

# RuneQuest

*Games Master's Handbook*





# RuneQuest

## RUNEQUEST GAMES MASTER'S HANDBOOK

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# INTRODUCTION

This book is for *RuneQuest* Games Masters and is designed to help players get the most from their games, both in terms of general Games Mastering advice and in administering the rules so that games move freely and enjoyably. It is not a definitive guide to Games Mastering: there will always be different ways of doing things and, ultimately, it is a matter of finding a rule or procedure that suits your style of play. Instead, this book should be viewed as a sister volume to the *RuneQuest Companion*, *RuneQuest Monsters*, and *RuneQuest Arms and Equipment* – each of which also contains excellent tools for Games Masters.

This book attempts to present, in one place, techniques and tools that have been proven in countless *RuneQuest* games over the years. Games Masters are free to use the ideas and rules presented here as much or as little as they wish, but remember that the aim is to make life simpler for the beleaguered Games Master and provide the mechanisms that keep *RuneQuest* games fluid, interesting, and as realistic as any fantasy roleplaying game can hope to be.

Some of the material in this book has been inspired by, and developed from, ideas and discussions by those participating in the *RuneQuest* Forum at the Mongoose Publishing website and the MRQ Wiki. It is impossible to credit all those people, but our thanks goes to all who have discussed, in detail, the *RuneQuest* system, offered their own house rules for consideration by others, and suggested different ways of tackling certain situations. Their involvement has been invaluable, and this book is an attempt to bring some of those ideas and concepts into one place and formalise them into the *RuneQuest* system.

## STRUCTURE

The *RuneQuest* Games Master's Guide is divided into the following chapters.

### Games Mastering *RuneQuest*

General tips and advice on *RuneQuest*; what differentiates it from other roleplaying games; advice for establishing *RuneQuest* campaigns and some tips for running successful games.

### Character Creation

This chapter looks at the character creation process from the points of view of both Player Characters (PCs) and Non Player Characters (NPCs). It provides some shortcuts and templates for speeding up the generation of each character type and discusses some alternative character generation methods.

### Skills

Skills are the lifeblood of *RuneQuest*. This chapter looks at how skills work, offers some new Advanced skills, and provides guidance on how skills can be applied in a variety of common adventuring situations.

### Combat

Most *RuneQuest* adventures involve combat in some shape or form. This chapter deals with the practicalities of *RuneQuest* combat and offers a series of optional rules to help make combat more realistic.

### Magic

Magic in *RuneQuest* comes in many forms, some specific to the campaign setting, such as Glorantha or Elric of Melniboné. This chapter offers advice on using the basic magic systems of *RuneQuest* and the *RuneQuest* companion, plus additional rules covering certain forms of more esoteric types of magic, such as summonings and alchemy.

### Adventuring

This chapter provides Games Masters with a series of tools to administer and resolve common situations found in most adventures.

### Towns and Cities

The urban environment is a place for adventure. This chapter offers guidance for creating a town or city on the fly, with tables to help generate population, facilities and services. A section covering guilds offers new adventuring and advancement possibilities.

# GAMES MASTERING RUNEQUEST

Since its inception in the late 1970s *RuneQuest* has occupied a special place in the history of roleplaying games and in the hearts of players and Games Masters. It shares many of the common traits of games from that era, such as hit points and a core group of Characteristics defining the character, but it was also one of the first (if not the first) to build into its mechanics a way of measuring personal advancement based on genuine growth. In *RuneQuest* one sees one's character get better through the gradual improvement of individual skills and abilities, allowing the player to decide on the areas of specialisation for his character, be this in combat skills, magical skills or any number of other areas of expertise.

This, coupled with the percentile central mechanic of rolling within one's skill range to determine success, offers a degree of realism coupled with a degree of abstraction that remains both logical and intuitive. In most *RuneQuest* games the rules and mechanics fade into the background allowing the players to focus on roleplaying and storytelling. When the need to make use of the mechanics does arise, the resolution process is straightforward and relatively unambiguous. A player can glance at his character sheet and know, very easily, what particular skill is required for a particular situation and how likely he is to succeed or fail. Of course, real-life is not nearly so clear-cut, but *RuneQuest* is a game about heroes making split-second decisions where the need to instantly understand one's capabilities, and perhaps gauge those of an opponent, is critical. *RuneQuest* offers that clarity of game play via its central skill and percentile mechanism without being either too 'gamist' or too simplistic. It strikes a happy medium between gritty realism and abstracted resolution that still stands up today, some 30 years after it first appeared.

This chapter offers new Games Masters (and old hands!) some general guidance on setting up their first *RuneQuest* campaign. The secret to successful Games Mastering lies in the high-level approach to the campaign the *RuneQuest* rules will support. Use the information below as a checklist for your preparations.

## What Kind of Game?

*RuneQuest* is a flexible system and can be used for almost any kind of game setting, from straight-forward fantasy, through historical recreation, to contemporary/modern day, and even science fiction and futuristic. The core mechanics are, in fact, setting agnostic, and the Basic skills (and most Advanced ones) can be applied to almost any genre or time period, with some subtle alterations here and there to reflect specific circumstances.

From a fantasy perspective, there are several options to consider when planning your campaign. This is by no means an exhaustive list and, of course, these genres can be mixed and matched to produce intriguing and highly satisfying hybrids with a unique flavour.

### High Fantasy

High fantasy deals with lofty ambitions against a backdrop of change and upheaval, usually involving noble causes attempting to vanquish a brooding threat. This is the traditional 'Good versus Evil' paradigm involving legendary heroes, mythic quests, great destinies, despicable villains, the wills of gods, and magic that has an almost divine quality to it. High fantasy is concerned with achieving noble ideals representing a particular cause or way of life and is a familiar staple of roleplaying fantasy environments. To some extent Glorantha can be considered a High Fantasy setting, although its range and depth mean that it is capable of supporting all the different fantasy classifications described here.

### Low Fantasy or Swords and Sorcery

'Swords and Sorcery' is a term coined in the 1960s by Fritz Leiber (author of the *Lankhmar* stories), in response to a request by Michael Moorcock (author of the *Elric* and *Eternal Champion* stories) for a definition of the kind of fantasy featuring muscular, mundane, heroic archetypes, such as Conan, who chiefly came into conflict with evil and powerful witches and

wizards wielding supernatural powers. The terms 'Low' and 'Swords and Sorcery' might seem to be derogatory but they are not intended here to be used in such a way. In Low Fantasy the heroes are, genuinely, those with simple needs (although this might change, given time), making their way in their world with simple moral values, clear-cut threats, and little in the way of supernatural powers of their own. The gods are distant forces seemingly removed from the world unless channelled by powerful forces of good and evil, but usually to help the hero (or thwart him) rather than being channelled by him. Low fantasy campaigns tend to involve a great deal of combat and treasure-hunting in a relatively unsophisticated world, and have no ideal greater than simple survival. Of course this is a gross simplification of fantasy worlds that fit into such a classification, but as a general guiding principle, the backdrop for a Low Fantasy campaign is a world of fable rather than powerful myth, filled with distinct character archetypes acting in archetypal ways (and having a fabulous time because of it).



## Dark Fantasy

Dark fantasy settings are those typically reversing the trends of High Fantasy. Lofty ideals are generally tainted with shades of grey, corruption of the soul is commonplace, and individual dooms are often realised even though the characters struggle valiantly against conspiratorial circumstances. The world is tinged with a deep sense of menace that *cannot* be dispelled through achieving noble quests, and in many cases the heroes of the setting are also those who cause or establish the circumstances for the world's troubles. Dark Fantasy settings also tend to embody a certain philosophical edge to them, examining the nature of corruption and moral dilemma through the negative impact of actions. Michael Moorcock's Elric stories are an excellent example of a Dark Fantasy campaign, where the main protagonist inadvertently causes the destruction of his world, the death of all those closest to him, and the betrayal of many more, even though he strives to avert such things. Dark Fantasy campaigns are therefore intense settings, mixing traditional fantasy elements with horror and the supernatural to create a sense of unavoidable catastrophe.

## Mythic Historical

The Mythic Historical setting takes a particular historical period (such as the Crusades), and applies to it fantasy elements such as magic, making them workable and available components that will influence the events of the period. Mythic History mixes real people and real events with fantasy elements in order to explore 'What if...?' scenarios and can be hugely enjoyable. What if the Roman Empire had discovered runes and not converted to Christianity? What if the Celts, with the help of Merlin, had expelled the Saxons from Briton? What if Charlemagne's spear was The Spear of Destiny and had several integrated runes in its make up? What if the combatants of the Hundred Years War had access to battlefield spells? The canvas to draw upon is rich, and the possibilities endless, although a certain amount of time needs to be invested in historical research, followed by a degree of extrapolation once the fantasy elements have been decided. The opportunity to change the course of history is an age-old lure, and the Mythic Historic setting offers huge potential for 'realistic' campaigns that enjoy a strong fantasy presence.

# Campaign Structure

The structure of the campaign is as important as the setting. In many cases it will be an unconscious choice that naturally reflects the style of play enjoyed by all the participants and dictated to a certain extent by how often your group plays, how it plays (face to face is traditional, but 'virtual' groups are growing, where the participants communicate via internet chat or IP telephone conferencing) and what individual styles of play are supported.

Some thought should be given to campaign structure because it helps the Games Master plan a wide range of components: major Non-Player Characters, recent and distant history, current events, access to magic, the nature of religion and worship in the world, what sort of creatures can be found, and so forth. These elements need only be sketched in broad terms since part of the enjoyment of a *RuneQuest* game is exploring them as part of a story, but a general idea of what the world is like and how it has been shaped by its history helps to lend depth and credibility, giving the players a real feeling of place and helping to define their characters.

Most campaigns tend to mix different structures depending on what stage the campaign is at and the various external factors, such as frequency of play, already mentioned. However, in broad terms, campaigns are structured along the following lines.

## Campaign Arc

The campaign is based around a storyline that plays out over multiple sessions (which might be weeks, years or decades of both game and real time). Each game session interacts with a certain part of the story arc, revealing more information to the characters, involving them in crucial events, and advancing the story arc as a result. Some game sessions may be more critical than others, involving decisive moments in the story that have long-term repercussions, whilst other sessions will be incidental or only marginally connected to the grand plan. This approach allows the characters some light relief and keeps them on their toes. Perhaps a simple barroom brawl will have consequences far beyond their understanding, or maybe it is simply just a bawdy fight over a spilled drink.

It can often be tempting to have the campaign arc tightly defined with a definite conclusion and predetermined touch points for the characters. This certainly allows the Games Master to plan carefully and control events important to the story, but can lead to difficulties when the characters do something that fundamentally challenges or changes the campaign arc. A key villain might be killed, for example, whereas his escape is essential for later events. Of course, the Games Master is always the final arbiter of events and has the last word on how things are resolved, but it can be frustrating for the players to see fairly obtained results modified by the Games Master in order to fit a predetermined sequence (a practice known as 'railroading'). When occasions like this arise players often feel they are little more than ciphers or bit players, rather than being truly influential in events. Flexibility is therefore key to running a campaign arc. Events should be sketched through and certain conclusions pre-ordained, but the Games Master also should be prepared for the unexpected and embrace it. The campaign arc might be challenged by character actions, but sometimes the results can lead to a series of hugely enjoyable new stories as a consequence. This keeps the players engaged and allows their characters to be influential in the overall story. After all, once the session is finished the Games Master has some time to consider how to incorporate new twists into the arc and assess their consequences. Many successful and rewarding *RuneQuest* campaigns are sustained in precisely this way.

## One-Off Stories

One-off stories take place against a defined background and setting but are self-contained adventures taking either a single session or two or three sessions at the most, to complete. Outcomes might influence later stories, but generally the idea is to create a short-story rather than a full-blown novel. One-off stories are excellent for groups meeting infrequently, and it is quite possible for a full campaign arc to emerge out of one or more story sessions. They are also particularly suitable when it is not possible for all the regular group members to be present. It is relatively easy to explain a character's absence when a new story starts – after all, characters have lives beyond their adventures.

Some care needs to be exercised with one-off stories. Themes should be consistent from one story to another to retain a sense of continuity and credibility, and it is a

good idea to reintroduce certain key personalities from time to time to reinforce the sense of a living, breathing world. Think of the campaign in terms of a television serial with each story equating to a weekly episode. And, of course, it can be very easy to introduce a loose plot arc threaded between each story to heighten the resonance of the campaign.

### Freeform

Freeform campaigns tend not to have any particular structure predefined, but are allowed to emerge naturally with the characters' actions determining how the structure forms and what course the campaign follows. There is a generally defined setting and background, but beyond that, events unfold in a freewheeling way that changes direction according to whatever wild and creative ideas both the Games Master and players throw into the mix.

Campaigns of this kind are huge fun to play but will, at some stage, require a little structure to be imposed by the Games Master. If this does not happen it is possible for the campaign to lose sense of itself, in terms of direction and consequence. Events take place that make little rational sense and if this becomes a frequent occurrence, the campaign can pall. The trick, therefore, is to allow considerable freedom and invention, but every so often introduce a structured min-arc or one-off story that allows the campaign to establish its own roots and 'ground' the characters in the reality of the game world. These grounding sessions need not be frequent or even especially serious, but it helps to balance the power that comes with creativity, and to lend the campaign a structure that is neither restrictive nor meaningless.

## Background Settings

What background setting should you choose for your *RuneQuest* games? Should you use a published *RuneQuest* setting, one from another games producer, or create one based on a favourite book, film, computer game or TV show; or should you create your own? The choice is vast and ultimately dependent on the style preferred by you and your players.

*RuneQuest* obviously has several settings already developed for it and explored in the range of books published by Mongoose Publishing. Some will be

familiar to *RuneQuest* Games Masters, but others less so. What follows is a brief synopsis of the existing *RuneQuest* settings at the time of writing. More will appear in the future, including Feudal Japan and others.

### Glorantha

This is one of the oldest and most extensively detailed and explored *RuneQuest* settings in existence. It is the world *RuneQuest* was initially created to support more than thirty years ago, and millions of words have been written about it since.

Glorantha was created by Greg Stafford in 1966 as part of his abiding interest in myth and folklore, and the world explicitly explores the subjects of myth, culture and community and how they interact and influence each other. The world is a truly mythic place, being not a planet but a lozenge of earth floating on the primal sea of myth, flowing down the river of Time. Its lands are not the result of geological activity but of the deliberate actions of the gods during the God Time. Traditional physical laws exist because the gods will them to, not due to the laws of physics.

The gods are real, influential beings, separated from the mundane world of Glorantha by The Great Compromise which brought the Gods Wars to an end and helped banish darkness and chaos from the world. The races of Glorantha have a great affinity with the dozens of gods, major and minor, that watch over the world, and derive considerable magic powers as a result of their worship. Magic is commonplace in Glorantha, with the various Runes offering a way of tapping into the powers of the gods, and direct magical gifts being granted by the gods themselves.

The campaign setting for *RuneQuest*'s Glorantha is the world's Second Age, also known as the Imperial Age, which sees two great, rival empires struggling for control of the world. The mighty Middle Sea Empire (known colloquially as The God Learners) of Jurstela follows the teachings of the One True God and his prophet, Malkion, and are experts in sorcery and myth reshaping. Their overarching aim is to bring together the disparate myths of the world into a single, logical framework known as the 'monomyth'. They do this through sorcery and HeroQuesting, which is nothing less than entering the mythic world and engaging with the deeds and stories of the gods, either to understand

them or reshape them – whatever best serves the creation of the monomyth. In addition to this mythical tampering the God Learners are also experimenting with magically-fused technology in a bid to raise their own machine god, Zistor. This practice is considered as abhorrent as myth-plundering by the other cultures of the world, and a great army is preparing to lay siege to the city where Zistor is being created.

The second great empire is the Empire of Wyrms' Friends, or EWF, which seeks to transform itself into an immense dragon through spiritual purity and the mystical transcendence of the mundane world. Allied with the enigmatic dragonewts, the leaders of the EWF are close to realising personal dragonhood, becoming dragons in their own right, as well as guiding the empire towards raising the Great Dragon to Be. However, as the EWF gains deeper mystical insight it becomes ever more detached from reality to a point where its grip is weakening and being challenged by the God Learners. The stage is therefore set for a mighty clash between these two forces, and the world will most likely be reshaped as a consequence.

Glorantha mixes High and Low fantasy, and injects it with a deep and intriguing mythical resonance permitting Games Masters and players to engage with relative ease in the great events of the world. The spectacular level of detail in Glorantha – its history, people, cultures and cults – may seem daunting, but the campaign setting is structured to allow Games Masters to use as much or as little as they wish, keeping events local (but still significant) or epic and globe-spanning, whilst still gritty and realistic. Part of the allure of Glorantha is plunging straight in and learning its immense legacy through steady play – much as one learns of a detailed fantasy world in a novel by starting at page one and continuing through to the end. Detail can be absorbed incrementally, becoming ever richer as the players and Games Master expand their understanding and engagement with the world.

### Lankhmar

Based on the novel and the short stories of Fritz Leiber (the fabled 'Swords...' saga) detailing the exploits of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, the Lankhmar setting is a superb example of Low Fantasy, although to title it so is something of a disservice to the quality of the

storytelling and the characters. Lankhmar is concerned not with lofty schemes and idealistic quests – although these can be easily accommodated – but with everyday survival and making one's way in the dangerous and scheming lands of Newhon and the eponymous city.

Lankhmar thus concerns itself with small deeds on a personal scale in a relatively contained environment. This permits a great deal of campaign intimacy and personal storytelling to be developed with an investment of detail in the denizens of Lankhmar itself, one of the best developed city locales in fantasy literature. Magic and intrigue feature, of course, but are not as central to the lives of the characters as they are in Glorantha, for example. Adventures tend to centre on the roguish endeavours of the world's inhabitants rather than on the grand schemes of empires, but are no less involving or epic for it.

As a result, Lankhmar is a superb place for One-Off story campaigns, where individual tales can be explored in a self-contained format, tied together by the rich background of Fritz Leiber's imagination.

### Elric





Michael Moorcock's Elric of Melniboné is one of the great fantasy creations. Elric is a prime example of Dark Fantasy. The world (The Young Kingdoms) is being contested by the opposing forces of Law and Chaos, and Elric is an agent of both. The world is a dark, sinister, and ultimately doomed place, the direct result of Elric's own actions. As an emperor, sorcerer and albino weakling all, Elric himself is intriguing enough, but the backdrop of the struggle between Law and Chaos creates epic, doom-tinged campaigns where the morals and souls of the characters are at constant risk.

The Elric saga spans forty years of short stories and novels, and is richly detailed as a result. Campaigns can be epic or intimate, but ultimately carry a dark, foreboding edge reflecting the clash of the primal forces and the whims of the capricious Lords of Law and Chaos. Magic is rare but extremely powerful, with sorcerers striking bargains with gods for great, but costly, gifts, and summoning and bartering with demons and elementals for temporal power. The great empire of Melniboné is in decay, and the new, equally corrupt empire of Pan Tang is rising, providing an intriguing backdrop for epic, power-struggle based campaigns. Yet the city-states of Ilmar, Bakshaan and Menii offer more intimated campaign opportunities, in the same vein as Lankhmar.

### Hawkmoon

Another of Michael Moorcock's creations, Hawkmoon is played out on a grand tapestry – namely a far, far future Europe where both science and sorcery abound. Europe itself is a fractured, feudal place that is climbing out of an extensive dark age. Its nations are engaged in perpetual, petty wars, vying for territory and influence, all the while neglecting the sinister rise of Granbretan and its masked martial orders that are beginning to assume control.

Overarching this state of war is the mythical Runestaff, a mysterious item of great and fateful power that is only too keen to sweep people into its schemes for good or ill. Adventurers in Hawkmoon might be completely unaware of their involvement in the Runestaff's agenda, believing themselves to be simple souls caught up in the fight between European kingdoms or against the mighty Granbretan. This means that the Hawkmoon setting is perfect for both Freeform and Campaign Arc campaigns, with the emphasis

switching between different forces according to the actions of the characters and how deeply they are involved in the plots of local rulers, Granbretan's Dark Empire, or the Runestaff's direct requirements.

And, of deep interest to players is the fabulous, baroque technology available to characters. Ornate ornithopters, shaped like birds or insects, take to the skies on mechanical wings, whilst flamelance-armed troops clash on the battlefields of Germania and the Kamarg. The blending and blurring of science and sorcery is enough to spur many adventures into existence as the characters search for it, guard it, steal it, or try to flee its presence...if the Runestaff will let them, of course.

## Campaign Experience Level

The attraction of any roleplaying game is in seeing characters develop and grow as their experiences broaden and deepen. *RuneQuest* is no exception, of course, with progression measured in terms of skill improvement and advancement in cults, guilds or societies. And, of course, through obtaining and mastering more magic.

However, the starting point of the campaign requires some thought. Will the characters be fresh-faced youths or grizzled veterans of countless battles, cynical and care-worn? Some of those questions are addressed by this book, but ultimately the Games Master is responsible for deciding the experience level of the campaign. It is important to consider this before the players sit down to create their characters. Low-level characters are relatively unskilled and vulnerable, but they have opportunity ahead of them and the advantage of being able to advance in skill expertise with a degree of ease. More experienced adventurers can face more difficult challenges, but progression in terms of skills and advancement is more difficult. Master and Heroic characters are at the height of their powers and represent many, many years of adventuring. Progression for them will not be measured in skill advancement, but more likely in achieving other goals. Beginning a campaign at this level will require a great deal of thought about the challenges they will face and the repercussions of their actions.

Page 103 of the *RuneQuest* rules describes the framework for developing characters with different degrees of experience and a Games Master should read that section and consider the setting, structure and themes of his campaign. Consider also the pros and cons of the different experience levels available. Note – all characters should begin at the same level of experience. During play they will develop at different rates, but this is down to player-choice. It might be tempting to mix character levels in the same party, but this will quickly lead to frustration as less experienced characters find themselves taking a back-seat to the more experienced.

### Low-Level

This is the default level of character created by the standard *RuneQuest* character creation procedure. Characters are beginning their adventuring career and have a whole, wide world to experience. They are vulnerable because of inexperience (although likely to be competent in one or two areas) and have a lot to learn.

This is a good place to begin a campaign with players new to *RuneQuest* or even completely new to roleplaying. Whilst characters, and character creation choices, are limited, low-level character builds allow the players to become familiar with the character creation mechanics and, when they begin adventuring, experience a fair share of success and failure that will let them decide how they want their character to advance and develop when it comes time for the first round of improvement rolls. Characters at this level have everything to gain, and, whilst there is much to lose, it is an easier burden to bear if a character falls to an enemy.

At this level the Games Master should discuss the direct home life and cultural background of the character with each player. What ambitions does the character have? What has formed those aspirations? How attached to his home life is the adventurer? What is the spur for embarking on a career that is likely to be hazardous? The answers to these questions are important to establish a context for the adventurer, and can be brought into play as the campaign develops. However, at this level it is important to let the characters define their own way in the world without previous baggage to weigh them down.

### Seasoned and Veteran

Seasoned and Veteran characters have spent a few years adventuring and are competent in several different skill areas, reflecting previous adventures and life experiences. When creating characters at these levels Games Masters should spend some time discussing the kinds of exploits that have led to the character's current collection of skills and abilities/ How did they come by them? What exploits have they been involved in? Who are the likely enemies, allies and friends as a result of these adventures? What is next in store for the characters?

Campaign and story themes should reflect the answers to these questions, and be able to involve the players' concepts into the campaign framework. This is important at all levels, of course, but perhaps most for Seasoned and Veteran character levels, which have a reasonable degree of exposure to a more dangerous world and require further challenges to permit their advancement. At this stage in their careers past actions should be preparing to revisit them, and this acts as a good foundation for a campaign.



## Master and Heroic

Beginning characters at this level requires a solid rationale for the campaign, equipped with well-drawn Non-Player Characters and events and challenges that will be of sufficient interest to the characters. The events need to be of a high-level, earth-shaking nature: top-ranking political intrigue, averting cosmic disasters, taking on armies single-handedly, and so forth. As mentioned, characters at this level find it exceedingly difficult to advance their skills further, and therefore require different kinds of challenges, suited to their status, if interest is to be engaged and maintained.

The levels of magic and threat should thus also be at the high-end of the scale. Mundane concerns will be boring and irrelevant to Master and Heroic characters, and so the focus needs to be on handling high levels of power in ways that have wide-scale, dramatic repercussions. Foes need to be big and very tough; situations need to be critical and the gestures grand. Campaigns of this type require a definite story-arc, shaped by key events and interactions, but still with the flexibility to accommodate the fact that the Master and Heroic characters are going to have a high chance of succeeding in most skills they exercise.

## Running the Game

It goes without saying that, a Games Master should be familiar with the *RuneQuest* rules. You should have a firm grasp of which rules are likely to come into play in the forthcoming session, understand how to apply them consistently, and what the outcomes will be. The kind of campaign you are running will determine what optional rules you decide to have in the game, including the optional rules found in this book, and how they will be communicated to the players during the game session.

Although this is not a 'How to Run *RuneQuest*' book, here are some straightforward Do's and Don'ts that benefit all Games Masters.

### Do

- ▣ Be consistent. Apply all rules, even optional ones, fairly and in the same way. If it's necessary to alter an outcome to shape a particular part of the story, be prepared to explain why or justify your judgment.
- ▣ Prepare an outline of your scenario or story, with relevant maps and handouts. Creating something in great detail may certainly be satisfying and certainly shows dedication to the cause, but players and characters are notorious in their ability to short-circuit a meticulously planned scenario for, sometimes, the most innocuous of reasons. A certain amount of railroading might be possible (even necessary) to get the characters back on track, but flexibility and forethought, rather than reams of notes and detailed maps and floor plans, is often a better Games Master aid.
- ▣ Run with good ideas from players and characters, and work them into the story. Some of the most inventive aspects of a scenario or campaign come from throwaway ideas or comments by players or their characters. Note those you like and make use of them when it is appropriate to do so. This engages both players and characters, and helps add depth and resonance to the game session.
- ▣ Vary published backgrounds. If you are playing in *Elric of Melniboné*, there is no reason to stick to the published background; perhaps *Elric* died at birth and *Yyrkoon* occupies the Ruby Throne. If playing *Glorantha*, perhaps the *Uz of Dagori Inkarth* have defeated the *Eternal Dragon Ring* and now rule *Dragon Pass*, creating a new, trollish empire. Use published backgrounds for inspiration and follow them to the letter if you wish, but never be afraid to experiment and even hybridise. A *God Learner* experiment might open a gateway to *Tragic Millennium Europe*, for example, or *Newhon*.

is an old province of Melniboné somewhere in the western Young Kingdoms, its gods being minor vassals of Chaos.

⌚ Encourage characters to join guilds and cults. *RuneQuest* is about culture and community as well as fantasy adventuring. Cults and other societies offer new insights into both and are great sources for adventuring and campaign threads.

⌚ Allow characters freedom. It is often tempting to say ‘No, you can’t do that because...’ when sometimes saying ‘Okay, let’s see where this leads...’ might produce a fun and highly creative result for all concerned. *RuneQuest* is a flexible game, and as long as rules are applied consistently, saying ‘Yes’ can often be much better than restricting character freedom.

⌚ Reward characters with a Hero Point for excellent ideas and roleplaying. If their characters do something that advances the standing or progress of the party, or does something that amuses and enhances enjoyment, reward with a Hero Point either there and then, or at the end of the session.

### Do not

⌚ Be stingy with Hero Points. These are the currency of *RuneQuest* and are rewarded for good roleplaying and contribution to the story, not for killing heaps of monsters or bagging lots of treasure. *RuneQuest* is a game about heroes – so give the players the means to achieve that end (but obviously in moderation).

⌚ Feel you have to produce full statistics for every single creature or NPC. It is time consuming, for one thing. The *RuneQuest Games Masters’ Guide* contains some useful tips and tools, not to mention some pregenerated NPCs, to help save you that effort. And, most monsters and creatures come with average values – don’t be afraid to use them.

⌚ Overly restrict access to magic. The name *RuneQuest* implies that runes can be quested for and found. Even though they are very rare, let characters find them and make use of them. In worlds such as Glorantha, magic is commonplace, and whilst rune ownership might be uncommon, cults offer access to Rune Magic as part of their membership. Some settings restrict magic in order to reflect their source material, such as Hawkmoon, but this shouldn’t mean it is impossible to get. A great deal of fun can be derived from having access to magic in some shape or form.

⌚ Be a slave to the rules. If something is going well and everyone is having fun – or a particular idea or suggestion will add huge enjoyment, be prepared to go with it. Improvise a rule if you have to, or make it clear that you will be bending the rules slightly on this occasion to let the ideas happen and the play flow. Don’t forget to reward the character suggesting the idea with a Hero Point either during or at the end of the session.

# CHARACTERS

Characters, both those controlled by the players (Player Characters) and those controlled by the Games Master (Non-Player Characters, or NPCs) are the lifeblood of any *RuneQuest* game. Most game interactions are via the characters and a successful game session is seen through the characters' eyes, rather than those of the player. Whilst on the face of it a character is no more than a list of numbers and words on a character sheet, how that information is perceived and then translated into game interactions defines the nature of the character.

This is not to recommend that *RuneQuest* players become method actors or drama students. For some that is a comfortable approach and much has been written elsewhere about the role of drama in roleplaying. For many players it is enough to simply state 'my character is angry and does X' without having to dramatise the emotion. What is important, though, is perceiving the character as being distinct from the player. It is very true to say that the character is very much an extension of our own personalities; but the more clearly defined the character is, beyond raw numbers, in the minds of both the player and Games Master, the more rewarding the experience can be.

This is therefore a case for investing characters with some depth beyond the archetypes common to almost all fantasy roleplaying games. *RuneQuest* has been particularly successful in this regard by placing the cultural background at the forefront of the character creation process, thus encouraging players to formulate an initial idea of where their character is from and what has shaped his particular beliefs and worldview. Yet there is still scope for investing characters with greater depth. The more deeply defined the character, the more rewarding the experience for all concerned. However, investing either Player Characters or NPCs with depth takes a certain amount of time and effort. In the case of Player Characters this can be accomplished before the characters start adventuring – during the character creation process, in other words. For NPCs, Games Masters assume full responsibility, and detailing a constant source of NPCs can be a very time-consuming process.

In this chapter we explore both creating character depth and offer some suggestions for shortcuts for creating NPCs that make the Games Master's job easier without sacrificing depth or game enjoyment. A selection of NPCs is also provided in the Gazetteer section: ready-made NPCs to slot into your campaigns.

## Cultural Voices

In this section representatives of the various *RuneQuest* cultures define themselves in terms of their place, beliefs, outlooks, hopes and states of mind. Use these voices to help players understand what being a Barbarian or Nomad actually means; indeed you are encouraged to write your own, using the voices presented here as examples.

### The Barbarian Voice

'The people of the towns and cities call us barbarians because our houses are not made of brick and we choose not crush ourselves together like too many fish in a shallow pond. They call us barbarians because we choose not to write down what we see, hear and say. They call us barbarians because we fight amongst ourselves sometimes. They call us barbarians because they simply do not understand. Living in brick boxes must do something to the wits.

We choose to be close to the ground that gave rise to all of us. Our homes are made from the things we can readily find and shape and we do not believe in building high or covering the ground in dressed stone. Life is hard; we appreciate it that way. It is good to feel the rain on our cheeks and the sun on our backs as we go about our business. Why lock ourselves away? The gods created us to experience the world and you can't do that if you spend all your time in a box of bricks. We accept the world for what it is and how it is. Town and city folk seek to make it something else. We appreciate comfort and warmth just like they do, but we take life as it comes, not as how we would like it be. A bed of good, fresh straw is as comfortable as any slab stuffed with feathers – and probably cleaner and certainly better for the back.



Neither do we waste. Waste is an insult to the gods! We eat, or find a use, for everything we hunt. We honour what nature provides and do not squander it. It brings tears to the eyes and heart to see the waste in the cities. If you are not prepared to use something to its full then leave it alone.

And do not believe what they say about our lack of laws. Our laws are embodied in our customs and traditions. When we transgress we expect to be punished. When we transgress badly we expect the punishment to be bad, too. We believe in saying what we mean, meaning what we say and doing what we have promised. Some view this as harsh, such as when we stone to death liars, but this means we do not have liars in our midst. Those tempted to transgress know the consequences and think twice. This helps us to live in harmony.

Ah, of course...the raids. Well, do the civilised folk not make wars? Of course they do! When they make war thousands die and most are unprepared for it. For us, we raid to settle scores and to build our strength – not just the strength of the tribe but the strength of character in each of us, too. We expect to be raided and our neighbours expect us to raid them. Just as the

hawk takes the dove on the wing. Life is a cycle and we are part of it. And when we raid, a few might die, but most do not. And when we die we are ready for it and unafraid. Through raiding we understand our place and keep it, just as the wolf knows its territory and keeps that.

So come and break bread with us. We do not care that you live in a brick box; as a visitor to our hearth you are a guest and will be honoured. You will be served first, above even the headman, and we will share with you all that we have, keeping nothing back. In return we ask for news and stories and perhaps a small token of your appreciation for our hospitality in the form of a song or a dance. Come, the elders are waiting.'

### The Civilised Voice

'Isn't this a fine city? I mean, isn't it the finest you've seen? Safe, too. The militia sees to that and although you might see the odd troll wandering around the marketplace you're as likely to get eaten by monsters as you are to grow wings and a pink beard.

We have rules, you see. Without rules we're no better than animals. Rules help us live together without fighting, and to make things we can sell so that we can move up in the world. It's about order and a certain degree of comfort. And it's about education. I can do sums and read quite a few words and that helps me run my business. Because I run my business I can buy education for my children so they can run businesses too, when they're older. And I can buy my wife the things we need to bring up the children, and sometimes there's a little left over for a treat. Sometimes. And pay the taxes. It's very important that we pay the taxes.

But mostly it's about protection. That wall around the city is there for more than show. It keeps the invaders out and lets us live in peace. The garrison patrols the borders and the wall and alerts us to when enemies are near. Not that they'd dare attack us! We have the most important city in the whole kingdom. Attacking us would invite hatred from everywhere else. So we are safe.

Well, yes, of course there's crime. There's always someone who isn't prepared to work for it and steals instead. Why, only last week my shop was turned over and the day's takings stolen. And yes, there are

muggings and murders too, but we know the militia will catch the perpetrators. And when they do! Well, then they'll see our marvellous court in action. The Duke himself presides over it you know, and he's a fair man. He can tell when someone's guilty just by staring at them. And don't bother appealing; if you're guilty, you're off to the dungeon. That's unless you've been stealing, in which case you lose fingers.

What I like most about the city is the wider community. It's about meeting new people every day, each one having a new story to tell. I like seeing my neighbours, even if they are a bit loud sometimes, and I like the atmosphere of market day or Saints Day when everyone's excited and out for a good time. I like having a roof over my head and a warm bed to lie in at night (even if it is damp). I like having a door I can close on the world when I get fed up with it, and knowing that I don't have to go out with a spear to hunt my next meal.

Me? Give up the city? No chance!'

### The Mariner Voice

'Sea's in my blood, see? Sea is the blood – just smell it on the air! Smells of life it does, and that's a good thing. The sea gives us what we need, food and treasure. You know where you are with it. When the sea's stormy, you don't take your boat out unless its sturdy and your stomach strong. When the sea's calm, you can get a great catch that you can sell and feed your family with. The sea is freedom. An endless expanse of it, and when you're born by water it gets in your veins and stays there, calling you back.

I lived in the city awhile. Couldn't have it, even though I was on the harbour-front. Had to get back on the deck and hauling the nets, climbing the rigging. Just didn't do to be around all that stillness. The world rocks when you're on the water, comforts you. Even the storm can be a comfort because you know you're alive then, and got to get through anyway you can. Coming out of it to sunshine and calm seas makes you give thanks for the risk. Don't get that walking down a street. Don't get that freedom.

And people who live by water are open people. No secrets. There's things you don't say, because there's things not for saying, but nothing's hidden. Sea can't lie and neither can those born to it. When you're on the



boat and your life depends on someone holding your tether, you don't need to ask, you just trust. So sea people are trusting people too. Have to be. No other way to be.

But she's a harsh one, the sea. Lots of mysteries. She has a long memory and never forgives, so you learn respect for her. If you show weakness she won't show any mercy. Go down in a squall and you're hers to keep. That's the way of it. No use crying over it. So you trust, and you stay open and you concentrate and the sea watches you and all's well.

Course, there's pirates. No denying that. But they're not the sea's fault. That's the fault of desperation and human weakness. There are pirates on land too, so it's no use saying how dangerous the sea can be because of the pirates and privateers. If your wits are about you and you stay close to the shore, you can be just fine. But pirates don't care for the sea. They just care about themselves and what they can steal. They're not interested in her ways or wherefores – or yours or mine. Selfish bastards one and all, and when they drown the sea don't want them. She gives their souls to the dead fleet, where they belong.'

## The Noble Voice

‘Do not be fooled by the finery of these robes. I have known hardship and had days – months even – when I didn’t have two silvers to scratch together. And don’t let the castle fool you either; the amount of money it costs to keep this place running... servants, repairs, supplies... none of it cheap. Yes, I suppose you could say I was born into privilege because we are an old family and always enjoyed the queen’s favour, but that comes at a price, too. Always there’s a price to be paid. I wish the commoners understood that better. We all feel the winters just the same, despite the robes I wear.

Everything I have could be gone at a moment’s notice. My titles, lands and home are all within the queen’s gift. If she decided to give them all to someone else tomorrow, she could, and I would be just like you: a commoner. We all have to fight for something. For someone like you, it’s eking a living from the land. For me, it’s eking a living from all the intrigues at court and doing a fickle queen’s bidding. Oh, I offer advice, as do all the dukes, and sometimes she listens, but for the most part its lists: lists of things these lands want, things they have, and things they need; lists of how many cattle, how many horses, how many peasants owe rent. I might wear that suit of armour when I ride out to battle the queen’s enemies, but my real armour is the invisible stuff that clothes my conscience and repels the arrows of gossip and blades of malicious stares and barbed tongues. Give me an honest battle with an honest enemy any day.

I try to take an interest in the lands I own, I really do, but it gets harder to do so with each passing year. The demands on my time grow longer, just like those lists I have to compile. If there’s a bad harvest or a stubborn winter I have to explain it to the queen as though it’s all my fault! I’m the one who has to detail the poor showing in the tithe list and explain that the plague is to blame once more.

But I believe in duty. I swear an oath to protect the crown in exchange for a title and a small amount of influence over how these lands are run. My father did it and my sons will do it too (if the queen doesn’t give everything I have to some new favourite). I have a duty to uphold my family’s traditions and to find matches for my children so that dynasties grow stronger and prosperity continues. Not so different than you, eh?

No, we’re all servants to someone else. You to me, me to the queen, the queen to the High Priest and the High Priest to the gods. So don’t be fooled by the finery of these robes. They belonged to my father and they’re coming apart at the seams.’

## The Nomad Voice

‘In the winter we move to the good shelter of the valley floor where our people have made camp every year for fifty generations. We wait until the ground thaws, living all the while on the dried meats and fruits laid-down in the spring, and protect ourselves from the cold, the snow and the wolves. Last year we arrived in the valley to find it had been occupied by brood and we had to drive them out and cleanse the place with fire to kill the disease. A dozen died in that fight. A dozen hands less to tend the herd and forage.

In the spring we move up to the higher pastures, some ten-day’s walk, and check the game trails to see what has made it through the winter. The Great Hunt takes place in that time, when the strong go and find boar and elk and the rest move the herd out of the valley. Those are good days, and we give thanks to the spirits and sacrifice a cow or two. We meet the other clans at the Great Cairn and exchange news and gifts. There is always a feast and many sore heads, but we agree on the business for the year and discuss what the game trails are like and how the pasture holds out. Last year one clan brought with it a monster they had captured and tamed. It was a scaly thing with tusks and hide like tree bark, but the sages said it was not of Chaos, so the clan kept it as a watchdog.

And then in the summer we move out onto the grasslands and towards the shade of the great forest where we gather and prepare for the winter. Sometimes there’s a battle, depending on who is also on the grasslands or lurking in the forest, but mostly we know peace. It is difficult to find enemies when you’re always on the move.

Why do we follow this life? Because of the seasons! The world moves and so must we. If you stay in one place you sap the earth and it stops giving. Stay in one place and sooner or later enemies or monsters find you and before you know it you’re fighting every day instead of every now and again. By moving we learn the land and take its best. We learn to co-operate with



those who have not insulted us and we learn to share when sharing's needed. If you set down roots, you become like a plant, and we are not plants. We have legs and we walk and run like the deer walk and run. We are free, and being free we must move freely. Our traditions are strong because our knowledge of these lands is strong. Our hunters and herders are strong because we keep our blood moving keep time with the seasons, moving when the earth and the spirits say it is time to move. We never stop moving. Even when death claims us, we go to the Great Pasture where all is spring and the hunting is good, and the spirits look after us as we have looked after them.

We have a good life.'

### The Primitive Voice

The world is full of fear. It is a wrathful place and we know its wrath. So we hide. We try to keep the gods happy with sacrifices of blood but still they punish us. We asked the wise woman why the gods are so angry and she told us it is because we are not perfect, like they are, and it is our fault. So now we know. Can we be perfect? I don't think so. I think the gods like it that way. I think they like having something to blame and then punish. So we fear them.

Our home is the great cave that runs deep into that mountain. When the gods send the monsters to eat us we flee deep inside while the warriors hurl their spears and the shaman makes her chants. We paint our victories on the cave wall and tell stories about them so the children will know that even though the gods are angry at us we are a strong people and want to make things good. We eat the monsters we kill and make weapons and tools from the bones.

Our wise woman told us that the people who live in the woodlands two days from us made the gods even angrier because they stole the secret of fire, so we went and killed them. We thought the gods would be pleased with us for killing the thieves but that night they sent a great plague and more monsters, so maybe the wise woman was wrong, but she probably wasn't. I wonder, how do you get to be a wise woman?

Our chieftain married the young daughter who we took as a slave when we killed the enemies, and we know that is wrong because her hair is red. Red is the colour

of the trickster god but the chieftain won't listen. He was challenged and killed the hunter who challenged him and ate his heart. He gave the brain to his new wife so she might eat and gain some wisdom. Perhaps *that's* how you get to be a wise woman. Because she has red hair we fear her and we fear the chieftain because he's changed. She's put a spell on him, we think. That's probably how her people stole fire from the gods. I think *she* did it.

I made my first spear yesterday. I knapped the flint myself and tied it firm with the twine I made from dried pig gut. It is very straight and very sharp. I went looking for an enemy to kill and found someone lost in the hills not far from our cave. I tested my spear on him and it stuck so deep I nearly broke the haft getting it out. I ate his heart without bothering to make it hot and now I have his soul. I'm not sure I want two souls, so I will go to the wise woman and give her the skull from the enemy I tested my spear on, and she will take the second soul from me. It will be my slave then, and I will make it worship me like a god, and I will make it fear me.

Because the world is full of fear.

### The Townsman's Voice

Now them city types look down on us because we're small and live in their shadow, but small is beautiful, eh? It's not size that counts – it's what you do with it. Can't use more than a handful, that's what my old father told me.

We like it here in the town. I know most people and they know me. Not like the city. I go there to the spring market and its okay for a day or three, but it's too big for my liking and everything costs so much. Not like here. We get value here. It's all about value, you see. Our town values what it has and things like that get lost in the city because there's too much and too many. Because we know everyone we can share our sense of value. And if they don't like it, they can get lost. Or go back to the city.

Our lord is not so bad. That's his place, up on the hill. I do some odd jobs for him now and then and he pays well enough. Keeps to himself mostly, so that's all well and good. We do the usual thing with tribute and he does his usual thing and leaves us alone. No need for rubbing

shoulders all the time, and everyone knows their place. I mean, why have more? We've got everything we need here in one street and that suits me.

On an evening I play dice at Dixie's tavern and we talk about what's going on. Nothing gets past us you know. Can't have secrets in a place like this. Take Dixie for example. He's been carrying on with the miller's wife for more than a year now (not that I'd blame him. The miller can't grind for toffee and the flour's always got grit in it) and it's always fun to speculate on when the miller will find out and what he'll do when he does. Of course, we'll have to put a stern face on things and shake our heads at the tragedy, and tut a lot, but it's been a year of solid entertainment for us who go to Dixie's, so we're happy to see it run for a good while yet.

I suppose the worst thing though is the gossip. Now, as you know, I'm not one for the gossip. Keep myself to myself and my nose out of other's business. Do something that gets the tongues wagging and before you know it your life's laid bare for everyone to pick over. That chandler's the worst. Keep a secret? Him? He was the one told us about Dixie and the miller's wife. He's one to talk. He's got three children he won't admit to but everyone knows they're his, or I've got three heads.

So everything we need is here on the doorstep. Course we all wish we had a little bit more but then doesn't everyone? Otherwise we've got it good. We don't get much crime and we can keep our doors unlocked of a night. Not like them city types. I hear all the houses in the city have got a bar and a bolt to keep the thieves out. Wouldn't happen here. We're too small for all that.

Your round, innit?'

### Life Experiences

Life Experience	Persistence and Resilience Modifiers
Disease or Poisoning	-10% (Resilience)
Emotional trauma	-5% (Persistence)
Insanity	-10% (Persistence)
Major Wound	-10% (Resilience)
Resurrected from Death	-15% (Persistence and Resilience)
Serious Wound	-5% (Resilience)

## Player Characters

This section explores some of the things Player Characters can experience – either before or during their adventuring careers. All the ideas presented here are optional, but they allow Games Masters to help players add depth and resonance to their adventurers.

### Ageing

The march of Time is inevitable. Unless a character is the lucky beneficiary of age-halting magic, he will get older and the effects of age will tell upon the frame. In *RuneQuest* the signs of ageing do not begin until the character reaches the age of 40. At that point, and for each year thereafter (the birthday perhaps, or an anniversary agreed between you and the player), the character should make two checks: one for Resilience and one for Persistence. Each test is at a penalty equal to the number of years over 40 the character has attained. Thus, a 50-year-old character suffers a -10% penalty to the Resilience and Persistence tests. The tests are also further modified according to the character's life experiences, as noted in the table below.

Each different life experience is cumulative; so, a character who has been poisoned and suffered a Major Wound incurs a -20% penalty to his Resilience and Persistence tests. However, the character does not suffer from accumulated penalties for the multiple occurrences of the same experience. Thus, even though a character may have suffered several Major Wounds, he only incurs a single -10% penalty.

If the Resilience and/or Persistence test is made successfully, the character does not incur any ageing effects *that year*. If either test fails, the character must



### Character Ageing

1D6	Physical Ageing (Failed Resilience)	Mental Ageing (Failed Persistence)
1-2	STR	INT
3-4	CON	POW
5-6	DEX	CHA

roll on the appropriate, or both, columns of the Character Ageing Table, above, to determine which Characteristics suffer from the effects of ageing that year.

Each Characteristic affected by ageing reduces by 1D2 points. These points can be recovered through normal Characteristic improvement, as described on page 97 of the *RuneQuest* rules, representing efforts made by the character to keep himself trim and alert as he grows older. What specific debilitating effects arise as part of the ageing process are down to the players and Games Master to define. Reducing STR or DEX indicates the general wear and tear on the body, for instance, with creaking joints and a gradual loss of mobility. Reducing INT indicates that age is starting to play tricks on the mind and memory, whilst reducing CHA indicates the character is getting craggier, and more short-tempered, perhaps, as he gets older.



### Alternative Characteristic Generation

The *RuneQuest* character creation rules use dice rolls to generate adventurers' Characteristics. This creates random results that can be redistributed to a certain extent to allow players some flexibility in designing a character that fits their particular preferences. However, Games Masters and players might prefer a less random approach to character design. If so, the alternative Character Generation systems below may be used.

#### Points Build

Every player has 80 Characteristic points to assign to Characteristics as he wishes, with the following conditions:

- ⌚ No Characteristic can exceed the species maximum (for humans this is 21 for STR, CON, DEX, POW and CHA, and 20 for SIZ and INT). For other species it is the *maximum* result of the Characteristic dice *plus* the number of characteristic dice. For example, a Dark Troll has a STR of 3D6+6. Its species maximum is therefore 27 (24, the maximum possible from the dice roll and modifier, plus 3 – the number of dice).
- ⌚ INT and SIZ must be a minimum of 8.
- ⌚ No Characteristic may have a value lower than 6.
- ⌚ All Characteristic points *must* be spent on Characteristics. They cannot be held over to be invested in skills.

All Attributes are figured as per the *RuneQuest* rules.

## Non-Human Species Maximums

Non-human characters have different Characteristic point values depending on race. The below table summarises a selection of popular humanoid races from *RuneQuest* and *RuneQuest Monsters* with species maximums and Characteristic point values.

### Non-Human Character Points and Species Maximums

Race	Points	Species Maximum						
		STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	INT	POW	CHA
Broo	80	20	19	19	21	20	21	14
Dark Troll	90	27	21	30	21	20	21	21
Dragonewt (crested)	80	14	21	14	23	28	14	21
Duck	75	17	20	13	20	20	21	14
Dwarf	80	28	26	13	14	20	21	21
Elf	85	17	21	17	27	27	20	21
Goblin	80	17	17	14	35	21	17	14
Great Troll	110	40	26	40	21	14	21	14
Halfling	75	14	23	10	23	20	20	21
Morocanth	90	27	21	27	17	21	21	21
Ogre	85	26	20	21	20	20	20	24
Orc	80	28	21	17	23	21	17	14

### Semi-Built

This is a faster version of the points build. All Characteristics start at a value of 10. The player may then distribute a further 10 points amongst the Characteristics as he sees fit (but not exceeding the species maximum).

### Quick Start Adventurers

It is the Games Master's eternal dilemma: a Player Character dies and the player wants to resume play without wanting to repeat the character creation process from scratch, or someone unexpectedly joins the game and needs a character, but there isn't the time to devote to the full character creation process. One solution is to give the player a pre-rolled character or the statistics for a NPC (the Gazetteer later in this chapter provides an extensive selection), but this isn't always possible, practical or equitable. Instead, follow the Quick Start process below.

- ⌘ Characteristic values are not rolled. Instead distribute the values 18, 14, 12, 11, 11, 8 and 6 amongst the seven Characteristics.
- ⌘ Attributes are figured normally.
- ⌘ The Character does not decide on either Cultural Background or Profession at this stage.
- ⌘ Allocate the percentage modifiers below to the number of Basic skills indicated in the corresponding column. Note that only one skill can be allocated one percentage. One could not, for example, allocate +30% and +20% (for +50%) to the same skill. The Characteristic starting values for Basic skills are calculated normally.

### Quick Start Skills Table

Skill Modifier	Basic skills (including Combat Skills)
+30%	2
+25%	2
+20%	3
+15%	2
+10%	2

- The Character chooses *four* Advanced skills at their Starting Value from the following list:
  - Artistic Expression
  - Commerce\*
  - Courtesy\*
  - Craft
  - Culture\*
  - Dance
  - Engineering
  - Gambling\*
  - Healing
  - Insight\*
  - Language (choose a second language)
  - Lore (choose a lore: regional, specific theology, and so forth)
  - Martial Arts
  - Mechanisms
  - Oratory
  - Play Instrument
  - Runecasting (or similar magic using skill)
  - Seduction\*
  - Shiphandling
  - Streetwise
  - Survival
  - Tracking

*\*A new Advanced skill. See the Skills Chapter for more information*

- The Character receives Language (Native) at +50%, plus its starting value.
- The player can now choose any Cultural Background and Profession according to either the needs of the campaign/scenario, and according to how the skills percentages have been allocated by the player *For example, +30% in Lore (Animal) and Resilience, with +25% in Stealth and 1H Spear suggests a Barbarian or Nomad hunter.* The profession should equate to the cultural background but it is not essential.
- Finally, the Character receives one weapon for each weapon skill, and 3D6 x20 Silver Pieces to spend on equipment. Alternatively, the Games Master can simply allocate the character's equipment, and the character starts with 2D6 x10 Silver Pieces instead.

### Quick Start Adventurers at Higher Experience Levels

*RuneQuest* allows players to begin with Characters who already have adventuring experience in-hand using the *Beginning Play with Advanced Characters* rules on page 103 of the main rules. If the Games Master agrees, a Quick Start Adventurer can be generated at either the Seasoned, Veteran, Master or Hero level using the following variations.

- Use the Quick Start Characteristic values of 18, 14, 12, 11, 11, 8 and 6. Seasoned adventurers may distribute a further 1D3 points amongst these Characteristics; Veterans 1D4+1, Masters 1D6+2 and Heroes 1D8+4. No Characteristics can exceed the species maximum.
- Skill values are assigned according to the following table:

### Experienced Adventurer Quick Start Skills Table

Skills	Seasoned	Veteran	Master	Hero
Additional Characteristic Points	1D3	1D4+1	1D6+2	1D8+4n
1 Skill at...	+50	+60	+90	+90
1 Skill at...	+45	+50	+80	+85
2 Skills at	+40	+40	+70	+80
2 Skills at...	+35	+35	+60	+75
2 Skills at...	+30	+30	+45	+70
1 Skill at...	–	–	–	+50
1 Skill at...	–	–	–	+45
Advanced skills	5	5 (2 at +20)	6 (1 at +30, 2 at +20, 1 at +10)	6 (1 at +50, 2 at +30, 2 at +20 and 1 at +10)

- ⌘ All Experienced Quick Start Adventurers get Language (Native) at +50.
- ⌘ And, because experienced adventurers have probably left their original culture and profession behind them some time ago, neither Cultural Background nor profession needs to be stipulated.

### Background Events

When a character is created he usually begins life as a young man, but this does not mean his previous childhood and adolescence was lived in an uneventful bubble. We all undergo life-shaping experiences that define who we are, what we do and what our approach is to life. Games Masters are strongly recommended to spend time with their players developing the previous lives of the characters. This needn't be especially detailed and neither does it need to be too specific. Past experiences can be fleshed-out during the course of play or even ignored all together. But establishing the background events to a character's life can be extremely rewarding and provide the fuel for countless future adventures, if the Games Master desires it.

Of course the cultural background of the character will have some say in what these previous experiences were, or, at the very least, determine where they took place. But the *general* nature of life experiences tends to be

universal. The following table offers a wide selection of possible background events that the Games Master may wish to apply to the characters during character creation.

### Families

All adventurers have families. Family ties might still be close or were severed long ago. The family might be large and rambling or small and close-knit. The family might have a reputation that has been a help or hindrance to the character, or its connections might be useful for all sorts of reasons now or in the future.

The Background Events table above may be of help in determining a little about the family's background and history, but in terms of determining the size and shape of the family, the tables below provide the means with which to sketch out a character's family unit. Roll 1D100 for each column to determine the parental status, number of siblings and what the general, extended family structure is like.

For large families it is recommended that details be left deliberately vague. Part of the fun is introducing that roguish or well-connected uncle or cousin at strategic points in a campaign or scenario, and keeping family details at a low level allows for considerable flexibility in developing interesting and intriguing plot twists.

### Background Events Table

1D100	Event
01	Accidentally injured or killed a childhood friend
02	Afflicted by visions of a God or Goddess
03	Afflicted by visions of the future
04	Amnesia. No memory of life before age of 18. Unsure if current family is real or bogus
05-06	Attacked or chased by a creature or monster – harbour a deep fear of the creatures as a result
07-08	Battle – character witnessed a great battle or other conflict
09	Birthmark. Character has a prominent and unusual birthmark that has been mistaken for the holy sign of a particular god
10	Blind. Character either born blind or struck by blindness later. Other senses have compensated
11	Body Double. The character is either a very close likeness or almost identical double of someone famous (or infamous)
12	Born with an integrated Rune
13-15	Brother or Sister died or killed
16-18	Bullied viciously by one or more youths
19-20	Childhood sweetheart – character was once married to childhood sweetheart
21-22	Childhood sweetheart lost – character's childhood sweetheart married a friend or rival
23	Deaf. Character either born deaf or struck by deafness later. Other senses have compensated
24	Destitution – the character's family fell into destitution
25	Disappearance. A family member disappeared 1D10 years ago and character is on a quest to find him or her
26	Discovery – character discovered, by accident, some long-lost lore, formula or piece of knowledge that various agencies are now hunting
27-29	Disease or Plague – character suffered disease or grave illness as a child
30	Family Secret – the character's family harbours a great secret
31	Family Treasure – the character's family is custodian of a great treasure
32-35	Father died or killed
36	Feud and Romance. Character's family has a long-standing feud with religious/trade/political rivals. Character has fallen in love with son/daughter of the rival family/organisation – something which must be kept secret
37	Feud. Character's family has a long-standing feud with religious/trade/political rivals that has recently turned to bloodshed
38	Foundling – character was abandoned by birth parents and brought up by adoptive guardians
39-40	Fraud – the character has been part of a fraud or scam: or the victim of one.
41	Fugitive – character gave secret help to a known fugitive
42	Gender Change – character was once a member of the opposite sex but changed to current gender through a curse or powerful magic
43	Identity change – the character has adopted a new identity for some reason
44	Inadvertent Comments. Something the character did or said resulted in a fight, battle or war. The remark or action was innocent but the repercussions tragic
45-46	Inheritance or Legacy Denied. Character has been cheated out of a huge legacy left by a parent or relative.
47-48	Inheritance or Legacy. Character is set to inherit a huge legacy from a parent or relative.
49	Kidnapped and/or indentured by a powerful sorcerer who needed an apprentice
50	Kidnapped or press-ganged into military service

**1D100 Event**

- 51 Last Will. Character is on a quest to fulfil the dying wish of a relative or loved one.
- 52 Local Coward. Well-known in local community for a particularly *unheroic* deed
- 53-54 Local Hero. Well-known in local community for a particularly heroic deed
- 55-56 Major Wound – character suffered major wound as a child that leaves a permanent scar or other sign of injury
- 57 Merchant Dynasty. Character is born into a powerful mercantile family or dynasty
- 58 Met a great hero at a time when he or she was relatively unknown
- 59 Met a villain at a time when he or she was relatively unknown
- 60 Mistaken Identity – Case of mistaken identity resulted in a period of imprisonment or some other punishment
- 61-63 Mother died or killed
- 64 Mute. Character either born mute or struck mute later. Fluent sign language communicator
- 65 Orphaned. The character lost both parents through either illness, an accident or some other tragedy
- 66-67 Ostracised from family
- 68 Penance. Character is undergoing penance for some insult or slight committed against someone in power or authority
- 69 Personal Treasure – found a great treasure and hid it for safekeeping
- 70 Physical deformity of a random location. No ill effects, as character has learned to adapt
- 71-72 Pioneers. Family moved to a new country as settlers, refugees or pioneers
- 73 Political Family. One parent is a high-ranking political official
- 74 Prosperity – the character rises from destitution to great wealth
- 75 Raised by a cult or monastic order
- 76 Raised by a Guild or Military order
- 77 Raised by distant relatives
- 78 Raised by inhumans (trolls, for example, or dragonewts)
- 79 Ran away to sea or to join a travelling troupe
- 80 Religious Family. One parent is a high-ranking religious official
- 81 Sect or Cult. Discovered that family is part of a secret sect or cult and disagrees with their views. Trying to escape both family and those who hunt them.
- 82 Shipwrecked or stranded as a youth and lived alone for several years before rescued or found
- 83 Sidekick. Somehow the character has picked up a loyal companion or retainer. This does not make the companion a welcome presence, necessarily, but the relationship has somehow endured over the years.
- 84 Slavery. Spent childhood and young adulthood as a slave before escaping or being freed
- 85 Sole Survivor – family wiped out by some tragedy
- 86 Sole survivor of a tragedy that wiped out the character's entire settlement/community
- 87-88 Squire – character indentured as a vassal or squire to a famous knight or warrior
- 89-90 Twin. Character has a twin brother
- 91-92 Twin. Character has a twin sister
- 93 Visited by ghosts or spirits
- 94-95 Well-travelled. The character either singly or with family/friends, has travelled widely.
- 96 Wicked Step-Parent. One parent died and the other remarried. The step-parent is cold, calculating and brutal towards the character. A typical evil step-parent.
- 97-98 Reroll once
- 99-00 Reroll twice



### Family Ties

1D100	Parents/Guardians	Siblings	Family Size
01–20	Both Parents present	None	Self Contained
21–40	No Living Parents	1D4	1D4 Aunts and Uncles on each parent's side
41–60	One birth parent plus step-parent	1D6	1D6 Aunts and Uncles on each parent's side
61–80	Single Parent – Father	1D8	1D8 Aunts and Uncles on each parent's side
81–00	Single Parent – Mother	2D6	1D10 Aunts and Uncles on each parent's side

How well is the family connected? Is it important or run-of-the-mill? Is it well-liked or does the family name carry with it a stigma? The charts below help decide how well known the family is, and what kind of weight it carries at local, regional and national levels. These take the form of modifiers to the Influence skill which are applicable when the character is dealing with others in communities they are familiar with.

### Family Reputation

1D100	Reputation	Game Effects
01–20	Poor reputation	–20 to Influence tests when interacting with home community
21–50	Average reputation, but a few skeletons and secrets in the background	–10 to Influence tests when interacting with home community
51–65	Average reputation	No Influence modifiers
66–85	Good reputation, but a few skeletons and secrets in the background	+10 to Influence tests when interacting with home community
85–00	Reputation of excellent standing	+20 to Influence tests when interacting with home community

### Family Connections

1D100	Connections	Game Effects
01–20	No connections worth mentioning	No Influence modifiers
21–80	Family has reasonable connections within the community	+10 to Influence tests when interacting with home community
81–90	Family is considered well connected with other families and persons holding local power	+20 to Influence tests when interacting with home community
91–95	Family is considered well connected with other families and persons holding local and regional power	+30 to Influence tests when interacting with home community, and +10 within regional community
96–00	Family is considered well connected with other families and persons holding local, regional and national power	+40 to Influence tests when interacting with home community, +20 within regional community and +10 at a national level

# Non-Player Characters

Non-Player characters – NPCs – bring a game to life. They range from general sword-fodder through to arch-villains with as much depth and importance as any Player Character. However NPCs, no matter what their stature, require an investment of time and, because they are all under the control of the Games Master, handling interactions between a group of adventurers and a group of NPCs can become a complex affair very quickly – especially so in combat where the Games Master has to control and book-keep multiple sets of statistics whilst the players need only to concentrate on their own character.

This section offers general guidance on running NPCs, along with some short-cuts to assist in creating them and handling them in intense tactical situations such as a melee.

## General Advice on Creating and Using NPCs

Unless it is likely that the NPC is going to be involved in combat it is not immediately necessary to generate a full set of Characteristics and skills. Only the key skills – those most likely to be used in an interaction with the adventurers – need to be defined. A City Guard, for example, needs a weapon skill, Dodge, Perception, Persistence and Resilience. A bureaucrat responsible for dishing out permits for entry to the ruins of Hrelar Amali probably only needs Evaluate, Influence and Oratory. When designing an adventure, and the NPCs populating it, think about their function and likely interactions. You can never be a hundred percent certain of what the Player Characters will do that might mean you have to suddenly attribute new skills and values, but in most cases it is unnecessary to fully detail each and every NPC.

NPCs come alive when invested with some personality. This does not require the Games Master to become a method actor, but it does require a little thought about how the NPC presents himself. Is he short or tall? Does he have a beard trimmed into a fashionable style? Does he have any memorable facial features or mannerisms? Is he polite and friendly towards strangers or aggressive and rude? When introducing the NPC, make sure you describe these particular traits to the adventurers as soon as possible.

*For example: 'Looking for a room for the night means approaching the innkeeper. He's a portly, bald-headed man who scowls at everyone approaching the bar. The nasty scar down his right cheek shows he's not afraid of confrontation.'*

Try to make NPCs memorable – even minor ones that are destined to be sword-fodder. Not only does this add colour and depth to the scenario, it makes things interesting for the Player Characters and keeps things unpredictable. There are plenty of simple tools available to help make NPCs memorable, such as:

- Always mispronouncing an adventurer's name, or the name of a village, town or city
- Give the chief NPC a bunch of cronies or hangers-on who agree with everything he says and does, only to dissolve into the shadows when trouble looms
- Allow the NPC to deliberately fail – or critically succeed at – a key skill test or task now and then, just to keep the adventurers on their toes and not become complacent about the NPC's competency in a given situation
- Particular mannerisms are a useful way of making NPCs memorable: the innkeeper who always makes a holy sign over every drink served; the town crier who clears his throat into a red spotted handkerchief; the superstitious local thug who spits to ward off evil spirits and always rips his shirt sleeves off before entering a fight.

# Non-Player Character Gazetteer

This section contains a series of NPC vignettes, with full skills, for Games Masters to call upon at short notice when a particular encounter is needed. Each set of characters is organised by Cultural Background with sample professions available to the culture.

## Equipment for NPCs

Non-Player Characters can be expected to carry the tools appropriate to their trade, the weapons listed in their description, and to wear some form of armour, again appropriate to their profession.

## Barbarian

### Crafter

The culture belies the art. The diligent and insightful Crafter renders things of exquisite beauty and utility for his people from the most mundane items drawn from the land. Every item is blessed by the Ancestors and carries his fingerprints and soul. These are not tools or implements of labour, but labours of love.

**Characteristics:** STR 16, CON 10, DEX 15, SIZ 14, INT 15, POW 11, CHA 15

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +1D2 **SR:** 15 **MP:** 11 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 57%, Athletics 79%, Boating 48%, Dodge 34%, Driving 26%, Evaluate 32%, First Aid 16%, Influence 70%, Lore (Animal) 48%, Lore (Plant) 13%, Lore (World) 37%, Perception 33%, Persistence

### NPC Armour Table

NPC Type	Typical Armour	Armour Points	Skill Penalty
Militia	Leather Hauberk	2	-4%
Militia Captain	Chainmail Shirt	5	-20%
Professional Soldier	Ringmail Shirt	3	-12%
Tradesman or Provider of a Service	None	None	None
Bodyguard or Thug	Leather shirt	1	-4%

33%, Resilience 26%, Riding 64%, Sing 34%, Sleight 52%, Stealth 68%, Throwing 18%, Unarmed 52%, Craft (Armour) 73%, Craft (Jewelry) 49%, Craft (Tools) 76%

**Atk:** Hammer 90%, 1D6+1D2 / AP 2

Target Shield 96%, 1D6+1D2 / AP 8

Shortspear 70%, 1D8+1D2 / AP 2

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

### Herder

In tune with his herd and the land, the tanned herder says little but sees much. He knows how to spot the trails of predators and guards his beasts against all threats. His hair and beard are wound with talismans of his herd and he believes in the Animal Spirits that watch over the world.

**Characteristics:** STR 10, CON 14, DEX 15, SIZ 11, INT 12, POW 16, CHA 17

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +0 **SR:** 14 **MP:** 16 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 41%, Athletics 55%, Boating 13%, Dodge 44%, Driving 72%, Evaluate 33%, First Aid 49%, Influence 70%, Lore (Animal) 61%, Lore (Plant) 47%,



## HUNTER

The swift and silent hunter stalks the game trails in search of signs of passing, knowing his prey and hunting it down. He feeds the hearth and soul alike, with small dedications to the Ancestors and the Game Spirits who understand the birth-death cycle. He takes what is needed and no more, never pandering to greed or mere opportunity. His methods are clean and quick, his motives pure.

**Characteristics:** STR 12, CON 11, DEX 16, SIZ 17, INT 16, POW 13, CHA 9

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +1D2 **SR:** 16 **MP:** 13 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 27%, Athletics 66%, Boating 31%, Dodge 31%, Driving 50%, Evaluate 31%, First Aid 40%, Influence 38%, Lore (Animal) 86%, Lore (Plant) 9%, Lore (World) 62%, Perception 75%, Persistence 38%, Resilience 25%, Riding 33%, Sing 32%, Sleight 31%, Stealth 66%, Throwing 50%, Unarmed 24%, Lore (Ancestors) 70%, Survival 53%, Tracking 86%

### Combat Skills

Sling 73%, 1D6+1D2 50m range / AP 1

Shortspear 95%, 1D8+1D2 / AP 2

Dagger 81%, 1D4+1+1D2 / AP 4

Short Bow 93%, 1D8+1D2 60m range/ AP 2

Lore (World) 45%, Perception 34%, Persistence 42%, Resilience 40%, Riding 68%, Sing 66%, Sleight 50%, Stealth 53%, Throwing 48%, Unarmed 16%, Language (Tribe) 55%, Lore (Plains) 28%, Survival 80%

**Atk:** Sling 23%, 1D6 50m range / AP 1

Longspear 82%, 1D10 / AP 2

Short Bow 76%, 1D8 60m range/ AP 2

### HIT LOCATIONS

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

### HIT LOCATIONS

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/6
4-6	Left Leg	-/6
7-9	Abdomen	-/7
10-12	Chest	-/8
13-15	Right Arm	-/5
16-18	Left Arm	-/5
19-20	Head	-/6

## MERCENARY

He learned his arts in raids against the other steads, out of necessity in the cold winters and out of pleasure when the warmth returned. He is fearless in battle and ruthless with it; necessary qualities when life is as hard as the frozen or baked earth. His tools are his wits, his spear, his bow and his sword, in that order. Now he serves for money because he has learned that the men of the towns and cities will pay silver and gold for his ways of death. He does not feel a betrayal for his old ways; death is death, and a way to make a living.

**Characteristics:** STR 16, CON 18, DEX 12, SIZ 14, INT 13, POW 16, CHA 12

**CA: 2 DM: +1D2 SR: 13 MP: 16 Move: 4m**

**Armour:** Ringmail Shirt 3 points. -12% skill penalty

**Skills:** Acrobatics 36%, Athletics 39%, Boating 56%, Dodge 81%, Driving 45%, Evaluate 42%, First Aid 32%, Influence 53%, Lore (Animal) 27%, Lore (Plant) 39%, Lore (World) 29%, Perception 40%, Persistence 38%, Resilience 38%, Riding 44%, Sing 37%, Sleight 41%, Stealth 28%, Throwing 42%, Unarmed 66%, Healing 70%, Lore (Battle) 51%, Survival 85%

**Atk:** Warsword 84%, 1D8+1D2 / AP 4  
 Longspear 71%, 1D10+1D2 / AP 2  
 Target Shield 65%, 1D6+1D2 / AP 8

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-7
4-6	Left Leg	-7
7-9	Abdomen	3/8
10-12	Chest	3/9
13-15	Right Arm	3/6
16-18	Left Arm	3/6
19-20	Head	-7

Shaman

She is wise and cunning, not a woman to cross. With bones woven into her hair and the Ancestor tattoos on her face and hands she weaves hexes and prophecies and communes with the spirits. The headman fears her but respects her shrill voice and wild stare. The children avoid her, but she is first with a remedy when they fall ill. She lives apart from the other women but understands their ways better than they do. She walks with the spirits daily and they never leave her side.

**Characteristics:** STR 8, CON 15, DEX 14, SIZ 13, INT 15, POW 18, CHA 18

**CA: 3 DM: +0 SR: 15 MP: 18 Move: 4m**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 44%, Athletics 63%, Boating 51%, Dodge 41%, Driving 38%, Evaluate 16%, First Aid 32%, Influence 34%, Lore (Animal) 50%, Lore (Plant)

97%, Lore (World) 60%, Perception 37%, Persistence 42%, Resilience 50%, Riding 49%, Sing 93%, Sleight 45%, Stealth 28%, Throwing 35%, Unarmed 36%, Lore (Ancestors) 106%, Lore (Spirits) 64%, Runecasting (Spirit) 85%

Rune Touched (Spirit). Spells: Second Sight

**Atk:** Dagger 62%, 1D4+1 / AP 4

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-6
4-6	Left Leg	-6
7-9	Abdomen	-7
10-12	Chest	-8
13-15	Right Arm	-5
16-18	Left Arm	-5
19-20	Head	-6



## Civilised

### Alchemist

Stinking of sulphur and charcoal, his robes coated in dust and ash, the alchemist wanders his quarters with a distracted air, mumbling. His mind is focused on purity, his eyes darting as though searching for the secret of it in the dark corners of the laboratory. He has made the Magesterium but must make more; his patron, having sampled its healing properties now wants gold. The alchemist will give him these things but for himself seeks only the Great Prize: life eternal.

**Characteristics:** STR 11, CON 10, DEX 11, SIZ 10, INT 18, POW 16, CHA 11  
**CA:** 2 **DM:** +0 **SR:** 15 **MP:** 16 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 17%, Athletics 30%, Boating 50%, Dodge 49%, Driving 64%, Evaluate 64%, First Aid 44%, Influence 64%, Lore (Animal) 32%, Lore (Plant) 40%, Lore (World) 86%, Perception 39%, Persistence 36%, Resilience 29%, Riding 31%, Sing 49%, Sleight 49%, Stealth 29%, Throwing 21%, Unarmed 46%, Alchemy 84%, Lore (Philosophy) 80%, Runecasting (Metal) 65%

Rune Touched (Metal). Spells: Repair

The Alchemist has 2 grams of Philosopher's Stone (Purity 2) prepared.

**Atk:** Dagger 20%, 1D4+1 / AP 4

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-4
4-6	Left Leg	-4
7-9	Abdomen	-5
10-12	Chest	-6
13-15	Right Arm	-3
16-18	Left Arm	-3
19-20	Head	-4

### Blacksmith

He shaves his head because the sweat matts his hair. His hands are blistered and calloused from toiling with hammer, tongs and white-hot metal. If he feels the heat

he does not show it, and no man can match him drink for drink when the working day is ended. He can size a hoof at a glance and craft a shoe to fit without needing a second measurement, all the while speaking in soft, calming words to the animal and exchanging banter with the owner. He knows all the gossip and will trade it, later, in the tavern, for a few mugs of good ale.

**Characteristics:** STR 14, CON 16, DEX 14, SIZ 14, INT 9, POW 18, CHA 10  
**CA:** 3 **DM:** +1D2 **SR:** 12 **MP:** 18 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 48%, Athletics 62%, Boating 26%, Dodge 47%, Driving 77%, Evaluate 25%, First Aid 66%, Influence 54%, Lore (Animal) 93%, Lore (Plant) 44%, Lore (World) 62%, Perception 64%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 77%, Riding 56%, Sing 21%, Sleight 39%, Stealth 77%, Throwing 33%, Unarmed 39%, Craft (Blacksmith) 98%, Craft (Tools) 36%, Craft (Weapons) 48%

**Atk:** Hammer 66%, 1D6+1D2 / AP 2  
 Warsword 43%, 1D8+1D2 / AP 4  
 Thrown Horseshoe 83%, 1D4+1D2 / AP 1

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-6
4-6	Left Leg	-6
7-9	Abdomen	-7
10-12	Chest	-8
13-15	Right Arm	-5
16-18	Left Arm	-5
19-20	Head	-6

### Courtier

She knows the workings of nobility better than the streets of her home city. She knows who lives where, what they like, how to be addressed and, most importantly, what they scheme of and dream for. She has danced with kings and princes, dukes and barons, and will, one day, be wed to one of them and rise to greater prominence. Her appearance and manners are impeccable; she dresses in the latest fashions and can be found at every ball and function, smiling demurely and sizing-up the opposition. The Court is a cut-throat place, and she has honed her weapons.

**Characteristics:** STR 12, CON 7, DEX 14, SIZ 10, INT 11, POW 18, CHA 13

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +0 **SR:** 13 **MP:** 18 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 19%, Athletics 59%, Boating 41%, Dodge 23%, Driving 53%, Evaluate 42%, First Aid 67%, Influence 43%, Lore (Animal) 19%, Lore (Plant) 19%, Lore (World) 63%, Perception 79%, Persistence 42%, Resilience 36%, Riding 59%, Sing 48%, Sleight 29%, Stealth 54%, Throwing 54%, Unarmed 52%, Dance 84%, Courtesy 89%, Lore (Noble Court) 77%, Seduction 41%

**Atk:** Grapple 31%, Special

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-4
4-6	Left Leg	-4
7-9	Abdomen	-5
10-12	Chest	-6
13-15	Right Arm	-3
16-18	Left Arm	-3
19-20	Head	-4

### KnighT

A gentleman and a warrior, he has earned his spurs in the service of the Queen and carries her favor tied to his belt. His sense of justice is profound, his mercy extensive but when angered he is a wrathful foe and cunning adversary. He understands how the world works and would make it better, but secretly knows it may be a futile exercise because people are motivated by base needs and desires. He seeks to transcend that, to rise above schemes and shady dealings, casual cruelty and shaken faith. He embodies order, dignity and duty.

**Characteristics:** STR 17, CON 16, DEX 13, SIZ 17, INT 10, POW 15, CHA 15

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +1D4 **SR:** 12 **MP:** 15 **Move:** 4m

**Armour:** Plate 6 points. -42% skill penalty (worn only when in battle)

**Skills:** Acrobatics 16%, Athletics 35%, Boating 32%, Dodge 85%, Driving 74%, Evaluate 33%, First Aid

64%, Influence 75%, Lore (Animal) 48%, Lore (Plant) 26%, Lore (World) 83%, Perception 65%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 49%, Riding 89%, Sing 61%, Sleight 28%, Stealth 50%, Throwing 46%, Unarmed 76%, Artistic Expression (Poetry) 47%, Lore (Chivalry) 85%, Oratory 96%

**Atk:** Warsword 82%, 1D8+1D4 / AP 4

Lance 73%, 1D10+2+1D4 / AP 2

Target Shield 81%, 1D6 / AP 8

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	6/7
4-6	Left Leg	6/7
7-9	Abdomen	6/8
10-12	Chest	6/9
13-15	Right Arm	6/6
16-18	Left Arm	6/6
19-20	Head	6/7

### PRIESTESS

In a life dedicated to the service of the gods, she has seen miracles and divine wrath and is humbled by both. But she is devout and has little time for those who stray from the path or refuse to believe. Her life is prayer and dedication. She can relate all actions to the holy books and views the behaviour around her the way her goddess would view it. If she could transcend the mundane, she would do so and sit with her goddess and learn the secrets of the universe in serene splendour. Tied to the mundane world she must be patient with it although it tries her patience daily. This is why she drinks more wine than she should, and why she is short tempered with the blinkered faithful who cannot grasp the truth of the goddess's divine teachings.

**Characteristics:** STR 8, CON 6, DEX 8, SIZ 10, INT 10, POW 18, CHA 16

**CA:** 2 **DM:** -1D2 **SR:** 9 **MP:** 18 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 14%, Athletics 24%, Boating 20%, Dodge 43%, Driving 33%, Evaluate 31%, First Aid 24%, Influence 66%, Lore (Animal) 17%, Lore (Plant) 19%, Lore (World) 59%, Perception 56%, Persistence 38%, Resilience 41%, Riding 32%, Sing 31%, Sleight

51%, Stealth 31%, Throwing 47%, Unarmed 24%, Lore (Goddess Theology) 94%, Runecasting (Fertility) 80%

Divine Magic Spells: Consecrate, Heal Body  
Rune Touched (Fertility) Spells: Endurance

**Atk:** Grapple 73%, Special  
Club 21%, 1D6 / AP 2

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-4
4-6	Left Leg	-4
7-9	Abdomen	-5
10-12	Chest	-6
13-15	Right Arm	-3
16-18	Left Arm	-3
19-20	Head	-4

### Mariner

#### Explorer

Sailed the world, he has, and visited every port you've ever heard of – and many you never will. He's seen the ends of the earth and *yes*, there are sea monsters! Watch him at the dockside regale the children with tales of wonder and magic, eyeing the parents and hoping for a little silver for the entertainment. Yet his tales are true and friendly demeanor masks a shrewd operator: a man who lives by his wits or who would have died years ago. He's landlocked now, but as soon as his captain gains a commission he'll be first aboard, but only if the trip offers a new horizon, a new port, and new adventures so his tales will be enriched.

**Characteristics:** STR 10, CON 10, DEX 11, SIZ 15, INT 9, POW 13, CHA 18

**CA:** 2 **DM:** 0 **SR:** 10 **MP:** 13 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 46%, Athletics 88%, Boating 95%, Dodge 52%, Driving 40%, Evaluate 89%, First Aid 14%, Influence 57%, Lore (Animal) 58%, Lore (Plant) 48%, Lore (World) 87%, Perception 58%, Persistence 34%, Resilience 64%, Riding 63%, Sing 41%, Sleight 41%, Stealth 11%, Throwing 40%, Unarmed 21%, Language (Any Foreign Tongue) 33%, Lore (Sea) 46%, Shiphandling 98%



**Atk:** Hatchet 27%, 1D6 / AP 3  
Cutlass 56%, 1D6+1 / AP 3  
Dagger 44%, 1D4+1 / AP 4

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-5
4-6	Left Leg	-5
7-9	Abdomen	-6
10-12	Chest	-7
13-15	Right Arm	-4
16-18	Left Arm	-4
19-20	Head	-5

#### Fisherman

Day after day and night after night the fisherman and his small crew take their small boat out onto the seas to haul its bounty. They follow the shoals and know their habits, raising nets filled with spluttering silver. Hands reddened from pulling the lines and nets, he has little



time for softer folk who know nothing of his life: the cold, the driving rain, the bitter winds and the vicious currents. He dedicates the first net to the Ocean God, and all others to the market. When the weather (which he predicts with unerring accuracy from the smallest signs) is too dangerous to sail, he is restless and short-tempered, seeing another day's income lost to poor fortune

**Characteristics:** STR 17, CON 16, DEX 18, SIZ 13, INT 10, POW 8, CHA 14  
**CA: 3 DM: +1D2 SR: 13 MP: 8 Move: 4m**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 23%, Athletics 78%, Boating 94%, Dodge 24%, Driving 41%, Evaluate 47%, First Aid 40%, Influence 27%, Lore (Animal) 55%, Lore (Plant) 29%, Lore (World) 33%, Perception 48%, Persistence 78%, Resilience 86%, Riding 30%, Sing 46%, Sleight 15%, Stealth 55%, Throwing 82%, Unarmed 41%, Lore (Sea) 91%, Lore (Weather) 89%, Survival 50%

**Atk:** Net 96%, Special Dagger 79%, 1D4+1+1D2 / AP 4

### HIT LOCATIONS

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/6
4-6	Left Leg	-/6
7-9	Abdomen	-/7
10-12	Chest	-/8
13-15	Right Arm	-/5
16-18	Left Arm	-/5
19-20	Head	-/6

### MERCHANT

When he was young, many years ago, he watched the merchant cogs bringing back treasures from far-off lands and decided he would roam the world and wear the fine silks and jewels of the merchant captains who followed the cargoes down from the hold. Now he owns his own ship, is a respected Fellow of the Guild of Merchant Venturers, and has visited those far-off places in search of spices, herbs, rare oils and perfumes. He has made a fortune and lost several more. He has enemies because his methods are ruthless, but also friends in high places and across half a dozen countries. He risks all on the turn of the tide and the pirates of both the high seas and fickle markets of alien shores. He operates to the code of commerce and shrewd judgment and he is never knowingly undersold.

**Characteristics:** STR 7, CON 12, DEX 13, SIZ 15, INT 18, POW 8, CHA 11  
**CA: 3 DM: +0 SR: 16 MP: 8 Move: 4m**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 38%, Athletics 53%, Boating 57%, Dodge 21%, Driving 49%, Evaluate 102%, First Aid 47%, Influence 89%, Lore (Animal) 14%, Lore (Plant) 19%, Lore (World) 88%, Perception 75%, Persistence 31%, Resilience 35%, Riding 31%, Sing 26%, Sleight 40%, Stealth 43%, Throwing 43%, Unarmed 24%, Commerce 96%, Language (Trader's Cant) 91%, Lore (Trade) 97%, Runecasting (Trade) 51%

Rune Touched (Trade). Spells: Golden Tongue

**Atk:** Dagger 36%, 1D4+1+1D2 / AP 4  
 Cutlass 44%, 1D6+1+1D2 / AP 3  
 Scimitar 62% 1D6+1+1D2 / AP 4

### HIT LOCATIONS

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/6
4-6	Left Leg	-/6
7-9	Abdomen	-/7
10-12	Chest	-/8
13-15	Right Arm	-/5
16-18	Left Arm	-/5
19-20	Head	-/6

### SAILOR

The ports and harbors are full of tars like this one. He has weather-beaten, salt-licked skin, scars where ropes have struck and hands with calluses like walnuts. He walks with a rolling gait when on land and is never happy with firm ground. Give him the shifting decks and the sway of the hammock over solid land and a motionless bed any day. In his time he has fought pirates and, on occasion, sailed with them. His heart was lost to the ocean when just a boy and brine, not blood, flows through his veins. He drinks hard when ashore, because he never knows when his next drink will be brackish water, and he's ever quick to prove his worth in a fight in case a Mate or Captain is watching, looking for a handy crew.

**Characteristics:** STR 17, CON 17, DEX 13, SIZ 11, INT 11, POW 15, CHA 11  
**CA: 3 DM: +1D2 SR: 12 MP: 15 Move: 4m**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 60%, Athletics 69%, Boating 62%, Dodge 55%, Driving 33%, Evaluate 55%, First Aid 23%, Influence 53%, Lore (Animal) 32%, Lore (Plant) 24%, Lore (World) 61%, Perception 30%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 76%, Riding 17%, Sing 78%, Sleight 57%, Stealth 62%, Throwing 80%, Unarmed 87%, Language (Local Cant) 47%, Lore (Sea) 62%, Shiphandling 60%

**Atk:** Club 79%, 1D6+1D2 / AP 2  
Cutlass 91%, 1D6+1+1D2 / AP 3

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-6
4-6	Left Leg	-6
7-9	Abdomen	-7
10-12	Chest	-8
13-15	Right Arm	-5
16-18	Left Arm	-5
19-20	Head	-6

### Pirate

He's long forgotten what it was that drove him to a life of piracy, but it certainly was not the glamour. Every day is spent watching for ships to prey on, or the fleets of the powers-that-be who would exact revenge for the casual murder that is the stock in trade for a pirate. He is as sullen and cold as the ocean bottom, careless of life and inured to its hardships. He dreams, perhaps, of making a fortune and retiring to a secluded villa where he will be tended by servants and might live out his remaining days in luxury, but he knows time is short and whatever he has left is luck. Life is an endless ocean, an unforgiving captain, and a daily battle for survival amongst shipmates who will kill you for a weevil-filled biscuit.

**Characteristics:** STR 17, CON 14, DEX 10, SIZ 11, INT 18, POW 6, CHA 8  
**CA: 2 DM: +1D2 SR: 14 MP: 6 Move: 4m**

**Armour:** Leather shirt 1 point. -4% skill penalty

**Skills:** Acrobatics 59%, Athletics 62%, Boating 52%, Dodge 12%, Driving 50%, Evaluate 60%, First Aid 11%, Influence 55%, Lore (Animal) 28%, Lore (Plant) 19%, Lore (World) 40%, Perception 73%, Persistence 34%, Resilience 59%, Riding 18%, Sing 38%, Sleight

55%, Stealth 75%, Throwing 65%, Unarmed 42%, Language (Pirate's Cant) 45%, Lore (Sea) 54%, Shiphandling 69%

**Atk:** Belaying Pin 75%, 1D4+1D2 / AP 4  
Cutlass 96%, 1D6+1+1D2 / AP 3  
Dagger 75%, 1D4+1+1D2 / AP 4

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-5
4-6	Left Leg	-5
7-9	Abdomen	1/6
10-12	Chest	1/7
13-15	Right Arm	1/4
16-18	Left Arm	1/4
19-20	Head	-5

### Noble

#### Baron

The Baron is gifted land by his Lord. He gets to keep some of the tithe in return for managing collections of tribute and dealing with the locals. He hates the job but enjoys the money. He cannot abide listening to the constant petitions and petty problems that seem to arrive on his doorstep every day and his method for coping is to promise lots and deliver little; thus is an easy life earned. It is not that the Baron is bad or evil, just that he is unsuited for his role. Once he was a warrior and believed that retirement would be much easier than the battlefield. Alas, it is not, and sometimes he rues the day he accepted the title.

**Characteristics:** STR 16, CON 17, DEX 7, SIZ 9, INT 12, POW 13, CHA 9  
**CA: 2 DM: +0 SR: 10 MP: 13 Move: 4m**

**Armour:** Plate 6 points. -42% skill penalty (worn only when in battle)

**Skills:** Acrobatics 50%, Athletics 49%, Boating 48%, Dodge 32%, Driving 49%, Evaluate 56%, First Aid 46%, Influence 43%, Lore (Animal) 23%, Lore (Plant) 22%, Lore (World) 46%, Perception 44%, Persistence 36%, Resilience 37%, Riding 53%, Sing 52%, Sleight 37%, Stealth 31%, Throwing 31%, Unarmed 43%, Courtesy 44%, Lore (Region) 85%, Lore (Royal Court) 56%

**Atk:** Bastard Sword 52%, 1D8 / AP 4  
 Short Bow 49%, 1D8 Range 60m / AP 2  
 Target Shield 79%, 1D6 / AP 8

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	6/6
4-6	Left Leg	6/6
7-9	Abdomen	6/7
10-12	Chest	6/8
13-15	Right Arm	6/5
16-18	Left Arm	6/5
19-20	Head	6/6

Emperor

His position was achieved through ruthless conquest and the ability to impose his will over those who would not exercise their own. He was prepared to campaign to broaden the prosperity of his domain and now rules over an empire with more languages than he has fingers. Now that all the battles have been fought, and external enemies vanquished, he must turn his attention to those who would take his position and squander it... for there are many. Emperors do not become so without making enemies, and the worst kind are not the ones conquered in battle, for they know humility, but the ones who wander the corridors of state, forever seeing power as the ultimate prize. The Emperor knows this all too well; it is how he gained *his* position.

**Characteristics:** STR 14, CON 10, DEX 9, SIZ 12, INT 18, POW 17, CHA 15

**CA:** 2 **DM:** +1D2 **SR:** 14 **MP:** 17 **Move:** 4m

**Armour:** Plate 6 points. -42% skill penalty (worn only when in battle)

**Skills:** Acrobatics 26%, Athletics 41%, Boating 19%, Dodge 78%, Driving 37%, Evaluate 90%, First Aid 63%, Influence 130%, Lore (Animal) 64%, Lore (Plant) 17%, Lore (World) 81%, Perception 91%, Persistence 83%, Resilience 79%, Riding 96%, Sing 29%, Sleight 48%, Stealth 64%, Throwing 33%, Unarmed 33%, Courtesy 55%, Lore (Imperial Court) 102%, Lore (Theology) 73%

**Atk:** Warsword 89%, 1D8+1D2 / AP 4  
 Longspear 45%, 1D10+1D2 / AP 2  
 Target Shield 75%, 1D6+1D2 / AP 8

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	6/5
4-6	Left Leg	6/5
7-9	Abdomen	6/6
10-12	Chest	6/7
13-15	Right Arm	6/4
16-18	Left Arm	6/4
19-20	Head	6/5

King

He lives in a world not of crowns and scepters, but of concerned, fussing advisors who know better than he how to run the domain. He represents the people but is kept isolated from them by rules and protocol, accompanied everywhere by guards and fawning



bureaucrats with ever more papers to sign and seal. When his carriage rattles past the masses he envies the simplicity of their lives and how, when the day is ending, they can leave behind their jobs and tasks. But his are never finished. The dukes and barons squabble and scheme; his courtiers bow and scrape with feigned dignity; and across the borders others plot war and death. He has wealth and a castle, and an army that will die on his command, but he is chained to duty and bound by a pact he was born into and never chose.

**Characteristics:** STR 8, CON 16, DEX 13, SIZ 14, INT 14, POW 16, CHA 16  
**CA:** 3 **DM:** +0 **SR:** 14 **MP:** 16 **Move:** 4m

**Armour:** Plate 6 points. -42% skill penalty (worn only when in battle)

**Skills:** Acrobatics 45%, Athletics 74%, Boating 19%, Dodge 23%, Driving 18%, Evaluate 44%, First Aid 50%, Influence 128%, Lore (Animal) 45%, Lore (Plant) 25%, Lore (World) 59%, Perception 52%, Persistence 28%, Resilience 31%, Riding 73%, Sing 42%, Sleight 20%, Stealth 25%, Throwing 56%, Unarmed 65%, Courtesy 38%, Lore (Royal Traditions) 104%, Lore (Theology) 76%

**Atk:** Shortbow 42%, 1D8 Range 60m / AP 2  
 Warsword 78%, 1D8 / AP 4  
 Heavy Mace 52%, 1D8 / AP 3

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	6/6
4-6	Left Leg	6/6
7-9	Abdomen	6/7
10-12	Chest	6/8
13-15	Right Arm	6/5
16-18	Left Arm	6/5
19-20	Head	6/6

Lord

Given responsibility for a particular region the Lord enjoys the power and wealth his position brings. He has few concerns for those who occupy his lands, save that taxes and tithes are paid on time, and that the men-folk heed the call for the fyrd when it is made. If they do not – well, the Lord has plenty of people to help

enforce. The Lord does not care that he is disliked; he cares only for his own comfort and that of his family. It is not as though he is alone, surely all Lords behave this way? Isn't it *expected*?

**Characteristics:** STR 10, CON 12, DEX 12, SIZ 11, INT 16, POW 11, CHA 15  
**CA:** 2 **DM:** +0 **SR:** 14 **MP:** 11 **Move:** 4m

**Armour:** Plate 6 points. -42% skill penalty (worn only when in battle)

**Skills:** Acrobatics 24%, Athletics 40%, Boating 13%, Dodge 47%, Driving 35%, Evaluate 61%, First Aid 27%, Influence 75%, Lore (Animal) 48%, Lore (Plant) 24%, Lore (World) 57%, Perception 60%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 32%, Riding 70%, Sing 30%, Sleight 29%, Stealth 43%, Throwing 67%, Unarmed 25%, Courtesy 53%, Lore (Region) 75%, Lore (Royal Court) 62%

**Atk:** Warsword 67%, 1D8 / AP 4  
 Dagger 62%, 1D4+1 / AP 4  
 Target Shield 61%, 1D6 / AP 8

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	6/5
4-6	Left Leg	6/5
7-9	Abdomen	6/6
10-12	Chest	6/7
13-15	Right Arm	6/4
16-18	Left Arm	6/4
19-20	Head	6/5

Nomadic

Craftsman

He makes the things the clan needs before it sets off on the next haul. He tends the tackle and affects the repairs and there's nothing he cannot fix given enough time and the right tools. He weaves, tans, binds spearheads and knaps flint. He knows which trees make the best shafts and when is the precise time to cut the wood. He made the headman's helmet from bronze bought from a merchant caravan, and everyone agrees it's the finest they've ever seen.

**Characteristics:** STR 14, CON 8, DEX 18, SIZ 6, INT 14, POW 18, CHA 7

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +0 **SR:** 16 **MP:** 18 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 67%, Athletics 81%, Boating 55%, Dodge 41%, Driving 31%, Evaluate 93%, First Aid 39%, Influence 26%, Lore (Animal) 75%, Lore (Plant) 89%, Lore (World) 54%, Perception 51%, Persistence 39%, Resilience 40%, Riding 70%, Sing 22%, Sleight 19%, Stealth 39%, Throwing 62%, Unarmed 40%, Craft (Boneworking) 112%, Craft (Stoneworking) 110%, (Woodworking) 112%, Craft (Metalworking) 85%

**Atk:** Shortbow 47%, 1D8 Range 60m / AP 2  
Hatchet 44%, 1D6 / AP 3  
Shotspear 43%, 1D8 / AP 2

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-3
4-6	Left Leg	-3
7-9	Abdomen	-4
10-12	Chest	-5
13-15	Right Arm	-2
16-18	Left Arm	-2
19-20	Head	-3

### Explorer

He left the tribe years ago after angering the Elders and disagreeing with the old traditions. Now he wanders alone, living from the land, taking what he needs, and discovering new things about the world. He is suspicious of everyone but is never outwardly hostile; strangers are all potential allies until they show their true colours. He has seen many wondrous sites and faced many dangers. He has come to realise that the world is larger than the clan and that the old teachings are inward-looking and flawed. His self-respect is high, despite what the Elders said when expelling him, and he relies on nothing more than his wits and knowledge. Every day there is something new to explore.

**Characteristics:** STR 16, CON 10, DEX 9, SIZ 15, INT 7, POW 17, CHA 11

**CA:** 2 **DM:** +1D4 **SR:** 8 **MP:** 17 **Move:** 4m

Combat Actions 2, Damage Modifier +1D4, Strike

Rank 8, Hit Points 13, Magic Points 17, Move 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 29%, Athletics 52%, Boating 65%, Dodge 45%, Driving 18%, Evaluate 21%, First Aid 65%, Influence 26%, Lore (Animal) 68%, Lore (Plant) 66%, Lore (World) 62%, Perception 60%, Persistence 34%, Resilience 36%, Riding 61%, Sing 29%, Sleight 23%, Stealth 64%, Throwing 58%, Unarmed 24%, Lore (Astronomy) 62%, Lore (Geography) 98%, Survival 68%

**Atk:** Nomad Bow 78%, 1D10 Range 120m / AP 2  
Shotspear 81%, 1D8+1D4 / AP 2  
Warsword 74%, 1D8+1D4 / AP 4

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-5
4-6	Left Leg	-5
7-9	Abdomen	-6
10-12	Chest	-7
13-15	Right Arm	-4
16-18	Left Arm	-4
19-20	Head	-5

### Fisherman

The strange little boat on his back is his coracle, light enough to run with and strong enough to propel him down rivers and across lakes, fishing spears in hand, to find a meal. He can glance at a still lake and tell you what type of fish lurk where. He can spear a fish and snatch it from the water faster than you can blink, an explosion of movement followed by a flurry of silver and splashed water. He can remain perfectly silent and still for hours upon end, waiting for the moon to sink and the biggest fish to rise. He prays to Grandfather Catfish, who swims in the underworld lakes, and thanks him for his bounty. The first fish caught is eaten in reverence to Him.

**Characteristics:** STR 14, CON 10, DEX 18, SIZ 13, INT 13, POW 13, CHA 10

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +1D2 **SR:** 16 **MP:** 13 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 38%, Athletics 44%, Boating 124%, Dodge 72%, Driving 17%, Evaluate 54%, First Aid 51%, Influence 52%, Lore (Animal) 94%, Lore (Plant) 49%, Lore (World) 37%, Perception 73%, Persistence

54%, Resilience 56%, Riding 71%, Sing 22%, Sleight 30%, Stealth 96%, Throwing 114%, Unarmed 22%, Lore (Fish) 98%, Lore (Geography) 94%, Runecasting (Stasis) 28%

Rune Touched (Stasis). Spells: Pierce

**Atk:** Harpoon 93%, 1D6+1D2 Range 40m / AP 1  
Dagger 72%, 1D4+1+1D2 / AP 4  
Shortsword 33%, 1D6+1D2 / AP 3

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

### Tracker

She's small but cunning, like a fox, and as fast and agile as a stoat. She tracks animals even when there's no trail to be seen and she sniffs the air as though finding the creature's scent. She knows every sign of passing; every disturbance, no matter how small, tells a story: how, big, how small, how old, or how angry. She knows when to pursue fast and when to hide. Listen to her and she may save your life.

**Characteristics:** STR 10, CON 16, DEX 16, SIZ 07, INT 16, POW 15, CHA 18  
**CA:** 3 **DM:** -1D2 **SR:** 16 **MP:** 15 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 38%, Athletics 55%, Boating 25%, Dodge 90%, Driving 14%, Evaluate 22%, First Aid 31%, Influence 65%, Lore (Animal) 105%, Lore (Plant) 95%, Lore (World) 27%, Perception 78%, Persistence 32%, Resilience 37%, Riding 40%, Sing 24%, Sleight 38%, Stealth 78%, Throwing 21%, Unarmed 45%, Lore (Geography) 60%, Tracking 125%, Survival 91%

**Atk:** Dagger 39%, 1D4+1-1D2 / AP 4  
Dagger (thrown) 36%, 1D4+1-1D2 Range 10m / AP 4  
Sling 85%, 1D6-1D2 Range 50m / AP 1

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

### Primitive

#### The Shaman

The gods talk through the shaman and everyone listens to him. He knows where the moon goes during the day and where the sun sinks to at night. He knows of the battle between the two for the supremacy of the sky, and he knows that both are angry with the tribe for honouring both together. He claims to summon thunderstorms with a shake of his Lightning Stick and his frenzied dances drive the tribe to an ecstasy beneath the rising moon. Everyone fears him, and he knows it.

**Characteristics:** STR 11, CON 8, DEX 10, SIZ 11, INT 17, POW 17, CHA 17

**CA:** 2 **DM:** +0 **SR:** 14 **MP:** 17 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 44%, Athletics 71%, Boating 19%, Dodge 16%, Driving 42%, Evaluate 32%, First Aid 57%, Influence 98%, Lore (Animal) 53%, Lore (Plant) 24%, Lore (World) 33%, Perception 33%, Persistence 44%, Resilience 30%, Riding 61%, Sing 65%, Sleight 60%, Stealth 23%, Throwing 22%, Unarmed 21%, Lore (Moon God) 59%, Lore (Sun God) 82%, Runecasting (Moon) 54%

Rune Touched (Moon). Spells: Emotion  
Divine Spells: Illusion (Substance), Madness

**Atk:** Stone Hatchet 83%, 1D6-1 / AP 3  
Stone Knife 53%, 1D3-1 / AP 3

### HIT LOCATIONS

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-4
4-6	Left Leg	-4
7-9	Abdomen	-5
10-12	Chest	-6
13-15	Right Arm	-3
16-18	Left Arm	-3
19-20	Head	-4

### WARRIOR

From the animal bones in his hair to the ritual scars across his brow, he is every inch the brute warrior: proud, aggressive, and afraid of no one but the gods and the darkness. Everyone is a potential enemy or agent of the Trickster; everyone wants what's his; there are no exceptions. He would kill you as soon as look at you unless you have the wits to counter his suspicions. It can be done, but he needs to find fear first.

**Characteristics:** STR 13, CON 18, DEX 10, SIZ 10, INT 6, POW 6, CHA 10

**CA: 2 DM: +0 SR: 8 MP: 6 Move: 4m**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 38%, Athletics 51%, Boating 9%, Dodge 28%, Driving 42%, Evaluate 27%, First Aid 40%, Influence 36%, Lore (Animal) 50%, Lore (Plant) 38%, Lore (World) 19%, Perception 28%, Persistence 24%, Resilience 24%, Riding 47%, Sing 42%, Sleight 28%, Stealth 50%, Throwing 36%, Unarmed 18%, Lore (Tribal) 36%, Lore (Geography) 39%, Survival 52%

**Atk:** Shortspear 81%, 1D8-1 / AP 2

Stone Hatchet 82%, 1D6-1 / AP 2

### HIT LOCATIONS

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-6
4-6	Left Leg	-6
7-9	Abdomen	-7
10-12	Chest	-8
13-15	Right Arm	-5
16-18	Left Arm	-5
19-20	Head	-6



### TRIBAL HEADMAN

He rules through physical fear and the will of the Shaman. Bigger and stronger than the rest, he attained his position by killing the previous headman and retains it still because the shaman has not decided otherwise. He is an uncertain leader. He can hunt and prepare meat, and in the field and bush he has few equals from his own tribe, but at the hearth he is hesitant, casting fervent glances towards the shaman whenever a decision is called for. Dissenters are beaten down with fists and screams; more than one challenger has fallen to his merciless blows. But he lives in fear as well as ruling by it, knowing that one day someone will take his place and his own body will be cast into the Death Pit.

**Characteristics:** STR 13, CON 13, DEX 15, SIZ 18, INT 15, POW 17, CHA 9

**CA: 3 DM: +1D4 SR: 15 MP: 17 Move: 4m**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 49%, Athletics 61%, Boating 30%, Dodge 47%, Driving 13%, Evaluate 51%, First Aid 16%, Influence 79%, Lore (Animal) 39%, Lore (Plant) 42%, Lore (World) 42%, Perception 43%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 37%, Riding 23%, Sing 21%, Sleight 47%, Stealth 72%, Throwing 57%, Unarmed 71%, Survival 94%

**Atk:** Stone Hatchet 97%, 1D6-1+1D4 / AP 2  
Stone Shortspear 72%, 1D8-1+1D4 / AP 2

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-7
4-6	Left Leg	-7
7-9	Abdomen	-8
10-12	Chest	-9
13-15	Right Arm	-6
16-18	Left Arm	-6
19-20	Head	-7

### Townsmen

#### Acrobat

A bundle of nervous energy the acrobat delights the crowds on market days with feats of tumbling and balance, juggling, and palm tricks that have the children wide-eyed and giggling with joy. His outfit is the motley and his shoes equipped with tiny silver bells that jangle with every leap and twist and somersault. His act is amazing and it needs to be. Whilst he cavorts for the crowd, his partner, a barely noticeable part of the assembled throng, slips from person to person, lifting purses...

**Characteristics:** STR 13, CON 11, DEX 17, SIZ 14, INT 16, POW 11, CHA 17

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +1D2 **SR:** 17 **MP:** 11 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 129%, Athletics 70%, Boating 38%, Dodge 80%, Driving 63%, Evaluate 65%, First Aid 37%, Influence 34%, Lore (Animal) 19%, Lore (Plant) 39%, Lore (World) 48%, Perception 61%, Persistence

36%, Resilience 29%, Riding 74%, Sing 15%, Sleight 90%, Stealth 63%, Throwing 47%, Unarmed 41%, Language (Regional) 34%, Streetwise 72%

**Atk:** Grapple 95%, Special Knife 63%, 1D3+1D2 / AP 4

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-5
4-6	Left Leg	-5
7-9	Abdomen	-6
10-12	Chest	-7
13-15	Right Arm	-4
16-18	Left Arm	-4
19-20	Head	-5

#### Animal Trainer

She uses but a whisper and a few kind words to tame the wildest horse or most ferocious dog. She can bring the cat and the mouse to sit together side by side and even the wolves of the forest would not molest her. She seems more at ease with animals than people, whom she cannot tame, and remains forever uncomfortable around society. When not in the company of a beast of some kind she is sullen and silent, only at peace when confronted with an animal as troubled as she is.

**Characteristics:** STR 6, CON 6, DEX 16, SIZ 14, INT 8, POW 17, CHA 7 (18 for animals)

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +0 **SR:** 12 **MP:** 17 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 41%, Athletics 62%, Boating 28%, Dodge 31%, Driving 43%, Evaluate 28%, First Aid 20%, Influence 37%, Lore (Animal) 130%, Lore (Plant) 36%, Lore (World) 15%, Perception 62%, Persistence 25%, Resilience 29%, Riding 47%, Sing 23%, Sleight 49%, Stealth 53%, Throwing 62%, Unarmed 28%, Runecasting (Beast) 85%, Streetwise 39%, Tracking 47%

Rune Touched (Beast). Spells: Calm Beast, Bestial Enhancement

**Atk:** Unarmed 35%, 1D3 / AP -



### HIT LOCATIONS

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-4
4-6	Left Leg	-4
7-9	Abdomen	-5
10-12	Chest	-6
13-15	Right Arm	-3
16-18	Left Arm	-3
19-20	Head	-4

#### BARD

He circuits the taverns and inns with his lute and whistle, striking a tune and offering a heartfelt song (some bawdy, some heartbreaking, all moving). He plays for liars and lovers alike and can compose a poem on any subject given, and as long as a shilling clanks into his discreetly proffered bowl. He claims to have played for the king and to have received favors from the queen, and he knowingly winks at the children who giggle whilst their parents nod wisely.

**Characteristics:** STR 11, CON 7, DEX 18, SIZ 11, INT 11, POW 11, CHA 18

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +0 **SR:** 15 **MP:** 11 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 44%, Athletics 28%, Boating 65%, Dodge 22%, Driving 68%, Evaluate 43%, First Aid 32%, Influence 70%, Lore (Animal) 35%, Lore (Plant) 49%, Lore (World) 37%, Perception 29%, Persistence 23%, Resilience 27%, Riding 24%, Sing 108%, Sleight 79%, Stealth 19%, Throwing 28%, Unarmed 47%, Artistic Expression (Storytelling) 85%, Play Instrument (Lute) 99, Play Instrument (Tin Whistle) 90%

**Atk:** Knife 66%, 1D3 / AP 4

### HIT LOCATIONS

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-4
4-6	Left Leg	-4
7-9	Abdomen	-5
10-12	Chest	-6
13-15	Right Arm	-3
16-18	Left Arm	-3
19-20	Head	-4



#### FARMER

He works the land until his back breaks, with ox and hoe, come all weathers. His face is copper-red and his arms muscled and powerful. He suffers fools poorly but reserves his true contempt for shirkers and skivers, who always seem to have money to spend on frivolous things whilst he breaks his bones breaking the earth for the sowing. Some nights he can be found in the tavern with the others of this kind, a semi-silent group who communicate in some unknowable language of grunts and 'ayes'.

**Characteristics:** STR 14, CON 10, DEX 16, SIZ 15, INT 8, POW 7, CHA 9

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +1D2 **SR:** 12 **MP:** 7 **Move:** 4m

**Skills:** Acrobatics 17%, Athletics 49%, Boating 9%, Dodge 24%, Driving 61%, Evaluate 32%, First Aid 29%, Influence 20%, Lore (Animal) 55%, Lore (Plant) 77%, Lore (World) 35%, Perception 68%, Persistence 22%, Resilience 65%, Riding 43%, Sing 13%, Sleight 29%, Stealth 31%, Throwing 64%, Unarmed 33%

**Atk:** Club 63%, 1D6+1D2 / AP 2  
Shortspear 61%, 1D8+1D2 / AP 2

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

## Assorted Foes, Hirelings, Soldiers and Thugs

### Bodyguard

Strong and imposing the bodyguard protects without much thought about why. He can spot a potential threat amongst a sea of hazards and reacts with an explosion of force that shocks the enemy and pleases whoever has hired him. There is nothing subtle about this man; he is brute strength without finesse or fear.

**Characteristics:** STR 17, CON 17, DEX 11, SIZ 16, INT 9, POW 11, CHA 7

**CA:** 2 **DM:** +1D4 **SR:** 10 **MP:** 11 **Move:** 4m

**Armour:** Leather shirt 1 point. -4% skill penalty

**Skills:** Acrobatics 28%, Athletics 36%, Boating 22%, Dodge 61%, Driving 30%, Evaluate 51%, First Aid 38%, Influence 56%, Lore (Animal) 12%, Lore (Plant) 15%, Lore (World) 22%, Perception 48%, Persistence 49%, Resilience 43%, Riding 31%, Sing 39%, Sleight 23%, Stealth 11%, Throwing 45%, Unarmed 53%, Streetwise 60%, Survival 46%

**Atk:** Bastard Sword 73%, 1D8+1D4 / AP 4  
Heavy Mace 28%, 1D8+1D4 / AP 3  
Target Shield 51%, 1D6+1D4 / AP 8

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/7
4-6	Left Leg	-/7
7-9	Abdomen	1/8
10-12	Chest	1/9
13-15	Right Arm	1/6
16-18	Left Arm	1/6
19-20	Head	-/7

### Henchman

This is the right-hand man. The doer and fixer. The one who marshals the thugs who do the villain's bidding. He's as cunning and devious as his master but lacks the creative flair that the villain possesses. He has all the right contacts amongst the criminal classes; he knows who is right for a particular job or piece of treachery, and he is prepared to get his hands dirty in areas too lowly for the villain to be concerned.

**Characteristics:** STR 11, CON 13, DEX 13, SIZ 10, INT 13, POW 12, CHA 9

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +0 **SR:** 13 **MP:** 12 **Move:** 4m

**Armour:** Leather shirt 1 point. -4% skill penalty

**Skills:** Acrobatics 49%, Athletics 45%, Boating 43%, Dodge 41%, Driving 55%, Evaluate 58%, First Aid 61%, Influence 33%, Lore (Animal) 34%, Lore (Plant) 42%, Lore (World) 54%, Perception 42%, Persistence 29%, Resilience 27%, Riding 57%, Sing 24%, Sleight 41%, Stealth 43%, Throwing 55%, Unarmed 45%, Lore (Criminal) 59%, Streetwise 78%, Survival 46%

**Atk:** Bastard Sword 75%, 1D8 / AP 4  
Dagger 44%, 1D4+1 / AP 4  
Target Shield 40%, 1D6 / AP 8

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	1/6
10-12	Chest	1/7
13-15	Right Arm	1/4
16-18	Left Arm	1/4
19-20	Head	-/5

### Militia Captain

He commands the watch of the city, arranging the patrols, identifying the trouble-spots and sending the best men for the job. Not that he has much to choose from; he knows his men can be idle and inattentive, especially on the quiet nights and the cold nights when it is easier to find a cozy tavern in which to while away the shift. He tries to instill more discipline but it always seems to fall on deaf ears. By and large, there isn't much trouble, and his life is relatively easy. But he's heard that a group of adventurers or mercenaries have rolled into town, and that always spells trouble, so perhaps he will take a wander down to the inn they're staying at and see what they're up to.

**Characteristics:** STR 13, CON 17, DEX 15, SIZ 13, INT 14, POW 7, CHA 12

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +1D2 **SR:** 15 **MP:** 7 **Move:** 4m

**Armour:** Chainmail Shirt 5 points. -20% skill penalty

**Skills:** Acrobatics 46%, Athletics 43%, Boating 19%, Dodge 41%, Driving 45%, Evaluate 50%, First Aid 47%, Influence 73%, Lore (Animal) 37%, Lore (Plant) 32%, Lore (World) 57%, Perception 58%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 38%, Riding 60%, Sing 20%, Sleight 57%, Stealth 59%, Throwing 41%, Unarmed 39%, Lore (Regional) 70%, Streetwise 99%

**Atk:** Bastard Sword 93%, 1D8+1D2 / AP 4  
Target Shield 65%, 1D6+1D2 / AP 8  
Shortspear 49%, 1D8+1D2 / AP 2

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/6
4-6	Left Leg	-/6
7-9	Abdomen	5/7
10-12	Chest	5/8
13-15	Right Arm	5/5
16-18	Left Arm	5/5
19-20	Head	-/6

### Militia Sergeant

He heads a patrol and keeps the streets safe. He knows the haunt of the every troublemaker and lowlife and can predict to an inch where they will be and what they will be doing. He knows the warning signs before trouble brews and he knows when to send in his men and when to stay back. He also knows which taverns give free drinks to the poor militia and which serving girls like the uniform the best. He doesn't envy the captain because his job seems like too much hard work. The sergeant is happiest with his men - rabble that they be - and keeping his city safe.

**Characteristics:** STR 10, CON 13, DEX 15, SIZ 10, INT 12, POW 7, CHA 13

**CA:** 3 **DM:** +0 **SR:** 10 **MP:** 7 **Move:** 4m

**Armour:** Heavy Leather Hauberk 2 points. -4% skill penalty

**Skills:** Acrobatics 29%, Athletics 63%, Boating 26%, Dodge 54%, Driving 34%, Evaluate 34%, First Aid 57%, Influence 46%, Lore (Animal) 50%, Lore (Plant) 46%, Lore (World) 42%, Perception 62%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 37%, Riding 61%, Sing 41%, Sleight 30%, Stealth 57%, Throwing 39%, Unarmed 54%, Lore (Regional) 61%, Streetwise 74%

**Atk:** Bastard Sword 84%, 1D8 / AP 4  
Target Shield 74%, 1D6+1D2 / AP 8  
Shortspear 44%, 1D8 / AP 2

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	2/6
10-12	Chest	2/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

## Militia Volunteer

Not a professional soldier but a man-at-arms who offers a part-time service to his town or city, patrolling the streets and handling trouble here and there. He is not corrupt, as such, but has a family to feed, and every little helps. If that means turning a blind eye now and again, then so be it. He follows orders but without any real enthusiasm. He likes the uniform though, and the chance to wander the streets with his sword and shield, revelling in the importance of it all.

**Characteristics:** STR 9, CON 10, DEX 13, SIZ 14, INT 9, POW 14, CHA 11  
**CA: 3 DM: 0 SR: 11 MP: 14 Move: 4m**

**Armour:** Heavy Leather Hauberk 2 points. -4% skill penalty

**Skills:** Acrobatics 20%, Athletics 34%, Boating 42%, Dodge 31%, Driving 53%, Evaluate 47%, First Aid 64%, Influence 30%, Lore (Animal) 25%, Lore (Plant) 24%, Lore (World) 49%, Perception 42%, Persistence 41%, Resilience 26%, Riding 33%, Sing 26%, Sleight 25%, Stealth 34%, Throwing 24%, Unarmed 38%, Lore (Regional) 47%, Streetwise 56%

**Atk:** Bastard Sword 25%, 1D8 / AP 4  
Target Shield 24%, 1D6+1D2 / AP 8  
Shortspear 23%, 1D8 / AP 2

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	2/6
10-12	Chest	2/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

## Thug

Muscle for rent, no questions asked. No job too dirty or mean; no punishment too cruel. He lusts for violence – any excuse. He does not care who the recipient is, he will happily deal out a beating just for the pleasure it gives him. If he's been drinking, which is usually, he is even more unpredictable. But they do come faster, and they do come smarter. A vicious thug he might be, but he is without elegance or forethought, and that is his weakness.

**Characteristics:** STR 16, CON 12, DEX 13, SIZ 15, INT 7, POW 10, CHA 7  
**CA: 3 DM: +1D4 SR: 10 MP: 10 Move: 4m**

**Armour:** Leather shirt 1 point. -4% skill penalty

**Skills:** Acrobatics 37%, Athletics 42%, Boating 54%, Dodge 34%, Driving 36%, Evaluate 8%, First Aid 33%, Influence 44%, Lore (Animal) 49%, Lore (Plant) 43%, Lore (World) 26%, Perception 26%, Persistence 31%, Resilience 40%, Riding 27%, Sing 22%, Sleight 31%, Stealth 35%, Throwing 20%, Unarmed 35%, Streetwise 44%

**Atk:** Club 73%, 1D6+1D4 / AP 2  
Dagger 52%, 1D4+1+1D4 / AP 4

### Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/6
4-6	Left Leg	-/6
7-9	Abdomen	1/7
10-12	Chest	1/8
13-15	Right Arm	1/5
16-18	Left Arm	1/5
19-20	Head	-/6

# SKILLS

*RuneQuest* characters are defined by their skills. Skills reflect the culture and vocation of the character, but also say a great deal about the player, and what he wants to try to accomplish with his character in the course of the game. Every Games Master should cast an eye over the character sheet of each adventurer and note which skills have been favoured in the distribution of the Free Skill points. They give important clues about the kinds of situations the player wants his character to be involved with, and this offers the opportunity for the Games Master to tailor a scenario to cater for these involvements.

Of course, it is not always practical or possible to cater for every individual preference and still maintain a semblance of game balance, but it is important to be aware of the non-verbal signals players give when designing their characters. Emphasis on weapon skills is clearly an indication that the player is looking forward to lots of combat encounters and a chance to flex muscle; but what about some of the other skills on the character sheet? If Lore skills, for example, are favoured, it indicates that the player is looking for a quite different kind of game to one based around combat. Stealth and thievery skills indicate a preference for scenarios involving cunning, deception, trickery and one-upmanship.

The skills chosen, and the way players invest in them, say more about the character, and the player, than the Characteristic scores ever can. For that reason, skills and skill choices need to be understood by the Games Master and ways sought to allow these skills to come to the fore.

This chapter aims to provide advice and some tools to help Games Masters, and their players, with getting the most from the *RuneQuest* skills system. It looks at the way skills work, examines the opposed skill test system, and offers some suggestions for critical and fumble effects. A selection of new Advanced skills is also offered, expanding the range skills available to *RuneQuest* players.

## Important Changes to Persistence and Resilience

The following changes to the Persistence and Resilience skills have been made following a great deal of playtesting and analysis of how the skills work in play. They constitute a recommended revision of the rules to introduce greater game balance and accuracy, based upon countless hours of playtesting and discussion.

### Persistence and Resilience as Skills

Whilst described as skills, both Persistence and Resilience are a combination of natural capability, personal fortitude and training to deal with situations involving mental and physical stress, including pain. All of us have untapped reserves of Persistence and Resilience; these skills measure the character's ability to draw upon them to resist a variety of different pressures and conditions.

There are, however, limits to mental and physical endurance – barriers beyond which the mind and body cannot be pushed and surrender becomes inevitable. To represent this, Persistence cannot exceed the value of the POW Characteristic multiplied by 5, and Resilience cannot exceed the CON Characteristic multiplied by five. The starting values for each skill are both calculated as per *RuneQuest*, but they are now no longer 'limitless' skills. Of course, their limits can be extended through the improvement of their respective Characteristic scores.

### Resisting Magic

The effects of a spell can be resisted by a character, as noted in the spell's description. Spell Resistance is an Opposed test between the spell caster's skill with the spell and the target's appropriate skill. This represents the spell caster's expertise in weaving a strong, magical effect that can overcome a target's innate resistance, and the target's ability to call upon the necessary reserves to counter the spell.

For example Kalandra, with Runecasting (Disorder) 45%, is casting a disruption spell at Vasaris who resists with his Persistence of 64%. Both roll and the results are compared: Kalandra's roll is 41, a success, and Vasaris rolls 26, also a success. However, because Kalandra's roll is higher than Vasaris's, his psychic defences have been bested on this occasion and the spell takes its full effect.

### Overcharging Spells

If a spell has been overcharged, and the target also succeeds in the Opposed test, but has the lower roll, the spell takes effect only at its base value; the additional Magnitude of the spell is successfully resisted.

## When and When Not to Roll

Routine activities – those a character conducts time and again, under normal circumstances and expected pressures – do not require a roll to test for success. For example, riding a horse at a trot or gentle gallop across an open field, on a fine day, does not need a Riding test. Similarly a blacksmith making horseshoes with all the right tools and raw materials does not need to make a Craft (Smithying) test.

Skill tests are required where the circumstances are out of the ordinary and/or impart some degree of stress, urgency or difficulty to the situation. Riding a horse at a gallop across an open field whilst being pursued by bandits is an instance where a Riding test is called for. Attempting to make horseshoes with poor quality implements or a lack of resources is another.

The watchword is *circumstances*. The Games Master is the best judge as to when the conditions and circumstances warrant a skill test. A character might not need to make a Perception test to hear a neighbouring conversation if the surroundings are relatively quiet. But if there is a degree of background noise, it will be necessary to roll to overhear accurately. And, if the people the character is eavesdropping are whispering, then the skill test should incur a penalty as exemplified on page 18 of the *RuneQuest* rules.

Of course, there is always skill competency to consider. What is considered routine for a character with a skill of 60% may well be considered difficult for a character with only 25% in the same skill. So, the value of the skill forms one of the circumstances to take into consideration. The chart below gathers skills values into a range of Competencies along with some guidance on what constitutes a routine task.

### Skill Competencies Table

Skill Range	Competency	Description
01–10	Inexperienced	All attempts to use the skill successfully require a skill test.
11–25	Novice	Basic techniques and principles are usually completed without the need for a skill test, if enough time is available and the necessary equipment is at hand. Advanced techniques require a skill test and may suffer a penalty depending on the nature of the task.
26–40	Regular	All basic and some advanced techniques are possible without a skill test if enough time is available and necessary equipment is at hand. Some advanced techniques require a skill test and may suffer a penalty depending on the nature of the task.
41–60	Professional	Advanced tasks can be tackled even in the absence of one or two components necessary for success, but again, at a penalty.
61–80	Expert	Almost all techniques are known and can be undertaken with confidence even when the right components have been compromised.
81–90	Master	The character is supremely confident in his execution of the skill and can readily improvise or resolve problems easily using effective shortcuts.
91–110+	Grand Master	At this level the character is an absolute virtuoso of the skill and able to tackle, with confidence, any problem involving the skill's use. The duration taken for most tasks can be halved, if necessary (although a Grand Master knows that time and patience are always key).

## Augmenting Skills with Other Skills

There are occasions where one skill can help with another. For example, a merchant trying to get a good price on a rare Carmanian vase might want to use his Lore (Carmanian Pottery) skill to help his Influence skill and thus get a better deal. In such situations it is permissible to allow the secondary skill to provide a bonus equal to its critical score to the primary skill. Thus, in the example above, the merchant has Influence at 70% and Lore (Carmanian Pottery) at 63%. The critical score for Lore (Carmanian Pottery) is 6% making the merchant's Influence 76% in total.

Only one skill at a time can be used to boost another skill and the skills must be complementary to each other for the given situation. The Games Master should also stipulate when an augmentation like this can be applied; it is never an automatic right.

## Opposed Skill Tests

The rules for Opposed Skill tests call for the participants to roll equal to, or under, their skill, but also roll as high as possible to win the contest. The questions usually arising from this are:

- ⌚ Why is the Opposed Skill Test rule calling for high rolls when low rolls are usually better?
- ⌚ How do I score a critical if I have to roll high?

These are valid questions, and each has a straightforward answer.

First, whilst it might seem counter-intuitive to have to roll high and still within a skill-range, this method provides an instant indication of which participant in an Opposed Skill contest has achieved the better result. Of course, one can determine the winner simply by subtracting the number rolled from the skill's value, but this can be challenging, especially if one does not have a head for quick mental arithmetic. The higher roll, but still within the skill range, is an immediate visual indication of which participant has outplayed the other.

Second, a critical success is still completely possible in an Opposed Skill contest. Any critical success



rolled beats a normal success – no matter how highly the opponent has rolled. And, if *both* participants roll a critical, the *higher* critical roll wins the opposed test.

*Example: Farric is arm wrestling with Moonglum. This calls for an Athletics (Brute Force) opposed skill test. Farric's Athletics (Brute Force) is 24% and Moonglum's is 95%. The dice are rolled and Moonglum scores 94 – a very good roll since it is a high roll and less than his skill percentage. Farric's roll is 02 – a critical success, and this beats Moonglum's standard success. Farric's lucky burst of strength clearly overwhelmed Moonglum's technique. Had Farric rolled between 03 and 24, Moonglum would have won because whilst both characters succeeded, Moonglum's was the higher roll whilst still being a success.*

Opposed Skill tests are extremely useful for many situations where the skills of one party need to be weighed directly against the skills of another. The arm-wrestling example is a good one, but here are some more examples:

- ⌚ Bargaining (characters match Influence and Influence, or Commerce and Commerce)

- ⌘ Evading detection (character matches Stealth against opponent's Perception)
- ⌘ Gambling (participants match Gambling skills)
- ⌘ Persuading (character matches Influence against Persistence)
- ⌘ Pursuits (participants match Athletics skills)
- ⌘ Seduction (character matches Seduction against the Persistence of the object of seduction)
- ⌘ Withstanding torture (character matches Resilience against Lore (Torture))
- ⌘ Hiding or palming an object (Sleight against Perception)
- ⌘ Using a disguise to fool an official (Disguise against Perception)

In the case of activities that might take place over the course of a long period of time, such as a seduction, a chase, or an involved card game, it is perfectly reasonable for several Opposed Contests to be made back-to-back with the overall winner being the one who wins most contests (best of three or best of five, perhaps).

### A correction to the Opposed Skill Test Rules

Page 20 of the *RuneQuest* rules describes the different outcomes of an Opposed Test challenge and notes that when both characters fail, the character who rolled lowest in the challenge wins the contest.

Whilst there is a certain logic to this, namely, in producing a positive outcome for one of the participants, it is not a realistic treatment of results. It is perfectly possible, in many (if not most) instances, for both participants to fail and for there to be no positive outcome for either side. Consider the following example.

*Tired of the constant jibes about his new hat, Mikhail throws a wooden goblet at Jurgen. As Jurgen's player states he will try to catch the hurled goblet the Games*

*Master says this is an Opposed Test: Mikhail's Throw skill versus Jurgen's Athletics. Both characters roll and both fail. Mikhail's aim is way off so that the goblet sails wide of Jurgen's head, and Jurgen's attempt to catch is clumsy to the point of being funny.*

In this instance the wooden goblet misses its mark completely and that is the end of the episode (unless Mikhail chooses to lob something else and take more careful aim). However, applying the rule as they are written from *RuneQuest*, whoever rolls lowest out of the two failures wins the contest. In this case Mikhail's failure was the lower roll, and even while failing his skill test, would have struck the giggling Jurgen. In any other circumstances, and certainly in a straightforward skill test, failure means one has not succeeded. Therefore ruling that the lower scoring failure in an Opposed challenge results in a win goes against the intent of the *RuneQuest* skills system. Establishing a clear-cut winner is only essential when both participants have rolled successfully – not when both participants have failed in their respective objectives.

The recommendation for Games Masters is to treat two failures as a *complete* failure of the contest with no success for either side. If there is a likelihood that one side might gain some kind of advantage, even though the character failed the skill test (such as in a thief attempting to hide from an unobservant guard), then the Games Master should take into account the full circumstances surrounding the contest and make a decision accordingly. There are instances where two failures might result in an *advantage* for a character, but not an outright win – evading observation, for example – but this should be an exception rather than the norm.

**What about Combat?**  
Using Opposed Tests for resolving combat is certainly an option Games Masters may consider. It is treated in greater depth on page 47 of the Combat Chapter.





## Skills in Excess of 100% and Opposed Tests

Page 20 of the *RuneQuest* rules offers a way of handling opposed tests where at least one participant has a skill exceeding 100%. This rule has been subject to much debate owing to the statistical anomalies resulting from simply halving the skills involved for all participants. Here is an alternative method that does not involve having any of the skills.

- ⌚ Apply all relevant test modifiers to both skills
- ⌚ Participants roll against their skills
- ⌚ Note: whether the dice rolls were a critical, normal success or failure (for participants with skills of 100% or more this will only be on a roll of 96-00). A critical success always beats a normal success, as explained earlier
- ⌚ If the dice roll was a normal success, participants with skills exceeding 100% may now add the difference between 100 and their skill value. Ignore the fact 96-00 is an automatic failure; that is only applicable to the initial dice roll, and not the modified result

*For Example: Bastokos the Hero is trying to beat Korovoros in a discus hurling competition. Bastokos has Throwing at 174% whilst Korovoros has Throwing at 76%. There are no skill modifiers to be applied to the test.*

*Bastokos makes his roll: 19. This is a low roll, but it is not a critical success, just a normal one. As high rolls prevail in an Opposed test, he adds 74 to the result (the difference between 100 and his skill value) bringing the final result up to 93. His discus goes hurtling into the distance, reflecting Bastokos's heroic skill with the weapon. Korovoros makes his roll, which is 07 – a critical success. This beats Bastokos's normal success hands down, so Korovoros wins the contest even though Bastokos is the more experienced discus thrower.*

*But Bastokos will not be beaten so easily and he demands a second attempt to see if Korovoros can repeat his good fortune. Rolls are made again. This time Bastokos scores 18, a normal success which he boosts by 74 to give a result of 92. Korovoros can*

*win if he rolls critically, but his dice roll is a 75 – a very good success, but still a normal success and not enough to beat Bastokos this time.*

*Korovoros suggests the best of three and so rolls are made once more. Korovoros scores 57 and Bastokos scores 25. As Bastokos has rolled a normal success, he adds his 74 once again which totals 99. He can ignore the fact that, for a normal dice roll, a 99 is an automatic failure, and he wins this contest. Korovoros graciously acknowledges Bastokos's mastery of the discus and the two depart as friends.*

## Rolling in Secret

It is a great deal of fun rolling dice and seeing the outcome. But there are going to be occasions where the game is better served by the Games Master making the dice roll on behalf of the characters and in secret, only revealing the result through game-play. For example, a character might be attempting to disguise himself to gain access to a thieves' guild. The character isn't aware of how convincing the disguise attempt has been until it is put into practical use, infiltrating the guild headquarters. If the Disguise skill test is made secretly by the Games Master then it becomes easier to build an air of suspense and tension as the character makes his attempts to bypass the guild's members as he wanders into the guild buildings.

Not all rolls should be made secretly by the Games Master. The best times to use secret rolls are in the following conditions:

- ⌚ The character using the skill would have little or no way of knowing how successful his skill attempt has been until it is put to a practical test
- ⌚ The skill's outcome is not immediate
- ⌚ Revealing the outcome of the skill test incrementally will create a better sense of tension

Games Master dice rolls are, like all game tools, there to increase the enjoyment of the game for all, not to remove fun and enjoyment from the players. Used with discretion and at times where the outcome may not be immediate, certain or clear-cut, it can be a great way of introducing drama to a situation.

## Projects and Protracted Endeavours

Sometimes accomplishing things takes time: building a shelter, crafting a set of armour, creating a work of fine art. Such activities are measured in days, weeks, months and sometimes even years. Long-term projects can, of course, be handled with a single skill test and the assumption that the character concentrates completely on the activity at hand. But sometimes it is necessary to measure success over the period of the activity either because it is important to the story or because the project is of a particularly complex nature and its final outcome rests on how certain stages were completed beforehand.

First, the Games Master should decide how long it will take to complete a particular project. Some examples are given below.

- ⌘ Repair a broken weapon so it is fit for purpose: 1 Day
- ⌘ Make a weapon from scratch: 1 week
- ⌘ Craft a piece of fine jewellery: 2 – 4 weeks
- ⌘ Build a small hut: 4 days
- ⌘ Build a small, stone house: 4 weeks
- ⌘ Build a large villa: 50 weeks
- ⌘ Plough a field with a hand plough: 3 days
- ⌘ Draw an accurate map: 12 hours
- ⌘ Compose a love ballad: 2 days
- ⌘ Research a new spell: 10 days
- ⌘ Pick the lock of well-made safe: 6 hours
- ⌘ Build a length of wall 1 metres by 2 metres: 12 hours

Next, the complexity of the task needs to be determined. This is rated between 1 and 100, although some tasks may be exceedingly complex and rated much higher. Note that complexity does not necessarily equate with the time taken to undertake the task. The task

complexity's critical score – one tenth – is the number of successful skill tests required to complete the task satisfactorily. Each skill test is opposed by the task's Complexity rating.

*For example, crafting a forgery of an ornate ring is rated as taking 3 weeks. Its complexity is high and rated as 70. This means 7 successful Craft (Jewellery) skill tests must be made, opposed by the Complexity of 70 each time.*

For each opposed test, note the outcome.

- ⌘ **Success:** If the character scores a normal success, work may continue.
- ⌘ **Failure:** If the result is a failure, work may continue but the final result will be flawed in some way. Alternatively the character may take an extra unit of time (a day, week, month, and so forth) and attempt to correct his mistake. Cumulative failures, if left uncorrected, contribute to the flaws and overall integrity of the final result.
- ⌘ **Fumble:** A disaster strikes and the project must be started from scratch with all time used so far wasted.
- ⌘ **Critical:** A critical success means work is either completed quicker than anticipated – reduce the time required by one unit (a day, week, and so forth) – or the overall quality of the result is higher than expected. As with Fumbles, cumulative critical successes all contribute to the speed and overall quality of the endeavour.
- ⌘ If the outcome of the Complexity's opposed roll is a critical, treat it as a success. If the roll is a fumble, reduce the time for completion by 1 unit. The character has clearly discovered a shortcut.

*Example: Talius the Jeweller is making a replica of an ornate gold and diamond ring. He has all the tools and raw materials and the work will take 4 weeks to complete given the complexity of the original piece Talius is copying. The Games Master gives the project a Complexity of 70 meaning Talius needs to make 7 opposed tests with his Craft (Jewellery) skill of 85%.*

*The first opposed test: Talius rolls 27 against the project Complexity's roll of 90. Talius succeeds and work is going well. For the second test Talius rolls 30 and the Complexity is 00. Talius has found a faster way of completing the design, and so the ring should be ready in 3 weeks rather than 4. Talius succeeds in the next two rolls, so he has just three more to complete. For his fifth roll, Talius scores a critical success: he chooses to invest this as additional quality of work, rather than complete the project quicker. His sixth roll, however, is a 95 against the Complexity roll of 56; a failure. The project is extended by one week as Talius painstakingly corrects the mistake. For the seventh and final roll, Talius scores 79 and the Complexity scores 51 – the final success needed. After 4 weeks the ring is complete and its quality is outstanding, reflecting the critical success from earlier in the project.*

## New Advanced skills

### Commerce (INT+CHA)

This skill is used to secure the best price for goods being either bought or sold, and it can be opposed by another Commerce roll, with the victor securing the advantage. Commerce is more than just haggling or simple bargaining; it is concerned with negotiation, compromise, brinkmanship and knowledge of the strength (or weakness) of the market for what is being traded. Where highly complex commercial deals are being discussed, a succession of opposed Commerce rolls might be called for, with cumulative bonuses or penalties (no greater than +/-10% at a time) applied to the winner or loser, simulating the ebb and flow of the negotiation before settlement is reached.

### Culture (specific culture) (INT)

The Culture skill is actually several separate skills, each dealing with a specific culture. The Culture skill is distinct from Lore and Language skills, as it represents a person's understanding of, and ability to heed the behaviours, habits, customs and everyday rituals of a specific cultural group. For example, someone making a successful test in Culture (Praxian) understands that it is considered good manners to remove all head-gear and footwear whenever entering a person's tent, or knows that it is considered polite to pass the bread from left to right at a Praxian feast, whilst the wine is always passed from right to left. A character's starting skill for the culture in which he was raised is 50% + INT.

### Fast Draw (DEX)

This advanced skill is taught by some of the elite warrior cultures. It allows a character who has not yet readied a melee weapon to draw it without using a Ready Weapon Combat Action (See *RuneQuest* Main rules p47). The weapon must be single handed and easily accessible. Successful use of the skill allows the weapon to be drawn as a free act. A critical success replaces the normal 1d10 roll for Strike Rank order with an automatic 10. The Fast Draw skill cannot exceed the skill of the weapon being used.

### Gambling (INT)

The ability to understand and play games of chance, including calculating odds, keeping one's composure under high stakes, and noticing when someone is cheating or when a game has been rigged

### Insight (INT+POW)

Insight is the ability to read a person's verbal and non-verbal behaviours and signals to determine their motives and state of mind. Insight is used to determine if someone is telling you a lie, or to determine how someone feels about a particular situation. It is distinct from the Perception skill, since it is used to detect subtle expressions of character and attitude, rather than tangible effects that can be assessed through general observation alone.

### Meditation (POW)

The use of meditation helps to focus concentration, and is psychically soothing. Meditation is a skill which must be learned either by study or practice. A successfully meditating character may recover lost MPs at twice the normal rate. A critical success triples it. Meditating characters retain full awareness of their surroundings and may make Perception tests at no penalty.

### Seduction (INT+CHA)

Seduction combines charm, flirtatiousness, tenacity and cunning. This skill allows the adventurer to completely win-over the target of the seduction attempt using overt romantic or sexual signals, leading to the target becoming deeply enthralled to the adventurer and willing to perform one suggested service or command. The target may try to resist a seduction attempt with an opposed Persistence test.

## Criticals and Fumbles: Acrobatics

### Skill by skill

A critical success occurs when the dice roll is 10% or less than the modified skill's value. A fumble occurs on a roll of 00. Both granularities indicate either spectacular success or dismal failure. The *RuneQuest* main rulebook gives some guidance on what sorts of effects can result from a critical and fumble, but the final decision lies with the Games Master's adjudication according to the situation and scenario. This is fine for most cases, but there are times when a little more specific guidance can be helpful, not least in ensuring consistency from one game session to the next, and one skill test result to another. In the heat and excitement of play, it is quite easy (and all too common) for a Games Master to make a particular decision regarding the effects of a critical success or a fumble, only to make a quite different decision involving similar circumstances later. Sometimes this is fine; the circumstances and results may make for a more enjoyable game. But there are times where even a slight variation in a decision might give rise to a disputed outcome that breaks the excitement temporarily whilst reasons are explained and facts checked. Once the momentum is gone, it can be hard to regain.

This section goes through each Basic and Advanced skill, including the new skills presented earlier, and offers some guidance on the consequences and outcomes of a critical success and a fumbled skill test. Most are based on common sense, and like all roleplaying rules, are there to act as a guide rather than an absolute doctrine. Most importantly, though, they are presented to help ensure consistency of decision-making. Players like to know where they stand and what the consequences of a botched (or staggeringly great) skill test are going to be. But of course, as Games Master, you have the final word, and it is up to you to define the outcome that best suits the scenario and style of play you have developed with your players and their characters. However, if you have a base concept to work from, that is understood by all, it makes it easier to craft an exception, and justify it.

#### Critical Success

A critical Acrobatics success allows the character to double his movement rate when performing a feat of gymnastics or when negotiating an unstable surface.

A critical success when using Acrobatics to reduce falling damage means the character sustains only a quarter of the damage.

#### Fumble

A fumbled Acrobatics roll means that balance and agility has been lost catastrophically. Not only does the character fall, he falls awkwardly, sustaining the maximum damage from the fall.

#### Athletics

Brute force basically involves pushing, lifting or dragging. Under ordinary conditions a character can lift items in SIZ equal to his STR Characteristic, and pull or push the same up to his Movement in metres.

#### Critical Success

A critical Brute Force success indicates a sudden surge of power from hidden, inner reserves. If lifting an object, the character can heft items in SIZ equal to his STR Characteristic, plus half again, and hold it stable for a number of Combat Rounds equal to half his STR. Thus, a character with an STR of 10, succeeding critically in Brute Force could lift an item of SIZ 15, and hold it for 5 Combat Rounds.

If pulling or pushing an item, the character can tackle a SIZ as described above, and move it a number of metres equal to his STR Characteristic. For example, the same character above could drag an item of SIZ 15 for 10 metres.

#### Fumble

If a Brute Force roll is fumbled, the character risks sustaining physical damage from the attempt. The character must make a Resilience test immediately. If failed, the character sustains 1D4 points of damage to a random location, indicating either injury to the back, neck, abdominal muscles, or limbs through sprains, strains, tendon/ligament damage.

**Climbing:** Tests should be made for treacherous surfaces (such as sheer cliffs or wet surfaces) and if a character is trying to increase the rate of his ascent or descent. A character can double the rate of his climb or descent by taking a -20% penalty on his Athletics test.

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

A critical Climbing success allows the character to triple his Movement rate for the climb.

#### Fumble

The character falls and cannot make an Acrobatics test to attempt to reduce the falling damage.

**Jumping:** In general, a successful Athletics test allows a character to jump up to twice his own height horizontally or up to half his own height vertically, if he has at least five metres to run first. If he is making a standing jump, these distances are halved.

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character increases the distance jumped by half again. Thus, a character 2 metres in height could jump 1.5 metres vertically and 6 metres horizontally.

#### Fumble

A fumbled Jump roll indicates the character has landed awkwardly. He must immediately make a Resilience test. If the Resilience test is successful he sustains 1 point of damage to each leg. If the Resilience test fails, then he sustains 1D4 points of damage to each leg.

**Swimming:** Characters normally swim at half their usual Movement.

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

A critical Swim test allows the character to swim at his normal Movement rate.

#### Fumble

The character gets into difficulties due to the water conditions. He must make a successful Resilience test or sustain Suffocation damage, as described on page 90 of the *RuneQuest* rules.



## Boating

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

A critical Boating success increases the Movement rate for the craft by half again.

#### Fumble

If a Boating test is fumbled, the character should make an Athletics test. If the Athletics test succeeds then the character has lost an oar or the controlling device for the boat has been broken. Reduce the craft's movement by half. If the Athletics test is a failure or fumble, then the boat is in danger of capsizing. All on board need to make an Acrobatics test to remain in the boat. Those that fail fall into the water.

#### Dodge

See the Combat chapter beginning on page 60.

#### Driving

If a character is driving a wagon, chariot or similar vehicle at not more than a walking pace across flat terrain, a Driving test will never be required. Tests are required when a character wants to do something out of the ordinary with a vehicle – traverse treacherous terrain, jump obstacles and so on.

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

A critical result increases the vehicle's movement by half again, if the skill is being used in a straightforward manner. Or, if being used to perform a special manoeuvre, such as evading an enemy, a critical success allows half the character's normal Driving skill to be used as a negative modifier against any applicable skills being used by pursuers for the rest of the Combat Round.

*For example: Vadrus the Charioteer is being pursued by the war chariot of his enemy, Kortek. Kortek is hurling javelins with abandon and Vadrus declares he's going to try to wheel his horses in a bid to evade the javelins. The Games Master calls for a Driving test skill from Vadrus's player. Vadrus's skill at Driving is 70% and the dice roll is 06. This means that a -35% penalty is now applied to Kortek's attack rolls as Vadrus's chariot weaves and swerves.*

### Fumble

A fumbled Driving roll indicates either a reduction in the vehicle's speed by half, or, if the vehicle is trying to perform a special manoeuvre, it becomes unstable and overturns. If the vehicle overturns all occupants need to make a successful Athletics test to leap clear of the wreckage or sustain 1D6 points of damage to a random location as the vehicle crashes.

### Evaluate

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character not only estimates the item's value precisely, he also determines a secret or hitherto unknown fact about it that can be used to increase the item's value by half again. *For example, examining a rare Pelorian vase, Matvalk the Merchant scores a critical Evaluate and correctly values the vase at 500 SP. He also notices a minute signature on the base meaning that the vase came from the Shah of Carmania's renowned slave potter, Gustubus. This means the vase is highly sought after and could be sold for up to 750 SP.*

### Fumble

Not only does the character completely misjudge the value of the object, he devalues it by half again. Thus, if Matvalk in the above example had fumbled his Evaluate roll, he would have valued the vase at only 250 SP.

### First Aid

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

A critical success in First Aid reduces the treatment time to 2 Combat Actions. If being used to treat an Injured location (see table on page 24 of the *RuneQuest* rules), then 1D3+1 hit points are restored to the hurt location.

### Fumble

The First Aid attempt causes more harm than good: the hit location being treated suffers a further 1 point of damage.

### Influence

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character's efforts are incredibly persuasive, so much so that not only is the character successful in what he's trying to attain with his Influence skill, but his next Influence test with the same person, no matter when it takes place, is at a bonus equal to the character's CHA. *For example, Matvalk the Merchant, having now determined the vase he's studying is worth 750 SP tries to convince the seller that it's a worthless piece of Carmanian tat. His Influence test is a critical success and Matvalk walks away with the vase for a trifling 200 SP. In his next Influence test with the same merchant, Matvalk's Influence will be at a +14% bonus, for Matvalk's CHA value.*

### Fumble

A fumbled Influence roll indicates that not only does the Influence attempt fail; it also insults or offends the person being influenced. The reaction depends on the individual and the situation, but at the very least it means that all future Influence tests against the same person will be at a -40% penalty.

### Lore

Special results for Lore skill tests vary considerably according to the Lore and the situation in which it is being used – so this is one area where Games Master discretion is needed.

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character has gained some specific insight or made a startling discovery as a result of the critical success in the Lore skill. The character should be given one specific fact, relevant to the scenario or campaign that the character can use as he sees fit.

**Fumble**

A fumbled Lore test indicates a complete misunderstanding of the tenets of the Lore in question. In the case of Lore (Plant), for instance, might mean mistaking a poisonous fungus for an edible one; with Lore (World) it might be placing the capital of a country a thousand miles from its true position. This is an area where Games Master fiat *has* to prevail.

**Perception****CRITICAL SUCCESS**

The adventurer has picked up on a nuance unseen, or unheard, by everyone else. A critical Perception test offers a single burst of insight or recognition that helps avert disaster or completely reveals the concealed.

**Fumble**

Fumbling a Perception test leads the adventurer to being utterly oblivious to his surroundings. He is blissfully unaware of the impending ambush; he hasn't a clue that a missing diamond ring lies a metre away from his left foot. Fumbling a Perception test in circumstances where the character is likely to face some threat, such as an attack, provides a +40% bonus to the initial attacks of the opposing side when it launches its schemes.

**Persistence**

Persistence is chiefly used when resisting hostile magic, but is also used for any situation that requires strength of will to prevail.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**

A critical success in resisting magic means that no further spells cast by the opponent will have any effect on the character for a number of Combat Actions equal to the character's current Magic Points.

In the case of utilising willpower or mental fortitude a critical Persistence roll enables the character to shrug-off any psychological effects of the situation and to remain undeterred by whatever it is he is experiencing.

**Fumble**

Fumbling the Persistence roll when resisting magic increases the effects of the spell by 1 Magic Point, if the spell is progressive. Otherwise the duration of the spell's effect is increased by a further minute.

If the fumble concerns a matter of willpower, not only does the character completely fold under the pressure of the experience, but he becomes unable to conduct any other actions for 1D6 minutes due to the sheer mental strain.

**Resilience**

Persistence is chiefly used when resisting the effects of physical damage, but is also used for any situation that requires physical fortitude to prevail.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**

When resisting the effects of wounds a critical Resilience success allows the character to reduce the damage by 1 point. Thus, a wound reducing a character to -2 HP in a location would be reduced to -1.

When resisting poisons a critical success halves the duration of the poison's effect. When resisting disease a critical success *doubles* the delay of the disease's onset.

**Fumble**

A fumbled Resilience test when resisting the effects of damage increases the severity of the wound by 1 Hit Point.

Fumbling when resisting poison means the poison takes effect for its maximum duration. When resisting disease, halve the disease's delay.

**Riding****CRITICAL SUCCESS**

A critical Riding test allows the character to double the mount's Movement for a number of Combat Rounds equal to the rider's critical range for the Riding skill. Thus, a character with a Riding skill of 50% would double the movement rate for 5 Combat Rounds.

## Fumble

Fumbling a Riding roll means the character must make an Athletics test to avoid losing control and being thrown from the mount (sustaining any falling damage as appropriate).

## Sing

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

A critical Sing success can have one of several effects. If singing to earn money, increase by half again the amount earned due to the audience's appreciation of the performance. If being used to impress someone, add the Sing's critical score to the character's Influence skill. Thus, a character with a Sing skill of 70% would add +7 to his Influence test.

## Fumble

The song was truly terrible – off-key, out of tune, and poorly performed. Halve any earnings, and subtract the critical score of the Sing skill from any subsequent Influence test.

## Sleight

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character has concealed or palmed the object so successfully that any subsequent attempts to locate it, using a Perception test, for example, are subject to a penalty of -40% *plus* the critical score of the Sleight skill.

## Fumble

Not only is the item not concealed, it is dropped or otherwise exposed in full view of whoever is watching. If no one is actively watching for the deception, the sound of the item falling, or some other commotion immediately attracts their attention.

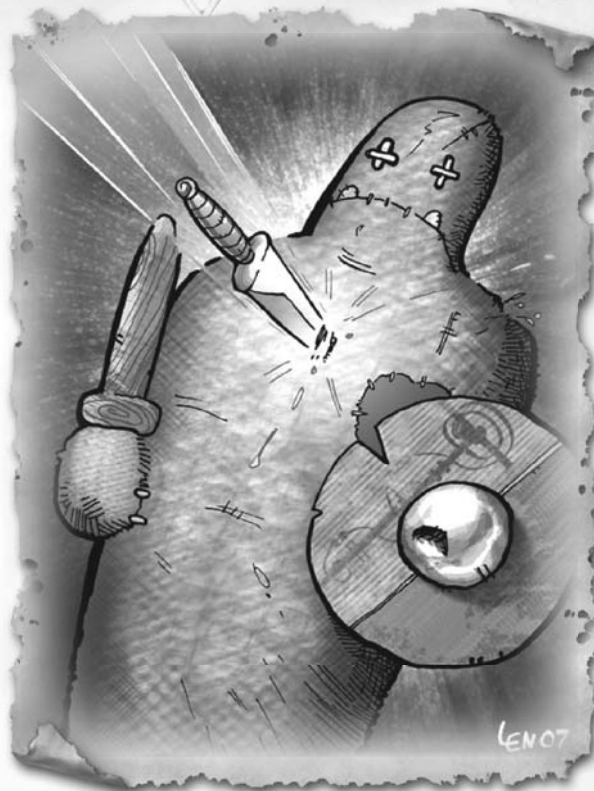
## Stealth

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

Any subsequent attempts to locate the character (follow him, find him, etc) are at a penalty of -40% *plus* the critical score of the Stealth skill.

## Fumble

The character stumbles and causes some form of commotion that immediately attracts the attention of anyone in the vicinity. Furthermore, if any other



SKILLS

characters are attempting a Stealth test in the fumbling character's company, they suffer a penalty of -40% *plus* the critical score of the Stealth skill.

## Throwing

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

A critical Throwing success results in either the range of the object being thrown increased by half again, OR, striking a precise location as decided by the character.

## Fumble

The item is dropped or it goes in a random direction determined by the Games Master. If this is a thrown weapon, then the Games Master may roll on the Ranged Weapons Fumble Table found on page 67.

## Unarmed

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

A critical success means maximum damage results from the blow.





### Fumble

A fumbled Unarmed test means the character must roll on the Natural Weapons Fumble Table found on page 66.

## Advanced skill Descriptions

### Artistic Expression

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The artwork produced is of stunning quality – worth half the standard value again of like products. If being used as part of an Influence test, to impress a prospective client or ally perhaps, then the Influence test receives a bonus of +40% plus the critical score for the Artistic Expression skill.

### Fumble

The artwork is a disaster, and worth only half the value of similar, standard items, if not less. If being used to influence another party the Influence roll suffers a penalty of -40% plus the skill's critical score.

### Commerce

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character displays acute commercial acumen, securing the commodity or service at half its usual price (or selling it for double).

### Fumble

The character's commercial sensibilities fail him. The commodity or service is secured at twice the price or sold for only half the value.

## Courtesy

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character has made a superb impression with his courteousness and gains a bonus of +40%, plus the critical value of his Courtesy skill, in any Influence or similar tests, made soon after the Courtesy skill.

### Fumble

A devastating faux-pas has been committed. Any subsequent skill tests involving communication or personal credibility suffer a penalty of -40% plus the critical value of his Courtesy skill.

## Craft

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The item being crafted is of superior quality, in terms of durability, value or utility (choose one area of excellence). In terms of durability, it has additional AP and HP, distributed as the character sees fit, equal to half the critical score of the skill. For example, a sword maker crafts an especially fine long sword using his skill of 81%. This gives him 4 points to distribute between the sword's AP and HP, in addition to the standard AP and HP for a standard sword. The AP and HP of an item may not be increased beyond the original amount  $\times 1.5$  (for example a great sword would have a maximum AP of 6 and HP of 18).

In terms of value, increase the item's value by half again. In terms of utility, the item provides a bonus equal to its maker's critical score to whichever skill the item is used for.

### Fumble

A fumbled roll reverses the benefits of a critical success. Thus, in the above example, 8 points would be deducted from the sword's standard AP and HP, or the item would be worth only half its usual value, or it would impose a skill penalty equal to the critical range of the maker, instead of a bonus.

## Culture

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character has gained a unique understanding or insight into the workings of a particular cultural group, subgroup or type. The Games Master should

reveal one or two key, previously unknown, facts about the culture to the character. Additionally the character may add double his Culture critical score to any communication or personal credibility tests made in the immediate circumstances.

### Fumble

The character has completely misunderstood a particular cultural practice, reference or social code that leads to a potential cultural embarrassment that will be, at best, humiliating or, at worst, insulting. The character's Cultural critical score is used as a penalty to all communication or personal credibility tests made in the immediate circumstances.

## Dance

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The dance is expressive, fluid and deeply affecting for all who witness it. Music is accompanied by perfect movement and emotion. The dance is as persuasive as any Influence test and can be used as such in situations resting on communication and personal credibility. Alternatively any subsequent Influence test is given a bonus of double the critical score of the Dance skill.

### Fumble

A fumbled dance is deeply humiliating to both the dancer and those who watch it. Passion is lost, the execution is clumsy and the dance fails to interpret the music in any shape or form. Any skills resting on communication and personal credibility suffer a penalty of double the critical score of the Dancer.

## Disguise

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The disguise is completely perfect and convincing to the last detail. The character gains the confidence of those being deceived and receives a bonus of double the critical score in the Disguise skill, to any further skill tests relying upon the effectiveness of the disguise attempt.

### Fumble

The disguise is so unconvincingly executed as to be obvious. Even in a dark room, it fools no one.

## Engineering

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The quality of the engineering project is first rate in terms of its durability and utility. The project is completed ahead of time and on budget.

### Fumble

The results of the project are simply unusable or may have failed to materialise. Indeed, the initial attempts have failed so badly that it takes double the time and expense to continue it.

## Fast Draw

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The weapon is drawn with lightning speed: add a further +5 to the Strike Rank.

### Fumble

Roll on the Close Combat fumble table on page 66 of the Combat Chapter.

## Healing

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

*Curing Disease and Poison:* the patient gains a bonus to his Resilience test equal to the healer's Healing divided by 5.

*Surgery:* the patient gains 1D3 hit points due to the superior quality of the healing. Reattached limbs will heal at half the normal rate described under Natural Healing on page 88 of the *RuneQuest* rules.

### Fumble

*Curing Disease and Poison:* the remedy weakens the patient's ability to fight the cause of the affliction; all Resilience tests are at -10% penalty.

*Surgery:* the treatment is bungled and inflicts a further 1D3 points of damage to the affected location.

## Insight

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character gains the ability to second guess how the person under analysis will react to a given situation.

The Games Master should offer private hints to the character regarding the person's motivations and likely actions.

### Fumble

The character completely misjudged the analysed person's motives and actions. The Games Master should offer the character a series of private, deliberately misleading hints regarding the person's motivations and likely actions.

## Language

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character has achieved a superb grasp of the language. He gains a bonus equal to double his Language critical score for any tests involving communication or personal credibility.

### Fumble

The character has completely misunderstood or mangled the nuances of the language. All immediate skill tests involving communication and personal credibility suffer a penalty equal to double the critical score of the skill.

## Martial Arts

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The Martial Arts attack deals maximum possible damage, as per normal combat.

### Fumble

Roll on the Natural Weapons Fumble table on page 66 of the Combat chapter.

## Mechanisms

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character achieves success in half the usual time and with flawless results.

### Fumble

The mechanism is broken and requires the attention of its maker to be fixed properly.

## Meditation

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character triples the rate of Magic Point recovery.

### Fumble

There are no other undue effects for a fumbled Meditation test.

### Oratory

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character wins over the audience completely and utterly, gaining their vociferous agreement. He gains a bonus equal to double the critical score of his Oratory skill for all immediate tests concerning communication and personal credibility.

### Fumble

The character's arguments come across as shallow and ill-communicated – even insulting. He gains a penalty equal to the critical score of his Oratory skill for all immediate tests concerning communication and personal credibility.

### Play Instrument

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The music produced is of stunning emotional quality. If being used as part of an Influence test, to impress a prospective client or an ally perhaps, then the Influence test receives a bonus of double the critical score for the Play Instrument skill.

### Fumble

The music is discordant and unpleasant to listen to. If being used as part of an Influence test, to impress a prospective client or an ally perhaps, then the Influence test receives a penalty of double the critical score for the Play Instrument skill.

### Seduction

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character is utterly charming and irresistible. The opposed Persistence roll, if one is being made, is at a -40% penalty.

### Fumble

The character's attempts are clumsy and repulsive. The opposed Persistence roll, if one is being made, is at a +40% bonus.

### Shiphandling

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

A critical Shiphandling success increases the Movement rate for the craft by half again.

### Fumble

If the test is fumbled, reduce the craft's movement by half.

### Streetwise

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

A critical success allows the character to find what he is looking for, for 1D2 hours, rather than the usual 1D4.

### Fumble

The character makes some mistake that causes insult or offence, attracting the attention of undesirables who may wish to cause him harm. The Games Master should decide on the specifics according to the circumstances.

### Survival

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character has been able to weather the conditions for a number of days equal to half his critical score in Survival (rounded up) without needing to make any further tests against Resilience, for instance.

### Fumble

The character has done something that causes immediate harm. A Resilience test is required immediately. If failed, the character suffers 1D3 points of damage to a random location, and the Games Master should adjudicate the specifics according to the circumstances of the environment.

### Tracking

#### CRITICAL SUCCESS

The character will not need to make any further Tracking tests in pursuit of the quarry and is able to anticipate and follow the trail without difficulty.

### Fumble

The trail is completely lost and cannot be recovered.



# COMBAT

Combat is an occupational hazard for *RuneQuest* adventurers. There are plenty of creatures, monsters, villains and rivals who would happily cleave a piece from a character simply because they can. Adventurers have to be on their guard, handy with a weapon, and prepared to both deal-out and take injury if they are to survive.

Of course, not every *RuneQuest* session will include a fight and there are scores of campaigns that pass with relatively little, or even no, bloodshed. But combats are visceral, emotive things. They highlight the fact that *RuneQuest* is a heroic game, threaded with peril and conflict. Most of us will never engage in a real-life battle for our lives and *RuneQuest*, as with all roleplaying games, offers an abstracted way of simulating that experience.

There has been more debate about the idiosyncrasies of the *RuneQuest* combat system than any other aspect of the rules. This is understandable; combat can be a confusing business and it necessarily involves the lives of characters. Of all the various mechanics in *RuneQuest*, combat needs to be handled in a consistent, logical, and easy-to-understand fashion, whilst conveying (with a necessary degree of abstraction), the fear, sweat, excitement and brutality of a melee.

Therefore this chapter presents an *optional* system for combat resolution. It is designed to be consistent with the rules discussed in the Skills chapter of this book, and the reasons behind the mechanics are explained in detail. Modified attack and defence matrices are presented, which intend to clear-up the confusion surrounding the originals found in the main *RuneQuest* rules. In fact, these matrices can be substituted for the main rule versions with no trouble at all, without having to adopt the optional skill resolution mechanics.

## Combat Anatomy

Combat between opponents is a dizzying mixture of tactics, nuance, reaction, counter-action and desperation. Attack, defence, counter-attack and tactical movement take place quickly and often automatically.

A combat is a brief explosion of violent activity with many possible outcomes and, where opponents are evenly matched, a constant exchange of advantage. Where opponents are unevenly matched, the more experienced combatant will, in most circumstances, always maintain the upper-hand, but there is always the chance of a lucky break, a mistimed strike, or the opportunity of a brief opening leading to a decisive lunge by the less experienced warrior.

*RuneQuest* combat seeks to abstract the complexities of detailed combat. Each roll to hit or defend against being hit represents a series of thrusts, lunges, slashes, feints, side-steps and false openings. It is not strictly a blow-by-blow re-enactment, although, in some cases, it can be perceived this way. A character's expertise with a weapon is not just about how accurately he hits; it is a distillation of tactical awareness, psychological assessment of the opponent, finesse and the ability concentrate under pressure.

All this needs to be remembered, both by players and Games Masters, when a combat sequence is in progress. The various components of *RuneQuest* combat – Strike Rank, Attack rolls, Dodging, Parrying, and Damage – are distillations of a much greater whole. Taken at this level, combat can be exciting, rewarding, exhilarating and, as far as things can ever be in a game, realistic, whilst still being both genuinely deadly and accomplished within the timescales of a typical *RuneQuest* game session.

## The Combat Sequence

This is unchanged from the details on page 44 of *RuneQuest*. The combat is still measured in rounds of five or so seconds, each round being divided into Combat Actions. However, we have included here a few optional rules for Games Master consideration.

## Strike Rank and Weapon Reach

Strike Rank is a mixture of both the speed of reaction and the ability to read the circumstances of the conflict before making decisions that may well be irreversible. This is why Strike Rank is calculated using the DEX and INT Characteristics. One factor not included in

figuring Strike Rank, however, is the type of weapon being used. Longer weapons improve a combatant's ability to strike an opponent before the opponent can attack. This is known as a weapon's Reach, and it can be used as a positive modifier to a character's Strike

Rank. The Reach for the weapons found in *RuneQuest* and *RuneQuest: Arms and Equipment* is summarised in the table below. The Reach score is added to the 1D10 roll when determining Strike Rank order.

### Close Combat Weapons and Reach

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Reach
Archer's Blade	1H Sword	1D4	7/9	1	4/6	+2
Awl Pike	Spear <sup>1,2</sup>	1D8+1	9/5	3	3/8	+6
Ball & chain	1H Flail	1D6+1	9/11	2	4/8	+1
Bastard sword	1H Sword	1D8	13/9	2	4/12	+3
	2H Sword	1D8+1	9/9			
Battleaxe	1H Axe	1D6+1	11/9	1	3/8	+2
	2H Axe	1D6+2	9/9			
Bill	Polearm <sup>2</sup>	1D6+1	7/9	2	2/8	+5
Broadsword	1H Sword	1D8+1	14/9	2	4/14	+2
	2H Sword	1D10	11/9			
Buckler	Shield	1D4	-5	1	5/8	0
Cestus	Unarmed	1D3+1	9/9	1	5/6	0
Chain	1H Flail	1D4	7/12	1	4/6	+1
Chakram	1H Axe <sup>4</sup>	1D6+1	-13	1	4/7	0
Club	1H Hammer	1D6	7/-	1	2/4	+1
Cutlass	1H Sword	1D6+1	6/7	1	3/9	+1
Dagger	Dagger <sup>4</sup>	1D4+1	-/-	-	4/6	0
Dart Blade	Dagger <sup>4</sup>	1D2	-/-	-	2/4	0
Dirk	Dagger <sup>1</sup>	1D3+2	-/-	-	4/8	+1
Falchion	1H Sword	1D6+1	7/9	1	4/10	+1
Fang shield	Shield <sup>3</sup>	1D8	10/9	2	8/12	+1
Flamberge	1H Sword <sup>1</sup>	1D8	9/9	2	4/10	+2
Gaff	Polearm <sup>1</sup>	1D6	7/9	2	2/8	+5
Gandasa	2H Axe	2D6+1	12/9	4	3/12	+4
Garrotte	Unarmed	1D2	-9	-	1/2	0
Glaive	Polearm <sup>2</sup>	1D8+1	7/9	3	2/10	+5
Great axe	2H Axe	2D6+2	13/9	2	3/10	+5
Great club	2H Hammer	1D8+1	12/9	3	3/10	+4
Great hammer	2H Hammer	1D10+3	11/9	3	3/10	+4
Great sword	2H Sword	2D8	13/11	4	4/12	+4
Halberd	2H Axe	1D8+2	13/7	4	3/10	+5
	Polearm <sup>2</sup>	1D8+1	9/9			
	Spear <sup>1,2</sup>	1D8	7/7			
Harpoon	Spear <sup>1,2</sup>	1D8+1	7/7	2	2/7	+3
Hatchet	1H Axe <sup>4</sup>	1D6	-9	1	3/6	+1
Heavy mace	1H Hammer	1D8	11/7	3	3/10	+2
	2H Hammer	1D8+1	9/7			
Iris	Dagger <sup>1</sup>	1D4	-9	-	4/3	0

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Reach
Katana	1H Sword	1D10+1	11/10	2	5/10	+2
	2H Sword	1D10+2	9/9			
Khopesh	1H Sword	1D6+2	10/10	2	3/10	+1
Kite shield	Shield <sup>3</sup>	1D6	13/-	3	10/18	0
Knife	Dagger	1D3	-/-	—	4/4	0
Knuckledusters	Unarmed	1D4	-/-	—	3/2	0
Kris	Dagger <sup>1</sup>	1D4+1	-/9	—	3/6	0
Kukri	1H Sword	1D6	9/-	1	3/7	+1
Kunai	Dagger <sup>4</sup>	1D3+1	-/7	—	4/4	0
Lance	Spear <sup>1,2</sup>	1D10+2	9/9	3	2/10	+6
Light mace	1H Hammer	1D6	7/7	1	3/6	+1
Long spear	Spear <sup>1,2</sup>	1D10	5/5	2	2/10	+5
Long sword	1H Sword	1D8	10/7	2	4/10	+3
Lucerne hammer	Polearm <sup>1</sup>	1D10	12/7	3	4/12	+4
Main Gauche	Dagger	1D4	-/11	—	3/7	+1
Mancatcher	Polearm <sup>2</sup>	1D4	9/10	3	4/10	+4
Military flail	2H Flail	1D10+2	13/11	3	3/10	+2
Military pick	1H Hammer	1D6+1	11/5	3	3/10	+3
Moon Axe	2H Axe	2D6	11/9	3	3/12	+3
Morningstar	2H Hammer	2D4	9/9	2	3/10	+2
Naginata	2H Axe	2D8	11/7	3	4/12	+5
	Polearm <sup>1,2</sup>	1D10	10/9			
Net	2H Flail <sup>4</sup>	1D4	10/11	3	2/20	+1
Ninja-to	1H Sword	1D6+2	10/9	1	5/8	+2
	2H Sword	1D8+1	7/9			
No-Dachi	2H Sword <sup>2</sup>	2D8+1	12/10	3	5/12	+4
Nunchaku	1H Flail	1D4+1	7/13	—	3/5	+1
Poniard	Dagger <sup>1</sup>	1D4	-/7	—	3/5	+1
Quarterstaff	Staff	1D8	7/7	2	3/8	+3
Rapier	Rapier <sup>1</sup>	1D8	7/13	1	3/8	+2
Rondel	Dagger	1D4+2	-/-	—	3/6	+1
Sabre	1H Sword	1D6+1	7/7	1	4/8	+2
Sai	Dagger <sup>1</sup>	1D4+1	-/9	1	3/8	+1
Scimitar	1H Sword	1D6+1	7/11	2	4/10	+2
Shillelagh	1H Hammer	1D6+1	6/-	1	2/6	+2
Short spear	Spear <sup>1,2,4</sup>	1D8	5/5	2	2/5	+2
Shortsword	1H Sword <sup>1</sup>	1D6	5/7	1	3/8	+1
Stavesword	Polearm <sup>1,2</sup>	2D6+2	11/9	3	4/12	+4
Stiletto	Dagger <sup>1</sup>	1D3+2	-/-	—	4/3	+1
Tanto	Dagger <sup>1</sup>	1D6	-/-	—	5/5	0
Target shield	Shield <sup>3</sup>	1D6	9/-	2	8/12	0
Tetsubo	2H Hammer	2D8	12/-	4	4/12	+4
Tonfa	1H Hammer	1D4+1	-/9	—	2/8	+1
Trident	Spear <sup>1,2,4</sup>	1D8	10/7	2	4/10	+4
Tulwar	2H Sword	2D6	9/7	3	4/14	+2

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Reach
Wakazashi	1H Sword	1D8	-9	1	5/8	+1
War gauntlet	Unarmed	1D6	10/9	1	6/8	0
War maul	2H Hammer	2D6	13/7	3	3/12	+5
War hammer	1H Hammer	1D8+1	11/9	2	3/8	+3
War sword	1H Sword	1D8	9/7	2	4/10	+2
Zweihänder	2H Sword	2D6+1	12/11	3	4/12	+4

<sup>1</sup> This weapon will impale an opponent upon a critical hit. See page 48 in *RuneQuest* for details on impalement.

<sup>2</sup> This weapon may be set against a charge. See page 35 in *RuneQuest* for details on setting weapons against a charge.

<sup>3</sup> This weapon may Parry ranged weapons.

<sup>4</sup> This weapon suffers no penalty when thrown.

### Reach for Size and Natural Weapons

Creatures and monsters often use natural weapons – claws, kicks, bites and so forth – to inflict damage. Larger creatures thus tend to have a longer Reach. Similarly, very tall characters will have a longer reach than very short ones. To accommodate the effect of SIZ on a weapon's Reach, apply a bonus of +1 for every 5 full points of SIZ over 10 a creature has, and impose a penalty of -1 for every 5 full points of SIZ it has below 10.

*For example, a warrior of SIZ 17 faces-off against a vicious, but stunted, broo of SIZ 5. The warrior gains +1 to his Strike Rank whilst the broo takes a -1 penalty.*

### Reach and Ranged Weapons

Ranged combatants have a distinct advantage, being able to deliver damage over substantial distances without needing to engage in close quarters fighting. Any character using a ranged weapon gains an automatic +10 Reach.

### Closing and Disengaging

These are two new Combat Actions designed to handle combatants of sizes and weapons of different lengths.

#### Closing

A character whose reach is considerably shorter (-2 Reach or less) than his opponent's needs to actively Close into close combat range, or otherwise remain unable to strike. Closing on an opponent is a Combat Action, and requires the *opponent* to decide whether he wishes to counter the closing action, or whether to strike at the closer instead. Either option requires a Reaction.

If the opponent decides to counter the closing action, then the closer and the opponent make an Opposed Test using their Dodge skills. The winner of the contest either closes or maintains distance as desired.

However, if the opponent decides to use the closing action to take a free attack instead, then the closer attempts an Opposed Test of their Dodge skill against the opponent's Weapon skill. In this circumstance the opponent gains a bonus of 10% per point of difference in his disparate Reaches. If the opponent wins the contest then he has struck the closing combatant. Whether or not the opponent is hit, the closer will succeed in reaching close combat distance.

Once within the reach of the opponent's weapon, the advantage switches to the wielder of the shorter weapon. The opponent will now suffer a penalty of 10% per point of difference in their divergent Reaches to *all* attacks or parries until they reopen the distance between themselves.

#### Disengaging

Characters that have been closed upon by opponents with a shorter reach are at a serious tactical disadvantage. Their only escape is to disengage from combat, and in so doing, restore the original range between them. This works in exactly the same manner as Closing above. To disengage requires a Combat Action, and the *opponent* must decide whether they wish to remain in close combat distance, or whether they wish to gain a free attack at the disengaging combatant instead. Either option also requires a Reaction to use.



If the opponent decides to remain in close combat, then the disengaging combatant and the opponent make an Opposed Test using their Dodge skills. The winner of the contest either retreats or maintains distance as desired.

However, if the opponent decides to use the disengaging action to take a free attack instead, then the disengaging combatant attempts an Opposed Test of his Dodge skill against the opponent's Weapon skill. In this circumstance the opponent retains any bonuses gained from being in close combat. If the opponent wins the contest then he strikes the disengaging combatant. Whether or not the combatant is hit, the disengagement will succeed and the advantage returns to the combatant with the longer reach.

## Opposed Test Combats

Any combat, close quarters or ranged, is effectively an Opposed test, matching the skills of the attacker against the skills of the defender. Thus, to resolve a combat sequence, the Opposed Test mechanics described in both the main *RuneQuest* rules, and explored in the Skills chapter of this book on page 46, can be used in place of a straight-forward test against individual skills.

However, because the nature of combat requires a detailed analysis of the results between the winner and loser of the Opposed test, it is still necessary to cross-reference the result on a combat results matrix, as is the case using the standard *RuneQuest* mechanics. But, there are some important differences to note if Opposed tests are used to handle combat.

- ⌚ In real combat the decision to parry or dodge is made in a split second and is very often in anticipation to an incoming attack, irrespective of whether the blow will strike. Because *RuneQuest* combat is an abstraction of what really happens in a battle, such decisions need to be made as part of the general statements of intent *before* attack and defensive rolls are made. This effectively supersedes the Trigger Effects used in the standard *RuneQuest* rules
- ⌚ since it assumes that all participants in a combat will act defensively whenever an attack is initiated.
- ⌚ Both participants in the combat need to make a test against their respective skills, having first declared their intentions. For an attacker this is straightforward: 'I try to hit the broo with my sword'. For a defender the statement needs to be explicit: 'I will try to parry the broo's axe' or 'I try to dodge the broo's axe because my sword is already damaged'.
- ⌚ The attack and defence rolls are then made *simultaneously* by the combatants and the results compared according to the Opposed Test mechanics: as usual, a Critical Success always beats a normal success, but if the success levels are equal, the higher Success roll wins and the lower roll is demoted by one level. I.e. if both combatants roll a normal success, then the higher roll remains a success, but the lower roll is downgraded to a failure, or if both roll a critical success the lower roll is downgraded to a normal success. This may seem unfair when both combatants have succeeded, but it *is* a logical outcome. In such situations the winning opponent has exhibited either greater luck or greater competence, and turned the situation to his advantage.
- ⌚ If one of the combatants has a weapon skill in excess of 100%, and the skill is a standard success, the skill's value in excess of 100 is added to the result of the dice roll, increasing the chances of victory in the Opposed contest.
- ⌚ Where the participants tie: i.e. the result of the Opposed roll, taking into account all modifiers, is an identical score, and the level of failure or success is the same, then both have achieved the same result on the appropriate combat matrix.
- ⌚ The outcome of each combatant's roll is compared on the table appropriate for the defensive method being used and the results applied.

**Dodge Table**

		Attacker's Result			
		<i>Critical</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Fail</i>	<i>Fumble</i>
Defender's Result	<i>Critical</i>	Attack succeeds. Defender sustains minimum damage from the attacker's weapon.	Attack fails.	Attack fails. Defender may Riposte.	Attack fails. Defender may Riposte. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	<i>Success</i>	Attack succeeds. Defender takes normal rolled damage from the attacker's weapon.	Attack succeeds and causes minimum damage to the defender.	Attack fails.	Attack fails. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	<i>Fail</i>	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage to the defender. Defender forced to give ground.	Attack succeeds and causes normal rolled damage to the defender. Defender forced to give ground.	Attack fails and Defender forced to Give Ground	Attack fails. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	<i>Fumble</i>	Attack succeeds and causes maximum weapon and strength bonus damage to the defender. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble table.	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage to the defender. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.	Attack fails. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.	Attack fails. Both sides roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.

**Parry Table**

		Attacker's Result			
		<i>Critical</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Fail</i>	<i>Fumble</i>
Defender's Result	<i>Critical</i>	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage, reduced by twice the AP of the parrying weapon.	Attack succeeds and causes normal rolled damage, reduced by twice the AP of the parrying weapon.	Attack fails. Defender may Riposte.	Attack fails. Defender may Riposte. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	<i>Success</i>	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage, reduced by the AP of the parrying weapon.	Attack succeeds and causes normal rolled damage, reduced by the AP of the parrying weapon.	Attack fails.	Attack fails. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	<i>Fail</i>	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage to the defender.	Attack succeeds and causes normal rolled damage to the defender.	Attack fails.	Attack fails. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	<i>Fumble</i>	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage to the defender. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.	Attack succeeds and causes normal rolled damage to the defender. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.	Attack fails. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.	Attack fails. Both sides roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.

## Opposed Tests against Multiple Foes

Where a character is fighting two or more foes, he engages each foe in an Opposed Contest. Each combat round he must nominate, before Strike Ranks are calculated, which of the foes is the primary opponent. All Opposed Tests against the primary opponent are conducted normally. If the character has enough Combat Actions and Reactions, he can attack and defend against the additional foes, but each foe is at a -20% penalty and these penalties stack up. Thus, a character would engage the primary foe at normal skill values, adjusted for applicable modifiers, the second at -20%, the third at -40%, and so forth.

The primary foe can be reselected at the beginning of each new Combat Round, but must be selected before Strike Ranks have been calculated.

## Combat Fumbles

Fumbling during a combat can have disastrous results. Depending on the opponent's degree of success or failure, a Fumble always results in a roll on the appropriate Fumble table at the very least.

There are three Fumble tables: one for Close Combat fumbles (including dodges and parries), one for Natural Weapons and one for Ranged Weapons. When a Fumble occurs, roll on the appropriate Fumble table for the action involved. Reroll if the result seems inappropriate for the activity being conducted (e.g. results 6-7, 20 in close combat when dodging, or when no weapons are involved), or improvise!

### Close Combat Fumble Table

1D20	Result	Effect
01-03	Falter	Lose next Combat Action.
04-06	Drop Weapon	Weapon falls 1D4 metres away.
07-09	Lose Balance	Lose next 1D3 Combat Actions.
10-12	Damage Weapon	Weapon takes damage from opponent's parrying weapon. Else weapon strikes an inanimate object (tree, wall, ground, etc) and does damage to itself.
13-14	Stumble	Trip and fall prone. Forfeit next 1d3 Combat Actions. All defensive actions at a -20% penalty.
15-16	Lose Armour	Roll for hit location where the armour fell from. If not armoured, roll again.
17	Hit Ally	Accidentally strike a nearby companion for normal rolled damage. If no ally within reach, hit self instead.
18	Unlucky	Roll twice.
19	Break Weapon	The weapon strikes the ground, a wall, or a similar surface capable of causing damage. The weapon takes 1D10 points of damage, plus the user's Damage Modifier, but reduced by the AP of the weapon. Roll three times.
20	Hit Self	Inadvertently hit own hit location for normal rolled damage, plus Damage Modifier.

### Natural Weapon Fumbles

1D20	Result	Effect
01-03	Hesitate	Lose next Combat Action.
04-06	Numb Limb	Limb is temporarily paralysed until a successful Resilience roll is made, starting next Combat Action.
07-09	Entangle Self	Lose next 1d3 Combat Actions.
10-12	Damage Limb	Limb is injured from striking opponent's parrying weapon, armour or an inanimate object (tree, wall, ground, etc) and does damage to itself.
13-14	Sprawl	Trip and fall prone. Forfeit next 1d3 Combat Actions. All defensive actions at a -20% penalty.
15-16	Break Limb	Limb is reduced to -1 hit point, suffering a Serious Wound.
17-18	Hit Ally	Accidentally strike a nearby companion for normal rolled damage. If no ally within reach, damage is done to self instead from wrenching a random location.
19	Fated	Roll twice.
20	Cursed	Roll three times.

## Ranged Weapon Fumbles

1D20	Result	Effect
01-03	Disoriented	Attacker loses target and next Combat Action.
04-06	Drop Weapon	Weapon falls 1D2 metres away.
07-09	Snare Weapon	Lose next 1d3 Combat Actions.
10-12	Lose Weapon	Weapon string either snaps or weapon is lost when thrown.
13-14	Damage Weapon	Weapon when fired or thrown suffers rolled damage to itself.
15-16	Hit Ally	Accidentally strike a nearby companion for normal rolled damage.
17-18	Misfire	Inflict normal damage to self.
19	Bedevilled	Roll twice.
20	Damned	Roll three times.

## Example of an Opposed Test Combat

### The Combatants

*Jurgen the Straw Dog, a mercenary meets his long-time foe The Baron on the battlefield. Jurgen uses a long sword (130%, Reach +3, Damage 1D8, AP 4 HP 10) and a Target Shield (94%, Reach +0, Damage 1D6, AP 8, HP 12). He wears a leather shirt and treads, a plate breastplate, and a plate helmet (1 AP each limb, 7 AP chest and abdomen, 6 AP head) for a skill penalty of -24%. His Dodge is 88%, his Resilience is 64%. His base Strike Rank is +14. His Damage Modifier is +1D2.*

*Taking into account his armour penalty, Jurgen's combat skills are: Long sword 106%, Shield 70%, Dodge 64%.*

*The Baron, a vicious conqueror of nations, wields a great sword (127%, Reach +4, Damage 2D8, AP 4, HP 12) and wears a suit of full plate armour (6 AP all locations), with a -42% skill penalty. His Dodge is 95%, his Resilience is 71%. His base Strike Rank is +12. His Damage Modifier is +1D2.*

*Taking into account his finely-wrought, black-lacquered plate, The Baron's combat skills are: Great sword 85%, Dodge 53%.*

*Both combatants have the same hit points per location (5 each leg, 6 abdomen, 7 chest, 4 arms and 5 head) and 3 Combat Actions.*

### First Combat Round

*Strike Ranks are determined with a 1D10 roll for each combatant. Jurgen's is 7 and The Baron's 9. Jurgen's*

*Strike Rank this round is thus  $7+14+3=25$ . The Baron's is  $9+12+4=26$ . The Baron acts first.*

**First Combat Action:** *The Baron makes a mighty swing with his sword; Jurgen is already preparing a parry with his shield. The Baron is rolling against his Great sword of 85% and Jurgen is rolling against his Shield of 70%. As neither combatant has a score over 100% there will be no further modifier to the score of their respective dice rolls. The Baron's attack score is 14, a success; Jurgen's parry is 09, also a success, but a lower roll than The Baron's, which means Jurgen's roll, despite being successful, is outclassed by The Baron's expertise, and is treated as a Failure. Cross-referenced on the Parry Table, The Baron's attack succeeds causing normal rolled damage to Jurgen. The Baron hits Jurgen in the right arm for 4 points of damage. Jurgen's leather armour absorbs 1 point, meaning the Straw Dog takes 3 points of damage – a nasty cut, but nothing Jurgen cannot weather for now.*

*Jurgen returns the attack with his Long sword and The Baron chooses to parry the incoming blow. Both roll. Jurgen's roll for his attack is 54, which, because he has a Long sword skill of 106%, means he can add an additional 6 to his result, for a score of 60 – a successful attack. The Baron rolls 05: a critical parry, beating Jurgen's success. Cross-referenced on the Parry Table, Jurgen's attack succeeds for normal damage, but is reduced by twice The Baron's Great sword AP. Jurgen's damage roll is 7 points, so The Baron easily turns Jurgen's attack.*

**Second Combat Action:** *The Baron attacks again, this time aiming directly for Jurgen's head in a bid to end this fight quickly. A Precise Attack means a -40% modifier, so The Baron is rolling against 45% this time.*

Jurgen, quite naturally, is parrying with his shield. Rolls are made: The Baron scores 96, which is a Failure. Jurgen's roll is 04, a critical parry. Checking the result, Jurgen is allowed to Riposte, a free, immediate attack. Jurgen rolls 35, a success. The Baron does not spend a Reaction trying to defend, hoping to let his armour absorb the blow. Jurgen hits The Baron's left arm for 5 points of damage, which clangs on the black steel but do not penetrate. It is still Jurgen's Combat Action and he attacks again, but this time attempting to penetrate a weak spot in The Baron's armour. This puts his attack at -40%, so Jurgen is rolling against 66% rather than 106%. The Baron is parrying. Jurgen's roll is a 61 and The Baron's 83. Both are successful rolls, but The Baron's is the highest, meaning that Jurgen's Precise Attack fails.

**Third Combat Action:** Once again The Baron swings his mighty sword and scores 91, a failure. Parrying, Jurgen scores 43, a success. There is no other effect. Jurgen returns with a second, Precise Attack aimed at bypassing The Baron's armour. Jurgen rolls 35 and The Baron, parrying, rolls 00 – a Fumble! Jurgen inflicts 5 points of damage in total to The Baron's left arm, completely bypassing the plate armour. This reduces The Baron's left arm hit points to -1 – a Serious Wound. The Baron loses his next Combat Action (a 1 on a 1D4 die roll) but must also roll on the Close Combat Fumble Table for his fumbled parry. The result is a 7: Drop Weapon; The Baron loses his grip on his sword and it lands 2 metres away. The Baron has a shortsword which he can use a Combat Action to ready, but as he loses his next Combat Action, Jurgen is at a significant advantage in the combat.

### Second Combat Round

Strike Ranks are calculated again. Jurgen's is 21 and The Baron's 19. If and when he readies his shortsword, it will increase to 20 (a +1 for the shortsword's reach). The Baron has a skill of 103%, taking into account his armour penalty, with a shortsword.

**First Combat Action:** Jurgen attacks with a Precise Attack, aiming again for The Baron's left arm. The Baron can only Dodge. Dice are rolled and Jurgen scores 07 against his modified attack of 66% - a success, but just short of a critical. The Baron attempts to dodge. He is rolling against 53% and scores 85, a failure. Cross referencing Jurgen's attack against The Baron's defence on the Dodge Table shows Jurgen's

attack succeeds for normal damage, and The Baron is forced to Give Ground. The damage roll is 9 points. The Baron's armour absorbs 6 points, but he still sustains a further 3 points in his injured left arm, taking it to -4. The Baron is driven backwards by 4 metres, but Jurgen closes the distance to remain in combat.

As The Baron has lost this Combat Action due to his previous injury, he cannot act at all.

**Second Combat Action:** Jurgen makes a normal attack attempt this time, and rolls 61 against his 106% attack, which is modified to 67. The Baron dodges again, rolling 02 – a critical success. Jurgen's attack fails, clattering harmlessly on The Baron's armour. For his Combat Action, The Baron draws his shortsword.

**Third Combat Action:** Jurgen attacks again; as The Baron is drawing his sword, he can only dodge. Jurgen rolls 77, modified to 83. The Baron rolls 45. Both rolls are successful but as Jurgen has the better success, the Baron's Dodge attempt is treated as a failure. Jurgen's attack hits for normal damage and The Baron is driven back a further 4 metres. Jurgen rolls 9 for his damage and hits The Baron's chest. The Baron now has a chest wound taking him to 4 HP in that location.

The Baron and Jurgen now stand 4 metres apart. The Baron has drawn his shortsword but is badly wounded in the arm and bleeding in the chest. He hurls insults at Jurgen and stands his ground. Both men, breathing hard, glare at each other.

### Third Combat Round

Strike Ranks are calculated again. Jurgen's is 21 and The Baron's 16.

**First Combat Action:** Jurgen wanders a metre or so backwards for his Combat Action, eyes fixed on The Baron. The Baron continues to goad the mercenary, listing atrocities he has committed against Jurgen's family. For his Combat Action he is intending to Defend, giving a +20 bonus to parries or dodges.

**Second Combat Action:** As Jurgen now has 5 metres distance between himself and his enemy, he launches a Charge attack. The Baron continues to Defend. Jurgen rushes forward and The Baron braces himself for the assault.

**Third Combat Action:** *Jurgen completes his charge and uses a Precise Attack to hit The Baron in the chest. His attack roll needs to be below 66% and he rolls 50. The Baron dodges with a bonus of +20% for his Defend action; he needs to roll less than 73 and rolls 17 – a success, but less than Jurgen’s success and thus a failure. A Failed Dodge versus a Successful Attack means Jurgen hits for normal damage and The Baron must give ground again. Jurgen has automatically hit The Baron in the chest and, because he is Charging, rolls 1D8+1D2+1D4. The total damage is 11, delivering 5 points to The Baron’s chest and taking its HP to –1. This is a Serious Wound and The Baron is forced to make a Resilience roll. His Resilience is 71% and his roll is 99. The Baron collapses with the force of the blow and is hurled backwards, landing in an unconscious heap, blood seeping through a huge gash in his black plate.*

*Jurgen is victorious and he leaves The Baron where he lies, somehow suspecting that the two of them will meet like this in combat again, and next time...*

## Wounds

Characters and creatures with very high Resilience scores, or scores over 100, enjoy huge advantages in combat, with some seemingly unable to be killed. Clearly this poses a problem for Games Masters because the sense of peril and mortality is lost, especially where players can see that either their character, or a monster they are fighting, cannot be defeated by mortal means.

The optional rules here restructure the effects of wounds to address some of these issues. The First Aid skill effects table, which is now more crucial to dealing with seriously injured characters, is reproduced for ease of reference.

### Location’s Hit Points reduced to –1 Hit Points or below

The location has suffered a Serious Wound. The location is permanently scarred and the character loses his next 1D4 Combat Actions.

### Limbs

A limb is rendered useless by a Serious Wound, until the location is restored to 0 hit points or more. If a leg is rendered useless, the character drops prone. If an arm is rendered useless it drops whatever it is holding, unless the object is strapped on.

### Abdomen, Chest or Head

A character suffering a Serious Wound to the Abdomen, Chest or Head must immediately make a Resilience test or fall unconscious. If the character remains conscious, this test will have to be repeated at the end of every Combat Round, until the location is restored to 0 hit points or more.

### Location’s Hit Points reduced to a negative score greater than its starting Hit Points

The location has suffered a Major Wound. The location is permanently maimed and the character is incapacitated, unable to continue fighting.

### Limbs

The limb is considered to be either severed or shattered. The character drops prone, totally incapacitated and must immediately make a Resilience test or fall unconscious. If the character remains conscious, this test will have to be repeated at the end of every Combat Round, until the location is restored to 0 hit points or more. If the location is not treated within a number of *minutes* equal to the character’s CON+POW, the character dies from blood loss and shock.

### Abdomen, Chest or Head

The location receives a lethal wound to its internal organs. The character drops prone, totally incapacitated and must immediately make a Resilience test or fall unconscious. If the character remains conscious, this test will have to be repeated at the end of every Combat Round, until the location is restored to 0 hit points or more. If the location is not treated within a number of *rounds* equal to half the character’s CON+POW, the character dies from blood loss and shock.

## First Aid Actions

Injury or Ailment	Treatment
Impalement	A successful First Aid test removes the impaling item without causing more damage to the victim.
Unconsciousness	A successful First Aid test can revive an adventurer from unconsciousness, though drugged patients may inflict a penalty on the First Aid test.
Injured location	A successful First Aid test on an injured location (but not one below 0 hit points) will heal 1D3 hit points to that location.
Serious Injury	A successful First Aid test on a location suffering from a Serious Injury will restore the location's hit points to 0. A limb is no longer considered useless and an Abdomen, Chest or Head location will no longer require tests to stay conscious.
Major Injury	A successful First Aid test on a location suffering from a Major Injury will not restore the location's hit points. This First Aid merely stabilises the patient enough so that he will not die of blood loss.

It normally takes at least 1D4+1 Combat Actions to administer First Aid. Both adventurers must remain stationary and may not use Combat Actions or Reactions while this occurs.

A location that has had any variation of First Aid administered to it may not benefit from First Aid again until it has fully healed (is restored to maximum hit points once more). The use of First Aid requires suitable medical equipment such as bandages or salves.

## Heroic Last Actions

In the special case of Player Characters or major NPC's who have received a Major Wound, the Games Master might allow a heroic last action – such as spitting out one last spell, attempting to cut down their slayer, crawling away to hide, or trying to tourniquet their own wound. They must be conscious, have working limbs applicable to the action and succeed in a Resilience test. They get a *single* opportunity to attempt their desire, and then immediately collapse into unconsciousness and probable death.

## Resilience and Wounds – Optional Rule

A particularly high Resilience score may mean that a character or creature will almost always be able to resist the effects of a wound if a straight Resilience test is made. To counter this, Games Masters may wish to rule that Resilience tests are always Opposed by the weapon skill of the opponent, thus reflecting the skill of the combatant to strike a vital area.

*For example, Jorgen is fighting a velociraptor, which has a Resilience of 140% (see RuneQuest Monsters). He hits the velociraptor in the head with a critical hit, meaning he inflicts 10 points of damage, plus his Damage Modifier which is a further 2 points – so 12 points of damage, of which 5 points is absorbed by its thick hide. As the creature has already sustained two earlier blows, and had only 3 hit points in the location, it has now been taken to negative Head hit points and sustains a Major Wound. Under normal damage rules, with its 140% Resilience, this wound means little to the monster, despite the fact that it has been hit in a critical area and with a critical blow. However, the velociraptor must match its Resilience of 140% against Jorgen's weapon skill of 130% with a long sword. Rolls are made; the velociraptor rolls 27, which is modified to 67 owing to the additional 40% over 100% it has in Resilience. Jorgen rolls 56, which is modified to 86 for his additional 30% above 100 in long word. As the Jorgen is the victor in this opposed test, with the higher roll, the velociraptor takes the effects of the wound as though it had failed its Resilience test.*

# MAGIC

Magic is an integral part of *RuneQuest*. Almost all characters have some access to magic, and its effects can be incredibly potent. This chapter examines magic from a Games Master's point of view: how it works, how to give access to it and how it should be used. Also included are some additional ways of handling Runes, access to Divine spells and rules for summoning and binding creatures such as elementals and demons. The chapter concludes with the long-awaited rules for alchemy.

## How Magic Works

This section looks at how the basic magic systems of *RuneQuest* – Rune Magic, Divine Magic and Sorcery – work in the context of what magic is.

### The Nature of Magic

At its most simplistic level, magic is the ability to influence the laws of the natural world and reality, for better or for worse. This presupposes that magical forces exist outside the sphere of reality and can be drawn in, or channelled, and then manipulated to cause an effect. A magician is, in effect, puncturing the unseen barrier between reality and the magical planes and controlling the through-flow of magical energy in the mundane world. In this way the prevailing laws of the mundane world can be shaped or altered according to the effects the magician desires.

How much magical energy a character can control is represented by the Magic Points attribute and the character's skill in a particular magic skill. The former is his capacity to channel magic and the latter is his capability to do something it. The two cannot operate in isolation.

How magical energy is obtained – how the character punctures that invisible barrier – is determined by the type of magic he is skilled in using. Rune magicians use the inherent power of runes to channel specific types of primal force. Divine magicians call upon a deity and effectively channel some of that deity's power. Sorcerers study the physical interactions between reality and the magical plane and develop codes, ciphers and rituals that allow the barrier to be

breached without the need for a third-party mechanism such as a rune or a god. To the sorcerer magic is a commodity like anything else, there to be used (or abused) at will.

### Rune Magic

Runes are rumoured to be droplets of blood from the gods that have fallen to earth and taken solid form. They are essential things; that is, each rune is pure of itself and embodies powers of a single, unalterable nature reflecting the nature of the god that produced it. When mundane creatures channel the powers of the runes the effects manifest as spells, which are diluted versions of the powers of the gods because they are being channelled through the invisible barrier separating the mundane world from the gods' realm.

Yet that is not the whole story. Runes can be categorised into different groups of powers. When these powers interact in the realm of the gods' tremendous acts of creation, change and destruction occur – and this is how gods make worlds, the things that live within them, and destroy them. The classes runes can be categorised into are as follows:

#### Elemental or Primal Runes

The components of all creation. Most worlds contain all these runes in different combinations of strength, but some worlds may be devoid of a certain rune. A world made without the water rune, or where the water rune is weak, would have no seas, rivers, lakes or even rainfall. It would be a dreadfully arid, probably lifeless place. In a world where the darkness rune is strongest, perpetual night would shroud the place. Thus the strength and combination of runes determines the conditions of the world. Most worlds have the runes in a certain balance, thereby promoting life and the conditions under which life thrives.

The Elemental Runes are *Air* ☉, *Darkness* ●, *Earth* □, *Fire* ☼, *Metal* ▲, *Moon* ☾ and *Water* ♁.

#### Form Runes

The Form Runes describe the elements of life and the shape it takes. Usually a single form of life – such as man – is associated with a single rune, but sometimes



a form of life is a combination of two or more runes. A combination of the runes of Man and Beast, for example, might create a form of life such as a centaur or an intelligent, bipedal cat, or perhaps a man with the intellect, nature and abilities of a particular beast. Much depends on how the runes are mixed by the gods. Of the Form runes, Chaos is the most feared, because it preys on the nature of the other Form runes and denies them consistency. The Chaos rune imposes constant, unremitting change for its own sake. In some worlds the Chaos rune is excluded and guarded against with utmost vigilance. In others it is rampant and causes untold misery whilst the gods watch with glee at the unleashed havoc. Such is the way of gods.

The Form Runes are *Beast* ▽, *Chaos* ♣, *Dragon* ❄, *Dragonewt* (where dragonewts exist, in Glorantha, for instance) ▲, *Man* ♀, *Spirit* ⚗ and *Plant* †.

### POWER RUNES

The Runes of Power are arranged in diametrically opposed pairs. They characterise the chief motivations of gods and so are invested in whatever they create. They derive from, and are influenced by, the Elemental Runes and influence the Form Runes. They are typically manifestations of a specific type of power derived from a primal source. Most cults are therefore invested with those runes characterising the god or gods they worship, and consider as enemies the opposing rune (and consequently the deities characterised by them) – although outright enmity is not always guaranteed, and depends very much on the mythic relationships and alliances struck by the gods during the creation of the world and its subsequent history.

The Power Runes are:

●	<i>Cold</i>	◎	<i>Heat</i>
†	<i>Death</i>	⌘	<i>Fertility</i>
⌘	<i>Disorder</i>		<i>Harmony</i>
*	<i>Fate</i>	π	<i>Luck</i>
∞	<i>Motion</i>	△	<i>Stasis</i>
∴	<i>Illusion</i>	Υ	<i>Truth</i>
○	<i>Light</i>	●	<i>Shadow</i>

Adventurers need to be careful in the Power Runes they choose to integrate. Integrating two runes that are opposites does *not* confer the powers of both runes: instead the powers cancel out as each power rune struggles for dominance in the Rune Touched's



soul. Casting rune spells of either rune is subject to difficulty too; the Runecasting chance for each rune of an opposing pair is halved and Magic Point costs are doubled. *So, for example, a character who has integrated the Cold rune has developed his Runecasting (Cold Rune) skill to 70%. During his adventures he finds and integrates the Heat rune. First of all, he finds the Runic Powers obtained from his Cold Rune suddenly disappear; neither does he gain any Runic power from the Heat rune. Next, when attempting to cast a Magnitude 3 Frostbite spell, his chance to do so is 35%, not 70, and the Magic Point cost is 6, to achieve the Magnitude 3 effects.*

### CONDITION RUNES

The Condition Runes are the final group and they define how gods, cults or individuals deal with any of the preceding runes. There are five main conditions: Infinity ∞, Law △, Magic ⚗, Mastery ||| and Trade †. Each works in a different way:

*Infinity* – this is the mark of the gods. It implies complete freedom of will and the ability to act like a god oneself. It is conferred only on those worthy of

the status and is the preserve of demi-gods, true heroes and enormously powerful creatures such as dragons.

*Law* – the Law rune aims to defend against Chaos. It stabilises another rune and helps prevent Chaos from disrupting it. Those who possess or command the Law Rune are committed to rationality, steady progress and natural evolution. They tend to dislike anything that attempts to twist or shape reality and thus, in many respects, the Law rune is the antithesis of the Magic rune.

*Magic* – the Magic rune is derived from the Chaos Rune but lacks its parent’s malignancy. It represents the ability to command, shape and control another rune on a temporary basis.

*Mastery* – the Mastery rune signifies mastery of a particular Form, Power or Condition and is an indication of the ascendancy of power. It is meaningless without another rune to define it, although its presence signifies the independence of its owner from the rank and file. Cults possessing the Mastery rune are the true movers and shakers of the world. Individuals possessing it are those destined for greatness (or infamy).

*Trade* – the Trade rune is that of communication. It signifies a willingness to enter into dialogue and to bargain or compromise. It is seen as a rune of agreement and amicability although the Trade rune can also be employed ruthlessly.

### Rune Strength

Mention has already been made of the relative strengths and weaknesses of runes. In the *RuneQuest* rules all runes are considered to be of equal strength, but in developing your campaign or game world you might choose to have runes with *different* strengths of power reflecting the gods that exist in your world (or a

region of it) and the powers they command. This does not mean runes are any more common, or easier to find, but it does mean that some runes will be more powerful than others, reflecting the dominant forces.

Stronger, more dominant, runes are harder to integrate than weaker ones. This is because dominant runes already exert a substantive influence in the world and have built-up a natural resistance to mundane manipulation. Weaker runes are seeking to exert their influence and mundane manipulation is one way of exerting that influence. The strength of a rune is therefore rated between 1 and 100. Attempting to integrate a rune requires a successful opposed test between the character’s Persistence and the rune’s strength.

All runes of the same type will have the same strength range but different scores – just as characters have characteristics in the same range but at different levels. The first task is to decide which runes from each category, as defined above, exist (it can be all or some, but remember that the absence of an Elemental Rune probably indicates that element’s absence too), and how strong they are based on the presence of the gods in your campaign world. For example, in Glorantha, the runes associated with the Storm Pantheon (Motion and Air) are strong in the regions dominated by the Orlanthei, whereas in regions such as Dagori Inkarth, home of the trolls, the Darkness rune holds sway.

Using this system, runes become harder to integrate but this does come with certain benefits. Strong and Very Strong runes also offer a single rune spell, determined either by the Games Master or randomly, as part of the Runic Power gained by integrating the rune. The character absorbs the knowledge of the spell casting whilst integrating the rune. So, in the case of a Strong Rune, integrating successfully provides the Runic Power associated with the rune and at least a

### Rune Strength Table

Strength Category	Rune Strength Score	Runic Benefits	Stored Magic Points
Very Strong	90+1D20	Runic Power plus One Rune Spell appropriate to Rune	2D6
Strong	70+1D20	Standard Runic Power plus chance of One Rune Spell appropriate to Rune equal to Rune Strength	1D6
Average	50+1D20	Standard Runic Power	1D3
Weak	30+1D20	Chance of Runic Power equal to Rune Strength	None
Very Weak	10+1D20	No Runic Power	None

71% chance of a single rune spell. Conversely, weaker runes offer fewer benefits but are easier to integrate.

### STORED MAGIC POINTS

Runes, being inherently magical, may contain their own Magic Points. If successfully integrated, these Magic Points become available to the user although, once exhausted, they cannot be retrieved and neither can the rune be re-powered (see 'Crystals and Other Devices', below).

Elemental and Form Runes *always* begin at Average strength. Power and Condition Runes can be of any strength.

As a particular god gains in status or popularity, so the strength of the runes associated with it gain in strength, and vice-versa. So, to use Glorantha as an example again, the runes of the Empire of Wyrms, Friends, Dragon, Dragonewt and Magic, have steadily gained in strength as the empire's borders have expanded; however, at its edges, where the God Learners and Old Ways Traditionalists try to repel its influence, the strength of its runes is less than in the EWF heartland of Dragon Pass. Thus, the Dragon, Dragonewt and Magic Runes are Very Strong in Dragon Pass, but grow progressively weaker as one moves further out, until they are Average in strength at the furthest reaches of the EWF and Weak or Very Weak in those territories the EWF has yet to reach.

### ACCESS TO RUNES AND MANIFESTATIONS OF BEING RUNE TOUCHED

Runes are rare. Most access is provided via a cult which has already obtained and mastered (or is mastering) one or more runes related to a particular deity. Otherwise, runes must be specifically sought, either through quests or hugely expensive business transactions, or found by chance. Games Masters

should carefully consider several things when using runes in their scenarios:

- ⌚ What runes exist in the world? What are their relative strengths?
- ⌚ What runes are absent? What effect has this had on the world?
- ⌚ What runes exist in a particular region? An area where a particular god or pantheon of gods is strongly worshipped is likely to have more instances of runes associated with them, and fewer of those they are opposed to.
- ⌚ Are runes being bought and sold as commodities? What kinds of prices are being commanded? Who brokers the runes? How were they found?
- ⌚ What are the sanctions for possessing a rune reviled by a cult?
- ⌚ Are any runes controlled exclusively by a particular group or cult?

Once a rune has been obtained and integrated it confers its immediate runic power(s) and permits the user to channel magic, in the form of rune spells, thus creating a gateway between the mundane and magical worlds. Yet integrating a rune is, or should be, a *significant* undertaking. Rune Touched have combined part of the primal force of the world with their own souls and this marks them out, usually in quite subtle ways that are apparent to the trained eye. Spotting whether someone is Rune Touched requires an Opposed Test between Perception and Persistence. If successful, the subtle effects associated with having integrated a rune are visible to the observer.

## Visible Effects of Rune Integration

Rune	Visible Effect
Air	The air seems to shimmer about the individual, taking on a slight, silvery quality.
Beast	The individual possesses slight, animal-like characteristics; the odd bestial grunt, perhaps. If any animals are nearby, they pause and glance in the individual's direction before returning to their routines.
Chaos	Every now and again, and only fleetingly, something about the individual's appearance alters and then returns to normal. The individual seems to be unaware of the change. If observed again, subsequent physical alterations are always different.
Cold	The individual's skin is cold to the touch, and the temperature around him is noticeably cooler.
Communication	The individual carries an aura that makes what he says seem interesting even when it is not. When the individual listens, he seems to be listening intently even when he is not.
Darkness	The light around the individual flickers and dims slightly, before reasserting itself.
Death	A barely perceptible shadow clings to the individual and he seems to be carrying life as a great burden.
Disorder	Even when immaculately dressed and presented, the individual has a slightly dishevelled appearance.
Dragon	The individual radiates a distinct aura of inhumanness; a coldness and distance from mortal concerns.
Dragonewt	The individual behaves, now and again, in ways that, when given some consideration, are distinctly odd. Pauses in conversation are longer than usual; inconsequential items are studied with great intent; words are sometimes given strange meanings.
Earth	The ground at the individual's feet seems to ripple as he walks. If standing in the same place for a period of time, his feet appear to merge with the ground.
Fate	There is an air of Great Destiny about the individual, as though this person is marked out for something of great importance, not yet fulfilled.
Fertility	The individual blooms. Cheeks are rosy-red, lips full, the complexion glowing.
Fire	An occasional, faint, lick of flame ripples over the individual's skin.
Harmony	Arguments and disagreements around the individual become less intense or frantic. People feel the need to agree with what the individual says.
Heat	A faint heat-haze accompanies the individual. His skin is much warmer than usual to the touch, but there is no sign of a fever.
Illusion	The individual seems to carry an air of distrust about him. Something, though it is impossible to say precisely what, does not feel quite <i>right</i> .
Infinity	The individual carries himself with a bearing of quite remarkable grace and power. It is impossible to say what, or why, but the individual <i>seems</i> to be <i>special</i> .
Law	It is as if the individual has achieved some form of perfection. His manners are precise and everything said and done appears to be rational and deliberate. Movements are economical and conversations well structured, as though rehearsed.
Light	The individual glows imperceptibly. Shadows seem to shy away from him.
Luck	Everything seems to be going well and right for the individual. There is an air of fortune and prosperity about him.
Magic	There is a distinct feeling of otherworldly power about the individual, occasionally accompanied by the odd, fleeting spark of magical energy across the skin.
Man	The individual appears to be more manly (or womanly) than those around him. He epitomises the essence of his gender.
Mastery	The individual exudes an air of being in complete control of everything about him. There is never a sense of panic.
Metal	Any metal touched by the individual glows faintly. Blunt edges suddenly become a little sharper.
Moon	If the moon is visible, the individual seems to glow, as though radiating some of its light.
Motion	The individual's movements are fluid and more graceful than one would expect. Crowds seem to unconsciously part for the individual and he never stumbles or trips.

Plant	Plants of all types momentarily turn towards the individual. Withered specimens seem to recover slightly in the individual's presence.
Shadow	Shadows deepen and lengthen around the individual. His own features seem shaded, masking something deeper beneath the surface.
Spirit	The air flickers around the individual and very faint, ghostly whispers can be heard which soon fade into the background noise.
Stasis	The individual has an innate stillness. When standing, he stands perfectly still without the <i>slightest</i> movement.
Trade	The individual seems to have something everyone wants and needs; and even if it is not on display, there is a sense that the individual can get it.
Truth	An air of complete sincerity accompanies the individual. He appears to be utterly trustworthy.
Undead	The skin has an unhealthy pallor and there is a slight smell of the grave about the individual.
Water	Raindrops seem to miss the individual, and water flows off the skin without leaving wetness.

The intensity of these effects may be more profound depending on the character's skill with a particular rune, becoming less subtle in their manifestation – although still unnoticeable to the untrained eye if the Opposed Perception/Persistence test is unsuccessful.

## Divine Magic

The ability to cast Divine Magic rests on the relationship a character has with a deity. Regular worship, donations and observing cult practices keeps the relationship stable and healthy. Part of that relationship is the gift of a god's own abilities, in the form of a Divine Magic spell. The cost to the individual is a temporary sacrifice of POW which is restored when the spell has been used and expelled from the mind. In other words the Divine Magician takes on the powers (in an earthly shape) of his god, and part of his soul is, to put it crudely, mortgaged for a while.

Whereas Rune Magic is the interaction between the individual and the world, Divine Magic is the clear interaction between an individual and his god. The depth of this relationship can be measured in the worshipper's rank within the cult or religion, the amount of Divine Magic the worshipper possesses and the skill with which he wields it, as represented in the Lore (Specific Theology) skill. These three measurements, taken together, show the degree to which the character is known to the god and has a recognisable presence on the God Plane.

As noted in *The RuneQuest Companion*, Divine Magic is very powerful compared with Rune Magic and Sorcery. Spells are powered by the relationship with the god and, unless deliberately overpowered, require no Magic Point investment for their base effects. Its limitations come in the form of regaining used spells: once cast, a Divine spell is lost from the memory and can only be retrieved through prayer at an appropriate place of worship.

The way Divine magicians use their magic is therefore very different to the way Rune magicians use theirs. Whilst some spells may be held in memory perpetually, due to their overall utility, others need to be given considerable strategic thought depending on the kinds of situations the character believes he will face. Rune magicians can call upon any of the spells they know as many times as they wish, as long as they have the Magic Point reserves. Divine magicians do not have this luxury: if they venture out unequipped with a particular spell they find they later need, there is no chance of accessing it without finding somewhere to offer the correct prayers.

Thus, choosing the right types of Divine Magic in advance of an adventure is of paramount importance. It depends on, obviously, the spells known by the character, what spells are offered by the cult he belongs to, and the anticipated needs of the impending adventure. Whilst the decision on what spells to memorise should always rest with the character, Games Masters can assist the task by reminding players (if it isn't obvious) of the inherent limitations Divine Magic provides.

## Appealing for Divine Magic

Despite the fact that an adventurer might be caught in a situation where a Divine spell he knows is not available (he has used it perhaps, or not committed it to memory beforehand), Games Masters may wish to allow characters to make a direct appeal to their god for help without resorting to Divine Intervention, and thereby gain the use of a Divine spell without having to retreat to a friendly temple to pray for it.

Appealing for Magic should only be allowed in the gravest circumstances, and it comes at a heavy cost. Making an appeal is trading on the relationship the adventurer has with the god over and above the basic contract he already enjoys. This is not Divine Intervention in its strictest sense because it operates only in the following circumstances:

- ⌘ The character can only appeal – hurriedly pray – for the single use of a Divine spell he already knows but does not have available
- ⌘ Only one appeal per adventure or story is permitted
- ⌘ If the appeal is granted, the character must make a *permanent* sacrifice of POW. Each point of POW sacrificed grants the character a 5% chance that the god will heed the Appeal and grant the magic sought
- ⌘ The character adds his CHA to the chance of the appeal
- ⌘ If the Appeal fails, 1 point of POW is lost. If the Appeal fumbles, then *all* POW offered is lost
- ⌘ The Appeal prayer takes 1 Combat Round of uninterrupted concentration per point of POW sacrificed, to complete
- ⌘ There is no additional benefit for scoring a critical success when making an Appeal

*For example: Larissa, a priestess of Hama Dreth, has been captured by the Inquisitors of Var-Astalis, sworn enemies of the Hama Dreth cult. She has already used her Fear Divine spell (page 16 of the RuneQuest Companion) but knows that, imprisoned in the Var*

*Astalis dungeons, awaiting execution, she can use Fear to terrify her guards into setting her free. Composing herself in prayer to the shadows of Hama Dreth, she offers a sacrifice of 2 POW to the Lord of Shadows, giving her a 10% chance of appeal, and adds her CHA of 11, for an overall Appeal score of 21%. The result is a 19; Hama Dreth looks favourably on his servant and Larissa finds she now has the ability to cast Fear once more. Her POW Characteristic is immediately reduced from 16 to 14. Calling to the guards watching her cell, she readies the Fear spell...*

## SORCERY

Sorcerers invest their time in working out the inherent magical relationship between the mundane world and the magical world. To them, runes are unsophisticated tools that require little of the user, whilst gods and their divine ways are an unnecessary distraction from the pure power offered by being able to mould reality through the simple force of will.

Sorcerers know that if the nature of a thing is understood it can be manipulated. On its own, this knowledge is called Science. But the sorcerer also knows that the mystical energies used in creation have left a permanent residue of latent magic. Sorcery is therefore the exploitation of that latent magic coupled with an understanding of a thing and how it can be manipulated.

Sorcerers are not necessarily unreligious; some cults have active sorcery branches that provide enormous benefits. Instead, sorcerers do not rely on external tools to provide power: their philosophy is to research and develop it themselves. The mightiest sorcerers can wield powers that are on par with gods, and indeed, some sorcerers may have developed their own form of godhood as a result of their efforts.

## Summoning, Demonology and Elementalism

The practice of summoning and controlling creatures that exist beyond the limits of the mundane world is a sub-branch of sorcery; indeed, some sorcerers specialise in it to the exclusion of all else. The terms 'Demonology' and 'Elementalism' refers to the specific practice of summoning specific creatures. In the case of Elementalism, the creatures summoned are the

elemental spirits tied to the elemental runes discussed earlier. In the case of Demonology the creatures are usually powerful entities inhabiting parallel planes of existence that tend to (but may not always) take a malevolent and predatory view of the mundane world. Both practices require the knowledge of summoning, described in this section, although Demonology and Elementalism have certain, separate pre-requisites that link them to Divine Magic and Rune Magic respectively.

### The Summoning Skill

Any summoning, elemental or demon, is underpinned by the Summoning skill. This is an Advanced skill encapsulating the formulae and rituals needed to breach the barriers between the mundane and Other worlds allowing a creature of the desired type to enter. The Summoning skill is therefore both a method for creating a magical gateway and then bringing a creature through it.

### The Summoning Ritual

The Summoning skill is at the heart of a Summoning Ritual. The Ritual requires seclusion and an area commensurate with the kind of summoning being conducted.

For demons the Ritual needs:

- ⌚ A room large enough to accommodate the sorcerer and the summoned creature. A minimum requirement is 3 cubic metres.
- ⌚ Surfaces that can be inscribed with the runes, diagrams and other devices necessary to the summoning.
- ⌚ A brazier or other receptacle for burning aromatics.

The Summoning ritual for demons always requires some form of sacrifice. This may be an inanimate offering, such as a rare book or work of art, or a living creature. If the sacrifice requires an expenditure of POW then a living sacrifice is always necessary, or the sorcerer must make the POW offering himself.

Elemental summonings require:

- ⌚ An area, inside or outside, where the element in question can flow freely. For water elementals (undines), a static body of water is acceptable.

### New Advanced skill: Summoning (INT+POW)

This is several separate skills – one for each different type of creature being summoned (for example, Summon Earth Elemental and Summon Fire Elemental are separate skills. Demons are summoned according to their type, breed or affiliation to a particular god.). Using this skill, the sorcerer prepares a specific area with a combination of magical symbols, runes, and other devices that, when activated, breach the fabric of reality and create a gate into the particular realm the sorcerer wishes to reach. The skill requires meditation and incantation accompanied by the burning of incense and other aromatics to help adjust the sorcerer's mind to the enormity of literally bending and breaking the fabric of reality.

The time taken to use Summoning is dependent on the creature being summoned and it always involves a Magic Point cost. In the case of demons, it may also require a dedication of POW or some other sacrifice. Likewise the time taken to work the summoning depends on what is being summoned, but it is never less than 1 hour.

A successful summoning calls into existence the desired creature. A critical success calls it into existence at half the Magic Point cost. A fumble means the summoning fails and all the Magic Points necessary to fuel the attempt are lost.

■ A single surface, usually the ground, where inscriptions can be made.

The Summoning ritual for elementals always requires the presence of the rune governing that element. The sorcerer does not need to be experienced with that rune or have it integrated, but someone who *is* is essential. An elemental will not manifest without an appropriate Rune Touched being present.

Once all conditions have been fulfilled, the Summoning skill is used to call forth the creature. Summoning is an Opposed Test against the creature's Persistence skill. If the summoning succeeds then the appropriate Magic Point (and POW, if required) value is deducted and the creature appears, there for the sorcerer to command.

As noted earlier, a separate Summoning skill is required for each elemental and demon type. Elemental summonings are taught either by cults worshipping the specific element, or having a strong affiliation with it, or may be researched. The summoning rites for demons can also be researched or may be obtained through a specific cult. Demons attached to cults tend to be specific agents of a particular god, often acting as an agent of reprisal or some monster defeated and subjugated by the god during mythic times and now commanded to do the god's bidding. Other cults, particularly those associated with Chaos or evil practices, command whole legions of demons that more closely fit the traditional portrait of a demon. A selection of demons and the cults and gods they serve, is provided at the end of this chapter. No doubt more will appear in future *RuneQuest* sourcebooks and settings.

### Summoning Spells from the *RuneQuest* Spellbook

The *RuneQuest* Spell Book provides several Divine Magic Summoning spells for elementals. If you have access to this book, by all means feel free to use the elemental summoning spells described there – but bearing in mind that, as Divine spells, they have certain limitations over Sorcery spells and skills.



### Commanding Summoned Creatures

A summoned creature, be it demon or elemental, performs one, single, unambiguous command without question. Both demons and elementals take commands literally and carry them out to the letter; thus, commands need to be phrased carefully. Commanding a demon to 'Guard that box of gems' means the demon will do just that, including guarding the box against the sorcerer. Nor will a creature do something that is fundamentally against its nature. Earth elementals will never co-operate with Water elementals and Air elementals will never co-operate with Fire. Unless a demon is described as being a fighter or warrior, it cannot be expected (or even commanded) to willingly fight unless combat forms a core part of a task it is specifically interested in carrying out. Exceptions and exemptions must be included in the command or the sorcerer risks unwanted and unpleasant results.

A creature's services are retained for either one day or until the specified task is completed, whichever is the shorter period. If, at the end of this time, the sorcerer wants the creature to perform additional services, he must persuade the creature to do so using an Opposed Influence test against the creature's Persistence. He must also spend the same number of Magic Points as required for the initial summoning.



A successful or critical success in this negotiation retains the creature's services. A failure sees the creature simply depart for its home plane. If the negotiation fumbles, then Backlash occurs: creatures from the Other worlds, even elementals, do not like to be kept from their homes. Roll on the Summoning Backlash table below.

### Binding CREATURES

Whilst it is a risky business, some creatures can be bound into permanent service. This secures the creature to the mundane plane and places it under the summoner's bidding.

Binding is a protracted and dangerous task. Creatures of Otherworlds do not like to be bound as servants or slaves and, if they successfully resist, may punish the summoner for his insolence. When successful, a summoner commands the bound creature and can call upon its power until he decides to release it from service.

Binding an elemental or demon requires certain conditions.

- ⌘ A binding object. This can be anything capable of having a rune engraved into it; a ring, a sword blade, a staff, and so forth.
- ⌘ Runes. The binding object must be engraved with two runes: the Rune of Stasis and the Rune for the governing element, if the creature is an elemental, or the Rune of Chaos if the creature

is a demon. The Rune of Chaos is essential to warp the creature's true nature and bind it with that of the summoning object. The respective runes must be inscribed by a Rune Touched.

- ⌘ Creatures cannot be bound into other living things.
- ⌘ The binding *must* take place before any command is issued. Creatures cannot be bound once they have been commanded.
- ⌘ If the binding object is lost, so is the creature bound to it. Whoever finds an object with a bound creature can command the bound entity once, and it will do the commander's bidding, but in doing so it will be released from the binding.

During the binding process the summoner must decide if the creature resides in the binding object or maintains a physical presence beyond it. The decision is irreversible. All elementals automatically reside within the binding object. Calling forth the bound creature costs 1 Magic Point each time it is needed.

Binding is considered to be an extended project, as described on page 49 of the Skills chapter. The creature's POW divided by 3 represents the number of hours needed to complete the binding, and the Complexity of the project is equal to the creature's POW multiplied by 5. The sorcerer uses his Persistence in the Opposed roll to complete the binding.

### Summoning Backlash

1D100	Backlash Effect
01-40	The summoning has failed normally with no further effects.
41-60	The sorcerer is rendered unconscious for 1D8 hours.
61-80	The sorcerer is driven temporarily insane for 1D8 hours.
81-88	The sorcerer loses <i>all</i> Magic Points for 1D8 days.
89-90	The sorcerer is reduced to a drooling, gibbering idiot for 1D8 weeks.
91-92	The sorcerer gains a permanent insanity, such as paranoia or other condition.
93-94	The sorcerer loses 1D8 POW permanently.
95-96	The sorcerer loses 1D8 INT permanently.
97-98	The sorcerer loses 1D8 x 5% from his Persistence skill permanently.
99	The sorcerer's soul is ripped from their body and cast into the ether.
100	The sorcerer's soul is consumed by the entity being summoned to spend an eternity in purgatory.

### Example of a Summoning and Binding

Hargravan the Sorcerer serves Hama Dreth and wishes to summon one of the Shadow Talons, a particularly vicious Hama Dreth demon assassin that can assume the form of the shadow of its target. As there are several people Hargravan wants dead, he believes binding it will be the best all-round solution.

First Hargravan has a bracelet prepared with the Runes of Stasis and Chaos. It is a non-descript thing of plain bronze – the sort any person might wear as general decoration, save for the runes, which are inscribed on the inside of the band.

Next, Hargravan prepares for the summoning. He retires to the cellars of his workshop, fills a brazier with powerful incense, meditates for an hour, and then sets to work painting the walls and floor with the charms needed to breach the fabric of reality and access Hama Dreth's shadow plane. When ready, Hargravan strips naked and begins the Summoning chant. He needs to sacrifice 1 point of his own POW and does so by cutting a scar across the back of his wrist; it will be hidden by the bracelet.

A Shadow Talon costs 10 Magic Points to summon and has a Persistence of 70%. Hargravan's Summoning (Shadow Talon) is 58%. This is an Opposed Test. Hargravan's Summoning roll is 37 and the demon's Persistence roll is 35; with the higher successful roll, Hargravan is successful and the dreadful, shadowy, vulture-like form of the Talon materialises in the central pentacle Hargravan inscribed earlier. Hargravan is now 10 Magic Points poorer.

Now for the binding. The Shadow Talon is a fierce demon not to be trifled with, and Hargravan knows the risks but desires revenge badly enough to take it. He begins the binding. The demon's POW is rolled on 3D6 and is 17: the binding will therefore take 6 hours (17 divided by 3 and rounded up), and require 6 successful Opposed rolls against the binding Complexity of 85 (17 x 5). Hargravan's Persistence is 80%, so he is in with a chance.

The first three rolls are successful in Hargravan's favour but on the fourth he rolls 00, a Fumble. The Shadow Talon is released and it immediately steals Hargravan's shadow. Hargravan must also roll on the Summoning Backlash table. The roll is 89. Hargravan is left as a drooling imbecile for the next 3 weeks – plenty of time for the Games Master to decide what the consequences of losing one's shadow will be...

If any of the sorcerer's Opposed test rolls fail, the entire binding attempt is aborted and the creature returns to whence it came. If any of the binding rolls fails, roll on the Summoning Backlash table. In addition, the creature may exact retribution according to its nature. Usually elementals take little or no retribution, although the temperamental Fire elementals, the salamanders, might raze the sorcerer's premises for good measure. Demons are far more capricious and usually extract revenge in line with their natures. Here, the Games Master should use his imagination.

### Sample Creatures of the Otherworlds

The creatures described here are examples of demons that might be found in the service of any god, or who can be summoned if the right Summoning skill is researched from an appropriate grimoire or other text. Games Masters should draw some inspiration from these creatures and design their own to fit their particular campaign. There are countless examples of demons – some of them benign – to be found in real-world myths.

Elementals are already covered in detail in *RuneQuest Monsters*.

In addition to the expected statistics, each creature is given a Summoning Cost; this is the number of Magic Points required to summon it to the mundane world for either one day or the duration of the specific task, whichever is the shorter. Any sacrifice required is also noted.

## Storm Demon

Servants of the Storm God and those of his pantheon, Storm Demons are the immaterial harbingers of destructive weather. A whirling concentration of storm cloud, tornado, pummelling rain and contained lightning, Storm Demons manifest with an ear-shattering clap of thunder and the overwhelming urge to deliver the full fury of the Storm God's wrath upon the earth. These are primal creatures, oblivious to reason, uncaring of life, and revelling on wanton destruction. As they are non-corporeal they are immune to mundane weapons and can only be harmed by magical attacks and weapons that have been blessed with Earth Rune. They can communicate, but do so slowly and reluctantly, their voices being rolls of thunder and brittle rasps of lightning.

As they lack physical bodies, Hit Points are based on STR rather than CON. They also have only one Hit Location, like elementals. In combat Storm Demons use bolts of lightning to attack, which they can generate as many times as necessary, although it takes 6 Combat Actions to prepare each fresh bolt after the first. Metal armour offers no protection against a lightning bolt strike. The second method is to buffet the target with the force of its wind. Each buffet inflicts the demon's Damage Modifier as physical damage, but automatically inflicts Knockback, as per the *RuneQuest* rules, moving the target backwards a number of metres equal to the demon's STR characteristic.

Striking a Storm Demon with a physical weapon is risky. The attacker must make an Athletics (Brute Force) Opposed Test against the demon's Resilience. If the test is successful, the attacker manages to hold onto his weapon and, if magical, deliver damage. If the test fails, the weapon is wrenched free and hurled in a random direction for a number of metres equal to the demon's STR. If the test fumbles, then the attacker's

arm sustains the demon's Damage Modifier in damage as muscles and tendons are torn and twisted by the strength and power of the whirling winds.

### CHARACTERISTICS

STR	6D6	(21)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	6D6+6	(27)
INT	2D6	(8)
POW	3D6	(11)

### Storm Demon Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-20	Body	-/23

### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage
Lightning Bolt	50%	1D10+1D8
Wind Buffet	85%	1D8+Knockback

### Special Rules

*Summoning Cost:* 10

*Sacrifice:* A large bird or other creature of the air

*Combat Actions:* 2

*Strike Rank:* +10

*Movement:* 3m

*Traits:* Echolocation, Lifesense

*Skills:* Athletics 40%, Dodge 90%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 80%

*Typical Armour:* None, but immune to non-magical attacks.

## Warrior of Mithras

A hideous amalgam of undead bull and man, these hulking monstrosities are fearless and merciless warriors. Their stench is that of rotten flesh, and their black skin and broken, twisted horns are enough to terrify even the strongest souls. They are bipedal but the earth shakes with their cloven-hoofed footfall and if not commanded to attack a specific foe, they attack anyone they can find with weapons and horn-strikes.

They are intelligent but consumed with blood-lust, and hate being dragged from their home plane, which is an immense battlefield where they spend their days fighting amongst each other and those foes who have challenged Mithras and lost.



**Special Rules**

- Combat Actions:* 2
- Summoning Cost:* 10
- Sacrifice:* 1 Point of Summoner's POW
- Strike Rank:* +11
- Movement:* 4m
- Traits:* Lifesense, Disease Immunity, Poison Immunity, Trample
- Skills:* Athletics 70%, Perception 60%, Persistence 85%, Resilience 80%, Tracking 40%
- Typical Armour:* Horns (AP 5 Head only), Hide (AP 3, all other locations), no Skill Penalty

**The Indigo Stain**

Demonic servants of the Indigo Thief, the trickster god of the Indigo Hand, the Indigo Stain is a malevolent, semi-corporeal demon that delights in causing confusion and deception, warping true motivation into the cunning, twisted guile of the Indigo Thief. In liquid form they are immune to mundane weapons and can only be damaged by spells related to the Rune of Truth or weapons blessed with it.

It manifests as a pool of indigo iridescence 1 metre in diameter with a leering face appearing on its surface. It has the properties of a liquid and easily seeps under doors and through even the smallest cracks in its bid to carry out its commands. It acts by forcing itself into the body of its target through any available orifice, suffocating its victim, as described in the Suffocation section of the *RuneQuest* rules (but inflicting 3D6 in damage, rather than the standard 1D6 for liquid suffocation damage). When the victim is dead, it assumes control of his body, perfectly mimicking the dead person's personality and absorbing his knowledge. It then acts in a way that is diametrically opposed to the target's own motivations. Thus a passive person would become murderously violent and a violent one passive to the point of cowardice. It uses the statistics of the target for all skills save Persistence, and substitutes the victim's INT and POW with its own.

**CHARACTERISTICS**

- STR 6D6+12 (27)
- CON 3D6+12 (23)
- DEX 3D6 (11)
- SIZ 3D6+12 (23)
- INT 3D6 (11)
- POW 3D6 (11)

**Warrior of Mithras Hit Locations**

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	3/9
4-6	Left Leg	3/9
7-9	Abdomen	3/10
10-12	Chest	3/11
13-15	Right Arm	3/8
16-18	Left Arm	3/8
19-20	Head	5/9

**Weapons**

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Great Sword	110%	2D8+1D10 / 3
Head Butt	80%	1D6+1D10

**CHARACTERISTICS**

- STR 1D6 (4)
- CON 3D6 (11)
- DEX 6D6 (21) – liquid form only
- SIZ 1 metre
- INT 6D6 (21)
- POW 6D6+6 (27)

magic

### Indigo Stain Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-20	Body	-/11

#### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Suffocation	See above.	

#### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 4

*Summoning Cost:* 12

*Sacrifice:* Any animal, which must be drowned in blood

*Strike Rank:* +21

*Movement:* 6m

*Traits:* Lifesense

*Skills:* Perception 90%, Persistence 90%, Resilience 60%

*Typical Armour:* Immune to mundane physical attacks

### Shadow Talon of Hama Dreth

Shadowy demons of assassination, these monstrosities were created by Hama Dreth himself to take vengeance on his persecutors by merging the vultures hovering over his grave (where he was buried alive) with the skeletons and decaying bodies of other, less fortunate gods. The result was the Shadow Talons, a mixture of skeleton, zombie, vulture and the very fabric of death itself. The most powerful Talons can kill gods; the lesser versions – those described here – specialise in the murder of men.

A typical Talon is vulture-headed and shrouded in shadow, its skeletal body occasionally flickering into view, but they take other forms: a vulture-winged skeleton perhaps, or a partially decayed body with the legs and feet of a vulture. The stench of the grave accompanies them, and they feast on shadows. Talons cannot be harmed by mundane weapons although brilliant displays of light will keep them at bay. Spells associated with the Rune of Light, or weapons blessed with, are needed to harm their physical form.

A summoned Talon must be given a specific target: nothing less will do. They must be capable of reaching that target within a day at the absolute most, but once given a target they stop at nothing to complete their task. They use shadows, which they can manipulate, to mask their passing, and the shadow of the victim

is always the first thing stolen. What use the Talons gain from this is unknown, but they are obsessed with shadows and will not be denied them. If no victim is offered, they will happily take the shadow of the summoner or someone close by instead.

When they kill, they use daggers wrought from bone, tempered to a razor-sharp edge. These otherworldly daggers always ignore the first 2 points of any armour. Stealing a shadow is done by matching the Talon's Persistence against that of the victim in an Opposed Test. Once lost, a shadow can never be recovered, even if the victim survives the attack.

#### CHARACTERISTICS

STR	4D6	(14)
CON	4D6	(14)
DEX	6D6+6	(27)
SIZ	3D6+6	(17)
INT	4D6	(14)
POW	3D6	(11)

### Shadow Talon Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	1/6
4-6	Left Leg	1/6
7-9	Abdomen	1/7
10-12	Chest	1/8
13-15	Right Arm	1/5
16-18	Left Arm	1/5
19-20	Head	2/6

#### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Dagger	120%	1D6+1+1D2

#### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 4

*Summoning Cost:* 10

*Sacrifice:* 1 Point of Summoner's POW

*Strike Rank:* +19

*Movement:* 4m

*Traits:* Lifesense,

*Skills:* Athletics 90%, Perception 100%, Persistence 95%, Resilience 90%, Tracking 140%

*Typical Armour:* Wreathed in shadows and sickening stench. Head has 2 points of leathery skin.

## Moon Maiden's Daughter

The Moon Maiden has many daughters; they are alluring creatures, summoned on beams of moonlight, who can fulfil almost any desire.

The summoning ritual must take place at night, during a full moon with the moon visible and moonbeams accessible to the place where the Summoning ritual is conducted. The daughters always assume a form found physically attractive to the summoner and take on corporeal substance for the duration of their visit.

Moon daughters are spies, seducers, wish-granters and objects of desire. Their physical appearance is always attractive to whoever beholds them, and as this changes from one individual to another, trying to describe a moon daughter is never an easy or agreeable business. If being summoned to spy or seduce the daughter requires a specific target within one day's reach of the summoning site. They work with amazing speed and if they cannot gain the information needed (a very rare occurrence) they simply return to the Moon Maiden without any further contact with the summoner.

If summoned to grant a wish, there are additional conditions. First, the nature of the wish must be available within one day's travel of the summoner. Second, the sorcerer must be willing to pay for the wish. Moon daughters always extract their payment in Characteristic points: roll 1D8 to determine which Characteristic they want: 1 STR, 2 CON, 3 DEX, 4 SIZ, 5 INT, 6 POW, 7 CHA and 8 Games Master's choice, based on the nature of the wish. The selected Characteristic is then reduced by 2D6. If this results in the Characteristic falling to zero or below, then the summoner is allowed the remainder of the day to enjoy his wish and is then carried-off to the Moon Meadows to be the daughter's slave for eternity.

### CHARACTERISTICS

STR	4D6	(14)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	6D6	(21)
SIZ	2D6+6	(13)
INT	4D6	(14)
POW	6D6	(21)
CHA	6D6+6	(27)

## Moon Daughter Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
None		

### Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Summoning Cost: 15

Sacrifice: 1 Point of Summoner's POW

Strike Rank: +18

Movement: 4m

Traits: Lifesense

Skills: Athletics 90%, Influence 110%, Perception 140%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 70%, Seduction 140%

Typical Armour: None, but immune to non-magical weapons.

## The Gaitha

The demonic rat-consort of the Three-Headed Rat God, the Gaitha is both a demon of retribution and a lord of disease. His army is the multitude of rats that occupy every nook and cranny of the world and his arrival is always heralded by a tidal wave of creatures that seem to appear from nowhere.

The Gaitha takes the form a gigantic, furless rat with three tails. His eyes burn with hellfire and his skin is pock-marked and ashen. The enormous incisors are like fangs and a cloud of noxious disease hovers around the demon like a cloak.

The Gaitha is summoned only by those loyal to the Three-Headed Rat God and it is a capricious demon, frequently turning on its summoner. It is relatively mindless, caring only to spread disease and to feed, but it can be guided, although base instinct always overruns it.



CHARACTERISTICS

STR 20  
 CON 18  
 DEX 16  
 SIZ 26  
 INT 05  
 POW 19

**Gaitha Hit Locations**

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1	Tail 1	1/8
2	Tail 2	1/8
3	Tail 3	1/8
4-5	Right Rear Leg	3/8
6-7	Left Rear Leg	3/8
8-10	Abdomen	3/9
11-13	Chest	3/10
14-15	Right Leg	3/8
16-18	Left Leg	3/8
19-20	Head	3/8

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Bite	112%	2D8+1D10
Claw	95%	1D6+2+1D10

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Summoning Cost: 10

Sacrifice: Blood of 10 cats

Strike Rank: +12

Movement: 8m

Traits: Dark Sight, Disease, Earth Sense, Excellent Swimmer, Night Sight

Skills: Athletics 130%, Perception 99%, Persistence 75%, Resilience 80%

Typical Armour: 3 points of scabbed skin

Poison: The Gaitha's disease cloud carries the Plague of Gaitha. It is Airborne, has a delay of 1D6 hours, and a Potency of 81. It causes 1D3 hit points of damage to all locations in the form of intense muscle spasms and choking fits. CON is reduced permanently by 1D3 points.

**The Daemonlords**

*RuneQuest: Legendary Heroes* describes a series of powerful Overworld entities. If using these in your campaign, the summoning costs and requirements are summarised below:

**Ahriman, Lord of Shadows.** Summoning Cost: 15, Sacrifice 1 kilo of silver that must be melted down and poured into the centre of the summoning inscriptions

**Brasidious of the Eternal Battle** Summoning Cost: 18, Sacrifice 1 human or humanoid creature with a POW of at least 10

**Demosa, Queen of Suffering.** Summoning Cost: 15, Sacrifice three domestic cats or one, large, feral cat

**Golgothar, Hell's Executioner** Summoning Cost: 15, Sacrifice a convicted criminal

**Iss of Seven Pillars** Summoning Cost: 15, Sacrifice a Holy Book of an enemy god

**Solumai, Traitor King** Summoning Cost 15: Sacrifice a convicted traitor

**Xeticoto the Blood God** Summoning Cost 15: Sacrifice the blood from an entire human or humanoid body

# Alchemy

*'Whosoever thou art that presumest to dive into the fountain of our work and hopest to obtain by my ambitious enterprise the reward of Art, I tell thee by the Eternal Creator, for a truth of all truths, that if there be a metalick soul, a metalick spirit and a metalick body that there must be a metalick Mercury, a metalick sulphur and a metalick salt which can of necessity produce no other than a perfect metaline body. If you do not understand this that you ought to understand, you are not adepth for Philosophy or God concealeth it from thee.'*

— Basil Valentine, *Sixteenth Century Alchemist*

The traditional view of the alchemist is of the bearded, robed and capped scholar, surrounded by his apparatus, striving to turn base metals into gold. This image belies the truth of alchemy; for it is an ancient art practiced by the Chinese, Egyptians, and Sumerians more than a thousand years before the detailed writings and experiments of the likes of Basil Valentine, John Dee and even Sir Isaac Newton. The transformation of base materials into gold is a simplistic metaphor for an art that is a subtle alliance of chemistry, mysticism and spirituality and which seeks, no less, for the secret of eternal life. The chemical experiments of alchemical practitioners have little to do with attaining material wealth, though it is no doubt an attractive side-effect, and more to do with understanding how to attain spiritual purity and consequently metaphysical transformation through achieving the same with the use of the Elements and the Metals.

## Alchemy, Magic and Science

Alchemy occupies a curious place in relation to both magic and science. It blends both, but belongs to neither. In a magic-rich world, where gods regularly grant divine gifts, and magical power can be defined from runes, there are easier ways to achieve the purity and transformation sought by alchemists. In worlds where science dominates, alchemy's importance is diminished for the simple reason that mysticism and spirituality have little place in the hard, logical world of empirical science, although alchemy clearly laid the foundations for the scientific endeavour, particularly during the European Renaissance.

Alchemy offers something magic and science cannot. In the vase of magic, alchemy offers permanence. Magic is a temporary application of power, short-lived and reliant on inherently magical paradigms such as Runes and Gods. Alchemy seeks to attain similar powers through defining the essence of things and then manipulating that essence to create something new that transcends mundane capability. In the case of science alchemy offers a mystical and spiritual approach that is about understanding the nature of the soul and its relationship with the earth and cosmos to achieve a higher state of being. Curiously, it is not about attaining godhood; instead, alchemy is concerned with attaining human perfection, through purity of mind and spirit, and thereby transcending the ravages of disease and time to attain enlightenment.

## Alchemy in RuneQuest

Alchemy is a complex and vastly detailed subject and there simply is not space here to offer a detailed examination of it with the depth it deserves. Instead, *RuneQuest* alchemy seeks to abstract the most familiar core concepts and provide rules for using alchemy in *RuneQuest* games. It is a blend of the mystical and practical, drawing upon both types of skill possessed by *RuneQuest* characters to augment the specific Alchemy Advanced skill.



magic



### New Advanced skill - Alchemy (INT+POW)

Like almost all magical or mystical skills, Alchemy is based on INT and POW characteristics. It is the character's ability to study, perceive and understand the essential qualities and properties of the physical world and how they relate to the spiritual world. Alchemists study practical chemistry, metaphysics and philosophy.

The Alchemy skill is used whenever an alchemical experiment is being conducted to determine the degree of success and the experiment's result. It also measures the alchemist's own progress towards purity of body, mind and spirit. The value of the Alchemy skill indicates what results the alchemist is capable of achieving with his degree of knowledge, as outlined in the Philosopher's Stone, below. However it can also be used in tests requiring expertise with mystical, spiritual or philosophical concepts, since all alchemists are widely read in both practical and metaphysical disciplines.

As well as possessing the Alchemy skill, alchemist characters sometimes also have the Runecasting (Rune of Metal) magical skill, although this is by no means essential to practicing alchemy. The Runecasting (Rune of Metal) skill offers a bonus, described later in this section, to the Alchemy skill when possessed by a character.

Alchemists concern themselves with four core endeavours: Understanding (the physical and metaphysical worlds), Manipulation (of the same), Transmutation (of the physical into the metaphysical, and vice versa) and Purity. They do this through the study of the Elements and the Seven Metals. The Elemental Runes are described on page 71 of this chapter, and include the Rune of Metal. However, alchemists have determined that the Rune of Metal can be subdivided into seven lesser forms which relate to the Prime Metals, which are: Copper, Gold, Iron, Lead, Mercury, Silver and Tin. Gold is the purest

metal, symbolising physical and spiritual purity and perfection. By transmuting the six lesser metals into gold, the alchemist hopes to unlock the secret of achieving similar, personal purity and perfection.

The mechanism for this understanding, and the thing pursued by all *RuneQuest* alchemist characters, is the Philosopher's Stone.

### The Philosopher's Stone

Also known as the Essence, the Quintessence, the Magisterium and the Magnum Opus, the Philosopher's Stone is so-named not because it is a physical stone, but because it can resist the effects of fire in the same way a physical stone resists them. When created, the Philosopher's Stone takes the form of a fine, fragrant, sweet-tasting powder that has the brilliance of the most perfect glass and may be of any colour. The Philosopher's Stone is the agent used in affecting transmutation and attaining purity. The Philosopher's Stone has its own degree of purity, based on the alchemist's skill. It is an amalgamation of three components: mercury, 'salt' (not sodium chloride, but a compound from dissolving one of the base metals in strong acid and then distilling the residue) and sulphur. Mercury is the primal element that makes all things malleable and transmutable; sulphur provides flammability, or the catalyst for transformation; and salt binds the two together, bringing about the Philosopher's Stone.

### Making the Philosopher's Stone

Making the Philosopher's Stone requires one kilogram of each component to create one gram of Philosopher's Stone. The alchemist requires access to a laboratory and an array of alchemical equipment which must include a furnace, mortars for grinding, alembics and a variety of other paraphernalia detailed further on in this section. It takes one week to prepare one gram of the Stone. An Alchemy test is then made and, if successful, the Philosopher's Stone is crystallised. A critical success yields double the amount.

The Alchemy skill test can be augmented by the Runecasting expertise of the alchemist. The Alchemy skill is increased by the alchemist's critical value of the Runecasting (Rune of Metal) skill.

The Alchemist must also invest the Philosopher's Stone with Magic Points; this determines its purity, as described below. The Magic Point investment is

actually an unconscious act for the alchemist, occurring as part of the metaphysical application of the Alchemy skill. As many Magic Points can be invested as the Alchemist desires, depending on personal reserves. However, it requires one gram of Philosopher's Stone to store one magic point.

### PROPERTIES OF THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

Once crystallised, the Philosopher's Stone has properties based on its Purity. Its Purity is determined by the skill of the alchemist.

The Purity Property column determines what the Philosopher's Stone, when ingested, can achieve. All effects are stackable, meaning that, for example, a Purity 3 Philosopher's Stone would heal damage and cure both disease and poison effects as well as increase the imbiber's Resilience.

### Transmutation

The Philosopher's Stone is used as the agent to turn base metal into gold. The number of Magic Points invested in the Philosopher's Stone, multiplied by

its Purity, is the amount of grams of base metal the alchemist can turn into half that weight in gold. Thus an alchemist who has created 6 grams of Purity 3 Philosopher's Stone, invested with 6 Magic Points, can transmute 18 grams of copper or tin, say, into 9 grams of pure gold. The transmutation process takes one week per gram of base metal and requires a successful Alchemy test each week to accomplish. Failing a test means the process must be repeated from scratch. The alchemist needs to be in attendance for at least twelve hours of each day to ensure the transmutation is going according to plan, although apprentices and associates can take over to allow the alchemist to rest.

Naturally enough the alchemist must have access to raw components as well as a fully stocked and functioning laboratory. He cannot conduct any other alchemical processes or studies whilst transmuting base metal to gold; his full attention must be given to the task. If the Alchemy test is a critical success, then the amount of gold created at the end of the process is one kilo higher than expected. If the Alchemy roll is fumbled, then roll on the Transmutation Backlash table.

### Philosopher's Stone Purity

Alchemist's Alchemy Skill Value	Purity	Purity Property	Effect
01-50%	1	Healing	For every Magic Point invested in the creation of the Stone, 1 Hit Point of damage in each location is healed immediately. The Stone can be sprinkled on, or rubbed into, a wound to provide healing, or drunk in the form of a solution.
51-100%	2	Disease Resistance	For every 3 Magic Points invested the imbiber gains +5% to their Resilience skill <i>for the purposes of resisting disease</i> . This effect is permanent, and any existing disease is immediately cured.
101-150%	3	Poison Resistance	For every 3 Magic Points invested the imbiber gains +5% to their Resilience skill <i>for the purposes of resisting poison</i> . This effect is permanent, and any existing poison is immediately cured.
151-250%	4	Longevity	For every 3 Magic Points invested the imbiber gains an additional 5 years to their normal lifespan. They are not immortal and not immune to the physical damage, but the ageing process slows as their allotted span increases.
251%+	5	Immortality	For the Philosopher's Stone to grant immortality, the alchemist must be able to invest at least 250 Magic Points. Where reserves are found and how they are stored is a problem for the alchemist to solve. Once imbibed, the character is immortal with ageing arrested. The character is still susceptible to all forms of damage, but immune to the passage of time.

### Transmutation Backlash Table

1D20	Effect
01-05	Equipment overheats and experiment must be aborted.
06-10	Experiment fails with raw material rendered to a useless slag.
11-14	Equipment overheats and explodes. All alchemical apparatus is destroyed.
15-16	Equipment overheats and explodes. All alchemical apparatus is destroyed and alchemist plus any companions sustain 1D6 damage from flying glass and earthenware.
17-18	As above, but the explosion is of ferocious intensity. Alchemist plus any companions sustain 2D6 damage.
19	Conflagration. A Large Fire consumes the entire laboratory. All occupants suffer 3D6 damage. All equipment destroyed.
20	Explosion. The entire laboratory explodes with Inferno intensity. 5D6 damage to all occupants, plus a raging fire that damages all buildings within 60 metres of the laboratory's location.

### Potions and Balms

As well as pursuing the goal of perfecting the Philosopher's Stone, alchemists can concoct all manner of potions, salves and balms that can have beneficial effects, and things such as poisons, which have detrimental ones. Alchemists who have integrated runes can use their Rune Touched abilities to invest such concoctions with effects reflecting the nature of the rune.

The kinds of effect that can be worked into a potion, salve or other substance are summarised in the Rune Potion table below. In each case the procedure for the alchemist is the same.

- ⌌ The alchemist must succeed in an Alchemy test. The roll *must also be lower* than the Runecasting skill governing the particular Rune being used to create the magical effect.
- ⌌ The concoction must include something that is governed by, or of, the Rune involved. Making a potion involving the Rune of Air, for example, might include a feather or bird's egg.
- ⌌ The potion must be invested with at least 1 Magic Point. The number of Magic Points invested cannot exceed the critical score of the Runecasting skill. For example, an alchemist with Runecasting (Rune of Water) 45% could invest up to 4 Magic Points in the potion, but no more.
- ⌌ The alchemist must decide in advance what form the concoction will take. Potions are drunk, balms are ointments rubbed into the skin.

- ⌌ All alchemical concoctions of this nature have a duration, in minutes, equal to the alchemist's critical score in the Alchemy skill.
- ⌌ There are some Runes – Dragon, Dragonewt and Fate, for example – that cannot be integrated into a concoction. Only those listed in the table below can be worked by an alchemist.

### Poisons

Alchemists can manufacture poisons and their antidotes. The completed poison's Potency is up to, or equal to, the alchemist's Alchemy skill, and the range of poisons the alchemist can make is determined by his skill rating. It takes one week to make one dose of poison and the alchemist requires appropriate materials and apparatus to formulate it.

Naturally enough, an alchemist can also formulate the antidote to any poison he has created. All antidotes, with the exception of Class 1 poisons, can be ingested in advance to prevent against the poison's effects, or be taken afterwards to treat the symptoms (assuming there is enough time). Antidotes always arrest the damage; they do not cure it.

### The Alchemist's Laboratory

Laboratories come in all shapes and sizes and may be hidden or in open view, depending on the secrecy of the alchemist. Common to all laboratories, though, is the range and variety of equipment to be found there. This section describes the essential components of an alchemist's laboratory.

## Potions and Balm Effects

Rune	Potion or Balm Effect
Air	For every Magic Point invested, the Recipient's SIZ, for the purposes of weight, is reduced by 1. If SIZ is reduced to zero, the recipient floats from the ground, gaining height at half its movement rate in metres per Combat Action, before the effect wears off. Inanimate objects gain height at a rate of 1m per Combat Action.
Beast	The recipient is able to understand, and converse in, the tongue of any beasts encountered, with a Language skill of 10% for every Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Chaos	The recipient gains 1 Chaotic Feature (see <i>RuneQuest Monsters</i> ) for every Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Cold	Each Magic Point invested in the concoction negates 1 point of damage caused by cold or freezing conditions.
Communication & Trade	The recipient gains +5% in Influence and Oratory for every Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Darkness & Shadow	The recipient merges into the shadows. Stealth is increased by 5% for every Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Death	The concoction can be used to raise the dead, when applied to someone or something killed within a number of Combat Rounds equal to its CON. There is a 5% chance for every Magic Point invested in the concoction that the deceased will be brought back to life for the concoction's duration. Note: this does not heal damage, but it might buy enough time for furthering healing to be applied which will restore life permanently.
Disorder	The recipient becomes confused, losing 5% to all INT-based skills for every Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Earth	The recipient's STR increases by 1 point for every Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Fertility	The recipient's SIZ increases by 1 point for every Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Fire & Heat	Each Magic Point invested in the concoction negates 1 point of damage caused by fire or heat damage.
Harmony	The recipient's CHA increases by 1 point for every Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Illusion	Each Magic Point invested alters one of the recipient's facial aspects into something the recipient desires and visualises whilst taking or applying the concoction. The change is illusory; the recipient does not assume any other benefits beyond those of appearance.
Law	One characteristic is immediately raised to its species maximum for the duration of the concoction: roll 1D6: 1 STR, 2 CON, 3 DEX, 4SIZ, 5 INT, 6 CHA
Light	The recipient glows, emitting a light that illuminates a radius of 3m for every Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Luck	The recipient may re-roll a number of dice results equal to the Magic Points invested in the concoction and within its duration.
Magic	The recipient's Magic Points are boosted by those contained in the concoction for the concoction's duration.
Mastery	One skill for each Magic Point invested in the concoction is raised to 100% for the concoction's duration. The skills affected must be specified by the alchemist, and all skills are raised at the same time.
Metal	The bones of the Recipient strengthen, increasing the Hit Points of each location by 1Hit Point for every Magic point invested in the concoction. Damage taken during the concoction's effect is applied to the magically provided Hit Points first, before being applied to the recipient's normal hit points.
Motion	The recipient's DEX increases by 1 point for every Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Spirit	The recipient's POW increases by 1 point for every Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Stasis	For every Magic Point invested in the concoction, one movable thing (such as an arm, a leg, a cog, a wheel) becomes immovable by any force for the concoction's duration.
Truth	The recipient answers one question with absolute truth for each Magic Point invested in the concoction.
Water	The recipient is able to breathe underwater for the concoction's duration, and the Athletics skill, for the purposes of swimming is raised by 5% for each Magic Point invested in the concoction.

### Alchemy Poisons Table

Alchemy Skill	Poison Class	Poison Type
01–20	1 – Crude Poisons	Poisons causing limited damage and with a limited delay and duration. 1D2 points of damage to the struck location (if smeared) or chest (if drunk), with a delay and duration of 1D4 Combat Rounds each.
21–40	2 – Delayed Acting Poisons	The poison causes 1D2 damage with a Delay of 6D10 minutes and a Duration of 6D10 minutes.
41–60	3 – Paralysis or Unconsciousness	The victim is rendered immobile or unconscious for a 1D20 hours
61–80	4 – Illness-like symptoms	The poison has a delay of 1D6 days and then a duration of 1D10 days, during which time a Resilience test is required against the poison's Potency. The poison causes the loss of 1 Characteristic point to either STR, CON, DEX or INT, as stipulated by the alchemist when making the poison, for each failed Resilience test.
81–100+	5 – Instant or Rapid Death	The victim is allowed an Opposed Resilience test against the poison's Potency. If the test fails, the victim rolls 1D100

01–10: Instant Death  
 11–50: Death in 1D6 Combat Rounds  
 51–100: Death in 1D6 Minutes

#### Heat Source

This is essential, and it must be both contained and easy to regulate, allowing a rapid increase or decrease of heat to promote or arrest processes such as distillation. The simplest heat source is an open fire, but this is difficult to regulate. Therefore it is common for most alchemists to invest in an *athanor*. This is a clay furnace about one-and-a-half metres in height. It can be split into several sections and the base section contains a small fireplace for the heat source. Each section can be fitted with a grid or stand for various receptacles, and the even heat distribution around the *athanor* allows constant temperatures to be maintained.

More powerful furnaces, either of a beehived or ziggurat design, are used for smelting, rapid distillation, sublimation and digestion, according to the alchemist's needs. Large furnaces are charcoal, coal or wood-fired and give out huge amounts of heat and sometimes noxious gases. Thus they need to be in large, well ventilated areas and kept under strict watch whilst in operation.

#### Vessels

Alchemists use a vast array of different vessels, made from glass, clay and earthenware, for their experiments. Vessels come in all shapes and sizes. It is a tendency

for alchemists to buy the largest vessels they can, even though the materials they create might be very, very small. The bigger and more impressive the assembly of vessels, the more impressive and important the laboratory appears. Space prevents a full listing, but the key vessels to be found in a typical laboratory are:

#### Alembics

A glass or earthenware vessel in two parts. The lower part is a bulbous flask in which ingredients are placed for heating. The upper part is a domed vessel that can be separated from the lower. It has a stem leading from its base that points downwards at an angle allowing for condensing fluids to drain into a collecting vessel, such as a receiver.

#### Cucurbits

A wide-necked, bulbous jar used for boiling. Several cucurbits can be stacked together, with the upper jars having hollow bottoms to allow vapours to pass upwards and condense against the sides of the vessel.

#### Retorts

Another bulbous jar with a long, swan-like neck that curves over the side of the bowl in a gentle bend. Used for distillation and in conjunction with matrasses and recipients.

### Matrass

A matrass is a spherical bowl with a long, angled, stem-like neck that rises some way above the bowl. Used to collect distillate, vapours and condensing liquids in conjunction with retorts and other vessels.

### Pelican

Similar to an alembic but with two stems leading from the upper bowl allowing different distillates to be collected separately.

### Recipient

A large bulb with a short, wide-mouthed, angled stem, and used to collect distillates and vapours from retorts and other vessels.

### Sustaining the Life of an Alchemist

Alchemists require access to raw materials, most notably base metals and various other chemicals, such as sulphur, for the creation of the salts necessary to crystallise the Philosopher's Stone. This requires money and good connections, particularly with the trading guilds of a city. Many alchemists thus work under the patronage of someone wealthy enough to finance their activities but who may have motives less pure than those of the alchemist. This might be a wealthy noble or noble family, but equally it might be a cult or guild, and, in these circumstances, the needs of the patron tend to come before the higher motives of the alchemist himself.

Whilst it is in the power of a *RuneQuest* alchemist character to make gold to pay for his own activities, the quantities he can make are relatively small and the core resources considerable. It is therefore common for alchemists to spend their time labouring on smaller, less edifying projects for their patron, and in creating small doses of potions and balms for others.

Alchemists tend to be self-absorbed, studious individuals concerned less with making gold and magic potions and more with achieving knowledge and refining particular alchemical processes aimed at improving the quality of the elusive Philosopher's Stone. They are not adventuring types and are more likely to hire adventurers (as bodyguards, or agents to procure certain minerals) than to do the adventuring. There are also many alchemists who are charlatans – those who lack the true skill and dedication to perform

alchemy but claim they have the talent in order to secure prestige and personal wealth without having to work for it. True alchemists are unconcerned by the lure of wealth. Creating gold from base metals is merely an expression of their skill. The true goal is immortality and purity, and this requires decades of study and experimentation to achieve.

For all these reasons alchemists are recommended as non-Player Characters rather than as adventurers. More to the point, their alchemical abilities need to be carefully assessed in the overall scheme of a campaign. If alchemy is a successful enterprise then eternal life or longevity will be commonplace. Transmuting base metal into gold in vast quantities will devalue gold as a currency. Charlatans will find shortcuts that create false gold, thus debasing the reputation of true alchemists, and many hedge magicians and peddlers of cheap remedies will make the quality of true magical potions suspect.

### The Alchemist Profession

#### *Cultural Backgrounds*

Civilised

#### *Basic skill Bonuses*

Evaluate +5%, Influence +10%, Lore (Plant) +5%, Lore (World) +5%

#### *Advanced skills*

Alchemy, Pick one from Lore (Specific Theology), Lore (Metals), Runecasting

The alchemist character should also be given a patron who supplies funds and rents premises for the alchemist's laboratory. However, the patron should also be given a single, lofty goal the alchemist is retained to achieve. The patron expects (and funding depends on) results and one of the alchemist's preoccupations is to keep the patron's expectations managed in order to continue to practice.

# ADVENTURING

This chapter provides guidance on a range of activities and events characters will most likely engage in or face that Games Masters need to adjudicate.

## Alcohol

Imbibing alcohol is a recreational pursuit for many adventurers – not least because so many stories begin (and perhaps end) in bars, taverns and inns. Some species, such as trolls, actively measure a person’s worth in terms of how much alcohol he can consume without falling over.

### The Night Before...

All alcoholic drinks are, of course, ingested poisons, albeit weak ones. Though the end results of drinking too much of any alcoholic beverage may seem the same – falling over, sleeping in alleyways, a troll-sized hangover – there are in fact a number of important differences. Beyond the fact that various brews can be more or less potent, each type of alcohol can induce a specific *sort* of drunkenness. Certain drinks can even produce effects that, given the right situation, might be beneficial. What is more, the various types of mood and drunken outlook that these drinks produce can offer some fantastic opportunities for roleplaying. From the sophisticated intoxication of one soused on expensive wine to the brooding sullenness of the vodka drinker, there are different species of drunkards. Each has his own habits and unique behaviour.

### Intoxication Levels

Level of Intoxication	Effects
Sober	None
Tipsy	–5% penalty on all skill tests involving DEX
Merry	–10% penalty on all skill tests involving DEX Strike Rank suffers a –1 penalty.
Drunk	–20% penalty on all skill tests involving DEX. –10% penalty on all skill tests involving INT. Strike Rank suffers a –2 penalty. Queasiness.
Smashed	–30% penalty on all skill tests involving DEX or INT. –20% penalty on all other skill tests. Strike Rank suffers –4 penalty. Nausea.
Unconscious	Character passes out. He will reawaken naturally once his Intoxication level falls below Unconscious.

### INTOXICATION

As a character succumbs to the effects of alcohol, he acquires levels of Intoxication. These are similar to levels of Fatigue, inflicting penalties on a character’s co-ordination and mental capacity, and may eventually result in him passing out.

### Queasiness

Once a character has acquired three levels of intoxication, there is a chance he will start vomiting. The character must pass a Resilience test or be physically sick. Though this is unlikely to endear him to his companions or host, it does have the beneficial effect of immediately reducing his Intoxication level by one.

### Nausea

A character who has acquired four levels of Intoxication is quite likely to experience vomiting. He must pass a Resilience test with a –20% penalty or start being sick for 2D6 minutes. This immediately reduces his Intoxication level by one. Note that if a character’s Intoxication level rises and falls (as he begins to sober up and then continues to drink), he must check for the effects of Queasiness and Nausea each time he acquires three or four levels of Intoxication.

*For example, Ranyart Finn reaches three levels of Intoxication after his first few drinks. At this point, he must check the effects of Queasiness. Luckily for him, he passes his Resilience test. After an hour, his Intoxication level drops to two as his body begins to sober up. Finn, true to form, continues to drink,*

acquiring another level of Intoxication. As this takes him back to three levels, he must once again check the effects of Queasiness.

### What's your poison?

Despite the fact that most characters willingly seek out inns and taverns, alcohol is a toxin that the body tries very hard to eliminate. Accordingly, the rules for alcohol are based on those which deal with poison (*RuneQuest*, page 91). Each type of alcohol includes an entry that describes its specific potency and effects. Note that there is no 'Type' category for alcohol as assumedly it will always be ingested. In addition, there is no 'Duration'. A character's body is able to naturally remove one unit of alcohol each hour (see *Sobering Up*).

In addition, various types of drink contain different amounts of alcohol. This is represented by 'Measures'. For each Measure, a character must make an Opposed Resilience test versus the relevant Potency in order to ignore the effects of the drink. This means that a single dose of certain drinks can inflict more than one level of Intoxication.

*For example, Finn quaffs a flagon of mead – a drink containing two Measures with Potency 45. He makes two Opposed Resilience tests, succeeding with one but failing the other. He therefore acquires one level of Intoxication. Had he failed both tests, he would have acquired two levels.*

### Individual Resistance

A character's size and physical condition can have a significant impact on the amount of alcohol he can drink before he starts to feel the effects. Accordingly, characters with particularly high SIZ and/or CON are entitled to a number of re-rolls per drinking session to ignore the effects of drinking too much. A single

Intoxication Test may only be re-rolled once, however, and the result of the second roll must always be taken.

### Fearless Resolve – Drinking before Battle

It has long been a practice of those going into battle to seek a little liquid courage. A few stiff drinks can dull the nerves of those preparing to fight and help them to overcome their fears. A character who acquires two or more levels of Intoxication whilst preparing for a fight may attempt to dispel his fears in an alcoholic haze. The character should make a Persistence test with a +20% bonus for each level of Intoxication. If successful, the character enters a sort of battle trance which serves to shield him from the horrors he may be about to experience. The character's Fatigue level is considered two less than it actually is, he receives a +10% bonus on all Resilience tests to ignore the effects of an injury, and he inflicts an additional 1D2 damage in melee combat. In addition, such a character – whilst not immune to fear – is far less likely to break in the face of the enemy.

When a character leaves this alcoholic battle trance – which occurs when he no longer has two or more levels of Intoxication or when there is a lull in the fighting – he loses the benefits of Fearless Resolve and immediately acquires an extra level of Fatigue. Note that a character in a battle trance suffers all the normal penalties for drunkenness: just because he feels invincible does not mean he is actually any more skilful in combat.

### Alcohol Resistance

Combined SIZ and CON	Number of Re-rolls
25 or less	None
26 – 30	1
31 – 35	2
36 – 40	3
41 – 45	4
46 – 50	5
51+	Special – creatures this large and hardy may re-roll every Intoxication test.



## Drinks

Below is a list of beverages that characters can expect to find in most drinking establishments. Each entry assumes a character is imbibing the standard dosage for each particular drink – a flagon of ale, a pint of beer, a shot of whisky, and so forth. Games Masters and players alike can use the descriptions of the moods brought about by the consumption of each drink as a guide to roleplaying characters who are under the influence.

### PRICES

These are the standard prices that characters can expect to pay for alcoholic beverages. These prices can vary dramatically according to the quality of the premises where they are purchased, along with other factors such as availability of the product locally. For instance, a community located near a large dwarven settlement may have better access to Dwarven Water, forcing down the price.

Drink	Cost				
	Wilds	Rural/ Small Town	Large Town	Small City	Large City
Ale	1 CP*	1 CP*	1 CP	1 CP	2 CP
Beer	1 CP	1 CP	2 CP	2 CP	4 CP
Cider	1 CP	1 CP	2 CP	2 CP	4 CP
Mead	1 CP	1 CP	1 CP	2 CP	4 CP
Rum	-	1 CP	1 CP	2 CP	3 CP
Vodka	-	1 CP	1 CP	2 CP	3 CP
Whisky	-	1 CP	1 CP	2 CP	3 CP
Wine (poor)	-	1 CP*	1 CP	1 CP	2 CP
Wine (good)	-	-	5 SP	5 SP	5 SP

\* Servings tend to be double the quantity in these areas.

### Small Beer

**Delay:** 5D6 minutes

**Potency:** 20

**Full Effect:** 1 level of Intoxication

**Measures:** 1

A weak ale often drunk by adults and children where the quality of water is suspect.

### Ale

**Delay:** 5D6 minutes

**Potency:** 40

**Full Effect:** 1 level of Intoxication, Gift from the Gods

**Measures:** 1

An incredibly important drink in many cultures, ale is part of the staple diet of most non-wealthy people – it is safer than drinking water and is usually cheap to buy. As alcoholic drinks go, it tends to be quite weak, in no small part because of the regular watering down which occurs in many establishments.

### Gift from the Gods

Some cultures believe that ale has magical properties, others that it is a gift from the gods. For characters who grew up in such places, and believe this to be the case, one level of Intoxication – and only one level – bestows a +5% bonus on magical skill tests such as Runecasting and Sorcery.

### Beer

**Delay:** 4D6 minutes

**Potency:** 50

**Full Effect:** 1 level of Intoxication, Anger, Lascivious

**Measures:** 2

Perhaps the world's oldest alcoholic beverage, beer is produced using malted barley, hops, water and yeast.

### Anger

Characters who acquire three or more levels of Intoxication whilst drinking beer are likely to become short-tempered and irritable. They receive a –10% penalty for all CHA-based skill tests and are generally pricklier.

### Lascivious

All drunks suffer from questionable decision-making, but beer induces a particular type of lascivious behaviour. A character with three or more levels of Intoxication from beer regards all members of the preferred sex as having CHA 3 points higher than they actually do. Their behaviour is also generally more sexually aggressive.

### Cider

**Delay:** 3D8 minutes

**Potency:** 50

**Full Effect:** 1 level of Intoxication, Addled Brain

**Measures:** 2

### Addled Brain

Excessive consumption of cider rots the brain. Each time a character acquires four or more levels of Intoxication whilst drinking cider, he should roll a percentile die. If the result is lower than his current INT, he permanently loses one point of INT. A character may use a re-roll due to high SIZ and CON to try to avoid this effect.

### Mead

**Delay:** 5D6 minutes

**Potency:** 45

**Full Effect:** 1 level of Intoxication, Mellow

**Measures:** 2

A drink made with honey, water and yeast, mead is often popular where it is difficult to grow grapes. Mead comes in a vast array of forms and tastes, including metheglin (spiced mead) and melomel (mead containing fruit).

### Mellow

Characters who are Intoxicated on mead tend to become relaxed and easy-going rather than boisterous and loud.

### Rum

**Delay:** 2D8 minutes

**Potency:** 55

**Full Effect:** 1 level of Intoxication, Boisterous

**Measures:** 1

A popular drink with sea-faring types, rum is said to lift the spirits and fire the blood.

### Boisterous

Those Intoxicated on rum tend to become rather lively and animated. A character with one or more levels of Intoxication from drinking rum may ignore one level of Fatigue until such time as he becomes sober. He must then make a Resilience test or acquire an additional level of Fatigue.

Many a sea captain, wary of inciting disturbances within his crew, elects to water-down rum before it is served. Rum that has been diluted in this way is known as 'grog'. A dose of grog has potency 40, but otherwise has the same effects as rum.

### Vodka

**Delay:** 2D8 minutes

**Potency:** 55

**Full Effect:** 1 level of Intoxication, Warms the belly, Melancholy

**Measures:** 1

A hard drink, often chosen by those who wish to get drunk quickly, vodka is popular in cold climates.

### Warms the belly

A single shot of vodka, whether it induces Intoxication levels or not, is good for warming the blood. This enables a character to ward off the effects of extreme cold. A +10% bonus should be allowed for Resilience or Persistence tests to remain focused whilst in frigid conditions, to ward off frostbite, or for any similar sort of test.

### Melancholy

Characters who suffer Intoxication levels from vodka tend to become very downbeat, often moping over their drinks and lamenting the sad nature of the world.

### Whisky

**Delay:** 2D8 minutes

**Potency:** 55

**Full Effect:** 1 level of Intoxication, Gift of the Gab

**Measures:** 1

### Gift of the Gab

Characters with two or more levels of Intoxication from whisky seem to acquire a talent for tale-telling. These inebriated raconteurs receive a +10% bonus on Influence tests which involve anecdotes or the spinning of yarns.



(Wine (poor))

**Delay:** 5D6 minutes

**Potency:** 50

**Full Effect:** 1 level of Intoxication, Sore head

**Measures:** 1

Sore head

Excessive amounts of any kind of alcohol can result in some unpleasant after-effects, but the excessive tannin in cheap wine has a way of inflicting hangovers that make the sufferer wish he were dead.

When checking for the effects of a hangover, a character who has acquired levels of Intoxication from cheap wine must make an additional Resilience test to determine whether he drops down any levels of Fatigue.

(Wine (good))

**Delay:** 5D6 minutes

**Potency:** 50

**Full Effect:** 1 level of Intoxication, Sophisticated drunkenness

**Measures:** 1

Sophisticated Drunkenness

Acquiring one or two levels of Intoxication from expensive wine results in a particular kind of suave drunkenness. Rather than succumbing to the traditional boisterousness of inebriation, the character benefits from a more refined style of light-headedness. This change can be roleplayed out with flamboyant style – a taste for delicacies, appreciation of art and fine culture, and a hankering for more fine wine.

Characters seeking to pass themselves off as members of a higher station should find their efforts to do so aided by a few glasses of expensive wine. A +10% bonus on Influence tests may be used to represent a character's alcohol-assisted refinement.

However, characters that overdo it, and acquire three or more levels of Intoxication, lose this benefit and become caricatures of their formerly refined selves – too verbose, too courtly to be believable.

**Food**

Characters wishing to avoid some of the effects of alcohol may elect to eat a meal whilst they are drinking. Doing so entitles a character to ignore the first failed

Resilience test to determine whether he acquires any levels of Intoxication.

**Toilet breaks**

One hour after a character acquires his first level of Intoxication, he must make a Resilience test to see whether his bladder is still coping with the demands of a night out. If successful, he need not test again for an hour.

As soon as a character fails a test, he finds that he needs to use the toilet. He must now test every ten minutes to see whether or not he needs to go again. This persists until an hour after the character stops drinking alcohol.

**Sobering Up**

Each hour, as the alcohol in a character's system is cleaned out, his Intoxication level is reduced by one. However, it is quite likely that a character will continue to drink as his body is trying to purify his system – therefore, he will have to keep track of the rise and fall of his Intoxication level, as he downs drinks and his body does its best to keep him upright.

*For example, Hetlal downs a single flagon of ale at the start of a night at The Easy Lady. In doing so, he acquires one level of Intoxication. One hour after downing this drink, his body reduces his Intoxication level by one, potentially sobering him up. However, Hetlal presses on immediately with a pint of beer which increases his Intoxication level to three. If he stops now, it will take three hours before he completely sobers up.*

**Hangovers**

Once a character who has acquired levels of Intoxication sobers up, he may find that he is left with a hangover. In game terms, this is represented through Fatigue.

The character must make a number of Resilience tests equal to the highest Intoxication level he acquired. Each failed test results in the character dropping down one level of Fatigue. A character who drops down several levels of Fatigue has likely suffered alcohol poisoning and severe dehydration.

Fatigue acquired through heavy drinking is recovered in the same way as normal (*RuneQuest*, page 87).

## TROLL DRINKS

Trolls are notorious for their incredible alcoholic drinks. Here is a selection of some of the better-known ones. These drinks differ from the standard types of alcohol described above and their specific potency levels and effects are discussed in each drink's description.

### DRIVE CAREFUL WINE (Potency 30)

A sour-smelling, syrupy concoction made from a variety of plants with small lumps of insect detritus floating on the thick, brown, crusty head. The drink tastes fabulous to trolls but ghastly to humans; a Resilience roll is immediately necessary to avoid gagging. The Potency of Drive Careful Wine is only 30, but its effects stay in the body forever. Every mug of the stuff should be recorded by the character. After drinking Drive Careful Wine for the first time, violent stomach spasms ensue and sickness is inevitable; only calm and peaceful songs, along with a successful Healing test by a caring colleague bring any relief. Skill reduction due to drinking it is permanent, not temporary.

### Old Rotgut (Potency 45)

A purple, frothy ale made from berries, it is surprisingly palatable to humans but extremely strong by ale standards. Continuous consumption turns the teeth permanently pink. The first drink of Old Rotgut causes 1D6 points of damage to the abdomen immediately, unless a Resilience test is successfully made. Further measures have no such damaging effects.

### Powzie (Potency 80)

A garlic and cinnamon-scented fortified wine that is yellow and frothy. It is served in large glasses or goblets containing about 20 measures. It does not have the usual inebriating effects; instead, the drinker matches his Resilience against the powzie's potency in an Opposed test. Failure causes 1 point of damage to the drinker's head-hit location. Each swallow increases the drink's Potency by 1%, making it increasingly harder to resist the damage; it is not uncommon for Healers with copious amounts of healing magic to be on-hand during powzie drinking sessions.

### Skullbuster (Potency 70)

The yellow crust, flecked with pieces of chewy, unidentifiable red bits, conceals a thin, brown liquid that smells of stale tobacco and red capsicum. Elf skin is rumoured to be used in its preparation. It tastes reasonably good, and trolls enjoy it for the numbing effect it has on their weak eyesight and keen hearing, which is a pleasant sensory combination for them. Drinking skullbuster uses the standard alcohol rules, but keep note of how many mugs are drunk. Next day, the INT Characteristic is reduced by that number, in addition to the residual effects of the night before. A Persistence test can be made every hour, with each success restoring a point of INT. If the drinker sups enough skullbuster to reduce INT to zero or less, he lapses into a coma that only healing magic can alleviate.



*If a character falls asleep before he sobers up, it is only when he wakes that he should determine the effects of any hangover. Therefore, a character cannot get hideously drunk and expect to completely sleep off the effects.*

Note that tests for hangover-related Fatigue are only made when a character sobers up – if he elects to stay drunk, he may avoid the effects of a hangover for some time.

### Characters Who Pass Out

A character who falls unconscious due to excessive drinking may, upon waking, suffer any of the following effects that the Games Master deems appropriate: temporary blindness, memory loss, mysterious wounds, food cravings or blackouts. Basically, a character who gets this drunk is fair game for whatever mischief a Games Master cares to devise!

### Emergency Measures

Sometimes a character needs to sober up in a hurry. Certain concoctions, many of which contain questionable ingredients, or a sudden shock can help a character clear his head.

Inflicting damage on a character or exposing him to a sudden surprise will immediately reduce his Intoxication level by one. The sort of surprise required for this jolt of adrenaline would be the threat of immediate danger to himself or a loved one.

A ‘sobering-up’ potion can be rustled up by any character who passes an Easy (+40%) Alchemy or Healing test, and has access to a stocked kitchen. Such concoctions also reduce a character’s Intoxication level by one, but multiple concoctions have no further effects.

### Down Time

Down time is the period in between adventures when characters spend their hours relaxing, training, carousing, researching, or simply getting on with their mundane lives. It is deliberately not a period that requires a Games Master to invest with any great detail, but it can be interesting and fun to find out what characters have been up to in their down time and, perhaps, use some of their activities either as the basis for a scenario or to form part of one. Down time can represent a significant period of time between adventures, not merely a few days (or even weeks).

#### ACTIVITIES

The characters can get into countless activities during Down Time and they do not need to be specific about them unless they are associated with improving the character in some way, or might have a useful implication for further adventures.

If the Games Master (and players) want to know what happens to their adventurers during Down Time, and do not wish to fill in the blanks deliberately, here are some suggestions for common activities.

### Odd Jobs

The character takes on paid, part-time work using his skills as an adventurer. The work is generally non-hazardous and relatively poorly paid. Either choose an odd job or roll randomly. To see how much the character earns, either decide how many days are spent in the odd job, and multiply it by the Payment per Day figure, or roll 1D20 to randomly determine the number of days.

To see how successful the character was in the job, roll a second 1D20. If the die roll is a 20, this indicates the character was sacked from the job for some reason and pay was withheld (or worse). If a 1 is rolled, then the character performed a sterling service. Double the earnings from the odd job.

### Cost of Living

When not adventuring, characters have living expenses like everyone else; food, rent, taxes, socialising, and so forth. Of course, how much a character chooses to spend depends almost entirely on what they have available to spend. Living luxuriously to one character may seem like border-line poverty to another, depending on what characters are used to.

Use the table below as a general guide to living expenses. The terms used are relative to the amount of money the character has available: 'luxury' to someone with only a few silvers in their purse might be taking a bath once a week; to someone with several thousand, it might be taking a bath in ass's milk every day.

### Odd Job Table

1D20	Job	Payment per Day	Notes
1	Bar Keep	5 CP	Free lodging
2	Bard/Busker	1D8 CP	
3	Bodyguard	1D4 SP	Free lodging
4	Bouncer	1D2 SP	Free drink
5	Burglary*	1D100 SP	Chance of being caught. See below
6	Farmhand	3 CP	Free lodging
7	Gambler**	1D100 SP	Free set of dice or cards
8	Grave Digger	3 CP	Free shovel
9	Hunter	1D10 SP	Free food
10	Librarian/Research Assistant	2 SP	May conduct personal research whilst working
11	Local Politics	2D4 SP	
12	Manual Labourer	3 CP	
13	Militia Duty	2 SP	Free food and lodging
14	Odd-Jobber	1D10 CP	
15	Rat Catcher/Pest Control	2D4 CP	Free net
16	Rent Collector	2D4 CP	
17	Salesman	1D4 SP	
18	Tax Collector	1D6 SP	
19	Teacher	8 CP	Free chalk and slate
20	Temple Assistant	2 SP	Free lodging

*\*If a character attempts burglary as a Down Time odd job, a 20 on the D20 roll indicates the character has been caught red-handed. Apply a punishment, as found on page 101 of the Adventuring chapter.*

*\*\* A roll of 20 indicates the character has lost everything, including any money earned from adventuring, bar his clothes and one piece of equipment*

### Standard of Living Table

Standard of Living	Proportion of Personal Wealth spent
Subsistence	10%
Within Means	25%
Comfortable	50%
Luxurious	80%
Ostentatious	100%

The amounts spent on Cost of Living exclude any dues necessary to cults or guilds, and are exclusive of training costs. Neither are the costs of specific weapons, armour or other individual goods used in adventuring. As a period of Down Time begins, characters should declare what standard of living they intend to pursue after having decided on training and personal improvement activities, and pay any dues to cults or other patrons. These costs should be deducted from each character's personal wealth, and the remainder used to determine the standard of living enjoyed for the remainder of the Down Time.

### Practice, Research and Training

A major Down Time activity is self improvement, as represented by the Improvement mechanisms detailed on pages 94 onwards in the *RuneQuest* rules. As noted in that chapter, it generally takes 1 day for each 10% already known in a skill to improve it through practice or research.

Both endeavours assume access to the right resources necessary for improvement: practice facilities, libraries, and so forth. These resources are normally provided by cults, guilds or from within the family circle, and it is always worthwhile deciding with the players how they intend to pursue their character improvement options.

#### Training

Training is provided by mentors, as explained on page 96 of the *RuneQuest* rules, and this offers an improved Skill Increase roll of 1D6+1. As the rules stand, training is considered part of Practice and Research, not in addition to it. If Games Masters wish to allow adventurers to freely train in existing or new skills, and gain improvements *in addition* to the Improvement Rolls offered at the end of a story, here is some guidance on buying additional training which supersedes those of the main rules.

⚔ The character must actively seek a mentor or teacher, if he does not have any existing cult or guild affiliations. The availability of a teacher is never guaranteed – see Towns and Cities on page 109 for more guidance on the availability of particular professions in different kinds of settlement.

⚔ A mentor or trainer must have a score in the skill being taught of at least twice the character's current value.

⚔ Training takes place in blocks of one week. Any interruption to the study means no benefit is derived.

⚔ At the end of the week a skill test is made for both the teacher and the student. The results of the rolls for each are summarised below:

### Training Improvement Table

Training Roll Result	Training Improvement
Critical	+4%
Success	+2%
Failure	—
Fumble	-2%

The figure in the Training Improvement column is the amount the student's skill increases by at the end of the training period. A Fumble on either part means the instruction has been poorly communicated and/or misunderstood and has had a detrimental impact on the student's knowledge in the skill.

Thus, in the course of a week, a student can realise a maximum of +8%, or, in truly exceptional circumstances, a decrease by 4%.

Naturally, training costs money. Cults and guilds often provide training in certain skills practiced by the institution, and usually at some form of discount (sometimes even free). For more general training costs, the rates are as follows:

⚔ 10 SP per 1% of increase in Basic skills

⚔ 15 SP per 1% of increase in Advanced skills. Learning a new Advanced skill costs 500 SP to attain the skill's starting percentage.



Exceptional trainers – those over 100% in a skill – may command higher prices as a result of their reputation and expertise. They may even have specialised schools dedicated to the study of a single technique. In such cases feel free to adjust the general training costs to match the excellence of the school. Note that training costs usually cannot be bartered for.

## Law and Order

All societies maintain some form of law and order. The nature of these judicial structures varies from place to place and culture to culture, and in many cases may be based on age-old traditions and customs rather than any written legislation. Punishments for transgressing the laws of a place range from verbal admonishment, through fines and confiscations, public humiliation (being placed in the stocks or a guarded pit, and pelted with eggs, rotten fruit or worse), mutilation for crimes such as theft (cutting off a hand or fingers), through to capital punishment, either public or private.

The dispensation of justice is usually in the hands of the settlement's elders (the headman and his advisers, a clan council, the lord or noble in charge of the settlement), or a specially convened body such as a Court of Law, which is typically only found in large towns and cities where it is impractical to dispense justice in a more

- 100 SP per 1% of increase in Magic skills. Learning a new Magic skill, such as a new sorcery spell, costs 200 SP to attain the starting percentage.

### Crime and Punishment

	Barbarian, Nomad and Primitive	Civilised, Peasant and Town
Adultery	Public Humiliation, Exile	Public Humiliation (ducking stool, stocks), Fines
Theft (including Mugging)	Loss of a hand	Loss of a hand
Arson	Death	Death
Bribery	Exile, Loss of the Tongue	Fine, Public Humiliation, Imprisonment
Treason	Death	Death
Burglary	Loss of a Hand and Exile	Loss of a Hand and Public Humiliation
Highway Theft	Loss of a Hand and Exile	Imprisonment, Death
Rape	Castration, Death	Castration, Public Humiliation and Death
Murder	Death	Death
Manslaughter	Payment of wergild	Payment of wergild, Imprisonment
Fraud	Exile	Public Humiliation and Exile



intimate, ad-hoc manner. Imprisonment in a jail or dungeon is less common than one might expect since imprisonment generally costs money to maintain, and public funds can be put to better use elsewhere. Swift, summary justice is more common, with its severity acting as the chief deterrent, and has the benefits of being visible, fast and cheap.

Some sample crimes and their punishments, depending on the culture in which the crime was committed, are given in the Crime and Punishment table below. The precise nature of the punishment is dependent on circumstances and severity of the original crime, but let the punishments noted act as a general guide.

### Establishing Guilt - Trial

Where guilt is difficult to establish conclusively, or where innocence is vehemently protested, some form of trial to establish innocence or guilt is common across all cultures. This usually follows the following sequence:

#### TRIAL BY HONOUR

Someone of a good reputation or standing may well be considered to be innocent before being considered guilty. Those dispensing justice may order a task or quest to be performed which, if performed successfully, proves the person's honour and thus their innocence. Such tasks or quests may be something to benefit the community and may be either physically dangerous (stealing the egg of the Golden Griffin, for example), or almost impossible (Bring back the far end of a rainbow). Trials of Honour can provide excellent material of adventuring.

#### TRIAL BY FIRE

The accused is required to either walk across red-hot coals or to grasp and hold a piece of hot stone or metal for a period of time. Guilt or innocence is dependent on the amount of blistering or damage caused to the accused. Innocence is proved if the damage is non-existent or minimal; guilt is established if blistering and damage is severe. Innocence should protect against such damage.

#### TRIAL BY WATER

The accused is weighted down in some fashion and cast into a body of water. If the accused floats, he is innocent. If he sinks – guilty. As innocence is often viewed as a purity of spirit, that purity should lift the accused to the surface.

In the cases of Trial by Fire or Water, the accused should make first a Persistence test and consult the Trials table below. The outcome of the Persistence test is then influential on a following Resilience test, with either a bonus or penalty being applied.

#### TRIAL BY COMBAT

Usually reserved for warriors and nobles, trial by combat is nothing less than a fight to the death with either some creature reserved for the task, or a local champion. An innocent man can conquer any adversity by dint of his innocence; a guilty man will fall. Some form of handicap is not uncommon – fighting without weapons, or with an arm or leg shackled and bound – but this depends on the crime and standing of the accused.

### Trial Table

Outcome of Test	Persistence	Resilience
Critical	Remains silent and stoic throughout the trial, without even sweating or showing the remotest sign of panic. <i>+20 to Resilience test.</i>	No physical damage whatsoever, or the accused floats
Success	Manages to stifle any screams or minimise the amount of struggling. <i>+10 to Resilience test.</i>	Minimal damage. If Trial by Water, the accused sinks, but then bobs back to the surface
Failure	Cries out or struggles against the pain and discomfort of the trial. <i>-10 to Resilience test</i>	Blistering and burn damage; the accused sinks. Sure sign of guilt.
Fumble	Cannot endure the mental anguish of the trial and cries for mercy almost as soon as it has begun. <i>-20 to Resilience test</i>	Intense agony. The accused sinks immediately and cannot be easily hauled from the water. As guilty as hell.

# TOWNS AND CITIES

This chapter offers Games Masters ways of quickly creating and handling urban adventures: from determining the demographics of settlements through to the kinds of services adventurers can obtain. The urban environment is an excellent setting for all kinds of adventure: political intrigue, chases, investigation, shady dealings and criminal schemes to name but a few. With a small amount of preparation a town or city can become more than simply a name or a dot on a map: even the humblest hamlet can be ripe with adventuring possibilities.

## Settlement Descriptions

*RuneQuest* organises settlements into several distinct types. The Hearth is the smallest – little more than a large family – through to the Metropolis which can have hundreds of thousands of inhabitants. The following settlement descriptions note the general size in populace, whether or not it is likely to have a citadel or fortress offering a garrison for regular troops, religious amenities such as temples and shrines, and, of course, the hubs of adventuring: taverns and inns.

**Population:** the general size of the population.

**Citadel:** a citadel is a fortress protecting a town. It typically houses a garrison that offers the core of a settlement's defence, but equally the citadel protects the garrison from its own inhabitants. A citadel may or may not incorporate a castle, which is typically home to a ruling family. A citadel is fortified with limited access points. It is also common for it to be raised above the settlement both as a deterrent to would-be attackers, and to provide a vantage point for the garrison.

**Temples:** the number of temples the settlement has. Temples (or churches) have a permanent clergy and other supporting functionaries.

**Shrine:** shrines are small, sometimes temporary, sites of dedication to one or more gods. They can be simple affairs, such as a cairn, quite ornate structures venerating a particular event or miracle, or even an especially significant natural item such as an ancient

tree or a peaceful waterfall. Shrines are quite often unstaffed. At best, a shrine has only one or two priests or other functionaries who lead appropriate services and keep it in good order.

**Guilds/Schools:** the number of trade guilds and/or schools present in the settlement. Guild representation may be as simple as a single guild member, or be the headquarters for a wider guild infrastructure. Guilds tend to be found in towns and cities, with very little representation out in the countryside. Schools may be guild-run or independent. Where they are guild-operated, they tend to specialise in the knowledge and crafts of the guild, with perhaps a basic grounding in literacy and numeracy. Independent schools are often simple affairs, run by a single local teacher responsible for schooling children of all ages (and even some adults) in the area. Seats of academia, such as universities and colleges, are found only in larger cities and are beyond the economic means of most people. Some offer scholarships to especially bright or talented students but places are keenly sought.

**Tavern/Inn:** the focal point for social life, taverns and inns come in all shapes, sizes and levels of refinement. A blacksmith's shop serving home-brewed ale is still considered a tavern even though that is not its primary business. Taverns sell drink and perhaps some food. Inns offer accommodation and sometimes stabling services. The best inns offer bathing facilities and sometimes even smithying services too, depending on size and location. Taverns and inns are usually the first place in a settlement adventurers gravitate towards for these reasons.

## The Hearth

**Cultures: Barbarian, Peasant, Primitive, Nomad**

The Hearth is the simplest settlement and characteristic of Barbarian, Primitive and Peasant cultures where the strength of the extended family dominates. It is usually a large or extended family with a single small residence or a very small group of residences that may be fixed or nomadic. The Hearth tends to be subsistence in nature: its members produce enough food for their own needs and barely any surplus. This may or may not include any

tribute that has to be paid to a landowner or baron. Quite often a Hearth will be wracked by poverty although many consider themselves wealthy enough, caring little for anything but the bounty of the land.

Population: Up to 10 people – extended family  
 Citadel/Fortress: None  
 Temples: None  
 Shrine: None  
 Guilds/Schools: None  
 Tavern/Inn: None

## The Camp

**Cultures: Barbarian, Nomad**

The camp is a semi-permanent settlement, usually of tents or other movable structures, including caravans such as those found amongst Romany cultures. Most camps are found within easy reach of, if not beside, a source of water such as a river or stream, and a source of fuel, usually wood. In environments where such commodities are scarce, such as in deserts, camps gather at known locales where these resources can be found, such as the desert oasis.

The camp usually abides by strict codes of etiquette that are designed to preserve cleanliness and respect. Removing footwear is a common protocol, for example. However, given that camps may be formed of many disparate families, strict codes of hospitality are enforced to reduce the likelihood of arguments and violence. In this way all present benefit from the resources without having to give way to age-old grudges or disputes.

Resolving disputes is a common reason for large camps comprised of many hearths. In the presence of others, arguments can be settled and justice agreed upon. Moreover, camps are very good sources of news, and communities from across a wide area come together and share their experiences.

Population: 50 – 500 people  
 Citadel/Fortress: None  
 Temples: 1D4  
 Shrine: 1D3  
 Guilds/Schools: None  
 Tavern/Inn: None, but hospitality offered at most hearths

## The Hamlet

**Cultures: Barbarian, Civilised, Peasant, Townsman**

The Hamlet is a small village typically with no church or temple of its own and usually under the political jurisdiction of another village or town. Facilities are scarce and there is great reliance on the governing settlement for anything but the most basic commodities. Community bonds tend to be strong, and focused around a few well-established families.

Population: 55 – 100 people (5D10+50)  
 Citadel/Fortress: None  
 Temples: None  
 Shrine: 1D3–1  
 Guilds/Schools: None  
 Tavern/Inn: 50% chance of a tavern

## The Village

**Cultures: Barbarian, Civilised, Peasant, Townsman**

As one would expect, a village is a self-contained community consisting of self-contained families and with the resources to offer a range of facilities. Villages may either be governed by a landowner or a town, or be self-governing, depending on the political structure of the region. A council of elders or other such representatives preside over domestic affairs.

Villages can offer schooling of a rudimentary form: usually a single teacher or tutor who runs the timetable according to the working demands of the villagers. A shop or store offers locally produced commodities but little else. A tavern or inn offers basic refreshment and accommodation for wayfarers, as well as being a communal focal point.

Population: 100 – 350 people  
 Citadel/Fortress: None  
 Temples: 1D2–1  
 Shrine: 1D3–1  
 Guilds/Schools: None: 20% chance of a single teacher or guild representatives  
 Tavern/Inn: 1D3–1



## The Town

### Cultures: Civilised, Townsman

Towns are centres of trade and habitation with populations in the hundreds. A wide range of facilities is offered although usually with a local theme. Whilst villages and hamlets may not have any governance of their own, towns always do. This varies from place to place; it might be a single ruler, such as a baron or duke, or it might be a council, elected or otherwise. The ruling body defines the by-laws (laws specific to the town), local taxes, and enforces certain codes of conduct – such as curfews, and the bearing of arms in public. A local guard or militia, consisting, perhaps of a few professionals supplemented by volunteers, provide a rudimentary enforcement service, but vigilance is dictated by the quality of the force. Volunteers may be enthusiastic, but lack experience; conscripts lack motivation. Such things can be easily exploited with the right words and bribes of an appropriate amount or type.

Population: 350 – 1000  
Citadel/Fortress: 1D2–1  
Temples: 1D4  
Shrine: 1D4  
Guilds/Schools: 1D4  
Tavern/Inn: 1D6

## Cities

### Cultures: Civilised

Cities are major hubs of commerce and habitation. Protection is offered by a wall, palisade or earthwork and a citadel (and in larger cities, several) is always present, housing one or more garrisons responsible for the city's defence against invaders and internal troublemakers.

Markets, shops, taverns and inns all proliferate in cities, whatever their size, and most adventurers' needs can be accommodated for a price. An armed militia enforces law and order (although not always fairly), and guilds can be expected to regulate trade and prices (again, not always fairly).

Cities always maintain some form of local government, with a titled noble or similar dignitary serving a regional power. It is common for cities to be divided into wards for easier administration, especially in large cities and metropolises, and ward governments may run with their own agendas and enforce particular by-laws depending on local circumstances.

Living conditions in cities are far from splendid. They are crowded, cramped, dirty, and frequently dangerous. The rich and poor might occupy different districts but it is not uncommon for them to live cheek-by-jowl, which makes the division between wealth and status all the more acute. Vermin, from mice and rats through to feral dogs and cats (and perhaps more tenacious creatures) are an ever-present nuisance, carrying disease that infects food and water. Indeed clean water is always a problem in the city. It might be built on a natural spring or next to a sweet river, but human waste quickly pollutes especially where sewers are little better than open drains. A general disregard for hygiene and the presence of vermin means that disease is a common threat and plagues a very real worry. In such cramped, intimate conditions, contagion spreads rapidly and with frightening ease.

It is easy to find anonymity in a city, but it is equally easy to find casual cruelty and predatory behaviour in ways that are unheard of in smaller settlements. Laws tend to be designed to serve and protect the wealthy, not the poor and anonymous. They are less about ensuring fairness and more about keeping people in their place. For instance the punishment for theft or despoiling property is often more harsh than for crimes involving physical violence. Murder is always the most heinous crime, but those enforcing the law are more likely to investigate the killing of a wealthy merchant or guild fellow than they are the killing of an itinerant, peasant or humble artisan.

### Small City

Population: 500 – 3000  
 Citadel/Fortress: 1  
 Temples: 2D4-1  
 Shrine: 2D4  
 Guilds/Schools: 1D8  
 Tavern/Inn: 2D6

### Medium City

Population: 2000 – 8000  
 Citadel/Fortress: 1  
 Temples: 2D4+1  
 Shrine: 2D4+2  
 Guilds/Schools: 2D6  
 Tavern/Inn: 2D6+4

### Large City/City State

Population: 6000 – 24000  
 Citadel/Fortress: 1D3  
 Temples: 2D6+1  
 Shrine: 2D6+4  
 Guilds/Schools: 2D6+2  
 Tavern/Inn: 4D6

### Metropolis

Population: 25,000+  
 Citadel/Fortress: 2D3  
 Temples: 3D6  
 Shrine: 3D6+1  
 Guilds/Schools: 3D6+4  
 Tavern/Inn: 3D10+4

## Services and Tradesmen

A key reason to visit a place is to get access to goods and services. Clearly the availability of services will vary from place to place and with the size of the settlement. Local legislative and religious practices and beliefs will also dictate what is *openly* available, what is restricted, and what is illegal. And, obviously, restricted and illegal goods and services will be more expensive to obtain – not just because of the risk of falling foul of the Powers That Be; suppliers are canny and know that restriction fuels demand, creating a sellers' market. The prices charged by the black market will typically be 50% to 100% higher than in settlements where similar goods and services are legal or unrestricted; however it is not uncommon for prices to reach 200%, 300% or even as high as 500%, depending on the circumstances.

The chart below details a range of professional services typically found in urban areas, along with the primary skills a typical provider has, and their expected aptitude. Naturally there will be providers who are more, or less, skilled, and their prices are likely to reflect their expertise and reputation. The table also lists the settlement types where these tradespeople are most likely to be found. If a particular settlement is not mentioned, that does not mean a representative of that trade cannot be found there; it is simply less likely, and the Games Master should make the decision as to whether or not a particular trade is available, based on the size of the settlement and the nature of the trade. The Cost per Day column gives *typical* daily costs for employing or retaining a provider; adjust these prices to suit the market, the provider's expertise and the availability/legality of what they are selling.

**Services**

<b>Profession</b>	<b>Primary Skill &amp; Aptitude</b>	<b>Where?</b>	<b>Cost per Day/Use (wage)</b>
Accountant	Lore (Appraisal) 60%	Town, City	1 SP
Acolyte	Lore (Religion) 70%	Camp, Village, Town, City	5 CP
Advisor	Influence 65%	Camp, Town, City	1 SP
Alchemist	Alchemy 75%	Town, City	5 SP
Animal Trainer	Lore (Animal) 60%	Camp, Hamlet, Village, Town, City	1 SP
Apothecary	First Aid 45%	Village, Town, City	6 CP
Armourer	Craft (Armourer) 65%	Camp, Town, City	2 SP
Barber	Craft (Grooming) 70%	Village, Town, City	3 CP
Barkeep	Craft (Libations) 65%	Hamlet, Village, Town, City	4 CP
Blacksmith	Craft (Blacksmith) 70%	Hamlet, Village, Town, City	1 SP
Bowman	Bow or Crossbow 50%	Village, Town, City	8 CP
Bowyer	Craft (Bowyer) 60%	Camp, Town, City	5 CP
Brewer	Craft (Brewer) 70%	Village, Town, City	3 CP
Burglar	Stealth 60%	Everywhere...	100 SP
Butcher	Craft (Butcher) 70%	Camp, Village, Town, City	2 CP
Butler/Page	Craft (Husbandry) 60%	Town, City	5 CP
Carpenter	Craft (Carpenter) 65%	Camp, Village, Town, City	2 CP
Cartographer	Craft (Cartography) 70%	Town, City	3 SP
Cavalryman	Spear or 2H Flail 60%	City, Citadel	1 SP
Chandler	Craft (Candle making) 75%	Village, Town, City	2 CP
Chef	Craft (Cooking) 70%	Town, City	4 SP
Clerk	Influence 50%	Town, City	3 CP
Cobbler	Craft (Cobbler) 65%	Village, Town, City	4 CP
Coinsmith	Craft (Minting) 70%	City	7 CP
Cook	Craft (Cooking) 50%	Camp, Town, City	4 CP
Cooper	Craft (Barrel-making) 65%	Village, Town, City	3 CP
Courier	Riding 40%	Camp, Town, City	1 SP
Courtier	Influence 70%	City	50 SP
Delegate	Influence 60%	City	60 SP
Doctor	First Aid 75%	Village, Town, City	10 SP
Driver	Driving 60%	Camp, Hamlet, Village, Town, City	4 CP
Dyer	Craft (Dyeing) 70%	Village, Town, City	2 CP
Engineer	Engineering 65%	City	1 SP
Entertainer	Acrobatics, Dance, Play Instrument or Sing 65%	Everywhere	1 SP
Farmer (agricultural)	Craft (Farming) 50%	Hearth, Hamlet, Village, Town	1 CP
Farmer (livestock)	Lore (Animal – varies) 50%	Hearth, Hamlet, Village, Town	1 CP
Fisherman	Craft (Fishing) 65%	Hamlet, Village, Town	5 CP
Fletcher	Craft (Fletcher) 65%	Camp, Town, City	4 CP
Furrier	Tracking 70%	Hamlet, Village, Town, City	7 CP
Gemcutter	Craft (Gemcutting) 70%	City	2 SP

Profession	Primary Skill & Aptitude	Where?	Cost per Day/Use (wage)
Guard	1H Sword or 1H Axe 50%	Camp, Village, Town, City	5 CP
Guide	Lore (World – varies) 60%	Hamlet, Village, Town, City	6 CP
Healer	Healing 50%	Camp, Village, Town, City	8 SP
Herald	Lore (Heraldry) 75%	Camp, Town, City	2 SP
Hunter	Survival 65%	Hearth, Hamlet, Village, Town	1 SP
Interpreter	Language 60%	Camp, Town, City	1 SP
Jester	Influence 75%	Town, City	2 SP
Jeweller	Craft (Jeweller) 70%	Town, City	1 SP
Labourer	Athletics 65%	Hamlet, Village, Town, City	1 CP
Leatherworker	Craft (Leatherworking) 65%	Camp, Village, Town, City	3 CP
Locksmith	Mechanisms 60%	Town, City	3 SP
Maid	Craft (Cleaning) 50%	Hamlet, Village, Town, City	4 CP
Man at Arms	Spear or 1H Sword 55%	Town, City	1 SP
Metalsmith	Craft (Metalsmith) 65%	Camp, Town, City	8 CP
Midwife	Craft (Midwifery) 40%	Camp, Hamlet, Village, Town, City	3 CP
Miller	Craft (Milling) 70%	Hamlet, Village, Town, City	3 CP
Navigator	Lore (World – varies) 60%	Camp, Town, City	7 CP
Nurse	First Aid 40%	Village, Town, City	2 SP
Painter, artiste	Craft (Painting) 65%	Village, Town, City	10 SP
Painter, limner	Craft (Painting) 40%	Village, Town, City	2 CP
Papermaker	Craft (Papermaking) 60%	Town, City	1 SP
Pikeman	Spear or Polearm 50%	Town, City, Citadel	1 SP
Porter	Athletics 40%	Village, Town, City	3 CP
Potter	Craft (Pottery) 65%	Camp, Hamlet, Village, Town, City	5 CP
Priest/Priestess	Lore (Religion) 80%	Camp, Hamlet, Village, Town, City	10 SP
Prostitute	Craft (Carnal Arts) 65%	Camp, Town, City	25 SP
Sage/Soothsayer	Lore (World – varies) 75%	Everywhere	10 SP
Sailor	Boating 65%	Village, Town, City	2 CP
Scribe	Craft (Calligraphy) 70%	Camp, Village, Town, City	2 SP
Sculptor	Craft (Sculpting) 65%	City	6 CP
Seamstress	Craft (Sewing) 50%	Camp, Village, Town, City	2 CP
Shepherd	Lore (Goat/Sheep) 75%	Hearth, Hamlet, Village	1 CP
Shipwright	Craft (Shipbuilding) 50%	Town, City	3 CP
Surgeon	Healing 75%	Town, City	25 SP
Tailor	Craft (Tailoring) 65%	Village, Town, City	6 CP
Tanner	Craft (Tanning) 70%	Camp, Village, Town, City	6 CP
Undertaker	Craft (Mortuary Arts) 55%	Village, Town, City	4 CP
Vintner	Craft (Winemaking) 70%	Town, City	2 SP
Weaponsmith	Craft (Weaponsmith) 65%	Camp, Town, City	1 SP
Yeoman	Bow 65%	Town, City	2 SP

# Guilds and Societies

Guilds, in the western European tradition, are affiliations or societies of master craftsmen and other artisans, including professions such as scribes, who protect trade and professional interests within a town or city. They are responsible for setting prices and creating standards of practice and 'marks' of quality. The modern trademark, quality mark and patent systems all originated with the guild system. Many had religious affiliations, leading to strong relationships between church and craft that have persisted to this day: freemasonry being perhaps the best known example.

*RuneQuest* treats guilds in this western European model, with a few abstractions for fantasy settings. Like cults, guilds offer training, certain privileges for loyal and diligent members, and, in some cases, access to Rune and Divine magic.

In towns and cities where guilds operate, it is almost impossible to practice a particular profession without joining the guild. Those who do not, quickly find custom deserting them, accompanied by whispering campaigns decrying the poor quality of the goods or services being offered, deliberate acts of sabotage and, in extreme cases, outright violence. Joining a guild means paying a regular contribution to the guild's coffers and, in return, gaining support in disputes, access to certain materials in the guild's control, access to 'fair' markets (although that is fair in the eyes of the guild, not necessarily the member), and, at the highest levels, access to guild secrets. Guild members are bound by oath to uphold guild traditions, maintain guild secrets, abide by guild pricing tariffs, and to offer goods and services meeting guild standards of excellence. This seems like good news and, for the most part it is, but guilds are, first and foremost, concerned with their own interests. Standards of quality and set prices are what the guild believes to be reasonable, not the consumer, and because independent trade is stifled, customers are frequently forced to accept guild terms and conditions that may not (and often definitely are not) be in their favour.

Guild animosity is not just confined to harassing independent traders and service providers. Many guilds consist of internal factions, each with its own agenda, each seeking some form of power or prestige. Intra-guild rivalry is common and feuds are an expected part of guild business. Inter-guild animosity is also commonplace; quite often there is no clear division between crafts, trades or services. The Guild of Master Carpenters, for example, might believe it should have access to contracts and markets that are the province of the Guild of Shipwrights. After all, both deal in the working of wood, so, why should one guild be favoured with lucrative ship-repair deals over the other? When one guild controls a commodity needed by another rival guild, trouble can quickly brew.

Guilds therefore offer countless opportunities for rewarding, city-based adventure. The climate is rife with warring, internal factions, inter-guild feuds, defending the lone, independent trader seeking an honest crust against the mighty and restrictive guild system; or intimidating unscrupulous sole traders who, through shoddy goods, are damaging the guild's pristine reputation. Guilds *always* have work for adventurers. Involving outsiders to assist with their clandestine affairs has many attractions, the most obvious being that the guild can deny all knowledge of adventurers' actions, if they so wish; indeed, that might be the first clause in the contract or terms of engagement.

## Guild Structures

Like cults, guilds in *RuneQuest* follow a particular format.

### Name

The guild's official name. It always describes the professions its represents or the areas controlled: The Guild of Master Bakers, for example, or Lumber Merchants' Affiliation. The name needs to be immediately recognisable and indicative of purpose to make it clear to all and sundry its purpose and position. Guilds favoured by royalty or other rulers may carry an additional honorific titles such as 'The Royal Guild of...' or 'The Most Excellent Guild of ...', but such grandiosity is no guarantee of quality, honour or even-handedness.



**Device**

The guild's emblem, crest or coat of arms. A sword makers' guild might have a pair of crossed swords against a plain shield; the bakers' guild a golden loaf of bread, and so forth. Again, the guild's device is immediately recognisable, distinctive, and displayed prominently by its members on their signage and storefronts.

**Professions**

The professions falling within the guild's membership. Usually only one or two professions are recognised by a guild, although occasionally a guild might cover a wider range. The Exalted Guild of Merchant Venturers might represent perhaps a dozen separate merchant services, united by the fact that all members operate caravans or other means of taking wares into the wider world. Any affiliations with other guilds will be mentioned here.

**Membership Levels**

These are ranks within the guild dealing with its internal regulation and operation; they are quite separate from professional ranks or distinctions.

**Professional Titles**

The titles individual members are entitled to use in their day to day business. Ranks usually reflect aptitude and reputation, but not always. Professional titles can sometimes be bought. Much depends on how rigorous and honest the internal workings of the guild are. To join a guild at its lowest professional rank, one must have a skill at a certain level. This is noted here.

**Fees**

How much, in silver pieces per year, it costs to join the guild. Different professional ranks pay different amounts.

**General Duties**

The common services offered to its members. These differ from guild to guild, but it can be taken as read that all guilds do the following:

- ▣ Regulate all trade within their area of operation, permitting only guild members to openly operate



- ▣ Arbitrate in disputes between guild members (although not always effectively or without bias)
- ▣ Promote and defend the profession
- ▣ Set and control prices

**Skills Taught**

What skills the guild can offer training in. The price charged for training is regulated, naturally, and is different from one guild to another, but use the prices described on page 102 of the Adventuring chapter of this book as a guide.

**Magic**

What magic the guild has access to, and whether or not it teaches it to its members. If so, only certain Membership Levels are entitled to learn it.

### Guild Secrets

Every guild has a secret. This might be relatively mundane, such as knowing the best place to quarry a particular stone. Alternatively – and infinitely more fun – secrets might be truly esoteric, sensitive, or dangerous – politically, religiously or magically.

### Sample Guilds

**The Most Excellent Guild of Fine Craftsmen**  
A small, select guild priding itself on fine furniture and metalwork. It supplies exclusively to the duke of the region and the city's most prestigious houses and families. Members are drawn from several other guilds and invited to join only if they have supplied someone of importance. Membership is therefore extremely prestigious and, because this guild poaches members from other guilds, it is viewed with considerable animosity by other crafting guilds in the city. Because it supplies exclusively to the rulers and people of moneyed importance, both the prices of its goods, and the fees charged for membership, are exorbitantly high. Members of the Most Excellent Guild of Fine Craftsmen take their membership very seriously and treat it as the highest professional accolade possible. Many are snobbish and dismissive of the lesser guilds that were probably responsible for nurturing their initial talents in the first place.

### Device

A throne on which is laid a pair of crossed chisels.

### Professions

All craft professions, but particularly those of furniture and cabinet making, polishing, silverware, and jewellery. The Most Excellent Guild of Fine Craftsmen has no cordial affiliations with any other guilds representing the same trades, but it does have scores of enemies, especially amongst the Guild of Master Craftsmen, which finds its own ranks being depleted as the Most Excellent Guild steals its best connected tradesmen.

### Membership Levels

Membership is by invitation only. Ad-hoc applications to join are always rejected. Membership levels range from Class Three (lowest) up to Class One (highest). Class Three members are given, or recommended

for, the lowliest or least prestigious jobs, whilst Class One takes the cream of the commissions. Class One members also elect the guild's ruling council, the Chisellers, who are responsible for co-ordinating and distributing all contracts and arranging the collection of membership dues. Chisellers are initiated into the secrets of the guild. The guild's foremost member is known as the Grand High Chiseller, an elected position held by a Chiseller for two years.

### Professional Titles

Class Three: Fine Master Craftsman – must have one Craft skill at 70% or higher

Class Two: Most Excellent Master Craftsman - must have one Craft skill at 90% or higher

Class One: Supreme Master Craftsman - must have one Craft skill at 70% or higher and a second at 100% or higher

### Fees

Class Three: 500 SP per year

Class Two: 800 SP per year

Class One: 1,100 SP per year

### General Duties

Provide the finest quality of goods and services to the finest people in the city. Keep prices in line with market forces, but benefit members through the continued promotion of excellence and quality. Continually watch for, and recommend for membership, emerging talent throughout the city. Ensure that the goods of its members are not just the finest in the city, but throughout the land.

### Skills Taught

Crafts (Cabinet Making, Carpentry, Jewellery, Masonry, Polishing,, Silverware); Influence; Oratory

### Magic

The Most Excellent Guild holds the Mastery Rune. All members of Class Two and higher are able to integrate the Mastery Rune after completing their first contract at that Class. It knows most spells associated with the Mastery Rune.

### Guild Secrets

The Most Excellent Guild of Fine Craftsmen knows that the duke of the city has several illegitimate children by various street whores and maintains a secret harem

of high class courtesans that he visits regularly. The guild has been blackmailing for the duke for over a year now, although it has done so carefully and without undue threat. The duke has tolerated the relationship for a while, but the current Grand High Chiseller is desperate to win an especially lucrative contract for the renovation of a palace outside the city and has been applying too much pressure.

The duke is now growing tired of the relationship and is secretly plotting to have the Grand High Chiseller silenced (and the whole Chiseller Council, if needs be), by any means necessary.

#### Fortuitous Association of the Ratcatching Trade

This guild, which revels in its acronym, represents all rat catchers in the city. Looked down upon by most other guilds, its members nevertheless provide a vital service and know all there is to know about vermin of all types. It serves both the humble and the lofty alike but has never been able to shake-off its somewhat squalid reputation, perhaps because of the acronym of which it is so proud. It is loosely affiliated with the secretive thieves' guild, trading secrets and knowledge in return for a small percentage.

#### Device

A rat consuming its own tail

#### Professions

Exclusively rat catchers. Anyone expressing an interest in vermin control, or demonstrating a particular aptitude for it, may apply to join. Membership is secured through swearing the FART oath, paying the first year's membership fee in advance, and succeeding in the famed Rat Run Test.

#### Membership Levels

Most members are Ratters; the rank and file rat catchers who serve the general populace of the city. The second level is Master of Rats and allows access to contracts in the home of merchants and more prosperous clients. The third level is Rat Lord, which allows access to vermin control for the noble houses of the city. Rat Lords manage the guild, set prices, and so forth. The fourth and final level is King Rat, occupied by only one individual. See the guild's secrets, below.

Members must supply their own cats and traps.

#### Professional Titles

Ratter – 10 SP per year. Either Lore (Animal), or Craft (Rat Catching) at 40% or higher

Master of Rats - 15 SP per year. Either Lore (Animal), or Craft (Rat Catching) at 60% or higher

Rat Lord - 20 SP per year. Either Lore (Animal), or Craft (Rat Catching) at 80% or higher

King Rat – see guild secrets below

#### Fees

Ratter – 10 SP per year.

Master of Rats - 15 SP per year.

Rat Lord - 20 SP per year.

King Rat – see guild secrets below

#### General Duties

Control vermin throughout the city. Maintain prices and ensure all members receive at least one commission per month.

#### Skills Taught

Craft (Rat Catching), Lore (Animal), Lore (Sewers), Mechanisms, Streetwise

#### Magic

The King Rat has access to the powers of the Three-Headed Rat God, see below.

#### Guild Secrets

The guild knows the sewers and streets of the city intimately. It knows how to access important buildings using the sewer network and teaches this knowledge to Masters of Rats when they have been in service for one year. Rat Lords also co-ordinate the exchange of information with the thieves' guild.

The guild's biggest, and best kept, secret, is the Cult of the Three-Headed Rat. In the deepest recesses of the sewers this demonic creature schemes and births the millions of rats infesting the city. It cannot control its children and relies on the guild to do it for her. In return the guild, via the exalted King Rat, who is the high priest of the Cult of the Three-Headed Rat, is granted use of Rat Magic, a small selection of sorcery spells and enchanted items the Rat God has collected over the years. The King Rat is also taught the Summon

Gaitha ritual, which allows him to summon forth the feared rat demon Gaitha, father of all vermin (see Magic, page 85).

## The League of Merchant Venturers

The League of Merchant Venturers was established as a way of gathering information on potential markets and customers but rapidly grew into a powerful, trading society that regulates the entire mercantile system in the region. It ignores the humble shopkeeper and stall holder, but any merchant that wishes to import or export goods on a large scale has to be a member of the guild. Those who are not quickly find themselves ostracised and their markets shrivelling. As one might expect, the guild is rich. Very rich. It offers banking and brokering services to its members and anyone else who requires a safe place and a return of interest on their money. It owns a lot of opulent property in the city and carries the clout to influence nobles and government officials with comparative ease. Joining the guild is neither easy nor cheap; it demands a 15% cut of all profits transacted by its members, but its connections mean markets are guaranteed and it has the internal resources and contacts to operate a fleet of ships, its own bodyguards (almost a small army in number), and a sizable bureaucracy. If it wished, it could seize control of the city; as yet, it has no such wish.

### Device

A set of golden weighing scales

### Professions

All travelling and large-scale merchants

### Membership Levels

The League runs on four separate levels. Most are at the Venturer level, and thus have little involvement in the overall business of the League and simply go about their regular affairs. Above that is The Office, which is the League's extensive bureaucratic arm. All trade permits, cargo manifests, import/export registers and tax levies are administrated by The Office. Local taxes are paid on behalf of guild members leaving them with only needing to pay their League membership percentage. Above The Office is The Council, which manages the wide-scale political and legal affairs of the guild. It is here that markets are analysed, contracts brokered, political pressure applied and prices, terms

and conditions agreed. It courts dukes, high-ranking political and religious figures, and is courted by them. The council is small in number but shrewd and ruthless in its dealings.

### Professional Titles

Venturer – rank and file membership

Officer - varying classes, 1 through to 5, denoting seniority and responsibility

Councillor – the highest rank. Councillors are found, never elected.

### Fees

15% of all profits. Accounts must be audited by The Office. Anyone found withholding or falsifying profits is subject to a Council Tribunal and then expulsion from the guild.

### General Duties

Regulate all large-scale trade in the city. Set tariffs, monitor and regulate prices, facilitate the payment of all legal dues and obligations. In return members may apply for permits, licences, bodyguards and so forth either free of charge or at extremely attractive rates. All trade expeditions must be registered with The Office.

### Skills Taught

Commerce, Courtesy, Influence, Languages, Oratory

### Magic

The League of Merchant Venturers holds the Runes of Trade, Truth and Illusion. Favoured members who perform special tasks for the Council are allowed to integrate these Runes and learn spells associated with them. The Office makes all such arrangements.

### Guild Secrets

The League has many. The biggest is that it is almost bankrupt and functions on a complex series of debts that, if ever called-in, would see the collapse of trade throughout the region. Only the highest members of The Office know this, and, of course, The Council. The second secret is that the League operates its own guild of assassins and spies and has been behind (suspected, but never proved) a series of killings over the years that have led to sympathetic politicians and religious leaders being placed in key positions of power.



### The Honourable Guild of Steel

This is the guild of armourers and weaponsmiths. The guild maintains strong links with those who mine and produce the best metals, providing quality raw materials for their members. The mark of the Guild of Steel ensures quality and excellence. It also ensures a relatively fair price. Its members are expert craftsmen who care more for their work than for pure profit.

Craftsmen who are not guild members are tolerated, but find access to good materials difficult; as a consequence, their prices tend to reflect the quality of the goods they make.

#### Device

Three swords crossed, surmounted by an open helmet against a kite shield

#### Professions

All armourers and weaponsmiths. Blacksmiths may also join if they sometimes make or repair weapons.

#### Membership Levels

The Guild of Steel has a very loose structure. All members are equal and each year a vote is taken on who should serve on the guild's ruling council. The council has always been fair with its members, and so it is common for the same people to be nominated and elected each year. The council sets the usual trade tariffs and negotiates with metal producers on behalf of its members.

#### Professional Titles

Master Smith  
Councillor

#### Fees

150 SP per year

#### General Duties

Continue to support the craft of armour and weapon making. Find the best sources of raw materials at the best prices. Ensure quality and excellence for customers.

#### Skills Taught

Crafts (Armourer, Weaponsmith, Blacksmith), Mechanisms

#### Magic

The guild knows the Rune of Metal but only one or two councillors have it integrated. They will, if necessary, offer a small amount of magic to guild members, depending on the reason.

#### Guild Secrets

A few years ago, the guild developed a way of making armour and weapons that was fast and produced lighter, stronger products. However the methods used were flawed and the items turned out to be of very poor quality. The council spent a great deal of money and time in covering up this fact to protect its reputation. Blame was shifted to a few, unscrupulous smiths who went out of business, and the new process was dropped with a return to traditional methods. However, some of those who were blamed for the poor products seek revenge for having lost their livelihoods.

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# RuneQuest

## Games Master's Handbook

The *RuneQuest Games Master's Guide* is packed full of rules and information that will aid the smooth running of any *RuneQuest* campaign.

Inside there are rules for skills, their effects, and the consequences of fumbles and critical successes are detailed. Magic and combat are both similarly treated, with new rules presented and advice on how to handle these vital elements of play. Rules for summoning and alchemy are introduced in the magic chapter, along with some additional effects of rune integration.

Much more is crammed inside, with subjects as diverse as training, alcohol, law and order, guilds and settlements all discussed, providing the Games Master with an invaluable aid in running campaigns.



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