

The logo features the words "ADVENTURE MASTER" in a white box at the top, with "MYTHS" in large, bold, black letters below it. The text is centered within a grey, arrow-shaped frame with a horizontal line through the middle.

# ADVENTURE MASTER MYTHS

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Bestiary graphics – What bestiary graphics?

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# Contents

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### 1 Introduction to Myths

*Myths* is an FRPG – a Fantasy Role Playing Game. For those of you unfamiliar with roleplaying, you may want to skip ahead to the section entitled “What is Roleplaying?” to fill you in on what you’ve been missing. Otherwise, or if you’re feeling brave, just let your eyes drift down the page in the normal manner.

It is very difficult to classify any single RPG into nice neat little categories like it is possible to do with some other games. Just so you know what you’re getting yourself into though, here is a brief guide to *Myths*.

First of all, *Myths* is a generic fantasy system. It is not based in any particular world or restricted to any style of play, though obviously it assumes a fantasy setting of some kind. It has been used to play low fantasy thief campaigns within cities, high fantasy high magic mage campaigns, dungeon crawls and quests for gods to decide the fate of the world. *Myths* can support all of these playing styles without problems.

*Myths* is reasonably realistic. It doesn’t use pages of charts and tables and complicated mathematical formulae to achieve this end though. I like to think of *Myths* as being rules *extensive*, but not rules *intensive*. It isn’t a simple system where game mechanics are cut down to the barest minimum like in some games, but the rules generally adhere to common sense and ‘realistic’ physics wherever possible, so it is easy to just ignore the rules when no-one can remember them (or be bothered to use them), use a common sense result, and still get a good approximation to what *Myths* would have come up with anyway.

*Myths* is a skill-based system. It has no classes and no levels to restrict what characters can do and learn. All creatures use the same rules for defining them, from player characters to the largest dragons. Character generation is varied with lots of options, from choice of backgrounds to gifts and curses which grant some characters special inborn advantages over others.

By now you should have a general idea of what you are getting into. One final thing, and that is that *Myths* is modular. It has been organised into a coherent system which is compatible with itself – the same basic mechanics are used throughout. This means it is possible to rip out something you don’t like and put something else in its place. As with all systems, if you don’t like something, change it. What is written here isn’t the final word. As all roleplayers know, every group have their own house rules tailored to make things work how they want them to. This system is no different.

#### 1.1 Adventure Master

A little note just to mention *Adventure Master*. Not another game system, but the core rules upon which *Myths* is based. As mentioned previously, *Myths* is a generic fantasy system. *AM* is a generic everything system – well, little more than a skeleton system really. Some time in the future, there may be another system which draws on the core rules of *AM* to make say, a science fiction game system. Such would use a different set of rules, but they would be similar to and compatible with *Myths*. Well, that’s the idea anyway.

#### 1.2 What is Roleplaying?

Ask a dozen different people that question and you are bound to get a dozen different answers. Roleplaying is half acting, half let’s pretend, half team work, half puzzle solving and half storytelling. Which makes about two and a half games rolled into one! Now for a slightly more explanatory description.

Role playing is an advanced (I use the term loosely) form of “let’s pretend”. Each player controls a character in a make believe world – in this case a fantasy world most probably based on a medieval culture where magic works and elfin hosts really do ride through the faerie woods on the Wild Hunt of mythology.

Unlike a children’s game of let’s pretend though, there are written rules which define the way in which character’s can act. This rules are a simple parody of real life. Each character is represented by general attributes – her strength, agility and intelligence for instance, each given a numeric value. These, together with the skills and experience the character is given, define what that character can do and can’t do. The player controls his character, playing out her actions in this imaginary world.

This last bit is the crucial point of role playing. It is not a board game, where player’s move pieces across a physical board. Neither do the players dress up and act out their characters actions physically. The game is one of imagination. Consider it like reading a novel, but where each player has control of one of the characters and can therefore control the flow of the story.

With any novel though, there is always a novelist. Someone who must set the scene and describe to the players

#### Examples and Suggestions

Throughout these rules you will see shaded boxes such as these. They contain items of interest best left out of the main text, mainly rules clarifications but also suggestions for modifying the rules to fit your style of play.

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## Chapter 1 : Introduction to Myths

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what the results of their character's actions are. This person is the Game Master (or GM for short). It is the GM who writes the plot for the story, and who gives the final say on what characters the players can have. The GM plays the parts of the other characters in the story – the ones not controlled by the players (having more than about five or six players can get a bit hectic, and any more than about ten chaotic). In this sense, he is often seen to be working against the players – after all, he plays their foes. He also plays the common men and women they character's meet though, as well as their friends and allies. The GM should be impartial. Likewise, the player's are not working against each other like in most other games, but work together as a group, sharing some common goal (though a little inter-player rivalry never goes amiss, as long as it doesn't develop into a bloodbath). The ultimate goal of any role playing game is the same as for any other game – to have fun.

### 1.3 This Book

*Myths* is designed to be a modular system, with the ability to slot bits and pieces in wherever desired. For this reason, what you are currently reading is not *Myths* in its entirety, but rather the core rules – the barest minimum needed to run a game. It describes everything from the basic system, through character generation to combat.

Further books will describe other areas of *Myths*. Some obvious things have been missed out of these rules, particularly magic, descriptions of creatures, and a campaign setting.

### Myths Magic

This very important supplement to the main rules includes all that is needed to be known about magic, and its effects in the game. A brief overview could have been given here, but since there is easily enough information to fill its own rule book, it is given one. *Myths Magic* does not replace any of the rules given herein though – it merely adds to them to allow for the use of magic.

### Bestiary

Another important supplement, for it lists all the common creatures, together with their attributes, skills and general descriptions. Also included are plenty of rules and guidelines for running animals, with special abilities, some ideas for animal player characters and much more.

### Dark Lore

*Dark Lore* is somewhat related to *Myths Magic* in that it describes the supernatural. This supplement though deals mainly with things beyond the control of mere mortals,

giving descriptions and ideas for faeries, demons and undead creatures, their use in the game, as well as rules for running them as player characters (you want to play a faerie or vampire character? No problem!) if this is what the GM wants. *Dark Lore* also contains information on Faith, and the powers of gods and their priests within the campaign.

### Psionics

I suppose I'll need to do this one as well at some point. Not for a very long time though, since it isn't needed in my campaign (yet!).

### The Land of Kythe

Not one, but many separate supplements detailing the *Land of Kythe* fantasy setting. A separate supplement for each of the major player character races (ie anything considered intelligent which isn't grossly powerful – or maybe them as well since it could be fun), plus all the megabytes of background info I have typed up into one coherent whole.

### 1.4 To the Reader

Okay, these rules are anything but ready, and lots needs to be added. Any comments, suggestions, flames and general abuse should be sent to me so I can either ignore you or make the necessary corrections.

Read on and enjoy!

## 2 The Core Rules System

*Myths* is the fantasy version of *Adventure Master*. Though *Adventure Master* is generic in scope, it is but a mechanics system, rules without a game if you like. What *Myths* does is to expand upon and add to *Adventure Master*, putting it in a fantasy context. As it stands, *AM* has no rules for magic, no descriptions of skills, and no details for weapons. *Myths* includes all of these, plus a fantasy bestiary and more besides.

What follows in this section is a basic overview of the *AM* game system. The following is the basis upon which *Myths* is based. It explains what dice are rolled, and how they are interpreted, how all creatures are defined and generally how the game mechanics relate to the physical world.

### The Dice

*AM* uses the ten-sided die as the basis for the game. Other denominations are also used, but to a lesser extent. In general, several ten-sided dice will be necessary, though no more than a dozen should be needed except in either extreme circumstances or if using very highly skilled characters.

Individual dice are referred to as either d2, d4, d6, d8, d10 or d20, depending on how many sides they have. The d2 is usually another die, with the lower half of the scale taken as '1', and the upper half as '2' (ie, on a d6 1-3 = 1 and 4-6 = 2). If multiple dice are needed, then they are referred to as 2d6 or 3d8, meaning two six-sided dice or three eight sided dice. Such references are rare though. In the case of d10's, a result of '0' is taken to mean 10, not 0.

The most common way in which dice are used are as *dice ratings*. These are expressed principally in d10's, with a possible further fractional die, which is either a d2, d4, d6 or d8. Whole Dice are written as  $xD$ , where the  $x$  is the number of d10's rolled. Each d10 also has a fractional part, which is one of the smaller denominations of die. Together, they are written as  $xD+y$ . Possible dice ratings would be  $3D+6$  or  $5D+4$ . The latter would mean "roll 5d10 plus a d4".

Sometimes, a dice rating will need to be converted to an actual (non-random) value. For this purpose, each full dice is equivalent to 5 points. Each fractional stage to 1 point.

### Succeeding and Failing

Now we know how to roll the dice, we need to know what we are rolling against. The most common use of Dice is to see if a character has succeeded in a task. All tasks are

### Dice Ratings and Point Values

Dice Ratings are written as  $xD+y$  with the  $x$  being the number of d10's, and  $y$  the lesser die. Where there is no fraction, simply writing  $xD$  is sufficient. This gives a progression like:

0D	0D+2	0D+4	0D+6	0D+8
1D	1D+2	1D+4	1D+6	1D+8
2D	etc. . .			

When all the dice are rolled, they are added together to give a single total value. The progression up the scale is more or less linear.

When converting to a points value, a quick way to do it is to multiply the number of d10's by 5, and add half the size of fractional die (ie +3 for  $xD+6$ ).  $4D$  is 20 ( $4 \times 5$ ),  $5D+4$  is 27 ( $5 \times 5 + 2$ ).

Converting from points to dice can be a bit harder. Again, a quick way is to double the number of points, taking the number of 10's as the number of dice, and the 'units' as the fractional part. For instance, 17 doubles to 34, which would be  $3D+4$ . 52 doubles to 104, which would be  $10D+4$ . 10 doubles to 20 which is  $2D$ .

given a difficulty rating, usually from 10 to 100, with the higher numbers being harder tasks. A difficulty of 20 represents a task that most trained people would be able to accomplish most of the time – relatively simple and straightforward.

A character's level of skill for a given task is measured in Dice, so a character might have  $5D$  sneak skill, or  $4D$  etiquette. When a situation arises which must be accomplished with a skill roll, the character rolls the number of Dice for the relevant skill. If the total equals or exceeds the difficulty number (designated by the GM), then the character succeeds. If the roll is lower, then the character fails. For the majority of skills,  $5D$  is considered to be professional level, with  $2D+4$  being the level of most people with no training.

### 2.1 Rounding

In some circumstances, it will be necessary to divide a number and end up with a fraction. In nearly all cases, any fractions should be truncated – ie dropped, even if this results in 3.99 being rounded down to a 3. In practice, you shouldn't need to divide by anything larger than 5 though, so the biggest fraction will be 0.8.

## Chapter 2 : The Core Rules

### 2.2 Attributes and Skills

Attributes are the basic building blocks of all creatures within the *Myths* game system. They represent the natural ability of each creature within each relevant area. Altogether, there are ten different attributes, though only eight are used for player characters. Given below is a list of all these attributes, together with their use. In all cases, the average human attribute is equal to 5D.

**Strength (or STR)** is quite simply a measure of the strength of a creature. Creatures with a higher strength can lift heavier loads and cause more damage in combat. Strength is purely physical in nature, and it is generally easy to tell strong creatures from weak creatures.

**Constitution (or CON)** is similar in some ways to strength, for it is a measure of the toughness of a creature. Constitution is the staying power of a creature. A strong creature can lift more, but a creature with a high constitution could keep the weight above its head for longer. Constitution is also a measure of how much damage a creature can sustain before dying (but see *body* below). It is also used to resist the effects of poison, disease and for natural healing.

**Body (or BOD)** is sometimes used in place of constitution to represent the amount of physical damage a

creature can sustain. For humans and human-like creatures, constitution and body are considered the same. For very large and very small creatures, they can differ quite widely. This is because though a very large creature might be able to resist lots of damage, they are not necessarily immune to the effects of poison and disease.

**Agility (or AGI)** is a measure of the quickness, sure-footedness, and general acrobatic ability of a creature. Small fast predators often have agility, especially cats and cat-like creatures.

**Dexterity (or DEX)** represents a combination of hand-eye coordination, sleight of hand, and localised body control (especially in the hands and arms). dexterity is used for missile and melee combat as well as for many skills involving careful manipulation, such as lock picking or delicate craft skills.

**Perception (or PER)** is the quality of a creature's overall senses. High perception creatures are more aware of their surroundings than others. They are better at hiding, tracking and generally noticing things. Animals often get further bonuses to perception based skills for individual senses, but a high perception is a feature of the majority of animals when compared with intelligent creatures such as humans.

**Table 2.1 : Relative Comparisons of Attributes**

Dice	Strength	Constitution	Body	Agility	Dexterity
0D	Mouse or rat	Dead	Mouse or rat	Cannot move	Cannot move
1D	Hawk	Barely awake	Small dog	Cannot crawl	No coordination
2D	Small dog	Bed ridden	6-year old	Cannot walk	Handicapped
3D	6-year old	Sickly	12-year old	Useless	Useless
4D	12-year old	Unfit	Weak person	Clumsy	Clumsy
5D	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average
6D	Strong man	Fit	Strong	Graceful	Steady hand
7D	Very strong	Energetic	Very strong	Athlete	
8D	Conan	Iron constitution		Gymnast	Superb fencer
10D			Horse	Cat	
12D	Horse	Ultra resilient		Mongoose	
Dice	Perception	Knowledge	Charisma	Orneriness	Will
0D	No senses	Insect	Unintelligent	Mindless	Mindless
1D	Oblivious	Reptile	Unintelligent		Animal
2D		Mammal	Social outcast		Animal
3D	Stupid	Child	Total bore	Pet dog	Weak willed
4D	Dull	Below average	Dull		Gullible
5D	Average	Average	Average	Pet cat	Average
6D	Perceptive	Fast learner	Charming	Wolf	Strong willed
7D	Keen senses	Genius		Wild cat	
8D	Cat/dog	Super genius	Natural leader		Powerful will
10D			Unnatural	Stubborn as hell	
12D			Ridiculous		Unnatural will



**Knowledge (or KNO)** is not a measure of intelligence, but more a measure of a creature's ability to remember and learn. Animals will often have a low KNO (about 2D), but this does not necessarily mean they are any less intelligent or crafty than a human (though they often are).

**Charisma (or CHA)** is used only for intelligent creatures. Animals do not have a charisma attribute, but instead have an *Orneriness* attribute (see below). Charisma rates the personal magnetism, friendliness and charm of a person. High charisma people are good leaders and diplomats. Charisma is not a measure of the physical appearance of a character, merely a general guide to their personality.

**Orneriness (or ORN)** is used only for animals. Orneriness is a measure of the stubbornness of a creature, and how hard it is to train, ride or otherwise control. Friendly, docile animals will often have a low orneriness, while predators often have a high orneriness. In modern day Earth society, pet dogs would be considered to have a lower orneriness than pet cats, since the latter tend to be a lot more free willed and independent.

**Will (or WIL)** is a measure of the mental strength of a creature. Will is used to both resist magical attacks, and also for a creature to resist basic emotions (such as fear or hatred). Like for knowledge, animals often have a low Will, so are often easy to affect with magic.

### 2.3 Skills and Effective Skills

*Skills* represent your training in much narrower areas than your attributes cover. In all, there are several dozen skills, covering things from climbing and dodging, to etiquette, weapon skills and magical skills. Each skill initially starts at a base of 0D (you have no training in that skill), but all characters get some 'free' skills when they choose a background (described later), as well as any they get from their race.

*Effective skill* represents your ability at a given task. It is a combination of your skill and an attribute. For instance, a character may have a skill at boating. If you wanted to know if a particular type of boat could weather a storm, your effective skill would be based on your boating skill and your knowledge attribute. To guide a boat down a narrow river would be your boating skill and your dexterity attribute.

To find your effective skill, it is the average of the attribute and the skill (rounded down). Someone with 5D attribute and 2D skill has an effective skill of 3D+4 (ie half of 7D). Unless otherwise stated, all modifiers to skills apply to the effective skill, and it is the effective skill which is rolled when a task is attempted. In most cases, the term *skill*

is used to refer to your *effective skill*, since the actual skill itself is never used, except for purposes of developing it to higher levels.

A few skills are sometimes based on *two* attributes. In this case, the character uses whichever attribute is the best for the given situation. Such a combination is written as STR/AGI, or PER/CHA.

### Standard Difficulties

For many situations, there will be a definite difficulty number set for the task. For just as many though, the GM will have to improvise. Listed below are some guidelines on what sort of difficulties apply to certain tasks. It is up to the GM though to judge tasks on a case by case basis.

#### Target Rating

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 0+   | <i>Very easy</i> task which should very rarely ever be failed. It is possible for a task to have a difficulty of zero – the character still needs to have at least 0D+2 though to succeed in it.  |
| 10+  | <i>Easy</i> task which most people should be able to complete with a moderate degree of success without need of training.   |
| 20+  | <i>Moderate</i> task, which should be easy for those with professional training, but difficult for those with little or no training in that skill. Someone with a skill of 5D, has an average roll of 27½, so difficulties in the range of 25-30 will give a 50-50 chance of success. |
| 30+  | <i>Hard</i> task, even for a professional. Could be a moderate task under less than ideal conditions or when using poor tools.  |
| 40+  | <i>Difficult</i> – an unusual or complicated task. Normal professionals would very rarely succeed, only true experts can really hope for success here.  |
| 50+  | <i>Very difficult</i> . This would normally be the limit for normal tasks under ideal conditions – even then though it represents great difficulty even for experts.  |
| 60+  | <i>Extremely difficult</i> task, probably a difficult or worse task under very poor conditions. For knowledge based skills, would be specific details about obscure topics. Such difficulties should be very rare.  |
| 80+  | <i>Sheer folly</i> . The sort of thing that normally just isn't done. To succeed in such a task would require an initial skill of over 25D!   |
| 100+ | <i>Absurd</i> . The sort of difficulty level reserved for when characters are getting really desperate and are dredging the barrel for ideas. Such a difficulty might as well be impossible for practically everyone.   |

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### 2.4 Experience

*Experience* is a general measure of a character's learning and overall experience. At the end of each adventure (or game session), each character is awarded a number of *experience points* by the GM, which can be put towards developing skills. The awarding of experience is explained more fully in chapter six – the use of experience, which is much more important to the player, is described here.

Any skill can be advanced by one point (ie by 0D+2) by spending a number of experience points upon it. This 'cost' is equal to the current number of full dice of skill the character has. So a character with 4D skill needs to spend 4 experience points to advance it to 4D+2. The minimum cost is 1 experience point, even if the character's skill is less than 1D. The table on the previous page gives the experience point cost to develop a skill to a certain level from a level of 0D.

As can be seen, it is reasonably easy to develop a skill to 2D or 3D. To develop it to very high levels (12D+ for example) can become very expensive.

### 2.5 Criticals and Fumbles

Sometimes, due to luck (or the lack of it) if nothing else, a character will succeed in a task beyond all expectations, or likewise cock it up so badly that they will end up doing the reverse of what was intended. Such quirks of fate are known as criticals and fumbles respectively.

Relative Skill Levels		
Skill	Experience	Equivalent to....
0D	0	Unskilled
1D	5	
2D	10	
3D	20	Competent
4D	35	
5D	55	Professional level
6D	80	
7D	110	Skilled craftsman
8D	145	
9D	185	Expert craftsman
10D	230	
11D	280	
12D	335	Master of your craft
13D	395	
14D	460	
15D	530	
16D	605	Very rare craftsman
17D	685	
18D	770	
19D	860	
20D	955	Exceedingly rare

#### Adjudicating Fumbles

Generally, there are no charts and tables for either criticals and fumbles. Such tend to limit the number of possibilities open to the GM, and also tie her down to a particular result (players often like to roll on such charts themselves making it difficult for the GM to ignore a result she doesn't like). Unless the GM has a particular result in mind, simply rolling a single die for severity is a good idea, with one end of the scale being something near fatal, and the other end something very minor.

Of course, if she wants to, the GM can write up her own charts for fumble results, changing them from time to time (or maybe changing a result each time it comes up, making them all unique) so players don't get to know in advance what is going to happen when they fumble.

Both are not based solely on luck, but the chances of both tend to be very small (a few percent in most cases). Skill does come into it, and highly skilled characters are more likely to critical than they are to fumble, but there is never a certainty of either, though *very* skilled characters can have a critical chance of around 30%, with a fumble chance of less than 1%.

#### Criticals

A critical is when things go really well. When skill dice are rolled, one or more natural '0' results gives a chance of a critical. This chance is equal to 2 in 20 for each '0' rolled. A roll of 20 means no critical whatever the chance.

The results of a critical are often left up to the GM to decide, though individual skill descriptions do give guidelines for each skill. A simple solution is to allow for open ended rolls. What this means is that every time a critical is achieved, the player rolls again and adds to the previous total. There is no limit to the number of times this may be done, so very high rolls are possible, but rare. This is the most common critical effect for resistance rolls.

#### Fumbles

Fumbles are the reverse of criticals – they are when things go seriously wrong for the character. The chance of a fumble is given on an extra die which is rolled in addition to any other dice rolled. This die is known as the *fumble die* and should be of a different colour to the other dice rolled so it can be told apart (of course, if you happen to be one of those people who enjoy collecting a range of dice all of different colours (like me) then simply saying "the red die" or "the green and purple die" is sufficient).

The result of the fumble die is ignored unless the result is a '1'. If this is the case, then there is a chance of a fumble. Like the critical, the chance is rolled on a d20. The chance of fumbling is equal to 15, minus the number of full dice being rolled. A roll of 1 will always fumble, regardless of the chances. So someone rolling 7D who rolls a '1' on the fumble die, has a 8 (15-7) in 20 chance of fumbling. It should maybe be pointed out that in the case of open-ended critical rolls, the fumble die is only rolled once the first time.

As for criticals, the exact results of a fumble are left more or less up to the GM. A fumble should never directly kill a character unless the situation is particularly dangerous and warrants such action. One the whole, a fumble should hinder, annoy, embarrass and penalise the character. A good guide is to rate the severity of a fumble along with the importance of the task, and the inherent danger in it.

### 2.6 Contests Between Characters

Often, the difficulty of a task can be given an exact target value. Sometimes though, a character is in direct opposition with another character – either a PC or NPC. In these cases, it is a relatively simple case of making opposed rolls.

What this entails is that both characters make a skill check, and whoever gets the highest roll wins. Sometimes, the skills used with obviously be the same (such as in an arm wrestling contest), in others, they will be different (trying to creep up on someone will oppose your stealth skill against their alertness skill). In either case, the rules are exactly the same. The GM may give modifiers to either side depending on circumstances.

It is inevitable that at one point both characters will get a tie – rolling the same number. In this case, there are two possible solutions.

Where one character obviously forced a contest against another character, the first character will win. Such situations include a character sneaking up on another, a character conning another, or a character trying to hit someone. In all cases, the first character gets the advantage, and wins any tie.

In other situations, simply either roll again, or where such a result is possible, declare an actual tie (realistically you can't tie when trying to hit someone who is parrying – you either succeed or they parry (or you miss), but you could if arm wrestling or playing a game of chess for instance).

### Long Contests

Sometimes it may not be satisfying enough to simply

roll the dice and abide by that outcome, especially in something like a long race, or a tug of war. In these situations, the GM should come up with a target number which is a lot higher than either character could make in a single roll. Each opponent rolls several times, adding all their totals together until the target number is reached. The first to reach the target wins.

### 2.7 Time and Actions

All skills take time to accomplish, whether it is merely a fraction of a second to recall a piece of knowledge or to dodge a blow, or several minutes to pick a lock, or even several weeks to craft a weapon or cast a ritual spell.

Obviously, the more skilled you are, the quicker you are at completing the task. Likewise, people who are attempting something they are not very good at will often take longer to improve their chances of success.

The following applies to the majority of skills. Skills used in combat (ie weapon skills) and magical skills cannot be affected this way – they use their own rules for these situations.

#### Taking Your Time

The skill descriptions given in chapter 6 list an average time for completion of a given task, and difficulties assume that this amount of time is being taken. It is possible though for a character to take longer than the normal amount of time, to try and improve the chance of success.

By taking double the listed time, a +1D bonus is gained to skill (after averaging with the attribute). If quadruple time is taken, then a +2D bonus is gained, and if decuple time is taken, then a +3D bonus is gained. A bonus beyond +3D is not possible this way. However much time is taken though, the character cannot ever do more than double her skill (after averaging).

#### Hastening Actions

The reverse of taking your time is taking a penalty to speed things up. Actions can be sped up in steps, where each step gives a penalty of -1D to skill. The size of the step depends on the length of time the duration is being reduced from.

Skills which take months, are reduced in steps of a week. Below a week, reduce in steps of a day, less than two days, reduce by 6 hours, less than 6 hours reduce by an hour.

An hour reduces to 45 minutes, 30 minutes, 20 minutes, 15 minutes, 10 minutes, and from then on down in

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steps of 1 minute. Below a minute, the time is reduced by 10 seconds down to 10 seconds, where it is reduced in 1 second decrements, down to a minimum of 5 seconds.

Obviously, it is possible to speed tasks up a great deal, but only at a massive penalty to your skill. No skill can be reduced to below 0D (such would be pointless anyway).

### 2.8 Confidence

Both players and characters have a lot of faith in their own abilities, sometimes more so than is physically healthy, causing them to blunder into situations that are way over their heads. Because it is fantasy, this confidence tends to rub off on reality, and characters can sometimes succeed where others would fail.

What the above basically boils down to is that each character has a number of confidence points (usually 3 at the start of the campaign), which the character may use at anytime luck is against him. When a confidence point is used, the character may re-roll their last roll, allowing them to hopefully succeed where before they failed. Of course this isn't always guaranteed, but it gives the character a better chance than he would otherwise have. Sometimes though even this chance is not enough, and the character may have to spend several confidence points to make more than one re-roll.

A single re-roll costs one confidence point. If the character wishes to make a second re-roll, then it costs him a further two confidence, a third re-roll will cost three confidence etc. As long as the character has at least one confidence point remaining, he may make a re-roll, however many confidence points it costs, thereby going into negative confidence.

Normally, a character will gain back confidence points at the end of the adventure, though this will not always be the case. If the re-roll is significantly worse than the original roll (enough to make a difference), then the confidence is lost. If the re-roll was a fumble, then it is automatically lost. In the case of multiple re-rolls, it is the final value that counts towards whether they are lost. However many are spent though to re-roll a single original roll, no more than one is gained back naturally (unless the roll was a fluke – see below).

One point which needs to be borne in mind though is that confidence can only be spent on the *last die roll*. The player cannot get a fumble with a bad skill roll, find out that the fumble caused him to break both his legs, and *then* decide to re-roll his skill dice. What he could do though is force a re-roll on the fumble itself. In the case where the GM didn't roll the fumble but made it up, the GM should simply

make a roll, and compare the new fumble result with the original for purposes of whether the new fumble is worse or not.

Use of confidence should also be declared immediately after the die roll it is to effect. This though is not totally necessary (though desirable). If a player waits to find out the results of a bad roll (or simply 'forgets' about confidence when he has no excuse to), but before other rolls are made, then a confidence re-roll is allowed, but at a cost of 3 confidence points! In this case, only one re-roll is allowed, however much confidence the character has to spare. Again though, only one would be gained back, not all three, at the end of the adventure.

Note: Since GM's are often kind and generous, and because the player has offered him his last roll, GM's can if they wish use the above rule of spending 3 CP to get one re-roll even if further die rolls have been made. This shouldn't be made a common thing though, and player's shouldn't expect it to be allowed. GM's are encouraged to be totally arbitrary in these situations just to keep 'em guessing! If the player is using this rule on purpose, taking the gamble that a bad roll doesn't have too serious consequences, then declaring confidence use if it does turn out really bad, then the GM should veto their decision. 'Officially' if confidence isn't spent immediately, it cannot be used. If the player's are hard pressed though, then the GM can be kind and allow the higher cost.

### Negative Confidence

Once a character has a negative amount of confidence, it is time for the GM to spend it for him. Negative confidence is used in the same way as positive confidence, except that it is the GM who forces the player to make a re-roll when it would be to the character's disadvantage. The GM cannot force more than one re-roll at a time though, and when a re-roll is forced, the character gains a confidence point (the GM is effectively spending the 'negative' confidence).

### Gaining Extra Confidence

Characters normally start the game with three confidence points. This number will go down during an adventure, but is normally regained at the adventures end. Just as confidence can be permanently lost when it is spent through bad rolls, so extra confidence can also be gained. If the re-roll is really good, allowing the character to excel at his task, getting a critical and doing something really fabulous, then the GM can opt to reward the character with two confidence points back instead of only one.

The character doesn't have to spend confidence to

gain some though. If the character makes a naturally fluky roll, or several mildly fluky ones which are important to the adventure, then the GM can reward an extra confidence point. Likewise though, a large amount of bad luck, can lead to the character loosing a point of confidence (though the character should never loose more than one point during an adventure in this way, and shouldn't gain more than one or two).

### Other Uses of Confidence

The uses of confidence as described above are not the only ways in which confidence can be used. For another use of confidence, see chapter 7 on Personality Traits, which gives rules on skill bonuses due to the characters personality.

## 2.9 Running Combat

Combat tends to take up the majority of the rules for most RPGs, the reason being that it is the most 'important' part of the rules. Practically everything else can be handled very abstractly, especially those skills related to CHA and KNO. In combat on the other hand, the results of any action will often mean the life or death of a character, and for this reason, player's tend to notice arbitrary decisions by the GM more in such situations.

Combat between characters is handled simply as skill uses of weapon and other related combat skills (such as dodge and reactions). The difference between skill use here though is things are much more precise. Firstly, time becomes very important. When trying to sneak past someone, the GM might say "it takes you a couple of minutes to make your way around the courtyard". What does a minute here or there matter in such situations?

Within combat, time is measured in *segments*. Every action a character performs takes a certain number of segments. Hitting someone with a sword might take 7 segments. If the player states his character is hitting someone on segment 8, he actually does so 7 segments later on segment 15. If that person was preparing to throw a spear at segment 5, an action which might take 9 segments, then it is clear that the swordsman is too late, and that the spear is thrown.

Unlike in most other RPG combat systems, rounds are not used (okay then, they are, but only for things like durations of combat spells and working out fatigue). The use of a more precise system means things are a lot more flexible (the difference in speeds between weapons has a lot more affect on the game – especially useful to those you like small light rapiers for instance), but also requires more work for both the GM and players. At first, it may seem daunting having to keep track of exactly when everyone is going to

act, rather than running through everyone in turn. In reality, it is quite easy, especially if the GM can trust the players to handle their own character's themselves, and maybe also the character's allies.

A final advantage is that it is very easy to speed up your attacks, taking penalties your skill to hit faster. In the above example, the swordsman could take 2D off his skill to hit two segments earlier, beating the spearman. This makes having a high skill very useful.

Linked to this, is the principle idea that it is very easy to actually hit someone. After all, could you miss someone standing directly in front of you with a sword? Your average warrior has over 90% chance to hit someone *in ideal conditions*. The target can parry or dodge. A person can be speeding up their attacks, be fatigued or injured etc. The 90% chance of success is suddenly a 20% chance of success. Modifiers to skills and difficulties are a lot more common in combat than anywhere else.

The full combat system is described in chapter 8. For now though, don't worry about it and instead concentrate on the more important matter of character generation.

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### 3 Character Generation

By now, you should have a basic understanding of how the system works. What happens now, is that this framework is given detail, by using it to define the characters within the game.

There are six distinct steps to making up a character. The first step is to choose a race, which is the first and most important step. This must be done first, since it defines the path taken by the rest of character generation.

Second comes determination of attributes. These are the basic strengths and weaknesses of each character, giving an indication of how strong, quick and intelligent he is. Your race can effect these attributes to a substantial extent.

Thirdly, are character backgrounds. There are several generic backgrounds for each race, basically detailing what the character has been doing up to this point. Each background gives skills and other advantages to the character. Now is also the time to work out who your character is, and what they are like as a person.

Fourth, are *advantages* and *disadvantages*. These allow you to tailor your character's abilities to your own expectations – within certain limits of course. They include several background options, plus gifts and curses – special abilities beyond the normal for your race.

Fifth, are the skills of your character. Though many skills are given to you in your character background, all character's can purchase more at the start of the game, so you can fine tune their character's skills to what you want your character to be able to do.

Lastly, characters need to buy equipment beyond that obtained from their background. For this, they get a small cash outlay at the start, with which to buy basic equipment. As always though, the best stuff will have to wait.

Most of this chapter is a general overview of character generation. It is best to read through this chapter first, before making up a character. The following chapters can be read as they are needed, but this one is quite important to grasp first. There isn't much too it though. The intricate details are left till later.

#### 3.1 Character Race

The race of your character affects more than just cosmetics. Your race determines your attributes, both physical and mental, the gifts and curses available to you, what type of background your character has had, as well as

how you are received within society.

The basic 'standard' race is the human, though there will often be several different types of humans within a game world. Normally, these differences are merely cultural, but they can sometimes effect game related statistics to some extent.

The possible player character races are not described here, but within the relevant racial supplements for each world. Background descriptions, and all rules pertaining to each race can be found there. What follows in this chapter is the basic framework of character generation, using the basic human character as an example. GM's wishing to design their own races should use this as a base to work from. Players should consult the relevant world source book (or consult the GM) for details on available races.

#### 3.2 Character Attributes

Player characters have eight basic attributes, strength, constitution, agility, dexterity, perception, knowledge, charisma and will (as described in the previous chapter). The value of each attribute is realistically very much down to chance – you can't *choose* to be strong or intelligent when you are born. To represent this, and also to add a bit of 'unfairness' into character generation, attributes are randomly generated. The rest of the character is made up through player decision – so players can still have the sort of character they want.

The basic human character gets 4d6+11 points on each attribute. This should be converted to a dice rating (ie 25 points = 5D) as described in chapter 2. There are two ways in which these dice rolls may be taken.

The first, is to declare the attribute for each roll *before* the roll. The easiest way is to simply roll each attribute in turn starting at strength, constitution etc and ending with will. This gives players no choice over what their characters are initially good at, but it has the advantage of prompting players to choose character types they may not otherwise try. It is also simpler for first time players who don't know what attributes are important and which ones aren't.

The second method, is for the player to roll for eight attributes, and then to arrange the totals as desired. The values can't be chosen, but where they go can. This obviously gives more flexibility than the first method. If the GM prefers a humanocentric world (where humans are the dominant species, and other races take a side line – a feature of most fantasy worlds) then the second option can be used for human characters, and the first for non-humans. The argument behind this is that humans are much more flexible and adaptable than other races, and hence player's of human

## Chapter 3 : Character Generation

### Non-Random Attributes

Not everyone agrees with having their character's attributes rolled randomly. Presented here is a system for generating attributes in a non-random way, simply using a point based system. It ensures that all player's can start with the sort of character they want. It does mean though that it rules out the possibility of having a really good character, since how good a character can be is fixed. Note that the GM should settle on one way to generate characters. The two methods given here are not 'equal' to the random method – for a start, they make it a lot easier to have a maximum racial attribute – something which is quite hard to do using random determination.

#### Method Two

All attributes start at their average value (5D for the basic human character), and can be raised and lowered as desired as long as they stay within the bounds which are normally available with random determination (3D-7D for humans). Of course, putting one attribute up by a point means another must be put down by a point.

All potentials start at a level equal to their average number of points above their attribute (ie 3 points for humans). These can be raised and lowered within normal limits as for an attribute. An attribute can be lowered to raise a potential and vice versa.

Because the costs of attributes are linear, characters will tend to have about half of them very high, and the rest very low, which can lead to very specialised characters. Then again, it does make it easy for players to get just the sort of character that they want. It also tends to be more suited to a 'heroic' type of campaign.

#### Method Three

This method makes it much harder to obtain high attributes, by both making the cost non-linear, and also by making the cost be taken out of the character's starting background points (see section 3.4).

As before, all attributes start at a value equal to the average for the race (5D for humans). The cost to put up each attribute is given on the the chart below. Potentials are handled in the same way that the attributes are, each potential starting at a value of 3 (average rounded down).

When the final total cost is found (ie the sum of all the bonuses plus the sum of all the penalties), this is either a positive or negative value (or zero). If it is positive, then it counts as an advantage of that cost. If it is negative, then it counts as a disadvantage of that cost.

The points gained from lowering an attribute aren't as many as the points it costs to raise an attribute the same amount. Having one high attribute will mean lowering two

Bonus	Cost	Penalty	Cost
+1	+2	-1	-1
+2	+5	-2	-2
+3	+10	-3	-5
+4	+15	-4	-10
+5	+20	-5	-15
+6	+30	-6	-20
+7	+40	-7	-25
+8	+50	-8	-30
+9	+60	-9	-35
+10	+70	-10	-40
+11	+80	-11	-45
+12	+100	-12	-50
+13	+120	-13	-55
+14	+140	-14	-60
...+1	...+20	...-1	...+5

others a similar amount. If the GM desires, an option is to make both costs the same (using either column). GM's should note though that any attribute that a player is putting up is more important than those being put down (after all, if the player wants the attribute to be high, she obviously thinks it is going to be useful, and vice versa), so to balance things, putting up an attribute should cost more.

Using either of these methods, attributes cannot be raised or lowered any other way during character generation, except by the direct expenditure of experience.

Method three tends to limit characters from having several high attributes more than method two does, but two is limiting in that if a character wants two high attributes, she must take two low attributes. With both these methods, many players will end up with the same attributes sitting at minimum each time they make a character (KNO and CHA are favourites). Though random determination doesn't prevent this from happening, it does make it less likely, and takes the spotlight off the attributes of the character, making skills and backgrounds more important.



characters should be allowed more flexibility. The final choice is up to the GM of course.

### Potential Attributes

Once the main attributes have been determined, it is necessary to find the *potentials* for each attribute. Though attributes normally stay at their starting values, it is possible (though expensive as opposed to developing skills) to develop them beyond this. How far they can be developed depends on the attributes potential.

For the basic human character, the potentials are determined using a single d6. Roll this for each of the attributes in turn. The number rolled is the number of points *higher* than the current level of the attribute it can be developed to. An attribute of 7D for example can be developed to a possible maximum of 8D+2 (assuming a roll of 6 on the potential die). Obviously this means that character's with a low attribute are never going to be able to develop it to high levels, but they can at least develop it to moderate levels if they so wish.

It should be noted that potentials *cannot* be arranged as desired even if the GM allows the attributes themselves to be. This is something which is very much out of the player's control.

### 3.3 Character Backgrounds

Player characters don't just pop up from nowhere. Just like other people, they have come from a family (or at the very least have had an unknown mother and father). They've had a childhood, and also some basic training in a career – even if that career was as a pick pocket.

For the most part, the background of a character is to be decided by the player, with some input from the GM concerning where that character fits into the GM's campaign. The details of a background obviously have nothing to do with game mechanics, but there are several background templates which can be chosen by the player.

In game terms, a background gives a character a 'package' of starting skills, all relevant to the chosen back-

#### Age Limits

It takes time to learn skills and gain experience, and hence GM's wishing a bit of realism chucked in, can rule that a character must start at a minimum age, depending on the cost of the background taken. For a human, this could be 1 year per 5 points of background, above a base age of 12 (so a 60 point background means that the character must be at least 24 years old).

ground. Some backgrounds will also supply the character with specialist equipment, not normally available to characters (weapons and armour for example are often very expensive, and beyond the means of most characters. A mercenary background will allow the character to start with such equipment automatically, though it may not be of the highest quality). All this is not gained for free of course. Having such a background is considered an advantage, and hence must be paid for (see section 3.4 which follows). The costs for a background though are cheap for the number of skills you get (five times cheaper in fact). The game assumes that all character's will start with a background, so no attempt is made to balance the differences between characters with backgrounds, and those without.

Furthermore, the background supplies the player with something to work on when developing a history and personality for the character. Some character's may have the option of a few contacts – though these may well cost extra background points.

A brief selection of backgrounds suitable for practically any fantasy campaign are given in chapter 4. Further backgrounds will be given within the relevant race source books for each campaign world.

### 3.4 Background Points

That was the easy bit. The next parts of character generation require a bit of thought and much flicking through lists of options for the first (and second and third...) time player. This doesn't mean what follows is necessarily complex – it is simply that there are quite a few options now open to the player. First though, a few limitations.

The basic human character starts the game with 200 points worth of background points. What are background points? Simply, they allow the player to 'purchase' special bonuses for his character, known as advantages, in order to give him an advantage over others. Actually, many NPC's get them as well, so it isn't as great as it sounds.

These first 200 background points are gained for free. It is possible to extend the number of advantages it is possible to buy though by taking disadvantages – penalties to your character. Generally, disadvantages can be chosen in a way so that they don't affect your character too much. Taking penalties to combat skills for instance isn't going to hurt someone who doesn't plan on ever getting into a fight anyway.

Costs of disadvantages count as negative towards your background point total, so taking 50 points of disadvantages allows you to take a further 50 points of advantages to balance it. You may take up to 100 points of disadvantages,

## Chapter 3 : Character Generation

### Unlimited Disadvantages

There is no reason why the limits of 200 background points and 100 points of disadvantages need to be stuck to. If the GM wishes, he may allow characters to start with more than 200 background points, though excessive amounts are not suggested. If the GM wants players to start with highly skilled characters, it is better to give them extra experience after initial character generation than it is to give large amounts of background points, else characters will have large numbers of gifts, and very high attributes.

A further optional change is to allow characters to take far more disadvantages than the 100 points previously suggested. This way players don't get off as lightly. Allowing 200 or 300 points of disadvantages will allow far more flexibility – after all, players don't have to take the maximum amount if they don't want to.

One final suggestion is to totally remove the limits on the number of disadvantages able to be taken. GM's may want to enforce diminishing returns here though. A suggested method to use is that the first 100 points of disadvantages give equal amounts of advantages. The next 200 points only give 1 background point for every 2 points of disadvantages. The next 400 count as 1 for 4 etc. This is a good idea for GM's who want starting characters, but also want to allow the players greater flexibility.

giving you a total of 300 points worth of background points in total for advantages.

### Use of Background Points

The first that should be considered is for improving starting attributes. For every 10 background points spent, a single attribute can be raised by one point. This raises the potential at the same time, so it is just as if the attribute roll was one point better. There are two limits. Firstly, no attribute can be raised to beyond the maximum it is possible to roll normally. A basic human character cannot have a starting attribute higher than 7D. Secondly, no more than 50 points may be put into each individual attribute, so none may be raised by more than 1D.

Closely related to this, is that it is also possible to raise a potential independent of its attribute. Again, it is not possible to raise it to more than the normal six points (for a human) it is possible to roll. This does *not* count towards the 50 point limit for an attribute, and so it allows a very high potential where one is required. The cost to raise a potential is the same as the cost to raise the attribute itself.

It is also necessary to take penalties to your attributes

in order to gain advantages elsewhere. For each point of penalty you take, you gain five points of disadvantages, up to a maximum of 25 points of disadvantages off any single attribute. Potentials cannot be altered this way, but reducing an attribute by one point also drops the potential by the same amount.

### Appearance

Appearance is a single number which says how 'good' you look. In reality, appearance is a *lot* more complex than this, but a simple game representation is all that is really required. Appearance can theoretically range from negative infinity to positive infinity – but the normal 'mundane' from is from -10 to +10, with 0 being 'average' looks – whatever they are.

All characters start with an appearance of 0. Optionally, they may use random determination to find their initial appearance. Any type of dice, up to size d6 (ie a d2, d3, d4, d5 or d6 – the choice is up to each player) is rolled twice. The second die roll is subtracted from the first to give the final value of appearance (or use two differently coloured dice – the result is the same). If the GM wants, dice up to the d10 can be rolled (though no larger than this (unless someone has a d11 laying around) for obvious reasons), but keeping to lower sized dice ensures very high and very low appearances are uncommon (and though +8 appearance is nice, -8 can really put a stop to a character's chances of interacting with NPC's).

Characters who wish to have exceptional good looks (or exceptional bad looks) may modify their appearance using advantages and disadvantages. Each 10 points of advantage increases appearance by 1, and each 10 points of disadvantages decreases it by 1. No character may have an appearance greater than +10 nor lower than -10. Different races though are 'perceived' in different ways by other races, so modified values beyond the -10/+10 limit are possible – just not so within the same race.

Appearance is used for initial reactions from NPC's. An low appearance character will generally be given the cold shoulder, while someone with an amazing appearance will find everyone *very* helpful. Appearance is mainly physical looks, but is also social habits and expression. Someone with an appearance of -2 or -3 may have average looks, but might where a bored 'unfriendly' expression, and have bad dress sense. Of course, when she opens her mouth she might be able to win over the coldest heart – but that is charisma.

### Gifts and Curses

*Gifts* and *curses* are a special form of advantages and disadvantages respectively. Many border on the fantastic,

### Appearance

Value	Description
+30	The sort of beauty held only by goddesses, and faerie people. A dangerous level of appearance, since even strong willed people will loose control of their bodily desires.
+20	The opposite sex have a tendency to fall over themselves to attract your attention. They find it very hard to resist you if you make advances.
+15	Unnatural beauty, unattainable by mere mortals. Someone with this sort of beauty will never go unnoticed unless they try very hard to conceal it.
+10	Stunning. The maximum normally achievable for a race. The opposite sex will tend to act foolishly around you.
+7	Exceptional beauty. Heads will turn, hearts will race, people will automatically notice you.
+5	Beautiful. You will always attract attention, having several outstanding features.
+4	Very good looking.
+3	Obviously pretty or handsome, though not outstandingly so.
+2	Good looks. Some nice features (warm eyes, beautiful hair etc).
+1	Quite good looking.
0	Average, human appearance.
-1	A bit on the plain side.
-2	Poor dress sense, slightly ugly. Nothing though which can't be countered by good personality.
-3	General bad looks, could be due to either age or just naturally plain. Again, a decent personality can still shine through.
-4	You have several ugly features, and may find it hard to attract attention. You are noticeable though, and people will easily recognise you.
-5	You are ugly. People will often give you the cold shoulder, and may often be rude.
-7	Very ugly. You are often the butt of cruel jokes, and even if you have a high charisma, you have difficulty getting a good reaction from people.
-10	Disgusting. People have as little to do with you as possible. Anything from being hunch backed, to having a disfigured face is possible – probably both in fact.
-15	People will try to actively avoid you. Generally this level of appearance is only possible through supernatural means.
-20	A real disgusting mess. People are sickened by your presence. You are welcome nowhere.
-30	The common reaction from those you see you is that you are an evil monstrosity. You may be hunted down and killed.

though some merely represent ‘abilities’ of a character which cannot normally be gained, such as extra keen senses, or an affinity with a certain type of skill which makes it easier to learn. Since gifts and curses are so varied, and also quite extensive, chapter 5 is entirely devoted to describing them. What is given here is just a quick peep at how they are used in character generation.

Firstly, each gift and curse has a point cost which corresponds with an equivalent advantage-disadvantage cost. There is no limit to how many gifts and curses may be obtained – up to the normal cost limits of course, though some gifts and curses may not be combined, and several may only be taken once. The gifts and curses listed herein are the basic ones available to all characters (subject to GM ruling of course). Individual world source books may list some available only to specific races, and some races may well have them as ‘inherent’ abilities – ie all members of that race automatically have them at no option. Beyond this, it is just a matter of player preference.

### Wealth and Social Status

Characters are assumed to start off as more or less middle class, with not much in the way of funds (see section 3.5 which follows). By spending background points, it is possible to start as wealthy and influential individuals.

This should be born in mind for later. Many players won't bother with these options, but they can be useful. Such matters are described in detail a bit later on – they are merely mentioned here so players know to keep their options open.

### 3.5 Equipment and Starting Money

All characters start the game with a limited amount of money with which to purchase equipment, or just to use as loose change on their first adventure. Hopefully, as time progresses, they will earn more, either through robbing tombs or by taking on jobs.

As a base, each character has 2d6 silver coins as cash. This can be increased dramatically by taking the wealth advantage, but otherwise starting funds are rather pitiful.

How much though is a silver coin worth? The silver coin is the base unit of currency used by *Myths*. It is worth twenty copper coins, which are in turn worth ten brass coins each. Fifty silver coins equal a gold coin.

The currency in *Myths* is kept deliberately boring to encourage GM's to use their own names and currency conventions. Basic equipment lists are given in the appendices, but for a rough guide, a silver coin is actually a lot of money. It just so happens swords and armour costs a

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## Chapter 3 : Character Generation

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lot of money. One silver coin will keep a peasant happy for several months. A decent bed and room for the night at an inn can be had for a few brass coins. It is enough to live on, but not enough to live on well.

It is a good idea to encourage players to waste their character's money on luxuries by staying at expensive inns, and buying high quality clothes and equipment. After all, a well dressed character will be better received and looked up to by the surrounding populace. The GM should give advantages to character's who are so dressed were advantage is due. Of course, such characters are also a lot more popular amongst the thieves, but it should be nothing the tough player character can't handle.

### 3.6 Wealth

It is possible to start with more money than is normally possible by taking wealth as an advantage, and spending the required background points. There are four methods of gaining wealth – cash in the hand, an income, land, and inheritance.

#### Cash in the Hand

This is the most obvious way of starting with money – you actually start with it, as cash, ready to spend. Once you've spent it though, that's it. Where the money came from is for the player and the GM to decide. It could be a lucky 'find' (insert theft, inheritance or other suitable word as applicable) or your life's savings.

The amount gained from this is equal to 1 gold coin for every 10 background points spent. It is possible to start with quite a bit of money, but horrendous amounts are normally not worth it, and anyway, the GM is free to limit such wealth if he really wants to.

#### Income

Whether from a generous donor, blackmail, or family funds, you gain a steady income each month. Most probably, you will have to travel to a particular place to collect it – though it is normal to assume this place is very close to where you start. When you start the game, you have just collected one month's earnings, so you may start with this. Each gold coin a month of income costs 25 background points. It is important that you work out exactly where this money is coming from and why. There is nothing 'magical' about the source – it is all to capable of drying up (whether through death, poverty or sheer maliciousness) if the GM so wills. Of course, GMs should make this a rare occurrence, otherwise it tends to ruin the point of the advantage.

#### Land

You are a land owner, one of the elite few who owns a respectable amount of land which is workable and brings you an income. In many cultures, you may have to be of a suitable social rank to own land, in which case you must buy this advantage separately – it isn't gained automatically. You may well have to return from time to time to oversee running of it, and also to collect your money – usually taxes.

*I haven't figured out costs for this yet. Income won't be as high as for other things of similar cost, but other advantages gained, such as a base of operations, people loyal to you and so forth. Could also include farms, villages and even a castle. Cannot start off with anything bigger.*

#### Inheritance

You are due to obtain a large sum of money sometime in the future. This is a 'long term' advantage which has no affect on the present. The costs are the same as for cash in hand, except for each year you have to wait, multiply amount gained by a multiple of 5, ie after one year, it is x5, two years is x10, three years is x15.

### 3.7 Social Status

All characters are assumed to come from the lower end of the middle classes. Free people, but not exactly high up in society. Starting any lower than this is considered to be a disadvantage, while starting higher is considered an advantage, as might be expected. It is possible to start as a noble, or even as a member of a royal family – but not anything which grants you actual land, wealth or responsibility (beyond staying true to your station at any rate) immediately. For the higher ranks of nobility, you are restricted to being quite distant from the throne (or whatever), at least third or fourth in line. Also, if you want money from this, you must take wealth instead (an income is best for this since it is more realistic).

Social Class	Cost	Description
<b>Under classes</b>		
Lower	*	Outlaws
Upper	*	Slaves
<b>Lower classes</b>		
Lower	-25	Beggars
Middle	-10	Peasants
Upper	-5	Poor townsman
<b>Middle classes</b>		
Lower	0	Town folk
Middle	+10	Comfortable
Upper	+25	Wealthy
<b>Upper classes</b>		
Lower	+50	Minor nobility
Middle	+100	Greater nobility
Upper	+200	Royalty

\* It is not possible to start as a slave. See later for details on being an outlaw.

If the GM so wishes, he can assume other defaults for social classes. In n outlaw campaign for instance (along the lines of Robin Hood for example), everyone would be assumed to be an outlaw, and so won't gain any benefit from it. Likewise, where all characters start at a higher social level, they can be assumed to get their status free.

Advantages gained with a high social class tend to be rather amorphous, and will depend greatly on the campaign setting. There are a few basic guidelines though which can be followed.

First, high class PC's can be assumed to start with a home which befits their station. Unless they buy land, it will be a town house, or very small estate. Of course, having a large, luxurious mansion does not mean that the character is able to afford its upkeep. Assume that if the character's starting wealth level is much lower than that able to support the house (in the GM's opinion), then it is bare of furnishings, run down and/or in a general state of disrepair.

Secondly, the character will have some influence with those beneath their station. The city watch will probably be respectful, fewer questions will be asked about where the character is going etc. Of course, there are always the peasants who are jealous of the higher classes, bandits who prey on the rich and so on.

Finally, characters should act their social level. High class nobles are not going to be wandering around in dirty armour, or hiring themselves out as caravan guards. Well, they can, but they will loose status in the eyes of their peers if such becomes common knowledge.

### 3.8 Skills

Any background points left over should go on gaining extra skills. In fact, though skills are gained from a character's background, having some more (and improving the ones you do have) is very important. Players should remember to keep background points left over for some extra skills. Two skill points is considered to be one point of advantage. To buy an entirely new skill up to professional level costs 55 skill points – ie 23 background points, with one skill point left over.

### 3.9 Personality Traits

Personality traits are a way of representing the overall personality of your character. Whether he is a brave and noble warrior, loyal friend, or greedy and treacherous ball of slime, your character has a number of traits. Traits not only give an indication of your character, which you should role play, but also give some game effects. Brave characters are less prone to running in fear from supernatural horrors, and lustful characters are more likely to be trapped by the charms of a dryad. Chapter 7 gives full details on these.

### 3.10 Sticking it all Together

Everything listed in this chapter has been roughly put into the order which is best suited for making up the character. As you've most probably noticed, few details are actually given here. Instead, details are given over the following chapters. The brief overview should help explain general terminology, and give you a general idea of where everything fits into the 'grand scheme of things'.

### Creating Your Character

You now know enough to be able to make up a character. If you want, you can either do so now, or read the rest of the character generation chapters (this one through to chapter 7) first to find out about the details involved. If you don't do this, then just skip to the relevant chapters when you need to fill in the details.

### The Character Sheet

The character sheet is where you record all the information about your character. If you want, you can make your own simply by grabbing the nearest sheet of scrap paper. Alternatively you can use the ones supplied with this work.

The standard *Myths* character sheet is an A3 affair, set out as four sides of A4. It has been arranged so that the outer two pages (since it is folded in half like a booklet) concern themselves with mainly non-mechanic related subjects, which you will not need to reference often. The inside two

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## Chapter 3 : Character Generation

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pages are for the mechanics of the system, where your attributes, skills and game related figures are noted.

### The Front Page

At the top of the page is room for *your* name and your *character's* name. Also you should note down your race and gender. There is also room here for your general appearance – from height and weight to your clothes and general bearing. These are best left till last when you have a good idea of who your character is and hence what he looks like. Most of this is for you as the player to come up with – there are no rules for determining your exact background or your age. The appearance entry listed in the top part of the character sheet is for your *appearance* statistic.

The middle of the sheet has three text boxes – one for your appearance (ie actual physical description), one for your demeanour (ie personality, bearing and generally how you get on with everyone else) and lastly one for your background (who you are, where you've come from etc).

The appearance box is probably the most important out of the three text boxes, since it will save many arguments later (if the GM assumes you are wearing sigil inscribed robes because you are a wizard, because you haven't noted down anything, don't complain when everyone guesses your profession and mistrusts you).

Next to these, roughly in the middle of the page, is room to note down your personality traits, and also room for any gifts and curses (which you will undoubtedly have plenty of) – remember to record the levels to which you have bought gifts and curses if applicable.

Finally, at the bottom right, is space to note any allies and companions you may have. These may be dependants, contacts or henchman as described in chapter 5 (obviously dependants and henchmen are going to need their own character sheets, but you can note their names and professions here for the record), but they can also be other player characters in your group, so you can at least remember what each character's name is.

### The Second Page

Here is where you should note your attributes once they have been rolled and decided upon. There are two spaces given for each attribute – the first is for the current level of the attribute, and the second is for its potential.

Next to the attributes, is space to note down your hitpoints. Their full purpose is described in the combat chapter (chapter 8), but simply they are a measure of how much injury you can sustain before dying.

All characters have a number of hitpoints equal to twice their CON, in points. A character with 5D CON has 50 hitpoints (this is also the same as the maximum number it is possible to roll with your CON). This figure should be noted down next to the "100%". This is your hitpoints when you are at peak health. There are three levels below this – 75%, 50% and 25% which are the respective fractions of your maximum hitpoints. You should fill these in as well, remembering to round fractions down. 5D CON, would give:

100%	50
75%	37
50%	25
25%	12

Bleeding and injuries should be left blank, and you want them to stay that way. If they ever get filled in, it means you've been hurt. Their use is explained in chapter 8 : Combat.

### Armour

Next comes a daunting looking table. Actually, it's quite simple, since all you do is copy the figures given for whatever armour you're wearing on each part of your body. If you don't wear armour, then things are even easier – just ignore it! The required data is given in the equipment section, and the details about how armour is used is given in chapter 8.

The left hand side of this table gives your hit locations. Whenever someone hits you in combat, they roll on that table with a d20, to see where they hit you. If you have armour there, the damage is reduced. There are two columns, one for melee combat and one for missile, but they both work in the same way.

Below this is another daunting table, this one for your weapons. Again, most of what is here is simply copied off the equipment lists. It is a lot easier to have it there in front of you though, so everything is reproduced on your sheet.

Four columns in this table will depend on your character. First, there is *damage* and *attack*. They represent the effectiveness of your weapon, and depend on your STR. See chapter 8 for how they are worked out.

*Skill* is your skill in the weapon. since 99% of all usage of your weapon skill will be DEX based, you should note down your skill here averaged with DEX (normally you note down your base skill, and average when you use it). This makes things easier for you, and speeds up the game somewhat.

*Speed* is how quickly you attack with the weapon. It is based on your AGI, your reactions skill (see later) and the

speed of the weapon. Again, see chapter 8 for further details.

Just underneath the melee weapons, is room for missile weapons, which use a slightly different table, but again all that needs to be done is to copy everything off the weapon charts when you know what weapons (if any) you are taking.

At the bottom left of this page is a little box which holds practically anything which doesn't fit elsewhere. First here, is your *experience* – which will be any left over from character generation.

Second, is *confidence* and also your *current confidence*. Normally, both start at a value of 3, but this may change during character creation – and will change during the game. Your *confidence* value only changes at the end of each adventure, since you may get some back after spending it. How much you have for use now is your *current confidence*.

Your *base speed*, *mental speed* and *base move* is described in chapter eight, but represent how quickly you can act, and also how far you can move when running.

*Stuns* and *fatigue* should be left blank since you don't want them to ever be filled in. At some point or other though, they will be. They are a measure of penalties to your character from being knocked around, and generally worn out. There are two types of fatigue – short term (sh) and long term (lg) and both have separate entries.

Lastly, in the remaining space, are three columns for any weapon skills you might have. The base skill should be noted down here, not your skill averaged with DEX. Three columns is probably overkill, but allows you to keep different weapons separate (melee and missile weapons for instance).

### The Third Page

The entire of this page is filled with room for your skills. The six general lists (see chapter 6) are included already noted down so you don't have to refer to the main rules to see what is available. The more common unrelated general skills are given also, as well as some languages and alphabets.

Astute observers will notice little letters following some of the skills. These show the penalty categories for being encumbered (again see some later chapter) or for wearing armour. Consulting the relevant charts will show you what each category represents, and also what penalties are caused by what. Having them down on the character sheet makes things a lot easier.

### The Back Page

On the back of the character sheet is room for notes, equipment and any money you may be carrying. The top of the page is headed "Notes, Jottings and Maps", and can be used for just this.

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## Chapter 3 : Character Generation

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### 4 Character Backgrounds

Despite popular belief, characters do not suddenly pop into existence when they are created and inserted into the campaign by the player. It is assumed that they have had a history before this time, starting with their birth and working up till the time the player takes control.

For much of this, it is up to the player to flesh things out, to work out who the character's parents are (or were – it is often a lot easier to assume the character has no family ties), what sort of upbringing the character had, and what class of society she lived in. Whatever is chosen for this, is left up to the player's own desires, but has no immediate effect on the game. It might turn out later that this background grants some small benefits, but anything concrete must be gained through expenditure of background points. It is also assumed that the character came from a more or less middle class background. Some character types are more suited to being lower class. High class backgrounds must be gained through background points though.

Some time during the early to mid teens, it is assumed the character started on the path which takes her to her current career – ie she started her training and experience needed for the type of character the player has in mind. From this point on, it is important what background the character has, and it grants many benefits for the character.

#### 4.1 Background Benefits

The most obvious advantage gained from a background is that the character gains some basic skills. The exact skills gained obviously vary according to background, but they all represent what the character has picked up, and what she needs to know to be able to follow her chosen career. It should be noted though that after character generation, the player is free to develop whatever skills he wants to for his character. The given ones are a simple base to work from.

Some backgrounds provide starting equipment for characters. This is especially true of the backgrounds for warrior characters – mercenaries, gladiators and so forth. Weapons and armour tends to be expensive, and beyond the level of funds characters begin with. Such characters though *need* such equipment, so it is given as part as their background.

All backgrounds must be paid for with background points. The cost of a background is typically about a tenth of the cost of buying all the skills separately – so taking a background gives large benefits. Nothing is stopping a character not taking one, but there is no real reason for this.

Finally, backgrounds will give a few notes on some non-system benefits – such as past contacts and role playing notes. Nothing so gained is as concrete or powerful as anything obtained through advantages, but every little bit helps.

#### 4.2 Racial Background

Every character gains some basic skills from their race. These are the things that a character learnt during childhood, and also natural racial abilities. These don't include many skills, since for the most part 'natural ability' is covered by the attribute level. Some skills though will obviously be much higher than the normal default.

The basic human character merely starts with 5D in his native language (spoken, not written). All other skills are considered to be at 0D.

#### 4.3 Character Backgrounds

Given here are a few sample backgrounds for the basic human character. They are basic templates which cover rather broad categories. Given in the racial source books are some more specialised varieties, which give both a larger number of choices, and more detailed backgrounds. GM's developing their own worlds can use these as a general guide to add further possible backgrounds. World sourcebooks will generally replace (rather than add to) this list.

##### Acrobat (Cost: 70)

The acrobat is a thief, one skilled at getting into difficult locations. Though she is not as skilled as the burglar in getting past mechanical locks and such, she is good at getting over walls, through windows and across roof tops with the minimum of noise in the minimum time.

##### Acrobat Equipment

Anything remotely to do with climbing, balancing, and other related pursuits an acrobat may count as her starting equipment. She also starts with some lock picks, and 2d6 silds.

##### Acrobat Skills

<b>Athletics</b>	
Balance . . . . .	5D
Climbing . . . . .	5D
Contortion . . . . .	5D
Jumping . . . . .	5D
Stamina . . . . .	3D
Tumbling . . . . .	5D

## Chapter 4 : Character Backgrounds

### Brawling

Dodge . . . . . 5D  
Reactions . . . . . 3D

### Local lore

Geography, urban . . . . . 4D  
Social . . . . . 2D

### Subterfuge

Alertness . . . . . 5D  
Observation . . . . . 4D  
Stealth . . . . . 5D

Awareness . . . . . 5D  
Mechanical . . . . . 3D  
Running . . . . . 5D  
Streetwise . . . . . 4D

Many skills crossover between the burglar and the acrobat, though both excel in different areas., complementing each other nicely.

### Benefits and Restrictions

A acrobat may automatically be a member of a thieves guild if one is present in her city. This counts as a reasonably powerful contact (base cost of 20 or 40), at no modifier for relationship – the benefits of a guild work both ways.

If she is a guild member, then any extra contacts which involve guild operatives (such as a fence, guild master, or official guild contacts) can be purchased for half the normal number of background points.

If the acrobat is not a guild member, then she automatically has an enemy – the guild. This is considered to be 20 or 40 points base (depending on the strength of the guild, less or more is possible, though these figures are the most common), which is infrequent (20% chance of turning up). She does *not* count towards disadvantages though – it is gained free (even though the player will want to pay for it). If the player wishes the guild to turn up more often, then subtract the cost of this automatic disadvantage from the one gained.

An acrobat must have a minimum STR of 5D, and an AGI of at least 6D initially.

### Acrobat Background Notes

Acrobats have often learnt their profession under the tuition of other thieves, normally within the structure of a thieves guild. This doesn't have to be the case though, and some interesting backgrounds could arise if the acrobat was

brought up within a circus, or similar group of entertainers. She could have either left at some point, turning to a life of crime, or maybe the circus is itself a criminal organisation, using it's more public image as a front for more nefarious activities.

### Adept (Cost: 75)

The Adept is scholar of the magical arts. It is considered to be an *Arcane Background* – so such a character may choose from the arcane gifts and curses listed in chapter 5. It is one of the few backgrounds which allows a character to start with skills in magic.

### Adept Equipment

An adept needs very little to get by in the world. After all, magic is flexible enough such that an adept of reasonable intelligence can solve almost any problem with magic alone – the question is not "is it possible?", but "how is it possible?". Likewise, it is a very simple illusion to create fake coins good enough to fool almost anyone. So who needs money? For those adepts with a conscious though, they can start off with 3d6 sils to buy equipment.

### Adept Skills

#### Athletics

Stamina . . . . . 2D

#### Local lores

Any two of choice . . . . . 3D

#### Lore skills

Spell lore . . . . . 5D  
Two sage skills of choice . . . . . 3D

One mundane alphabet . . . . . 5D  
Magical language of choice . . . . . 5D  
Concentration . . . . . 4D

#### Magical skills

Power . . . . . 5D  
One art . . . . . 5D  
One art . . . . . 3D  
Two arts . . . . . 1D

50 XP with which to buy spells.

Note that the magical skills are double cost, and the arts have an original expenditure of 20 XP to learn to 0D, which makes this background more expensive than would normally be the case. Use of these skills will be explained later in the magic section.

### Benefits and Restrictions

If she comes from an academy, then an adept may have a free contact – the exact power and relationship to the contact depends very much on the GM's own campaign. Otherwise, it is assumed that she had a master at some point, and if the player wishes to continue the relationship (ie she didn't get booted out for breaking her master's x100 crystal ball) then she can have a contact for half the normal cost.

A character must have at least 5D KNO and 5D WIL to be an adept, and must also have either the gifts of *partial talent* or *full talent* – both of which though may be obtained at half cost.

### Adept background Notes

The adept is basically the generic starting mage, fresh out of academy (or from under a master's tutorage). Such a character can be anything for the bookworm hedge wizard to a violent fire-mage – the type is based on what arts you as the player selects, and also the arcane gifts and curses taken.

### Bard (Cost: 80)

The bard is a teller of stories, a source of information and most probably a rogue and scoundrel to boot. They are welcomed, if not trusted, almost everywhere they go, for they are often the only source of entertainment and news, especially in rural villages and farmsteads.

Bards have a very broad range of skills, though combat is not amongst them. Many bards do supplement their normal skills for a bit of skill with the sword, for not everyone is friendly even to a bard, and their habit of travelling alone can make them fair prey for music hating outlaws.

### Bard Equipment

A bard starts the game with up to three reasonably priced musical instruments. Normally, this is one large instrument (such as a harp or violin) and a couple of minor secondary ones (such as a flute or recorder).

### Bard Skills

#### Communication

Carousing . . . . .	5D
Con . . . . .	3D
Etiquette . . . . .	5D
Orate . . . . .	5D

#### Local lore

Geography . . . . .	5D
History . . . . .	5D
Social . . . . .	5D

Singing . . . . .	5D
Poetry . . . . .	5D
Mimicry . . . . .	3D
Disguise . . . . .	3D

#### Musical instruments

One instrument . . . . .	5D
Two instruments . . . . .	4D

Written alphabet . . . . .	3D
Spoken language . . . . .	5D
Spoken language . . . . .	3D
Two knowledges . . . . .	4D

In some cultures, bards are the keepers of tradition and lore, as well as entertainers, preserving the history of their people orally, handing it down from generation to generation. If the GM allows, characters from such cultures may take knowledge skills instead of language skills.

### Benefits and Restrictions

Bards gain no game related benefits apart from their skills. A bard though is generally well received wherever they go, though this applies to any character masquerading as a bard.

Bard character's must have a minimum CHA and KNO of 6D when they start.

### Bard Background Notes

Bards are travellers by nature, so could have come from anywhere. Normally, they are selected and trained by an experienced bard, and have to earn their tuition through work. A bard character will generally be reasonably well travelled, hence their wide selection of languages.

### Burglar (Cost: 55)

The burglar is a thief specialised in house breaking , relying on stealth, agility and the fact that most other people are asleep when she is about her work. They are found only within large towns, for a large population is required for them to be able to ply their trade without milking everyone dry within weeks.

A burglar is subtle, avoiding confrontations whenever possible, preferring to run then get into a fight. Few burglars could fight if they wanted to – those that need to are obviously not very good burglars.

## Chapter 4 : Character Backgrounds

### Burglar Equipment

A burglar actually needs very little in the way of specialist equipment, but there is loads of stuff which tends to come in useful. All burglars do start with a set of lock picks of average quality. She also starts with 2d6 silver coins of starting money, with which to buy anything else she deems necessary. It is left to player experience to work out what is useful and what isn't though. GM's should not allow an entry on the equipment list along the lines of *thieving stuff* – it is far too open to abuse.

### Burglar Skills

#### Athletics

Balance . . . . .	5D
Climbing . . . . .	5D
Tumbling . . . . .	3D

#### Communication

Con . . . . .	3D
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#### Subterfuge

Alertness . . . . .	5D
Observation . . . . .	5D
Stealth . . . . .	5D

#### Local Lore

Geography, urban . . . . .	5D
Society . . . . .	2D

Awareness . . . . .	3D
Disguise . . . . .	3D
Evaluate . . . . .	3D
Mechanical . . . . .	5D
Streetwise . . . . .	5D

Note that a burglar has no weapon skills – she relies on stealth and cunning to get things done. Individual characters can buy weapon skills separately if they really want to.

One skill which could be useful for burglar characters is the *ambush* skill, which allows for particularly successful strikes from behind. It isn't included in the main package of skills though since generally burglars do not like killing people (and guilds tend to frown on such activity as well – after all, you don't kill the goose that lays the golden egg do you?).

### Benefits and Restrictions

A burglar may automatically be a member of a thieves guild if one is present in her city. This counts as a reasonably powerful contact (base cost of 20 or 40), at no modifier for relationship – the benefits of a guild work both ways.

If she is a guild member, then any extra contacts which involve guild operatives (such as a fence, guild master, or official guild contacts) can be purchased for half the normal number of background points.

If the burglar is not a guild member, then she automatically has an enemy – the guild. This is considered to be 20 or 40 points base (depending on the strength of the guild, less or more is possible, though these figures are the most common), which is infrequent (20% chance of turning up). She does *not* count towards disadvantages though – it is gained free (even though the player will want to pay for it). If the player wishes the guild to turn up more often, then subtract the cost of this automatic disadvantage from the one gained.

Burglar characters need a minimum DEX and PER of 5D initially.

### Burglar Background Notes

Burglars are city dwellers – they simply cannot ply their trade beyond the walls of civilisation. They also require more than just skills, needing the services of fences, and on particularly difficult jobs, other thieves as well. As such, these are the type who are most likely to form a guild of thieves. If there is a guild present in her city, then she may be a member or not (player's choice). Of course, the guild doesn't like free-lance thieves and will do their best to persuade her to join, or to kill her, especially if she becomes too prolific.

### Cutpurse (Cost: 30)

A cutpurse is a street thief, one who specialises in picking pockets and running very fast.. They make up the bulk of young, immature thieves in most towns and cities, and like the burglar, and not found outside these environments.

Because of their generally low number of skills, they will be at a disadvantage skill wise to other player characters, and are suited to those who just want to play an annoying kid, and as templates for NPC's.

### Cutpurse Equipment

1d6 silver coins and a set of rather poor quality clothes. That's all – a cutpurse neither needs nor can afford much else.

### Cutpurse Skills

#### Brawling

Dodge . . . . .	5D
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Reactions . . . . . 3D

**Local Lore**

City layout . . . . . 4D

**Subterfuge**

Alertness . . . . . 4D

Observation . . . . . 3D

Sleight . . . . . 5D

Trailing . . . . . 5D

Streetwise . . . . . 4D

A cutpurse is best suited for life on the streets. They avoid fights, except the occasional street brawl. Their lack of stealth skills relates to the fact that they work best in a crowded street, rather than in dark alleys or while breaking into a house.

**Benefits and Restrictions**

A cutpurse may or may not have a contact in the form of a thieves guild (if one exists). Unlike for many other thieves, guilds tend to ignore cutpurses since they are considered small fry beneath the notice of the guild. Where the guild is exceptionally weak and poor though, this may not be the case (and Beggars Guilds are not unheard of either). In this latter case, the cutpurse may have an enemy as for a burglar if the guild enforces cutpurses to join – it will be a weak enemy though.

A cutpurse must have a DEX of at least 5D.

**Cutpurse Background Notes**

Often an orphan, cutpurses grew up on the streets, learning to fend for themselves from an early age. They may often be members of guilds or small groups of like minded folk, though they are just as often freelance, working for themselves. Guilds tolerate them since they make very little money, and are too much hassle to track down anyway.

**Mercenary (Cost: 50)**

A mercenary is an experienced warrior who hires himself out for pay. They are generally considered untrustworthy, since they are loyal to the money a cause pays them rather than the cause itself, but do have their own code of honour, which the majority of them follow. A mercenary paid to do a job will do it, and is surprisingly difficult to bribe – as long as his employer doesn't double cross him or withhold important information (did I really say only 100 bloodthirsty barbarians? I *meant* 1000!).

**Mercenary Equipment**

Mercenaries get some armour and weapons free – after all, they can't practice their trade very easily without such. A mercenary may have one suit of chain mail, and two weapons of choice (where a weapon can be a shield). The weapons must be ones the mercenary is skilled in – at least one must be one of his primary weapons. They also start with 2d6 silver coins.

**Mercenary Skills**

**Athletics**

Stamina . . . . . 5D

**Brawling**

Dodge . . . . . 4D

Punch . . . . . 4D

Reactions . . . . . 5D

**Communication**

Command . . . . . 3D

**Local Lore**

Geography . . . . . 3D

Society . . . . . 3D

**Riding**

One animal . . . . . 3D

**Subterfuge**

Alertness . . . . . 3D

Observation . . . . . 2D

**Survival**

Direction sense . . . . . 3D

Area of choice . . . . . 3D

2 weapons . . . . . 5D

2 weapons . . . . . 3D

First aid . . . . . 3D

A mercenary's skills cover more than just the use of his weapons. A mercenary needs to be able to survive in the wilderness (at least to some degree), be aware of danger, and to give at least rudimentary first aid to his companions after a fight.

**Benefits and Restrictions**

Generally, a mercenary will have knowledge of mercenary bands, employers and weaponsmiths and armourers whom the mercenary has dealt with in the past. Contacts of these sorts are half cost for a mercenary.

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## Chapter 4 : Character Backgrounds

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If a character is to be a mercenary, they must have an initial STR and CON of at least 5D.

### Mercenary Background Notes

Mercenaries tend to be the type of people who don't like having their backgrounds known by others. Rarely is such a life style chosen through choice, though such is not unknown. A few mercenaries actually fight for a particular cause, though many simply take each job as it comes, thinking not much further ahead than where their next meal is coming from, if they even live that long.

A mercenary may have become such out of choice, because he was fleeing the law, because his home and friends were killed by brigands, or quite often because of the consequences following a night with the wrong woman.

### Ranger (Cost: 75)

The ranger is a woodsman, hunter and scout. Often loners, they have an intimate knowledge of the wilderness, either patrolling a region in the service of some lord, or out simply to get away from the hassles of civilisations, living amongst nature simply because its what they like best.

### Ranger Equipment

A ranger may start the game with two weapons of choice, which must be the ones the ranger is skilled in (see below). A ranger can also start with cuirboilli and/or soft leather armour. They have 1d8 silvers of money at the start.

### Ranger Skills

#### Athletics

Stamina. . . . . 5D

#### Brawling

Reactions . . . . . 5D

#### Local Lore

Fauna/Flora. . . . . 5D

Geography . . . . . 5D

#### Subterfuge

Alertness. . . . . 5D

Observation . . . . . 3D

Stealth. . . . . 5D

#### Survival

Direction sense. . . . . 5D

Tracking . . . . . 5D

One area . . . . . 5D

One area . . . . . 3D

Awareness. . . . . 3D

First aid. . . . . 4D

Mimicry . . . . . 4D

One suitable sage skill . . . . . 5D

One missile weapon . . . . . 5D

One other weapon. . . . . 3D

Ranger's get a wide range of skills, mostly to do with surviving in the wilderness, hunting and tracking. The area skills for the survival list should be ones the ranger could be familiar with. A 'suitable sage skill' is one appropriate to either the wilderness, or the specific region. A ranger who dwells around faerie woodlands, might have *faerie lore* for example. Other appropriate ones might be world lore (for a well travelled ranger) or beast lore.

### Benefits and Restrictions

If a ranger starts with an animal companion (bought as an advantage), then they only have to pay half cost for it. Any such companions bought beyond the first though are at normal cost.

A ranger must have a STR and KNO of at least 5D, and a CON and PER of at least 6D initially.

### Ranger Backgrounds

Though they don't have to be, rangers are often laconic loners who live apart from society. Of course, this stereotypical view is as often wrong as it is right – there are many rangers who work for lords and other land owners, patrolling their estates, looking after the hunting grounds and generally making themselves useful. Some have been known to be hired as (or by) bounty hunters on occasion, since their tracking and other wilderness skills are as much use against humans as they are against animals.

### Rogue (Cost: 60)

The rogue is part warrior, part thief. A traveller by nature, never really settling in one place for long – but whether this is due to personal preference, or to avoid the wrath of the law, is difficult to say. Rogues are con men, swindlers, bandits and thieves.

### Rogue Equipment

The rogue starts with a single weapon of choice, and leather or cuirboilli armour. They also have a set of lock picks for their more subtle activities. Rogues start with 2d6 silver coins of starting money.

## Rogue Skills

<b>Athletics</b>	
Stamina . . . . .	4D
<b>Brawling</b>	
Dodge . . . . .	4D
Reactions . . . . .	4D
<b>Communication</b>	
Con . . . . .	5D
<b>Local lore</b>	
Geography . . . . .	5D
Society . . . . .	2D
<b>Subterfuge</b>	
Alertness . . . . .	5D
Ambush . . . . .	2D
Observation . . . . .	4D
Sleight . . . . .	2D
Stealth . . . . .	4D
Trailing . . . . .	2D
<b>Survival</b>	
Direction sense . . . . .	3D
One area . . . . .	3D
Disguise . . . . .	2D
First aid . . . . .	3D
Mechanical . . . . .	3D
One weapon skill . . . . .	5D
Two weapon skills . . . . .	3D
One language . . . . .	3D
Two mundane skills . . . . .	3D

The rogue tends to be a jack of all trades, being skilled in thieving, fighting and talking their way out of situations. Of course, they aren't as good at fighting as a warrior, nor as good at thieving as a thief, but they can't have everything.

## Benefits and Restrictions

The rogue tends to live apart from society, so doesn't get the chance to settle down and gain the sort of benefits many other characters get. Because of their travels though, a rogue can have contacts, skills and so forth which aren't available within the starting campaign area – basically the rogue can be considered to have been anywhere within at least a few hundred kilometres, maybe more.

## Rogue Background

The background of a rogue is as diverse as there are rogues. Some simply got bored, others are running away, some may be seeking vengeance. There are rogues who are good natured scoundrels, others who are immoral bandits murders. The only thing they really have in common is that they don't really have a place they can call home.

## Young Nobleman (Cost: 50)

More derogatory terms for such a character might be a fop, or a dandy. They are generally young noblemen who have little better to do with their time than to seek out fun and excitement, knowing that one day they are going to inherit a lot of many – unless they are disowned first.

## Nobleman Equipment

A nobleman starts with a decent set of clothes (excellent quality, plus probably a wardrobe of good quality clothing), a single good looking melee weapon, and 5d10 silvers in starting loose change.

## Young Nobleman Skills

<b>Athletics</b>	
Stamina . . . . .	2D
<b>Brawling</b>	
Dodge . . . . .	3D
Punch . . . . .	3D
Reactions . . . . .	3D
<b>Communication</b>	
Bargain . . . . .	3D
Carousing . . . . .	5D
Command . . . . .	5D
Etiquette . . . . .	5D
<b>Local lore</b>	
Society . . . . .	5D
Two of choice . . . . .	3D
Speak Olabeth . . . . .	3D
Write Labeth . . . . .	5D
Sword of choice . . . . .	4D
Weapon of choice . . . . .	3D
One knowledge . . . . .	3D
Dance . . . . .	4D

A nobleman's skills reflect some limited training as a warrior, some rudimentary knowledge of academic skills, and good social skills. The latter are generally the nobleman's strongest area.

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## Chapter 4 : Character Backgrounds

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### Benefits and Restrictions

A nobleman often comes from a rich family with lots of powerful friends. Of course, a character nobleman may well have been disowned by his family, leaving him with little, but that's up to the player of course.

A nobleman gets several benefits from his background. Firstly, the costs for all advantages to do with wealth, social level and contacts are halved, though the latter may only be contacts which the character would logically have – such as others in high society.

Also, costs for henchmen for the nobleman are halved also – such a character often has a retinue of servants and bodyguards with him wherever he goes.

A nobleman must have an initial CHA and KNO of 5D, beyond that they are not restricted.

### Young Nobleman Backgrounds

A nobleman probably belongs to a rich (or not so rich – nobility doesn't necessarily mean monetary wealth in a feudal society) noble family. If the character wishes to have the support of this family, then he must buy this support in the form of a contact as normal (though it is half cost of course). Alternatively, the character might be the black sheep of the family, outcast for some vile misdeed, or even a common conman posing as a noble, though the punishment for such is death in many places. As always, the choice is in the player's hands.



### 5 Gifts and Curses

So far, a character has been defined game-wise by her attributes, and her race. Obviously though there are other differences, apart from personality, between people in real life. Some people just seem to have the knack in doing certain things. Some people are ambidextrous, others incredibly fast. There are people who can pick up languages just by glancing through a vocabulary, while others never learn anything more than a half dozen words however much time and effort they put in. Generally, the sort of things which aren't really definable as skills even – they are simply innate abilities of the person.

In *Myths*, all characters can have such abilities. These abilities are known as *gifts*, and their opposites (those detrimental to characters) are known as *curses*. Players get to choose what advantages and disadvantages they have – there is no random determination here.

A character cannot have any number of gifts though. Gifts are considered to be advantages, and hence must be paid for with background points. It is also possible to obtain curses, which are detrimental to the character. Curses are considered to be disadvantages, and hence gain the character background points, though no more than the normal limit may be obtained.

Gifts can be chosen so that they are the entire basis of the character – they are the character's main advantage. On the other hand, they can be chosen to give a character several small advantages. The choice is very much up to the player.

#### Gifts and Non-Player Characters

All characters may have gifts and curses, from the lowliest most useless peasant idiot, up to heroes, powerful wizards and kings. The basic human character can have anything up to 300 points of gifts. This though only really applies to player characters and other non-player characters who have taken the effort to make something of their lives.

All characters, non-player and otherwise, have the potential to have gifts, as many as or even more than player characters. The fact of the matter is though, the majority of people are simple peasants or townfolk who have never done anything more exciting than selling goods or labouring on a farm. They've never realised their possible potential, and hence don't get as many background points as player characters do.

This doesn't mean that all people the characters meet are going to have fewer gifts, just the majority. Generally, those which have been successful in life, and those whose

occupations are dangerous or hazardous should be made up in the same way as player characters are. This includes practically everyone in a military profession for example. Unique NPCs should simply be given the attributes, gifts and curses the GM wants them to have. After all, the normal character generation rules are just there to ensure player characters start off on a more or less even footing.

A second point to bear in mind when deciding on gifts and curses for NPC's is that gifts by their very nature are quirks of fate, an accident of birth. A character doesn't sit down one day and learn to become a linguist. A character either is from day one, or isn't. In a few cases, it is possible to do this (a fact which will be dealt with later), but on the whole it isn't. Player's are given conscious choice of gifts for the reason that it is more fun, and means they have some control over the type of character they play.

This means that though it might make sense for every warrior to be *fast*, and *resistant to pain*, it isn't realistic. For purposes of village militia and other run of the mill soldiery, simply giving them a few relevant skills is sufficient. These sorts of people don't make war their profession, so shouldn't be given such gifts simply because it would be useful to them.

How far this is taken is up to individual GM's. If you as GM believe that all characters should be made equally, with no advantages going to player characters, then fine, simply create all mercenaries as you would a PC mercenary, all thieves as you would a PC thief.

One good idea is to reserve the more useful gifts for elite groups of people, or restrict them for a small subset of each group. A band of a dozen mercenaries for example might have half their number having gifts such as *fast*, or *lightning reflexes*, and half of those having gifts such as *warrior*.

#### Gaining Gifts During the Game

There are several situations in which gifts or curses may be gained during normal play. A character could gain a good or bad reputation, loose a limb, or be branded a criminal. Such happenings though have nothing to do with these rules. If a character gains a reputation, or gains an enemy, then the GM may refer to these rules and base the effects of such on the relevant gift or curse. Doing so though does not in any way allow the character to purchase more gifts (because she happens to have another 40 points of effective curses). Likewise, if a character manages to loose a gift or curse during a game (an enemy is slain, a reputation proved false), the character does not have to *buy it off* as in some other game systems.

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## Chapter 5 : Gifts and Curses

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Under normal circumstances, it is assumed that further gifts of special nature (ie abilities, and not those whose effects are based on role playing) cannot be purchased after initial character generation time, so no hard and fast rules are given for doing so.

Realistically, this may not always be true though, so though allowing such is not *against* the rules (though even if it were, such shouldn't stop the GM allowing anything he feels should be allowed), it is not covered by them either. Given here though are some (very) rough guidelines for allowing such in the game.

Since gifts are given a value equivalent to XP, experience can be used to buy gifts later on (though no more curses beyond those gained at the start may be gained to give extra XP). It is suggested though that the cost of buying gifts after character generation be more expensive, say 50% to 100% extra cost, depending on the gift in question.

Gaining further gifts should be greatly discouraged by the GM to make such happenings rare. Just because the *linguist* gift could be purchased for 45 XP, doesn't mean that it can be. Such a decision is up to the GM. Furthermore, it should take time and effort on the part of the character. If a character has access to a library containing foreign texts, several sages who know linguistics, and lots of time (and probably money as well), then the GM may rule that after a few months of study, and expenditure of 45 XP, the character now has the *linguist* gift.

Anything to do with raising attributes, or magical abilities can only be chosen at character generation. Some physical gifts and curses are also obviously 'fixed' from generation time. Simply, it is up to the GM to decide each case on its merits. If the player can come up with a good argument for why she should be allowed a further gift (an argument which the GM agrees with of course!), then allow it. If not, don't.

### Racial Gifts

Over the next few pages are given many possible gifts and curses available to characters. This though, is not a complete list, for there are many other possibilities – players and GM's are bound to think of some, and as always they are free to add to this list.

Furthermore, individual races may well have their own unique gifts. Tough hardy races (such as the stereotypical fantasy dwarf) might be able to get immunity to poison, or cheaper costs for toughness and skill at arms. As with everything to do with specific races, consult the relevant source book. These gifts and curses here can be used by anyone. Racial gifts and curses may only be used by the race

they apply to.

### Restricted Gifts and Curses

Some gifts and curses have been marked with an asterisk (\*). These are ones which, depending on the GM's campaign, may not be available to all characters. Specifically, some of these may be best being restricted to certain races (ie the *berserker* gift may be restricted to certain barbarian races), but are described here since they are more or less common on all campaign worlds.

Generally, if the GM has his own races which their own selection of gifts and curses, those so marked should be ignored where listed in these rules, and only allowable for races which have them listed under their own selections.

Secondly, a number of curses are not actually worth anything to certain character types or certain campaigns. If the GM doesn't allow characters to spend time in training for instance, then taking *inept student* or *poor reader* isn't going to be a disadvantage.

Basically, players should check with their GM before taking such gifts or curses to see if they are allowed at all, or restricted to certain races or backgrounds.

### 5.1 Attributes

Attributes can be raised and lowered using background points. It costs 10 points to gain +1 to an attribute, and -5 to have a -1 penalty. See section 3.4 for the full details.

### 5.2 Appearance

The character's appearance can be shifted upwards or downwards with background points, at a cost of 10 points for each +1 or -1. See section 3.4 for details.

### 5.3 Wealth and Status

Buying wealth and social status counts as an advantage, and can be bought with background points. See chapter 3, sections 3.5 to 3.7 for all the details.

### 5.4 Physical Gifts

**Ambidextrous (25/60):** There are two 'levels' of ambidexterity available to you. The first type allows you to use either hand as if it were your 'best' hand – ie you have no off-hand. This costs 25 points. The second (60 point) form is more powerful, it enables you to use both hands with equal skill. This applies mostly to weapon use. Normally, a skill is

required for *each* hand – so if you were to use a weapon in each hand, you would need a *left*-hand skill and a *right*-hand skill. With 60 point ambidexterity, only one skill is required.

**Archer (40):** You are exceptionally adept at using all thrown or missile weapons, getting a +1D bonus to all such skills when you use them.

**Athlete (30):** Through natural ability and lots of practice, you are exceptionally good at athletic skills. You gain a bonus of +1D when using any skill in the athletics list.

**Double jointed (25):** You can move your body into weird and wonderful positions which are seemingly impossible for a normal person. You gain +2D on any skills which could make use of this. Possible uses are *wrestling* and *contortions*.

**Fast (30/90):** You are faster than most other people, your base speed being reduced by one (30 points) or two (90 points). Your AGI+*reactions* remains unaffected. Note that this cannot bring your base speed down to less than two regardless of your AGI+*reactions*. It cannot be taken more than once.

**Fast runner (15):** You are an exceptionally fast runner, Your move is increased by 2D – you can only take this gift once. This has the effect of raising your base move by 0.5.

**Fighter (25):** As a child, you were always the one who picked all the fights because you could win. You then spent years honing your skills in bar room brawls. Skilled at fighting bare handed, you gain a +1D bonus to all skills in the brawling list.

**Hardy Convalescence (20):** You are quick to recover from injuries, getting a +2D bonus to your CON when recovering them naturally. This does not apply to any chirurgery rolls you or others make on you.

**Lightning reflexes (35):** Normally, all characters start combat at a base segment of 10. You on the other hand can react quickly to new situations, starting instead at segment 5. At the GM's discretion, this may give you a bonus elsewhere as well in some situations.

**Need little food or water (40):** You only need to eat half as much food and drink half as much water as is normally the case. This does have the side effect that you can't eat as much as normal people, you tend to pick at your food, eating little even when you don't need to. This isn't normally a problem, but might be seen as a breach of etiquette in polite society.

**Need little sleep (50):** You need only half as much sleep as anyone else. Normally, this means you require only about four hours sleep a night, able to be awake for the other twenty. You could get away with three hours if need be, or even two if you push it. You suffer the same penalties as anyone else though. If you do sleep for a full eight hours, it counts as two nights rest. This also has the added benefit of giving you an extra 25% more time in which to study and learn (see chapter 6). Basically, you gain an extra week every four weeks for purposes of this. Of course, if you are being trained, then you can only take advantage of this extra time if you can find someone to teach you at odd hours.

**Resistant to disease (15):** You rarely suffer the effects of disease, getting a +3D bonus to your CON whenever resisting them.

**Resistant to poison (25):** Your metabolism is remarkably good at resisting the effects of poison. You get a +3D bonus to your CON whenever resisting such substances.

**Warrior (50):** You take to weapons like a duck to water. Whenever you use a melee weapon, you gain a +1D bonus with it. This does not apply to fighting bare handed.

**Well built (40):** You are strongly built, able to withstand a lot more punishment than most other people. You have an extra 10 hitpoints (effectively a +1D to your BOD) beyond that gained from your CON.

### 5.5 Mental Gifts

**Attentive student (25\*):** You learn quickly when taught by another. Each week you spend in study under the tuition of a teacher, you gain an extra point of experience beyond that normally gained for such tuition.

**Berserker (40\*):** You are the sort of person it is not wise to upset, since you quickly fly into a violent rage. You gain the ability to use the *Berserk Fury* skill – it starts at 0D and is WIL based. You are also prone to violence (see the chapter on personality traits).

**Book worm (35\*):** You love to spend your days with your nose stuck in a book, and have learnt to spend such time productively. Whenever you are learning skills from a book, you gain an extra point of experience each week you spend in such study. If you also have the *need little sleep* gift, then this bonus also applies to the 'fifth' week in each month of study.

**Busy body (30):** You've always been one for sticking your nose into where it doesn't belong, generally finding out about everyone and everything. You gain a +1D bonus when using any skill within the Local Lore list.

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## Chapter 5 : Gifts and Curses

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**Eidetic Memory (100):** The ability to remember things, especially images, almost perfectly. Being able to glance at a map, picture or scene for a few seconds enables you to recall that image again when needed. An *easy* KNO check is required to remember something over a week ago, a *moderate* check for over a month, and a *hard* check for over a year. Furthermore, any skills which this could help you learn (ie many sage skills, but *not* magic skills), are at half XP cost (skills below 2D go up by 2 stages for 1 XP) to learn. This gift does not combine with *fast learner*, but both may be obtained, simply take whichever is the most useful for any given situation.

**Gifted author (15\*):** You have a natural affinity with communicating via the written word. Whenever you write a book about a subject, its quality is increased by one.

**Intuition (40):** You have the knack of making a correct decision based on insufficient information – ie wild guesses. Whenever faced with a random choice, you can trust on your luck. There is about a 50% chance (the GM rolls of course) of you guessing the best one. The GM may modify the chance as desired. Note that the ‘best’ choice can often be unclear at the time the decision is made, so intuition may only give you a favourable choice.

**Fast learner (75):** You learn skills rapidly, quickly putting experience and training to good use. In game terms, the cost to put up a skill by one stage is reduced by 1 XP. For skills less than 2D, the cost is halved (so 1 XP develops a 0D skill to 0D+4). This gift may only be taken once. It does not affect any skills you gain automatically from your race and background, but does come into affect if you take extra experience an advantage.

**Linguist (30):** You seem to be a natural for picking up languages. You only have to pay half cost to develop language skills (including magical languages). You still have to obey the normal restrictions on learning them though – ie you must have someone teach you the language.

**Literate (20):** You can read and write your native alphabet at 5D automatically, regardless of your background. If your character’s background includes this skill, then simply take the highest.

**Mathematician (10):** You have a marvellous head for numbers. If for any reason your character needs to do some basic arithmetic of any kind, then you as a player are allowed to take time out to do all the necessary figuring and when you’ve finished, it is assumed your character did it all practically instantly! This gift probably won’t be used much (not in a fantasy campaign at any rate), so GM’s should be generous with what it allows.

**Musical ability (10):** You are a natural musician. All skills involving musical instruments and singing get a +1D whenever you use them.

**Never forget a face (15):** Once you see someone, you rarely forget who they are, and when you see them again, you will remember them and also where you met them. Any KNO based observation difficulties related with any of the above are halved.

**Ranger (20):** You have a natural affinity for the wilderness, maybe having been born and bred there. You gain a +1D bonus to all skills in the survival list.

### 5.6 Social Gifts

**Beautiful voice (15):** You have an exceptionally beautiful voice, which can be put to all sorts of devious uses. Because of it, you gain a +2D bonus to the *singing* skill, and also in any situation you could make use of your voice – generally with seduction skills (not general uses of *con* or *orate* though).

**Body reading (15):** This gift allows you to start with the skill of the same name. Simply, you can tell if someone is lying, worried or whatever from their bodily actions (such as scratching, looking you in the eye and that sort of thing). The skill starts at 0D, and is usually either PER or CHA based.

**Charming (30):** You are friendly and outward going, someone who always seems to get on well with people. You gain a +1D bonus whenever you use a skill from the communication list.

**Gifted teacher (20\*):** You are good at teaching people, and whenever you do so, your students gain one extra experience point each week you teach them.

**Empathy (40):** Maybe you have minor telepathic ability, or maybe you are just very good at reading people’s body language. Whatever the reasons, you have the knack of ‘feeling’ peoples emotions, able to tell when they are lying, see when they are frightened or emotionally hurt. This gift allows you a +2D bonus when using anything to oppose someone’s *con*, and can also be applicable to *orate* when you are playing on their emotions. Other effects are up to the GM to decide depending on the situation.

**Inner Strength (30/50):** You have a personality trait of +4 or +5 (for a 30 point or 50 point cost respectively), in some trait which would normally be advantageous. Examples include bravery, chastity, or even directed traits such as love. Loyalty counts as *fanaticism* which is considered to be a curse. You may only take one personality trait at +5.

**Natural Leader (25):** For some reason people tend to look to you to lead them. You have an aura of confidence that surrounds you, making people think that you are the sort of person who knows exactly what is going on, and where you are going in life. For this reason, they are more inclined to follow you and do as you say. If you are obviously an enemy, then this gift of course has no effect (except that people might target you since you are obviously 'in charge'). When using any CHA skill when ordering people about, you gain a +2D bonus. Though both gifts may be taken together, this gift cannot be used at the same time as the *charming* gift.

**Piercing gaze (25):** As a baby, people always said you had the 'evil look', and that there was something inherently evil about you. As far as you can tell, you are quite normal, except for your ability to frighten people with a single stare. Whenever you have the chance to look into someone's eyes, you can make them feel uneasy, as if you are looking into their mind, reading their soul. If they fail a bravery check difficulty 30 then they are fearful of you (they won't run in terror, but they will be less likely to cross you). Each +15 to the cost of this gift adds 5 to the bravery difficulty.

### 5.7 Sensory Gifts

A special note should be made regarding some of these gifts which improve a character's basic senses. These senses are vision, olfactory, hearing, dark sight and infravision. For a human, all are rated at 0.

**Absolute direction (25):** You have the uncanny ability to always know which direction they are facing in relation to some fixed point (not necessarily a compass direction, but assuming this gives the *player* a reference to work with). Note that being knocked unconscious or otherwise made senseless can upset this sense, but not being able to see does not.

**Absolute timing (20):** You always seem to know what time it is, even with no 'normal' way of finding this out. Being unconscious upsets this ability, though you can time natural sleep almost to the minute (ie if you settle down to sleep for four hours, you will wake up four hours later). After being senseless, you can still know how long it has been since you woke up.

**Danger sense (40):** There are times when you get the feeling of being watched, or that something somewhere is wrong. Whenever danger threatens, or someone is taking an interest in you, the GM rolls your PER at difficulty 25 – success means you sense something is up. A critical may tell you a bit more. If you are being magically scried, then the difficulty is 35.

**Dark sight (10):** You are particularly good at seeing in the dark, and your dark sight is improved by +2 each time you take this gift, up to +10. Beyond +10, this gift only gives a +1 bonus. Normal vision is unaffected, and you still cannot see in pitch blackness.

**Keen hearing (5):** You have especially acute hearing. Your hearing sense is increased by +2 each time you take this gift, up to +10, beyond which this gift only gives a +1 bonus. The bonus applies to any PER skill checks which involve hearing, including *alertness*, *awareness*, *stealth* and anything else the GM deems applicable.

**Keen taste and smell (3):** Your sense of taste and smell is especially good, and each time you take this gift, your olfactory sense is increased by +2, up to +10, beyond which the increase is only +1. The bonus applies to any rolls involving sense of smell or taste, and can also be applied to sensing poisons, or even recognising such, at the GM's option.

**Keen vision (5):** Your vision sense is improved by +2 for normal day light each time you take this gift, up to +10. Beyond a value of +10, this gift only gives a +1 bonus. The effects of this are that your vision sense adds to all rolls involving sight, including *observation* and *alertness* skills. Dark sight is unaffected.

**Light sleeper (20):** You are easily wakened from sleep. Whenever a PER check is required while asleep to see if you wake up, use your alertness instead, unless in a magically induced or drugged sleep, in which case normal rules apply.

**Peripheral vision (20):** You can notice events happening just to the edge of your vision. Whenever something happens to your sides, or slightly behind, you get a PER check to notice.

**Sharp senses (40):** You are quiet, sharp of senses and highly observant. You get a +1D bonus whenever you use a skill from the subterfuge list.

### 5.8 Arcane Gifts

The following gifts all involve the use of magic. In theory, any character make select these gifts, though they will generally only be beneficial to those who have taken an arcane background (see previous chapter).

**Affinity with armour (35):** Any increase to the power cost of spells caused by the wearing of metal armour is halved (round down). This gift is not of any use if the GM does not use the rules for armour restrictions.

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## Chapter 5 : Gifts and Curses

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**Affinity with art (30/60/120):** You have an innate ability in the use of one art of magic. Depending on what level you take this gift to, you gain either a +1D, +2D or +3D bonus to that art *after averaging*. This affinity may be taken multiple times for different arts.

**Animal affinity (15/30):** You have an affinity with understanding the thoughts of animals. For 15 points, the WIL bonus animals gain for being of an 'alien mindset' is halved. For 30 points, it is quartered.

**Compatible mind (20):** You are good at interpreting the thoughts of other races. Any bonuses a creature gains to its WIL for being of a different race when resisting mind spells is halved.

**Controlled gestures (10/20/40):** For each level of this gift, you are -1 on the Gesture component of each spell cast, down to a minimum of 0. With a level of 30 in this, you don't need ever to move your arms or hands to cast a spell.

**Durable magic (35):** The duration of all your spells is doubled. This includes both ritual and simple magic.

**Efficient magic (40):** Spells you cast are more efficient than normal, costing less power when you cast them. The power cost of a spell is reduced by one.

**Fast caster (55):** You can *fast cast* spells just as efficiently as you can slow cast them. Power cost for fast casting is not doubled, but you still suffer the increased chance of a fumble.

**Fast thinker (25):** Your base mental speed is reduced by one for all actions involving it. This can never take your mental speed to less than one, whatever your *reactions*.

**Life linked magic (50):** You have the ability to push yourself just that little bit further than other magi when casting spells. Whenever a spell fails, you have the option of pushing yourself to try and succeed in casting it, by spending long term fatigue (this decision is made *after* the roll to cast the spell has been made). Each +1D bonus you give yourself, gives you 1D of both fatigue and also stuns. The extra bonus is rolled by itself, and added to the rolls you made for each skill. An extra fumble die is rolled again for each skill, and criticals are based on the number of *extra* dice you are rolling. After the rolls (you can only push yourself once), you must make a CON+*stamina* check equal to 5 per 1D of fatigue gained, or die from the sudden exhaustion. Having spare confidence when you try this is suggested.

**Linked far sense (45):** You have the ability to cast spells at great distance when casting them through far sense spells. When this is done, you have the option of replacing

the distance modifier of the second spell with the distance modifier of the far sense spell it is being cast through.

**Mage smith (25):** When using craft skills in the creation of magical items, you add a 20% bonus to your craft *roll* when crafting the item.

**Partial talent (15):** You have a limited ability to use magic. The base difficulty of all spells is doubled when you cast them. Of course, cantrips are unaffected (base difficulty 0), though spells able level 15 become impractical.

**Penetrative magic (5/10/20):** Offensive spells you cast tend to be more deadly. Any offensive spells in a single art (your choice) gains either a +5, +10 or +15 bonus to penetration. This gift can be taken for multiple arts.

**Powerful (50):** You have a strong connection to the weave, enabling you to call on more magical power than other magi. You gain a 50% bonus to your power points.

**Precise caster (40):** Any ranged spell affects you cast are very precise and accurate. Basically, the base range difficulty for your *directed spells* skill is halved – though any modifiers are added as normal.

**Quiet magic (10/20/40):** For each level, you are at -1 on the Verbal component of any spell cast. At the highest level, even the most disruptive spells can be cast without even a whisper passing your lips.

**Ranged spells (25):** The distance modifier for all your spells is doubled. This does not affect the *directed spells* difficulty.

**Spontaneous magic (20):** You are good at making spells up on the spot, making it easy for you to cast spells you don't know. The penalty you suffer for casting spontaneous magic is halved.

**Strong magic (50):** Your magic is strong and powerful, able to withstand the effects of anti-magic much more effectively than other wizards spells can. The toughness of all your spells (the ability of a spell to resist anti-magic) is increased by 50%.

**Subtle magic (30):** Your magic is subtle, gently blending in with its surroundings and making it much harder to detect. Any cloaking you put on your spells is increased by 50%.

**Talent (60):** The ability to use magic. Without either this or partial talent, you cannot even hope to use magic. This gift is also known as *full talent*, since it allows full use of the magical arts. Only of immediate use to those who take

an arcane background, though there is no reason why other characters cannot learn magical skills later on (other than the normal reasons of being incredibly difficult to find a teacher).

### 5.9 Miscellaneous Gifts

**Animal affinity (10):** You are friendly with all sorts of natural animals. Passive creatures are unafraid of you, and you get a +1D bonus to rolls involving animals, including riding, training and calming them. Note that this bonus is not part of your skills, hence they are developed as normal, without adding this bonus in.

**Charmed (40):** You are one of these people for whom bad luck never seems to call. Your chance of fumbling is reduced by 5 on the d20 roll. When a fumble does occur though, it is just as bad as usual (if not a little bit worse, at the GM's discretion).

**Common sense (35):** You tend to be less prone to stupid actions than other people are, generally being reputed to have lots of 'common sense' – whatever that is. In game terms, whenever you are about to do something stupid, the GM should point this out and let you take another action. You don't *have* to change your mind, but you get a warning. The GM should also provide a reason for *why* the action is stupid. This gift does *not* provide you with any danger sense – the GM should only warn you about dangers your character knows about. Opening a door might be a bad idea because something nasty is hiding behind it, but the most common sense will tell you is to maybe check for traps or listen at the door – just like at any other door.

**Confident (15):** You have unusual confidence in your own abilities. Misplaced or not, it gives you an extra confidence point to start the game with. You may take this gift as many times as you want.

**Lucky (40):** You are extremely lucky, and fate seems to smile upon you. Whatever the reason behind your luck, you have a 3 in 20 chance of getting a critical for each '0' you roll on skills.

**Magic resistance (50\*):** You are naturally resistant to the effects of magic, and you personally have a magic resistance of 1D. This gift may be taken multiple times, but the cost is doubled each succeeding time. If you have this gift, you cannot use magic of any sort, or take any of the arcane gifts and curses.

**Serendipity (10/level):** Things just happen to turn out for the best for you. You have the uncanny habit of being in the right place at the right time, neatly sidestepping danger and finding solutions quite by chance. The GM needs to role

play this gift. The level to which this gift is taken rates just how lucky a character is. The maximum suggested level is 10. Anything beyond level 5 indicates that a person is *very* lucky. Level 10 would indicate sickening amounts of luck. *Serendipity* shouldn't just nullify bad luck, it should simply shift it elsewhere where applicable – ie to other party members.

**True faith (50+):** You do not only believe in the gods, but you also *believe* in them. You are quite willing to put your life in their hands, and as such they look favourably on your requests for aid. See the section on "Faith" for how this gift works.

### 5.10 Physical Curses

**Age (5/point):** You start the game with a number of *age points*, up to five maximum. These may have been gained because you are actually old, or because of some illness or magical affect you have suffered in the past.

**Albino (60):** You are an albino. Your skin and hair is white, and your eyes are pink. The sun is very bad for you (giving nasty sunburn), and you have difficulty seeing in daylight, giving you a -2D missile penalty above 10m, and doubling vision based PER skill checks over this range,

**Anosmia (20):** You have no sense of smell or taste. The effects of this should be obvious, but aren't that serious (except in some situations – being able to smell smoke for instance can come in useful at times).

**Bad balance (30):** You have a poor sense of balance, getting a -2D penalty to all skill checks where you are trying to remain on your feet or standing still. This also applies to riding skills.

**Bad coordination (30):** Your hand-eye coordination is abysmal over distances greater than about a metre. The difficulties for all missile skills are increased by 50%.

**Blind (200):** A very serious curse to have, since not being able to see anything can be a bit of a hindrance. Missile attacks are impossible (unless the GM rules otherwise). Awareness skill is at -2 XP/point to learn though (this only counts if the character grew up being blind – which is normally assumed). Other PER skills may be deemed impossible or difficult to learn (double or triple cost at least).

**Clumsy (20):** You are clumsy and heavy handed. When trying to use skills based with DEX (not weapon skills, but catching things, fiddling with fine precision or handling breakable objects) any failure is counted as a fumble. Whenever handling breakable items, you must make a difficulty 25 DEX check or break it.

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## Chapter 5 : Gifts and Curses

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**Colour blind (20):** You cannot distinguish certain colours. Common forms of colour blindness involve not being able to tell apart certain colours (such as red and green). Evaluation skill is triple cost to advance. Other skills involving sight may be penalised at the GM's option.

**Deaf (100):** You are unable to hear. All PER skills which rely on hearing are at 0D, and cannot be improved. Awareness skill is triple cost to develop, and obviously you will need to use writing or some other form of sign language to communicate with people. You can speak though, but nothing other than your native tongue, though even this is at -2D.

**Dying (50/100/150\*):** You are dying, either from some fatal disease or illness, or because of a curse. For game purposes, the effects are practically incurable, either through magic or otherwise, though a cure may be found after lots of research and a long quest, at the GM's option (but this must be difficult and dangerous enough to warrant this curse being worth what it is). The exact cost depends on how long you have to live. Having a month to live is worth 150 points, three months is 100 points and 1 year is 50 points. This curse may be forbidden for one-off adventures, or campaigns the GM knows will finish before the character will die from this curse.

**Easily fatigued (30):** Most consider you lazy, but your problem is a physical condition rather than any lack of enthusiasm. You suffer a -2D penalty on all skill rolls (especially stamina) involving resisting fatigue or staying awake.

**Eunuch (10):** You have been castrated from an early age. You are uninterested in sex, and cannot be seduced. At the GM's discretion, you pay receive a reaction penalty from those aware of your condition.

**Fat (60):** You are grossly overweight. Any gymnastic type skills (including climbing and jumping) are at +50% to the difficulty. You have no hope of squeezing through narrow doors etc, and movement rate is at 75% normal.

**Haemophilia (40):** You are a bleeder – a person whose blood is unable to clot properly. Blood loss is double normal for you (ie you lose two hitpoint for every point of bleeding you have). Realistically, this condition is only found in males.

**Hard of hearing (20):** Though you aren't deaf, you do have difficulty hearing people. You cannot hear whispers – people have to speak normally to you at the very least. Any PER skills based on sound are at +25% difficulty.

**Invalid (40):** You are slow to heal, your CON suffer-

ing a -1D penalty whenever you make a natural healing check. This penalty does not apply to chirurgery or healing rolls made on you.

**Low pain threshold (50):** Your body has this marvellous ability to sense pain, and you suffer double the normal penalties for being injured. Difficulties to resist torture etc are doubled.

**Mute (60):** You are mute (either through some disease or loss of tongue). You may not communicate with anyone using speech. You can yell, scream or otherwise make gurgling noises, but proper communication is impossible. This is an eight point curse if you opt to be unable to make even a single sound.

**Non-combatant (50):** You have never had any weapons training, and the use of swords and other weapons is totally foreign to you. Whenever you use a weapon (either melee or missile, and including *all* brawling skills) you are at -1D.

**Noticeable mark (10):** You have a strange and obvious mark on your body, which is normally visible for everyone to see. As well as leading to instant recognition, it could have superstitious meaning to some people. Alternatively, it could be something mundane, but out of the ordinary, such as bright red hair, or eyes obviously a different colour to each other.

**One arm (100):** You have only one arm (which one is your choice) – you were either born without it or more probably lost it in some way. Having learnt to live with your loss, you suffer no penalties beyond the normal ones for missing an arm (ie you can balance just as well for example). Anything which normally uses two arms, but which could be done with one, is at +50% the difficulty (such as climbing, lifting etc).

**One eye (30):** You have lost an eye, or are blind in one eye. Your depth perception is not very good. Missile difficulties beyond a range of about 20m are increased by 25%. You also have a blind side which may be used against you – especially in combat.

**One hand (50):** Similar to one arm above, but you have only lost your hand. You may still use a shield (since it can be strapped to your arm), and actions which normally require two hands, but could be managed with just an arm, are at +25% not +50% (such as climbing a tree, where the arm can be hooked around branches etc).

**One leg (120):** Somehow, you have lost a leg. You will need crutches or similar instruments to move about, unless you hop or crawl – you are at half normal movement



(including benefits from *running* skill).

**Overweight (20):** You are overweight, being slightly fatter than most people of your height. Though this gives no direct game penalties, you may find it hindering you in some situations (such as squeezing through a narrow crack). It also makes you easier to recognise, and may give a small reaction penalty as well.

**Phobia (10/20):** A phobia is an unreasonable fear of something, either an actual physical object, or a situation. If you have a phobia, then you gain a personality trait (see chapter 7) of *fear (phobia)* of +4 (10 point) or +5 (20 point) value. Whenever the situation or object has to be faced and overcome, a WIL check is required, of difficulty 10+. The cost of this curse is modified by how common the object of the phobia is, giving either a x1 (pretty rare), x2 (quite common) or x3 (very common) cost modifier. Some x1 phobias might be *arachniphobia* (spiders), *ailurophobia* (cats), *ophidiophobia* (snakes), *coitophobia* (sex), *toxicophobia* (poison). More common (x2) phobias would be *acrophobia* (heights), *hydrophobia* (water), *claustrophobia* (enclosed spaces), *necrophobia* (death), *autophobia* (being alone). Example x3 phobias would be *nyctaphobia* (darkness), *agoraphobia* (open spaces), *zoophobia* (animals), *xenophobia* (strangers), *androphobia* (men) and *gynephobia* (women). Phobias should be roleplayed by the player, and both GM and player should be aware that situations which could lead to a phobia being encountered may require WIL checks as well (for instance, someone with *nyctaphobia* may be very apprehensive about going underground, insisting on an overkill of torches, oil and other equipment for providing light just to make sure). Chapter 7 deals with the use of personality traits (including fear) to a greater extent.

**Short sighted (40):** Missile difficulties over a range of 50m are at x1.5 since you have great difficulty seeing anything at these ranges.

**Single handed (25):** You suffer a further -1D penalty whenever using your off-hand. You cannot be ambidextrous with this curse. This includes when using shields and other parrying weapons. You cannot take this curse if you have only one hand anyway.

**Skinny (45):** You are skinny, being light and thin for your height – choose a height and weight suitable for this. More importantly, you are less able to suffer damage to your body, and have 10 less hitpoints than normal for your CON. Also, you cannot have an appearance greater than +5.

**Slow speed (30):** You are slower than normal, your base speed being increased by one point. Any time you use your *reactions* skill for anything other than figuring base speed, you are at -2D.

**Slow reflexes (30):** You are slow to react to new situations. Whenever a combat situation is entered, you begin at segment 15 instead of 10. This can also penalise you in other situations, at the GM's option.

**Voracious appetite (25):** You need to eat double the normal amount of food to satisfy your appetite. You are not necessarily fat, but these two curses are good supplements for each other.

**Weak health (30):** Your body's immune system is not as good as it should be. You suffer a -1D penalty to CON whenever you try to resist poison or disease.

### 5.11 Mental Curses

**Absent Minded (25):** You have great difficulty trying to remember to do the simplest of things – such as picking things up, bringing food on a long journey etc. Under such circumstances, you should make a KNO check, difficulty 20–40 to remember to do things. Strangely, you have little difficulty recalling awkward facts or otherwise exercising your brain to solve problems.

**Heavy sleeper (10):** When asleep, it takes a lot of noise to wake you, and you wake feeling tired and confused. You are not necessarily lazy, just unable to get up in the mornings. Any perception difficulties to be woken are effectively doubled, and you spend the following five minutes with -2D to your actions, and the following ten minutes at -1D to your actions.

**Inept student (40\*):** You have great difficulty when trying to learn from others. Whenever studying under a teacher, or from a book, any experience you gain is halved (rounded down).

**Inept teacher (15\*):** You aren't very good at teaching people, and whenever you do attempt to do so, your *CHA+teaching* skill is effectively 1D lower than your skill would suggest.

**Lack of confidence (15):** You have little faith in your own abilities, and start the game with one less point of confidence than normal. You cannot take your confidence points down to less than -3 with this curse.

**No direction sense (40):** You are hopeless at finding your way about. Your direction sense skill is zero, and it can not be developed. This should also be role played (on your part and the GM's).

**Poor reader (25\*):** You dislike reading, and aren't very good at it when you do read. Whenever you study from a book, you gain 1 less experience than normal from it each

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week.

**Practical (45):** You are fine at anything of practical use, such as physical or social skills. When it comes to abstract theory though, you are hopeless. All knowledge skills are at +2 XP per point to learn – base cost for specialist skills is unaffected though.

**Shy (35):** You are unhappy when interacting with strangers. Whenever you need to use a CHA skill with someone you don't know, you gain a -1D penalty to the skill.

**Sleepwalker (20):** Though not normally a problem, when you are camped out in the wilderness in unknown territory, it is best someone keeps an eye out for you wandering off somewhere. There is a 15% chance of you sleepwalking each time you sleep. This can rise to as much as 50% if under duress.

**Slow learner (80):** You are slow to learn, from both experience, and study of any sort. All your skills cost +1 experience to develop per point.

**Weak writer (15\*):** You are not very good at communicating via the written word, and suffer a -1D penalty to your CHA+*authorship* skill whenever you try to write a book.

### 5.12 Social Curses

**Big mouth (40):** You have the nasty habit of saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. Though you don't get any penalties to your CHA skills, any failures are taken to be fumbles, and fumbles are especially dire.

**Branded criminal (20):** You have been branded as a criminal – either with a lost ear or finger, or some visible mark (usually on your face – a cross on the left cheek may be the sign of a thief or swindler. A circle could be the sign of worse crimes, such as murder or rape).

**Gullible (30):** You are easily persuaded by others, and seem totally incapable of considering that someone else might actually lie. Any skills which are used in this regard are considered to be at *partial* (effective skill is a fifth of your attribute) and cannot be developed. Normally gullibility suggests you are no good at lying yourself, but this isn't necessary (*terrible liar* goes well with this curse).

**Fanatical (20/40):** You have a loyalty trait of either +4 (20 point variant) or +5 (40 point) towards a particular cause or person. You obey without question, and put the cause above all else. If you have fanatical at +5, the only other traits you can have at +4 or above are those which complement your fanaticism (such as love, or loyalty),

though bravery or something similar could also be allowed.

**Great flaw (20/40):** You have a personality trait of either +4 or +5 for some anti-social trait. Examples would include coward, lustful, greedy, lazy or violent. Whenever you want to do anything that goes against these traits, a WIL check will be required (see chapter 7), though they should be roleplayed at all times of course. You can only take this once at +5, and no more than twice at +4 or above.

**Loud mouthed (5):** You have a loud voice, and have difficulty keeping it down to a whisper, or even normal levels. When you get excited, you are prone to shouting very loudly. Your GM may require you to make a WIL check if you are actively trying to keep quite.

**Speech impediment (25):** You have a stutter, or strange accent, which makes it difficult for other people to understand what you are saying. All CHA skills which require you to speak are at -2D. Note that this penalty does not apply to those who are used to your way of speaking – though a stutter in the middle of combat when trying to give orders can be fatal.

**Terrible liar (20):** However hard you try, you are useless at lying. It's not that you refuse to lie, just that it is beyond your ability. Your *con* skill, as well as anything else used when trying to lie, is at *partial*, and cannot be developed. Gullible is a good curse to take in conjunction with this one.

### 5.13 Arcane Curses

These curses affect your magic, making it (generally) less effective, or by imposing restrictions on its use. Obviously, to a non-magi, these curses aren't worth anything, so they can only be taken by those who have an arcane background.

**Blatant talent (35):** Your talent is obvious to anyone looking at you, though they may realise the reason for your 'difference'. You suffer a penalty when dealing with mundanes – the exact value depends on how used they are to magic (ie up to the GM) though shouldn't be more than -10 to any CHA based skill rolls.

**Clumsy magic (30):** Your magic is inaccurate and clumsy, and you have great difficulty in placing your spell effects at any reasonable range. Simply, all *directed spells* difficulties are doubled.

**Deleterious circumstances (10/20/30):** Under certain conditions, magic becomes harder for you to cast, forcing you to spend more power than normal. For a 10 point curse, the power cost (both when casting, and if maintaining a spell

cast during the deleterious circumstance) of spell si increased by 50%. For 20 points, it is doubled, and for 30 points it is quadrupled. You should choose the circumstances under which your magic is affected – this also affects the cost of the curse. During rare circumstances, such as full moons, or while at sea or during a storm, then the cost is as above. For uncommon (or avoidable) circumstances, such as while underground, in forests or in cities, the cost is doubled. For common circumstances, or those which are difficult to plan around, such as during the day, at night or during a particular season, then the cost is tripled.

**Formalaic magic (30):** You are not very good at making spells up on the spot – the penalty for casting a spontaneous spell is doubled.

**No familiar (30):** You can never have a familiar. For some reason, you are unable to forge the bond necessary to have one of these companions.

**Obvious magic (10):** Your magic is blunt and rather obvious to those who can sense it, and you have great difficulty trying to hide it. Any cloaking you put on your spells is halved.

**Personal magic (50):** For some reason, you cannot use indirect ranged magic unless you have a link to the target (ie a possession or part of the target creature or object). Spells which physically travel from you to the target (such as a missile spell) are unaffected.

**Physical caster (20):** You find it difficult to control your actions when casting a spell, and tend to wave your arms around and shout strange words more than is necessary. Gain +1 on the Verbal and Gesture components of each spell, up to a maximum of 3 (though a spell rated as 3, becomes 4 for purposes of reducing these components at casting time, and can only be reduced down to V1 or G1).

**Poor concentration (35):** You find it difficult concentrating on more than one thing at a time. Any penalties when maintaining a spell are doubled. Also, difficulties for the *concentration* skill are also doubled, except those to do with using or attuning to items.

**Pure magic (60):** Your talent has a major failing in that it cannot combine two or more different arts in a single spell. You can only ever learn or cast spells which use only a single art. This curse has less effect on ritual magic though, and you can learn and cast such spells if they have multiple arts, but you gain a penalty of +5 to the difficulty for all arts for each art beyond the first.

**Short lived magic (25):** Your spells don't last very long, and are expensive to maintain. The duration of all your

spells is halved (minimum of one segment for spells with a duration).

**Short ranged magic (20):** The distance (ie 'D' modifier) of all your spells is halved (a 4D modifier becomes 8D, not 2D of course).

**Slow magic (45):** You cannot fast cast spells – all your spells are cast at a speed of 1/5. You cannot cast spells at 1/10 even with penalties.

**Slow power (30):** You gain back power at only ½ the normal rate each hour.

**Slow thinker (25):** You are slow at thinking, gaining +1 to your base mental speed.

**Tainted magic (15):** Your magic is tainted by your personality in some way. This may have a physical affect on your magic, or not. Any mage who knows you can recognise your magic when they detect it. Someone who doesn't know you, will see that the magic is tainted by a personality in some way, but until they actually examine some spell they know has been cast by you, they cannot find out who cast that spell.

**Unlearnable art (15):** You are totally unable to learn an art of magic (choose one). This curse can be taken for several different arts, but cannot be combined with *weak art* for the same art.

**Wild magic (45):** You have an extra 1 in 10 chance of fumbling on the fumble die whenever you cast a spell. If you fumble because of this curse, then the result of the fumble is more weird than nasty, but is still detrimental to your spell.

**Weak art (10):** You have a deficiency in one art (though this curse can be taken multiple times for different arts). When spells in this art are *cast*, the base level is doubled. If you only have *partial talent*, then the final level of the spell is tripled, not quadrupled.

**Weak magic (35):** Your magic is very susceptible to anti-magic, and even your best efforts can do little to change this. Any AAM you put on your spells is halved.

### 5.14 Miscellaneous Curses

**Animals fear you (10):** For some reason, mundane animals fear and distrust you. Trying to calm one is next to impossible – usually you just make things worse. Trying to creep past them as well can also be a problem, especially if they kick up a fuss about it.

**Bad luck (60):** Fate always seems to work against

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## Chapter 5 : Gifts and Curses

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you. Whenever you have a chance of fumbling (ie the wild die comes up '1'), your chance is increased by 5 on the d20 roll.

**Cannot use magic (50):** You are unable to use magic of any sort (note Faith and Psionics are not magic), including items. Magic can effect you though just as readily.

**Faeries hate you (30):** Faeries and their kind hate you, and if you ever meet them, relationships can get very strained. They won't try to kill you (unless they are worgs or of similar mind), but will try to hinder, annoy and generally make your life miserable. You should work out the reasons for this with your GM. It should be noted that this curse does *not* give you the ability to see faeries, it just means they don't like you. This curse may not be applicable in all campaign worlds, you should see the *Dark Lore* supplement for more information on Faeries and their kind.

**Jinx (10/level):** You are unlucky, both to yourself and those with you. Bad luck just seems to hunt you out. You have no game penalties, but GM's are encouraged to role play this. This curse is the opposite of *serendipity*. A maximum level of 10 is suggested as for *serendipity*. A character who is *jinxed* should have a higher chance of being chosen as a target, fumbles should be more severe, and when there is a chance of something going wrong, that chance should be increased.

**Repellent (20):** The opposite sex find you repellent for some reason. They tend to dislike you, whatever your appearance. This only happens when up close though, and only really matters if you wish to become 'friendly' with them.

**Unlucky (60):** You have an inability to make use of golden opportunities. Whenever you have a chance of getting a critical, your chances are halved (1 in 20 for each '0' rolled).

### 5.15 Contacts

There are four further classes of advantages and disadvantages, which are described here. They are not modifications to the character himself, but NPC's, either controlled by the player or the GM, depending on their exact type.

The first type are known as *contacts*. These are effectively NPC's controlled wholly by the GM. They rarely (if ever) adventure with the character, but are instead people who the character knows, and is on friendly terms with. Contacts can be anything from a bribable guard, to a best friend or relative. How trustworthy the contact is, and how useful he is, depends a lot on the cost of the advantage.

The base cost of a contact depends on how powerful that contact is. Power can be equated in many ways, from magical power (a great archmage for instance) to mundane power (ruler of a kingdom or a rich and influential merchant).

**10 points:** A contact of this level hasn't any real power, just happens to be 'in the know', such as a servant, guardsman or beggar. Generally useful only for information, and little more than gossip at that. Of course, 'gossip' in the guards barracks might be totally unknown to outsiders, so such contacts have their uses.

**20 points:** Such a contact has some minor power, whether they be a captain of the guard, able to waive minor crimes, or a bureaucrat in the palace, able to organise meetings with more powerful people. Such a contact tends to be privy to more sensitive information than a 10 point contact. A contact of this level may also be a minor mage or temple priest, whose powers are around starting character level, but may have knowledge and skills not held by the player characters.

**40 points:** Contacts of this level are quite important, having access to restricted information, being able to wield considerable clout, or having considerable skills or power of magical or other super-natural nature. A powerful mage, a noble, head of a temple or rich and influential merchant would come under this category.

**80 points:** Archmagi, greater nobility (including national rulers), powerful merchant lords and such would be covered by an 80 point contact. Such contacts are very rare, and can be very useful. Players will have to come up with a good reason why they would have such a contact.

### Relationship with the Contact

Next, after the power of the contact, comes his loyalty. Just because a character happens to know an archmage does not mean that that archmage will do everything in his power to help the character. Generally, the more powerful the contact, the less they will want to help the character.

As standard, it is assumed that the character and his contact have a reasonably cool relationship. The contact is reliable and trustworthy, but will demand payment in exchange for services rendered. Payment may be in the form of money (for the less powerful contacts) or for services rendered (for the more powerful contacts). Contact and character have a good working relationship. Note that for occasional, minor services which aren't any real hassle for the contact, payment can often be waived. The more often a contact is used, and the more dangerous (both physically and also in terms of loosing their job if discovered) the services

provided, the higher the price the contact will demand.

For twice the normal cost of the contact, the character is on very good terms, and the contact could be considered a good friend. Payment will only be required for exceptional requests, though the odd tip by the character won't go unappreciated. The contact will probably have a loyalty of +1 or +2 towards the character.

For four times normal cost, the two are best of friends. Loyalty will be +3, and payment can be all but ignored. The contact will risk their life to help the character. This does *not* mean the contact is slavishly obedient to the character, and in no way will powerful mages spend all their time making arcane items for the character (for example). They are considered to be very good friends.

Towards the other extreme, if the cost of the contact is halved, then the relationship is not a very good one. At worst, the character simply knows the name of the person and how to contact them. Payment for anything will always be required, and loyalty and reliability is not to be trusted. This doesn't mean that the contact will always lie to the character, just think of it as a customer/merchant relationship – the contact needs to look after their credibility for future transactions with the character.

### Designing a Contact

It is up to the player to decide what sort of contact they want their character to have, and to outline who he is and what sort of services he can provide. It is also up to the GM to flesh this out, or to veto a choice.

A character may choose an NPC the GM has already detailed, but it is more flexible if the PC comes up with their own – it also adds to the background of the GM's campaign world as well of course.

Of course, a contact does not need to be a single person. There is no reason why it cannot be a group of people – such as a guild, mercenary band or similar such institution. In some cases, a character may get this automatically from their background – in which case it doesn't need to be paid for, but the same general ideas can be used for deciding the sort of relationship the character has to their contacts.

### 5.16 Dependants

A dependant is another character who is dependant on you for survival and protection. Dependants can be useful in some situations, but they are considered a disadvantage, since you must protect and care for them.

A dependant is under the control of both you and the GM. Generally, the dependant will listen to your character and do what he says, but not always. Dependants are rarely disloyal, but can be a bit unreliable.

To make up a dependant, just make up another character as you would your primary character, but with a difference – a dependant does not get any starting background points, and cannot have a character background. This means all skills and advantages must be paid for with disadvantages. To make matters worse, a dependant does not count as a disadvantage for you, unless they have more disadvantages than advantages. For every four points of disadvantage a dependant has beyond the number of advantages, it is worth a one point disadvantage for you.

For example, a player might create a dependant, and drop four of its attributes by 1D, making it a -100 point character. This would be worth 25 points of disadvantages for the player's primary character. If the player was to then give the dependant *full talent* (60 points), it would be only a -40 point character, worth only 10 points for the primary character. A dependant can never have a positive number of background points, but a character can have as many dependants as he wants to (though GM's are free to veto any choice of course – two or three should be the normal limit). A dependant may gain experience, but only for the dependant's own actions (none for roleplaying etc), so they should advance slowly.

If a dependant ever dies, then the character is deeply distraught. The character must pay a cost in experience points equal to twice the number of points the dependant was worth to the character. If the character has some experience spare at the time, at least half (round down) of this must be paid towards paying off the dependant. Whenever more experience is gained, at least half the gained experience must also be used. This way the cost is met, but the player has the choice of how quickly it is paid off (within reason).

Depending on the nature of the dependant's death, the GM may allow the character to take some mental disadvantages to help pay off the dependant. Suitable curses might include hatred, phobias (related to the form of death), recklessness or impulsiveness (no longer care about life). The choice is up to the player, to be vetoed by the GM.

### 5.17 Enemies

Every character needs enemies like they need holes in their heads, but they make for a good source of plot devices for the GM, and are yet another thing which can be used to use up necessary disadvantages.

An enemy can be a single character (GM controlled,

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of course), a large organisation, or anything in between. Generally, the cost of the disadvantage is based on the power of the individual or organisation, and also the frequency at which the enemy makes itself known to the character. A more frequent enemy obviously really cares about enacting vengeance (or whatever) on the character, while one which rarely crops up probably isn't that bothered, and won't go to too much trouble. Obviously, the more frequent the enemy, the higher the cost of the disadvantage.

### Power of the Enemy

Just like for contacts, an enemy is rated from 10 points up to 80 points. The progression of power is much the same as for there, though there are some differences, especially at the lower end of the scale.

**10 points:** For an individual enemy, the foe will be about equivalent in skill to the player character. For a group of people, it will generally be a small local group with no real official power, such as a street gang, or maybe an official group of people who dislike the character (such as the city watch, who go out of their way to make the character's life hell, but don't intend any real harm beyond a few days in a cell every week).

**20 points:** Such enemies are usually a reasonably powerful character (+500 experience say beyond a starting character), or a strong organisation, such as a weak thieves guild, mercenary band or similar.

**40 points:** Are most often groups of people, whether it be a powerful guild, or maybe a religious cult. Single enemies will either have a lot of mundane power (such as a nobleman or rich merchant) or be highly skilled and influential (+1000 experience at least).

**80 points:** Such enemies are very dangerous things to have, since they have a very good chance in succeeding in killing you whenever they try – if that is their intention. Such an enemy is a very powerful, wide spread or influential organisation (a king or similarly empowered ruler, an assassins guild, a whole religion etc) or a very powerful individual, of several thousand points of experience beyond starting levels. Such powerful individuals are normally mages, but such an enemy is not a good idea, since chance of success tends to be very high (around 100%) unless you have protection of some sort against scrying, or they don't know who exactly they are looking for.

### Frequency of Occurrence

The frequency at which an enemy turns up acts as a modifier to the cost of the disadvantage. The basic point cost gives about a 40% chance of the enemy rearing its head each

### Friends and Foes

As with everything, the GM has the final say about NPCs and organisations selected by players through advantages and disadvantages. Further, dependants and henchmen are not a second character for the player. Control of such is left in the player's hands simply because it makes life easier for the GM. If the GM thinks a player isn't playing a dependant or henchman correctly, then she should step in and take control.

A further point to bear in mind is that enemies are a good way for players to burn up lots of disadvantages for their characters without actually taking any direct disadvantages. If a player takes a powerful enemy that really hates the character, then play it as such. If it turns out that the character is way out of her depth, then tough, the character is probably going to end up dead. The player will then know that taking such an enemy isn't a good idea.

Finally, the cost for enemies is based around starting characters. If the GM is going to be running a high powered campaign, then consider disallowing enemies, or reducing their cost (by 2 or more times). A mage with 1000 points of experience behind her isn't going to be worried by a mere thieves guild unless that guild has access to equivalently powered mages of their own.

adventure.

Doubling the cost of the disadvantage raises this chance to 80%. It is not possible to raise the chance to more than this. Such an enemy needs to be got rid of (or amends made – if possible) pretty quickly else the character's career could be very short lived.

Halving the cost of the disadvantage ensures that the enemy only crops up 20% of the time, meaning the character doesn't have to worry too much about it.

### Limits on Enemies

No character should be allowed to take more than two enemies, since unless the character is very powerful (and with a long history behind him), then such is both unrealistic, and also leads to a short life expectancy. The GM may also want to limit certain combinations of enemies. If the first enemy is an 80 point enemy, then if the second enemy is only worth 20 points, then it will pale in comparison to the first, and not really be worth anything. If a second enemy is taken, and one is worth 80 points, then the other should be worth either 80 points or 40 points. These values are for the base cost of the enemy, unmodified for its frequency of

occurrence.

### Unknown Enemies

It is always possible to make an enemy without being aware of it at the time. A final option for an enemy is that the character doesn't actually know she has an enemy. In this case, the player simply selects frequency of occurrence and the power of the enemy, and the GM then makes up the rest. Until the enemy actually turns up in play (and even then, it may require some work to figure out exactly who is out to get you), neither the character nor player will know who it is.

Taking this option adds 25% to the final cost of the enemy. Note that infrequent enemies are best for this, otherwise some good reason why the character doesn't know about it already will be needed. For this to work well, the player will have to submit a brief history of what his character has been up to before play begins. It may be best to limit a character to only one enemy of this type.

### 5.18 Henchmen

A henchman is a trusted ally of the character, who follows him wherever he goes, risking his life and generally making himself useful. Of course, such service requires that the character looks after the henchman, protects him, and ensures he is fed, equipped and generally well treated.

Unlike dependants, a henchman is actually useful. They are created in much the same way as for a player character, though they tend to be less experienced. In general, a henchman starts with a number of background points equal to four times the cost of the advantage. So if a player spends 25 points on a henchman, the henchman will start with 100 background points. No henchman can start the game with more than 200 background points though – ie no more than 50 points may be spent by the player on a single henchman. There is no limit to the number of henchman a character may have, though any more than a couple will tend to complicate matters.

A henchman cannot start with a character background unless it is purchased with background points (they don't get any points free towards a background from their age), which makes a henchman with equivalent background points weaker than a player character.

### The Role of Henchmen

Exactly what the relationship between the character and the henchman is, is decided by the player. Sometimes the choice will be obvious. A player character who is a knight could have a squire, while a mage might well have an apprentice. Generally, the henchman will be loyal to the

character, though cannot have a loyalty trait more than +3 whatever the player wishes.

Normally, unless the character treats his henchmen badly, they will remain loyal, industrious and reliable. Though they do not usually require payment of monetary kind, they will expect equipment and general upkeep (including food and lodgings, of similar standard enjoyed by the character), as well as anything suggested by their relationship, which may be regular tuition, or just experience in the ways of the world.

Henchmen will gain experience as does a player character, though all role playing experience will go to the character, with the henchmen only getting experience from their own actions. This will generally mean they will advance slower than the player character.

If a henchman dies, then he will not be replaced. Unlike dependants, the character will not lose experience for this (though the GM might want to impose a penalty if the henchman's death was entirely the fault of the player), but should of course role play the consequences.

### 5.19 Animal Companions

Some character types are especially suited to having animal, rather than intelligent, companions. Such a companion can be anything from a pet to a mount or hunting animal. The costs of such animals are kept generic since otherwise working out how much an animal would cost could become a headache, unlike for character type companions as described previously, which simply use normal character generation rules.

The point cost of such companions range from 10 points for a small, harmless creature, to 80 points for anything really large, battle worthy and generally very useful. The cost guidelines are given below.

**10 points:** Such creatures tend to be small and harmless, and not particularly intelligent. Generally, anything which isn't worth 20 points.

**20 points:** A trained riding horse loyal to you, or a very intelligent smaller animal, able to perform tricks and serve a useful purpose. A cat or dog trained to fetch things would fall into this category (such an animal, untrained, would be but 10 points).

**40 points:** Anything which is particularly intelligent and also battle worthy. A wolf or hunting cat loyal to you, or a trained war horse. A really intelligent member of such species should cost 10, 20 or more points extra.

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**80 points:** Anything really large and nasty, oozing with combat potential should cost around 80 points. This category is generally reserved for large trainable fantasy beasts – there isn't much from Earth which would cost this much – though some dinosaurs could quite easily fall into this category. *Really* large animals, such as a T-Rex or Triceratops shouldn't normally be allowed, since such would be just too powerful.

### Fleshing out the Animal

Once a point cost has been decided upon by the GM, it is up to the player to generate her animal. She can either choose the 'average' attributes for that creature (as given in the Bestiary) or roll randomly. GM's may want to allow better than average animals.

The animal starts the game with all the skills listed for that creature in the Bestiary. Further skills may be added at the GM's discretion, especially for intelligent animals.

The animal gains experience in the same way henchmen do, and again there is no game penalties if the animal dies, but a replacement is not gained. The character should treat the animal as a good friend, and in return it will remain loyal to the character.



### 6 Character Skills

From the point of view of game mechanics, skills make the character. Whereas attributes are the natural abilities of a person, the skills represent experience, training and knowledge.

There are literally dozens of skills available, so no character is going to have knowledge of all of them. As has been seen in the previous chapter, all character's though do start with some basic skills gained from their background.

Most of the skills so gained are known as *general* skills. These include skills which can be picked up and learnt reasonably easily, mainly things such as physical activity (climbing and jumping), social skills (con and etiquette), knowledge about your home region and sensory skills (alertness and observation). Altogether they are divided into six *lists*. A list is a collection of related skills. Though there is no game mechanic linking skills in the same list, it helps group the skills together into a coherent order. The general lists are *Athletics*, *Brawling*, *Communication*, *Local lore*, *Riding*, *Subterfuge* and *Survival*.

There are also some unrelated general skills which are not members of any list.

#### 6.1 Learning a Skill

All general skills start at a level equal to 0D, unless otherwise specified in the character background. The majority of other skills also start at this level, but not all. 0D represents no formal training. Instead, the character has to rely on common sense and his natural ability. This is one of the important aspects of general skills – though a character may not have any formal training in them, they gain no penalty to trying to use them beyond that imposed by simply having a low skill.

As explained in section 2.3 on page 8, when you come to make a skill check, what you actually roll – your *effective skill* – is equal to the average of your skill and the attribute. An average person with an attribute of 5D, and a skill of 0D, has an effective skill of 2D+4, so they can succeed at *easy* tasks without too much difficulty, even without training.

#### Specialist Skills

There are some skills which require such specialist knowledge, than someone without training has either little or no hope of succeeding – even for *easy* or *very easy* tasks. These skills are considered to be *specialist* skills.

Specialist skills start off at a level equal to a level somewhat worse than 0D – either *partial* or *unknown*. A partial skill, when used, has an effective skill equal to a fifth of the characters attribute – ie 0D+2 for each full dice of attribute. Someone with 5D attribute has an effective skill of merely 1D. Further, there is double the normal chance of fumbling – ie a roll of 1 or 2 on the fumble die represents a fumble check.

A skill which is listed as *unknown* cannot be used. A characters effective skill in it is 0D. This class of skills mainly includes knowledge skills (after all, if you've never encountered a topic before, you're not going to know a thing about it), but also some craft skills as well.

Both type of specialist skills require a flat experience point expenditure before they can be developed. The exact amount depends on the skill in question, but 10 to 20 XP is common. This gives a skill of 0D – but it is now averaged with the attribute as for normal skills, and can now also be developed. Learning a skill in this way requires it to be taught – either by a teacher or by reading from a book. After all, you're not going to be able to improve your history skill by sitting out in the wilderness alone. Learning it without such tutorage may be possible – but only at increased cost. The GM is left to use her common sense in deciding whether a skill can be learnt this way.

#### 6.2 Developing a Skill

Once a skill has been *learned* (or immediately for non-specialist skills), it may be developed. To do this, requires experience points, which must be paid each time a skill is raised by a point. The cost to develop a skill is a number of experience points equal to the number of full dice of skill the character currently has, with a minimum cost of one point. To develop a skill from 2D to 2D+2 costs 2 XP. From 3D+8 to 4D costs 3. From 0D+6 to 0D+8 costs 1.

There is no limit to how high a skill may be developed to, though some skills are capped when rolled with certain attributes. Whenever you roll a skill with either STR, CON, AGI, DEX or PER, the effective skill is capped to twice the level of the attribute. So a 20D skill averaged with 6D strength will give an effective skill of 12D. If this skill was averaged with 6D knowledge, it would still give 13D.

#### 6.3 Language Skills

Language skills are treated as a special case. For a start, they are not averaged with any attribute. Secondly, they are hardly ever used as 'skills' – the GM should simply use them as a rough guide.

All language skills start at a default of 0D, and cannot

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be used. They can only be developed if they are taught or learnt from a book (though the latter isn't as effective since pronunciation will often turn out to be wrong). If a character has a chance to learn a language, then she may develop it as normal, without having to pay any extra cost to 'buy' it initially.

Further, languages can be picked up 'for free' without having to pay experience for it. Simply, each week spent amongst those speaking the language gives the character 1 XP point towards learning it, up to a maximum of 4D skill. Beyond this, the character must pay XP as normal.

As mentioned previously, language skills are not normally 'rolled' – instead the level of skill a character has should be used as a rough guide by the GM when deciding whether the character can make herself understood by foreigners, and whether she can understand what they are saying. The following should be used as a guide.

**0D** The character has no knowledge of the language and is unable to use or understand it.

**1D** The character has a very limited knowledge of the language. She would recognise it if she hears it spoken, and knows half a dozen very common words.

**2D** The character can put together simple sentences, and can understand the general gist of what is being said as long as the speaker speaks slowly.

**3D** The character has a reasonable knowledge of the language. She has an obvious foreign accent, stumbles over words quite often, and may need things repeating. Complex technical terms and other uncommon words are unknown.

**4D** The character has a good grasp of the language, and though she stumbles over words occasionally, has no problems understanding others or making herself understood. Some uncommon words and technical terms will sometimes be known.

**5D** This is the level assumed for a native speaker of the language. A foreigner will still have a marked accent at this level, but is fluent in the language.

**6D+** Beyond 5D isn't really necessary, except maybe for linguists who like showing off using long words, and bards who may find it useful having an extensive vocabulary. Anything beyond 7D or 8D is getting silly.

### 6.4 Developing Attributes

It is possible to develop an attribute in much the same way a skill is developed. An attribute cannot be developed any higher than its potential though, and a potential cannot be changed by any 'normal' means.

Cost of developing an attribute is more than for skills, and the exact value depends on the specific attribute – generally those which are used directly (STR, CON etc) cost more than those which are usually based on skills (KNO). Costs are a multiple of the normal cost if the attribute was a skill. Costs are as follows:

STR, CON, WIL	x5
AGI, PER	x4
KNO, CHA, DEX	x3

### 6.5 Skill Descriptions

For starters, this is all you need to know about skills. There are further rules, concerning being taught skills by a teacher, learning from books and so forth, but such can be left till later.

What follows now are the actual skills available to player characters, together with their descriptions. The most common of these are listed on the character sheet to save everyone having to reference this book when creating a character.

It should be pointed out that there are many, many, more skills than are actually listed here. For a start, there are skills for each weapon, as well as countless sage skills to do with the history, geography and society of the campaign world – things *Myths* knows nothing about. These are left for the individual world source books to detail.

### 6.6 General Skills

The majority of the following skills start at a level of 0D, and can be developed as normal. A few (mainly in the unrelated list) are specialist though, and are given in *italics* in this case.

#### Athletics List

**Balance** This skill is the character's ability to keep his balance under perilous conditions. Normally it is based on AGI. It can be used to cross tight ropes or narrow ledges, as well as being used in general circumstances where a character has a chance of being knocked down or falling over (such as when running across ice). General difficulties for types of surfaces being moved over are as follows:

Surface up to 1 metre wide . . . . . 5

Surface up to 50cm wide . . . . . 10  
 Surface up to 20 cm wide . . . . . 20  
 Surface up to 10cm wide . . . . . 30  
 Surface less than 5cm wide . . . . . 40  
 Light wind/slightly unstable surface . . . . . +5  
 Moderate wind/unstable surface . . . . . +10  
 Strong wind/surface moving greatly . . . . . +20  
 Slippery surface (some oil/grease) . . . . . +5  
 Very slippery surface (ice) . . . . . +15

Note that tight ropes are particularly nasty since in high winds, they become unstable, so a character gets penalised twice (use the same modifiers for both). **Time taken:** Takes 1 round to traverse a distance equal to a quarter of his base move in metres. One check is needed each round. A bonus is applicable for going slower. **Failure:** Failure means the character has slipped and fallen. An AGI+*reactions* roll may be allowed for the character to catch himself. On a rope, the difficulty would be 20, for a ledge 30. Use the same modifiers for slippery/unstable surfaces as above. **Criticals:** These allow the character to move either five times the distance with a single roll, or in half the time. **Fumbles:** A fumble means the character gets no chance to grab the rope/ledge as he falls, with a good chance of knocking himself out as he falls. A bad roll might involve the rope snapping, or the ledge giving way, maybe endangering other characters as well.

**Climbing** This skill is used when climbing ladders, ropes, walls or indeed practically anything else. It can be based on either STR or AGI – generally STR is used for straightforward climbs (such as up walls or ropes), and AGI for things like clambering over rubble or up a steep incline. Difficulties can vary depending on situations, but guidelines follow:

Stiff ladders, steep stairs . . . . . 5  
 Rope ladders, going down a rope . . . . . 10  
 Free ropes, most trees or easy cliffs . . . . . 15  
 Difficult cliffs, but still hand holds . . . . . 20  
 Rough walls, crumbling with hand holds . . . . . 30  
 Brick walls . . . . . 40  
 Smooth poles . . . . . 50  
 Slippery (wet) . . . . . +10  
 Very slippery (grease) . . . . . +20  
 Very smooth . . . . . +10

Other modifiers can be added at GM’s discretion. Note that stairs and stiff ladders should not normally require a check – if the character is rushing though, or fighting at the same time, checks may be necessary. **Time taken:** One minute to move a distance in metres equal to her base move, though she may take longer for a bonus to skill (or quicker for a penalty). If the climb will take longer than one minute, then a check at the beginning, and a check at the end is required. For really long climbs, a check every five minutes is needed. **Failure:** Failure simply means she must make an AGI+balance check at the same difficulty as the climbing

check or fall. Success at this latter check means she is stuck, and needs to try a different approach. A second climb roll must be made, but at +5 difficulty. Each further failure has a further +5 difficulty, and 1 wasted minute. **Critical:** The character can climb 5 times the normal movement before a subsequent check. **Fumble:** The character automatically falls. A really severe fumble might mean the character knocking herself out, or an automatic fumble for her tumbling roll.

**Contortion** This skill is the ability to contort the characters body so as to escape or manoeuvre in cramped or restraining situations. In general, it is normally based on AGI. Ropes may be slipped out of, Cracks squeezed through, or narrow shafts wriggled through.

Loose ropes . . . . . 10  
 Tight ropes . . . . . 25  
 Really tight ropes (well tied) . . . . . 50  
 Loose manacles (ie kind GM) . . . . . 40  
 Nicely fitting manacles (usual) . . . . . 80  
 Narrow gap . . . . . 15

Escaping from another character or creature comes under the wrestling skill. **Time taken:** 1 minute for each point of difficulty. Taking extra time is applicable. **Failure:** For escape, failure is just simply that. A second attempt takes double the time, the third double that etc. **Critical:** Character takes half normal time, maybe coming up with a really good technique which she can use in the future, making the difficulty easier. **Fumble:** The character has probably slit his own wrists, permanently injured himself, or made it impossible to try again (or raising the difficulty).

**Jumping** *Jumping* is used whenever a character needs to leap large distances, either across (long jump) or up (high jump). For distance jumps, *jumping* is STR based, for jumps onto a table, over a chair etc, it is AGI based. For long jumps, the base distance which can be jumped is equal to a tenth of the character’s base move, in metres (1.5 metres for an ‘average’ character).

Up to base distance . . . . . 5  
 Up to twice base distance . . . . . 15  
 Up to triple base distance . . . . . 30  
 Up to quadruple base distance . . . . . 50  
 Up to quintuple base distance (max) . . . . . 80

This assumes the character had a run up equal to at least twice the distance to be jumped. If this wasn’t available, then halve all distances. A high jump is calculated in the same way, but the base distance is a quarter of the long jump. Note that if a character wishes to merely jump up to catch hold of something (like the top of a wall), then she can effectively add her height to the height jumped. **Time taken:** Generally base speed of character, more if a run up is taken. She cannot take extra time to gain a bonus. **Failure:** Character can try again with no penalty – unless of course she was trying to leap a chasm, in which case failure can be quite serious.

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**Critical:** Leap 50% further distance (not always useful), but also land ready and able to act immediately. **Fumble:** The character trips over her own feet even before she leaves the ground, falling flat on her face (or against the wall/fence). For a success and a fumble it might be better if the character lands badly – breaking her leg maybe.

**Lifting** This skill involves any actions where the character is exercising brute strength – obviously it is STR based. Actions can include actually lifting heavy objects, bending bars, or snapping chains or ropes. Effectively, anything where a steady application of strength is applied. Difficulties for some miscellaneous tasks would be:

Bending thin bars. . . . .	25
Bending medium bars (most) . . . . .	40
Bending thick bars. . . . .	60
Snapping ropes . . . . .	30
Snapping chains (manacles) . . . . .	50

Where objects of a predetermined weight are being lifted, a character can lift up to 4 kg for each point of difficulty. At the end of each round it is held up, one short term fatigue (ie -1D) is gained, and another check is required. **Time taken:** Special. Character cannot take longer over it to gain a bonus. **Failure:** Item is either not moved, or has to be dropped. **Critical:** Bars and chains are broken or utterly ruined, objects can be held aloft for two rounds between checks and fatigue. **Fumble:** Character strains his back, gaining a penalty to STR and AGI related rolls (-1D to -3D usual), drops item on his head or foot etc.

**Stamina** Stamina is a measure of the character's ability to keep on going at some task, to remain conscious while suffering extreme pain, and generally ignoring her bodies demands to give up and get some rest. *Stamina* is normally CON based, and is always so when resisting effects of injury criticals (see Chapter 8: Combat). **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** Depends on circumstances. Generally either gain fatigue, or fail at task in hand. **Critical:** Open ended. **Fumble:** Suffer serious fatigue, or treat roll as zero.

**Tumbling** Tumbling is the character's ability to break his fall – the ability to land after a fall from a great height without suffering (too much) damage. It is nearly always AGI based. Normally, a character receives 1D of damage for every metre they fall, up to a total of 10m (beyond this, things get a bit more complex – see the rules on falling later on). This damage is type T, penetration 3 per metre fallen, and ignores all armour (except for natural toughness). A character able to use his *tumbling* skill (ie anyone conscious and not trussed up or otherwise prevented from movement) may roll his skill, and reduce the damage by this amount. Example: A character with 4D tumbling falls

six metres. He takes 34 points of damage from the fall, and rolls 19, so damage is reduced to 15 points. For distances greater than 10m, the roll from this skill is halved. Beyond 50m, the roll is quartered, and at distances greater than 100m, this skill is quite useless. **Time taken:**  $t^2=d/5$  **Critical:** Damage is divided by 10, or by a d20 roll – player's choice. **Fumble:** Result is probably a broken leg, knocked unconscious, or even killed instantly, depending on severity.

### Brawling List

**Dodge** With this AGI based skill, the character can dodge blows in melee (and rarely missiles as well), falling trees, blocks and other items that could hit the character. For combat purposes, this skill is explained in the combat section, but simply, it makes it harder to be hit. In other situations, use the following guidelines.

Dodging a falling tree . . . . .	15
Trying to avoid a pit trap . . . . .	30
On slippery ground (mud) . . . . .	+10
On smooth slippery ground (ice) . . . . .	+20

**Time taken:** Usually base speed, though can often be an 'instantaneous' action. **Failure:** Characters rarely get two attempts to dodge something after failing, and failing can hurt. **Critical:** Ha! Missed! **Fumble:** Simply failing is often the worst that can happen, so a fumble is usually a failure. Of course, if there is a second, worse trap, near by, then the character could stumble into that one instead (or as well).

**Punch** Hitting people, or blocking other peoples blows with your arms or fists, uses this skill. It is described more fully in the combat chapter (chapter 8). It is based on AGI.

**Reactions** This is a measure of how quickly a character can react to a situation – it is used mainly in combat to calculate which segment the character starts acting in (see the chapter on combat for more details of this). There is no failure, merely good rolls and bad rolls. At the GM's discretion, some specific actions may require a reactions roll (specifically those needing precision timing). It is often AGI based, but can be PER based to react to ambushes, or DEX based to grab hold of something etc. **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** Special. **Critical:** Character acts in segment 0, regardless of roll. **Fumble:** Character is totally overcome by the situation, taking an extra 5 segments to react.

**Throw** Yep, you've guessed it, another combat skill which is described in the combat chapter. This skill is used to chuck people over your shoulder, or just to hurl them to the ground. It is AGI based.

**Wrestle** Whenever you want to grab hold of anyone, pulling them to the ground, or to grapple with them

and hold them still, then the wrestling skill is needed. Again, it is explained further in the combat chapter. Generally though, to grab hold of someone, an opposed wrestling and dodge roll is needed, with further opposed wrestling rolls to keep the hold (or to escape it). Normally, it is AGI based, but could be based on STR in some circumstances.

**Communication List**

**Bargain** A useful skill to use when discussing money matters. Few places in the Land have fixed prices for equipment, and the price paid will depend just as much on the respective skills of the buyer and seller, as on the actual worth of the item. To speed up play, it is suggested that bargaining is only actually role played for big purchases. As for all charisma skills, a player willing to play out the situation should get a bonus to her roll. Simply, the buyer and seller both name a price for the item, after an initial round of "It is rather out of fashion" and "I can assure you madam, blue really does suit you", the seller names the price, at which point the buyer expresses utter outrage at such extortionate prices, and cuts it to a quarter. Which isn't all that bad, since the initial price was probably double the worth of the item. If the buyer seems gullible, then the seller will up the price even further. A good trick if the seller thinks the buyer has absolutely no idea about the price, is the old "Well, how much would you give me" trick. The chances are quite good that the buyer will name a too high a price. If the price is too low, then you just haggle them up. Of course, a high price is still haggled up, else the buyer would get suspicious. Anyway, the two roll their *bargain* skills. They are modified as follows:

- For the buyer:
- Item is very common. . . . . +5
- Superfluous stock which isn't selling . . . . . +10
- Seller's price is outrageous . . . . . +10
- Seller's price is *really* outrageous . . . . . +20
- For the seller:
- Item is rare (more so than normal) . . . . . +10
- Item is extremely popular . . . . . +5
- Buyer's price is outrageous (<50%) . . . . . +10
- Buyer's price is <25% . . . . . +25

A 'win' forces the other person to shift the desired direction in your favour. The exact amount shifted depends on how much you won by, and is based on the difference between the two prices (so a shift of 50% shifts you to the midway point).

- A win by less than 10 points. . . . . 10%
- A win by 10+ points . . . . . 20%
- A win by 20+ points . . . . . 30%
- A win by 30+ points . . . . . 40%
- A win by 50+ points . . . . . 50%
- A win by 70+ points . . . . . 60%
- A win by 100+ points (ouch!) . . . . . 75%

The bargaining ends when the two prices meet somewhere in the middle (probably a rather skewed middle). Realistically,

the PC should have to cough up the cash whether she likes the price or not (since the *character* was gullible enough to be bargained up so high). If as a GM you don't like forcing players to act according to die rolls, then you can ignore this, and allow players to choose not to buy an item if they don't like the price. **Time taken:** Each roll can take anything from a few seconds to a couple of minutes. The longer it goes on for, the longer each 'round' lasts. **Failure:** There are no actual 'failed' rolls as such, just not very good ones. **Critical:** The other person is convinced to pay your currently offered value. **Fumble:** You are convinced to pay the other persons currently offered value.

**Command** The most obvious use of *command* is to tell others what to do. Its principle function is to control a group of people who are working together to achieve a common goal. Each person in the group may combine their skills together (combining skills in described in chapter 2 – *The Core Rules*). The person with the highest command skill takes charge. Just before the skill roll is made for the skill being combined for, a CHA+*command* skill check must be made. The difficulty depends on the number of people (other than the commander) combining.

- One person. . . . . 10
- Two people . . . . . 15
- Three people . . . . . 20
- Up to five people . . . . . 25
- Up to ten people. . . . . 30
- Up to twenty people. . . . . 35
- Each ten people thereafter. . . . . +5

Obviously, the number of people who can combine is also going to be limited by the nature of the task. At most, only two or three people can fit around a body to combine *first aid* for instance. Failure means the skill being combined automatically fails, with all penalties inherent for this. A second use for *command* is to order people around. By shouting very loudly, seeming very confident, it is possible to confuse people into doing things. This works best against military personal, and others who are trained to follow orders. Of course, automatic failure is the only result when the victims of the attempt are aware of the character's true status. Otherwise, treat it as a *con* attempt, with modifiers for who good the character looks the part. **Time taken:** Either the length of the normal skill attempt, or however long it takes to shout the phoney orders, depending on what *command* is being used for. **Failure:** For combining, failure with this skill means failure in the combined skill. Still roll though in case a fumble occurs. A critical just makes the command into a success. **Critical:** Does *not* mean the combined skill criticals. Allow two rolls for the combined skill, taking the best. **Fumble:** Combined skill fumbles, or only use the lowest skill of those combining, depending on how mean the GM is feeling.

**Con** This skill involves quick wits and an

## Chapter 6 : Character Skills

honest face. Often useful for thieves and rogues who need to fast talk their way out of tricky situations. The skill can also be used to 'confuse' people, such as spinning a sort of plausible explanation or quoting unusual and probably fake laws in such a way that the other person has a nagging suspicion that he is missing something, but agrees with you just to get you to shut up and go away.

Has no reason to believe otherwise . . . . .	+30
Isn't really my job but... . . . . .	+20
Dressed the part. . . . .	+10
Situation is suspicious . . . . .	-5
Situation is very suspicious . . . . .	-15
Sensitive topic (palace grounds) . . . . .	-10
Very sensitive topic (kings bedchamber) . . . . .	-25
Con man is total misfit . . . . .	-10

The con roll is rolled against the other persons *con* skill. For the person doing the conning, this skill is based on *CHA*, for the person being conned, it is based on *PER*. **Time taken:** Variable. **Failure:** Depends on situation, but you are not believed, and often the worst is assumed. **Critical:** Yes sir, sorry to have bothered you sir! **Fumble:** Marvellous how the human mind works isn't it? How a mere palace guard can intuitively guess that just because you were loitering outside the gates, you are actually an assassin, a high ranking member of the cult of Taila even, planning to assassinate the king!

**Orate** Orate is used to stir the emotions of crowds. Basically, it includes being able to stand up in front of a lot of people and make a clear speech, while at the same time being able to 'read' the general mood of the crowd. Of course, you need to be able to get people's attention first, and just standing on top of a box in the market place is going to require two or three good oratory rolls just to get people listening to you (after all, there are probably half a dozen other speakers on other boxes about the market). Once you have a crowd to work (the size decided by the GM), you can be your subject proper. A roll of less than 20 will cause people to ignore you (only a fumble or negative roll (ie with modifiers) will get a really bad reaction). 30 or more and they will listen to you and bear what you say in mind. By about 40, they will be heartily agreeing with you (and meaning it), and at 50 or so, they will gladly side you, and will be cheering your name. The difficulties may seem a bit high, but this is because it is generally difficult to get people to *do* something unless they want to, and doesn't involve going up against big men with sharp swords. Just because they laugh or shout 'YES!' at the right moment doesn't mean they're going to rise in revolution.

You are a total stranger . . . . .	+5
You are disliked or distrusted . . . . .	+15
You are generally hated. . . . .	+40
You are liked and trusted . . . . .	-5
The crowd agrees with you anyway. . . . .	-5
They feel strongly about the subject . . . . .	-10

As above, but disagree with you . . . . .	+20
You have good evidence to support you . . . . .	-15
What you want them to do is going to benefit them immediately . . . . .	-10
Agreeing with you could be dangerous. . . . .	+10
Agreeing <i>will</i> be dangerous. . . . .	+25

Further modifiers, of about -15 to +15 may be added depending on the crowds general mood at the time. Stirring up a crowd of drunk revellers for example will be a lot easier than rising up the emotions of a bunch of dour dwarves. **Time taken:** 15 minutes, an hour, maybe more, maybe less. **Failure:** How does it feel to be ignored? **Critical:** Our hero! **Fumble:** You get interesting sound effects along with your speech – rotten fruit makes such a satisfying *sqelch* don't you think? If the roll is really bad as well, then cries of *kill him!* may well start to echo through the streets....

### Local Lore List

**Culture** This skill covers knowledge of the culture of a society, its customs, traditions, structure etc. To get by in normal, everyday life, skill checks are never necessary (at least not for a person's home culture), but knowledge about special ceremonies or social levels outside your own may require checks. **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** You don't know. **Critical:** You know a lot about this subject. **Fumble:** You think you know the answer, but it is totally wrong.

**Fauna/Flora** Gives knowledge of plants and animals which can be found in the local region. Character knows about common herbs and their general properties (though not how to prepare them if such is necessary – this comes under the *herb lore* skill), what animals are found where, and how best to avoid them etc. **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** You don't know. If failure was by less than five, you can try again after a few hours, then a few days. **Critical:** It's your speciality topic! **Fumble:** Get totally the wrong answer, which may possibly be dangerous.

**Folk lore** Anything included in the local mythology, from old wives tales, some faerie lore, knowledge of haunted ruins and so on and so forth. This can actually cover a wide range of topics, but knowledge tends to be inaccurate at best, since it gives the popular interpretation of everything, which may not be the actual truth. **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** You don't know. If failure was by less than five, you can try again after a few hours, then a few days. **Critical:** It's your speciality topic! **Fumble:** Get totally the wrong answer, which may possibly be dangerous.

**Geography** Gives knowledge of the area around where the character grew up (see also *urban geography* later on). This skill covers an area which is anything from a

kilometre or so around a village, or a whole county or duchy. The size of the area is really governed by the character type – wandering sorts will have less specialised knowledge of a much larger area. **Time taken:** Instantaneous reply, to a few seconds. **Failure:** You don't know, or can't remember. It may come to you in a few days. **Critical:** Very detailed knowledge of a subject. **Fumble:** You think you know, but of course you're very, very wrong.

**History** Gives knowledge of recent history of local region, for the most part for the last hundred years. For notable events, this can go back much further, but generally the less important and less recent facts are harder to know. KNO based, obviously. **Time taken:** Anything up to a few seconds, depending on detail needed. Can take a while to inform others of the facts though of course. **Failure:** Can try again maybe in a day or so if the failure was no more than by 5 points, but otherwise can't try again. **Critical:** Know everything needed down to the smallest detail. **Fumble:** Get things a bit confused with something else.

**Religion** This skill gives you details about the local religion – ie the one you ascribe to. It may be specific to a single deity, or to a complete pantheon, depending on the religion in question. May also provide you with knowledge about other religions, but this knowledge will be coloured by your religions own biases (a christians views on wicca may be very different from the actual reality for instance). **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** May try again later if failure was by less than 5 points, else you never knew this. **Critical:** You're a genius on this particular facet of the religion. **Fumble:** Satan? Isn't he a local fertility god?

**Society** You have knowledge of who's who in your local area, what they look like, general public opinion about them, and also what their weaknesses are (ie can a particular judge be bribed). Of course, this skill won't give you anything other than what is reasonably common knowledge, so you can't usually use it to find a way of blackmailing someone. *Society* is KNO based. **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** As above. **Critical:** Or then again, maybe you do know some juicy not-very-well-known piece of information which could be used to your advantage. **Fumble:** Hanse Shadowspawn? Ah! He's just a petty street thief with a big ego.

**Urban geography** Similar to geography, except covers a single town or city, making it more useful for thief type characters. Character will know where streets, shops and other places of note are. The character may want to specialise in a specific area of a city (especially if the city is big), since knowing about small allies and back streets requires a high skill, unless the area covered is relatively small. Obviously it is KNO based. **Time taken:**

Instantaneous reply, to a few seconds. **Failure:** You don't know, or can't remember. It may come to you in a few days. **Critical:** Ah ha! This alley comes out half way along Tanners street, where there's a hole in the fence that allows us across into Stinking Square... **Fumble:** Quick! Down this alley, we can nip across to Tanner's Street then – oops, I'm *sure* it was the second alley which was a dead end...

**Riding List**

*Riding* includes several related skills, each for riding different types of animal. Basically, each general class of animal has its own skill (so there will be horse, elephant or dragon skills etc, exactly how specific character's need to be is generally up to the GM). The skill is AGI based for actually riding the animal, CHA based for controlling it (when necessary), and KNO based for knowing how to care for the animal.

Normally, riding an animal will be an *easy* AGI based check for a period of a day – failure means the rider has fallen off at least once. Ensuring animals are sufficiently fed, watered and cared for at the end of the day is generally a *moderate* difficulty, based on KNO. Failure will mean that animals won't be in peak condition the next day, and may even fall ill or die! One person can easily see to many animals though, or at least tell others what to do (such tasks aren't too difficult – if you know what to do).

General difficulties for riding an animal under unusual circumstances (such as while galloping, or during combat), are as follows. All the following are AGI based.

- Normal riding for a day . . . . . 10
  - Fast (trotting) for a day . . . . . 15
  - Canter or gallop for a few minutes . . . . . 20
  - Leaping into the saddle . . . . . 20
  - Using mount as a shield (per round) . . . . . 30
  - Staying on while mount is jumping . . . . . 20
  - Any of the above on an airborne mount . . . . . +5
- Being tied down (the usual practice for air mounts since the fall can really hurt) can often mean either a big bonus or totally negating chance of failure (unless the ropes break of course).

One of the most important aspects of actually having a riding skill is that while riding, all physical skills are capped to your AGI+*riding* skill. This can make unskilled riders next to useless in combat. Magical skills are not capped (but things like *directed spells* are), but may require a concentration roll to cast a spell. **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** You generally fall off and take 2D damage. **Critical:** You could carry on like this all day, or maybe just a bonus to further checks for similar attempts. **Fumble:** Ouch! You fall off, landing on your head, or ropes holding you down snap or come loose –

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in which case you don't fall, but further failures will mean you will.

### Subterfuge List

**Alertness** Generally a measure of how *alert* a character is, ie how good he is at noticing noises, sights and so forth around him. Simply, its major use is in foiling attempts by others to *hide* or *sneak* past or up to the character. In these cases, a simple opposed roll is made. The other person may get bonuses or penalties, as the GM sees fit (and which are described under the respective skills). If the character is asleep, this skill is reduced to 0D (before averaging), unless the character has the gift of being a light sleeper. *Alertness* is a PER based skill. **Time taken:** Not really applicable. **Failure:** Often fatal, sometimes not. More than one attempt may be given at the GM's option if the other person is spending a long time doing whatever he is trying to do quietly. **Critical:** Open ended, or gain lots of information. **Fumble:** Oblivious to the world.

**Ambush** A skill most prized by assassins and other characters who strike with surprise. Basically, use of this skill gives you a bonus to the penetration of your attack when your attack is unexpected. It is really a combat skill, so is fully explained in chapter 9, under *Surprise Tactics*.

**Camouflage** This skill is used whenever the character wishes to try to hide something other than himself. It is based on PER, and the difficulty number is simply an opposed role between the hider's PER+*camouflage* and the searcher's PER+*observation*. The player should specify where and how something is being hidden, and some situations are going to totally bypass this skill. Hiding something in a sand desert for instance is practically impossible, unless you bury it, in which case the chances of someone finding it are purely based on luck. Areas of dense undergrowth, or lots of dark nooks and crannies, can give up to +20 to the roll, whereas a small confined area, or reasonably bare room, may give a similar penalty. **Time taken:** Anything from a few seconds, to a few minutes or even a few hours – it depends on the size of the object. Something hand sized would take seconds, a human sized body may take five minutes, while a cart would take an hour. **Failure:** Failure isn't known until someone finds it, by which time it is too late. **Critical:** Open ended. **Fumble:** Everyone involved thinks the object is really well hidden, the score though is a fifth of whatever was actually rolled.

**Observation** The ability to actually notice things, rather than just to see them. For example, seeing a bulge in someone's jacket which could be a hidden weapon, a clean patch on the floor where a cupboard could of stood which has now been moved for some reason, remembering faces or

places for future reference, noticing snares or other large traps. Noticing things is generally PER based, while remembering things is KNO based.

A crude pit trap . . . . .	10
Someone leave or enter a crowded bar . . . . .	15
Furniture removed from a room . . . . .	20
Small detail, such as small blood stains on someone's clothes . . . . .	30
Very minor detail, such as torn cloth . . . . .	40
Specifically looking . . . . .	-15
Keeping an eye out in general . . . . .	-5
Thoughts elsewhere. . . . .	+10

For noticing sleight of hand tricks, hidden pits and so forth, an opposed roll verses the tricksters sleight skill, hunters camouflage skill or whatever is needed. **Time taken:** A quick glance, to a close scrutiny. **Failure:** If trying to remember, then can try again in a few minutes, a few hours, then a few days. After this though, the thoughts are hopelessly lost. Otherwise, as GM sees fit. **Critical:** Automatic success, with maybe some detailed information. **Fumble:** Oblivious...

**Sleight** Allows you to palm small objects without anyone noticing, including filching things from peoples pockets. Can also be used for simple tricks and 'illusions' – pulling flowers from peoples ears or dancing coins across your knuckles. When picking someone's pocket, or trying another similar manoeuvre, all involved make opposed PER+*alertness* and DEX+*sleight* rolls. The sleight roll is modified as follows:

Very crowded and congested conditions . . . . .	+20
Crowded conditions. . . . .	+10
Light crowd . . . . .	+5
Target especially alert . . . . .	+15
Target is watching thief . . . . .	+50

Other factors may modify the roll depending on conditions. Others around who are in line of sight may also get a chance to witness the attempt, at GM's discretion. **Time taken:** Usually a few seconds once near target. Longer if the target is alert. **Failure:** Can keep on trying, but if you fail by 10 or more you are seen. Failure by 5 or more means the victim suspects, but didn't actually see you. **Critical:** You could probably take the shirt from their backs while you're at it. **Fumble:** Hand gets caught, or victim sees it coming right from the start.

**Stealth** Stealth involves both hiding and sneaking. Moving around quietly so no-one hears you is AGI based, while finding somewhere to hide is PER based. For sneaking, it is an opposed roll against peoples PER+*alertness*, while hiding from someone is an opposed roll against their PER+*observation*. Some modifiers to these rolls could be as follows:

For hiding:	
Good deep shadows. . . . .	+10



At least 50% of body totally hidden . . . . .	+5
At least 75% of body totally hidden . . . . .	+10
Just head/hands showing . . . . .	+15
Wearing suitable clothes . . . . .	+5
Wearing bright clothes . . . . .	-10
Observer is specifically looking . . . . .	-10
For sneaking:	
No other sounds . . . . .	-10
Very quiet . . . . .	-5
Background noise (talking) . . . . .	+5
Laughing or talking loudly . . . . .	+10
Loud crowd . . . . .	+20

Other modifiers may be added at GM's discretion. Note that a successful alertness or observation check means that the person both heard/saw the character, and considered it unusual enough to pay attention. **Time taken:** Movement is at normal speed. Any faster, and the skill suffers penalties as for running (see chapter 8 on movement). Moving slower is possible to gain a bonus to skill roll, just use normal rules for taking longer. **Failure:** You are heard or seen. Trying again becomes rater pointless. **Critical:** Open ended roll. **Fumble:** Tried to hide somewhere stupid, or knocked over something making a loud noise.

**Trailing** This is the skill of following someone through crowds. It is not like *stealth*, where you are trying to prevent yourself being seen, but instead you are trying to follow someone without making it look like you are following someone. It is normally PER based, but can be CHA based on occasion (trying to act as if you're not interested in someone who suspects you're following him).

Packed crowds. . . . .	+5
Long streets . . . . .	+5
Thin crowd . . . . .	-5
Very thin crowd (half a dozen or less) . . . . .	-10
Empty streets . . . . .	-15
Short streets (ie have to stick close). . . . .	-10
Short, winding maze-like streets . . . . .	-25

Rolls are against the followed persons PER+*observation* skill. *Alertness* isn't used since normally the target will have seen you, he just needs to recognise the fact that he's seen you continuously for the past half hour. **Time taken:** Normally, a check should be made every five to fifteen minutes. GM's may increase the frequency if under difficult circumstances. **Failure:** Either you've lost him, or he's noticed you. Note that the latter isn't always obvious. **Critical:** Assume success for the next four or five checks. **Fumble:** You've lost him, he knows you're following him, and you don't know that. Maybe he's now even following you...

**Survival List**

**Area Lore** This is not one skill, but several, each

for a particular type of terrain. It covers surviving in and knowing about particular terrain types. Types of area include *arctic, desert, jungle, mountains, subterranean* and *temperate*. The difficulties needed for each depend greatly on prevailing conditions, and will vary from season to season. Surviving in a temperate area (plains or forest generally) may be difficulty 20, whereas arctic or desert regions will tend to be 40. Difficulties should be lowered by 5 or 10 points if the character has partial supplies (having plenty of food and water in the desert could lower the difficulty down to 20 – you may have everything you need, but it is still an unfriendly environment. **Time taken:** Generally used to cover a day, week or month depending on time scale. **Failure:** Loss of physical attributes until death results from starvation and exposure. **Critical:** Find a good source of food, or an excellent shelter. **Fumble:** In arctic or desert climates, generally fatal. In others, it is up to the GM.

**Direction sense** By noting the position of the sun, moons and stars, you can tell where north lays, and hence which way you are going. You may also use this skill to give yourself an awareness of where you are in relation to somewhere you have just left. For instance, if wandering underground, you can keep track of turns and know which way you are facing relative to where you started from, and roughly how far you are away from there. It is KNO based.

Finding north from the stars . . . . .	15
Finding north from the sun . . . . .	20
Finding north without either . . . . .	30
Keeping track of facing:	
a few gentle turns, or right angled turns . . . . .	15
quite complex twists and turns . . . . .	25
really complex and frequent changes . . . . .	35
vertical direction changes as well . . . . .	+5

The ability to find north without resorting to the sun or stars assumes there is another way – such as which way plants are growing etc. Doing this in the middle of empty plains with full cloud cover is going to be impossible. Keeping track of your facing assumes a normal walking pace. Add +10 to the difficulty for each multiple of movement you are running at. **Time taken:** Variable. **Failure:** You have no idea, you're too confused. **Critical:** You know for sure. **Fumble:** You think you know, but are wrong.

**Tracking** The skill used by rangers, bounty hunters and others who wish to follow anything across country. Enables you to find and identify tracks left by creatures, and to possibly follow them as well. It is PER based to find and to follow tracks, while KNO is used to identify and interpret them. Note that 'tracks' can be anything from actual footprints, to broken branches, bits of torn cloth or trails of blood. Some standard difficulties are as follows:

Tracking a walking creature . . . . .	25
Tracking a running creature (x2 move) . . . . .	20

## Chapter 6 : Character Skills

Tracking a sprinting creature (x4 move) . . . . .	15
CRreature is 500kg or more in weight. . . . .	-5
Creature is 1 tonne or more in weight . . . . .	-10
Creature is 2 tonnes or more . . . . .	-15
Creature is 5 tonnes or more . . . . .	-20
Creature is less than 40kg . . . . .	+5
Creature is less than 20kg . . . . .	+10
Creature is less than 10kg . . . . .	+15
Creature is less than 5kg . . . . .	+20
Ground is soft and muddy . . . . .	-5
Ground is hard. . . . .	+5
Ground is mostly rock. . . . .	+10
Ground is all rock . . . . .	+20

The GM should use her judgement for any other unusual conditions. Some creatures may opt to hide their tracks, in which case they use their DEX+tracking skill to cover their tracks. This skill replaces the normal difficulty if it is higher. Such creatures cannot move faster than walking speed when they do this. **Time taken:** Varies greatly, depending on how obvious tracks are. Assume one minute for each five difficulty when searching an are (100m<sup>2</sup>) of area. **Failure:** Find nothing. **Critical:** Gain extra information from tracks if any are there. **Fumble:** Find wrong tracks, but think you've found what you're looking for.

### Unrelated Skills

**Acting** A CHA based skill which can be used for both entertainment and also more misleading activities. It is similar in use to the con skill, though allows you to mislead others through body movement. **Time taken:** Varies. **Failure:** Viewers become suspicious. **Critical:** Open ended. **Fumble:** You make a complete fool of yourself.

**Arcane Sense** A PER based skill which defaults to 0D, but cannot be developed unless you either have Talent of some description, or it is taught by someone who does. With it, you can sense magical attacks against you, such as mind reading, scrying or other 'subtle' methods. It is also possible to sense auras and other magical regions. Difficulty depends on the strength of the aura (on a scale 0-5).

Anti-magic region . . . . .	60-1/2×aura
Divine aura . . . . .	50-4×aura
Faerie aura. . . . .	40-5×aura
Infernal aura . . . . .	50-5×aura
Magical aura . . . . .	30-5×aura

For sensing a magical attack, the difficulty is 20, minus the number of points the WIL check was made by, plus the cloaking of the spell. Where the WIL check was failed, add the number of points it was failed by. **Time taken:** Instantaneous. For regions, a check is made when entering an area, and every hour thereafter. Another check can be made when a region is left to notice that, but only if the region was detected first. **Failure:** You sense nothing. **Critical:** Open

ended, or sense more detailed nature of attack or region. **Fumble:** Sense incorrect information, or nothing at all.

**Authorship** This is a CHA based skill used when writing books. The better your *authorship*, the easier the book is to read, understand and to learn from. See the section on on studying from books later on in this chapter for further details. **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** There is no failure, only degrees of success. **Critical:** The skill is not rolled, just taken 'as is', so criticals are not possible. **Fumble:** See criticals.

**Awareness** *Awareness* is the skill of knowing where everyone is around you when you can't actually see them, basically making use of secondary senses. See the *Advanced Combat* chapter (chapter 9) for further information on how this skill is used.

**Berserk Fury** This is a skill that is normally found only in barbarian warriors. It enables the warrior to reach a mental state, combining ecstasy with bloodlust. While in a *berserk* state, you can ignore pain, and fight like a demon possessed. You cannot though retreat from combat, make tactical decisions (you merely attack the nearest foe), parry or go defensive (you can dodge, though you cannot forego attacks in order to do so, and such dodges are less effective – divide the dodge roll by three, not by two). There are some pretty hefty bonuses though which are gained when in a *berserk* state. Use the following chart when going berserk:

Roll	Injury	WIL	STR	Speed
20	1D	—	—	—
25	3D	1D	—	—
30	5D	2D	1D	—
35	7D	3D	1D	-1
40	9D	5D	1D	-1
45	All	7D	2D	-1
50	All	9D	2D	-2
55	All	12D	2D	-2
60	All	15D	3D	-2
70	All	18D	3D	-2

The Injury is how much is ignored. So someone who rolls 35 or more, ignores 7D worth of penalties from being injured or stunned. The WIL column is a bonus to all stamina and WIL checks. The STR column is the bonus to STR, speed is the bonus (ie reduction) to base speed, though this cannot take base speed down to less than 2. There are some disadvantages to being berserk though. For a start, you are filled with blood lust, to such an extent that you have difficulty telling friend from foe. Whenever you need to refrain from attacking, you must make a WIL+berserk fury roll to keep control, which must exceed the WIL+berserk fury roll you made to go berserk. Careful berserkers may opt to reduce your skill when going berserk, to get fewer bonuses, but to ensure that you have a better chance of

controlling your berserk state. The same rules apply when you want to come out of being berserk. As a berserk warrior, you will never willingly retreat, give quarter or rest until either everyone is dead, or you leave your berserk state. You are not considered 'berserk' unless you roll at least 20 with your skill. Note that berserk fury is a specialist skill of an unusual nature. It is *very* rare, and should be restricted to certain character backgrounds. If you want it, you have to take the *Berserk Fury* gift first, at which point you gain this skill at 0D. **Time taken:** It takes a number of rounds equal to your base mental speed to go berserk. This may be hastened as normal, but any penalties for having hastened this also come off rolls to keep control while berserk. **Failure:** Nothing happens. You can keep on trying though as much as you want. **Critical:** if you roll 20 or more, then a critical shifts the effects you gain up a category. **Fumble:** On a roll of 20 or more, you go berserk as normal, but your roll is considered double for purposes of regaining control.

**Boating** This skill enables you to pilot small boats, either with sails or oars. You have a reasonable knowledge about such things, and can tell whether a boat is sea worthy with a successful easy KNO+*boating* check. Deciding just how seaworthy a boat is may be moderate or harder. Piloting a boat uses DEX+*boating* skill. Some difficulties are as follows:

- Calm lake, or slow river . . . . . 5
- Choppy lake, medium river . . . . . 10
- Strong wind or current . . . . . 15
- Fast flowing river . . . . . 20
- Very fast river, hazardous obstacles . . . . . 30
- White water rapids, or a storm . . . . . 40

Bear in mind that the sort of boat this skill covers are nothing like 'modern' canoes or yachts built for rough handling. **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** In safe situation, boat runs aground. In dangerous situation, might get smashed against rocks or overturned. **Critical:** Open ended. **Fumble:** Boat has head on collision against a rock. Everyone probably takes damage, then must swim or die.

**Body Reading** Body reading is a specialist skill which defaults to nil. It can only be developed if the character has the *body reading* gift, in which case it defaults to 0D, and is PER based. With it, the character can 'read' peoples emotions through their actions and posture. Only simple emotions can be picked up, such as fear, love and unease. It is possible to try and tell if someone is lying, or about to attack, but such can be difficult. A different skill is needed for each race. Trying to read someone of a different race doubles the difficulty.

- Reading simple emotion . . . . . 15-30+acting skill
- Detecting lies . . . . . 15+con skill
- Detecting sudden action . . . . . 25+acting skill

Acting skill should only add to the difficulty if the target is actively trying to hide her emotions or actions. Difficulty for

reading emotions will depend on how strong the emotion is. Trying to spot a sudden movement by the target requires an *active* use of the skill. **Time taken:** A couple of seconds for detecting lies and emotions. Success for detecting an action gives the character a warning equal to 1 segment for each five (or part) success was made by, up to a maximum of the base speed of the target. **Failure:** Nothing is learnt. **Critical:** Open ended, or GM's discretion. **Fumble:** Incorrect information is provided. A sudden movement takes you totally by surprise.

**Calligraphy** The art of writing nicely. You can illuminate manuscripts and generally make things look more readable and 'professional'. The skill is DEX+ *calligraphy*, and is a specialist skill, being partial until it is bought with 5 XP. It can also be used to forge signatures, documents and anything else involving writing. **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** Doesn't look as good. **Critical:** Open ended, so things look really nice. **Fumble:** You totally ruin whatever it is you're working on.

**Catching** Allows you to catch objects thrown your way – including even thrown weapons if you have a high enough skill! First, the character chucking the item to you must make a successful hit roll. By every point this roll is failed by, the difficulty of the catch is increased by 2. The skill to use is DEX+*catching*, against the following difficulties:

- Basic item . . . . . 10
- Weapons such as a spear or axe . . . . . 30
- Weapons such as knives or darts . . . . . 40
- Quarrels or arrows . . . . . 60
- Item is slippery . . . . . up to +10
- Item is spinning . . . . . up to +10
- Using both hands . . . . . -5

Heavy items may require a STR+*lifting* roll as well to hold onto it if it is particularly heavy, at the GM's discretion. A difficulty of 1 for every 1 to 2 kg of weight (exact value will depend on the shape and velocity of the object). For items thrown to harm you (ie weapons), a DEX+*reactions* roll must also be made, of difficulty 50, 40, 30 or 20 depending on whether the missile was thrown from close, short, medium or long range. For crossbows and bows, the reaction difficulty is doubled. If successfully caught, the missile automatically hits you, but both the penetration and the damage is reduced by a *lifting* skill roll. You cannot make any other defensive actions against an attack you try to catch in this way. **Time taken:** Very little. **Failure:** You drop the item, or get hit normally. If an attack misses by 5 or less, then you get hit anyway. **Critical:** Weapons so caught are automatically caught. **Fumble:** An item is dropped and broken (maybe a flailing arm hits it too hard) or the missile weapon is deflected into your head...

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**Chirurgery** Chirurgery involves sticking people back together again. This is a specialist skill which starts at partial, and costs 15 XP to learn to 0D. Medicine generally isn't very advanced in the time that *Myths* is set, but even so, people have enough knowledge to at least aid those injured after a fight or other event. The first use of *chirurgery* is to heal an injury. This must be done within an hour of the injury being gained. Seeing to an injury within four hours means that the difficulty is doubled. The injury should have been cleaned first (with the *first aid* skill, though this step can be ignored), and must not be bleeding. The difficulty of the healing attempt is equal to half of the size of the injury. So a 17 point injury would be difficulty 8 for instance. For every multiple of this rolled on the healer's DEX+*chirurgery* skill, 1 point of the injury is cured. This may be done only once per injury. Healing yourself is hard, and in such cases the difficulties are doubled. The skill can also be used to help someone heal naturally. After each night's rest, when characters get a CON roll to heal injuries (these and more will be explained under the Core Rules), a healer may add a fifth of his KNO+*chirurgery* skill to the character's CON. For each person being seen to beyond the first, the chirurgeons skill is reduced by 1D. A character cannot aid himself this way though. **Time taken:** 1 minute per point of injury. Add 50% if healing yourself. **Failure:** A failure simply means the injury is unaffected, but this still means no further attempts may be made. **Critical:** A second chirurgery attempt may be made on the same injury. **Fumble:** Depending on the severity of the fumble, the chirurgeon may actually make the injury worse, cause it to become infected or even decide that the only cure for the poor patient is to have the offending body part amputated!

**Concentration** A skill used when you have to keep your mind on a particular train of thought under extreme circumstances. It is normally used by magi, who may have to keep concentrating on spells under combat conditions. Generally, when concentration must be maintained when an injury is received, a WIL+*concentration* check must be made of the following difficulties:

Injury is less than 10% of max hitpoints . . . . .	5
Injury is 10% of max hitpoints . . . . .	10
Injury is 25% of max hitpoints . . . . .	20
Injury is 50% of max hitpoints . . . . .	30
Injury is 75% of max hitpoints . . . . .	45
Injury is 100% of max hitpoints . . . . .	60

Any penalties from being injured already, or being stunned or fatigued, also apply to this roll of course. **Time taken:** Instant. **Failure:** You lose your concentration. The spell fails or whatever. **Critical:** Open ended. **Fumble:** The attempt leaves you totally confused and unable to do anything for the next few segments at least.

**Dancing** A social skill which gives you both knowledge of different dance styles, and also the ability to

dance. It is based either on KNO or AGI, respectively. **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** Only a really bad roll normally fails, there are merely degrees of success. **Critical:** Open ended. **Fumble:** Often embarrassing. If you have a partner, hope he has tough shoes.

**Directed spells** A skill of use only to magi. Whenever a ranged spell is cast that requires a skill check to hit a target, DEX+*directed spells* is used. The difficulties are the same as for normal missile weapons. **Time taken:** Instant. **Failure:** You miss. **Critical:** No effect, or choice of exact location – GM's choice. **Fumble:** Miss, and hit something you definitely didn't want to.

**Disguise** The ability to change your appearance by mundane means – the application of make-up, changing of clothes and generally using the mannerisms and such of someone else. Your CHA+*disguise* skill is rolled against viewers PER+*observation*. This can be modified for circumstances, depending on the differences between your actual appearance, and that you wish to portray. If you are portraying a particular person, someone familiar with that person will get a bonus also. Modifiers to your roll include:

Major physical differences . . . . .	-5 or more
Per point of appearance too high . . . . .	-2
Per point of appearance too low . . . . .	-4
Viewer knows person . . . . .	-5 or more

Other bonuses or penalties can be added at GM's option. **Time taken:** Varies. **Failure:** Disguise is seen through. **Critical:** Open ended. **Fumble:** Everyone automatically guesses that you are in disguise, and if they know you, they recognise you.

**Evaluation** This is the skill of judging the value of precious goods, recognising them and being able to spot fakes. Knowing the value of something is KNO+*evaluation*, while checking for 'faulty goods' or fakes is PER+*evaluation*. This is a specialist skill, defaulting to partial, and costing 10 XP to learn initially to 0D. Specialist versions of it are possible – say evaluation (paintings), evaluation (gems) etc, but these default to 'none', and also cost 10 XP to learn. The difficulties for their area is halved.

Magnitude of value (whether the price would be in silver or gold coins for instance) . . . . .	15
Within 100% . . . . .	20
Within 50% . . . . .	25
Within 25% . . . . .	30
Very common item . . . . .	-10
Common item . . . . .	+0
Rare item . . . . .	+5
Very rare item . . . . .	+10
Unique or unusual market . . . . .	+15
Spotting obvious flaws . . . . .	5
Spotting 'minor' flaws . . . . .	15

Spotting well hidden flaws . . . . . 25+  
 Price of many items is rarely fixed, which is why guessing a price to within 25% is so difficult. If a buyer reckons an item is stolen, then the price he will be willing to pay will be much lower. **Time taken:** A few seconds to judge price, maybe a few minutes to check an item for flaws. **Failure:** No idea. **Critical:** An accurate guess. **Fumble:** Think you're right, but in fact way off.

**First Aid** Similar in some ways to the chirurgery skill, first aid is far simpler. It's basically bandaging peoples wounds, stopping bleeding, and ensuring injuries don't become infected. It can also be used to bring round an unconscious person, giving the breath of life and other 'simple' tasks. Trying to stop bleeding takes a round to accomplish, and a successful roll reduces any blood loss that round and thereafter. The difficulty is half the amount being lost to bleeding, rounded down. For each multiple of this rolled, bleeding is reduced by one point. As for *chirurgery*, healing yourself doubles the difficulties. Some guidelines for other difficulties are given below.

- Bringing round an unconscious person . . . . . 20
- Cleaning a minor injury (<25%) . . . . . 10
- Cleaning a bad injury (25%+) . . . . . 15
- Cleaning a severe injury (50%+) . . . . . 20
- Cleaning a major injury (75%+) . . . . . 25
- Cleaning a mortal injury (100%+) . . . . . 30
- Making a splint for a broken limb . . . . . 20
- Reviving a drowned person after:
  - a few seconds . . . . . 10
  - a minute . . . . . 15
  - two minutes . . . . . 20
  - five minutes . . . . . 30

Cleaning an injury can take a minute or so, and failing to do this means that there is a chance of an injury becoming infected. See the Core Rules under *Injury, Sickness and Death*. **Time taken:** As above, plus reviving a drowned person takes as long as she has been drowned for. **Failure:** Giving the kiss of life can be tried again, but at the greater difficulty (since time has passed). An unconscious person can be tried as many times as necessary. For all other tasks, the healer *thinks* he has done ok... **Critical:** Have done exceptionally well. No chance of infection, no ill effects after drowning etc. **Fumble:** Hm, let's see, rubbing dirt into the wound will make it better, right?

**Herb Lore** The *herb lore* skill gives the character knowledge of herbs and their uses. She can find, prepare and use such herbs, and can possibly diagnose the effects of other herbs as well. *Herb lore* is a specialist skill, starting at a skill of 'none', and costs 10 XP to learn. Knowledge of herbs allows the character a chance to identify certain plants and poisons, as well as their effects (if any), and their antidotes. The GM and player should consult appendix C, which lists some example herbs for use in a fantasy game, and which

also gives rules for 'generic' herbs where more detailed descriptions are unavailable, or unwanted. **Time taken:** Varies greatly. Not long at all to recognise a herb, unless tests are needed to be done, but preparing herbs for use may take a long time. See the herb descriptions in appendix C. **Failure:** Character has never heard of this herb before, or doesn't know its effects. **Critical:** Complete knowledge of herb is available to the character. **Fumble:** Character mistakes this herb for another one, which may or may not be fatal.

**Mechanical** This skill covers anything to do with fiddling around with small mechanical devices – which 99% of the time are going to be locks and mechanical traps. This skill allows you to open doors without having to resort to such annoying items as keys, or to set or disarm mechanical traps. Both uses of the skill are based on DEX, and both normally require special tools to make life easier. Lack of any suitable tools will at the very least double the difficulty (if not make an attempt impossible). An improvised toll which is close to that required adds 50% to the difficulty. Some difficulties may be:

- Very basic padlock . . . . . 10
- Decent padlock . . . . . 20
- Good quality lock . . . . . 30
- Very good quality lock . . . . . 40
- Excellent quality lock (very rare) . . . . . 60
- Very complex lock of excellent quality . . . . . 80
- About the best anyone can make . . . . . 100

For disarming traps, use the same scale, though anything below difficulty 20 is considered rare. Setting a trap is about half of this (or less). Skeleton keys may also be of use, though tend to be restricted to particular types of lock, and may reduce the difficulty by a third, or half, depending on the quality of the key. This must be worked out on a case by case basis though. **Time taken:** 1 minute per five difficulty of the lock or trap. **Failure:** A second attempt takes twice as long, a third attempt three times as long, a fourth five times as long, and all succeeding attempts ten times as long. Failing to disarm a trap gives a percentage chance equal to twice the difficulty of the lock of setting it off. If you want, you can be *very* careful and reduce your skill by 1D, for every 15% off this chance. **Critical:** Half difficulty to open this lock or disarm this trap again. **Fumble:** Either you can't open this lock at all, or it is jammed shut (or open depending on what you don't want). Fumbling a trap will set it off in the worst possible way.

**Mimicry** *Mimicry* allows you to imitate sounds, including people's voices. It is CHA based, and difficulties are as follows:

- Rough impression of a persons voice . . . . . 15
- Convincing animal noise . . . . . 15
- Good impression of a persons voice . . . . . 20
- Very good impression, good animal noise . . . . . 25

The above values are for entertainment purposes. If you are

## Chapter 6 : Character Skills

trying to pass yourself off as someone, then use listeners PER+*observation* if it is higher than the above. Trying to fool animals is especially tricky, since many animals have a *lot* better hearing than humans do (and hence get a big bonus to their roll) – but animals will also tend to be less suspicious of fake noises unless they are already alerted to danger. **Time taken:** Time to speak, make the noise or whatever. **Failure:** Depends on circumstances, but generally people aren't convinced. **Critical:** Open ended, or simply convince everyone. **Fumble:** What d'ya mean that was a nightingale? Sure sounded like an elephant to me...

**Running** The ability to run very fast. This skill is based on STR, but also modifies your base move, which is AGI based, so both attributes are important. Actually, *running* isn't that important, even for those that like running away, since it doesn't make that much difference to your speed (even an olympic sprinter is only about 50% faster than your average person even today). Each dice of skill you have adds 0.1 (yep, 0.1) to your base movement *after* multiplication for sprinting. See the rules on running and movement in chapter 8 for full details of this skill.

**Seduction** Only for players who aren't embarrassed by roleplaying out those intimate scenes. For the majority of situations, it is CHA based, and is used for chatting up members of the opposite sex (or same sex depending on preference) for any one of many reasons. If you really want, it can also be used based on AGI or DEX after the CHA use of it has succeeded. Generally, it is making good use of your physical appearance, including body language and mode of dress to get what you want. The target gets a WIL roll to resist temptation, modified by any suitable personality traits (lustful and chaste spring to mind, but love or loyalty to another can be used as a bonus to resist, lust to someone else cannot). Difficulties of the *resistance* roll are as follows:

- Seducer is unprepared . . . . . 10
- Dressed the part, or good circumstances . . . . . 15
- Both of the above. . . . . 20

Good circumstances can include anything, from just happening to have a comfy bed handy, to an accidental meeting at an idyllic faerie pool. You add a third of your CHA+*seduction* roll to the difficulty, plus your appearance if it is positive, or twice your appearance if it is negative. You can also add half any bonus for being lustful (ie a trait of lustful +3, gives a +9 bonus, so you would add +4 here), and if you have a trait of chaste, this adds in full as a penalty. **Time taken:** As long as you want... **Failure:** Just because the person has succeeded in resisting your charms, doesn't mean that he will refuse you. Success on your part just means the target doesn't get a choice. **Critical:** Target gains +1 to lustful trait towards you, maximum +3. **Fumble:** Target just isn't interested, may gain a trait of chaste towards you.

**Singing** The ability to sing, and to sing well at that. This skill is KNO based to know of songs, and to remember the words to songs, and CHA based when actually singing them. There are no set difficulties, just degrees of quality. **Time taken:** The length of the song. **Failure:** No real failures, just bad reactions from crowd. **Critical:** Open ended. **Fumble:** Then again, maybe there can be real failures. Divide skill roll by 5 to get an idea of the quality (or lack) of this attempt.

**Swimming** This is a specialist skill, which is STR based, and starts at partial. It costs 5 XP to learn initially. Some general difficulties are as follows:

- Staying afloat in calm waters. . . . . 5
- Dog paddle in calm waters . . . . . 10
- Proper swimming. . . . . 15
- Choppy water (standard for sea) . . . . . +5
- Rough water . . . . . +10
- Very rough water . . . . . +15
- Storm . . . . . +20

In calm water, staying afloat isn't too hard a problem even for untrained people, but those without this skill must make a fear test, difficulty 25 or panic and begin to drown if the water is too deep to allow them to stand. A test must be made at least every 15 minutes, or more often if circumstances are extreme (such as cold water, rough seas, or swimming hard). CON+*stamina* checks may well be necessary, starting at difficulty 5, and increasing by 5 each time a check is made. Failure means long term fatigue is gained, which won't be lost until you are back on dry land (or at least a solid surface). This fatigue of course comes off your swimming skill. **Time taken:** See above. **Failure:** You sink, and possibly start to drown. **Critical:** Keep on going for four times as long without a test. **Fumble:** You sink and drown, even in shallow water.

**Teaching** This is a CHA based skill used when teaching a person a skill. The better your *teaching* ability, the faster your student will learn. See the section on training later on in this chapter for further details. **Time taken:** Special. **Failure:** There is no failure, only degrees of success. **Critical:** The skill is not rolled, just taken 'as is', so criticals are not possible. **Fumble:** See criticals.

**Ventriloquism** With this skill you can project your voice, making it sound like it is coming from somewhere other than your mouth, or at the very least, speak without opening your mouth. It is a specialist skill, defaulting to partial, and costing 15 XP to learn. It is normally CHA based.

- Speaking without opening mouth:
- Poor attempt . . . . . 10
- Reasonable attempt . . . . . 15
- Good attempt – sounds just like your voice . . . . . 20

Excellent attempt . . . . .	25
Making sound come from elsewhere:	
From you still . . . . .	+0
From within a metre . . . . .	+5
From within three metres . . . . .	+10
Within five metres . . . . .	+15
Within ten metres . . . . .	+20

This skill can be usefully combined with the *mimicry* skill to good effect. **Time taken:** Time to speak. **Failure:** No-one is fooled. **Critical:** Everyone is fooled. **Fumble:** You make an utter fool of yourself.

## 6.7 Craft Skills

Craft skills are those which are used for crafting items, such as weapons, armour, statues, and other similar objects. Unless otherwise stated, all are partial specialist skills, based on KNO, and cost 5 XP to learn to 0D.

## 6.8 Sage Skills

Sage skills cover a wide range of specialist KNO based skills. They cover knowledge which is not known by the majority of people – ie that which is often the domain of sages and scholars, hence the term. Though the subject matter may vary widely, all sage skills have several things in common in the way they are used, so some general information is given first. Note that these rules can apply to any knowledge skill.

### Knowledge Difficulties

The following difficulties should be used as guidelines for all sage skills. Generally, it is very difficult to give specific difficulties, because of the wide range of information covered by any particular skill.

The best way to handle knowledge checks in the game, is to just let the player roll his character's skill, and then see how much information is known by comparing the roll against the difficulties given below. Generally, one single roll for an entire subject is best, rather than checking for each individual question the player wants an answer to.

**0+** Really obvious knowledge, which is going to be known by anyone who is familiar with the subject, and sometimes (ie when the skill is partial, by those that aren't).

**10+** Anything which is obvious, but only to someone who is familiar with the subject. Detailed specifics will not be covered by this range of difficulties though.

**20+** Knowledge which is commonly known to those who have studied the subject, but which is generally unknown by those who have had but a passing interest.

**30+** Knowledge which is rare or which has to be derived from other more common knowledge. Generally, anything which requires a good understanding of the subject, not just the ability to memorise facts.

**40+** Information about a subject which is very rare and generally unknown. This will often include unimportant facts which most sources will tend to overlook.

**50+** Obscure facts about a subject. Only the most dedicated of academics will know of such knowledge. Even then, much work may need to be done pulling together related points to arrive at the answer.

The above difficulties are for general information about a subject. If the character wants specific, very detailed, information, then there are some modifiers to the above difficulties.

**+10** Detailed information is required on a subject, more so than normal.

**+20** Some very detailed and accurate knowledge is required, probably exploring some minor point about a subject,

**+30** Incredibly fine detail is wanted, to an almost ridiculous extent. Getting such information about rare or obscure subjects will be very difficult indeed.

### Specialising in Knowledges

It is possible for a character to specialise in a knowledge skill, by taking a skill which is related to one of those already given, but which covers a far narrower subject. The disadvantage of doing this is obvious – the skill is going to be applicable a lot less often. The advantage is that the difficulty to know something about that narrower topic is going to be quite a bit lower.

Exactly how the advantages apply is ultimately up to the GM. For example, a character has a skill in Elven Culture. This would cover all facets of the culture, from religious ceremonies to law and social structure. Let us say that he's been invited to an elven wedding, and wants to know some things about elven wedding customs. This might be a base difficulty of 20. The first thing he wants to know, is what to wear. This would require some detailed knowledge about the culture, so a +10 would be added to the difficulty. If he also wanted to know what sort of presents are required to be brought (if any) by a non-elven friend of the bride, then this would be +30 to the difficulty.

A second person, also invited to the wedding, has also studied elven culture, but she's been studying ceremonies in

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## Chapter 6 : Character Skills

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particular (with the skill, Elven Culture (ceremonies) say). The base difficulty might be difficulty 10 (since weddings are pretty common and important). Knowing what to wear would be considered basic knowledge, so no modifier. In the case of the present, this is going to require pretty detailed knowledge, so a modifier of +10 will be added.

Of course, a third person might actually have a skill in elven wedding ceremonies, so base difficulty in this case might be 1. The above is just guide, and it is up to the GM to decide what specialisations are possible. To the opposite extreme, there is no reason why a character cannot generalise, taking a knowledge skill which covers several listed here. Difficulties will of course be higher, since most things of use will require detailed knowledge of the subject.

### General Knowledges

**Agriculture** Gives knowledge of plants of the edible variety, of growing and planting them. This skill will be had by every farmer, since knowledge of such is necessary to successfully run a farm. It has a base of partial, and costs 5 XP to learn it.

**Beast Lore** This skill gives knowledge about. Specialisations would include animals of a particular region or climate (the former would generally be more specialised), type (insects, mammals, fish), family (felines, cattle) or even a particular animal (the lesser spotted shrew of the Verdant Jungle). A skill with *Beast Lore* itself will not give much more information than the ability to recognise animals, and say whether they are predator or prey. Anything else would require detailed knowledge. This skill costs 10 XP to learn. It starts as nil. Animals native to the character's homeland will come under the local lore skill of fauna/flora. It should be noted that this skill can be very much influenced by medieval thinking. Griffons and unicorns might be considered 'real' animals (even if they don't really exist), and the behaviour and abilities of animals could be totally inaccurate. Generally, the more removed from practical experience the source of this knowledge is, the more this skill will be based in mythology. A ranger or hunter might turn out to be more useful than a sage in these cases,

**Demon Lore** Knowledge of the infernal realms, and the beings which dwell there. This is one knowledge which should only be used in defence – actively searching out demons to try out your new found knowledge on does not lead to a long and productive life. With it, the character can know the possible goals and desires of demons, as well as their methods and capabilities. Costs 10 XP to learn, initially starting as nil.

**Dream Lore** Interpreting and understanding

dreams is the domain of this skill. For a mind mage, it can be a useful skill, but can of use to others if it is thought that some dream signifies a possible future. Of course, for those that make money by 'predicting' the future for others, it can be an invaluable skill. Costs 5 XP to learn, starts as nil.

**Ethereal Lore** The ethereal is the place of spirits and lost souls. It is also a place of reflections, being an image of the emotional nature of the mortal realm. This skill can give knowledge about the things that live there, and can also be used to interpret the nature of reflections. Costs 10 XP to learn to 0D, initially starting as nil.

**Faerie Lore** The usefulness of this skill will depend on how common the fey are in the campaign. In a mythical European style campaign, the fey could be common and quite powerful. In a more *Tolkien* style world, they are much more rarely encountered. Basically, Faerie Lore gives knowledge of the fey – the faerie beings which inhabit the world beyond that of civilisation. Depending on the campaign, different types of faerie might exist in different areas, in which case specialisation may be useful or even required. Other specialisations would include the Seelie or Unseelie courts (if celtic mythology is the base), forest faeries, water faeries etc. This skill could include elemental spirits as well as actual faerie creatures (if there is such a distinction). Starting skill will depend on how common faeries are. In a campaign with a mythical European flavour, it may start at 0D, alternatively it could be partial or nil, costing 5 XP to learn initially.

**History** Most often, this skill is best to specialise in, having knowledge of a particular region, time or people. Exact specialisations will of course depend on the campaign world. Normally it will default to *nil*, and cost 5 XP to develop to 0D.

**Legend Lore** With this skill the character knows about lost treasures and powerful artifacts of long ago, as well as those of more recent fame. The sort of knowledge known will be the name of the item, its reputed properties, maybe a history and where it is said to be (or who currently owns it). Specialisations may include items of a particular culture, or of a particular type (such as swords, or even anything made by Wayland for instance). Defaults to nil, and costs 10 XP to learn for a general *legend lore* skill, or 5 XP for a specific specialisation.

**Literature** Knowledge of great works of literature, including poetry, songs and tales. Specialisations will generally be for a particular culture, or even a single individual. Starts at nil, and costs 5 XP to learn to 0D.

**Mana Lore** Includes knowledge about the use and



properties of *mana*. It can be used to find likely places where mana might be found, recognise it, and also work with it (such as splitting a large seed into smaller ones). Initially starts as nil, and costs 10 XP to learn to 0D.

**Miracle Lore** Gives knowledge of the ways of the gods. Needless to say, it isn't always very accurate. Its main use is in the area of what miracles are possible for those with *True Faith* to perform. Costs 10 XP to learn, starting at nil.

**Race Lore** Knowledge of intelligent races. Often, a specialisation in a particular race or culture (a race rarely has a single culture). Very useful for when dealing with other races, since knowledge of customs and taboos will be known. Knowledge of the character's own race is assumed by default (and would come under *Local Lore*). Costs 5 XP to learn to 0D, starts as nil.

**Spell Lore** Knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of magic. It does *not* grant the ability to use magic, but instead allows the character to know how magic could be used to achieve some end. Can be useful for second guessing magi (ie to know about their weaknesses), but is of more use to magi themselves. Costs 15 XP to learn to 0D, initially starting at nil.

**Undead Lore** Knowledge of undead creatures and their kind. A character may take undead lore in a specific type of creature (such as animated undead, vampires, spirits etc) or keep it to the broad spectrum of all undead. Initially starts at 0D, and costs 10 XP to learn.

**World Lore** A knowledge of the world and its environs. Basically, geography over a large area, though specialisations are of course possible. A skill simply in *World Lore* will give knowledge of the location and general attributes of major mountain ranges, countries and forests etc, but not much else. Costs 5 XP to learn, starts at nil.

### Sciences

**Alchemy** In the majority of fantasy cultures, there is no such thing as chemistry, instead there is what is known as *alchemy*. It is a mixture of herb lore and a bit of chemistry. In a world where magical herbs and other ingredients are common place, this skill can be very useful. In more 'mundane' worlds, it doesn't have much practical use unless gunpowder is available. *Herb lore* is really a specialisation of this.

**Astrology** A mixture of astronomy and what is today is known as *astrology*. With astrology, it is possible to cast horoscopes (whether they have any value or not is up to

the GM), predict astrological events (eclipses, comets and so forth) and navigate by the stars.

**Engineering** You never know when this skill might come in useful. Whether you want to build a catapult or bridge, know the best way to clear rubble, or find weak points in a castle design, engineering has its uses. It is a mixture of the practical and theoretical sides of building and design.

**Mathematics** Includes basic geometry and simple physics as well as arithmetic. Of use only really to scholars in most fantasy campaigns, since it is generally not very advanced, and has few practical applications.

### 6.9 Weapon skills

The term *weapon skills* covers all skills to do with the use of personal melee and missile weapons. All such skills are based on DEX whenever they are used in combat.

A skill is required with each weapon. So there are skills for dagger, short sword, long sword, great axe, shield and so on. See the appendixes for lists of weapons, and their relative merits. Generally, if two weapons have a separate entry, then they require a separate skill.

#### Parries, Handedness and Fighting Style

One skill is used for both parry and attack – it is not necessary to develop two separate skills for this. Likewise, there are often two ways to use a weapon – either to *thrust* or to *swing*. Both styles use the same weapon skill.

However, the hand the weapon is used in does matter. A right handed person will normally use a weapon in his right hand, so by default, any skill learnt applies to using the weapon in the right hand. If the weapon is ever to be used in the left hand, a new skill is required.

#### Related Weapons

Some weapons are very similar, both in design and the way they are used. It would seem somewhat unfair that someone who has mastered the use of the kanris, a form of longsword, is unable to use any of that knowledge when he picks up a balsare, the orcish variant (for instance).

For this reason, some weapons are said to be *related*. A skill to use a weapon in the right hand, is automatically related to the skill to use the same weapon in the left hand.

When a character uses a weapon which is related to another weapon, which has a higher skill, then the average of

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the two skills is used (all this before averaging). If there are several related weapon skills, all higher than this one, then use the best. Weapon skills higher than other related weapon skills are unaffected.

### Improving Related Skills

Related weapon skills are improved normally, from the actual skill with the weapon. This is also the case if the character is being trained – use the actual (lower) skill.

### 6.10 Experience

*Experience* is a game mechanic used to represent the fact that characters are continually learning. As experience is gained, so characters can improve their skills (and learn new ones) and become generally more skilled and learned. Of course, character's also improve in the fact that they gain friends and allies, learn new things and generally gain reputations and (hopefully) higher standing within the game world – though obviously some characters will be after infamy instead. These latter points are handled purely within the game. All experience deals with is skill advancement.

#### When to Award Experience

When, and how often, experience is awarded is up to the GM. There are two main ways of looking at things. Either experience can be awarded according to 'real' time, or according to 'game' time.

Awarding it according to real time has the advantage that the GM can go away at the end of the play session and work out the experience the characters have earned in her own time, without being hassled by the players. A game session may not always end in a 'sensible' place though – and handing out experience while the characters are in the middle of combat may be a bit strange.

Awarding according to game time is more realistic. This may be done between 'adventures', or at more natural stop gaps – such as when the characters spend a few days at an inn, or during a long uneventful ride cross country. This will often mean though that the GM needs to work out experience during the game, when far more interesting things can be done. Basically, it all comes down to GM and player preference, as well as how long gaming sessions are, and the style of campaign being set (it is easier to award experience if the campaign is a series of unconnected adventures with lots of time inbetween, than it is when the campaign is a series of adventures which all merge together with no clear break).

#### Gaining Experience

How then, is experience gained? In *Myths*, it is very generic and rather amorphous. Experience is generally awarded for good roleplaying, actions of the character and also a group award depending on what was achieved. There is no set formulae, so GMs are free to do whatever they want.

How much to award is always a tricky question, and again varies according to GM and player preference, as well as the style of the campaign. When the same group of people are going to be playing the same campaign for a long time – months or years – then a slower experience progression can be used. If only a few games are going to be played over a period of a couple of weeks, then handing out lots of experience isn't going to matter since the characters aren't going to be around long enough to become overpowered.

Generally, an average of 1-3 experience points should be awarded for each hour of real time. Lower amounts for characters who didn't do very much, or who disrupted the group, higher amounts for those who role played really well and came up with lots of good ideas. There are two basic ways of deciding how much each character should receive – the quick and dirty method, and the slow and sure method.

#### Quick and Dirty Experience

The GM should simply rate each character on a scale 1-3, and multiply by the number of hours spent playing. After this number has been reached, add or subtract a small amount according to GM bias, or certain spectacular episodes, to give the final experience award. This can take but a few seconds, and is reasonably fair.

#### Slow and Sure Experience

For each character, go through the entire session, noting down each action the character performed which is worth some experience, normally 1-3 points should be awarded. You will often find characters earn lots of 1 point awards, which add up to give a figure similar to the first method. If the GM so wishes, she can also award each character a flat amount for 'group success', say 1-5 points. If the player role played well over the entire period, then add in a bit more. Generally, you should aim to get an average about equal to the 'quick and dirty' method. This way is more detailed, but a lot slower. The choice is for the GM to decide which she prefers. Obviously, there is nothing wrong with mixing the two methods, or even coming up with method number three.

#### Spending of Experience

Each character can spend this experience however he likes, though some GMs may limit experience to being put on skills which were used during the adventure. There should also be some time for the character to actually sit down and study the skill a bit – anything from a few hours to a few days, depending on the skill in question, and the amount of experience.

Experience gained here is treated in exactly the same way as experience gained at character generation. Advantages and disadvantages cannot normally be bought with it though – except see the note at the beginning of chapter 5. Experience of course, does not have to be spent, though unless the character is saving up to develop a very high skill, stockpiling it isn't much use.

### 6.11 Learning outside the Game

Gaining experience isn't the only way to improve skills. If the character has the money and the time, then finding someone to teach them a skill can be a lot easier.

Finding someone with a skill higher than professional level though can be difficult, and when they are found, they are either much in demand and expensive, or not willing to spend time teaching someone.

It should be noted that though many craftsmen are quite happy to take on apprentices, an apprenticeship is not a good option for player characters, since it involves several years of unpaid labour in the service of the master craftsman, with a little bit of teaching interspersed between mindless jobs.

#### Study and Campaign Style

In some styles of campaigns, rules such as these just aren't suitable. Players can be apt to ignore the excitement and dangers of adventure, and settle down for a couple of years to study and train, before going out into the big wide world with much more experienced characters. There are a lot of things the GM can do to prevent this of course – lack of funds to pay for such training and having adventure come looking for them are two suggestions, but some GMs may dislike the idea altogether. This is especially true of heroic and monster-bashing/treasure finding campaigns.

In such circumstances, the GM should simply ignore these rules, and force characters to advance simply by gaining experience the 'normal' way. Allowing NPCs to train while PCs can't is perfectly justifiable as well. A good suggestion is to allow a player to retire his character, at which point that character can be assumed to be in study. That character can then be used as a recurring NPC (under GM control) or even be bought back for a special adventure

much later, when he is a lot better skilled.

Of course, there are some campaign styles which are best suited for good use of these rules. An all-mage based campaign, with the characters at an academy of mages for instance, can be based around the characters spending *most* of their time in study, and going out into the big wide world every few months (seasons?) or so.

#### Multi-media Education

There are three ways a character can study. The first is private study, without any external aid. This is obviously a limited way of learning, and quite impossible for some (especially knowledge) skills. The second method is via a tutor, who can instruct the eager student in exchange for payment.

The third way, is from books. As for private study, there are some things books just cannot teach – many physical skills for instance. On the other hand, books are a very useful source of knowledge, even if the student doesn't wish to spend time enhancing his own skills.

#### How Long a Week?

For purposes of study and training, game time is measured in weeks. Exactly how long a week is, whether it includes weekends, and how much of each day is spent in study, doesn't really matter. Suffice to say, it is the optimum amount of time any particular character can spend in study – cramming more hours into each day, and working over weekends etc doesn't do much more than make the character irritable and tired, which has a negative effect on study which perfectly (what a coincidence!) balances any extra time gained through such cramming.

Needless to say, a character *is* going to have free time in which to do other things. If necessary, assume a five (or six) day working week, and about six to eight hours of work a day. The rest can be considered free time. Having mini-adventures in this time is possible, but such is left up to the GM to decide whether it is feasible. Also, taking a couple of extra days off from study, especially where months are involved, is going to have negligible effect.

### 6.12 Private Study

Private study is the slowest way to learn, but in some situations, it is the only way. Each full week spent studying, gains the character one point of experience towards that respective skill.

Practically all physical skills can be learnt this way, though sword skills will require the correct sword to practise

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with, lock picking will require a range of locks etc. Knowledge skills cannot be learnt this way, except maybe for local lore skills, which could be learnt simply by picking up on local gossip, and asking dumb questions of anyone handy.

Some skills are obviously to having a fast initial learning rate, even though the character starts with *no* knowledge of that skill. A good example would be something like *urban geography* – finding your way around a foreign city (in most medieval campaigns, this can be any city more than a days travel from your home) doesn't take that long. A character would start with a skill of *none* in this skill, but by spending a day wandering around and generally getting the feel of the place, a skill of *partial* can be achieved. After a week, a skill of 0D can be reached (ie effectively 1 XP to learn it). Knowing the major streets and shops is normally no problem, it's the narrow side streets and obscure shops which cause all the hassles with getting lost.

### 6.13 Learning From a Tutor

In many cases, the best way to learn something is to get someone else to teach you. This though, is not always quite as easy as it sounds. For a start, a tutor must be found who is both skilled in the skill the character wishes to learn, and who is also willing to teach. This latter often involves the transfer of large sums of money – more of which later.

Obviously, the tutor must have the relevant skill which the character wants to learn. The tutor's skill must also be higher than the student's by at least a dice.

Regardless of the skill in question, the tutor's effective skill, for purposes of teaching, is equal to his KNO+ *skill* – knowledge of how a skill is applied is more important than the tutor's own natural ability at it.

Where a knowledge skill is being taught (ie skills which are only ever used with the KNO attribute, including sage and magical arts, but not craft skills), then the skill is *not* averaged. This makes it a lot easier to teach knowledge skills than other skills.

For purposes of being taught, the student's skill is taken *as is* – not averaged with anything. This makes it very difficult to teach to very high skill levels for non-knowledge skills, for while the tutor's skill is being pulled down by averaging with KNO, the student's skill is not.

For every week that the character spends in training, 1 XP is gained towards learning that skill, for every full dice of difference between the tutor and the student. So, a tutor with 5D KNO, and 5D skill, teaching someone with 0D skill, teaches 5 XP after the first week, putting the student's skill up to 1D (!). After two weeks, the student only gains 4 XP

(to 1D+8) and after the third week, only 3 is gained (to 2D+2). Initial progression is fast, but it takes 24 weeks to be taught to a level of 4D+2! When it reaches the point that the character is only gaining 1 XP each week, private study may be the better option, since it is no slower, and doesn't cost anything.

### Teaching Isn't Easy

One factor has been missed out of the above equations – and that is the ability of the tutor to actually teach someone. This is considered to be a skill – the *Teaching* skill, and is based on CHA. The tutor cannot teach more XP a week, then he has full dice of CHA+*teaching*. An untrained tutor, with 5D CHA, and 0D teaching skill, can only impart a maximum of 2 XP a week – regardless of the difference in skill between him and his student. Simply finding someone who is skilled at what you want to learn isn't the only problem. Generally, only those who make a living teaching people are ever going to have a teaching skill higher than 0D. This greatly slows down the learning process.

### Teaching Multiple Students

It is possible for one person to teach several people at once. Every doubling beyond the first student reduces the teaching skill by 1D. A tutor with 5D teaching skill could teach 8 students, but would impart no more than 2 XP each week.

### 6.14 Learning From Books

The alternative approach to learning is to simply sit down with a good book. The advantage of a book is that once you have it, you can learn from it whenever you want to, and study is free (beyond the initial outlay if you paid for it). Books are often rare and expensive, especially since the printing press has yet to be invented in most fantasy worlds.

Books can only teach knowledge skills. This includes all sage and lore skills, craft skills and also magical skills. Physical skills such as weapon use or even charisma skills cannot be learnt from a book (not necessarily realistic, but such books would be practically non-existent in a medieval setting). A book obeys the same mechanics as a tutor – it has a skill rating (in dice), and also a rating (based on its authors CHA+*authorship*) governing how much can be learnt from the book each week. Learning from a book then, is similar to learning from a tutor. The main difference is that a book has to be written first.

### Writing Books

Writing a book is no easy task, even if all you are doing is duplicating someone else's work. For academic

types, especially magi as far as player characters go, books can be a useful source of knowledge, and a good medium in which to trade your own knowledge.

The first thing you must do is decide to what level of skill you are writing the book. This must be decided before any work begins, for unlike training someone directly, a book is not so easily adapted as it is being written. The maximum skill level that can be put into a book is equal to the writers KNO+*skill* score. The author also needs to use her CHA+*authorship* skill, which caps the rate at which a book is learnt from, just as CHA+*teaching* does for tutors.

Each week that is spent on writing a book, up to five experience points worth of skill can be placed into it. This process may be speeded up by reducing the quality of the final work. For each 1D penalty the author takes to her CHA+*authorship*, the speed is increased by a multiple (x2, x3, x4 etc). The CHA+*authorship* cannot be taken down to less than 0D though. Decreasing down to less than 1D is possible, but means the book will only be of use to someone with the *Book Worm* gift, and even they will learn very slowly from it. The level in whole dice of the authors CHA+*authorship*, which the book is written at is known as the *quality* of the book.

### Materials for a Book

Books are rare in most fantasy worlds, and the materials for making them are also. Paper (if it even exists) is generally expensive, and parchment is often the best substitute. The exact effects of using different types of paper, ink and bindings is left to a later supplement, but a few rules and ideas for the interested reader follow.

Each experience point of knowledge can be assumed to take up about one page of writing. Good quality parchment or paper will allow both sides to be used. Very long works may be split into several volumes.

An impoverished author may try to skimp on the materials, adding 50% to the amount which can be fitted on a single page, at a cost of reducing the quality of the work by 1. Doubling the amount of text on a page reduces the quality by 3.

Alternatively, it is possible to *illuminate* a book, making it much easier to read. This has the immediate disadvantage of automatically halving the amount of text which is on any single page (which doubles the cost straight off). It is not possible to *squash* work and illuminate it both at the same time.

After the text has been finished (or more generally, as the author is writing the later pages), an artist is got in to

decorate the work. The artist uses a DEX+*calligraphy* skill to illuminate the work, and it also helps if he is literate as well (in the language being used).

For every 20 rolled with the DEX+ *calligraphy*, the quality of the book is increased by 1. A critical result is open ended, and a fumble totally ruins the work (hint: use someone with confidence points! Not that it's possible to check an NPC to see if he has confidence of course...). The quality cannot be more than doubled this way, whatever the roll, though it can be raised by a minimum of one (for works with a quality of zero).

For every dice of skill lower than 5D the scribe has in his reading or writing of that language (take the lowest), the difficulty is increased by two (so 3D skill, means +1 quality for each 24 rolled with DEX+*calligraphy* skill).

### Copying Books

It is of course possible to copy a work with far less effort than it took to write it. As a base, 10 XP worth of writing can be copied each week. The scribe needs to use his DEX+*calligraphy* skill. Each dice this is reduced by increases the speed of writing by a multiple (x2, x3 etc).

Every 100 XP of skill that is copied (or part thereof) requires a skill check, of difficulty 10. This is increased if the scribe does not know the language (as above), but the increase is 3 for each dice below the required value (normally 5D). Failure means the scribe must repeat the section of work that the check was failed for. If the check is failed by 5 or more, then the scribe does not notice the mistakes, and the final quality of the copy is reduced by 1.

If the scribe fumbles, then some major omission or error has been made, which halves the final quality of the work, and is not noticed. Multiple failures and fumbles are all cumulative, and are applied in the order in which they happen.

### Combining Books and Tutors

By combining the use of books and a teacher, a small bonus to the learning rate can be achieved. If the student spends four weeks studying from a book *and* a teacher (both are assumed to happen concurrently), then the student gains four weeks of study with the book, and one with the teacher (though only four weeks of time passes). Though the teacher must be on hand during all this time, he only spends a week of time actually teaching the student (so can spend the other three weeks worth of time doing other things).

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## Chapter 6 : Character Skills

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## 7 Personality Traits

A *personality trait* is a numerical representation of a character's personality. A character will normally have several different traits, each representing a different facet of his personality. The choice of traits is left entirely in the hands of the player, and are merely an interface between game mechanics and role playing. They are best used sparingly and with care though, since over use of them by the GM can lead to the player feeling that she has no control over the actions of her character.

Each trait represents a single emotion, good examples being bravery, cowardice, love, hate, honour, greed and lust. Each is represented by a value between 0 and +5. Some traits are obvious opposites - such as bravery and cowardice - and hence a positive trait in one can be considered to be a negative trait in the other. Brave +3 is the same as coward -3 etc.

When a character is created, the player can choose up to three traits, one of which may have a value as high as +3, the other two being of +2 or +1. The scale from 0 to +5 is not linear - +4 is a lot more powerful than simply double +2. A guide to what each level of trait means is given below.

A trait of 0 represents 'neutral' feelings, either an average or lack of interest either way. All traits are considered to have a value of 0 at the start, unless explicitly given a higher value.

A trait of +1 represents minor tendencies above the norm. Such a trait has only a small effect on the character, though can be used to give a small bonus in times of stress.

A value of +2 means the character has quite strong feelings about the subject. Brave +2 represents a brave warrior for example. Loyalty +2 would represent normal feelings towards friends, or between a married couple in a 'cool' relationship. Values up to +2 are quite common.

Strong emotions are given a trait of +3. Such a trait can have quite a large effect on the character. Where the trait is loyalty or bravery, such characters are very dependable. Love +3 would mean a strong bond between the character and his loved one. Such traits are often 'visible' to others who have been around the character for a while, and he probable has a reputation for such.

A trait of +4 is incredibly strong feelings, and are quite rare. Loyalty or love to another of this value often means undying love or selfless loyalty. Such a trait is not quite fanatical, but isn't too far off.

### Example Personality Traits

<b>Brave</b>	a general trait for all situations
<b>Coward</b>	another general trait
<b>Fear</b>	of a certain situation or thing
<b>Love</b>	of a certain person
<b>Hate</b>	of a certain person or race
<b>Lustful</b>	general trait
<b>Chastity</b>	general trait
<b>Lust</b>	towards a certain person. Can be combined with lustful, love or even chastity.
<b>Loyal</b>	a general trait
<b>Loyalty</b>	towards a certain ideal or person, can be combined with a general trait of loyal.
<b>Treacherous</b>	a general trait
<b>Pious</b>	often to a certain religion
<b>Greedy</b>	either general or specific - character may have a greed for gold, or fine gem stones
<b>Lazy</b>	a general trait.

A trait of +5 is utter fanaticism. It is only possible to have a single trait of +5, since such an emotion becomes the main driving force behind a character. Such levels of feeling are *very* rare. They are most often found in religious fanatics or followers of some great leader, who are very willing to throw their lives away for their cause.

### 7.1 Use of Traits

Apart from helping to define a character's personality, there are two main uses of traits within the game. The first of these is for what are termed *trait checks*. This is where a character must check to see if he stays faithful to his trait. The second use is as a scene bonus, which grants the character a bonus to his actions where he is defending either the object of his trait (such as a loved one), or the reputation of the trait itself.

### 7.2 Trait Checks

Trait checks are based on WIL. Probably the most common form of a trait check is a bravery check. A character does not have to have a non-zero value in a trait to make a check, having a value though does grant a bonus.

The check is made only under extreme situations. Failure of the check means that the character is limited to a certain course of action (such as running away if a bravery check is failed). Success merely means that the player retains full character of the character. Just because a bravery check has been passed does *not* mean that the character *must* stay and fight - it merely means that he could if he wanted to. Of course, if a character with a high bravery trait continually runs away after succeeding such checks, then the GM should

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## Chapter 7 : Personality Traits

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reduce the trait accordingly since the character obviously isn't *brave*.

The trait check is made just like any other skill or resistance roll. To the number, should be added the bonus gained for having the relevant trait (if any). In the case of an opposing trait, the trait value counts as negative, so subtracts from the roll. Where two or more traits apply, then the *modifiers* for each trait are added in - the traits themselves are not added together.

What though, are the difficulties of such traits? Normally, quite reasonable, though situations can arise where it is very difficult to succeed a trait check - though such situations are generally quite rare. Some example situations for particular traits are given below.

### Bravery

Bravery is one of the more common traits to be checked against, especially when encountering supernatural creatures. It should be made clear that there is no difference between *magical* and *normal* fear - except that magical fear will generally be harder to resist. This is something which applies to all traits.

An *easy* trait check would be encountering an armed opponent. Normally, except for certified cowards, such difficulties shouldn't be checked against. If the character is surprised, then a +5 to the difficulty might be in order.

A *moderate* check would be for situations where the character is outnumbered or out skilled to a definite degree. Failure would mean an attempt to surrender or to run.

A *difficult* check would be very rare. Large unknown monsters lunging out of the darkness at unprepared characters might well require such a check. Anything harder than this is for creatures which radiate *fear*, or through magical effects.

### Loyalty

This may well be a check a character would be wanting to fail, since success can mean a willingness to lay down your life for a cause or a person. Such a check is also used by the GM if a NPC is offered a bribe to betray their lord. The loyalty trait can also be used as a bonus for bravery checks when defending those the character is loyal to, or when resisting torture. When being bribed, a greedy or temperate trait can also be added in. Note, in the following examples, the term 'lord' is used as the focus of the loyalty. Obviously, this can be anything the loyalty trait applies to, from a friend to a cause.

An *easy* check for a bribe which is a weeks wages, or which obviously goes against their lord, especially something which threatens his life.

A *moderate* check would be one which offered them a months wages or more. The more their treachery compromises their lord the easier the difficulty. Getting a servant to leave a kitchen door open is going to be a lot easier than getting a guard to let someone into the lords private rooms.

A *difficult* check would be where the person is offered a substantial reward. On a simple monetary scale, about a years wages might be required, but since such amounts are so obvious, more subtle offers might be needed

This trait is one of the more complex, since it involves a lot of factors. Where betraying someone is the case, getting someone *not* to do something is easier than getting some to *do* something. After all, a servant caught leaving a certain door unlocked might get beaten. A servant caught putting poison into food is going to get executed - slowly.

When trying to convince someone to betray their loyalty, use of the bargain skill is most appropriate.

### Lust

Lust towards a certain person often goes hand in hand with love, though the two are quite different. Lust is simply about sex. A character with a lustful trait will be generally promiscuous, and not particularly loyal to their *significant other* (though such relationships don't often last long enough to get this far).

The opposite of a lustful trait is chastity. Lust can be directed at a single person, chastity can't. It is perfectly reasonable to be chaste, and have a lustful trait towards a particular person (or race), though a generic lustful and chaste traits cannot coexist side by side. A lustful trait can be directed towards certain times or situations - such as *during the full moon* or *while wearing leather*.

This trait is most often used when being seduced, though it can be used as a bonus when protecting someone. GM's should limit their use in such situations though - a trait of love *someone* is far more effective.

The difficulty to resist seduction is increased by the seducer's appearance. An appearance of +10 increases the difficulty by 10 points. Supernatural creatures with incredible appearances (such as +20 or +30) can be very difficult to resist.

*Very easy* for just seeing someone. Normally, this



level can be ignored, since even someone with +10 appearance isn't going to be much affect.

*Easy* if the seducer is being provocative. This could be anything from wearing daring clothes to being seen swimming nude in a lake. Again, it is still reasonably easy to resist.

A seducer can add in any bonus from a *seduction* (CHA based) skill check. The GM should also add in modifiers relationship, situation and anything else. The point is though, that just because a person has resisted a seduction attempt, doesn't mean to say that it has failed. A successful WIL check merely means that they don't have to go along with the seduction if they don't want to. It doesn't mean that they wont.

### 7.3 Characters with Strong Traits

It is possible for a character to start with a trait above +3 – though such have to be paid for – either as advantages or disadvantages depending on the exact trait in question.

### 7.4 Scene Bonuses

A trait can be used to grant a character a scene bonus in situations which warrant it. For example, if defending a loved one, or attacking a hated enemy.

To get a scene bonus, the character spends a confidence point. This grants some bonuses for the remainder of the current situation.

The first bonus is that any trait checks with that trait gets double the normal bonus from *that trait only*. So a trait of +3 would give a +18 bonus instead of a +9 bonus.

Secondly, the character receives a bonus in dice to his skills equal to the value of the trait. A +1 trait gives +1D. A +3 trait gives +3D. The scene bonus cannot do more than double a skill, so it can't give you skills you don't have.

The confidence point is gained back at the end of the adventure if the character was successful. Exceptional success grants two confidence points, and failure none, just as for normal confidence use.

Character's cannot just get a scene bonus though whenever they want to. It is up to the GM to approve such bonuses. If he doesn't think a trait applies, then he shouldn't allow the bonus. In dodgy situations, half bonus (for the same cost) may be suitable, though here the character is allowed to refuse it. Only one trait can give a bonus at any single time.

### The Length of a Scene

How long does a scene last? This is really up to the GM. It could be a single combat, from a quick skirmish to a running battle. It might also last several days. For example, a character trying to make it back across wilderness to warn his friends of an enemy preparing to attack. He could use a loyalty trait to gain a scene bonus, getting bonuses to stamina checks over the course of several days (however long it takes to make it back). The decision is entirely up to the GM.

### 7.5 Gaining and Loosing Traits

Traits are not developed in the same way that skills are. Instead, it is up to both the GM and the player to decide when a character gains (or looses) a trait.

The simplest way in which a trait is modified, is when a player tells the GM that she wishes for a trait to change. For instance, her character might have been hired by some noble, whom she respects, and decides that a loyalty trait towards the noble would be suitable. If the player plays the character in a way that suggests that she is loyal to the noble, then the GM should allow the character a +1 or +2 trait. Increasing a trait to beyond this level is done in a similar way.

It is also possible that the GM notices a character is being played in a way would suggest a trait. A character who is always first into fights, or who risks his life to save the others, is probably on his way to getting a heroic or bravery trait. Likewise, a warrior with a brave trait might be played as a cowardly character, in which case the GM should consider dropping the trait – to zero or even less!

Generally, the GM should use common sense. A neutral trait isn't going to shift either way be more than one or two points. Traits beyond +2 aren't going to shift by more than one point. Remember that +4 and +5 traits represent fanaticism and obsession, and should be given out rarely. Of course, situations exist in real life where people fall in love to a fatal degree over night, and since this is fantasy, this is perfectly possible (especially where a male character meets a beautiful but evil sorceress – it makes a great plot device).

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## Chapter 7 : Personality Traits

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## 8 Basic Combat

There comes a time in every character's life, when talks break down, sneak rolls are failed, or the decision is reached that trying to explain to the palace guards exactly why you are in the royal treasury just isn't going to work. It is in these sorts of situations where combat becomes necessary. Of course, there is also the pure pleasure of gratuitous violence, and seeing your enemies splattered on the floor before you, but such grisly entertainment can be left to the uncultured barbarians. Can't it?

What this chapter covers are the basic framework of rules necessary to handle fights between two or more characters. Whether the two opponents are a couple of armoured knights, lightly dressed and armed swashbucklers, or an assassin taking a victim from behind, the rules are more or less the same.

### 8.1 Definition of Terms

As with most rules systems, *Myths* uses some jargon which is best explained now, rather than later. This glossary can be read through now, or skipped over and referred back to later when required, the choice is yours.

**Action:** any task a character is trying to accomplish. An action can be hitting someone with a sword, running, casting a spell, or opening a door. All actions take a certain amount of time to perform, measured in *segments*.

**Action segment:** time in combat is measured in *segments* (see below). The action segment is the segment in which an action is completed.

**Base move:** how far a character can move in a second, in metres. This is equal to the average of the characters AGI and Move for his race (1D for human), in points, divided by 10. So an average human has a base move of 1.5 metres each second.

**Base speed:** this is a measure of how fast a creature acts. It is actually an inverse measure – the higher the speed, the slower the creature. It is the base time (in segments) that a creature takes to do something. It is based on the AGI of the creature, and their reaction skill.

**Declaration segment:** all actions must be declared before they are started. The segment in which they are declared is the *declaration segment*. The action does not happen on this segment, but is started now, and is completed later on in the action's *action segment*. The declaration segment of the next action is the same as the action segment of the current action, unless the creature is waiting around

doing nothing.

**Hitpoints:** hitpoints are a measure of the physical toughness of a creature. The number of hitpoints a creature has is equal to twice their BOD in points. For human sized creatures, their BOD is the same as their CON. A human, with 5D CON therefore has 50 hitpoints. When a creature gets injured, they effectively *lose* their hitpoints until healed.

**Injury:** an injury is what is suffered when a character or creature takes damage. The injury is measured in hitpoints.

**Round:** a round is equal to 10 *segments* (see below). It is used as a unit of time for actions which take a long time, and also as a marker for other effects.

**Segment:** a semi-abstract unit of time used in combat to mark when actions will happen, and how long they will take. A segment is roughly equal to a quarter of a second if exact timing is required, but can be anything from a tenth of a second to a whole second.

**Speed:** how long an action takes. The higher the speed, the slower it is. Creatures have a base speed, and all actions have a speed. When a creature attempts an action, the two are added together to see how long it takes.

**Stuns:** a stun is a penalty to a creature's skills. Stuns are sometimes received when large injuries are taken. They fade over short periods of time, but can put a creature off balance while they last.

### 8.2 The Start of Combat

When combat is actually considered to start is much up to the GM, though normally it is as soon as hostilities commence. When a combat situation is entered, the GM needs to start marking time in *segments*. Combat is considered to start at segment 0, though action may not actually commence until a few segments later.

For now, we will assume that all members of an engagement are neither surprised, nor have an advantage over anyone else. This sort of situation rarely crops up, but is the simplest so is described first. So then, what happens next?

All creatures first make a reaction roll to see when they can actually start. Even creatures not considered surprised generally take a short while to realise the situation and to react to it. To make a reaction roll, use the *reactions* skill based on AGI. Normally, all characters get their first declaration segment on segment five. For every 5 they roll

## Chapter 8 : Combat

with their reactions skill, this is reduced by one segment down to a minimum of segment 0. This segment is their first *declaration segment*.

### 8.3 The Combat Sequence

Once everyone knows when they are going, it is time for the GM to start counting off the segments. The best way to do this is to start at zero, and count upwards aloud, until it is time for either an NPC to act, in which case the GM decides what he is going to do, or until a PC's declaration segment comes up, in which case the player says what his character is doing.

Remember that the action is only declared on the declaration segment. The character begins to do it, but does not actually complete it until later. Because it has been started though, others may be aware of what the character is doing. If someone starts to swing a sword, it is probably pretty obvious right from the start. On the other hand, it may not be clear who he is swinging the sword at until half way through the action.

#### Actions and Speed

Each action takes a set number of segments to complete. The time taken is equal to the base speed of the individual doing the action, plus the speed of the action. For weapons, this is equal to the speed of the weapon. For other actions, it can vary quite considerably.

The base speed of a creature is based on their reaction skill (AGI based). Table 8.1 shows how speed decreases with skill. Most humans have a skill of 2D+4, and hence a speed of 8. Trained warriors have a skill of 5D, and hence a speed of 6. Very large creatures might have a modifier to their speed, slowing them down more than their low AGI might suggest.

#### Movement

All creatures can automatically move a distance equal to their base move, in metres, each second. A creature's base move is equal to the average of its base racial Move and its AGI in points, divided by 10 (decimals are kept). Humans have a racial move of 1D, so their average move is 1.5 (5D

**Table 8.2 : Penalties Due to Running**

Actual Move	Creatures Maximum Move					
	x1	x2	x3	x4	x5	x6
x1	0D	0D	0D	0D	0D	0D
x2	--	-3D	-1D	-1D	-1D	-1D
x3	--	--	-3D	-3D	-2D	-2D
x4	--	--	--	-5D	-3D	-3D
x5	--	--	--	--	-5D	-4D
x6	--	--	--	--	--	-5D

AGI + 1D move averaged, over 10), allowing them to move 1.5 metres each second. Creatures can move this distance for 'free', and get no penalties for doing so. Movement is done at the same time as other actions. Obviously though, a walking creature cannot kick and move at the same time.

If a creature wishes to move faster, then it can do, though it gets penalties to any other actions it tries to do at the same time. How much faster a creature can move depends on the type of creature. Most creatures can move at up to x4 their base move. Some creatures can move at higher multiples than this, so AGI and Move do not alone govern how fast a creature can travel.

Creatures running at faster speeds gain the penalties to *all* other physical actions, and some mental skills – notably spell casting.

There will be some other rules concerning fatigue, and use of the *running* skill, but I can't be bothered with them at the moment.

#### End of the Round

The round consists of 10 segments – ie about 2.5 seconds. The round has no effect on the flow of actions, but is instead used as a general point for other events to happen.

The first round runs from segment 0 to segment 9. The second from segment 10 to segment 19 etc. At the beginning of next round, before any other actions are considered (ie at the start of segment 10, 20, 30 etc) the following needs to be done.

Anyone who is bleeding, bleeds. This sounds like they give a sudden spurt of blood, but it is simpler than handling hit point loss due to bleeding every segment. Bleeding is a continuous process – the effects though are only noted each round. Characters loose the relevant number of hit points (1 hit point for each point of bleeding sustained – see afterwards) and should make stamina checks to stay conscious and alive if applicable. If a character goes below

**Table 8.1 : Speed of a Creature**

Reactions	Speed	Reactions	Speed
0D	10	6D	5
1D	9	8D	4
2D	8	10D	3
3D	7	12D+	2
4D	6		

25% of hitpoints due to bleeding, a new CON+*stamina* check is not required each time hitpoints are lost, instead only roll when a new boundary (0%, -25% etc) is crossed. A check is required each time a character is damaged from an attack though.

Fatigue is accounted for. This is explained later on in chapter 9, but simply, every round a character needs to check for exhaustion.

Some other events also happen on a round by round basis, though not necessarily at the end of each round. Sustained damage for instance is done in such a way. If a character enters a burning building on segment 17, he would take flame damage then, and also each round thereafter, on segments 27, 37 etc.

### 8.4 Attacking

Attacking someone is divided into several stages – hitting them (or trying to), seeing if they parry or dodge, damaging them, and working out critical effects (if any). We will deal with these each in turn.

#### Hitting Someone

Trying to hit someone is worked just as a normal skill roll, and is considered to be an action, just like anything else during combat. The speed of the action is equal to the base speed of the attacker, plus the speed of the weapon.

Remember that the attack starts when the action is declared, so the defender has until the attack actually finishes to do something. The defender has several options open to him – he can either ignore the attack, try to parry it, try to dodge it, or to run away.

If he ignores the attack, then the attacker simply carries through with it, and when it finishes, sees if the attack hits by making a check against his (DEX based) weapon skill.

#### Parrying

Parrying an attack is a common defence. Basically, the defender parries in much the same way in which an attack is made. As soon as an attack is made against a character, a parry can be begun. The parry can be started later than this if the defender so desires (ie having to finish an attack with that weapon first), but it cannot start before.

When the attack does occur, the parry skill is automatically deducted the relevant number of dice in order to speed up the parry so it can meet the attack in time. If the parry cannot be speeded up enough, then no parry occurs.

The difficulty of the parry varies for each weapon – some weapons are more suited to parrying than others. When a parry is made, the defender rolls his weapon skill, and modifiers that roll by the parry modifier of his weapon. The attack must beat both the normal attack difficulty, plus the modified parry roll. Modifiers to the difficulty because of adverse conditions increase the parry roll (unless the GM rules they apply to the defender as well), though modifiers to hit specific locations do not.

The parry makes it very useful for having high skills, since the attacker really needs to go as fast as possible to prevent the defender from parrying, and the defender needs to go faster than the attacker. Of course, an attacker with a skill much higher than the defender can probably ignore the parry anyway.

Parrying with a shield is exactly the same as parrying with a weapon, except shields have much better parry modifiers, making them very good in this regard. They are rather slow though, so are best suited against large slow weapons.

#### Parrying Heavy Weapons

In some certain situations, it is not possible for someone to parry. A main-gauche is a perfectly good weapon to parry with – until it is used up against someone with a great axe. Generally, small weapons are unable to parry attacks from much larger weapons.

Certain weapons are considered to be *heavy weapons* for the purposes of parries. Only another heavy weapon can parry a heavy weapon. The exception to this is that a few weapons (notably shields), which are not classed as heavy weapons themselves, can parry such weapons. These weapons can be parried normally by any type of weapon. Heavy weapons are denoted by an “*H*” next to their name on the weapon tables. Non-heavy weapons able to parry heavy weapons are denoted with an “*h*”.

#### Dodging

Like for the parry, the dodge must be declared after an attack has been declared against the defender. Like for the parry, the dodge is automatically speeded up to meet the attack, but has the advantage that it only takes the base speed of the defender.

Before the attack is made, the dodge is rolled, and half of the roll is added to the attack difficulty.

The defender can make other actions while dodging, but both the dodge and the other actions all suffer a -1D penalty. This is the case even if the dodge overlaps another

## Chapter 8 : Combat

action by a segment. One reason why the start of a dodge may want to be delayed a few segments.

### Running Away

The most cowardly of all actions in combat, but also the one that has a habit of saving your life when things are way above your head.

As for most actions, you declare that you want to run away, and you don't actually start doing so until the action is 'finished' – though really it is only just starting. The speed of this action is equal to your base speed. You must make a difficulty 10 running (AGI based) roll to start to move – failure means you are delayed for 2 segments and can try again then. Normally, failure should not occur, though it may be necessary to cut down the time it takes you to start running by sacrificing dice from your skill – in which case it becomes possible to fail. A fumble means you trip over and fall prone!

Once you start moving, your attacker can either hold his ground (in which case you probably get away) or he can opt to chase after you. If by the time that he gets to hit you, you are too far away (assuming you can run faster than he can), then he automatically misses. *This bit requires some work I think.*

### Rolling to Hit

Assuming the defender is still there, the attacker rolls his weapon skill, at a difficulty equal to the melee difficulty of the weapon. If he succeeds, then the attack is a hit.

Next, roll for the hit location of the target. Normally, this is just a random d20 roll, though it is possible to aim for specific body parts (see later). Once you know you've hit, and you know where you've hit, its time to find out how badly you've hurt him.

**Table 8.3 : Humanoid Hit Locations**

Melee	Body part	Missile
19–20	Head	20
16–18	Right arm	18–19
13–15	Left arm	16–17
5–12	Torso	7–15
3–4	Right leg	4–6
1–2	Left leg	1–3

### 8.5 Damage and Armour

The effectiveness of a weapon (from a damage causing point of view) is governed by two factors – its damage, and its penetration.

The damage of a weapon is a dice rating which is rolled to see how many hitpoints of damage the weapon causes. The penetration is how good the weapon is at getting through armour, and also how effective it is at causing criticals – ie hitting and damaging something vital.

Melee weapons each have two possible methods of attack – either the *swing* or the *thrust*. Axes, many swords and club-like weapons are normally swung at the opponent. Spears, some swords (especially the rapier) and daggers are thrust at the opponent. Which method is used is up to the player at the time the attack is declared, and affect how damage is done.

A swinging attack is greatly affected by the STR of the attacker. The damage the weapon does is equal to the damage of the weapon, added to the base STR of the attacker. Some weapons have a negative damage rating, so can end up doing zero or less damage! A STR + damage total doing less than 0D+4 damage, actually does 0D+4. A weapon which ends up doing less than 0D damage, does 0D+2 damage. The penetration of the attack is also affected. The STR of the attacker, in points, is added to the penetration of the weapon. A weapon which ends up with negative penetration is considered to have a penetration of 0 – but see later since such puny attacks are less effective in causing damage criticals.

A thrusting attack generally does less damage than a swinging attack, but has higher penetrative power. The damage caused is merely a factor of the size of the weapon – having a high STR does no extra damage. Instead, the STR of the attacker just affects the penetration of the attack – the weapons penetration is added to the STR (in points) of the attacker. A long sword for instance, when used as a thrusting weapon, does 4D damage and has a penetration of -10. When used by someone with 5D STR, the damage remains at 4D, but the penetration goes up to 15.

Note that the speed and difficulty of the weapon can vary depending on the method of attack used. Some weapons just aren't suited to some methods (you do not thrust with a club for instance).

### Attack Form and Penetration

Listed along with the penetration of each weapon, is a letter code – either B, P, S or T. These represent how a weapon does damage.

A blunt ('B') attack is done by weapons such as clubs, maces and hammers. It relies merely on brute strength, aiming to crush the flesh to pulp and break the bones underneath.

Piercing ('P') attacks are used by spears, arrows and some swords. They generally don't do much damage, but because they penetrate through to the vitals inside the body, they have high penetrations and do some nasty criticals. They are also quite good at getting around armour.

Slicing ('S') attacks are those done by most swords, as well as weapons like axes. They involve using a sharp edge to cut through armour and flesh. They tend to be quite easily stopped by metal armour though.

Temporary ('T') damage is of the same kind as blunt damage, but isn't quite as effective. Bare handed attacks do this sort of damage, as do some club type weapons (a bottle, or a chair leg). It is recovered a lot quicker than other forms of damage.

There are also three other ways of getting hurt – these are the elemental attack forms – acid, cold and heat.

Acid ('A') is used to represent any liquid attack, whether it is holy/unholy water, actual acid or contact poison.

Cold ('C') damage is, well, cold damage. It is rarely suffered, except from the effects of magical spells.

Heat ('H') damage is, as you've probably guessed, damage from fire. Often suffered from magic, but also from being hit by torches, jumping into bonfires and so on.

The purpose of these is to represent the fact that a particular type of armour is not equally good against all types of weapons. Chain mail for instance is quite good at stopping a sword blow, on the other hand, against arrows or even spears, it is merely a lot of holes joined together.

Each type of armour has an armour value against all these attack forms (save for type T, which is based on type B). This tends to complicate the choice of weapons and armour, since the best choice often depends on your foe.

Calculating damage is a three fold process. First, the armour value versus the respective attack form is found, and this is reduced by the penetration of the weapon. Chain mail for instance has an armour value of 30 against slicing attacks. A long sword has a penetration of 15, so the armour value of the chain mail is reduced to 15 points. If the penetration is higher than the armour value, then the armour value is considered to be zero (but see later on).

Next, roll the damage for the weapon. Third, reduce this damage by the modified armour value. In the above example, the attacker might roll 32 for damage. This is reduced by the modified armour value by 15, down to only

17 points.

### Natural Armour and Unarmed Attacks

As has been mentioned previously, attack form 'T' is something of a special case since it is really a subset of form 'B'. It is used mainly to represent non-killing damage (well, not quite true, since it is possible to kill someone, just harder).

First off, all creatures have an automatic protection versus T attacks equal to half their STR in points, unless they have natural armour against form B which is higher, in which case it is equal to this. If someone is wearing non-metal armour, then they add its armour value versus B attacks to this. If they are wearing metal armour, then they add twice its armour value.

Attacks by an unarmed human do type T damage. The damage done is as if the attacker was using a weapon doing -2D type T-10 damage. It is always considered a swinging attack.

For purposes of criticals, such attacks are considered as if they were of type B. Damage from such attacks should be recorded separately though, since after a combat, when an injured character gets a chance to rest, half of any such damage is automatically healed (critical effects from it are not though).

### 8.6 Criticals and Injuries

Each injury which causes damage should be noted separately, since individual injuries need to be known when it comes time to heal (assuming the combat is survived of course). You should also make note of how many hitpoints you have left – ie, your maximum hitpoints minus all your injuries. When your hitpoints drop down to certain levels, you start suffering penalties.

These penalties occur at 25% intervals. Table 8.4 shows the effects of being injured. When you reach a proportion of your hitpoints, you take penalties to your skills (for instance, at 75% of your total hitpoints or less, you suffer a -1D penalty). At much lower hitpoints (starting when you reach 25%), you have to start making stamina checks – the difficulties to avoid either dying or going into a coma are given under the relevant columns on the same table. At -75% of your hitpoints, you automatically fall into a coma, whatever your stamina. At -100%, you automatically die. Every time you get injured, you must make the relevant stamina check – even if you only take 1 point of damage!

A coma will normally last for one hour for every point you failed the check by. If you are bleeding (which does not

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**Table 8.4 : Effects of Injuries**

Hitpoints	Death	Coma	Penalty
100%	—	—	—
75%	—	—	-1D
50%	—	—	-2D
25%	—	10	-3D
0%	10	20	-5D
-25%	20	40	-7D
-50%	40	80	-9D
-75%	80	Coma	—
-100%	Dead	—	—

most effective), should be looked up on tables 8.6 onwards, according to the body location which was hit. As can be seen from these tables, the type of attack also has a bearing on the form of the critical. The possible effects resulting from these tables are explained below.

**Stuns:** Abbreviated to “x S”, where *x* is the number of dice of stuns suffered. A 1D stun gives you 1D penalty to all actions. Stuns are cumulative, so taking 3D stuns when you already have 2D, will give you 5D of stuns.

The only way to get rid of stuns is to stop and try and regain your bearings. This means you must take time equal to your base speed doing *nothing* (though if you are concentrating on spells, you can keep them going, but you can't cast new ones). At the end of this time, roll your CON+*stamina*, for every 10 you roll, you loose 1D of stuns. You may hasten this action if you want to, taking a penalty to your stamina roll as for normal actions.

**Bleeding:** Abbreviated to “x B”, represents open wounds which cause further injuries as time progresses. At the end of each round, you loose a number of hitpoints equal to whoever many points of bleeding you have. This damage comes from a generic ‘blood loss’ injury – so all lost blood counts as a single injury. Hitpoints lost due to bleeding do not cause damage criticals themselves, but can force rolls to stay conscious and alive. See the *first aid* skill for how to get rid of bleeding.

**Coma:** Abbreviated to “C *x/time*”, where *x* is the difficulty number, and *time* is the units of time you are unconscious for. The creature must make a CON+*stamina* check of the required difficulty. If it is made, there is no effect. If it is failed, then the creature lapses into a coma for an amount of time equal to the amount the roll was failed by, in *time* units. So C 30/hours means that a difficulty 30 stamina check must be made. Failure results in being unconscious for a number of hours equal to the amount the difficulty was missed by. Bringing people around earlier is possible – see the description of the coma result at the beginning of this section.

**Table 8.5 : Damage Criticals**

d20	25%	50%	75%	100%	150%	200%
1	—	A	B	C	D	E
2–5	A	B	C	D	E	E+
6–15	B	C	D	E	E+	E+
16–19	C	D	E	E+	E+	E++
20–24	D	E	E+	E+	E++	E++
25+	E	E+	E+	E++	E++	E++

E+ Optionally, this can be even worse than an E, but the details are left up to the GM.  
E++ As for an E+, but worse still.

force a further stamina check every time you take damage from bleeding), and help does not get to you, this can often mean that you die anyway. If someone tries to bring you round, they get to roll their *first aid* skill. This adds to your original stamina roll. If the combined total is greater than the difficulty, then you come round. If it isn't, then the time is merely reduced by whatever was rolled with the first aid attempt. If this new time is less than the time elapsed since the person went unconscious, then he comes round. If multiple first aid attempts are tried, only the highest counts. A critical brings the person around, a fumble doubles the original difficulty, and no more attempts can be made.

### Damage Criticals

If large amounts of damage are suffered in a single blow (greater than 25% of the victims total hitpoints), then that person suffers injuries beyond the normal loss of hitpoints – these are known as *damage criticals*.

Table 8.5 shows the possible results of such criticals. When a single injury equals or exceeds one of the four categories (either 25% of the victims maximum hitpoints, 50%, 75% or 100% – only use the highest category, not all that apply!) then roll a d20, and consult the table for the type of critical done.

The critical effects, from A to E (with E being the

**Appearance:** Due to nasty scars etc, the *appearance*

### Hits to the Head

If you require a bit more realism, then a special rule can be used whenever the head (or similar vital organ on utterly alien creatures) takes a hit. This is the introduction of a new critical column - 10%. This is one stage less effective than the 25% column (ie a B is an A, an A is no critical), but makes the head that much more vulnerable to otherwise minor amounts of damage (5 or more hitpoints for the average 5D CON human).



of the victim is reduced. The notation used is *app-x*, where *x* is the penalty to the target's appearance score. This will not take an appearance down to less than *-x* though – a few extra scars makes no difference to really ugly people. Often, about half of this penalty will clear up when the injury is healed, the rest is permanent. Exact effects are up to the GM.

**Extra locations:** Some full body results such as 'E' crit on 1d6 limbs. This means a random number of randomly determined body parts suffer this type of critical, in addition to anything else suffered. The same body part can be affected more than once, and any non-applicable results (ie a hit to a limb which has just been severed) are ignored. These can be particularly nasty.

**Specific injuries:** Some criticals result in pierced lungs, broken bones and so forth. Chapter 10 gives full rules for these sorts of things, but generally, the victim suffers a further penalty (from -1D to -3D in general) until the injury heals. Some penalties may apply only to a specific body part (such as when using an arm). The final results are left to the GM to decide. When a limb is lost, randomly determine (or choose) where the limb came off – anywhere from the wrist to the shoulder!

### Winging It

If you, as GM, can't be bothered to look up critical results, then don't, simply assign some result that seems right. Likewise, if some result seems unrealistic for a given set of circumstances, then again assign something else.

In general, an E result is the worst possible thing that can happen. An E to the torso means death – anywhere else means it's been severed. A criticals on the other hand tend to be minor stuns and a bit of bleeding. A C critical is merely nasty, though can take off an arm.

### Modifiers to the Critical Roll

The severity of any damage criticals caused by an attack can be modified by the penetration of the weapon. Weapons which have a 'negative' penetration after STR is added, aren't as good as causing criticals, and have a -1 to the d20 roll for each full -5 of penetration. A weapon with a penetration of -12 for instance, has a -2 to the roll.

Similarly, weapons with very high penetrations receive a bonus. For each full five points of penetration a weapon has *more than* the armour value of the target, a +1 is gained to the critical roll. So a weapon with a penetration of 45, against an armour of 30, as well as totally ignoring the armour, gets +3 to the critical roll. Against unarmoured opponents, weapons can be deadly, especially bows and crossbows, which can quite easily get a bonus of +7 or more!

### Added complications

As it stands, a high or low weapon penetration gives a modifier to the critical roll for each full five points. GM's and players who don't mind added complexity (ie a further die roll) in return for a smoother progression, may randomise this instead. As before, each full five points gives a guaranteed +/-1. Each point after this has a 20% chance of giving +/- 1. So a penetration of 12 over the target's armour, gives a +2 to the critical, with a 40% chance of giving a extra +1 - for a total +3 bonus. This makes it more worthwhile to have an extra +1 or +2 penetration, which normally makes no difference except to do an extra couple of points of damage if the armour value is high enough.

Some of the weaker types of armour are there more to reduce or negate this bonus, more than to actually reduce the damage from an attack.

### 8.7 Missile Combat

Getting into a fight can be a dangerous business, since there is always the very real risk of being killed, or at least of getting seriously hurt. For this reason, man long ago invented these things called missile weapons, which are tend to be pretty good at taking people out with little or no risk to the attacker.

**Table 8.11 : Base Range Difficulties**

<b>Range (m)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Difficulty</b>	5	10	15	20	25	30
<b>Range (m)</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>+250</b>
<b>Difficulty</b>	40	50	65	80	100	+25

**Table 8.12 : Missile Range Modifiers**

<b>Range</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Damage</b>	<b>Penetration</b>
<b>Close</b>	x1/10	+1D	+5
<b>Short</b>	x1	--	--
<b>Medium</b>	x2	-1D	-5
<b>Long</b>	x3	-3D	-15

The basis of missile combat is very similar to normal melee combat. The attacker declares an attack, which takes a certain period of time – which can be hastened – then makes a DEX+ skill check to see if he hits his target. Hit location, armour and damage are all handled in exactly the same way. There are some differences though.

First off, missile fire is handled at a range. It is the

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**Table 8.6 : Head Criticals**

Critical	Blunt	Pierce	Slice
A	2 S	1 B, D 15, C 25/hours	1 S, 2 B
B	4 S, C 30/hours, D 20	3 B, D 40, C 50/days	6 B, D 40, C 50/days
C	6 S, C 60/hours, D 35	Death	Death
D	Death	Death	Death
E	Death	Death	Death

  

Critical	Acid	Cold	Heat
A	1 S, 1 B	blind 1-4 segs	hair loss, blind 2-5 segs
B	40% eyes, 2S 3 B, app-1	1 S, blind 1-10 secs	2 S, app-1, blind 2-12 secs
C	80% eyes, app-3, D 25	Frost bite, 2 S, blind 1-3 rnds, app-1	3 S, app-3, 50% blind, blind 2-5 rnds
D	Death	Frost bite, 4 S, blind, D 30, app-1	D 30, app-5, blind
E	Death	Death	Death

**Table 8.7 : Torso Criticals**

Critical	Blunt	Pierce	Slice
A	--	--	2 B
B	1 S	1 B	5 B
C	3 S, 5 B	3 B	Pierced lung, 3 S, 10 B
D	Broken ribs, 10 B	Pierced lung, 3 S, 7 B	Death
E	Death	Death	Death

  

Critical	Acid	Cold	Heat
A	--	--	--
B	1 B	--	--
C	1 S, 3 B	1 S	1 S
D	3 S, 7 B,	3 S, D 30	3 S, D 30
E	Death	Lungs freeze up, death	Insides cooked, death

**Table 8.8 : Arm Criticals**

Critical	Blunt	Pierce	Slice
A	1 S	--	1 S, 2 B
B	2 S, half skill for that arm	-1D for that arm	3 S, broken, 5 B
C	5 S, broken arm	half skill for that arm	5 S, severed, 10 B
D	5 S, broken arm (compound), 3 B	3 S, broken arm	5 S, severed, 10 B
E	5 S, shattered arm, 5 B, C 30/min.	5 S, shattered arm, 3 B, C30/min	5 S, severed, 10 B

  

Critical	Acid	Cold	Heat
A	--	--	--
B	1 S, 1 B	-1D for that arm	1 S, -1D for that arm
C	3 S, 4 B, half skill for that arm	1 S, useless 2d4 days	2 S, useless 2d4 weeks
D	5 S, 8 B, useless 2d6 weeks	2 S, ruined arm (frost bitten)	3 S, ruined and useless
E	5 S, 10 B, Dissolved	2 S, ruined arm (frost bitten)	5 S, frazzled to a cinder

range of the attack which dictates the difficulty needed to hit the target more than the weapon itself. Table 8.11 shows the difficulty needed to be able to hit a target within a certain range. Someone within two metres only requires a mere 5 to be hit – while someone within 500m requires a difficulty of 80!

There is also a second range to consider – that of the

weapon being used. Each weapon has a *base range*, from which is derived four range categories – close, short, medium and long. Close range is a tenth of the base range, short range is any distance up to the base range, medium range is anything up to twice the base range, and long range is anything up to three times the base range. Table 8.12 shows these categories, as well as modifiers to the weapon for hitting targets within these ranges.

**Table 8.9 : Leg Criticals**

Critical	Blunt	Pierce	Slice
A	--	--	--
B	1 S	--	1 S, 2 B
C	2 S, half skill for that leg	-1D for that leg	3 S, broken, 5 B
D	5 S, broken leg	half skill for that leg	5 S, severed, 10 B
E	5 S, broken leg (compound), 3 B	3 S, broken leg	5 S, severed, 10 B
Critical	Acid	Cold	Heat
A	--	--	--
B	--	--	--
C	1 S, 1 B	-1D for that leg	1 S, -1D for that leg
D	3 S, 4 B, half skill for that leg	1 S, useless 2d4 days	2 S, useless 2d4 weeks
E	5 S, 8 B, useless 2d6 weeks	2 S, ruined leg (frost bitten)	3 S, ruined and useless

**Table 8.10 : Full Body Criticals**

Critical	Blunt	Pierce	Slice
A	1 S	1 S, 1 B	3 B
B	3 S, 1 B	3 S, 3 B, C30/minutes	6 B
C	6 S, 3 B, C30/hours	5 S, 5 B, D 30, C40/hours	10 B
D	10 S, 5 B, 'E' crit to 1d8 locations	Death	Normal 'E' crit to 1d6 limbs, 10 B
E	Death	Death	Death - chopped and diced
Critical	Acid	Cold	Heat
A	1 S, 2 B	2 S	1 S, lose all uncovered body hair
B	2 S, 5 B, app-1	5 S, no feelings 2d10 minutes	2 S, app-1
C	4 S, 8 B, app-3	10 S, D40, frost bite on hands/feet	5 S, app-3, D 20
D	6 S, 12 B, app-6, blinded etc, D40	10 S, D 40, limbs ruined,	7 S, app-4, 'E' crit to 1d8 locations
E	Dissolved - death	Death - body fluids freeze	Death

If the weapon damage is modified to less than zero, then it is treated as zero, and cannot cause any damage at this range.

Melee weapons which are thrown have no *close* range, but are affected for medium and long range as for normal.

A final modification which comes from the weapon's base range – that of the accuracy of the weapon. Just as different melee weapons are easier to use than some others, missile weapons also gain a modifier to the difficulty to hit a target. The base difficulty for a target is found from the chart in table 8.11. This difficulty is modified by the *accuracy* of the weapon for its range category – each weapon has a different accuracy for close, short, medium and long range.

For instance, a heavy crossbow has a base range of 80m. To hit a target at 220m is a base difficulty of 50. This is long range for a heavy crossbow, so damage is reduced by 3D, and penetration by 15. Also, the crossbow has an accuracy modifier of +15 for long range, so the final difficulty to hit is 65. A long bow on the other hand, has a base range of 100m, so is still at long range, but has an accuracy

penalty of +0 giving a final difficulty of only 50.

### Thrown Weapons

Any weapon can be thrown – even a great sword. Obviously though, those that haven't been designed to be used in this way aren't going to be very effective...

A thrown weapon is treated just as a melee weapon for purposes of game mechanics, their exact statistics though represent the fact that they are better off being thrown than being used in melee. All thrown weapons have three ranges – short, medium and long, and suffer the same penalties at these ranges as for a missile weapon (thrown weapons have no *close* range).

Each weapon has a single *accuracy* rating. This is the weapons accuracy modifier for short range only. Accuracy at medium range is double this, and long range is triple this. What though is a weapons base range?

This is a factor of the weight of the weapon, and the STR and skill of its user. The STR and weapon skill (a separate skill is needed for using a weapon in melee, and

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throwing a weapon) is averaged, and the points value of that skill is divided by 5. This is the base range of the weapon (in metres). Other than this, thrown weapons and missile weapons are very much the same.

### 8.8 Modifiers to Combat

It isn't always going to be the case that everyone is in an ideal situation when it comes to combat, and many things and both improve and reduce your chances of being able to land a solid blow against your foe.

Table 8.13 and 8.14 list some common modifiers – the former for melee combat, and the latter for missile combat. Any advantage counts as a bonus to skill (After averaging, though no such bonus can ever do more than double your skill), and penalties increase the difficulty. Where melee combat is concerned, bonuses and penalties apply to both parries and attacks, though not to dodges or similar actions.

### 8.9 Minimum Strength of a Weapon

Each weapon has a minimum strength associated with it. The STR of the user must at least equal the minimum strength of the weapon for it to be used effectively.

Of course, this will not always be the case. When it isn't, for each point below the minimum required strength, a penalty of 0D+4 is suffered to the skill in that weapon.

Two handed weapons will often allow a +20% or a +50% bonus to STR for purposes of minimum strength, if the weapon is used in two hands. This is not always the case though, and just because this bonus is gained for damage, does not mean that it is gained for this – check the individual weapon descriptions.

### 8.10 Charge Attacks

Being able to get a good run at someone before an attack does wonders for the force of the blow – assuming of course that you actually hit. Anyone making a charge suffers the normal penalties to skill for fast movement, so a full sprint may give you a big bonus to damage, but it will reduce your chance of hitting considerably.

For every 3ms<sup>-1</sup> of movement a character is charging at, he gains +1D to damage for swinging attacks, or +5 to penetration for a thrusting attack. Note that ultimately, this is the relative speed between the attacker and the target. The target also gets a damage bonus when he strikes an attacker who is charging him, and if both are charging each other, then add each person's speeds together, to find the bonus they both get. Likewise, if the charger is chasing someone,

**Table 8.13 : Modifiers to Melee Combat**

#### Advantageous situations

Attacker on higher ground . . . . .	+1D
Attacking from sides/rear . . . . .	+1D

#### Disadvantageous situations

Defender on higher ground . . . . .	+5
Defender is at limit of reach . . . . .	+5
Every 4ms <sup>-1</sup> defender is moving . . . . .	+5
In bodily contact with target and using	
Short sword sized weapon . . . . .	+5
Long sword sized weapon . . . . .	+10
Great sword or larger weapon . . . . .	+15

**Table 8.14 : Modifiers to Missile Combat**

#### Advantageous situations

Spent base speed aiming . . . . .	+1D
Have spent thrice base speed aiming . . . . .	+2D

#### Disadvantageous situations

Aiming at torso . . . . .	+5
Aiming at leg or arm . . . . .	+10
Aiming at head . . . . .	+15
Target has 25% cover . . . . .	+5
Target has 50% cover . . . . .	+10
Target has 75% cover . . . . .	+15
Target has 90% cover . . . . .	+20
Every 4ms <sup>-1</sup> target is moving . . . . .	+5
Unsteady platform, make a balance check	
. . . . .	+1/point fail balance check

the charge speed is only taken to be the difference in speeds (someone moving at 7ms<sup>-1</sup> chasing someone running away at 6ms<sup>-1</sup> doesn't get any bonus, since the relative speed is only 1ms<sup>-1</sup>).

### 8.11 Mounted Combat

Of course, the best way to get a charge bonus is when mounted on a creature such as a horse. They move much faster, and no penalties are gained for running since the attacker is sitting still. Further, against infantry, the rider is considered to be a higher target, so gains all the advantages of this situation.

Fighting from horseback (or any other mount for that matter) requires at least some training though, in the form of a riding skill. People without this skill can still ride, but suffer severe penalties whenever they try to do anything from horseback, especially fighting.

Basically, all physical skills are capped to the character's AGI+*riding* skill for that mount (after averaging). For

instance, someone with 6D DEX, 5D AGI, 6D sword skill and 1D riding skill, would fight from horseback with only 3D skill (the lowest of  $AGI+riding$  and  $DEX+swordskill$ ). This is true of missile and melee attacks, dodges, reactions (making attacks slower) and even directed spells for mages, though magical arts are not affected. Perception skills are generally unaffected. Untrained characters are best to dismount before engaging in fights.

### Missile Combat from Mounts

Mounted archers have an advantage. It is possible to fire at any target within 360° while riding a mount, unless the physical make up of the mount prohibits this.

If the mount is moving, all targets are considered to be moving targets, at whatever speed the mount is moving relative to them. The only exception to this is for targets within short range of the weapon, either immediately in front of, or immediately behind the mount, who are not making movement perpendicular to the mount's direction of travel.

## 8.12 Weapon and Armour Damage

The following rules are optional for those who want a bit more fun and excitement added to combat – namely the chance of armour, shields and weapons being damaged and destroyed.

There are three basic situations which are covered; weapons against shields, weapons against armour, and weapons against weapons.

### Weapons Against Shields

Shields are useful, but have the disadvantage that they often take the brunt of blows, making them very susceptible to being damaged.

Whenever a shield parries a blow (in all cases, a parry is considered to have succeeded if the attack roll missed because of the parry, but would have hit otherwise), there is a chance of the shield suffering damage if the fumble die for the parry roll came up '10'. If the parried weapon is marked with a '\$' on the weapon charts, then this chance is increased, and any fumble die result of 8+ gives a chance of damage. Weapons marked '\$\$' are even better at destroying shields, and a fumble die result of 5+ results in breakage chance.

If the fumble die gives a breakage chance, then this chance is rolled on a d20. The chance of a shield being damaged is given by the "break" column on the weapon charts. This gives two numbers, such as 5/10 for a shield. If the d20 roll is less than or equal to the first number, then the

shield is destroyed and made useless. If the roll is higher than the first number, but equal or lower than the second, then the shield's parry number is reduced by 5. If this ever reaches zero, then the shield is considered useless anyway.

### Weapons Against Armour

Whenever a weapon strikes an armoured target, then two possible things can happen. The first is that the armour is damaged or even destroyed. The second, is that the weapon is blunted or made useless.

The chance of armour being damaged is checked in a similar way as for shields. A d10 is rolled – this is taken to be the armour's fumble die, and the same chances hold for armour as for shields, ie a chance of damage on a 10 for most weapons, greater chances for some weapons.

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## 9 Injury, Illness and Death

This, rather pessimistic, chapter covers everything to do with death and injuries not covered by combat. In most games, the most common form of death for characters will be during combat. Sometimes though, a character will die another way.

Also covered are ways to protect from such ways of dying, either through prevention or cure.

### 9.1 Aging

Eventually, everyone dies – well, all mortals at any rate. The process of death from old age can be a slow painful one, turning the strongest of warriors into weak old men. Exactly when the process of aging (for game terms, aging means detrimental aging – technically people are aging right from year one) starts to set in will depend on the race in question, and also on the time period. The following assumes a medieval setting, for humans.

For the lower classes, for peasants and the majority of city dwellers, aging checks must begin to be made on the character's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. For nobility, or reasonably well off rural dwellers (ie those living a comfortable and reasonably healthy life style), aging checks begin on the character's 45<sup>th</sup> birthday. Most player characters are assumed to use the later year, since generally they have enough money to feed themselves well, and live a reasonably healthy lifestyle.

#### Aging Checks

To make an aging check, roll a single d10, and add to the result the number of *age points* (if any) that the character has. Check this result with the chart on table 9.1. If age points are gained, then they add to future aging checks. It is possible to die on the very first roll, without gaining any age points, but rare.

A roll can result in a 'crippling injury'. These subtract permanently from the character's attributes. For each '-1' to the attribute, there is a 25% chance of the potential going down by 1 point as well. If two rolls on the crippling injury chart result in the same attribute going down by one point, then there is a combined 50% chance of potential loss (one roll). If five points are lost from an attribute (125% chance potential loss), then one point of potential is automatically lost, and there is a 25% chance of losing a second, and so on.

#### Further Checks

Further age checks are made every year of the character's life. Attribute loss is permanent, though unless the

**Table 9.1 : Aging Chart**

Roll	Result
1	Roll again and double*
2–6	No effect
7–9	+1 age points
10–12	+1 age points; 1 CI check
13–15	+2 age points; 2 CI checks
16–17	+2 age points; 4 CI checks
18–19	+3 age points; 8 CI checks
20+	Death

CI: Crippling Injuries. See table 9.2

\*: A second '1' counts as 'no effect', and ignores any age points character has.

**Table 9.2 : Crippling Injuries**

Roll (d20)	Result
1–3	-1 STR
4–6	-1 CON
7–9	-1 AGI
10–12	-1 DEX
13–14	-1 PER
15–16	-1 KNO
17	-1 CHA
18	-1 WIL
19	Roll again, with extra -1 to loss
20	Roll again, with extra -2 to loss

potential drops as well, the attribute can be developed back up to its original value if desired.

#### The Effects of Aging

Though the roll is made on the character's birthday, the effects do not have to occur at that time – though they do have to occur some time before the next check. A good place for attribute loss to occur is during a time of rest for the character, either during a long journey, or while resting up for a while.

The time of death should be determined randomly, or if desired by the GM, at some dramatically suitable moment during the next year. How sudden the death is, is also up to the GM. It could be a heart attack at night without warning, or the character's health could start to rapidly deteriorate over a period of weeks or months, losing points of attributes and skills every few days.

If a character is ever forced to make a non-natural aging roll (such as because of magic), then the effects should occur then. Also, the effects of any outstanding rolls should also occur at this point – the shock of sudden aging can be

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quite detrimental.

### 9.2 Fatigue

There are two types of fatigue in the game – long term and short term. Fatigue is gained from hard exertion, either over a long period of time (such as walking), or from a sudden burst of energy (such as a combat, or a 100m sprint).

Both affect the character in the same way, by giving a penalty to all actions equal to the level of fatigue. For this purpose, fatigue is measured in 'dice', nearly always whole dice.

Unlike other penalties, fatigue also reduces STR for purposes of damage caused by physical attacks, though not encumbrance and minimum required STR for weapons – calculating this could become too cumbersome.

#### Short Term Fatigue

Short term fatigue represents loss of wind, generally from hard exertion over short periods of time. It is also lost very quickly – normally after only a few minutes. Short term fatigue is gained during (long) combats, and also after any action deemed suitably tiring by the GM.

It takes five minutes to recover a dice of short term fatigue for every dice of it a character has. A character with 3D fatigue, would lose the first 1D after 15 minutes, the second after a further 10 minutes, and the last after 5 minutes. For recovery to take place, the character must rest.

If rest is not possible, then it can be regained at three times the normal length of time if the character is walking or performing other light duties. Even if such activity would gain the character long term fatigue, short term is lost.

#### Long Term Fatigue

This type of fatigue can only be lost through sleep. It is gained through lack of sleep, continuous exertion and sometimes because of attempts to use magic.

Such fatigue is lost at the rate of 1D for every two full hours of sleep. This is assuming a good sleep – if the sleep is poor, due to trying to sleep on a bouncing cart, or while out in the open during a storm for instance, then you may only lose fatigue after three hours or even four hours of sleep – the decision is the GM's.

#### Gaining Fatigue

The amount of fatigue gained is left more or less up to the GM. There are no hard and fast rules, but a few guide-

lines are given below.

A person who has been up all day, exerting himself lightly (ie anything other than resting) will have about 1D of LTF by the end of the day (by midnight, say). Someone who has been travelling by foot (or even on a horse for a long period when they are not trained for horse riding) will have 1D of LTF by around mid afternoon, and 2D by the end of the day. Someone who is not used to travel, will have gained 3D by the end of the day.

If the day was spent undergoing hard exertion, such as fighting, running or hard physical labour, then an extra dice is gained. A forced march, or severe conditions (extreme heat or cold for instance) will gain a character another dice (or two under really severe conditions).

As mentioned previously, this will generally be lost after a full nights sleep. Even if only 1D of fatigue was gained though, a full nights sleep is still needed. If sleep was missed altogether, then an extra 1D is gained for each twelve hour period unless a CON+*stamina* check of 20 is made. If a second night is missed, then the difficulty increases to 40. A roll less than 30 means 2D extra is gained each time. For the third night, it is difficulty 60 or lose 1D, 50 or lose 2D and 40 or lose 3D. The progression continues after each night of lost sleep.

For example, a person gains 1D of fatigue during the course of a day. She misses out sleeping, continuing to work, so gains another 1D through the night. Because she has missed a nights sleep though, she could lose another 1D, for a total of 3D of fatigue by the following morning. By the following night, assuming a second failed stamina check, she will have gained 5D total (1D for the day, plus 1D for having not slept).

Sometimes, only half a nights sleep will be possible. In this case, fatigue is lost, but stamina checks are still required the following day as if a nights sleep was missed altogether.

#### Passing Out From Fatigue

If the total amount of injury penalties, stuns, short term fatigue and long term fatigue ever exceeds the characters CON+*stamina* then that character will pass out, either from exhaustion or pain (or both). If the player wishes, and the GM decides the situation is suitable, confidence may be spent to gain a scene bonus from a suitable personality trait (see chapter 7). This bonus adds to the CON+*stamina* total until the scene ends (GMs discretion when of course) for purposes of this only. If further penalties are accrued, which take the total to beyond the CON+*stamina*+bonus, then not much else can be done.



If penalties subside, either because of chirurgery, loss of short term fatigue or stuns, then the character recovers consciousness about ten minutes later, unless woken sooner (with use of the *first aid* skill).

If the penalties do not subside, then every hour a CON+*stamina* check of difficulty 30 can be made (without injury penalties, but including fatigue penalties) to see if the character awakens. The penalties are still there, though the character will be conscious even if the penalties still exceed the amount he can normally cope with. Gaining any more penalties means the character falls unconscious again immediately. While conscious in this state, fumble chances are doubled (ie 1 or 2 on the fumble die) due to the characters groggy and only half-conscious condition.

### Dying from Fatigue

Sometimes, if the character is in a really bad way, then it is possible to die due to fatigue, though this is rare. If the characters combined short term and long term fatigue exceed twice her CON+*stamina*, then death can result. For every dice (or part thereof) of excess, a CON+*stamina* check of difficulty 10 is required. Failure means that the character dies from exhaustion.

Normally, the character will have passed out some time before this risk occurs though (and hence start recovering), but this isn't always the case, especially if the fatigue is magically induced.

### 9.3 Damage from Falls

Whenever a character falls a distance of more than about two metres, damage should be rolled for. Falls less than this distance can also cause damage, though rarely, and it is up to the GM if he wishes to check in such circumstances.

How much damage is taken from a fall depends on the height the character falls from. Armour does *not* protect from falling damage, but the *tumbling* skill can.

To find the damage suffered, use table 9.3, which gives damages for given heights. Because of air resistance, acceleration drops off quite quickly, here terminal velocity is assumed to occur at 60m. Though it ignores armour, the damage has a penetration (attack type B) which is used to figure bonuses for criticals (if any).

When a fall is made, and the character has free use of his limbs, then he can attempt to break his fall, reducing the damage taken. In such a case, roll AGI+*tumbling*, and reduce the damage suffered by the roll. When certain heights are reached, the tumbling skill becomes less effective – multiply

**Table 9.3 : Damage from a Fall**

Height	Damage	Penetration	Skill
≤10m	1D/m	3/m	×1
≤12m	11D	35	×½
≤14m	12D	35	×½
≤16m	13D	40	×½
≤18m	14D	40	×½
≤20m	15D	45	×½
≤25m	16D	45	×¼
≤30m	17D	45	×¼
≤40m	18D	50	×¼
≤60m	19D	50	×¼
>60m	20D	50	×0

the skill roll made by the multiple given in the fourth column of the table.

### Modifiers for Landing Surface

The damages assume a 'moderately hard' surface to land on, such as earth or light foliage. Different surfaces can modify the amount of damage taken from a fall.

If the surface is water, than divide the *distance fallen* by two for figuring damage. A character can use their swimming skill in place of their tumbling skill if they wish when falling into water.

When falling onto a *soft* surface (cushions, very thick undergrowth etc), damage taken may be as much as halved. When landing on a *hard* surface, such as bare rock, damage is doubled. Variations in between are of course possible.

### 9.4 Extremes of Temperature

Sometimes, normally due to the weather, characters will be exposed to temperatures outside the range generally considered comfortable. Such temperatures are not as extreme as those suffered by being at ground zero to a *fireball* for example, but because they are suffered over a long period of time, their effects can be just as deadly.

Damage from extreme temperatures doesn't reduce hitpoints, instead it reduces CON directly (though BOD is left unchanged – creatures without a BOD attribute still base hitpoints on their original CON value). If CON reaches 0D, then the character dies.

#### Heat

Every hour that is spent in a temperature of 30° or higher, causes the loss of 1d2 CON. In a temperature of 40°+, 1d4 CON is lost, and in temperatures of 50°+ 1d8

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°CON. Every 5° beyond 50° causes the loss of one extra point (ie 1d8+3 at a temperature of 65°). If the climate is also very humid, then effective temperature could be increased.

For each of the following that a character manages to do, reduce the damage taken by one: remains in the shade; consume lots of water; the wearing of light, loose clothes; remaining inactive.

CON loss in this case does not normally result in permanent disability. After a full (24 hours) days rest in normal (ie cool) conditions, with plenty of water, CON can be gained back at a rate of 4 points a day. If a character's CON ever falls to half or lower of her full CON though, one point is lost permanently (check for 25% chance of potential loss as well). When a quarter of CON is reached, a second point is lost permanently (again with a chance of potential loss).

In any day that CON is lost due to heat, 1D of long term fatigue is also gained (just to add insult to injury). This fatigue will not be lost until a full days rest (as above) is gained. Generally, a character with no chance of suitable recovery from the heat over a period of several dies will pass out from fatigue and soon die unless someone is around to provide her with food and water. Of course, CON is still lost even when unconscious, though the character counts as resting.

### 9.5 Poison

The assassins favourite weapon – and so it should be since poison is a highly effective in which to get rid of an enemy with the minimum amount of risk to one's one person.

Poison can take any number of different forms, and have any number of different effects, so any single rule set is either going to be too cumbersome, or too limiting. All poisons (and here the term poison can also mean drugs and herbs) though have a few things in common.

#### Administering Poison

Poison (generally) has to be able to get into the body in order to work. Even 'contact' poisons require this, though since they can be quickly absorbed through the skin, this necessity isn't always obvious. Generally though, poisons are administered in one of the following ways: digestion, injection, contact or respiration. Many poisons will work by several methods, since they simply require access to the blood stream.

If only one potency is given for a poison, then use the following chart to work out the potency of the poison if it is

applied in a different way to that given.

Normal Method	Actual method of use			
	Contact	Digested	Injected	Respiratory
Contact	x1	x1	x1	x1
Digested	—	x1	x <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	—
Injected	—	x <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	x1	—
Respiratory	—	x <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	x <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	x1

The multiplier is the modifier to the given potency (so a respiratory poison is only half as effective if consumed, while a contact poison can be used in any way). If several methods are given, then use whichever is the most effective for the given circumstances.

#### Resisting Poisons

All poisons can be resisted. Of course, there is always the matter of degree. If successfully administered, a poison is resisted using the creature's CON attribute. The BOD of a creature, as well as its stamina, has no effect on the ability to resist, though some creatures do get a bonus to CON to resist poisons. Some typical poison difficulties are as follows:

Weak poison. . . . .	30
Moderate poison. . . . .	40
Strong poison. . . . .	50
Exceptional poison. . . . .	60

As can be seen, poisons have a reasonable chance of killing someone. The above values are for a typical dose. Multiple doses add 5 to the difficulty for each extra dose beyond the first, to a maximum of +50%.

#### Using Poisons

Unfortunately for the would be assassin, administering a poison requires slightly more than simply dropping a few herbs into someones drink, a small amount of knowledge is required in order to judge the right dose, and to apply it correctly (anything from making sure it is on the right part of the sword, to ensuring it is mixed correctly into the food or drink).

Whenever a poison is applied or used, the character must make a KNO+*herb lore* roll. Every point rolled below 20 subtracts one point from the potency of the poison. A fumble ensures something goes drastically wrong (poisoning oneself is an option here). In some situations – such as putting poison on a weapon – a DEX+*herb lore* roll might be more applicable. In such a case, it is the GM's decision to make.