of war...”*

These are two passages that were written at the beginning of the 11th century, the first was by Bishop Adalbero of Laon and the second by Gerard of Cambrai. The image of a tripartite society divided by function has become a hallmark of medieval English (and European) history.

### **Those who work**

In the early part of the period that this game

covers, the vast majority of English men and women were peasants who were the property of their lords. There is comparatively little recorded about these people, simply because the clergy and nobility had little to say about them and they were the ones who kept written records. When the peasantry was mentioned, it was usually in relation to the obligations they owed their superiors.

Throughout the long history of medieval serfdom, the serf was required to perform labour services for his lord. This was generally in the form of farming the lord's fields and looking after his livestock amongst other duties. Although the number of days devoted to working the lord's land varied from place to place, it was usually three days a week. At harvest time, the lord would demand even more of his serfs' time. Furthermore, the serf was tied to the land. In other words the serfs were unable to leave.

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With the rise of towns, the increased productivity of the land, long-distance trade and the development of a money economy, more and more serfs managed to break free of this virtual slavery. What this really meant was that the peasants could now rent his land from the lord for a certain period of time. Equally importantly, with the passage of time many serfs no longer owed their lords a labour obligation. Instead they were taxed direct and indirectly on almost every task on the medieval manor.

The medieval manor varied greatly in size and could include one village, a few villages, or none at all. The land of the manor was divided

into two parts: the demesne was the lord's land worked by the peasants. The other part was held by the peasants. Their plot was usually much larger based on the condition that they cultivate the

lord's demesne before their own. The land itself was divided into long strips and it was entirely possible that one serf would have to work a number of different strips spread out across the manor.

The medieval estate required cooperation among all serfs since there were very few horses and ploughs. Medieval manors also had tracts of forest as well as open meadow for the grazing of cattle and sheep. Serfs and villeins could subsidize their meagre diet, which consisted largely of barley (made into either bread, porridge or soup - supplemented by a few onions, carrots or cabbages) by gathering firewood or thatch and go fishing and hunting

in the forest and meadow. In England, they had to take extra care not to take or damage anything in the Royal Forest.

Life on the medieval manor was quite simple and uncomplicated. But by the same token it was probably also dull and uninspiring. Most serfs were unable to travel outside of their home manor, without their lords' permission. Not that many would have a reason to do so as their family would all live in close proximity, since the children were expected to work for their lord from the age of 12. Nearly every day of the medieval peasant's existence was dedicated to farming arable land and so there was little time left over for things of an intellectual or cultural nature.

Of all the characteristics of medieval peasant society, none was perhaps more important than the Christian religion as practiced by ordinary men and women. Christianity was a matrix of ideas and modes of behaviour that was the medieval community. Nearly all of the important events in the short life of medieval

## LIFE IN MEDIEVAL TIMES

men and women took place within the confines of the church or churchyard. A person was usually baptized within hours of birth. Men and women confessed their sins to the priest and received the sacraments of Eucharist on Holy Days. There were also feasts that accompanied baptisms and weddings that were held in the churchyard. The village priest also read messages from secular and church authorities. Popular medieval religion was shot through with rituals and symbolism. For instance, before slicing bread a woman would tap the sign of the cross on it with her knife. The entire calendar was created with reference to many Holy Days. Everyone participated in village processions and religious days.

For the most part the peasants accepted what their family, custom, and the village priest had told them. Although the mass was in Latin, the priest delivered sermons, usually on the Gospel, in the vernacular. Peasants had a strong sense of the existence of God, believing that God was directly involved in human af-

fairs and could reward the virtuous. Of course, they believed that God punished men and women for their sins with disease, plague, poor harvest, and war. But life in the village community did entail cooperation and the values of a simple life.

### **Those who fight**

The nobility influenced all aspects of medieval politics, economics, religion, and culture. As the second Estate, the medieval nobility had special legal status. A man who was a member of the nobility was free in his person and in his possessions. The only limitation of the nobility concerned their military obligation to their own lord. As members of the nobility, they had certain rights and responsibilities: they could raise troops and command them in the field, they held their own courts of justice and they could even coin their own money. The nobleman was the lord of all those people who settled on his land. The medieval nobility was, of course, an Estate of warriors, - those who fight.

The nobility had a social function to protect the



weak and the poor. They accomplished this with a horse and a sword, the two visible signs of their standing. They were also encouraged to display the virtues of chivalry; a code of conduct created by the clergy to curb the brutality of this order of knights.

When a young member of the nobility finally

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came into possession of his property, he acquired authority over land and people. The nobility rarely lived up to the standard required. The reasons for this may be that the nobility wanted immediate gratification. The problem was there were many times when the nobility were not involved in warfare either with foreign enemies or rival lords. In other words, in times of peace the nobility needed an outlet for their warlike aggression. This came with their participation in the medieval tournament.

The medieval nobility lived without working. They also ate far better than the people under them. Their bread was made of wheat, rather than barley. They ate far more meat than the serfs as they could hunt boar and deer on their own lands. They imported spices from exotic places to flavour their food. Even salt was an expensive commodity that only the rich could afford. Wine was a far more common drink amongst the nobility than the ale that the poorer folk had to drink.



### **Those who pray**

At the top of medieval society was the first Estate, the clergy, those who pray. It was the village priest who was to oversee the spiritual life of his flock on the medieval manor. His duties were to administer the necessary sacraments with regularity and con-

sistency. He was also important to absolve men and women of their sins for the act of confession. His role, then, in the medieval village was extraordinary. Of course, not all village priests were as dedicated to the holiness of their flock as they should have been. However, it was the village priest with whom medieval men and women identified the Church, its teachings, and authority.

Apart from the manor, the church was the main focus of community life. Church parishes were usually the manor villages. The parish priest was appointed by the lord of the manor and was given a house. He was obliged to carry money for alms with him, keep up the church, and provide hospitality to travellers. The priest was usually a commoner by birth, though serfs were tied to the land and were not allowed to become priests. The priest officiated at his living from the income for parish lands, fees for services, and tithe money.

Tithing was a system whereby each person was expected to give



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1/10 of their earnings to support the church. The tithe income was divided up evenly between the parish priest, the church maintenance fund, the poor, and the bishop.

The chancel (where the altar is) belonged to the lord. The nave and the tower belonged to the people of the parish. Manor courts were often held in the nave, and tenants came there to pay their rent. A free meal was given to those who paid their rent. The church tower occasionally served double duty as the priest's residence and often was built to be defended in times of trouble. School was held in the church porch or in a room over it. The church's role went far beyond religion; it was the centre of village community life.

Originally, people stood in the nave to hear the church service. Pews were not introduced until the 15th century. Because few could read, Biblical stories were often acted out for the congregation in the form of miracle plays. The plays were performed in the churchyard or porch. In the 12th and 13th centuries markets

were often held in the churchyard, though this practice was officially banned in 1285. A special hut, or tollbooth, housed a court that regulated the affairs of the market. In time the tollbooth became a permanent fixture of the Town Hall.

Monasteries were the other main form of church presence. They were self-contained enclaves where monks or nuns chose to live a simple life of prayer and work. At least that was the theory. In practice monks at least were often criticized for their laxity and concern with worldly matters.

Although the details of daily life differed from one order to the next, monastic life was generally one of hard physical work, scholarship and prayer. Some orders encouraged the presence of 'lay brothers', monks who did most of the physical labour in the fields and workshops of the monastery so that the full-fledged monks could concentrate on prayer and learning.

The day of a monk or nun, in theory at least, was regulated by regular prayer services in the

abbey church. These services took place every three hours, day and night. When the services were over, monks would be occupied with all the tasks associated with maintaining a self-sustaining community. Abbeys grew their own food, did all their own building, and in some cases, grew quite prosperous doing so. Fountains Abbey and Rievaulx, both in Yorkshire, grew to be enormously wealthy, largely from raising sheep and selling the wool.

Throughout the medieval period the monasteries were practically the only repository of scholarship and learning. The monks were by far the best educated members of society - often they were the only educated members of society. Monasteries acted as libraries for ancient manuscripts, and many monks were occupied with laboriously copying sacred texts (generally in a room called the scriptorium). In the areas where Celtic influence was strongest, for example in Northumbria, the monks created "illuminated" manuscripts; beautifully

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illustrated Bibles and prayer books with painstakingly created images on most pages.

The abbey was under the authority of an abbot or abbess. The abbot could be a landless noble, who used the church as a means of social advancement. Under the abbot was the prior/prioress, who ran the monastery in the absence of the abbot, who might have to travel on church business. There could also be a sub-prior. Other officers included the cellarer (in charge of food storage and preparation), and specialists in the care of the sick, building, farming, masonry, and education.

One of the main sources of revenue for monasteries throughout the medieval period was pilgrims. Pilgrims could be induced to come to a monastic house by a number of means, the most common being a religious relic owned by the abbey. Such a relic might be a saint's bone, the blood of Christ, a fragment of the cross, or other

similar religious artefact. The tomb of a particularly saintly person could also become a target for pilgrimages. Pilgrims could generally be induced to buy an insignia to prove they had visited a particular shrine. Some popular pilgrimage centres built hotels to lodge pilgrims. The George Inn in Glastonbury is one such hotel, built to take the large number of pilgrims flocking to Glastonbury Abbey.

Monasteries were most numerous in Britain during the early 14th century, when there were as many as 500 different houses. The Black Death of 1348 dealt the monasteries a major blow, decimating the number of monks and nuns and most never fully recovered.



### Medieval medicine

Western medicine advanced very little in Europe during the Middle Ages. Scholarship fell into the religious sphere, and clerics were more interested in curing the soul than the body. Many theologians considered disease and injury to be the result of supernatural intervention and insisted that cures were only possible through prayer. No new medical research was conducted, and no new practices were created. Physicians simply perpetuated the church-approved classical techniques that were preserved in ornately decorated, hand-copied texts produced by monks. Christian concern for the ill and injured, as well as contact with the Arab world during the crusades,

did, however, lead to the creation of many large hospitals built and run by monastic orders. Although little was done to cure the patients, they were usually well fed and comforted by a religious nursing staff.

Although medi-

cine and surgery were related, medieval practitioners drew a distinct line between them. Generally, physicians treated problems inside the body, and surgeons dealt with wounds, fractures, dislocations, urinary problems, amputations, skin diseases, and syphilis. They also bled patients when directed by physicians. Many of today's surgeons can trace the origins of their specialties to the teeth-pullers, bone-setters, oculists, and midwives of the middle ages.

During this period, medicine began to be recognized as a profession based upon formal education, standardized curriculum, and legal regulation. In some regions, physicians were required to pass examinations before beginning practice. Untrained physicians were subject to prosecution and fines, and state licensing became common. Still, not all healers were priests or scholars. Women practitioners commonly treated female patients, and although scorned by the educated physicians, uneducated surgeons and self-taught lay doctors, or 'leeches', were

permitted to work on both men and livestock.

### **Crime & punishment Poisoning**

A remarkable amount was known about the effects, uses and treatments of poisoning, even in the relatively unscientific world of medieval Europe. The purveyors of medieval potions and poisons were apothecaries. They produced and sold preparations for a multitude of uses, and it was well known that many of these could be put to less beneficial purposes than those for which they were intended.

Poisoning was a popular subject of fiction, but there were also academic texts published on the subject. These were often written by monks. Many types of poison were described in these treatises, which were often a reasonably comprehensive account of the poisons known at the time, their effects and the best ways that they could be treated. They were often referred to by several different names, or as the plant from which they have more recently been purified, but were usually described with great ac-

curacy. The majority of these treatises were based on writings from the ancient world, as was a great deal of medieval medicine and scholarship in general. It is unlikely that these academic documents would have been available, or even comprehensible to the public.

However, there was also a great deal of lay poison-lore. The high profile of poisons and poisoners, the fact that they worked unseen and their association with witchcraft resulted in a level of paranoia in some sections of the population. This may in fact have been justified, as, with poisons readily available and no science of forensics or toxicology to provide convicting evidence, poisoning seems to have been relatively widespread. Methods of defence against poisons became very popular, and while some writings on antidotes, treatments and methods of avoiding poisons were quite reliable, there were also a great many creative, and entirely inaccurate, suggestions.

Drinking vessels made from "unicorn's horn",



rhino horn, or various gemstones were alleged to neutralise any poison contained in them. These materials, already valuable, became even more sought after, and could raise a huge price. No doubt many charlatans would have taken advantage of this, and helped their cause by persuading wealthy customers that poisoners were everywhere, and that the only way they could save themselves was to buy the gemstone, potion or whatever other charm the salesman was offering. Some religious artefacts, such as amulets and talismans, were also thought to be protective against poisoning. These were largely introduced by Jews, a race with a mixed reputation with respect to poisoning. Despite their association with protective charms, the scheming Jewish poisoner was a popular

figure of fear and hate in the xenophobic Christian populations of medieval Europe.

### **Fines**

If peasants already had it tough being taxed for virtually everything in their day-to-day lives, fines or 'ameracements' imposed as a result of crime could be devastating. There was a rigid procedure enforced at every unexpected death, any deviation from the rules being heavily fined. The rules were so complex that probably most cases showed some slip-up, with consequent financial penalty to someone.

### **First finder**

The first finder was supposedly the first person to come across the dead body. In practise he was probably actually the unfortunate who actually reported it. He was supposed to raise a search for the murderer by knocking on the doors of the four nearest households. There were fines for not doing this.

### **Hue & Cry**

The first finder raised the hue & cry by knocking on the doors of the nearest four house-

holds. Those householders in turn were supposed to go out in search of the murderer - whether there was an actual killer or not, or no matter how long the body had lain where it was found. Next, the Bailiff of the Hundred had to be notified and he, in turn was to summon the coroner. The locals were responsible for guarding the body and not moving it until the coroner arrived, which could be several days later. There were fines for not following these laws or indeed for not following them properly. Sometimes a village would bury the body before the coroner arrived. This was the cause of some very heavy fines for the whole village.

### **Inquest**

The coroner normally held the inquest immediately after viewing the body. Originally the inquest was a massive affair, as the jury had to consist of all the males over twelve years from the four nearest villages. It is doubtful whether this was always followed to the letter and by 1259 it had changed, so that only 'sufficient' people need be present.

### **Murdrum fine**

The murdrum fine was imposed on the whole village, where a suspected murder had taken place and the villagers couldn't confirm to the coroner's satisfaction that the dead person was of English origin (called the 'Presentment of Englishry'). In other words, it was assumed he was a Norman, unless proven otherwise. The murdrum fine dated back to the period just after the Norman Conquest, when a large number of the Norman conquerors were murdered up and down the country by aggrieved Englishmen. Although the imposition of this fine became harder and harder to justify, it remained in law until 1340, because it proved such a good means of income for the Crown.

### **The Deodand**

This was the object that was the cause of the sudden death, whether it was a murder or an accident. The Coroner's jury had to make a valuation of the deodand and the Coroner would then commit it to the care of the Constable until the Eyre, when the Judges would decide if it was forfeit to the Crown.

However, sometimes it was granted to the family of the victim, as compensation for their loss. All sorts of things could be declared deodand, such as dogs, horses, trees and so on. If a horse and cart ran over a man, the whole lot could be confiscated.

### **Capital offence**

A capital offence included any homicide or the theft of an article worth at least twelve pence. The perpetrator was called a felon and the coroner had complete jurisdiction over all felons.

### **Sanctuary**

If a criminal, fugitive or outlaw could reach a church or even just the church grounds, he could claim sanctuary. He had to come unarmed and must have committed no sacrilege. He then had 40 days breathing space from the law and he had to be fed and guarded by the locals. At the end of that time (or earlier) he had to confess his sins to the coroner and then the coroner had to arrange for his 'abjuration' from the realm. That is he had to give up all his possessions and go, on foot, to the nearest port



and leave the country never to return. Many simply went to Wales or Scotland, and even returned a few weeks or months later to go on living somewhere else in the country.

### **The General Eyre**

The Royal Courts of Law, called the General Eyre, was a system of justice that circulated slowly around the kingdom hearing cases that fell within the county coroner's (crown) jurisdiction. This body took so long to return to each county that, unless careful records were kept, many cases never came to trial and much potential revenue was lost to the Crown. The Eyre took an average of seven years - and often far longer - to complete a circuit. Its arrival within a community was one of the greatest affairs in medieval England, as the Eyre examined every detail of

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life since its last visit, as well as actual crimes. Unless good records were kept and some means found to enforce the appearance of witnesses and parties at trial, the King would lose much potential revenue. The grossly extortionate system of amercements could not be employed to the best advantage if old cases had been forgotten. At the London Eyre of 1321, for instance, a ward jury was expected to recall all the crimes that had been committed during the past 44 years since the court had last visited!

### **Forest Law**

A forest is an area of unenclosed countryside, consisting of a highly variable mixture of woodland, heath land, scrub, and agricultural land. Its purpose is to raise deer, which need a variety of land, i.e. woodland to rest and hide in during the day, and more open land in which to feed at night. It does not necessarily denote a wooded area, as such. Just as there were many laws surrounding deaths, murders and so on, there were many laws surrounding the Royal Forest and these were another source of

great revenue for the Crown.

### **Legalities**

In common with other large areas within the country, Forest Law imposes a kingdom within a kingdom, where the inhabitants are subjected to draconian laws to preserve, increase and protect game of all species and in this context a Forest, is land subject to special laws designed to protect deer and other animals of the hunt which the king reserves for his own right to hunt for himself and those he authorised.

Within afforested areas, Forest Law is applied in addition to Common Law. Forest Law was a distinct legal system with its own courts and officers. The sole aim of forest law was to preserve the venison and vert (green undergrowth for feeding the venison) for the King's pleasure. The Royal edicts were administered by Crown officials, with no appeal or redress.

### **Effect on the people**

The restrictions of Forest Law were very harsh. The residents of the forest were unable to cultivate the forestland, not allowed to



hunt the large game and, very often weren't allowed to hunt the small game, such as hares. The felling of timber was prohibited and it could even be forbidden to gather acorns in some parts.

### **Foresters**

Policing of the forests demanded a large network of forest officials who formed what was virtually a private army of the king. These were the foresters. A Forester is an officer of a forest who works for the King through the Bailiff and Sheriff. He is sworn to preserve the vert and venison of the forest. His job entailed attending upon the wild beasts within his Bailiwick and to attacking any offenders and poachers, to bring them to the justice of the forest courts.

## Glossary of medieval terms

**Abjurer:** A criminal who sought sanctuary in a church and elected to 'abjure' by confessing his sins to a coroner and then leave England forever, to avoid being hanged.

**Ale:** A brewed alcoholic beverage, before the advent of hops for preserving.

**Alehouse:** Most families brewed their own ale in the middle ages as water was not always clean enough to drink. Occasionally, one of the families who brewed the best ale in the village would start to sell their ale to their neighbours, who would stop by to gossip. This would inevitably become the village alehouse - not quite a tavern.

**Amerce:** To impose a fine on a person or village. The coroner would not collect it himself, but his clerk would record the amercement in his rolls to present to the King's justices when they visited; they would either cancel or claim the money.

**Apothecary:** A dispenser of medicines, who was often also a physician.

**Assart:** A piece of land cleared of trees and bushes, and fitted for cultivation to increase the holdings of a village.

**Approver:** An accused person who attempted to obtain mercy by implicating his accomplices. He had to confess to the coroner, and then challenge his accomplice to trial by battle. If he won, he was freed.

**Attachment:** An order made by a law officer, including a coroner, to ensure that a person appeared at a court hearing. If he failed to appear he forfeit goods or money.

**Bailey:** The outer enclosure of an early Norman castle. Here would be the huts for living quarters, the kitchens and so on.

**Bailiff:** Overseer of a manor or estate who directs the farming or other outdoor labour. Also an official who assists a sheriff and who has the power to execute writs, processes, and arrests.

**Bailiwick:** A bailiwick is the area of jurisdiction of a bailiff. The term was also applied to a territory in which the sheriff's functions were exercised by a privately appointed bailiff under a Crown grant.

**Baldric:** A diagonal strap over the right shoulder of a Norman warrior to suspend a sword scabbard on the left hip.

**Baron:** Any major landowner, especially those powerful enough to have political influence. Often at loggerheads with the king, many barons, especially those along the Welsh border, ran almost independent kingdoms.

**Barton:** A farming settlement.

**Bowyer:** A craftsman who made bows.

**Burgage:** A tenure a town, under which property of the king or a lord in a town was held in return for a yearly rent or the rendering of a service. Occupied by a burgess.

**Burgess:** A freeman or citizen of an English borough. Usually a person of substance, like a merchant or craftsman. A group of burgesses ran the town administration and elected the portreeves (later the mayor).

**Byrnie:** A Saxon word for a hauberk or mail shirt.

**Capucin:** Medieval headgear, consisting of a long length of cloth wound around the head rather like a turban, the

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free end dangling over one shoulder.

**Chapman:** A peddler, who carried his wares on his back.

**Cog:** A small merchant ship with one mast and a sail.

**Constable:** Has several uses, including; A peace officer with less authority and smaller jurisdiction than a sheriff, empowered to serve writs and warrants and make arrests, an officer of high rank, usually serving as military commander in the absence of a monarch or the governor of a royal castle.

**Coroner:** *Coroner* comes from Anglo-Norman *corouner*, a word derived from *coroune*, 'crown'. *Corouner* was the term used for the royal judicial officer who was called in Latin *custos placitorum coronae*, or 'guardian of the crown's pleas'. The person holding the office of coroner, a position dating from the 12th century, was charged with keeping local records of legal proceedings in which the crown had jurisdiction. He helped raise money for the crown by funnelling the property of executed criminals into the king's treasury. The coroner also investigated any suspicious

deaths (particularly among the Normans, who as the ruling class wanted to be sure that their deaths were not taken lightly). At one time in England all criminal proceedings were included in the coroner's responsibilities.

**Cottar:** A low-grade villein in the feudal system.

**Croft:** A small area of land around a village house, for growing vegetables or rearing a few animals. The occupier was either a bondsman (a villein or a serf).

**Curfew:** The prohibition of open fires in town after dark. During the curfew, the city gates were closed, from dusk till dawn. It could be a hanging offence for a gate-keeper to open the gates to anybody outside of these times.

**Destrier:** A knight's war horse.

**Deodand:** A personal chattel which had caused the death of a person and for that reason was given to God, that is, forfeited to the crown, to be applied to pious uses, and distributed in alms by the high almoner. Thus, if a cart ran over a man and killed him, it was forfeited as a deodand. It was the coroner's job to de-

termine what was deodand and what was not.

**Donjon:** The central fortified tower in an early Norman castle; later called the Keep. Early ones would have been constructed of wood.

**Eyre:** A circuit court held by itinerant royal justices in medieval England. They moved from county to county on a circuit that could take up to seven years to complete.

**Farm:** In the medieval sense, the total tax required by the King for the county. The 'farm' was collected by the sheriff and delivered to Winchester or London twice a year. It was a fixed sum per county and if the sheriff could collect more he could pocket the difference.

**First Finder:** The first person to discover a corpse or witness a crime. He or she was supposed to rouse the four nearest households and give chase. Failure to do so would result in a fine.

**Fletcher:** A maker of arrows.

**Forest:** Strictly, a wild area with or without trees. The Royal Forests were areas sequestered by the king, whether he owned the actual land or not, where only he could hunt and take the



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profit from various activities, such as wood=felling, forges, brewing and so on.

**Forester:** An officer, similar to a gamekeeper, directly responsible for enforcing the harsh forest laws and taking of offenders to the forest courts. Foresters were nominated by the Forest Warden, but received no salary. Sometimes they even paid for the privilege of the job, because of the possibilities for extortion. The Foresters badge was a horn.

**Gambeson:** A padded, quilted coat worn under mail to diffuse the force of blows. Some poorer soldiers might wear one as their main armour.

**Gleeman:** A medieval itinerant singer; a minstrel

**Hauberk:** Also called a byrnie, this was a long-sleeved mail coat.

**Hide:** An old English measure of land, usually the amount held adequate for one free family and its dependents.

**Hue & Cry:** The term used when the first finder raised the nearest households to give chase when a crime had been committed.

**Honour:** A holding of land from the King, Baron or Church. It

could be a large manor or a single estate.

**Hundred:** A subdivision of a county for administrative purposes.

**Jongleur:** Itinerant entertainers like minstrels who sing, dance and juggle.

**Jury:** The medieval jury were witnesses, local people who were obliged to gather and tell what they knew of a crime or a dispute. The coroner's jury were supposed to be men over twelve years of age from the four nearest villages, though this was often a practical impossibility.

**Justiciar:** The chief minister - a high ranking noble or churchman appointed by the king. In the reign of Richard I, there were several justiciars, the most effective being Hubert Walter. He was Chief Justiciar and also the Archbishop of Canterbury.

**Kirtle:** A woman's dress or skirt, which reached to the ankles.

**Knarr:** Early merchant ship, like a Viking longship but broader in the beam. It was partly decked and had a single hold, mast and sail.

**Mantle:** A loose sleeveless coat worn over outer garments; a cloak. It would sometimes have a hood for travelling.

**Mark:** A sum of money, though not an actual coin. Early in the Middle Ages only the silver penny existed, but later on other denominations came out.

**Manor Reeve:** The foreman appointed in each village by the lord of a manor to oversee daily routine.

**Midden:** A dunghill or refuse heap.

**Motte:** The mound on which the donjon was built in a Norman castle.

**Murdrum fine:** A fine or amercement levied on a village by the coroner when a person is found slain and the locals cannot confirm that he is of English stock (in other words he is assumed to be a Norman).

**Ordeal:** method of trial in which the accused was subjected to physically painful or dangerous tests, the result being regarded as a divine judgment of guilt or innocence. It was abolished by the Vatican in 1215.

**Ostler:** A servant in a stable or inn who took charge of the horses.

**Outlaw:** Literally, anyone outside of the law, usually an escaped criminal or a fugitive. They often lurked in forests and any person was entitled to kill them on

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sight to collect a bounty, as they were 'wolves heads'.

**Outremer:** The four Christian kingdoms in the Levant at the time of the crusades, including the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

**Palfrey:** A small, docile horse suitable for use by a woman.

**Portreeve:** One of the major officials in a town, of which there were normally two. Later these posts were superseded by a mayor.

**Posse:** A group of armed men, called out by the sheriff or a coroner in order to hunt outlaws or defend the realm.

**Presentment of Englishry:** Following the Norman Conquest of 1066, there were many Normans killed by aggrieved locals, so the law decreed that anyone found murdered was Norman, unless they could prove otherwise. This involved a fine on the nearest village if the deceased was determined to be Norman or even if it was unknown. This presentment of Englishry became a good source of income for the king and it continued for hundreds of years, despite becoming largely meaningless.

**Reeve:** See Manor Reeve.

**Sackbut:** A musical instrument similar to a trombone.

**Sanctuary:** An ancient and religious offer of mercy. A fugitive or gaol-breaker could claim forty days immunity from the law if he reached a church.

**Seneschal:** An official in a noble household in charge of domestic arrangements and the administration of servants; a steward or major-domo.

**Sergeant** (also spelt serjeant): It had several meanings. A sergeant was a senior man-at-arms or a law officer, below a town bailiff. It was also the term for a squire of a Templar Knight.

**Shalmes:** A stringed instrument.

**Sheriff:** The king's officer of a county or an administrative region who was charged mainly with judicial duties and tax collection. Often quite corrupt, hence the later appointment of coroners to fulfil some of their duties. The word is derived from 'shire-reeve'.

**Squire:** The servant of a knight, often aspiring to knighthood himself.

**Sumpter:** A pack horse or mule.

**Surcoat:** A loose outer coat or gown, often worn

by a knight over his armour.

**Tabard:** A short, heavy cape of coarse cloth formerly worn outdoors. Or a tunic or cape like garment worn by a knight over his armour and emblazoned with his coat of arms. A similar garment worn by a herald and bearing his lord's coat of arms.

**Trial-by-battle:** An ancient right to settle a dispute by fighting to the death. Women and unfit persons could employ a champion to fight for them.

**Tunic:** The main men's garment of the middle ages. A linen shirt would sometimes be worn underneath.

**Undercroft:** The ground floor of a fortified building or a church.

**Verderer:** A man serving as an official in charge of the royal forests. He was responsible to the sovereign, not the Warden. There were usually four in each royal forest. The verderer's badge was an axe.

**Vert:** The vegetation of the forest - trees, bushes and pasture, the use of which was subject to forest law.

**Villein:** A villein is, in the feudal system, a member of the class of serfs tied to the land, distinguished from

those in actual slavery, but restricted by law from exercising the rights of a free man.

**Warden of the Forest:**

The senior forest administrator, appointed by the king, who was responsible for organising the Forest Eyre. The Warden had to nominate the foresters, but not the verderers, who were individually responsible to the king.

**Wattle & Daub:** A common building technique in the Middle Ages. Clay or plaster is applied over a woven framework of hazel withies (branches).

**Wimple:** A headdress of linen or silk; worn by women over the head and around the neck and ears.

**Woodmote:** An alternative name for the lowest level of forest courts. Only offences against the vert, amounting to less than four pence

**Woodwards:** Employed by private landowners to protect the vert and venison, but outside the royal forests. Although they were servants of the landowner, they still had to adhere to the same oaths and codes as the foresters. Their badge was a billhook.



## Glossary of the medieval church

**Abbess:** female head of a nunnery of the Benedictine or related orders

**Abbey:** large religious house belonging either to one of the orders of the Benedictine family or to certain orders of the Canons Regular (Augustinian Canons)

**Abbot:** the head of a monastic house of the Benedictine or related orders, and of certain orders of Augustinian canons

**Absolution:** the formal act of a priest or bishop pronouncing the forgiveness of sins by Christ to those who are qualified by penitence to receive it

**Acolyte:** the highest of the minor orders of the ministry; they had particular responsibility for candles and assisted in preparations for mass

**Aisle:** part of a church, parallel to and divided by piers or columns from the nave, choir or transept

**Albigensian:** a heretical movement found in Germany, Italy and France in the 11th to 13th centuries; also known as Cathars

**Alms:** money collected for the relief of the poor

**Altar:** a table or slab consecrated for celebration for celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion; in a medieval church, in addition to the high altar or principal altar, other altars dedicated to particular saints were located in chapels around the church

**Archbishop:** a bishop with authority over a group of territorially contiguous dioceses and their bishops; also known as a metropolitan

**Archdeacon:** a cleric having a defined administrative authority delegated to him by the bishop in the whole or part of the diocese

**Archdeaconry:** a subdivision of a diocese administered by an archdeacon, whose authority was delegated to him by the bishop

**Archpriest:** a minister assisting a bishop in the administration of a rural deanery, or subdivision of an archdeaconry; also known as a rural dean

**Augustinian:** 1) order of regular canons following the Rule of St Augustine; established from pre-existing orders in Italy and France in the 12th century; 2) order of mendicant friars founded in Italy in the 13th

century; also known in England as the Austin Friars

**Aumbry:** a stone cupboard usually set in the north wall of the chancel, for mass vessels, books and other sacred objects

**Austin:** term used in England for the Augustinian friars

**Baptism:** the rite admitting an individual to the Christian church

**Baptistery:** a separate building or separate area in a church which contains the font and where the rite of baptism is carried out

**Belfry:** the upper storey of a tower where bells are hung, or a special purpose building for the hanging of bells

**Benedictine:** order of monks or nuns

**Benefice:** the means of generating an income to support a priest

**Bishop:** the highest order of minister in the church, with the power to confer particular diocese

**Book of Hours:** a book for the laity containing Psalms and prayers to be read at the times of the daily office

**Caldarium:** in a monastery, a small room containing a fire where inmates can go in to warm themselves

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**Canon:** 1) member of the secular clergy belonging to a cathedral or collegiate church; 2) a member of the Augustinian or regular canons who lived under semi-monastic rule; the term 'secular canon' distinguishes the former

**Canoness:** nun belonging to an Augustinian or related order

**Canon law:** the law of the church, imposed by authority in matters of faith, morals and discipline

**Cardinal:** the clergy of Rome who became the immediate advisors of the pope

**Carmelite:** order of mendicant friars originally founded in Palestine in the 12th century, then reformed in Europe in the 13th century after the failure of the Crusades; also known as the White Friars

**Cassock:** the ordinary garment of a priest; a simple close fitting tunic with sleeves

**Cathedra:** the throne of a bishop

**Cathedral:** the church which contains the throne, or official seat, of the bishop of the diocese and therefore the "mother church" of the diocese

**Cell:** an individual room in a monastic estab-

lishment where one person lived in seclusion

**Cellarium:** the storehouse for provisions

**Chalice:** the cup for holding the wine at the ritual of the Eucharist

**Chancel:** the eastern end of the church containing the high altar, where the mass is celebrated, reserved for the priest, other clergy and choir; may also include an extension of the nave east of the crossing

**Chantry priest:** a priest whose function is to say or sing masses for the soul of a dead person in a chantry chapel

**Chapel:** 1) a part of a church with a separate altar, which may be dedicated differently to the church as a whole; 2) a self-contained building dedicated to worship, the saying of prayers or the celebration of masses for the dead, but which does not serve the functions of a parish church; 3) a church which serves parochial needs, but which is dependent upon another church within the parish, sometimes called a chapel of ease

**Chaplain:** a priest who was paid an annual wage to serve in a parish church or dependent chapel

**Chapter:** 1) the members of a religious house in their corporate capacity; 2) the members of any corporate body responsible for an ecclesiastical institution; 3) a meeting of the members of a religious institution

**Chapter house:** a place of assembly for the members of a monastery, cathedral or collegiate church, for the discussion of business

**Chasuble:** item of mass vestments; simple loose sleeveless garment with an opening for the head

**Choir:** the part of the church containing the seats for the clergy; usually in the western part of the chancel, but occasionally in the eastern part of the nave

**Choir stalls:** the seating for the clergy in the choir of a church

**Cistercian:** monastic order derived from the Benedictine founded in the 12th century

**Clergy:** any member of Holy Orders, or of a monastic order

**Cloister:** a quadrangle surrounded by roofed or vaulted passages connecting a major church to domestic or ancillary buildings

**Close:** the enclosed precinct of a cathedral or collegiate church

## MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

**Cluniac:** reformed Benedictine order, founded in the 10th century in France

**Collegiate church:** a church served by a body of canons or prebendaries; not housing the throne of a bishop and therefore not a cathedral; served by secular canons rather than monks

**Commandery:** monastic house of the military order of Hospitallers

**Compline:** the last of the day services of divine office, recited before retiring

**Confession:** the rite of confession of sins to a priest in order to obtain absolution; obtaining absolution through confession and penance was considered a sacrament

**Confirmation:** the sacrament which follows baptism in the Christian life cycle, requiring the recipient to affirm their faith in the presence of a bishop

**Consecration:** to make sacred, the separation of a thing or person for divine service; 1) of the Eucharist, the act whereby the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ; 2) of bishops, the conferring of the character of the office by bishops to another; 3) of altars and

churches and sacred vessels, the setting apart of these things exclusively for the service of God.

**Consistory courts:** The ecclesiastical courts, which had the right to try clerics, rather than the secular courts. Anyone who could read and write could claim to be tried by this court, as literacy was virtually confined to the clergy.

**Convent:** an enclosed and regulated monastic institution

**Cope:** item of processional vestments; semi-circular outer cloak

**Corporal Acts of Mercy:** a series of charitable acts which aided the giver to salvation; feeding the hungry, providing drink for the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, visiting prisoners, taking in the traveller and burying the dead

**Council:** a formal meeting of bishops and representatives of churches convened for the purpose of regulating doctrine or discipline

**Cowl:** a loose gown with hanging sleeves and a hood, worn by Benedictine and other monks

**Crozier:** pastoral staff; a processional staff with the head in the form of a shepherd's crook

**Crusade:** series of military campaigns waged by Christian countries in the Holy Land from the 11th to the 13th century to recover the area from Islam; used more generally for any military campaign on behalf of the church

**Crutched Friars:** also known as the Brethren of the Holy Cross; not actually considered to be a mendicant group and were much involved with running hospitals

**Crypt:** a chamber or vault beneath the main floor of the church

**Deacon:** the rank in the ministry below the priest, with a major role in the collection and distribution of alms

**Dean:** the dean of a cathedral controlled its services and with the chapter, supervised its fabric and property; a rural dean assisted the bishop in administering a sub-division of an archdeaconry

**Deanery:** a group of parishes forming a sub-division of an archdeaconry; also referred to as a rural deanery

**Diocese:** the territorial unit of administration in the church, governed by a bishop; also known as a **see**

## LIFE IN MEDIEVAL TIMES

**Divine office:** the daily cycle of choir services performed by clergy

**Dominican:** order of mendicant friars founded in the early 13th century

**Doorkeeper:** the fourth rank of minor orders of the ministry; their functions were similar to those of a modern vergger, heading processions and undertaking general care of the church fabric

**Dormitory:** the communal sleeping area of a monastery; also known as the dorter

**Ecclesiastical:** pertaining to the church

**Episcopal:** in relation to the authority of a bishop

**Eremetical:** relating to the life of a hermit

**Eucharist:** one of the seven sacraments and the principal ritual of the church, in which bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ; the ritual must be administered by a priest

**Excommunication:** a censure imposed by church authority which excludes those subjected to it from Holy Communion and imposes on them other deprivations and disabilities; in the heavier form of this censure, the transgressor was forbidden any intercourse

with fellow Christians and deprived of all rights and privileges in the church

**Exorcist:** the second of the minor orders of the ministry; the power of exorcising evil spirits was never confined to this order although they assisted in this process, as well as with the pouring out of water at the mass a crucifix with foliate or floral ornament

**Font:** receptacle for baptismal water, usually made of stone but sometimes of metal

**Franciscan:** order of friars founded by St Francis of Assisi in the early 13th century in Italy; also known as the Friars Minor or the Grey Friars

**Frater:** the communal refectory of a monastic establishment

**Friars:** members of one of the mendicant orders, the four main orders being the Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Austin friars; they lived in regular fashion but were extensively involved with the outside community; the term literally means "brother"

**Friars of the Sack:** also called the Friars of the Penance of Jesus Christ; the largest of the lesser groups of friars in England, all of their houses were abandoned

by 1314 and the members obliged to join one of the major mendicant orders

**Friary:** a community of friars

**Gargoyle:** a water spout carved in the form of a grotesque human or animal

**Gilbertine:** a monastic order founded in England in the 12th century; a double order comprising male and female members under the spiritual guidance of the Augustinian canons

**Grand Master:** title of the heads of the military orders of Templars and Hospitallers

**Guardian:** term for the head of a Franciscan friary

**Habit:** the distinctive clothing worn by members of monastic orders

**Heresy:** the formal denial or doubt of any defined doctrine of the church

**Heretic:** person who has expressed formal denial or doubt of any defined doctrine of the church

**Holy Communion:** the sacrament of the Eucharist

**Holy Orders:** the higher grades of the Christian ministry; those of bishop, priest and deacon

**Holy water stoup:** a small stone basin containing holy water

## MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

**Hospitallers:** military order first recognised in 1113, founded to assist in the Crusades; their full name was Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem

**Hospitium:** a monastic guesthouse

**Hours:** the times specified for the recitation of divine office; Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers and Compline

**Inquisition:** the official persecution of heresy by special ecclesiastical courts; formally constituted by the papacy in the 13th century

**Interdict:** an ecclesiastical punishment excluding the faithful from participation in spiritual things; it could be applied to individuals, to local areas such as parishes, or to whole populations

**Lady Chapel:** a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary

**Laity:** persons who are not members of the clergy

**Lauds:** the early morning service of divine office

**Lavatorium:** a series of basins outside a monastic refectory for the washing of hands

**Lay:** with reference to the laity, or persons who

are not members of the clergy

**Lay brother:** member of a religious order who is not bound to the recitation of the divine office and is occupied in manual work, generally adult converts

**Lay sister:** female member of a religious order who is not bound to the recitation of the divine office and is occupied in manual work, generally adult converts

**Lectionary:** a book containing a series of biblical extracts to be read at the mass

**Lector:** the third rank of minor orders of the ministry; also known as reader

**Litany:** a form of prayer consisting of a series of petitions sung by a deacon, a priest or cantors, to which the people made fixed responses

**Little Hours:** Prime, Terce, Sext and None; the less elaborate of the services of divine office

**Liturgy:** all the prescribed rituals of the church, including the mass and divine office

**Maison dieu:** almshouse, or residence for the poor

**Major orders:** the higher ranks of the Christian ministry, comprising the orders of bishop, priest, deacon and sub-deacon

**Manual:** a book containing special services for occasional use, such as baptisms, marriages and visiting the sick

**Manuscript:** a written work transcribed by hand

**Marriage:** the ceremony of union of man and wife was a sacrament of the church

**Mass:** the principal ritual of the church, the service at which the sacrament of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, is performed

**Mass vestments:** ceremonial clothing worn by a priest for the celebration of the mass

**Master-general:** the head of the Dominican order

**Matins:** the night office; the service recited at 2 am in the divine office

**Mendicant orders:** term for the friars; the term refers to begging because of their dependence on alms for their support

**Metropolitan:** a bishop with authority over a group of territorially contiguous dioceses and their bishops; also known as an archbishop

**Minister General:** term for the head of the Franciscan order

**Ministers provincial:** term for the heads of



## LIFE IN MEDIEVAL TIMES

provinces within the Franciscan order

**Minor orders:** the lower ranks of the Christian ministry, comprising the orders of acolyte, exorcist, reader and doorkeeper

**Minster:** a church served by a body of canons or prebendaries; the same as a collegiate church; in the north of England the term was also used for a cathedral

**Missal:** book containing the forms of service for the mass

**Mitre:** the pointed headdress worn by archbishops, bishops and some abbots on ceremonial occasions

**Monastery:** a community of monks

**Monastic:** refers to the life or community of monks

**Monk:** a male member of a religious community living under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience; strictly it is confined to members of those bodies which live a communal life

**Mystery plays:** religious drama performed at major festivals, commonly performed out of doors

**Nave:** the western arm of a church, and more specifically the central axial section of that arm, used by the congregation and for sermons

**Night office:** Matins; the choir service of the daily round of divine office performed during the night

**None:** the fourth of the Little Hours of the divine office, recited at the ninth hour

**Nun:** a female living in a regular order under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience

**Nunnery:** an establishment of nuns

**Orders:** a) with respect to the monastic or regular life, groups of communities following the same rule or under a common administrative and spiritual structure b) with respect to the Christian ministry, the various grades consisting of the major orders - bishop, priest, deacon, sub-deacon - and the minor orders - acolyte, exorcist, reader, doorkeeper

**Orders of clergy:** the various grades consisting of the major orders - bishop, priest, deacon, sub-deacon - and the minor orders - acolyte, exorcist, reader, doorkeeper

**Ordinal:** book containing instructions for conducting the prescribed rituals of the church

**Ordination:** the rite of admission into the ministry of the church; only

admission to the major orders of the ministry was considered to be a sacrament

**Papal:** with reference to the office of the pope

**Papal bull:** legal document issued under the authority of the pope

**Papal curia:** the central government of the Western church

**Papal legate:** a personal representative of the pope who has been entrusted with his authority

**Parish:** an area under the pastoral care of a priest, himself under the jurisdiction of a bishop; the parish church was the centre of worship for the parish

**Parlour:** in a monastery, an area where speaking was allowed for legitimate purposes

**Patén:** the plate for holding the bread or communion wafers

**Penance:** a form of punishment whereby one who has confessed his sins to a priest can obtain absolution

**Pilgrimage:** a journey to a holy place from motives of devotion, to obtain supernatural help, or as a form of penance

**Piscina:** a stone basin with a drain, used for washing the mass vessels

## MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

**Pix:** container for the storage of consecrated wafers for the mass

**Poor Clares:** the female branch of the Franciscan order, maintaining an enclosed monastic life rather than one equivalent to that of the friars

**Pope:** head and spiritual leader of the church in Western Europe

**Prebend:** a cathedral benefice; normally consisting of the revenue from one manor of the cathedral estates which furnished a living for one cathedral canon, or prebendary

**Prebendary:** a cathedral canon supported by a prebend, normally the income from one manor of the cathedral estates

**Preceptory:** monastic house of the order of Templars

**Premonstratensian:** order of canons derived from the Augustinians, founded in 1121

**Priest:** a minister of the church empowered to administer the sacraments, most particularly that of the Eucharist or Holy Communion, as well as those of confession and extreme unction

**Primate:** the chief bishop of a single state or people

**Prime:** the first of the Little Hours of divine

office, recited at the first hour

**Prior:** the deputy of an abbot in a major Benedictine institution; or the head of a lesser Benedictine house; or the head of any house in some orders

**Prior provincial:** the head of a province in the Dominican order

**Prioress:** the head of a nunnery; in some orders of a lesser house dependent upon an abbey

**Priory:** a monastery; in the Benedictine orders a house dependent upon an abbey; in certain orders such as the Augustinians or the mendicant orders, any religious house

**Processional:** book containing prayers, hymns and litany

**Province:** 1) unit of ecclesiastical administration comprising a group of territorially contiguous dioceses: 2) in relation to later developments of monastic orders, geographic units of administration within the order

**Pulpit:** a stone or wooden stand from which sermons or readings were given

**Reader:** the third rank of minor orders of the ministry

**Rector:** a parish priest, or corporate body such

as a monastery or cathedral, that receives the benefice of a parish

**Relic:** the mortal remains, or any components thereof, of a saint; believed to embody the miraculous powers of the saint

**Reliquary:** a container for the relics of a saint; many were expensively gilded and jewelled

**Rosary:** a series of prayers; to assist the memory, the prayers are counted off on a string of beads

**Rural dean:** a minister assisting a bishop to administer a subdivision of an archdeaconry; known on the Continent as an archpriest

**Rural deanery:** a group of parishes forming a subdivision of an archdeaconry

**Sacrament:** a visible sign of a sacred thing; in the late medieval church there were deemed to be seven sacraments, representing life cycle rituals; baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, ordination, marriage, confession and extreme unction

**Sacristy:** a room for the storage of sacred vessels, liturgical books and priestly vestments; and where the clergy don their ceremonial attire; also known as a vestry

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**Sanctuary:** The part of the church containing the high altar

**Scriptorium:** a room where manuscripts were transcribed

**Secular:** 1) in relation to clergy, priests living in the world, not under a rule, who are bound by no vows and may possess property, working under the authority of a bishop; 2) more generally, refers to people who are not clergy

**See:** properly, the official 'seat' of a bishop. Commonly used for the territorial unit of administration in the church, governed by a bishop; also known as a diocese

**Sext:** the third of the Little Hours of divine office, recited at the sixth hour

**Shrine:** a reliquary, a sacred image of special importance or a holy place, especially one connected with pilgrimage

**Spirituals:** members of the Franciscan order devoted to maintaining the ideals of the founder with respect to money and property

**Sub-deacon:** a member of the order of the ministry below that of deacon; considered to be the lowest of the major orders

**Summoner:** An officer who works for the arch-

deacon to bring sinners to the consistory courts, to try them as a way of levying fines for the church

**Synod:** a formal meeting of representatives of various units of the church

**Templars:** order of military monks founded in 1119 to assist in the Crusades; also known as the Knights Templar or the Poor Knights of Christ

**Terce:** the second of the Little Hours of divine office, recited at the third hour

**Teutonic Order:** military order founded in the Holy land after the Third Crusade

**Tithe:** the tenth part of produce from the land and of other income, collected to support a parish priest and maintain his services

**Troper:** a book containing tropes for the use of the choir at mass or divine office; after around the 12th century, a book containing sequences

**True Cross:** supposedly the actual cross on which Christ was crucified; there were fragments of it preserved as relics across Christendom

**Undercroft:** a vaulted room, sometimes underground, below an upper room

**Vespers:** the evening service of divine office, recited before dark

**Vestments:** the ceremonial clothing of the clergy

**Vestry:** a room for the storage of sacred vessels, liturgical books and priestly vestments; and where the clergy don their ceremonial attire; also known as a sacristy

**Vicar:** a priest employed as a substitute for a parish rector or for a member of a religious house, monastic, cathedral or collegiate, which had appropriated the revenue for the position

**Vicarage:** the endowment for a vicar

**Visitation:** the periodic inspection by a bishop of the temporal and spiritual affairs of a diocese which are under his control, or by an abbot or monastic official of houses within his jurisdiction

**Vulgate:** the Latin version of the Bible; it became the standard version for the Western Church

**Warden:** head of a custody, or subsection of a province, within the Franciscan order

**White canons:** the Premonstratensians, an order derived from the Augustinians and founded in 1121

## CHAPTER IX

### ANIMALS, FOLK & NPCs

The following chapter focuses on some stats for riding animals, common people and then some non-player characters that you can use in your own games.

Folk are generally the ordinary NPCs that characters might meet along the way. They are not intended to be tough opposition – in a movie they would be the extras that are either on screen only very briefly or are killed early on, before the characters get to the end of their adventure. Folk are classed as 0-level. Sometimes, folk take on greater importance in the game than the GM originally envisaged. In this case, they might be elevated to NPC status.

NPCs are special GM characters. These characters must be worked out as if they are player characters. They have a

character class and may be of a level that is even higher than that of the player characters. They will probably have some major importance in the game and are likely to re-appear many times throughout a campaign. They should never turn out to be more important than the characters in terms of the overall story though – the characters are the focus of the game not the NPCs.

Experience points for defeating foes  
The Medieval Mysteries RPG isn't really about combat and fighting, so there is less opportunity to earn experience from killing things than there is in, say Castles & Crusades. However, there is experience available for those times when combat is inevitable. When animals, folk and NPCs are defeated, outwitted or killed, characters gain experience points (XP). The number of points gained depends on how tough the foe is to kill or defeat. For every hit die the foe has, there is a base XP award, set out in the table below. For every

hit point the foe has, extra XP are awarded. Work this out by multiplying the hit die of the foe by the number of hit points. So a boar with 12 hit points would work out as 2 (hit die) x 12 = 24 points added to its base of 200. For every special ability the foe has, add the number in the special ability column. Special abilities would be any class abilities of NPCs, or any animal abilities, like having more than one attack in a round. If the GM feels the special ability is particularly dangerous or not at all dangerous or useful, add or subtract another 50% for that ability. Ordinary folk count as 1HD. Certain creatures really do not provide experience, and so will not have any points listed.



## ANIMALS, FOLK & NPCS

### XP Table

HD	Base	Special
1	100	50
2	200	100
3	300	150
4	400	200
5	500	250
6	600	300
7	700	350
8	800	400
9	900	450
10	1000	500
11	1100	550
12	1200	600

### Animals

#### Boar

**Size:** Medium

**HD:** 2d8+3 (12)

**Move:** 40'

**AC:** 14

**Attacks:** Gore (1d8+3)

**Special:** see text

**Int:** Animal

**XP:** 224

Wild boars were hunted a lot in the middle ages. They can be extremely vicious when cornered and it can take a lot to put one down. They continue fighting until they reach -7 hit points.

#### Cat

**Size:** Medium

**HD:** 1d4 (2)

**Move:** 30'

**AC:** 14

**Attacks:** Claw (1) or bite (1)

**Special:** Hide, move silently

**Int:** Animal

**XP:** -

Cats can move silently (+2) and hide (+2) like a rogue.

#### Donkey

**Size:** Medium

**HD:** 2d8 (9)

**Move:** 40'

**AC:** 12

**Attacks:** 2 hooves (1d4 each)

**Special:**

**Int:** Average

**XP:** -

No self-respecting knight would be seen dead riding one of these. Occasionally used for travel by people who can't ride, or by women, monks or peasants. Their main use is the transport of small loads of goods or pulling small carts. Donkeys tend to be steady on their feet.

#### Horse, Destrier

**Size:** Large

**HD:** 4d10+12 (34)

**Move:** 50'

**AC:** 14

**Attacks:** 2 hooves (1d6+3 each), bite (1d4+2)

**Int:** Average

**XP:** 536

Large, solid horses. This is the archetypical knight's warhorse. When the knight was no longer king on the battlefield, they became plough horses.

#### Horse, Nag

**Size:** Large

**HD:** 1d8+3 (8)

**Move:** 30'

**AC:** 11

**Attacks:** none

**Int:** Average

**XP:** -

This is a very poor horse, pressed into service either to pull carts or wagons or perhaps for an extremely poor squire, as a stop-gap until he can afford something better.

#### Horse, Riding

**Size:** Large

**HD:** 2d8+4 (13)

**Move:** 60'

**AC:** 13

**Attacks:** 2 hooves (1d4+1 each)

**Int:** Average

**XP:** -

This is a good, high spirited riding horse, bred for speed and distance. Used for hunting or travel.

#### Palfrey

**Size:** Large

**HD:** 2d8+2 (12)

**Move:** 40'

**AC:** 13

**Attacks:** 2 hooves (1d4 each)

**Int:** Average

**XP:** -

A good, steady horse, more docile than the riding horse and bred for its steadiness. Used

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by ladies, often side-saddle.

### Mule

**Size:** Large  
**HD:** 3d8+4 (19)  
**Move:** 40'  
**AC:** 13  
**Attacks:** 2 hooves (1d4+1 each)  
**Int:** Average  
**XP:** -

Bred for steadiness and carrying ability.

### Wolf

**Size:** Medium  
**HD:** 2d8 (9)  
**Move:** 50'  
**AC:** 13  
**Attacks:** Bite (1d4+1)  
**Special:** Track  
**Int:** Average  
**XP:** 218

Wolves still existed in the wild in England in the middle ages. They hunt in packs and have a superior sense of smell, enabling them to track their prey.

### Folk

#### Beggar

**Size:** Medium  
**HD:** 1d4 (3)  
**Move:** 30'  
**AC:** 10  
**Attacks:** by weapon  
**Special:** Gossip  
**Prime:** None  
**Int:** Average  
**XP:** 103

Every city has its share of these individuals with their begging bowls in

front of them. Some are genuine ex-soldiers, with missing limbs and so on and others are rogues and scoundrels. They usually have a bit of gossip to impart, for a coin or two. Normally unarmed and unarmoured.

#### Burgess

**Size:** Medium  
**HD:** 1d4 (3)  
**Move:** 30'  
**AC:** 10  
**Attacks:** by weapon  
**Special:** a trade or craft  
**Prime:** None  
**Int:** Average  
**XP:** 103

These are wealthy townsmen, merchants and craftsmen. Always looking for ways to make more money or to better themselves. Usually armed only with a dagger.

#### Clergyman

**Size:** Medium  
**HD:** 1d4 (3)  
**Move:** 30'  
**AC:** 10  
**Attacks:** by weapon  
**Special:** Sanctuary  
**Prime:** None  
**Int:** Average  
**XP:** 103

These are clerics, monks and friars. Usually unarmed and unarmoured, but some will carry a staff or a dagger.

#### Clerk

**Size:** Medium  
**HD:** 1d4 (3)  
**Move:** 30'  
**AC:** 10  
**Attacks:** by weapon  
**Special:** Literacy  
**Prime:** Intelligence  
**Int:** High  
**XP:** 103

These are scribes, accountants and lawyers. Rarely combatants and if armed at all, will tend only to have a dagger.

#### Cutpurse

**Size:** Medium  
**HD:** 1d4 (3)  
**Move:** 30'  
**AC:** 11  
**Attacks:** by weapon  
**Special:** Pick pocket  
**Prime:** Dexterity  
**Int:** Average  
**XP:** 103

Unsavory characters adept at removing your money from you in a crowded marketplace or smoky tavern. Often armed with a club or a dagger.

#### Jongleur

**Size:** Medium  
**HD:** 1d6 (4)  
**Move:** 30'  
**AC:** 11  
**Attacks:** by weapon  
**Special:** Gossip, perform  
**Prime:** Charisma  
**Int:** Average  
**XP:** 104

## ANIMALS, FOLK & NPCS

Wandering entertainers, they always have some news and gossip from the road. Often armed with a staff, club or dagger.

### Man-at-Arms

**Size:** Medium

**HD:** 1d8 (5)

**Move:** 30'

**AC:** 13

**Attacks:** by weapon

**Special:** None

**Prime:** Strength

**Int:** Average

**XP:** 155

A soldier at the local lord's castle or a gate guard in the city, the man-at-arms is often armoured in studded leather and may have a sword, spear or a halberd.

### Mercenary

**Size:** Medium

**HD:** 1d8 (5)

**Move:** 30'

**AC:** 15

**Attacks:** by weapon

**Special:** Weapon specialization (+1 to attack & damage)

**Prime:** Strength

**Int:** Average

**XP:** 155

A poor knight back from the crusades returning to his home town, a Welsh archer or a foreign soldier

seeking employment, the mercenary is likely to be well armoured and well-armed with a sword, mace and/or longbow.

### Strumpet

**Size:** Medium

**HD:** 1d4 (3)

**Move:** 30'

**AC:** 10

**Attacks:** by weapon

**Special:** Gossip

**Prime:** None

**Int:** Average

**XP:** 103

Other names would be a woman of easy virtue, a lady of the night, a slattern, a tavern wench or a common whore. Unlikely to be armed or she might have a hidden dagger.

### Thug

**Size:** Medium

**HD:** 1d6 (4)

**Move:** 30'

**AC:** 12

**Attacks:** by weapon

**Special:** Intimidate

**Prime:** Strength

**Int:** Average

**XP:** 129

Thugs are usually bullies who go around in pairs at the very least, or more likely in gangs. They are often armed with an assortment of weapons but if pushed will just as likely back down as fight.

### Yeoman

**Size:** Medium

**HD:** 1d6 (4)

**Move:** 30'

**AC:** 10

**Attacks:** by weapon

**Special:** Gossip, animal handling

**Prime:** Constitution

**Int:** Average

**XP:** 104

A yeoman is a stout countryman or farmer. Unarmoured, but is likely to have a staff, dagger or a hand axe within easy reach.



## MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

### Sample NPCs

Non-player characters are the important characters created by the GM to provide people for the player characters to interact with. As important characters, they have attributes and a character class, just like the player characters. Here are a few sample NPCs that you can use in your campaign.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Bartholomew Matthews

**Class:** Apothecary  
**Level:** 8      **HP:** 28  
**Str:** 10 (0 - S)  
**Int:** 16 (+3 - P)  
**Wis:** 14 (+2 - P)  
**Dex:** 9 (-1 - T)  
**Con:** 13 (+1 - T)  
**Cha:** 12 (+1 - S)  
**AC:** 10  
**BtH ranged:** +2  
**BtH melee:** +3  
**Abilities:** Literate, gossip, heal, knowledge (wounds & corpses), knowledge (law), sense motive, search, medicines & potions, care & attention, minor surgery.  
**Languages:** English, Latin, French  
**XP:** 1,224  
**Belongings:** Good clothing, leather jerkin, medical bag containing several

vials of medicines, a small knife, birthing forceps and bandages), staff (+3 to hit, d6 damage), dagger (+3 to hit, d4 damage).

**Background:** Bartholomew has recently moved into a small rented shop in the town. He left his previous establishment in Gloucester amidst rumours that his medicines had poisoned a few of his patients. Whilst these rumours remained unfounded, it was considered best by the Apothecaries Guild in Gloucester that he move elsewhere as there had already been attempts on his life as a result. He has recently taken on an apprentice, Arnold Blakey.

**Secret:** Bartholomew is an evil psychopath. Whilst he was living in Gloucester, he became fascinated with poisons and decided to try out

some of his concoctions on his customers. He may start again very soon.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Gareth Bowman

**Class:** Fighter  
**Level:** 4      **HP:** 33  
**Str:** 14 (+2 - P)  
**Int:** 10 (0 - T)  
**Wis:** 13 (+1 - S)  
**Dex:** 16 (+3 - P)  
**Con:** 12 (+1 - T)  
**Cha:** 8 (-1 - S)  
**AC:** 16  
**BtH ranged:** +7  
**BtH melee:** +6  
**Abilities:** Climb, gossip, intimidate, notice, weapon specialization (longbow), combat dominance  
**Languages & literacy:** English  
**XP:** 732  
**Belongings:** Good, though well-worn clothing, studded leather, longbow (+8 to hit, d12+1 damage) broadsword (+6 to hit, 2d4+2 damage), dagger (+6 to hit, d4+2 damage).  
**Background:** A Welsh archer recently returned to England after fighting on the continent. He is now kicking around town, looking for gainful employment, preferably in his specialist area of





## ANIMALS, FOLK & NPCS

mercenary or fighting man, but otherwise anything goes, as he is prettily low on funds at the moment.

**Secret:** An old mercenary friend of Gareth's, Sagard D'Arcy stole his hard-earned money and fled back to England. Gareth Bowman has tracked him down and is now planning to kill him, after he has found out what he has done with his money.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Hugo Farrond

**Class:** Forester

**Level:** 2      **HP:** 17

**Str:** 15 (+2 - T)

**Int:** 10 (0 - S)

**Wis:** 12 (+1 - P)

**Dex:** 13 (+1 - S)

**Con:** 14 (+2 - P)

**Cha:** 8 (-1 - T)

**AC:** 14

**BtH ranged:** +2

**BtH melee:** +3

**Abilities:** Knowledge (local area), track, awareness, traps, conceal, ranged weapon specialist

**Languages:** English, French

**XP:** 334

**Belongings:** Average clothing, cloak, studded leather, staff (+3 to hit, d6+1 damage), hand axe (+3 to hit, d6+1 damage), light crossbow (+3 to hit, d10 damage).

**Background:** Hugo is the nephew of the noble,

Lord Henry Farrond, who used his position to help the otherwise lazy and useless Hugo a position as a forester. Hugo is completely and utterly corrupt and contemptible. There is nothing that he won't turn a blind eye to, if bribed sufficiently.

**Secret:** Hugo is an evil sex monster. He uses his position to force the local girls to sleep with him. One girl, Helwisa went missing recently from the area and despite a search, hasn't been found. That is because Hugo raped her when she wouldn't let him lie with her and then he killed her and hid her body. It remains an unsolved mystery.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Sister Agnes

**Class:** Cleric

**Level:** 3

**HP:** 13

**Str:** 8 (-1 - T)

**Int:** 13 (+1 - S)

**Wis:** 15 (+2 - P)

**Dex:** 12 (+1 - S)

**Con:** 10 (0 - T)

**Cha:** 14 (+2 - P)

**AC:** 10

**BtH ranged:** +2

**BtH melee:** 0

**Abilities:** Diplomacy, gossip, knowledge (religion), listen, notice, sense motive, literate, scribing, sanctuary, God's wrath, faith.

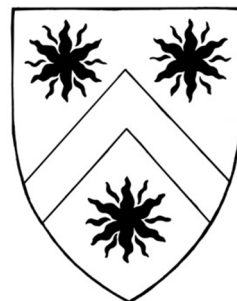
**Languages:** English, Latin

**XP:** 414

**Belongings:** Nun's habit, satchel with ink, parchment and goose feather quills, staff (+0 to hit, d6-1 damage), dagger (+0 to hit, d4-1 damage).

**Background:** Sister Agnes is a sleuthing nun and she has been looking into the case of the missing girl, Helewisa. She is suspicious of Hugo Farrond, but hasn't yet got any evidence to support her suspicions.

**Secret:** Sister Agnes is Lord Henry Farrond's secret lover. She sneaks out of the abbey whenever she has the opportunity and meets him in one of several places that they have arranged over the years for their trysts. Lord Henry's faithful man servant Ulric is the only other person who knows about this affair although another nun, Sister Angelica suspects something is going on.



## CHAPTER X

# MYSTERY: A VIAL MURDER

This scenario is left deliberately open so that you can pretty much use it whatever location or period you decide to set your own Medieval Murder Mystery RPG campaign in. I would suggest that you read it through to the end (it isn't that long) and decide which of the endings you prefer. You can then tailor the lines of questioning, the responses from the various NPCs and so on to the ending you have selected.

The alternative is to get the gist of the scenario and not necessarily have the conclusion predetermined, allowing your players to come up with the solution themselves. This may be a bit more difficult though and is recommended for more experienced GM's.

What is the mystery?  
A wealthy local wool merchant, Nicholas

Brace, aged about 50 falls dead from his horse, whilst talking to a local outside the inn that he had stayed at for the previous night. Brace had been conducting a little business at the port a day or so ride out of his hometown and was returning home. He had to stop at the inn as it was getting late and he was fearful of not making it back to town before nightfall.

The mystery is what killed him. He was talking one moment to the local carter Peter and the next moment, according to Peter he stopped talking, "looked like the Devil had possessed his soul" and keeled over, falling from his horse "like a sack of cabbages".

### **Involving the characters**

If the primary investigator is a crowner, then he is required to investigate anyway. If one of the characters is a noble, you could have the death occur on his manor and therefore he might feel obliged to investigate. A merchant

character could be a friend of the family or an apothecary could easily be drafted in to see if he can determine what was in the empty vial.

If nothing else, you can have character requested by the sheriff or some other person in authority to look into the death 'because he was a respected burgess in the town and we must be seen to do the right thing'. The family lawyer could even draft in some investigators, because there is a technicality in the will, that 'requires that we discover if he was murdered or died of natural cause' before it can be settled.

### **Investigations**

#### **The clues**

To all intents and purposes, it looks like death by natural causes, perhaps a heart attack. The only odd thing that a search of the body and his possessions will reveal is an empty potion vial in his belt pouch. Otherwise the body is whole (maybe with a bruise or scrape where he fell from his horse).

## A VIAL MURDER

There is actually a small drop of the potion left in the vial and an apothecary character (or NPC) could figure out that this is a slow-acting poison with time, access to his shop and a successful check.

### **Witnesses**

The only witness to the actual event was Peter who, being a god-fearing soul is apt to let his imagination run away with him. He will be adamant that Nicholas Brace had been possessed by the Devil, if pressed (besides, it's more gossip-worthy that way and might get him a few rounds in the tavern later).

None of the other locals know very much about the death. The innkeeper will say that Brace came in late in the afternoon, ordered a huge meal and plenty of ale a retired early. He seemed fine, if a little 'red in the face' and 'short of breath'. Earlier in the evening, he may have been sat with somebody, who he seemed to know (see *other possibilities: A rival merchant*).

### **Friends & family**

Brace was a well-known burgess around town. He was married to Hil-

da, pretty and a lot younger than him. They have no children (a sore point with Hilda). Hilda will explain that Nicholas was in ill-health and had been seeing an apothecary in the town, where he obtained his medicine. She did try to tell her husband not to eat so much rich food or to drink so much, but he wouldn't listen. One thing the characters might notice is that she doesn't seem as distraught as perhaps she might be, in the circumstances. If the vial is produced, Hilda will acknowledge that it was his and she will tell them the name of the apothecary, if asked. The apothecary is Walter Stanshill, respected, if a little ancient, but also a family friend.

Other merchants knew Nicholas well, being a pillar of the community, but have little to add to what Hilda has said. However, one person, Brace's sister Martha, says that she was always suspicious of Hilda, who she says is a money-grabbing strumpet. She says that she told Nicholas that Hilda was always up to no good with one of his apprentices, Aylwin, but Nicholas wouldn't have

a bad word said against his wife. Secretly, Martha says that she thinks that Hilda had been poisoning her husband. She is certain that Hilda had visited another apothecary and obtained a poison for vermin, which she was exchanging for Nicholas's medication. But Martha has no proof of this.

If the characters approach Walter Stanshill, they will see that his shop is a little messy and that he does seem a little old to still be dispensing medicines. However, he was Brace's friend and there doesn't seem to be any reason that he should want to see him dead. He too told Nicholas to lay off the spicy food and the wine and to get a bit of air now and again. He had prescribed him a remedy for his pain (if a character is an apothecary or they seek confirmation, it will be found that what was prescribed was normal for this type of complaint).

### **The gossip**

Around town the gossip is that there is an apothecary in town who is a specialist on poisons. Other gossip

## MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

suggests that he fled his previous town of Gloucester, because he had been accused of poisoning his customers. His name is Bartholomew Matthews (see sample NPCs).

Other gossip (from at least two fairly reliable sources) though, might help to confirm what Martha says about Hilda, in that she has been seen with Aylwin on more than one occasion, in a situation that 'wasn't appropriate for a married woman'.

### **Who did it, how and why?**

I present a couple of possibilities that you can consider. That way, you can develop the investigations in the way you want them to go, or you can feed off your players to give a conclusion that they find satisfactory. You might even surprise them.

#### **Aylwin did it**

He loves Hilda and couldn't wait to marry her (at which point, incidentally he would also be closer to taking over the family business as Hilda has no interest in running it). He obtained poison from Bartholomew Matthews and secretly exchanged it for

Brace's medication before he left for his port warehouse. He did it for love.

#### **Hilda did it**

Hilda didn't love her husband. He couldn't give her children and he was old, ugly and fat. She stands to inherit his business, his wealth and clears the way to



have children before she is old and grey. She got the poison from Walter Stanshill, on the pretext that the family home had been infested by rats that she was trying to kill with the poison.

#### **It was an accident**

Brace's dodderly old friend Walter Stanshill, who should no longer be

practising, accidentally mixed up some of the ingredients and ended up putting poison into the vial that was intended for his friends medication.

#### **A rival merchant did it**

One of Nicholas's rivals killed him. He did it because Nicholas was a hard businessman and had slowly putting him out of business. He arranged to meet him in the inn and when reasoning didn't work, he slipped poison into his wine in desperation.

#### **Martha did it**

Martha hated her brother. Many years ago, when she was married, Nicholas drove her husband out of business and drove him to an early grave. She never forgave him for this but was hoping to inherit his business when he died, which she figured wouldn't be too long because of his ill-health. Then the old fool went and married a young slattern and that has driven Martha to take drastic action, whilst trying to pin the murder on Hilda.

# MEDIEVAL MYSTERIES

## CHARACTER SHEET

PLAYER NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 CHARACTER NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 Class \_\_\_\_\_  
 Level \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age \_\_\_\_\_ Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_  
 Features \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTER SKETCH/NOTES

[ATTRIBUTE CHECK = D20 + ATTRIBUTE MOD + LEVEL]

ATTRIBUTES		SAVING THROWS		
P/S/T		MOD	TN	
[ ]	STR	_____	_____	_____
[ ]	INT	_____	_____	_____
[ ]	WIS	_____	_____	_____
[ ]	DEX	_____	_____	_____
[ ]	CON	_____	_____	_____
[ ]	CHA	_____	_____	_____

DEFENCE CLASS

HIT POINTS

HIT DIE TYPE

MONEY

EXPERIENCE

CLASS ABILITIES & SKILLS

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## Inspiration & recommended reading:

### **The Medieval Players Manual**

**Author:** David Chart

**Published by:** Green Ronin

This is an excellent resource for (slightly fantasized) medieval roleplaying.

### **The Time Traveller's Guide to Medieval England**

**Author:** Ian Mortimer

Not fiction, but written by a novelist, this book is a jaunty journey through the 14th Century, one that wriggles with the stuff of everyday life. This is a great primer for the period.

### **The Crowner John Mysteries**

**Author:** Bernard Knight

**Characters:** Sir John de Wolfe, Gwyn of Polruan and Thomas De Payne

Sir John de Wolfe, sometime companion in arms to Richard I and recently returned from crusade in 1194, is appointed a coroner in Devon. He is tasked, with his clerk Thomas De Payne (an unfrocked priest) and his retainer Gwyn of Polruan, with the investigation of sudden deaths, murders, arson, rape and finds of treasure trove - largely as a way of raising taxes for the release of the king who has been captured in Austria. In the process he upsets the sheriff, Sir Richard de Revelle, but that is the least of his problems, not least because he soon finds himself the sole coroner in one of the largest counties in England - only one other knight was prepared to accept the office and he has died as the result of a fall from a horse.

**The series titles:**

The Sanctuary Seeker	The Grim Reaper	The Noble Outlaw
The Poisoned Chalice	Fear in the Forest	The Manor of Death
Crowners Quest	The Witch Hunter	Crowner Royal
The Awful Secret	Figure of Hate	A Plague of Heretics
The Tinner's Corpse		

### **The Matthew Bartholomew Chronicles**

**Author:** Susanna Gregory

**Characters:** Matthew Bartholomew and Brother Michael

The series follows Matthew Bartholomew, a physician in a Cambridge ravaged by plague in the mid 1300's. Together with his friend and Brother Michael, Proctor of the fledgling university, he investigates murders and other suspicious goings on amongst the scholars, students, monks and friars who seem to have their own agendas.

**The series titles:**

A Plague on Both Your Houses	An Order for Death	The Tarnished Chalice
An Unholy Alliance	A Summer of Discontent	To Kill or Cure
A Bone of Contention	A Killer in Winter	The Devil's Disciples
A Deadly Brew	The Hand of Justice	A Vein of Deceit
A Wicked Deed	The Mark of a Murderer	The Killer of Pilgrims
A Masterly Murder		

### **Geoffrey Mappestone Mysteries**

**Author:** Simon Beaufort (aka Beau Riffenburgh & Susanna Gregory)

**Characters:** Sir Geoffrey Mappestone, Knight, Great Britain, 1100s

**The series titles:**

Murder in the Holy City	The Bishop's Brood	The Coiner's Quarrel
A Head for Poisoning	The King's Spies	

## **The Owen Archer Mysteries**

**Author:** Candace Robb

**Character:** Owen Archer

The Owen Archer mysteries are a chronicle of England in the late 14th century. Owen Archer is a former captain of archers for the Duke of Lancaster and, having been blinded in one eye, is now a spy in the service of John Thoresby, the Archbishop of York. The events he investigates involve the community or the realm. Owen is frequently reluctant to take up an investigation, as he is happily married and is a man who has begun life again after a career as a soldier.

**The series titles:**

The Apothecary Rose	The Riddle of St Leonard's	The Cross-Legged Knight
The Lady Chapel	A Gift of Sanctuary	The Guilt of Innocents
The Nun's Tale	A Spy for the Redeemer	A Vigil of Spies
The King's Bishop		

## **The Margaret Kerr Mysteries**

**Author:** Candace Robb

**Character:** Dame Margaret Kerr

Set in 13th Century Edinburgh

**The series titles:**

A Trust Betrayed	The Fire in the Flint	A Cruel Courtship
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## **Medieval West Country Mysteries**

**Author:** Michael Jecks

**Characters:** Sir Baldwin Furnshill and Bailiff Simon Puttock

Sir Baldwin Furnshill, Keeper of the King's Peace, investigates murders and other crimes in Devon and the West Country, during the mid-14th-century with his friend, Simon Puttock, Bailiff of Lydford Castle.

**The series titles:**

The Last Templar	The Tournament of Blood
The Merchant's Partner	The Sticklepath Strangler
A Moorland Hanging	The Devil's Acolyte
The Crediton Killings	The Traitor of St Giles
The Abbot's Gibbet	The Templar's Penance
The Leper's Return	The Outlaws of Ennor
Squire Throwleigh's Heir	The Tolls of Death
Belladonna at Belstone	The Chapel of Bones
The Boy-Bishop's Glovemaking	The Prophecy of Death
The Death Ship of Dartmouth	Dispensation of Death
The Malice of Unnatural Death	The Butcher of St Peters
The Templar, The Queen and Her Lover	A Friar's Bloodfeud
The Mad Monk of Gidleigh	The King of Thieves
No Law in the Land	The Bishop Must die

## **The Domesday Mysteries**

**Author:** Edward Marston

**Characters:** Lord Ralph Delchard & Gervase Bret

Ralph Delchard and Gervase Bret are commissioners, appointed by William the Conqueror, to look into the serious irregularities that come to light during the compilation of Domesday Book, the great survey of England. Delchard is a Norman soldier who fought at the Battle of Hastings, and who does not suffer fools gladly. Bret, a talented lawyer, comes from mixed Saxon and Breton parentage. They make a highly effective crime-fighting team in a violent and unstable period of history. Each of the books in the series takes them to a different English county.

**The series titles:**

The Wolves of Savernake  
The Ravens of Blackwater  
The Dragons of Archenfield  
The Lions of the North  
The Serpents of Harbledown  
The Stallions of Woodstock

The Hawks of Delamere  
The Wildcats of Exeter  
The Foxes of Warwick  
The Owls of Gloucester  
The Elephants of Norwich

## **The Falconer Series**

**Author:** Ian Morson

**Character:** William Falconer

A series set in 13th-century Oxford. The main character is an Oxford don (teacher) named William Falconer, who solves mysteries by the 'new' application of scientific method (like a modern detective, in other words). Famous historical characters include Roger Bacon.

**The series titles:**

Falconer and the Great Beast  
Falconer and the Face of God  
Falconer and the Moving Sands  
Falconer and the Ritual of Death

Falconer's Judgement  
Falconer's Crusade  
A Psalm for Falconer  
Falconer's Trial

## **The Sir Hugh Corbett Mysteries**

**Author:** P C Doherty

**Characters:** Sir Hugh Corbett, Ranulf-atte-Newgate and Maltote

Hugh Corbett, clerk and later chief clerk and keeper of the Secret Seal in the household of King Edward I, is assigned by Edward to investigate political crimes and to counter the spies of Edward's rival, Philip of France. In this he is ably assisted by Ranulf-atte-Newgate, a felon whom Hugh redeemed from Newgate Gaol, and the slightly comical Maltote, the clumsiest archer in the English army but a master horseman. The Corbett novels are extremely enjoyable historical mysteries in the classic mode, with complex and devious plotting, matching Corbett's razor-like mind against the cunning of French spies and agents or against dangerous murderers.

**The series titles:**

Satan in St. Mary's  
Crown in Darkness  
Spy in the Chancery  
The Angel of Death  
The Prince of Darkness  
Murder Wears A Cowl  
Corpse Candle  
The Waxman Murders  
The Assassin In The Greenwood

The Song of A Dark Angel  
Satan's Fire  
The Devil's Hunt  
The Demon Archer  
The Treason of the Ghosts  
The Magician's Death  
Nightshade  
The Mysterium

## **The Chronicles of Brother Cadfael**

**Author:** Ellis Peters

**Characters:** Brother Cadfael and Hugh Beringar

The crime mystery and investigation series featuring the Benedictine monk, Brother Cadfael, and the Shrewsbury Sheriff Hugh Beringar, set in the mid-12th century, during the upheavals of the English civil war between Empress Maud and King Steven. It was also filmed by Central Television as a TV Drama series starring Derek Jacobi.

**The series titles:**

A Rare Benedictine  
A Morbid Taste for Bones  
One Corpse Too Many  
Monk's Hood  
St. Peter's Fair  
The Leper of Saint Giles

An Excellent Mystery  
The Raven in the Foregate  
The Rose Rent  
The Hermit of Eyton Forest  
The Confession of Brother Haluin  
The Heretic's Apprentice



The Virgin in the Ice  
The Sanctuary Sparrow  
The Devil's Novice  
The Pilgrim of Hate

The Potter's Field  
The Summer of the Danes  
The Holy Thief  
Brother Cadfael's Penance

## **The Dame Frevisse Mysteries**

**Author:** Margaret Frazer

**Character:** Sister Frevisse

Sister Frevisse is the niece of Geoffrey Chaucer. She resides at the Benedictine nunnery of St. Frideswide's in Cornwall during the reign of Henry VI, but this does not mean that she is shielded from the troubles and dangers of the outside world. Despite her great devotion to her calling and her lack of contact with the outside world, Sister Frevisse proves herself an astute observer of human behaviour and amateur detective when the need arises.

**The series titles:**

The Novice's Tale	The Maiden's Tale	The Hunter's Tale
The Servant's Tale	The Reeve's Tale	The Widow's Tale
The Boy's Tale	The Squire's Tale	The Sempster's Tale
The Outlaw's Tale	The Clerk's Tale	The Traitor's Tale
The Murderer's Tale	The Bastard's Tale	The Apostate's Tale
The Prioress's Tale		

## **The Player Joliffe Mysteries**

**Author:** Margaret Frazer

**Character:** Joliffe the Player

Frazer's second set of mysteries, also set in 15th-century England, feature "Joliffe the Player." Joliffe is a spin-off character from the Dame Frevisse series. The Joliffe series is set in the mid-1430s. The Joliffe novels present the life of an acting troupe traveling through the English countryside.

**The series titles:**

A Play of Isaac	A Play of Knaves	A Play of Treachery
A Play of Dux Moraud	A Play of Lords	

## **The Burren Mysteries**

**Author:** Cora Harrison

**Character:** Mara the Brehon

Set in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Ireland, with a female detective as the central character.

**The series titles:**

My Lady Judge	Writ in Stone	Eye of the Law
Michaelmas Tribute	Sting of Justice	

## **The Medieval Murderers**

**Authors:** Bernard Knight, Ian Morson, Michael Jecks, Karen Maitland, Susanna Gregory, Philip Gooden and CJ Sansom

**Character:** A varied cast of the author's characters

These are a series of novels with a central theme that features each of the author's characters.

**The series titles:**

The Tainted Relic	House of Shadows	King Arthur's Bones
Sword of Shame	The Lost Prophecies	

## **The Chapman Mysteries**

**Author:** Kate Sedley

**Character:** Roger the Chapman

Set in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century; features Roger the Chapman, who has given up a monk's cell for the freedom of peddling his wares on the road.

**The series titles:**

Death and the Chapman	The Lammas Feast
The Plymouth Cloak	Nine Men Dancing
The Hanged Man	The Midsummer Rose
The Holy Innocents	The Burgundian's Tale
The Eve of Saint Hyacinth	The Prodigal Son
The Wicked Winter	The Three Kings of Cologne
The Brothers of Glastonbury	The Green Man
The Weaver's Inheritance	The Dance of Death
The Saint John's Fern	Wheel of Fate
The Goldsmith's Daughter	

**The Hawkenley Mysteries****Author:** Alys Clare**Character:** Helewise & Sir Josse d'Acquin

Helewise is the fourth Abbess of the recently-completed Hawkenlye Abbey near Tonbridge in Kent. She had been appointed by Queen Eleanor in 1184 at the age of 32. The stories feature her companion Sir Josse d'Acquin, who carries out much of the legwork for the detective nun.

**The series titles:**

Fortune Like the Moon (1999)	Whiter Than the Lily (2004)
Ashes of the Elements (2000)	Girl in a Red Tunic (2005)
The Tavern in the Morning (2000)	Heart of Ice (2006)
The Chatter of the Maidens (2001)	The Enchanter's Forest (2007)
The Faithful Dead (2002)	The Paths of the Air (2008)
A Dark Night Hidden (2003)	The Joys of My Life (2009)

**The Sister Fidelma Mysteries****Author:** Peter Tremayne**Character:** Sister Fidelma

The Sister Fidelma mysteries are set mainly in Ireland during the mid-seventh century AD.

**The Series titles:**

Absolution By Murder (1994)	The Haunted Abbot (2002)
Shroud for the Archbishop (1995)	Badger's Moon (2003)
Suffer Little Children (1995)	Whispers of the Dead (short stories) (2004)
The Subtle Serpent (1996)	The Leper's Bell (2004)
The Spider's Web (1997)	Master of Souls (2005)
Valley of the Shadow (1998)	A Prayer for the Damned (2006)
The Monk Who Vanished (1999)	Dancing with Demons (2007)
Act of Mercy (1999)	Council of the Cursed (2008)
Our Lady of Darkness (2000)	The Dove of Death (2009)
Hemlock At Vespers (short stories) (2000)	The Chalice of Blood (2010)
Smoke in the Wind (2001)	

**The Templar Knight Mysteries****Author:** Maureen Ash**Character:** Sir Bascot De Marins

An ex-monk, knight, then Templar, he lost his eye whilst in captivity as a Crusader in the Holy Land in 1191. On his return home, he finds his family had died during a pestilence. He joins the household of Lady Nicolaa at the royal castle of Lincoln, where his education is put to good use.

**The series titles:**

The Alehouse Murders (2007)	A Plague of Poison (2009)	Shroud of Dishonour (2010)
Death of a Squire (2008)	Murders for Christ's Mass (2009)	

## **Catherine LeVendeur Mysteries**

**Author:** Sharan Newman

**Character:** Catherine LeVendeur, 12th Century Novice, France

**The series titles:**

Death Comes as Epiphany (1993)	Cursed in the Blood (1998)	Heresy (2002)
The Devil's Door (1994)	The Difficult Saint (1999)	Outcast Dove (2003)
The Wandering Arm (1995)	To Wear the White Cloak (2000)	The Witch in the Well (2004)
Strong as Death (1996)		

## **The Name of the Rose**

**Author:** Umberto Eco

**Characters:** William of Baskerville and Adso of Melk

It is the year 1327 when William of Baskerville and his young scribe Adso of Melk (who narrates the story many years later) arrive at the unnamed northern Italian monastery, which contains the greatest library in Christendom. The abbot and his henchmen carefully control access to the collection; only the librarian and his assistant are allowed into the labyrinthine stacks. The ostensible reason is that there are thousands of books by pagan, Jewish, and Arab authors, as well as the records of many heresies. While true Christians must understand error in order to combat it, only the strongest and most mature minds should be exposed to it. Naturally the scribes and scholars, who have come from all across Europe to use the library, long to view its hidden treasures. Strange intrigues develop among the monks, and suddenly turn to murder. A gifted young illuminator is killed; the next morning a second monk is found dead, plunged headfirst into a barrel of pigs' blood. It is William, the Franciscan friar and follower of Roger Bacon's methods, who sets to investigating the murders and web of conspiracies surrounding the monastery. (Also made into a film starring Sean Connery & Christian Slater).

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