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MARK KRAWEC & EVIL DM PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS:

LEGENDS OF STEEL

"ZEFRS" EDITION



Legends of Steel
ZeFRS Edition



By Jeff Mejia & Mark Krawec



Dedication

Jeff's Dedication: Legends of Steel is dedicated to my beautiful wife Scarlett and my sons Anthony, Joshua, and Nicholas. Thank you for encouraging, inspiring, and allowing me to see this dream through.

Mark's Dedication: Many thanks to my wife Deborah for putting up with this foolishness, and my parents for encouraging it; without you, I never would have wandered so far down this long, weird, thrilling path

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Introduction



ZeFRS and Legends of Steel

ZeFRS was designed with two goals in mind: first, to be fast-playing and wide open, allowing lots of room for imaginative description and interpretation; and second, to make back-story integral to character creation, encouraging players to think about how the characters came to be the people they are.

Legends of Steel is a Campaign set in a world of Swords & Sorcery.

The type of Sword & Sorcery adventuring that Legends of Steel attempts to capture is the truly heroic, amazing, over the top action found in the Sword & Sorcery comic books of the 70s, the low budget Sword & Sorcery movies of the 80s and the adventure filled Sword & Sorcery television shows of the 90's .

Be a Hero...Be a Champion...Be a LEGEND!



Players Section: Building a Legend



Grim and Gritty or Sunswords and Somersaults?

Within the genre of Swords & Sorcery there are varying types. Among them are the grim and gritty tales of Frank Frazetta's Death Dealer, the action packed and sometimes campy tales of television's Xena: Warrior Princess, or the techno-sorcery post apocalyptic world of Thundarr the Barbarian. All of these variations of the genre are equally enjoyable in their own rights, but there is the possibility that when the GM says "I'm going to run a Sword & Sorcery adventure," he may be thinking of the classic Robert E. Howard tales of King Kull while the players are thinking Bruce Campbell's Army of Darkness. So, before getting started on the character sheets, make sure that everyone playing is on the same page regarding the tone and setting of the game.

Pulp and Paperback Sword & Sorcery

These are the Sword & Sorcery tales from the pulps of the 1930s and the paperback boom of the 1960s and 1970s. They feature characters such as Conan, Elric, Kull, Thongor, Kothar, and Kane. The tales are set in grim worlds where magic is almost exclusively in the realm of the antagonist. The heroes are mainly warrior types, barbarians or warrior-kings with only their guts and cold steel to carry them through the adventure. In fact, it would not be at all out of line in this style of game for the GM to prohibit the use of magic amongst player characters.

While there is a case for magic wielding player characters (The Grey Mouser, Elric, or Kane), the difficulty in obtaining the components and the time and rituals needed to perform even minor magical effects may greatly outweigh any of its advantages in game play.

Comic Book and Cartoon Sword & Sorcery

In the 1970s Sword & Sorcery comic books enjoyed a wide popularity. Every major comic book company published at least one Sword & Sorcery title with varying degrees of success. They published original characters such as DC's Arak Son of Thunder, adapted existing properties such as Marvel's Savage Sword of Conan, or created thinly disguised copies of such characters like Atlas Comics' Wulf the Barbarian.

This category also includes the slew of Sword & Sorcery movies from the 1980s (Hawk the Slayer, Deathstalker, Beastmaster, The Sword & the Sorcerer, etc.) and to a smaller extent the TV shows of the 1990s (Hercules: The Legendary Journeys, Xena: Warrior Princess and The Adventures of Sinbad). Let's not forget the Saturday morning cartoon shows such as Thundarr the Barbarian and Conan the Adventurer. These stories, while still retaining some elements found in the classic tales, often strayed a bit more into the fantastic, with mythical creatures and powerful sorcerers being more prevalent. The medium, being

primarily a visual one, had to entertain the reader's eyes with blasts of magical energy and demons rising from smoky cauldrons to do battle with the hero. Player characters who have a limited amount of magical ability fit in better in a campaign of this type than they do in a classic Sword & Sorcery setting. Still, the magic should be very limited and nowhere near the level found in a standard fantasy role playing game. If the character is a spell caster of some type the spells available should be very low key in effect. Spells that cause massive amounts of damage, have flashy effects, or allow the characters to fly, control armies or resurrect the dead should be left out entirely.

The setting for the Legends of Steel campaign, The World of Erisa, is tailored after the comic book and cartoon Sword & Sorcery example.

Sword & Sorcery Doesn't Always Have to Mean "Barbarian"

When people mention Sword & Sorcery the first image that usually pops into their head is the brawny, bare-chested barbarian carrying a great big axe or sword. While the barbarian warrior is the most popular character type in the Sword & Sorcery genre, it's not the only one. Heroes in Sword & Sorcery tales include kings, thieves, sailors, soldiers, farmers, and sorcerers. For example in Ray Harryhausen's Sinbad movie trilogy, the hero is a merchant sailor who travels the known world on epic quests. In the Lankhmar stories of Fritz Leiber, The Grey Mouser is a city-bred thief with a thirst for adventure and a love of the good life. Jirel of Joiry, by C.L. Moore, is a warrior queen who faces off against supernatural foes that threaten her kingdom.

When creating characters for Legends of Steel, look beyond the stereotypes that most people see in terms of Sword & Sorcery characters; don't limit yourself to the barbarian warrior. The Talents and Advantages in both the ZeFRS Core Rules and this supplement allow for an endless combination of character types. By exploring all the options and combinations found in the genre, your gaming experience with Legends of Steel will be truly memorable.

Character Concept

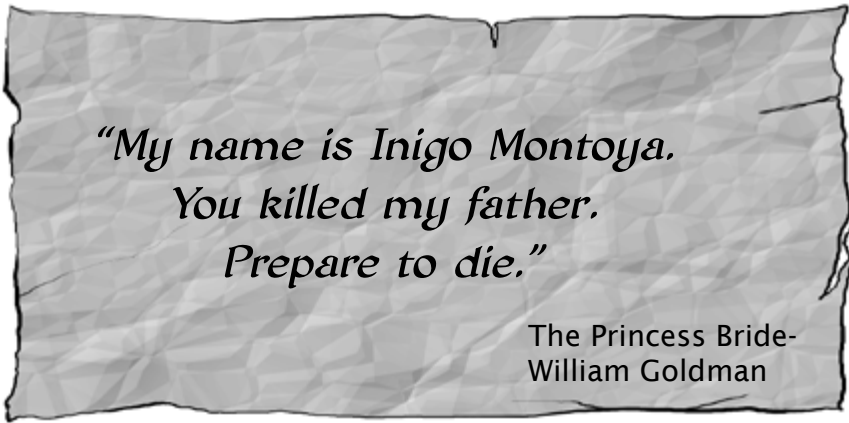
What kind of character do you want to play? What Sword & Sorcery archetypes excite you? A mighty barbarian warrior? A sly city-bred thief? An adventurous sailor?

Once you decide on a particular character, it's time to put some thought into where they come from and why they do what they do.

Give Them A Background

Was your character born in a barn or on a battlefield? Does he have any living parents or siblings? What was his father's trade? Is he city-bred, a farm boy or did he grow up in the great desert? Did he have a privileged childhood?

Give Them A Motivation



*"My name is Inigo Montoya.
You killed my father.
Prepare to die."*

The Princess Bride-
William Goldman

Why does your character do what he does? What set him on this path of adventure? Why does he feel the need to explore ruins and kill strangers? What motivates the adventurer?

When creating your character be sure to give some thought to their motivation. The following are some classic examples used in countless tales.

Vengeance:

- Bandits raided your village and killed everyone while you were away hunting. Now you are hunting them down, one by one.
- The local lord lusted after your girlfriend, she spurned his sweaty advances and in a fit of rage he killed her.
- The Wolf Clan has been your clan's sworn enemy for years. At a meeting meant to end the feud your people were ambushed. Somehow you survived. Now it's payback time.

To win or win back a kingdom:

- You were prophesized to one day wear a crown and tread a despot beneath your sandaled feet.
- Your father was many things; a good general wasn't one of them. He lost the battle, the war, and his kingdom. You pledged to him on his deathbed to return from exile and reclaim your rightful place as king.

Soldier of fortune:

- You live by your sword. It's all you've ever known: going from one job to another. Sometimes you believe what you're fighting for; other times you just want enough to keep you in wine and whores till a better job comes along.

King's agent:

- You are a patriot and loyal subject of your liege. You serve at his beck and call, and from time to time he has need of your special skills.

Freedom fighter:

- Your land has been overrun by a usurper and it has fallen to you and your comrades to free the people from the invader!

Remove a curse:

- The love of your life has been cursed by an unknown evil. She rests now, safe, but incurable. You have vowed to find a cure, lift the curse, or die trying.

Protect the child:

- It was written in the holy texts that a child of light shall be born, a child to bring peace to the age of man. It is your duty to protect this child from the evils of the world until she is ready to fulfill the prophecies.

Get home:

- You haven't seen your wife in five long years. Your sons are becoming men without you, but now the wars are over and all you want to do now is get home. It's going to be a long journey; we best get started.

Bored on the farm:

- Your father is a farmer, his father was a farmer, and your brothers are farmers. Your uncle, "the rebel" of the family, is a baker. You have got to get out of this town.

Hero out of time:

- You are from another time or another world. You may be desperately trying to find a way back home or you might feel that your knowledge and skills will be enough to carve out a kingdom amongst these primitives.

Hopefully the preceding examples have helped give you an idea of what type of character you want to play and maybe some possible motives for taking the road to adventure. Talk with the other players in your group and of course the GM about your choices. Together you can choose to be a group of disparate individuals thrown together and forced to cooperate in order to survive, or a tightly bonded team of specialists each working off of each other's strengths. It's all good, and it can all work. Now let's go build a Hero!

Build a Hero



Character Race

Whether the Sword & Sorcery hero is a hard-bitten warrior, a magic wielding barbarian queen or a city-bred rogue, they all have one major thing in common: they are all human.

Of course, they are exceptional humans and at times there may be rumors of non-human parentage, such as a trace of Fairy blood to explain unearthly beauty or perhaps an ancestor who was said to be a Troll to explain the hero's prodigious strength.

Unlike most standard fantasy role-playing games, Legends of Steel is geared towards humans as the only player character species.

Character Age

Heroic characters in literature and film come in a wide variety of ages, from children such as Mowgli to elders of indeterminate age like Merlin. The age of your character depends on your concept of the character. Most heroes fall in the late teens to early forties range, but don't let that stop you from having a hero of advanced age or a tough nine-year-old street urchin.

Talents, Weaknesses, and Advantages

In ZeFRS, all characters, player character (PC) and non-player character (NPC) alike, are defined by their talents. These catchall terms encompass not just areas of learned knowledge, but also innate abilities and shortcomings. Over the course of play, characters may improve their skill with their beginning talents, or learn new ones.

To create a character, players select the talents their characters possess and determine their level of ability in each talent. Each talent has a numerical rating; the higher the number, the greater the

character's proficiency.

Talent Pools

Every talent is part of one of six talent pools. Each talent in a pool is related in some way to the others. The six talent pools are:

Prowess: All physical activities other than fighting fall under this pool. Prowess governs such things as swimming, climbing, and acrobatics.

Fighting: All fighting skills fall under this pool. Fighting governs both armed and unarmed combat.

Endurance: These talents describe a character's ability to stand up to various types of harm. Endurance governs such talents as stamina, damage resistance, and magic resistance.

Knowledge: The knowledge pool governs bodies of knowledge. This includes such topics as siegecraft/engineering, reading, writing, and lore.

Perception: The perception pool governs non-fighting talents that may be taught but also require some natural ability on the part of the practitioner. This includes such talents as medicine, minstrel, and tracking.

Insight: Insight talents spring from an inborn ability. (Characters who learn an insight talent later in their careers are assumed to have unleashed previously untapped potential.) Insight talents include danger sense, berserk, and personal magnetism.

Note that it isn't necessary to have the talent relevant to an action to attempt that action. Having a rating in a talent means only that the character has been taught that skill or has that natural ability. Those who don't have that talent have no training and thus are less likely to succeed, but can still give it a try. Suppose Risa the archer has the Sword Fighting Talent, but not the Halberd Fighting Talent. She can still fight with a halberd, but not nearly as well as she would with a sword.



Initial Character Talents

Prowess	Fighting	Endurance
Acrobatics Animal Reflexes Climbing Contortion Movement Sleight of Hand Strength Swimming Throwing	Blind Fighting Brawling Two-Weapon Fighting Weapon (from weapon list) Weapon Flourish Wrestling	Damage Resistance Magic Resistance Poison Resistance Stamina Will
Knowledge	Perception	Insight
Alchemy (M) Arcane Languages Area Knowledge Blacksmith Carpentry Goldsmith Herbalism Language (choose language) Lockpicking Lore Navigation Reading/Writing (choose language) Religion (choose religion) Sailing Siegecraft/Engineering Survival (choose environment) Trapping	Animal Handling Artisan Forgery Medicine Minstrel Necromancy (M) Observation Physical Laws (M) Pocket Picking Summoning (M) Tracking	Animal Senses Berserk Danger Sense Directional Sense Hypnotism Information (M) Magic Sense Mind Control (M) Natural Magic (M) Personal Magnetism Telepathy Transmutation (M) Weather Sense

Talents marked with an (M) are magical talents, distrusted by the common people and sought out only by the desperate or the mad. Magic and its unwholesome uses are further explained in the Magic section.

Each character has 35 points to spend on talents and advantages. Each point in a talent or advantage costs one of these 35 points. The points can be spent on any talent or advantage, subject to two restrictions:

- You may have no more than 5 points in any one talent at the outset.
- You must have at least 1 talent from each Talent Pool.

You may also select one or more weaknesses for your character. For each weakness taken, you receive 10 more points to spend on talents and/or advantages. Keep in mind that weaknesses will hinder your character's attempts to do certain things, and may compel him to act against his own interest or even his own will! A weakness that never inconveniences a character is no weakness, and earns him no points.

You can also spend character points on advantages. Advantages are extraordinary abilities that help differentiate your Legends of Steel character from the common schleps of the world. These advantages can be purchased by either paying a number of Character Points (CP) or in exchange for taking a mundane Weakness. An advantage bought at creation is always available for use. Some advantages are more powerful or versatile than others, and cost more CP to purchase. The cost of an advantage is 10CP unless otherwise noted in its description. An advantage that costs more than 10CP can be paid for by taking a weakness and paying the remainder in points.

Creating New Talents

The list of talents given here is not exhaustive. There may be one or more not shown that fit the mental image or story you have for your character. In that case, consult with your referee about whether the talent should be allowed, whether your character would have had an opportunity to learn it, and which Talent Pool the new talent falls under.

New talents may be bought at character creation and given a rating from 1 to 5. They may also be raised in the course of play like any other talent.

General Talent Scores

Once you have bought your character's starting talents, find the General Score for each Talent Pool by adding the ratings of each talent that falls under that pool, then dividing by ten and dropping any remainder. For example, a character with a wrestling talent of 2, a broadsword talent of 6, and an axe talent of 4 will have a General Fighting Score of 1 ($2+6+4 = 12 / 10 = 1.2$, drop the .2 = 1).

The General Score is used whenever a character attempts to do something for which she has no rating, such as fighting with a spear without having taken the spear talent.

Anteus wants to try to read a sign written in Yari, a language he does not have the talent for. His rating for this attempt is equal to his General Score for the Knowledge Pool.

General Scores increase as the ratings for the talents under them increase. For example, a character with a total of 18 points of talents under the Perception Pool has a General Perception Score of 1. Suppose that character then raises some of the talents' ratings or acquires new ones, adding four more points under the Perception Pool and bringing the total to 22. The character's General Perception Score now increases to 2.

A listing of the Talents, Weaknesses, and Advantages available in Legends of Steel

Note that wherever the terms "Simple, Moderate, and Difficult" appear in a magical talent's description, these refer to the result on the Resolution Chart required to achieve a given effect in that category, representing green, yellow, and black respectively on the base chart.

Talents

Acrobatics

Talent Pool: **Prowess**

This Talent is used for any sort of athletic or gymnastic movement, such as vaulting an obstacle, leaping a gap, or walking a tightrope.

Alchemy

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Prerequisites: Arcane Languages, Herbalism

This Talent is used to create magical compounds, whether they be potions, powders, magical alloys, or gases. Three months of study are required to learn Alchemy. The student must also select a Magical Weakness. Some representative items that can be produced using Alchemy include:

Simple:

- Stupefying powders
- Love potions
- Sleeping draughts

Moderate:

- Knockout gas
- Poison gas
- Antidotes

Difficult:

- Healing elixir
- Insanity potions

Animal Empathy

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Animal Empathy lets a character communicate their feelings and intentions as well as understand the feelings and intentions of ordinary animals (but not monstrous creatures like basilisks or hydras). At a rating of 10, your character can convey instructions to animals that they are familiar with, using gestures that are imperceptible to humans. When your rating reaches 15, you are so in tune with animals you have trained from birth that if you stop to concentrate, you can receive mental impressions of what they're seeing and hearing at that moment.

Animal Handling

Talent Pool: **Perception**

Animal Handling allows a character to train and command animals. It is used for resolution checks involving riding mounts or driving draft animals. It also allows a character to train animals to obey simple commands, if the animal is reared from birth and taught for a period of at least one year. The trainer may still travel and adventure so long as the animal in training goes along.

Animal Handling is a prerequisite of the Natural Magic Talent.

Animal Reflexes

Talent Pool: **Prowess**

Your character has amazing cat-like reflexes. The Combat section explains how this Talent is applied.

Animal Senses

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Characters with this Talent possess senses that are far sharper than a normal human's. They get a bonus advantage level in combat, sleep so lightly that they spring fully awake in the blink of an eye, and are sensitive to the presence of individuals who suffer from Animal Aversion. They also gain a +2 column shift on all Tracking, Trapping, or Danger Sense resolution checks.

Arcane Languages

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

The Arcane Languages Talent represents study of the long-forgotten tongues in which tomes of arcane knowledge are invariably written. It is used whenever a character attempts to read a text dealing with magic. The degree of success on the Arcane Languages resolution check represents how well the reader grasps the meaning of the text. Incomplete or, worse yet, faulty understanding can have very grave consequences indeed.

All magical Talents have Arcane Languages as a prerequisite.

Area Knowledge

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Whether your familiarity comes from having lived there all your life or from having made a close study of the place and its people, you have intimate knowledge of the physical layout, customs and important people in a certain region. The size of the region varies - it might be a county, a city, or just a neighborhood - but it's a place with a distinct enough culture that anyone without your knowledge is likely to get lost.

Artisan

Talent Pool: **Perception**

Characters with this talent are trained in pottery, weaving, painting, or sculpture. They may also appraise items from their craft. Each craft must be taken as a separate Talent. Make a resolution check to determine the quality of each item the character makes. A failure indicates that the product is a piece of junk; a heroic (black) success means a masterpiece.

Berserk

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Berserks are filled with a mighty battle rage that enables them to ignore the effects of ordinary wounds. Specific wounds still cause their normal effects. A character with the Berserk Talent does not need to make resolution checks to stay conscious when his Damage Resistance rating drops to 0 or below. Instead, he fights on unimpeded until his Damage rating reaches the inverse of his Berserk rating.

The Ice Spire barbarian's vision fills with red mist as he lays about him with his broadsword. His Berserk rating is 5; he fights undaunted until his Damage rating reaches -5.

Unfortunately for the Berserk, once his Damage rating falls to that point, he drops dead.

To enter a Berserk state, the character must make a resolution check against his Berserk rating and get a total or heroic success. To leave the Berserk state, he must get a total or heroic success on a resolution check against his current Damage rating. Those who fail to leave the Berserk state keep on fighting even if the only people left standing are allies. If the Berserk's Damage rating is negative when he leaves the Berserk state, he falls unconscious.

Blacksmith

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Those who have this talent can forge metal tools, weapons, and armor. They cannot, however, create artistic items or work precious metals. Blacksmiths must have access to smithing tools to work metal. They can also evaluate the quality and workmanship of non-precious metalwork, especially in iron and steel.

Blind Fighting

Talent Pool: **Fighting**

Characters with blind fighting have learned to locate and follow foes using senses other than sight: feeling disturbances in the air, listening for footsteps, even sniffing out distinctive smells. When such characters are fighting in the dark, they suffer no penalty, but their blind fighting rating is used for combat resolution checks instead of their rating with the weapon being used. If their blind fighting rating is higher than the weapon's rating, the weapon's rating is used instead - learning blind fighting never means you fight better in the dark than you do in the light!

Brawling

Talent Pool: **Fighting**

Brawling is a catchall Talent used for fist fighting, bashing opponents with chairs, battering them with mugs, and so on. See Combat for a more complete explanation of brawling.

Carpentry

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Given the proper tools and materials, your character can build virtually any wooden item, from furniture to sailing vessels. The degree of success on the carpentry resolution check determines the quality of the resulting product. She can also identify various types of woods and knows their places of origin.

How long it takes to build a given item is up to the referee. Several carpenters may be able to work together on a large project; some may be impossible for a single carpenter to accomplish.

Climbing

Talent Pool: **Prowess**

Your character is practiced in climbing all types of surfaces.

Contortion

Talent Pool: **Prowess**

A character with this Talent has practiced twisting himself into unusual postures. His joints are loose enough that he can fit through very narrow openings, wedge himself into tight spaces, and slither out of restraints.

Damage Resistance

Talent Pool: **Endurance**

Damage resistance is the measure of how much injury your character can withstand before running the risk of dying. For a complete explanation, see *Combat*.

Danger Sense

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Your character's awareness is so keen that she can sense impending danger. Whenever she is threatened by a hidden enemy or trap, the referee makes a resolution check against her Danger Sense. On any degree of success, the character feels a vague sense of menace. Danger Sense provides a moment's warning but nothing identifying the nature of the threat. Characters who also have the Animal Senses talent receive a +2 column shift on their Danger Sense check.

Directional Sense

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Your character has an innate sense of which way north lies. He can make a resolution check against this talent to find his way when he has become lost.

Fame

Talent Pool: **Perception**

Fame measures a character's renown. For an explanation of fame is earned and can be used, see *Improvement and Goals*.

Forgery

Talent Pool: **Perception**

Your character can produce and detect forgeries (including writings and works of art). After the character attempts either to make or to detect a forgery, the referee should make a secret Resolution check. A white result indicates failure that is immediately apparent to your character. A green result indicates failure but your character will think it a success. Any other color equals success. Your character should not be advised of the degree of his success unless the result is white or black.

Goldsmith

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Your character is trained in working gold and crafting jewelry. She can identify and evaluate gems and pieces of jewelry, and can craft new items given the proper equipment and sufficient time. The quality of the resulting piece is determined by the degree of success obtained on a resolution check against this Talent.

Herbalism

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Those who have studied herbalism can identify and know the uses of various plants. This Talent can be used to identify poisonous and edible plants, prepare poultices that increase a character's rate of healing by 1 point per day, derive mild plant-based poisons, and brew teas to relieve pain, restore energy, and so on. Herbal brews can provide only minor relief and require some time to take effect. Herbalists who also have the Medicine or Survival Talents receive a +2 column shift on resolution checks using those Talents.

Herbalism is a prerequisite for Alchemy and Natural Magic.

Hypnotism

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Hypnotism allows your character to make compelling suggestions. The user and subject must have 10 uninterrupted minutes in comfortable, quiet and dim surroundings, at the end of which the hypnotist makes a resolution check against his Hypnotism rating minus the subject's Will or General Endurance rating. Success means the hypnotist can implant a suggestion. The suggestion must be short and simple; it cannot be complex, self-destructive or obviously counter to the subject's interests ("OK soldier - go flip off Captain Barselius!" is right out).

The hypnotist may attempt to make any number of suggestions, but must make a successful resolution check for each one. Failure means the subject refuses the suggestion. All suggestions wear off 24 hours after being implanted. The subject is fully aware of having been hypnotized unless a suggestion was made that he forget.

Hypnotism is a prerequisite for Mind Control.

Information

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Prerequisites: Arcane Languages, Lore

The Information Talent is the province of soothsayers and seers. It gives knowledge of distant or future events. It takes only one month of study to learn the Information Talent, but the student must take a magical weakness and become a priest of a setting-appropriate deity.

Information magic includes such spells as:

Simple

- Clairvoyance
- Clairaudience

Moderate

- Prediction
- Spiritual Advice

Difficult

- Prophecy
- Clairvoyance: seeing distant events.
- Clairaudience: hearing distant events.
- Prediction: foreknowledge of near-future events.
- Prophecy: foreknowledge of weighty events in the near or distant future.
- Spiritual Advice: petitioning a deity for knowledge or advice.

The knowledge gained through Information spells is always cryptic or fragmentary. Events foreseen are not inevitable; they are the outcome of the current situation. Human agency is required to cause the event, and is capable of preventing it.

Language

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

A rating of 1-10 in a foreign language represents basic knowledge of that language. A rating of 11-20 indicates competence, and a rating of 21 or greater represents fluency in the language. The referee may ask for a resolution check against your rating in a language to see whether you misunderstand a speaker or convey a meaning other than the one you intended. Your rating in a language can only be increased when your character has had a chance to practice speaking it.

Lockpicking

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Given the proper tools, your character can open any lock with a successful resolution check against this Talent. It may also be possible to improvise tools.

Lore

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Your character is versed in the ancient history of the world. She can make a resolution check against her Lore rating to glean a bit of information about a historical item, place, person or event.

Magic Resistance

Talent Pool: **Endurance**

This is a measure of your character's ability to resist the influence of spells or magical effects. See Magic for an explanation of its use.

Magic Sense

Talent Pool: **Insight**

On a successful resolution check against this Talent, your character becomes instinctively aware of magical items, people or creatures in her surroundings. She gains no specific information about the magic; she only feels its presence.

Medicine

Talent Pool: **Perception**

A character trained in Medicine can heal humans and animals alike. He can bandage injuries, concoct medicines, treat infections and cure diseases. A successful resolution check against Medicine doubles the patient's healing rate. However, only one check may be made per patient for each batch of wounds or conditions.

Mind Control

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Prerequisites: Arcane Languages, Hypnotism

Mind Control is used to cast spells that create illusions or dominate the thoughts of others. Learning Mind Control requires six months of study and imposes a magical weakness on the student. The caster of a Mind Control spell must be able to make eye contact with its target. Some typical Mind Control spells are:

Simple

- Paralyzing glare
- Momentary indecision
- Sound

Moderate

- Fear
- Illusion
- Long term suggestion

Difficult

- Instant hypnotism
- Complete hallucinations
- Mental slaves

Use of Mind Control spells is explained more fully in the Magic section.

Minstrel

Talent Pool: **Perception**

Those with the Minstrel talent can provide a range of entertainments: song, epic poetry, instrumental music, dance, juggling, and so on. They can earn 1-2 silver coins a day by performing. Since nearly all doors are open to minstrels, they are also frequently hired as spies. A character who has the Minstrel Talent gains a +2 column shift when using Lore or Mind Control.

Movement

Talent Pool: **Prowess**

Movement rating is a measure of both foot speed and agility in combat. The Talent's uses are explained under Combat and Movement.

Natural Magic

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Prerequisites: Animal Handling, Animal Senses, Herbalism

Natural Magic is the most ancient of the magical arts, dealing with animals and the wilderness. Its teachings are never written, but rather passed orally from instructor to student. What few symbols it uses are carved in the rock of secret caves and grottoes.

Those who would learn Natural Magic must study for one year in the wilderness, communing directly with the fauna and flora. A teacher is not necessary; it is possible to learn the basics of this art through observation and meditation. However, spells of moderate or difficult level can only be learned by those who are clergy of a nature god. Students must select a magical weakness other than Animal Aversion.

Typical Natural Magic spells include:

Simple

- Protection from animals
- Animal location
- Animal friendship

Moderate

- Animal speech
- Animal commanding

Difficult

- Monster commanding
- Sight through animals

Most NPCs who practice Natural Magic will live in remote forests, tending members of the tribe and wild animals.

Navigation

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

The Navigation Talent allows characters to chart their course by the stars. On any mostly cloudless night they may make a resolution check against their Navigation rating. Any degree of success means they have found their bearing; failure means they only think they have. In this case, the referee will randomly determine the direction in which the characters are actually travelling.

Necromancy

Talent Pool: **Perception**

Prerequisites: Arcane Languages, Lore, and Medicine

Necromancy is a dread art, the darkest of them all, for its purpose is nothing less than to toy with Death itself. Its uncanny secrets may be used to delay death, preserve a dead body from decay, communicate with the departed, and in the most extreme cases revive – or at least reanimate – the dead. It is reviled in any land in which sorcery is not a common practice. Not only is necromancy among the most unnatural of practices, it is also hideously dangerous. Creatures raised from the dead must be ruled with an iron fist, or they will turn on their creator and run wild. It takes one year of study at the feet of a master necromancer to learn necromancy, and the student must take a magical weakness.

Necromancy saps the vitality of its practitioners. Every time a character attempts to cast a necromancy spell, he takes 1 point of damage whether he succeeds or not. The injury is permanent and cannot be healed, although Talent Points may be spent to raise the necromancer's Damage rating once more.

Typical necromantic spells include:

Simple

- Preserve Organic Material (50 years)
- History of Deceased*
- Animate Small Animal Body**

Moderate

- Preserve Organic Material (1,000 years)
- Question Deceased*
- Animate Large Animal Body**

Difficult

- Preserve Organic Material (5,000 years)
- Force True Answers from Deceased*
- Animate Monster Body**
- Animate Human Body**
- Prolong Life***

** Requires a small part of the original creature or object (feather, tuft of hair, tomb dust) or an accurate likeness.*

*** Requires a substantial amount of the original creature or person, necessitating difficult quests for long-forgotten sepulchers.*

**** May be cast on oneself or someone else. May be cast only once per year. Each successful casting adds 10 years to the subject's life, but immediately decreases all Endurance Talents by half. Talent points may be spent to buy them back up over time.*

An animated animal or monster will perform a single service of limited duration for the necromancer. When the service is completed, death reclaims it. Animated humans will also perform one service, and then die again. If the same human is reanimated a second time, however, she is hostile to her reanimator and must be controlled by threats, force or magic (such as mind control). A repeatedly reanimated human who escapes control attempts to destroy the necromancer and flee into the wilds to seek peace and solitude.

A necromancer may cause his own animated creatures to de-animate at will. Reanimated humans will attempt to resist being hurled back into death. The necromancer must make a successful Resolution Check against his own Will rating minus the Will or General Endurance rating of the reanimated person to force her to die again.

If a necromancer gets a white (failure) result on his resolution check when attempting to cast a necromancy spell with a rating of difficult, the subject of the spell explodes into magical fire (rating 25, fills the room). The necromancer may escape or douse the flames, but the components used in the spell suffer an "attack" by the fire and may be destroyed.

Observation

Talent Pool: Perception

Your character is both extremely perceptive and quick at putting facts together. She has a keen eye for detail and is skilled at following others undetected.

Observation may be used in three main ways:

- To spot a minute or hidden detail, or to recall a crucial bit of information.
- To notice someone following you.
- To follow someone without being noticed.

To find something hidden or recall a point of information, make a resolution check against your Observation rating.

To detect the presence of someone following you, the referee makes a resolution check against the pursuer's Observation or General Perception rating minus your Observation rating. To shadow someone, make a resolution check against your Observation rating minus the target's Observation or General Perception.

Personal Magnetism

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Characters with this talent have learned to use their force of personality to intimidate, seduce, charm or otherwise convince others to do as they like. A character with Personal Magnetism is a born commander. He possesses a charm, dynamic personality, or ferocious energy that draws people to him automatically. All NPC reaction checks receive a +2 column shift bonus.

The forceful presence of a character with Personal Magnetism means no one is every neutral toward him; he is either worshipped in the ranks or despised. Any neutral reaction on an NPC reaction check is shifted toward the nearest strong reaction. An NPC who was simply accommodating will become actively helpful; one who was unfriendly will become hostile.

The character's force of personality may be such that NPCs are too intimidated to show their reaction openly. They may admire him from afar or secretly nurture a festering hate. Thus a character with Personal Magnetism is prone to suddenly discovering previously unknown allies and enemies.

Physical Laws

Talent Pool: **Perception**

As magical arts go, Physical Laws is among the least dreaded because it can be used for the good of the people. Those who study Physical Laws gain the ability to bring about changes in the forces of nature. Some representative uses of this Talent include:

Simple

- Create fog
- Influence weather 1 month out
- Stimulate plant growth
- Summon favorable winds

Moderate

- Cause rapid plant or animal growth
- Summon weather
- Blight an area

Difficult

- Eclipse the sun
- Create freezing cold instantly
- Cause earthquakes
- Cause tornadoes
- Summon comets or meteors
- Instantly age an object or being

Picking Pockets

Talent Pool: **Perception**

Your character is a trained cutpurse. On any degree of success on a resolution check against his Picking Pockets rating, he can pinch small items without being noticed. Ordinary failure simply means he has failed to grasp his object. On a roll of 95-100, however, his attempt at theft was detected.

Poison Resistance

Talent Pool: Endurance

This is a measure of your character's ability to resist the effects of poison. See Poison in the Hazards section for an explanation of this talent.

Reading/Writing

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Your character is literate in a given language. Make a resolution check against this rating to read a text in that language.

Religion

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

The religion Talent isn't a measure of piety; rather, it represents a character's familiarity with the rites, theology and code of behavior of a given religion. It's possible to have a high score in a religion to which your character doesn't subscribe.

Sailing

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Your character is a trained sailor and steersman. He can control vessels in rough water or high seas with a successful resolution check against his Sailing rating.

Siegecraft/Engineering

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Your character is trained in the design, construction and deployment of engines of war. She can direct troops in the use of siege engines and supervise tunneling under walls. On a successful resolution check against this Talent, sappers under her guidance can collapse fortifications.

Sleight of Hand

Talent Pool: **Prowess**

Your character is adept at concealing and manipulating objects with his hands. He is able to make small objects seemingly disappear, to juggle, and to cheat at games of chance. Your character's chance of successfully cheating is determined by subtracting his opponent's Observation (or General Perception) rating from his Sleight of Hand (or General Prowess) rating.

Stamina

Talent Pool: **Endurance**

Stamina is a measure of raw ability to keep at a physically or mentally strenuous task. See Movement for an explanation of its use.

Strength

Talent Pool: **Prowess**

A character can lift 100 pounds plus 10 pounds for every point of Strength he possesses. Strength rating also has some applications in Combat.

Summoning

Talent Pool: **Perception**

Prerequisites: Arcane Languages, Lore

Summoning is the most dread and dangerous of magical arts. Those who dare probe its secrets learn to rend the veil that separates this world from other, uncanny realities and call forth the dwellers in those mad, horrifying realms. These unwholesome creatures, often referred to as demons by mortal men, possess strange physical and mental powers because of their alien origin. Once the summoner has brought the creature into our world, he may then attempt to impose his will upon it. Should he fail, the consequences are dire indeed.

Summoning is the hardest to learn of any magical Talent. A wizard must study for two years before he may even attempt a summoning. The wizard must also take a magical weakness. Furthermore, every time the wizard learns to summon a new creature, he must take an additional magical weakness. This may be a new one, or the same as the one previously taken (in which case its effect becomes more severe - disfigurement becomes more terrible, animal aversion grows more extreme, and so on).

Each summoning spell summons a single type of creature and no other. The creature's abilities are determined by its form. For example, a winged demon could fight, carry messages, or stand guard, but not swim, burrow, or assume the form of a human. When your character learns a new summoning spell, you describe what you would like the summoned creature to be able to do. The referee then sets the difficulty level of summoning the creature.

Some sample difficulties follow:

Simple

- A creature that can perform a single non-combat action, e.g. transporting the summoner, delivering a message, tracking a quarry, or locating an item.

Moderate

- A creature that fights with claws, fangs or weapons, can follow simple instructions, can operate semi-independently, can relate lost knowledge, strikes fear in the summoner's enemies, or will stand guard for a short time.

Difficult

- A creature that fights using supernatural powers, will stand guard for a long time, can track and kill a target without fail, can teach its summoner a new spell, can assume the likeness of a specific individual, can serve as the summoner's advisor, or can imprison a person in perpetuity.

Summoning is time consuming and costly. A summoner must track down rare and hard-to-obtain material components - magic powders, directions for drawing blasphemous symbols, noisome incenses to be burnt in jewel-encrusted braziers. It is also incredibly physically taxing. Every time your character attempts to cast a summoning spell he takes one point of damage. This wound is permanent, cannot be healed (although you may still spend Talent points to increase your Damage rating), and is inflicted whether the summoning is successful or not.

Summoning is only half the job; the summoner must still convince the creature to do his will. Simple-level creatures will do a service in return for freedom to return to their own world. Moderate- and difficult-level creatures, however, give themselves more credit. Unless the summoner can threaten them with instant destruction (no mean feat itself), he must have something to offer the creature that it wants. It may accept a rare or magical item, but more likely it will demand a very personal price from the summoner - anything from an eye, to a service in exchange, to title to the summoner's soul. Whatever the price, it will mark the summoner as set apart - and increasingly different in nature - from ordinary humans.

Ordinary failure means that no creature appears. On a roll of 95-00, however, the summoner has made a critical error in casting and the creature enters the world out of control. It will immediately attack the summoner, either to kill him or carry him screaming back to the horrible netherworld from which it came. It never tires, it never gives up, and it will not stop, ever, until the summoner - or it - is dead.

Survival

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

This talent lets your character live off the land in one of four types of terrain: desert, jungle, arctic, and forest/plains. Survival in each type of terrain must be taken separately. Once a day, a successful resolution check against this Talent provides one day's food and water (even in the desert) plus shelter from the elements. Whether this is sustenance and shelter only the character who possesses the survival Talent, or for the character and all his companions, may depend upon the circumstances. Extremely unforgiving or barren environments may require a resolution check for each person to be so sustained. In a fertile environment, only a single check may be necessary for all the characters in a group.

Swimming

Talent Pool: **Prowess**

The Swimming Talent is used to determine how quickly your character can swim, as well as her ability to avoid drowning in rough water. See the Movement section for a full explanation.

Telepathy

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Telepathy allows direct mental communication. Those who have mastered this Talent may both send and receive thoughts, but only to characters/creatures that also have telepathy. Use of telepathy requires five minutes of stillness and concentration. On a successful resolution check, telepathy users can send or receive a message. On a heroic success, the telepath may filch information from an unwilling mind, although the thoughts so collected are usually jumbled and unclear.

Characters who possess both Telepathy and Mind Control Talents receive a +1 column shift on all Mind Control resolution checks.

Throwing

Talent Pool: **Prowess**

This talent is used when throwing an object or weapon for accuracy or to cause damage.

Tracking

Talent Pool: **Perception**

This Talent is used to follow a quarry through the wilds. A successful resolution check means that the tracker has found some trace of the person or creature sought and may follow it. The check suffers a -1 column shift for every hour the trail is old. The referee may apply additional negative or positive modifiers for inclement weather, a large number of beings travelling together, bloodstains, unyielding ground, and so on.

Transmutation

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Transmutation magic is used to alter shape or substance. It can be used to change a person's appearance, animate statues, turn stones to chunks of ice, and so on. One year of study is required to learn transmutation. The student must also select a magical weakness.

Typical transmutation spells include:

Simple

- Change object to similar item
- Temporary change of non-living form

Moderate

- Change your own form
- Change form of an animal
- Permanent change of non-living item

Difficult

- Change form of another person
- Animate item
- Permanent change of non-living item to precious item

Transformation spells are very draining. Every time a magician tries to cast one he suffers a point of damage. This loss is permanent and cannot be healed.

Trapping

Talent Pool: **Knowledge**

Your character is skilled in building, setting and baiting traps for small- to mid-size game. She also knows how to set up and manage a trap line. She can prepare traps and snares that will capture creatures up to the size of a human. With help, she can ready pit traps for large creatures.

Each time your character readies a trap, the referee makes a resolution check against your trapping rating. On any degree of success, the trap functions as intended and catches the prey.

This Talent may also be used to find hidden traps and snares with a successful resolution check. This applies only to wilderness traps, however, not indoor traps (such as rigged flagstones that trigger a volley of crossbow bolts).

Two-Weapon Fighting

Talent Pool: **Fighting**

Your character is trained to fight effectively with a weapon in each hand. Although the most common combination is a dagger and small sword, any two one-handed weapons can be used. Each weapon combination counts as a separate Talent: sword-and-dirk counts as one, axe-and-axe counts as another, and so on.

See Fighting with Two Weapons for an explanation of how two-weapon fighting is used.

Weapon

Talent Pool: **Fighting**

Your character is trained in the use of a particular weapon. See the Combat section for an explanation of the use of this skill.

Weapon Flourish

Talent Pool: **Fighting**

Fighters with the Weapon Flourish Talent have learned to put on a mesmerizing display of skill with one of their melee weapons. A fighter with this Talent may use it before engaging a foe in combat. On any degree of success, the fighter gains one free action against her opponent as if she had won a level of advantage (see Being Taken Off Guard in the ZeFRS combat rules). On a black result, the opponent is awestruck and must make a successful Will or General Endurance resolution check or flee in fear of the flourisher's lethal skill.

Note that using Weapon Flourish differs from surprise in that it can be used against foes who were already aware of the fighter's presence.

Fighters who want to flourish more than one weapon must take Weapon Flourish for each weapon to be so used.

Weather Sense

Talent Pool: **Insight**

Once per day, your character can make a resolution check to foretell weather conditions for the next 24 hours. This includes type and general amount of precipitation ("heavy rain comin'", not "I'm sensing scattered snow showers, 1 to 2 inches of accumulation..."), and wind speed and direction. Usually she can only use this Talent once per day, but if a sudden change is brewing she may make another.

Will

Talent Pool: **Endurance**

A character's Will Talent is used to resist external influences or pressures and internal compulsions or weaknesses. Will is used to resist various weaknesses, as well as the effects of certain magic.

Wrestling

Talent Pool: **Fighting**

Your character is trained in grappling, throwing, locking and pinning opponents. See Combat for an explanation of how to use this skill.



Weaknesses

The weaknesses available at character creation are listed below. Certain weaknesses render a character incapable of learning certain talents. Restricted talents are listed beside the relevant weakness. (The table does not include magical weaknesses, which is to say those that can only be acquired as a result of studying)

Weakness	Restricted Talent
Accident prone	
Color blind	
Disfigurement	
Fanatic	
Fear of animals	Animal Handling, Natural Magic
Fear of heights	Climbing
Fear of magic	Any magic
Fear of water	Swimming, Sailing
Foppish	
Gambler	
Glutton	
Impaired Sense	Minstrel (impaired hearing)
Miserly	
Night blind	
Obligation	
Phobia	
Rash	
Soft Spot	
Taciturn	
Tone Deaf	Minstrel
Weakness to drink	
Weakness to women/men	
Vow	

Some of the weaknesses listed below do not appear in the preceding table; these are magical weaknesses, which are inflicted on a character only as a result of dabbling in the black arts. They can't be taken for extra points at character creation.

Accident Prone

Bad luck dogs your character's steps. Every time you roll a 99 or 00 on a resolution check, some disaster befalls her - her weapon may break, she may read a warning as an invitation, she may lose her grip and fall on the person below her while climbing a wall, and so on.

Animal Aversion

Something about characters with this weakness is inherently unsettling to animals and humans who possess the Animal Senses Talent. Any such animal or person within 10 feet of your character instantly becomes nervous, skittish and irritable.

Those afflicted with Animal Aversion suffer a two-column penalty on reaction checks when dealing with characters who have the Animal Senses Talent. A character who has Animal Aversion cannot learn Animal Handling or Natural Magic.

Color Blind

Your character has very limited ability to distinguish one color from another. This makes identifying items by color impossible, and may also have some negative social consequences, such as an inability to put together a tasteful set of clothes.

Disfigurement

Those with this weakness have been scarred or otherwise mutilated, either by injury or as a side effect of their magical studies. Sorcerous disfigurements are often strange warpings of the body such as shriveled limbs, bizarre scarring, eye discoloration or loss, transformation of hands or feet into claws or hooves, and so on. Disfigurements are permanent and always blatant, but can be hidden with some work. Characters with disfigurements also suffer some social disadvantages.

Distrusted

A distrusted character has an unshakeable aura of untrustworthiness. Long hours of probing arcane secrets have subtly warped his personality and demeanor. A reaction check on meeting an NPC can never elicit a generous or friendly response. People may help the distrusted character, but they will never be at ease around him.

Endurance Loss

Study of the dark arts has sapped your character's physical and psychic vigor. Each Talent in the Endurance Talent Pool loses 2 points. Thereafter, it costs 3 points to increase an Endurance Talent by 1 point, and 10 points to purchase a new Endurance Talent.

Fanatic

A fanatic has become so dedicated to a cause or person that self-preservation now takes a back seat to furthering the aims of the cause or protecting the person. Those stricken with fanaticism will follow orders without hesitation or question in most cases. When directly instructed to place themselves in immediate danger of mutilation or death, they may make a Will or General Endurance check to refuse the suicidal command.

Fear of Animals

Characters who suffer from Fear of Animals are so terrified that they will avoid any animal if at all possible. To handle or even closely approach an animal, they must make a successful resolution check against Will or General Endurance. Failure means their fear prevents them from coming near the creature. This restriction does not, however, apply to monsters. Characters with this fear cannot learn Animal Handling or Natural Magic.

Fear of Heights

Your character's fear of heights is so strong that she must make a successful resolution check against Will or General Endurance to continue to act when at a great height or forced to climb. Failure means she is frozen in fear and must rely on someone else to help her budge from the spot. Characters with Fear of Heights cannot learn Climbing.

Fear of Magic

Characters with Fear of Magic must make a successful resolution check against Will or General Endurance to pick up any item they know to be magical. Whenever confronted by a sorcerer or magical monster, they must make a successful resolution check or flee/freeze in their tracks, as the player chooses. Those with Fear of Magic cannot learn any of the magical Talents.

Fear of Water

Your character so fears bodies of water that he must make a successful resolution check against Will or General Endurance to enter the water or even board a vessel. He will never travel by water for longer than one day unless forced. It is impossible for him to learn Swimming or Sailing.

Foppish

Foppish characters are obsessed with fashion. They may spend their last coin on a hat, wedge themselves into ridiculous hose for the sake of style, or pass over boots in favor of more attractive pair of sandals that are utterly worthless for the twenty-mile march they're about to undertake. They will do

their level best to keep their outfits pristine, avoiding such messy activities as battle whenever possible. They also tend to put on airs, which does make them the center of attention but unfortunately nets them a -1 column shift of all resolution checks for NPC reaction.

Gambler

A gambler is always ready for a game of chance. Whenever she's presented with the opportunity to take part in a wager but has reason to prefer not to, she must make a successful resolution check against Will or General Endurance to decline. (If she's willing to play, there's no need to check.) Once she has begun playing, she must make another successful resolution check to stop. The check may be modified according to the situation. After all, it's so hard to walk away from a hot streak...

There are limits to her susceptibility; she won't drop her sword and start dicing in the middle of a fight, for instance, although she might lay odds on the outcome even as she's hacking away. A gambler will bet on just about any situation whose outcome can be in doubt. Needless to say, this makes it hard for her to save a store of money.

Glutton

A glutton eats at every opportunity. He always has a little something to snack on with him, and must make a successful resolution check against Will or General Endurance to pass up an offer of food. His resultant girth means he can only wear custom-made clothing and armor, and he is of course much heavier than most other people.

Impaired Sense

Characters with this weakness have significantly degraded function of one of their senses. Those with impaired hearing are not deaf, but have poor enough hearing that they take a -3CS penalty to all resolution checks requiring listening. Even when they do hear a sound, they can hardly ever pin down where it's coming from. Those with impaired vision may be near- or far-sighted and suffer a -3CS penalty to all resolution checks that require clear sight; or they may be blind in or missing one eye entirely, and suffer a -3CS penalty to any resolution check that requires depth perception (most notably shooting, throwing, and steering a moving vehicle). Characters with an impaired sense of smell suffer a -3CS penalty to notice strong, vile odors; subtle scents escape them entirely, and they can't reliably differentiate between smells.

Madness

The terrible secrets your character has unearthed in his quest for forbidden knowledge have begun to loosen his grip on reality. Every day there is a cumulative 1% chance that he will be struck by a fit of madness (so he will without fail go temporarily mad at least every 100 days). When it comes, the fit lasts for 1-10 hours, during which time he will run wild, liable to do or say anything. At the end of the fit, the chance of another fit begins at 1% and slowly climbs as before.

Miserly

Your character is a skinflint who spends as little as possible. She buys the cheapest equipment, eats the most meager meals, and stays in the crustiest dives available. She hoards every coin she acquires and will certainly never lend money to anyone else. Unfortunately, her habit of squirreling away large amounts of lucre makes her a prime target for enterprising thieves...

Night Blind

Characters with this weakness have very poor low-light vision. They are blind by starlight and cannot learn Navigation. They also suffer a -2 column shift when doing at night anything that requires vision.

Nocturnal

Your character has delved so long into secrets that may only be spoken of by night that he has himself become a creature of the night. When the sun is down, he is full of energy and will not sleep. By day, he is lethargic and groggy if not actually asleep. He is dazzled by sunlight, so much so that he suffers a -2 column shift on task that involves vision when in broad daylight

Obligation

An obligation is a commitment to serve, assist or do a favor for another person or an organization. There are two degrees of obligation. A basic obligation is a one-off deal: for instance, a favor in return for a favor done in the past, or help given to someone who saved your life in the past. The more exacting obligation, sometimes referred to as indenture, places its subject in essentially perpetual service. Ordinary obligation can be bought off with one service. In game terms, the character must undertake an adventure at the behest of whomever she's obliged to. Indenture either requires many arduous tasks to fulfill, or cannot be bought off at all. In the latter case, however, each extraordinary mission is usually rewarded with a valuable gift. For those who are indentured to a religion, this is most often a Divine Boon.

Obsession

The effects of this weakness are explained in the Magic section.

Phobia

A phobia is a fear so debilitating that the phobic character must roll a heroic success on a resolution check against her Will or General Endurance rating to resist the urge to flee from the object of the phobia. A character can have a phobia of just about anything - cats, beards, blood (particularly inconvenient for a barbarian mercenary), night, foreigners, bridges, and so on - that you and your referee agree on.

Rash

A rash character is prone to leap into action without forethought. She is hot-tempered and cares little for analysis. Further, she can never choose to Wait in combat.

Soft Spot for (Subject)

A character with a soft spot is naturally inclined to be protective of and helpful toward a certain class of being. This may be a type of human being - e.g. young children, old ladies, disabled veterans, refugees - or an animal or animals in general. Whenever a member of the favored group needs help, the character must succeed on a resolution check against Will or General Endurance to turn a blind eye.

Taciturn

Your character is ridiculously tight-lipped. It's a rare day on which he uses a sentence of more than three words, and it's virtually unheard-of for him to initiate conversation. His extreme reluctance to speak unfortunately means he never volunteers information without being asked.

Tone Deaf

A character who is tone deaf cannot tell musical tones apart and perceives very little difference in vocal pitches. This leaves him with a flat, monotonous speaking voice and an utter inability to sing. He cannot learn the Minstrel Talent and suffers a -2 column shift when making an NPC reaction check or attempting to use a Mind Control spell.

Vow

A vow is the mundane equivalent of obsession. A character who has sworn a vow is bound and determined to accomplish a defined goal, no matter the cost. Whenever presented with the opportunity to take an action that would further fulfillment of the vow, the character must make a successful Will or General Endurance resolution check to refuse. The character gets to make another check if it becomes clear that pursuing the opportunity has or very shortly will put companions or innocents in immediate danger.

Weakness to Drink

Characters who suffer a weakness to drink must make a resolution check against their Will or General Endurance rating to pass up a chance to drink alcohol. Once they have begun to drink, they must make a resolution check to stop. They get a chance to check after finishing each drink. For each drink downed, a drinker must make a resolution check against his Stamina or General Endurance rating. If the check succeeds, he suffers no effects. If the check fails, however, all the

drinker's ratings are temporarily reduced by 1. When the drinker's Stamina or General Endurance reaches 0, he passes out. Characters who began with no Stamina rating and a General Endurance of 0 are out cold after their first failed check. Once the drinker stops drinking, either by force of will or due to unconsciousness, his ratings return to normal at the rate of 1 point for each full hour he does not drink.

Weakness to Drugs

A character with a weakness to drugs has become addicted to some kind of narcotic and must make a resolution check against Will or General Endurance to refrain from taking the drug whenever it's available. The addict must consume the drug at regular intervals or begin to suffer all-consuming cravings. Once these cravings have started, the addict must make a successful resolution check against Will or General Endurance to do anything other than search for a dose of the drug. Once the drug has been found, if the addict doesn't have the money to pay for it, she must make a successful resolution check to defy the impulse to steal it by whatever means necessary. The type and effect of the drug to which the character is addicted, along with the intervals at which it must be taken, should be decided in consultation with the referee.

Weakness to Women/Men

Characters with this weakness are particularly susceptible to the charms of their preferred gender. When presented with a possible romantic liaison, they must make a successful resolution check against their Will or General Endurance to decline. They must also make a successful check to turn down requests or pleas for assistance, not just from NPCs but from other PCs of the appropriate gender!

Advantages

When in dire straits, characters can muster their inner reserves and buy a single use of certain advantages (marked with an asterisk) by spending a luck point.

Alcohol Immunity

A character with alcohol immunity suffers no ill effect from drinking alcohol, no matter how much he drinks.

Animal Buddy/Familiar

Dog, monkey, ferret, hawk, leopard: the list is endless. More than a pet, it's your character's buddy. Treat it well and it'll do the same. But before you start to write down a lion or grizzly bear, remember, your character will be responsible for their animal buddy's welfare. This isn't as much of a problem in the wilderness as it is when your character will need to interact with a group or when he needs to spend time in a city. Most authorities frown on people bringing a full-grown lion into their town. So try to think past the "animal bodyguard" impulse when choosing a companion for your hero.

A familiar is the spellcaster's version of the animal companion. Familiars tend to fall into one of two camps: the very mundane (domestic cat, sparrow, toad) and the very exotic (enormous spider, horned lizard, pocket dragon). Familiars are highly intelligent and can communicate with their human partner, though the method varies from telepathy to spinning out a message in webbing to plain speech. Familiars are unshakably loyal. They will never abandon their humans and will mourn and even seek to avenge their deaths. If a spellcaster is so callous as to dismiss a familiar, it pines away and dies, and the spellcaster can never acquire another.

Birthright

Your character inherited an heirloom of considerable value: perhaps a family sword, ring, or a title to ancestral lands. The item should be exceptional and unique but not overpowering to the campaign. Sword and Sorcery tales are rife with the hero wielding a family heirloom of power as their birthright. You will need to work with your GM to come up with an item that fits the spirit of the campaign.

Sample birthrights may include:

- A Sword - The sword imparts the abilities of danger sense and night vision when wielded.
- A Horn - When the horn is sounded, foes are stricken with fear per the creature ability description. The horn can be heard for a distance of 20 miles.
- A Ship - A flying ship (similar to a zeppelin) requires a crew of 5 and can carry a total of ten full-grown men.

Contacts

Wherever they may happen to be, your character knows someone there. Maybe it's a distant cousin who owns a wine shop in town, a former Caravan master who has retired, or a rival who cheated you out of twenty Dinars and a good horse. Your character knows someone or will recognize someone in whatever city, settlement, village or tribe your character finds themselves in. The catch is that the "someone" may not always be friendly to your character and in some cases may be a person your character might want to avoid. But then again it could be a welcome face in a land of strangers. Such is the fickle will of the Gods.

Divine Boon

A divine boon is a magical power or effect bestowed upon a character in return for service to a church or deity. Such boons are usually granted in exchange for performance of a quest. In game terms, a character who has a religious Obligation may earn a divine boon in exchange for an extraordinary service undertaken in the name of that religion.

The type of divine boon granted depends upon the nature of the deity. For example, Brother Stern, a priest of Heldar, has received boons that let him manifest that god's powers of light and devotion to duty. (In fact he has four of them, which indicates that he has already had a long and storied career as a servant of Heldar.) A boon from Aviva might let its recipient breathe water or command sea creatures. A boon from Na-Ko might give its recipient extra vigor every time he's stung by a scorpion - or even make any blade he takes up become poisonous! And so on.

*Fast Healer**

A fast healer can focus her will to force her body to heal much faster than normal. A fast healer on complete rest regains (General Endurance +1) x 2 points of damage resistance every day. Even when engaging in strenuous activity, she regains 2 points of damage resistance every day.

*Fearless**

A fearless character can steel his nerve and resist supernatural fear effects, such as a monster's Fearsome ability or a spell that causes fear. He automatically resists without needing to make any sort of resolution check.

Good Looking

Your character is hot! If she's a gal, then she's a stone fox. If he's a guy, then he is a total hunk. Your character will always look good. Whether she was stranded in the jungle for three months or buried alive in the desert they will appear none the worse for wear; your character may be on death's door but she will look marvelous. Hair will be slightly mussed but still stylish, any grime will be strategically placed about the body, just enough to look rugged but not disheveled. Initial reactions will always be favorable from those attracted to your gender (suitable NPCs will never have a reaction worse than helpful), and resolution checks against Personal Magnetism receive a +4CS bonus.

Hard to Fool

Your character has a sixth sense for when he's being lied to. Every time an NPC tries to deliberately mislead your character, you instinctively know that what you were just told isn't the truth. You have no idea what the truth is; just that that wasn't it.

Hard to Kill (15CP)

When your character has dropped to zero damage resistance or lower and fails a resolution check, he gets to roll again. Only if he fails again does he die.

*Just the Thing**

Your character has an uncanny knack for having or finding exactly what she needs in a pinch. Locked in manacles? There's a bent piece of wire just within reach. Flung naked down a shaft into an abandoned mine full of degenerate cannibals? There's a pickaxe in the corner over there.

*Lightning Attack**

When your character takes multiple actions, he gains one more action for every level of success he achieves on the resolution check, from one extra action for a green result up to a truly terrifying four on a black result.

Magic Immunity

Your character is immune to any magical effects or illusions. If someone sets off a sphere of flame next to your character it doesn't harm him. But they can still take damage from falling in a magically excavated pit. Remember, not only is your character immune to harmful magic but the helpful kind as well. No magical healing or flying potions for you!

Night Vision

A character with night vision sees as well by moonlight as most people do by dusk, and even on a moonless night sees just as well as an ordinary person would under a bright full moon. In game terms she takes only a -2CS penalty for being in darkness (but still suffers a -6CS penalty for being blinded or in a location that's completely lightless).

One Foe at a Time

Henchmen, generic cultists, caravan guards - for whatever reason, your character never has to face more than one of them at a time in combat. Opponents who are considered enemies never bother to gang up on your character; instead they stand around seemingly looking for an opening and then attack in turn. Any bonuses for multiple enemies attacking the character with this edge are negated. If the GM for example has the heroes face off with a group of mook henchmen the other characters could be overwhelmed by the numbers but your character will have the advantage of fighting each one in turn, no dog piles. This advantage has no effect on foes.

Perfect Memory

A character with a perfect memory forgets nothing. Every time she wants to recall an event or detail, make a resolution check against her General Insight. Even if she fails, she remembers the salient points. On any degree of success, she perfectly recalls every last nuance. On a black result, she notices an extra detail she missed the first time!

Poison Immunity

Characters with poison immunity are unaffected by any poison, even a magical one.

*Rabble Rouser**

A rabble rouser can whip a group of complete strangers into a semi-cohesive mob that's hell-bent on achieving the goal he suggests. He isn't exactly in control of the mob; they won't take instructions from him, and in fact he can't disperse them, but whatever he has convinced them needs doing, they're determined to do it.

*Rapid Fire**

This is the missile weapon version of lightning attack.

*Right Back At You (15CP)**

Through long (and probably extremely painful) practice, your character has mastered the art of parrying missile attacks. Any shot projectile (incoming arrows, crossbow bolts, sling stones, etc.) she can bat aside with her weapon or slap away with a bare hand. A thrown weapon she can choose to deflect or catch and throw back (with the usual -3CS penalty for taking multiple actions). Note that this only applies to missiles she sees coming - she won't spontaneously whirl around and pick a dagger flying toward her back out of the air.

Serious Backup

In times of great need the character may call on a very powerful individual (the guild master of thieves, The Patriarch of Helder, the Admiral of the Northern Fleet) or organization (the Coven of Midnight, The Toscana crime family, the XII Legion) to assist them. They won't solve the problem for your character but they will lend material and direct support in order to help your hero along. When your back is against the wall and you're down to one arrow, it's nice to hear the horns and war drums of the XII Legion coming to your rescue.

Sexy Defense

Your character feels so much more at ease when scantily clad that it's actually easier to fight nearly nude than armored. Characters with sexy defense receive a +3CS to their Movement Talent, for combat purposes only, so long as they're wearing nothing but the bare minimum decency requires. The bonus is no longer in effect should the character cover up.

Shapechanger

Your character has the natural ability to assume the form of a natural animal, from as small as a house cat to as large as a horse. One specific type of animal (monkey, eagle, dolphin, etc.) must be chosen. He then gains all abilities of said animal but still retains his personality and identity. However, if your character remains in the form for more than 24 hours straight he runs the risk of "going wild": that is, forgetting his human form and assuming beast form permanently (Willpower resolution check at -3CS per hour over 24, cumulative). The character can assume this form as many times as he wishes. Each transformation takes no more than a few seconds. Clothing, weapons, or other possessions are not subject to the change: all drop to the floor when the character assumes animal form, and he is stark naked when he resumes human form.

The ability to assume the form of a small animal with negligible combat ability like a house cat, ferret or barn owl costs 10CP; the ability to become a combat-ready animal like as a leopard, wolf or giant red deer costs 15CP.

Sharpened Senses

Characters with this advantage have astonishingly keen eyesight, hearing, and smell. They receive a +3CS bonus to all observation and tracking resolution checks, and can detect even the slightest trace of poison by scent (even ones that are advertised as having no smell).

Sidekick

Your character has a buddy, a pal, a partner. He's cool. But not as cool as your character. Work with the GM to create your character's own "Bucky", "Tonto" or "Gabrielle". They will be competent and completely loyal, just not as awesome as your character. Build him/her using a base 25 character points; s/he may take one weakness for 10 extra points.

Social Chameleon

Given five or ten minutes to study their mannerisms and some appropriate clothing, a social chameleon can blend in with any group from a king's court to an assassin's guild.

Thunderblow (15CP)

Your character's first successful attack against any opponent threatens a specific wound, regardless of the color result achieved. This means your character is guaranteed to fell any enemy (see Enemies and Foes) he hits with his first attack.

*War Cry**

Whether it appeals to their pride or simply inflames their bloodlust, your character's war cry bolsters her allies as it disheartens her enemies. On their next attack after hearing her cry, all friends within earshot gain a +3CS modifier and all enemies suffer a -3CS penalty.



Finishing Touches

Physical Description

What are your hero's height, weight, and eye and hair color? Does he have long or short hair? Is it curly hair or straight? Does he have a beard? Does she have a beard? Is he barrel-chested or rail thin? Is she busty and bodacious or slim and athletic? Take a minute and describe your character.

Nuances

How does he walk and talk? Does she speak with an accent? Does she have a lisp? Are her clothes clean and well maintained or sloppy and stained? Is he a happy drunk, everybody's best friend, or does he tend to start fights after a few too many?

Colorful oaths are another staple of the Sword & Sorcery genre. Have your hero pepper his vocabulary with an occasional exclamation such as "By Grun's hairy scrotum!" or "Feel the bite of my blade you whoreson!"

References

This may sound like something you would find on a job application, but in this case coming up with at least three references will help you better round out your character. These references do not have to be family members, friends or even people who like your character they are just three individuals that your character has had dealings with in the past prior to the current campaign. The details on the three can be as brief or as detailed as you want.

For example:

"Anteus? He's a Killer! I saw him fight four men in the Coliseum a year ago in Crascia. He tore through them as if they were made of papyrus and he did it bare handed! I saw him crush one gladiator's windpipe with his boot heel."

Jamaal, the wine merchant

"The kindest man I've ever met. My daughter was pregnant and having a bad time of it. Anteus lived in the room down the hall from us. When I couldn't find work and we were about to be kicked out, Anteus paid our rent, and when the time came for my daughter to give birth he helped deliver the baby! Can you believe it? I know of his reputation in the arena, but to me the man is a saint."

Sofia, the washer woman

"He's the Gladiator that travels with the Sulanese woman eh? She's a looker, that one. But don't let him hear you say a word about her. He's the jealous type, y'know. Last week some young bravo whistled at her and made a remark. Anteus charged him like a bull and smashed his teeth in. That's one poor fool that won't be whistling again anytime soon."

Arik, the Barber

Starting Equipment

Characters begin with whatever gear fits the player's concept of how the character would be equipped. Remember, a sword-and-sorcery hero travels light and spends freely; your character is welcome to set out on her career with some good weapons and stout boots, but if you want her to begin with a suit of plate and a trained warhorse, you'd better have a really good backstory. A list of weapons, pieces of armor, and other commonly useful goods is included at the end of the section on Combat.



The Rules of Play



The Resolution Chart

At the heart of the ZeFRS system is the resolution chart used to determine success or failure of actions. In brief, any time you need to make a check to see if a Talent is successful, roll percentile dice. Find the column that corresponds to the rating against which the check is being made. Then find the value that was rolled. Whichever color the roll falls within is the degree of success obtained.

Example: Mark's character Galya is trying to calm a spooked horse. Galya's animal handling rating is 8. Mark rolls a 58. He finds the 8 column on the chart and looks up 58. He sees that the result is green – a marginal success. Galya manages to get the horse under control, but only just.

Example: Jeff's character Anteus is trying to diagnose a friend's illness. Anteus' medicine rating is 8. The referee knows that this is a very rare disease from a faraway country, so he gives Anteus a -3CS penalty to his check. Jeff rolls a 17 and looks at the 5 column (8 minus the 3CS penalty). That's a red, or total, success. Anteus realizes his friend has picked up gutwrack, a parasitic infestation from the Green Death Jungle.

Table Organization

There are four degrees of success, plus failure. Each is denoted by a color, such that a result will often be referred to as "red" or "green". Failure is white; green, yellow, red and black represent the various degrees of success.

White	Failure
Green	Marginal Success
Yellow	Acceptable Success
Red	Total Success
Black	Heroic Success

Column Shifts

When a character is attempting to do something, beneficial circumstances grant a positive column shift (CS) and hindrances impose a negative CS. The shift typically ranges from +/-1CS for a minor edge or inconvenience to +/-6CS for a tremendous advantage or impediment.

For example, if a character with a Sailing Talent rating of 4 were to receive a +2CS modifier thanks to some favorable condition or other, she would shift 2 columns to the right and roll on the 6 column of the table to resolve the attempt.

Opposed Tests

When a character is attempting to inflict an effect upon another character, the rating of one of the target's Talents is usually subtracted from the rating of the active character's appropriate Talent (e.g. target's Movement from attacker's Weapon, subject's Magic Resistance from caster's Magic Talent).

Sometimes, however, characters are actively using their abilities in competition. In this case, each character makes a resolution check against the appropriate Talent. Whoever achieves the higher degree of success wins the contest. If the competitors are directly opposing their Talents against one another, each competitor's Talent rating is subtracted from the other's. If the result is a tie, the contest continues until one person achieves a higher level of success on a resolution check or gives up. Complex contests may take more than one test to resolve. In this case the referee may set a number of "success points" that a competitor must score to win the contest. As in combat, a green result is worth one point, yellow is worth two, red is worth three and black, four. The first competitor to rack up enough points wins.



Combat

Enemies and Foes

Your character will face two types of NPCs in combat - Enemies and Foes. Enemies are common foot soldiers, bandits, guards and so on - up to a fight if pressed, but not professional warriors. They make up the ranks of petty thugs through which a hero must wade to get to his objective. PCs are qualitatively superior to their Enemies and gain a number of advantages over them in combat. Foes, on the other hand, are important personalities who present a major challenge to the characters. PCs have no special advantage over Foes.

Types of Combat

There are three types of combat in ZeFRS - melee, missile, and magic. Melee and missile combat are explained in this section; see the Magic section for an explanation of using magic.

Melee occurs whenever a character fights with his bare hands or with a non-projectile weapon. The intended subject of a melee attack must be within the attacker's reach, whether that means arm's reach or the reach of a weapon.

Characters engage in missile combat whenever they use a weapon that leaves their hands, whether fired, thrown, pushed or dropped. A character who is the subject of a melee attack cannot use a missile weapon during that combat turn.

Using Talent Pools

The chance of hitting an opponent in melee combat usually depends on the attacker's Talent Rating with the weapon he is using. However, if the attacker's General Fighting rating is higher than his rating with the weapon in hand, his General Fighting rating is used instead. His General Fighting rating is also used if the fighter does not have the appropriate weapon talent.

Esmis has a General Fighting rating of 2 and a Dirk rating of 7. If Esmis attacks his enemy with a dirk, he uses the 7. If he tries to smite his enemy with an axe, he uses the 2, since he has no talent rating for the axe.

Resolving Attacks

The success of melee and missile attacks is determined in exactly the same way: the attacker makes a resolution check against her Talent rating with the weapon she is using, minus the opponent's Movement or General Prowess. The result shows whether the attack succeeded as well as the base damage inflicted.

When an opponent attacks your character, your Movement or General Prowess Talent rating is subtracted from the attacker's weapon Talent rating. The assailant makes a resolution check against that modified number.

The Combat Turn

Combat in ZeFRS is divided into 5-second Combat Turns that are also the basic units of game time. Under ordinary circumstances, each character can complete one action and prepare for another in a single combat turn. So for Risa to drop from a balcony, fire an arrow, slash the ropes that bind the comrade she has come to rescue, and kick open a door takes four Combat Turns (20 seconds) of game time.

Characters may attempt to complete more than one action in a turn, but there's no guarantee that they will succeed (see Multiple Actions, page 1).

Steps in the Combat Turn

A combat turn may have up to five steps. Not all of them need occur in every turn.

- Check for surprise
- Declare action
- Determine initiative
- Resolve actions in initiative order
- Repeat until hostilities are over

Being Taken Off Guard

At the start of each combat, check to see whether any of the combatants are surprised. Those who are not will gain extra actions against those who are.

Check for surprise at the beginning of each combat, plus whenever a new fighter enters the fray. Each fighter makes a check against her/his Animal Reflexes or General Prowess rating. Each level of success grants one advantage; thus, white gives no advantage, green gives one, and so on up to four. Opponents compare total advantage; if one has more than the other, that fighter gets a number of free actions equal to the difference.

Jackal the Reaver and Dural Besh have both set out to rob the mansion of a Tyrolean merchant. They stumble across one another in the hall to the servants' quarters. Jackal gets a red result (three advantages); Besh gets a yellow result (two advantages). Jackal gets one free action to flee, try to silently shiv Besh, start a hushed parlay, or attempt anything else he could do in one combat turn. In a fight with only a small number of participants, each checks for advantage separately against their personal opponent.

Jackal and Besh have joined forces to carry away a very heavy chest of gold. They meet two of the merchant's house guard. Jackal, Besh, and the two guards each determine advantage. This time Jackal gets a green result (one) and his opponent gets one. Besh scores two again, but his opponent flubs the roll and gets none. Besh can take two unanswered actions against his opponent.

Whenever there are a large number of participants in a fight, each side checks for advantage as a group, using whoever's Animal Reflexes or General Prowess rating is highest.

When a new combatant enters the fight, only the individual that the new combatant attacks checks for advantage.

Not surprisingly, Besh and Jackal are now fighting the guards. The noise has roused another guard, who comes hurtling around the corner. He decides to go after Jackal. The new guard and Jackal check for advantage against one another.

Declaring Action

At the beginning of each combat turn, all participants state their intended actions. Possible actions fall into one of five broad categories:

Fight: Take some action intended to injure your opponent, from armed attack to dropping a rock on him. If you choose to attack, you must state who you will attack and what part of the body you're aiming for (unless you're firing a missile weapon).

Defend: Take action to avoid injury; this could mean parrying, dodging, blocking with a shield, and so on. You can only defend actively against one attack per combat turn, and must state how you are defending.

Move: Run, crawl, jump, swing, swim - whatever is physically possible under the circumstances. You must declare where and how you are moving.

Use Magic: The caster of a spell must declare which spell is being cast and its intended target.

Wait: You may declare that you're holding your action until a certain condition arises. When and if it does, you can try to act first.

Risa is talking with two rogues in the bazaar of Al-Khalid. She isn't sure whether they know there's a price on her head, so she's watching them closely. If one of them makes a move to grab her, she'll try to whip out her dagger and skewer him first.

Initiative

After actions are declared, all attacking participants in a combat roll d10 and add their Animal Reflexes, Movement, or General Prowess rating, whichever is highest, plus the Initiative Bonus of their weapon. (Some weapons have a positive or negative Initiative Bonus, reflecting how quickly they can be brought to bear.) Characters who are defending or waiting do not roll.

If the number of combatants is small, each rolls initiative individually. If you think the number of fighters is too large, roll collectively using the highest Animal Reflexes, Movement or General Prowess rating on each side. In the latter case, do not add weapon Initiative Bonus unless everyone on a given side is using the same weapon.

Fighters act in order of highest total to lowest.

If you have been waiting, when the condition you were waiting for arises, make a resolution check against your Animal Reflexes or General Prowess rating. If the result is white, you weren't fast enough; the opponent acts first. On any colored result, you may act first.

One of the rogues suddenly tries to lasso Risa with some cloth he snatches up from a nearby stall. Risa rolls against her General Prowess of 1 and gets a 52. That's green; good enough. She grabs the fabric with one hand and pulls her assailant onto the point of her dagger.

Every time you wait, you must check to see whether you beat your opponent to the punch. If you fail, not only does the opponent go first, but if you want to engage someone else, you must again check

against your Animal Reflexes or General Prowess rating, this time against the new opponent. If you fail again and try to go after a third opponent, you must repeat the process again, and so on. An unbroken run of bad luck will leave you going last in that combat turn!

Multiple Actions

You may attempt to carry out more than one action in a combat turn, but must state that you're doing so during action declarations, before initiative is rolled. You must also specify the order in which you intend to perform the actions.

Your first action is carried out normally. For the second and subsequent ones, make a resolution check against your Animal Reflexes or General Prowess rating. If you score a black result, you may proceed with the additional action. On any other result, you cannot take the action and suffer a -3CS penalty on all resolution checks for the rest of this combat turn and all of the next.

Foes can choose to take multiple actions. Enemies cannot.

Armed Melee

Melee can only take place between opponents who are within reach of each other's weapons. Usually this will mean that the combatants must be adjacent.

When you make an attack, you must specify your aiming point. There are seven aiming points: head, chest, right and left arm, gut, and right and left leg. Needless to say, in certain situations some points may be unreachable. A fighter on foot can strike only at the legs, gut and chest of a mounted opponent, unless the unmounted fighter is wielding a weapon that has a positive Initiative Bonus. Conversely, the mounted fighter cannot strike at the unmounted opponent's legs unless using a weapon that has a positive Initiative Bonus.

Unarmed Melee and Special Actions

Brawling

Brawling is a catchall term for combat involving kicking, punching, head butting - anything other than grappling a foe. Brawling damage is reduced by 2 points. Brawling also has a different set of specific wounds from armed combat.

Wrestling

Anyone can attempt to grapple, although trained wrestlers are obviously much better at it. If you intend to grapple, during action declaration you must describe what your character is trying to do. Then, when your character's turn to act comes around, make a resolution check against your Wrestling or General Fighting rating minus your opponent's Movement rating. On any result but white, your grapple succeeds. Only a black result causes actual damage, though, and even then only 1 point plus the attacker's Strength Bonus.

Esmis is hiding behind some wine barrels in a cellar. The warriors searching for him pass a little too close for comfort; he decides to sweep one's feet and make a run for it. Esmis has a Wrestling rating of 5. His target has a Movement of 2. Esmis rolls against a modified rating of 3 and gets a 27. Success! The warrior finds himself first horizontal, then plummeting to the floor as Esmis dashes past. Because Esmis scored only a red result, though, the fall inflicts no actual damage.

Rushing and Bashing

A rush lets your character charge past a person or through a group of hostile individuals to the other side. A rush is always a straight line, and anyone who wanders into the path of a rush in progress is automatically rushed as well.

To rush, pick an opponent to charge and make a resolution check against your character's Movement or General Prowess rating minus the target's Movement or General Prowess rating. On a white result, the rush fails and your character is knocked down. On a green, yellow, or red result, your character has made it through to the other side. The rushed character, however, can still take an action and may choose to attack you as you pass. On a black result, you have bowled over your opponent and he can take no action for the rest of the turn other than climbing to his feet. A rush never does damage.

A shield bash is a rush performed by a character who is carrying a shield. There are two varieties of shield bash. The first is a rush that uses the character's shield to knock down the opponent. This is resolved in exactly the same manner as a regular rush. The other type of shield bash is a strike on an adjacent opponent made with a shield. In this case, make a resolution check against your character's General Fighting rating minus the target's Movement or General Prowess rating. The target of the bash is knocked down only on a black result. Again, no damage is done.

Weapons of Desperation

Lacking a better weapon, your character may sometimes be forced to fight with whatever comes to hand - chair legs, fireplace pokers, pointed sticks, or the nearest big rock. The weapon description chart includes some suggested equivalents that you and the referee can use to approximate stats for an improvised weapon.

Fighting With Two Weapons

Anyone may attempt to fight with a weapon in each hand. However, each weapon takes a penalty of -3CS, unless the character has the two-weapon fighting Talent.

Characters with the two-weapon fighting Talent do not suffer the usual -3CS penalty for using two weapons. However, their rating in two-weapon fighting becomes the maximum effective rating for each weapon used. If their weapon rating is more than three points higher than their two-weapon fighting rating, they take the -3CS penalty instead. (Having the two-weapon fighting talent never penalizes a fighter more than not having it.)

Berbix has a sword rating of 6, a dirk rating of 3, and a two-weapon fighting rating of 4. When he takes up both sword and dirk at once, he fights as if his sword rating were 4. He still uses his dirk at a rating of 3.

If Berbix' sword rating were 10, he would take a -3CS to his sword rating rather than fight as if its rating were 4.

Only one-handed weapons can be used (no halberds or battleaxes, for example). Some common combinations are sword and dagger, sword and sword, or dagger and hand axe. The two-weapon fighting talent must be taken for each combination with which the character is practiced. For example, a character who wants to fight with sword and dagger as well as net and trident must take two-weapon fighting twice.

Two-handed fighting is impossible if the character is carrying a shield.

Anyone fighting with two weapons must designate an action - attack or defend - for each. If attacking with both, the first attack (which weapon is up to the player) occurs on the character's initiative, and the second occurs at the end of the combat turn. If attacking with one and defending with the other, the attack automatically falls at the end of the combat turn.

Fighting with two weapons is not considered multiple actions, so the multiple actions rules don't apply.

Knock-Outs

Every so often, your character may want to quickly knock an opponent unconscious rather than deal lethal damage. To do so, you must announce your intention to attempt a knock-out during declaration of intention. Then make a normal attack. If the result is black, you have knocked the target out. On any other color, the blow was not strong enough or missed the vital spot. A character thus knocked out remains unconscious for 1-10 minutes (12-120 combat turns).

Defending

When you choose to defend, you are focusing all your efforts on avoiding injury and foregoing any attempt to injure your opponent.

Your opponent, if attacking rather than defending himself, makes an attack in the normal manner. If he misses, nothing more need be done in this combat turn. If he hits, however, you then make a resolution check against your weapon or General Fighting talent (N.B. in this case, nothing is subtracted from your rating). On a white result, your defense wasn't good enough and the attack hits with full force. A green result reduces the damage done by 1 point; a yellow result reduces it by 2, red by 3, and black by 4.

Characters who have a Strength Bonus or are using a weapon that gives a Combat Bonus cannot be completely defended against. Their might is so great or their weapon so massive that some force will always penetrate a defense.

Missile Combat

Missile combat is only possible between opponents who are not adjacent and are armed with some type of projectile.

Each missile weapon has a short, medium and long range. A missile weapon is ineffective beyond its long range; it may be able to travel farther, but will have lost too much energy to do damage. Range is given as the number of feet the weapon can travel. On the weapons list, missile weapon ranges are given

Short bow	50/110/200
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The first number is short range, the second is medium range, and the last is long range.

Aiming

Combatants making a missile attack are not required to choose an aiming point. Typically an assailant will simply select a target, launch an attack toward that target, then roll on the random hit location table if the shot hits its mark.

Random Hit Location Table	
% Die Roll	Location Hit
01-10	Left Leg
11-20	Right Leg
21-45	Gut
46-70	Chest
71-80	Left Arm
81-90	Right Arm
91-100	Head

To aim for a specific location, you must call your shot during declaration of intention. The attack is resolved normally (resolution check against missile weapon or General Fighting talent minus the target's Movement). However, the shot is only successful on a black result. Any other result means the shot missed the target entirely.

Combat Modifiers

Combat modifiers are applied when one fighter or the other is in an advantageous or disadvantageous position compared to the other. All modifiers are applied to the column against which the dice roll is compared. A favorable modifier causes a shift to the right; an unfavorable one shifts to the left. A single attack may be subject to any number of modifiers.

Situation	Modifier
Attacker is:	
Attacking character from behind	+1
Bound or held	-4
Fallen or lower position	-2
Fighting with two weapons	-3
For every attacker over 2	+1
In darkness or blind	-6
Per point of Strength over 10	+1
Defender is:	
Bound or held	+6
Fallen or in a lower position	+1
Larger than a man	+2
Moving	-1
Smaller than a man	-2
At medium range	-3
At long range	-6
Blinded	+6
Obscured by fog/smoke	-2
Hidden by bush/drapes	-4

Fallen/lower position: Applies to characters who have been knocked to the ground, or are attacked by an opponent who is mounted, atop a wall, or otherwise at a higher elevation.

Obscured: Anything hidden from vision but not actually behind hard cover is considered obscured. Range modifiers: Applied to missile weapons fired at targets within the given range.

Damage

Damage is inflicted on characters in two distinct ways. The first, more common way, is by loss of points from the Damage Resistance Talent rating. The second is by infliction of a Specific Wound. When a character scores a hit in combat and the result of the resolution check is green, yellow, or red, the attack does 1, 2, or 3 points of damage, respectively. The amount of damage done may be modified by a Strength Bonus, Weapon Bonus, armor, or Defense check success.

When a character scores a hit with a black result, 4 points of damage are inflicted and there is a chance the victim has suffered a Specific Wound. The 4 points of damage may be modified by any of the factors mentioned above, but the chance of a Specific Wound remains.

The Specific Wound inflicted depends on the aiming point and type (armed or unarmed) of the attack. Effects range from outright death to temporary loss of use of a limb.

Weapon Bonuses

Certain weapons have a Weapon Bonus (which can in fact be positive or negative) that modifies damage done with them. It is possible for damage to be reduced to zero if the degree of success on the attack resolution check is low enough. Each weapon's Damage Bonus, if any, is listed on the weapon chart.

Strength Bonuses

Characters with great strength deal additional damage in melee. For every 10 points of Strength Talent, add 1 point to damage done in armed or unarmed melee.

Armor and Shields

Armor reduces the amount of damage done to a character by an attack. Unfortunately, its added weight slows the wearer and makes him easier to hit.

Armor is worn in pieces. Each piece protects one or more areas of the body. Which part(s) of the body a piece of armor covers is given on the equipment chart. The chart also gives the number of points by which a piece of armor reduces damage done to the area(s).

Normally each body area can be protected by only one piece of armor. However, some pieces of armor only cover part of an area. These can be used in combination with other pieces that protect different parts of the same area. When pieces can be used in combination, add the damage reduction for each piece to find the total protection given to the area.

Esmis is girding his loins - and everything else he can - for battle. First he puts on a studded leather kilt, protecting his gut and thighs. He also straps on brazen greaves (covering his shins) and a breastplate (covering his chest). Finally he dons an iron helmet to protect his head. All told, his armor will stop 2 points of damage to the legs (1 from the kilt plus 1 from the greaves), 1 to the gut, 2 to the chest, and 2 to his head.

Shields stop damage in the same way pieces of armor do, but can only protect one side of the body. A shield carried on the left arm can be used to protect the head, left arm, chest, gut, and left leg, but not the right arm or leg. A shield can only be brought to bear against one combat attack (melee or missile) per combat turn. When used to block an attack, the shield's rating is added to the ratings of any and all other pieces of armor protecting the same location.

Most pieces of armor make their wearer less mobile. The equipment chart lists the movement penalty, if any, imposed by wearing a given piece of armor. Add the move penalty for all pieces of armor a character is wearing, then subtract the total from the character's Movement or General Prowess rating for the combat in which the armor is worn. This may very well result in a negative rating.

Damage and Healing

Damage Resistance

Whenever a character suffers damage from an attack, subtract the number of points of damage from the character's Damage Resistance Talent rating. As long as the rating remains a positive number, there is no effect unless the character is called upon to make a resolution check against her Damage rating.

It's when a character's Damage rating reaches zero that the trouble starts. Reaching a Damage of 0 does not mean that the character instantly drops dead. However, every time a character whose

current Damage rating is 0 or less takes additional damage, he must make a resolution check against that Damage rating. If the result is black, the character can continue as normal. If the result is green, yellow, or red, the character drops unconscious. He will regain consciousness in 1-10 hours. If the result is white, alas, the character dies on the spot.

Enemies reduced to a 0 Damage rating do not get to make a resolution check; they fall instantly. Foes make resolution checks against their current damage rating to continue in action, just like PCs.

Specific Wounds

Whenever a character scores a black result on an attack resolution check, there is a chance she has inflicted a Specific Wound on her opponent. The chance of dealing a Specific Wound is not affected by defending, armor, shield use, strength bonus, or weapon bonus. Even if the victim is so heavily armored that the attack does 0 points of damage, the potential for a specific wound still exists. The Specific Wound chart details what wounds are caused by a hit to each location. The character struck has the chance to make a Damage Resistance or General Endurance resolution check to avoid the effects of a Specific Wound; the table gives the result needed to avoid each:

Aiming Point/Area Hit	Brawling	Other
Head	Unconscious; Red or Black to resist	Death; any color to avoid
Chest	Stunned 1 combat turn; Yellow, Red or Black to resist	Unconscious; Red or Black to resist
Gut	Stunned 2 combat turns; Yellow, Red or Black to resist	Unconscious; Black to resist
Arm	Drop any object held	Unusable; any color to resist
Leg	Knocked down; any color to resist	Unusable; Yellow, Red or Black to resist

If your character suffers a Specific Wound, make note in the Character Folio of the type of wound and the circumstances in which he received it. He will suffer the effects of that Specific Wound until it is healed. Some Specific Wounds may have effects that last long after the physical damage has healed.

Like PCs, foes make resolution checks to avoid the effects of Specific Wounds. Enemies, on the other hand, automatically suffer them.

Healing

Healing can be either natural or magical (but in Erisa, don't count on the latter). A character on complete rest will regain a number of Damage points equal to her General Endurance rating plus 1 (thus, never fewer than 1). A character who engages in strenuous activity heals only 1 point per day. A character may still travel slowly, putter around the house, or do light chores while resting. Damage points are restored at the end of each day. Needless to say, you can never heal more Damage points than you had originally.

Mass Combat

For fights involving large numbers of combatants, the procedure is somewhat different.

The players are put in charge of one side of the battle, and the referee of the other. Each side secretly divides their forces into three units - left, center, and right. Each may also keep up to three units in reserve. A unit composed of troops who bear a variety of weapons or are equipped with different armor is given a weapon and armor rating that is the average of the total value of all unit members.

Each unit is given a leader, who can be a PC or an NPC. If the leader is incapacitated, someone else must step into the breach. Each side in the conflict must also have an overall commander. This commander also must be replaced if incapacitated.

Each side now reveals the composition and placement of their units to the other; battle is joined! Side A's Left Unit is considered to be facing Side B's Right Unit, A's Right faces B's Left, and their Center Units face one another. Each reserve unit may be positioned behind any other unit.

As a visual aid, mark out a 5- by 7-square grid and note the square in which each unit is placed. Each square represents 100 feet. The referee will determine how far the opposing forces are when battle commences. It's very rare for an engagement to start with the antagonists already in contact, unless environmental factors (e.g. thick forest or dense fog) have let them get nose to nose without sighting one another.

Units not in contact with an enemy may move 1 square on the X or Y axis, but not diagonally, per combat round. The unit may be facing any direction after moving. A unit in contact with an enemy unit must Flee or Withdraw (see below) to move. Any unit can change its facing at any time.

The force commander can move one square in any direction, including diagonally, per turn. The commander may seize control of any friendly unit into whose square s/he moves. The commander then performs all the functions of that unit's leader for the turn, including engaging in leader-to-leader combat (see below).

Units may only attack adjacent enemies; they may not attack on the diagonal. Only one unit can be in each square. Units on several sides of a single enemy unit may gang up on it. The number of fighters in each coordinating unit is added together for purposes of determining whether and by what ratio the defenders are outnumbered (which imposes a negative modifier on the defenders).

Mass Combat Rounds

A mass combat round is divided into four segments. Before the start of each round, the commander of each side decides what action each unit will take for that round. The unit will perform that action for the entire round.

The choices are:

- attack
- defend
- shoot
- withdraw

A unit may attack the adjacent enemy unit it is facing. If more than one enemy unit is adjacent, it can't attack both at once.

A unit that defends is concentrating on avoiding damage rather than inflicting it.

If the unit's members carry missile weapons, they may shoot at any enemy unit to which the shooters are not adjacent.

A unit that withdraws is moving away from its enemy while actively defending.

Segment 1: Leader Combat

During the first round, the leaders of opposing units duel one-on-one. This is resolved using the regular combat rules. If two or more units are attacking a single enemy unit, both the attackers' leaders may attack the defenders' leader. A unit whose leader suffers an injury or specific wound, or is killed outright, is subject to a negative modifier when fighting the rest of the round.

Segments 2-4: Unit Combat

Now the struggle between the units' members is resolved. The attacking unit makes a resolution check against the average of the members' Talent with their weapons. The results of the resolution check do not indicate points of damage done in this case; rather, they indicate the number of fighters lost from the defending unit. Results are determined for both sides at the same time. Each unit makes a check every segment to determine the damage it inflicts on its target unit.

Result	Defenders Lost As % of Attackers' Numbers
Failure	0
Marginal	10
Acceptable	15
Total	20
Heroic	25

One hundred pikemen face off against 50 cavalry. The pikemen score a marginal success. The arrogant horsemen have neglected to wear any armor, so their number incapacitated is 10% of the number of pikemen - in this case, 10 riders.

The number of casualties inflicted is always rounded up.
Armor reduces the number of fighters lost as follows:

Unit's Average Armor Rating	Reduction in Losses
1	5 points
2	10 points
3	15 points
4	20 points

Since mass combat doesn't use hit locations, armor protection for all parts of the body is figured into a composite armor value. To figure a unit's overall armor rating, take the protection rating for each body part, multiply that rating by the values in the chart below, total them, and divide by 100. In this case round down.

Body Part	Multiplier
Head	10
Arm (each)	10
Chest	25
Gut	25
Legs (both)	20
Shield	Bonus
small	80
standard	160
great	240

After their unfortunate encounter with the pikemen, our cavalry decide they had better armor up before the next fight. They don leather jacks, leather arm protectors and steel helmets, and take along a small shield for good measure. The unit gets 1 chest (1 x 25) plus 1 gut (1 x 25) plus 2 arm (2 x 10) plus 2 head (2 x 10) plus a shield bonus, or 25+25+10+10+20+80=170. The total of 170 is divided by 100; the result of 1.7 is further rounded down to 1. The cavalry's kit will now reduce their

losses by 5 points. This means that the next time they face off against 100 pikemen, rather than losing 10 riders to a marginal success ($100 \times 10\%$), they will lose only 5 ($100 \times (10-5\%)$).

If a unit's members are not all wearing the same armor, figure the value for each portion of the group that is, then average that out. This value (mercifully) does not change no matter who in the unit should happen to be felled.

Morale

At the end of each round, if:

- the unit leader is slain,
- the number of unit fighters down reaches $1/3$ their original number,
- the number down reaches $2/3$ the original number, or
- the force commander is slain

a morale check must be made. If the force commander dies, all units must check morale. Otherwise, only the afflicted unit checks morale.

To test morale, the unit leader (or force commander, if s/he is with that unit) makes a resolution check against the average of her/his Will and the troops' average Will. A leaderless unit uses only the troops' average Will. Failure on the check means the unit flees. (In extreme circumstances, such as being outnumbered five to one or facing a horde of rampaging monsters, the referee may decide that the unit will flee on a marginal success as well.)

When a unit flees or its numbers are reduced to zero, it is removed from the battle grid. If the unit leader is alive, s/he may join any adjacent allied unit. Otherwise s/he is captured by the enemy. The space occupied by a unit that flees or is dispersed may immediately be occupied by a reserve unit if the reserve was adjacent at the time the destroyed unit was broken. Otherwise the enemy unit may immediately take the defeated unit's space.

A unit that withdraws moves back one space. Its enemy may advance one space for free.



Modifiers

A unit's combat effectiveness is subject to a large number of influences. The table below shows the modifier, in column shifts, applied to a unit under certain circumstances.

Unit Modifiers	
attacking from flank or rear	+2
attackers outnumber defenders 2:1	+1
attackers outnumber defenders 3:1	+2
attackers outnumber defenders 5:1	+3
defenders outnumber attackers 2:1	-1
defenders outnumber attackers 3:1	-2
defenders outnumber attackers 5:1	-3
attacker has high ground	+1
defender has high ground	-2
at least 25% of attackers are on horses	+2
at least 25% of attackers are on warhorses	+4
at least 25% of defenders are on horses	-2
at least 25% of attackers are on warhorses	-4
defenders are withdrawing	+2
Missile Modifiers	
defending unit 2 spaces away	-1
defending unit 3 spaces away	-3
defending unit 4+ spaces away	no missile fire possible
Leader Influences	
leader hit enemy leader in segment 1	+1
leader scored heroic success against enemy leader	+2
leader inflicted specific wound on enemy leader	+3
enemy leader's Damage Resistance half gone	+4
leader killed enemy leader	+6
unit's leader is killed in segment 1	-6
Force Commander Influences	
commander's General Fighting rating	+1/point
commander is present with unit	+1
commander killed this round	-8

The condition or achievements of a unit leader affect only that unit. The commander influences all units, except for the presence bonus which is only applied to a single unit.

Weapons

Weapon	Weapon Bonus	Initiative Bonus	Range	Cost
arbalest*	+1	0	50/120/200	special
bastard sword	0 (+1)**	-1	-	2 s
bill	+1	+2/-2***	-	9 s
broadsword	0	0	-	1 s
cinqueda	+1	-1	-	1 s
club	0	0	-	-
dirk	0	-1	0	5 b
falchion	+2	-2	-	2 s
fighting axe	+1	-1	-	3 s
flail	+1	-2	-	3 s
fork/trident	+1(+2)#	+2/-3***#	-	8 s
francisca	0	0	5/10/20	1 s
great axe	+2	-2	-	5 s
halberd	+1	+2/-3***	-	1 g
holy water sprinkler	+1	0	-	3 s
javelin	-1	0	30/50/80	4 b
katar	-1	+1	-	1 g
knife, throwing	0	+1	5/10/15	4 b
lance, jousting	+3	+4/-4***	-	2 g
lance, light	0	+3/-3***	-	8 g
longbow	0	0	70/150/250	4 g
mace	0	0	-	5 b
man-catcher	****	+2	-	3 g
maul	+2	-3	-	2 s
pike	0	+2/-3	-	1 g
rapier	0	+1	-	4 g
saber	0	0	-	5 s
short bow	0	0	50/110/200	2 g
short sword	0	0	-	7 b
sling	-1	0	50/100/150	3 b
spear	0	0	10/25/40	2 s
throwing dirk	0	0	10/20/30	1 s
tiger claw	-2	-2	-	3 g
two-handed sword	+2	-3	-	2 g
warhammer	0	0	-	6 s

* requires 3 combat turns to load

** use second number when using weapon with two hands

*** use first number on first round of combat only

**** does no damage, but traps target in weapon's jaws

Especially effective against mounted attackers; each hit has a 10% chance of unseating a mounted victim.

g = gold; s = silver; b = bronze

Weapons of Desperation or Circumstance

Items grabbed up to be used as improvised weapons in a brawl can be roughly grouped into a few broad categories:

Item	Treat As
small thrown object (platter, vase, lamp)	sling
small blunt object (chair leg, cane, axe handle)	club
sharp item (kitchen knife, large shard of glass, tanner's awl)	dirk
flaming object	fire as a torch
large blunt object (chair, statue, falling chandelier)	holy water sprinkler

Armor

Protection and cost given are for steel or iron armor. For bronze armor, reduce protection by 1 point and cost by 50%.

Human Armor				
Armor	Protection	Move Penalty	Cost	Area(s) Covered
arm guard, splint	2	1	4 s	RA, LA
armored sleeve	3	1	5 s	RA or LA
arm armor, leather	1	0	3 s	RA or LA
armet	3	1	3 g	H
barbutte	2	1	1 s	H
basinet	2	0	7 s	H
bishop's mantle	2	4	5 g	C, G, RA, LA, RL, LL
breastplate	3	2	3 g	C
brigandine	2	1	8 s	C, G
coif	1	0	2 s	H
jack	1	0	3 s	C, G
leg armor, metal	2	2	5 s	RL, LL
leg armor, leather	1	0	5 s	RL, LL
hauberk	2	2	1 g	C, G, RA, LA
mail suit	2	4	10 g	all but H
shield, buckler	2	0	8 s	see Armor and Shields, page 1
shield, great	3	4	5 g	“
shield, spiked	2	2	2 g	+
shield, standard	2	2	1 g	see Armor and Shields, page 1
shield, target	1	0	5 b	“
shirt, ring or scale	2	1	6 s	C, G
skirt, studded	1	1	3 s	G, RL, LL
tassets	3	1	6 s	G
three-quarter suit	4	5	12 g	H, C, G, RA, LA, RL, LL

Horse Armor				
chanfron	3	1	10 g	H
crupper, leather	1	0	5 g	Hindquarters
crupper, plate	3	4	20 g	Hindquarters
peytral, leather	1	0	10 g	chest
peytral, plate	3	3	25 g	chest

+ A spiked shield used to Bash knocks down the opponent on an acceptable through heroic result. The Bash also inflicts damage equal to the basher's strength bonus, if any. A failure on a bash means that the opponent has entangled the shield and torn it from the user's grasp.



Armor and Weapon Glossary

Some of the more obscure weapon and armor names are defined below:

Arbalest- A heavy crossbow

Armet- A large helmet that covers the entire head

Basinet- A helmet with no face covering

Bishop's Mantle- A large coat of mail

Brigandine- A leather coat with leather plates sewn onto it

Cinqueda- A short, very broad-bladed sword

Coif- A hood of mail

Falchion- A heavy-bladed, slightly curved sword

Francisca- A throwing axe

Greaves- Armor plates that protect the thighs

Holy Water Sprinkler- A spiked mace

Jack- A padded leather jacket

Katar- A "punch" dagger; one whose grip is perpendicular to the blade

Man-catcher- Any of a variety of polearms designed to grasp a person without causing injury

Tassets- A kilt or skirt of overlapping metal plates

Tiger Claw- Short spikes or blades that protrude from four conjoined finger rings

Chanfron- Face protection for a horse

Crupper- Armor for a horse's rump

Peytral- Protection for a horse's chest



Magic

Magic in ZeFRS is a shadowy and unnatural force - one into which only the most daring, obsessed, or mad inquire.

Who Can Use Magic

Anyone can learn magical skills, but not everyone wants to. The quest for magical knowledge involves spending long hours in musty libraries, poring over crumbling scrolls searching for scraps of information humanity was never meant to have. The wizard's growing intimacy with unnatural forces exacts other, grimmer tolls on mind and body. Once the forbidden knowledge has been gained, anything less than perfect application has the potential to destroy the user. And crucial bits of information have usually been lost to the ages...

On top of all that, the citizenry of many parts of Erisa consider magicians suspect at best, demonic at worst. A career in magic is not going to win you any friends.

Learning Magic

Magic cannot be learned like regular talents. Many magical talents have prerequisites that must be met, and each exacts a price from those who learn it. Furthermore, simply learning a magical talent is only the beginning; each spell to be cast must subsequently be learned individually.

Prerequisites

Some magical talents require other, mundane talents as prerequisites. Without prior knowledge of them, the teachings of that branch of magic would be incomprehensible. Magical talents' prerequisites, if any, are listed along with the talent itself in Talents and Weaknesses.

Study

Each magical talent demands a long period of study, lasting at least several months, before it can be used. The description of each magical talent gives the length of study necessary to begin learning effective spells with that talent. To learn the talent, the prospective magician must spend the specified length of time doing nothing but studying. She may travel and participate in adventures, but the time spent on those activities does not count toward time spent learning the talent.

Tolgan has undertaken the study of Mind Control. He must study for six months before he can even attempt to use this talent. After three months of study, he discovers that he needs to make a month-long journey to a far city to consult rare books in a reclusive sage's library. On arrival, he still needs to study for three more months before he can begin to use Mind Control.

Obsession

Upon learning his first magical talent, a character acquires a rating of 1 in Obsession "talent", which falls under the Insight Talent Pool. Every time the character learns a new magical talent or a new spell, his Obsession increases by 1 point. Obsession may also increase as a result of using certain magical items.

Obsession is a measure of how fixated the character is upon gaining new magical knowledge. Every time the character has the opportunity to acquire more magical power, he must make a resolution check against his Obsession rating. On a heroic (black) result, the character gives in and will do whatever he must to gain the power.

Obsession can be worked around, but never ignored; if it possible to sate the character's lust for magic without harming his friends, he will do so. But if injuring or betraying them can't be avoided ... well, sometimes a magician just has to do what he has to do...

Magical Weaknesses

In almost every case, learning a new magical talent inflicts a new magical weakness upon the student. Prolonged intimacy with unnatural forces gradually warps mind and spirit into something no longer entirely human. If a magical talent specifies that its students acquire a magical weakness, choose one from this list:

animal aversion
disfigurement
distrusted
endurance loss
madness
nocturnal

The weakness takes effect immediately on completion of the course of study in the new magical talent.

Spells

Mere knowledge of a magical talent is not enough to produce magical effects. It simply prepares the student to learn spells that fall under that talent's rubric. Researching a spell is no easy matter. The spell will require obscure, costly, and probably immoral components that must be gathered from remote and inhospitable locations.

There is no standardized spell list in ZeFRS. Each magical talent describes the sorts of effects it encompasses. When a magic-using character wants to learn a new spell, the character's player will describe to the referee what the spell should do. The player and ref will then settle on what must be learned or acquired for the character to use that spell. Then it's up to the character to track down each item.

Tolgan, not satisfied with controlling men's minds, has taken up Alchemy. The ref tells his player that Tolgan read of a deadly blood-reversing poison in fragments of an ancient Yari book. Reversing blood sounds good to Tolgan (whose Obsession rating is apparently already well up there), so he sets off on a six month trek, first crossing the Broken Lands then taking ship to the foreboding isle, to find the complete tome. On arrival, he finds the formula for concocting the poison. Now he needs to gather the ingredients - deadly black orchid from the fetid Green Death jungle. If he survives the quest to find the orchids, he can then prepare the lethal poison.

Types of Magic

There are many different types of magic, each conferring different powers, demanding different prerequisites and exacting a different cost. The types of magic are:

alchemy
information
mind control
natural magic
necromancy
physical laws
summoning
transmutation

Magical Talent Ratings

Upon learning a magical talent, you may assign it as many points as you can pay for, just as with any other new talent. The magical talent rating can also be improved like other talents'. The magical talent's rating is used to make resolution checks whenever a magician attempts to cast a spell.

Tolgan has completed his course of study in Mind Control, and has enough points saved up to immediately buy it at a rating of 5. After long hours of further study he has also learned his first spell, one that lets him erase himself from a person's sight. When he casts it, the spell will have a rating of 5.

Magic Resistance

Living beings who have spells cast upon them have a chance to resist. A magician casting a spell on another being subtracts the subject's Magic Resistance or General Endurance rating from his magical talent rating when making the resolution check to see whether the spell takes effect. On a failure (white) result, the spell or item does not affect the target. On any other result, the effect takes hold. Tolgan wants to sneak past an armed guard into a private laboratory. He casts his erasure spell on the guard, who has a General Endurance of 2. His adjusted rating when making the resolution check is 3 (base rating of 5 - guard's rating of 2).



Hazards

Falling

A fall of 10 or more feet may injure a character. The chance of injury increases with the distance fallen. When your character drops from a height, subtract 10 from the distance fallen in feet and find the corresponding value on the resolution chart. Make a resolution check against that value. On a white result, the character has miraculously avoided injury. Any other result causes commensurate injury (1 point for a marginal "success", 2 for acceptable, and so on).

As with a hit from a weapon, a heroic result on a fall resolution check may cause a specific wound. Roll on the random hit location table to determine which body area is threatened with a specific wound. PCs and foes may make a resolution check to avoid the specific wound.

Armor provides no protection against damage from a fall.

Characters who are injured in a fall are stunned for a number of combat turns equal to the distance fallen in feet divided by 10. Stunned characters can take no action at all.

Characters who fall more than 100 feet onto a hard surface are killed outright. Those who fall more than 100 feet onto a yielding surface such as sand, or into (sufficiently deep!) water may survive. It is left to the referee to determine how much damage is mitigated by the circumstances of a fall.

Fire

Fires are rated based on their intensity. A fire's rating determines how likely it is to injure characters who come into contact with it. The rating is used to "attack" a burnt character in the same manner as a fighters use their weapon Talent ratings. Characters who are at liberty to move away from a fire may subtract their Movement rating from the fire's

candle, small lamp	-5
torch, lantern	0
small fire, burning tapestry	5 to 8
large fire, burning beam	10 to 14
bonfire, burning building	15 to 20
lava, magical fire	25 to 30

Fire may cause a specific wound on a heroic result. Armor, regardless of type, provides 1 point of protection against fire damage.

Drowning and Suffocation

Characters must make a Swimming resolution check to stay above water whenever an unusual challenge is presented. Such challenges may include:

- falling or being tossed into water with no forewarning
- diving from a height of more than 20 feet
- swimming in armor
- beginning a swim in water with a rating of 10 or greater
- every turn spent swimming in water with a rating of 25 or greater

Bodies of water, like fires, have a rating. Water does not “attack”, however; rather, its rating is subtracted from the swimming character’s adjusted Swimming rating. When a character makes a resolution check to stay afloat, double his Swimming rating and subtract any Movement penalty imposed by armor. (This may very well result in a negative rating.) Any degree of success means the swimmer has kept his head above water. Failure means he has taken 1 point of damage from choking on water.

still, flat calm	0
slow stream, sewer, calm ocean	5
strong current, icy water	10
rapids, ocean swells	15
whitewater, windblown ocean	25
waterfall, river whirlpool, stormy seas	35
ocean whirlpool	40
hurricane on the open ocean	50

Characters may hold their breath for a number of combat turns equal to 6 plus their Stamina or General Endurance ratings. On every subsequent turn they do not breathe, they suffer 1 point of damage.

After some struggling, Esmis pries a melon-sized ruby free from the grasp of a statue. The statue responds by seizing Esmis by the throat and throttling him. Esmis has a Stamina rating of 7; therefore he has 13 combat turns to free himself from the statue’s grasp before he begins to suffer strangulation damage.

Poison

Poisons have three ratings: a venom rating, a wound rating, and a duration rating. The venom rating shows the poison's virulence, the wound rating determines the damage done by the poison, and the duration rating shows the poison's onset time.

When a character is poisoned, the referee makes a resolution check against the poisoned character's Poison Resistance or General Endurance rating minus the poison's venom rating. Failure means the poison takes full effect. Marginal success reduces damage by 1 point. Acceptable success reduces damage by 3 points. Total success reduces damage to a single point, and heroic success means the character shrugs off the effects of the poison completely.

Risa has lit out across the desert. As she beds down in the shadow of a dune to sleep through the heat of the day, she feels a sharp pain in her ankle; the sting of a scorpion, Honir blast it! Scorpion poison has a venom rating of 6. Risa has a Poison Resistance of 8. She makes a resolution check with a modified rating of 2 and gets an acceptable success. The scorpion's poison has a wound rating of 5, but because of her resolution check Risa will suffer only 2 points of damage. The poison's duration rating is 6 hours. Risa has 6 hours to find an antidote. If she succeeds in time, the poison will do her no damage at all.

Example Poison Ratings	
spider	6/5/6 hrs.
rattlesnake	10/8/2 hrs.
viper	13/15/1 hr.
curare	15/20/5 min.

Traps

Traps come in two varieties: ordinary and insidious. An ordinary trap is one that in essence "attacks" its victim. Its effects are resolved just like exposure to a fire. An ordinary trap has a trap rating. When a character triggers the trap, the referee makes a resolution check against the trap's rating minus the victim's Movement, Animal Reflexes or Danger Sense (whichever is higher). Armor on the body part struck by the trap provides its full normal protection.

Here are some sample ordinary traps:

Foot trap with punji stakes - Rating 5 (Automatic damage to leg)

Spring loaded dart shooter - Rating 10

Swinging blade trap - Rating 15

Then there are insidious traps, which are traps that are particularly deadly in design or size. These are traps, like giant falling boulders, that inflict truly massive damage or can't be completely avoided no matter what the victim does.

Against an insidious trap, the target makes a resolution check against either Animal Reflexes or Danger Sense. Success lowers damage done by the trap to the second result given. Heroic (black) success means no damage; armor offers no protection.

Possible insidious traps include:

Poisoned needle - Damage 1/0, Poison 15/20/5 minutes

Dropping block from ceiling - Damage 7/3

Rolling boulder trap - Damage 20/10



Movement

Types of Movement

There are two basic types of movement in ZeFRS. Covering short distances in a brief time is referred to as movement. Movement is measured in combat turns or minutes. Prolonged trekking across large distances is referred to as travel. Travel is measured in hours, days, or even weeks.

Movement

Crawling, Walking, Jogging and Sprinting: Under normal circumstances, any character can crawl, walk, jog or sprint. Jogging and sprinting are tiring, however, and will eventually require a resolution check to continue. They may also require a resolution check in difficult circumstances (say, if your character is knee-deep in a bog). Crawling and walking do not require a resolution check.

Climbing: Everyone can at least attempt to climb, although training makes it much easier. A character's Climbing Talent rating is used for resolution checks when scaling a surface.

Swimming: Not everyone can swim. Those who have no training at all, and particularly those who grew up away from large bodies of water, are liable simply to drown. A character's Swimming Talent rating is used for resolution checks to stay afloat.

Acrobatics: Those who have the Acrobatics Talent have practiced jumping, tumbling, swinging and so forth. The Acrobatics Talent is used for stunts such as swinging from a chandelier, vaulting a wall, or leaping from rooftop to rooftop.

Travel

Walking: Sword-and-sorcery characters spend half their lives too broke to afford a mount. When reduced to traveling on foot, the number of miles per day a character can walk depends on her Movement or General Prowess Talent.

Animals: In a day's travel, a mount can cover an amount of ground that corresponds to their Movement rating, determined as for a character. The rider's Animal Handling ability does not affect the distance the animal can travel in a day. It does affect the rider or driver's ability to keep control of or motivate the animal in unusual circumstances.

Boats and Sailing: For most of human history, riverboats and coasters were far and away the fastest and safest means of long-distance travel. The Sailing Talent determines how well a character can handle a boat; the Navigation Talent determines whether or not he can find his way.

Transport	Miles per Day
canoe, raft, rowboat	10
riverboat	30/10*
merchant galley	50
pirate or war galley	65

* miles sailed/miles rowed

Movement Rate

The following table shows the speed a character can attain at a crawl, walk, jog, and sprint.

Talent Rating	Crawl	Walk	Jog	Sprint
-10 or less	1 [10]	P	P	P
-9 to -5	2 [25]	5 [50]	P	P
-4 to -3	2 [25]	5 [50]	10 [100]	P
-2 to 0	3 [35]	5 [50]	10 [100]	15 [150]
1 to 3	3 [35]	5 [50]	15 [150]	20 [250]
4 to 6	3 [35]	10 [100]	15 [150]	25 [300]
7 to 10	3 [35]	10 [100]	20 [250]	30 [350]
11 to 13	4 [50]	10 [100]	20 [250]	35 [400]
14 to 17	4 [50]	10 [100]	20 [250]	40 [500]
18 to 21	4 [50]	10 [100]	25 [300]	45 [550]
22 to 25	5 [50]	10 [100]	25 [300]	50 [600]
26 to 29	4 [50]	15 [150]	25 [300]	55 [650]
30 or above	4 [50]	15 [150]	30 [350]	60 [700]

- The distance in yards a character can move per combat turn

[#] - The distance in yards a character can move in one minute

P - this type of movement is prohibited

Fatigue

Crawling and Walking: For game purposes, crawling and walking cause no fatigue. Your character can crawl or walk at the rates given in the movement table as long as he likes, so long as he stops to sleep for 8 hours out of every 24.

Jogging: Characters may jog for a number of hours equal to their Stamina or General Endurance ratings. Characters who have a rating of 0 in both can jog for 1 hour. After jogging for the maximum time, a character must rest for one hour. She may then continue her journey at a walk for the rest of the day. Characters can only jog once per day.

Sprinting: Characters may sprint flat out for a number of minutes equal to their Stamina or General Endurance rating. Those who have a rating of 0 in both can sprint for one minute. After sprinting, a character must rest for 30 minutes.

Animal Movement

Animals follow the same fatigue rules as do humans. Getting an animal to move in the first place is a whole other matter. To get an animal to do something unusual, such as getting a horse to rear and strike a foe with his forehooves, the rider or driver must make a resolution check against his Animal Handling or General Perception rating. On a failure, the character has lost control of the animal. (What that means will depend on whether the character is aboard the animal, driving it, or otherwise attempting to command it.) On a marginal success, the character retains control - the animal does not bolt - but cannot make the animal obey. On a higher result, the animal obeys the character's direction.

Climbing

Anyone can attempt to climb, and the referee can declare success automatic for easy ascents. Climbs that the referee decides are challenging can only be attempted unassisted by characters with the Climbing Talent. All others must be assisted by ropes, trained climbers going on ahead to hack footholds, and so on.

Characters climb at a rate of 5 feet plus their Climbing rating per combat turn. Under no circumstances can a character climb faster than 20 feet per turn.

For every 100 feet a character climbs, she must make a resolution check against her Climbing or General Prowess rating. For a climb of less than 100 feet, a check is made at the halfway point and on reaching the summit. Thus every climb involves at least two resolution checks. On a failure, the character falls from the point at which the check was made. Any degree of success means she may continue to climb.

Climbing checks are modified as follows:

sloping surface	+2 columns
rough surface	+1 column
glacier or ice	-1 column
smooth stone	-1 column
overhang	-3 columns

Characters who fall do not necessarily fall all the way to the bottom. There is a slim chance they can catch themselves before they hit.

If your character is climbing a rough or uneven surface, one that offers projections that might help slow or break his fall, the number of feet he falls before catching himself is equal to $d10 \times 10$. If the result is greater than the distance climbed, he has hit bottom.

To determine damage inflicted by a fall, see Hazards. A fall of 100 or more feet usually results in death.

Swimming

Only characters with the Swimming Talent can cover any significant distance by swimming. All others are limited to treading water and maybe dog paddling to the nearest bit of flotsam.

Those who have the Swimming Talent can swim at a rate equal to their walking speed on land as determined on the character movement table. Swimmers can swim at their walking speed for the same number of hours they can walk. They can swim at their jogging speed for a number of minutes equal to the number of hours they can jog.

Trained swimmers are also much less likely to drown. Drowning is explained in the Hazards section.

Acrobatics

Any acrobatic movement - vaulting, swinging, tumbling, and so on - has some chance of failure. When attempting such a movement, make a resolution check against your character's Acrobatics or General Prowess rating, whichever is higher. A failure means the character has bobbled the movement and suffers the consequences (e.g. lost his grip while swinging from a chandelier, smacked his chin trying to slip under a railing, crashed and skidded trying to vault an altar). The movement succeeds on any other result.

Long-Distance Travel

A character's Movement rating influences the number of miles the character can cover per day on foot. A character has a number of movement points equal to her Movement rating. The cost to cover one mile of various types of terrain is given in the table below.

Traveler	Movement Points	Clear	Mountain	Desert	Forest	River	Animal Walk / Sprint
Human	Movement rating	1/3	3	2	1	+2	--
Horse	20	¼	4	1	3	+1	10/30
Ox	10	1	3	4	2	+4	5/10
Mule/Pony	20	½	2	2	2	+2	10/20
Camel	20	½	5	1	3	+8	10/30
Elephant	15	2	4	8	2	+1	10/20

Clear: plains, steppes, meadows, farmlands, etc. **Desert:** includes tundra

Forest: includes jungle

River: applied only when fording rivers is necessary

If an animal is carrying a rider, it has only 2/3 its usual points available for travel. If pulling a chariot or wagon, it has only 1/2 the usual points available.

Employment

Adventuring characters will often try to make ends meet by serving as bodyguards or mercenaries. The sort of hired position a character can obtain depends on his Fame rating. Characters with greater Fame will be able to command higher rank and better pay.

Fame	Position
little known (rating 0-10)	bodyguard caravan guard soldier, sergeant brigand, highwayman
moderately famous (rating 11-25)	army captain bandit chieftain caravan master tribal warlord or hetman elite guard special envoy of a king
legendary (rating 26+)	general high priest ambassador prime minister

Aside from salaried work, there is always someone looking to hire skilled adventurers to carry out a dangerous, secretive, or dodgy mission.

Characters with a rating of 20 or more in a Talent may hire themselves out as instructors for whatever wage they can negotiate.

Dealing With NPCs

Referees will usually have decided ahead of time or be able to form a pretty good idea what an NPC's reaction to the characters will be. When reaction has to be determined on the spur of the moment, however, the character makes a resolution check against her Fame or General Perception rating, whichever is higher.

A friendly situation is one in which the PC is dealing with an NPC who is already well disposed toward the PC. In a neutral situation, the NPC has no opinion on the PC one way or the other. NPCs in a hostile situation have reason to dislike or distrust the PC. A dangerous situation is one in which the PC is trying to get the NPC to do something that puts the NPC at risk.

NPC Reaction Table				
Result	Situation			
	Friendly	Neutral	Hostile	Dangerous
failure	abrupt	ignores	fights	flees
marginal success	neutral	abrupt	refuses/brushes off PC	refuses
acceptable success	neutral	answers	unfriendly	refuses
total success	helpful	answers	unfriendly	will agree if bribed/rewarded
heroic success	generous	helpful	suspicious	helpful

Esmis has finished a relaxing steam at a Zandaran bath house. As he dresses, he discovers that his fine leather gloves are gone! Looking around, he sees a weasely little thief clutching his gloves and headed for the door. "Hoi!" he bellows, at which the thief brandishes a knife. "Stop that thief!" Esmis yells. He'll need to get a heroic result on his resolution check for anyone to risk going near the thief. If he had yelled, "A gold for the man who stops that thief!", he would only need a total success (will agree if rewarded).



Improvement and Ultimate Goals

What is best in life? That's up to each character to decide individually. There are, however, certain things that most characters will strive for at one time or another.

Money

Sword-and-sorcery heroes are typically eager to line their pockets with treasure, but mere money isn't their only motivation. Riches are there to be won by main force or cunning, then squandered just as quickly on high living.

Fame

A hero's fame will long outlast her money, and indeed will survive her. Her legend will be based on her deeds, earning her a reputation for cunning, might, ferocity, mercy - whatever attributes she displays in accomplishing her feats.

Each character has a Fame rating. Unlike other talents, Fame cannot be bought and cannot be improved with talent points. Fame must be earned by doing deeds of renown. Certain conditions must be met for Fame to be earned:

- The deed must be extraordinary or heroic.
- The deed must be performed before witnesses or leave indisputable proof of its author.
You can't earn Fame for something you can't prove you did.
- The deed must be dangerous.

Characters earn 1 Fame point for:

- particularly wild or dangerous stunts
- defeating an opponent with higher General ratings
- leading the victors in a major battle
- deeds of notable savagery
- each Talent rated between 20 and 29
- each Talent rated 30 or higher
- notable displays of mercy
- outwitting a major NPC

This is not an exhaustive list; the referee may award a Fame point for any sufficiently noteworthy accomplishment.

Monsters and items may have a Fame rating. A character who participates in defeating the monster or gains possession of the item gains Fame points equal to that rating.

Characters may also lose Fame due to public failure or misbehavior. For example, a character will lose 1 Fame point for:

- acts of notable cowardice
- acts of notable stupidity
- being made a fool of
- betraying friends or followers
- leading the losers in a major battle
- being defeated by an opponent with lower General ratings

Of course, since there must be proof or witnesses for a character to lose Fame, the truly amoral frequently have more than they deserve...

Expertise

At the end of each adventure, characters may gain talent points. These may be spent to improve existing Talents or acquire new ones.

Characters earn 1 talent point just for showing up. Using Talents earns additional points

Talent Point Awards	
Action	Talent Points
minor use of a talent	1
moderate use of a talent	2
major use of a talent	5
succeeding at an action for which the character does not have the Talent	2

Minor use of a Talent means using it only once or twice in the course of an adventure. Major use means making heavy use of it - making a two-thousand foot climb up a mountain then scaling the walls of the necromancer's tower perched atop it, for instance.

Characters may earn a hard maximum of 10 talent points per adventure.

Talent points may be spent to improve existing Talents on a one-for-one basis. A new Talent may be added at a cost of 5 points. The new Talent begins with a rating of 1.

Circumstances may dictate which new Talents your character can add at any given moment. Don't expect to learn Sailing while you're still atop necromancer mountain.

Thrills = Luck Points

Each character has a certain number of luck points that he can use to deal with the sudden changes of fortune that are wont to spring up in Erisa. At character creation, the referee secretly rolls d10 for the character. This is the number of luck points he starts with. The character (and player!) do not know how many points the character has; there is quite literally no knowing when his luck will run out.

Characters can spend 1 luck point to:

- reroll a resolution check
- reduce damage by one level (e.g. from heroic to total)
- gain temporary use of certain Advantages

They can also spend any number of luck points on an attempt at an action that could only possibly succeed by luck. Make a resolution check against the number of luck points spent; on any result other than a failure, the stunt succeeds.

Jackal and Dural Besh have escaped the merchant's mansion and are fleeing the city with the guard hot on their tails. Cornered atop the city walls, Jackal glances over the edge and spots a number of horses in a departing merchant caravan. He and Besh spend 3 luck points apiece and jump. Each makes a resolution check on the 3 column of the chart. Fortunately both roll a success and land squarely atop a mount. Wincing but still alive, they gallop away.

Characters earn additional luck points by deeds of derring-do. Referees may choose to award 1 luck point for a highly original or outrageous stunt. They may also award 1 point for good role-playing or generally contributing to everyone having a good time.



The Style of play



Behavior

In Legends of Steel, the Heroes aren't so much the "good guys" as they are the "not so bad guys." Good and evil aren't concepts that are at the forefront in daily life, nor are alignments strictly defined and codified. There are many shades of gray in the genre of Sword & Sorcery. There are codes of behavior that the heroes follow in the stories. The heroes of Sword & Sorcery tales were warriors and rogues, but not murderers and violators of the innocent. Such behavior should be for lesser men, and discouraged by the GM as it is eventually destructive to the spirit of the game.

Money and Equipment: "Don't weigh me down"

It goes against the grain of the genre to be too detailed when dealing with the actual logistics of an adventurer's daily life. Think of the typical heroes from various Sword & Sorcery tales; most of them traveled their worlds in a loincloth and fur boots, armed with a sword and maybe a dagger. Money and supplies never seemed to be an issue. They lived off the land and always had a few coins for a tankard of ale and a haunch of roast beast at some dingy tavern or other.

When they needed something they bought it or just took it. Many times their patrons supplied the mundane essentials such as a mount and a week's worth of supplies and the GM should feel free to do likewise.

Unless it has to do with the adventure at hand, don't sweat the details. Of course don't give away the farm either. If the group needs supplies they should be given the basics: rope, flint & steel, water skins, dried rations, etc. The weapons and armor should be (better than average) military issue, short swords, daggers, spears, leather armor, wooden shields. Special equipment like flash powder, lock pick sets, katanas, and chain armor are the types of things that aren't commonly issued. If your character wants a full suit of plate and a warhorse, then he better do something really special to have earned it.

If you want to do some shopping use this simple monetary system in order for your character hero to buy a weapon, horse, and some grub and get the hell out there and adventure.

One bronze piece = one dollar

One silver piece = twenty dollars

One gold piece = one hundred dollars

If record keeping and detailing monetary systems is your character's thing then by all means dress up the coinage by naming the different denominations to suit your campaign (Luna, Drachma, Orb, Peseta, etc.). Otherwise, just remember some of the basics of supply and demand. The further your character is from civilization the greater the cost for certain items. Also, most of your characters weaponry in rural areas tends to be of the type that can either serve double duty as a tool (axe, sledgehammer), or used for hunting (bow, boar spear). There's not much day-to-day use for a katana in the forest.

Wealth

In many Sword & Sorcery tales wealth is the motivator, but it's interesting to note that the heroes very rarely become wealthy. Many stories end with the hero clutching a sack of treasure in one hand and a curvaceous wench in the other, but by the start of the next tale the hero is broke, alone and itching for a new adventure. The GM has to find a fine balance between rewarding the characters and not overburdening them with riches and responsibilities. Many heroes in the genre eventually attain their goals of wealth and fame only to grow bored with the daily business of running a kingdom. Before you know it they are champing at the bit to leave it all behind and set out with just a strong horse and a sharp sword. The challenge for the GM is in finding ways to divest the heroes of their wealth without abusing the characters. Encourage them to be free with their fortune; have them invest in enterprises that will lead to further adventures. Perhaps they purchase a merchant ship and hire a crew, start a settlement on the borderlands, or outfit an expedition.

Remember, a wealthy hero is usually a retired hero, and a retired hero is usually bored.

Adventure Ideas

One thing I can promise with Legends of Steel: you will never run out of sources of inspiration for creating adventures. Just about every issue of every Sword & Sorcery comic is its own adventure. The entire genre was built for the short story. Back in the pulp infancy of Sword & Sorcery there were no "Trilogies" or "Cycles" or "Wheels" there were just short stories bursting with action and adventure that were usually resolved in less than forty pages.

The Genre and Pacing

I can't stress enough how important it is to keep to the spirit in which Legends of Steel was created. When preparing adventures for your players, try to revisit key examples of the genre. Pop in a DVD of Beastmaster or The Scorpion King for instant inspiration. Flip through a few issues of Red Sonja or The Savage Sword of Conan, re-read Fritz Leiber's Swords against Deviltry or Imaro by Charles Saunders. As stated earlier, for the most part the Sword & Sorcery genre is presented in the short story or episodic format. When planning an adventure try to match the pacing of the genre. For example, take an outline for a simple minor quest or mission:

- An opening scene
- An action scene
- The hook with a bit of background to set up the adventure
- An action scene
- Preparation and travel
- An action scene
- Arrival
- A setback or plot twist
- Action scene
- Return
- Ending scene

Now when I say action scene I don't necessarily mean combat. The best action movie directors realize that 20 minutes of pure bloody combat is about 17 minutes too long. Utilize the skills and Advantages that your players have chosen for their characters and create obstacles for them to overcome. Action and danger could be in the form of scaling a cliff or temple wall, piloting a ship through storm tossed waters, or disarming a deadly trap; anything that gets the players involved, gets them planning, and gets them rolling dice.

Make It Thrilling

Be sure that you use colorful narrative to describe the action. Characters in Sword & Sorcery tales never just "sneak over and kill the guard". They "slink through the shadows up behind the lone

guardsman and with an iron grip, wrench his neck until the snap of bone and tendon can be heard. They then lower the lifeless body to the cold stone floor and melt back into the shadows, to continue their way to the inner temple.”

Make It Heroic

In the genre of Sword & Sorcery it is especially important to allow the heroes to be heroic. As the game master, encourage swashbuckling and daring actions. Remember that for the sake of fun and adventure, the laws of physics can and should be suspended from time to time. Reward players whose characters embrace risky actions and cinematic play. If the characters fail in some swashbuckling ploy (and they will) remember to go easy on them. The goal is to encourage over-the-top gaming. Players will get attached to their characters and they may not always take chances on cinematic feats if they know that if they fail the GM will nail them for it every time.

Make It Rewarding

Luck points! Be generous with them.

Luck points are the means by which players are encouraged to take risks. Give them out liberally and players will use them. And when they do be sure to reward them properly with more Luck points. Make sure that everyone is rewarded with Luck points for good role playing, keeping in the spirit of the genre and most of all for taking risks.

Capture, Don't Kill

Killing your heroes means the end of the game, capturing means more adventure. Inform your players that in Sword & Sorcery sometimes it's okay to get captured, it may even be a necessary part of the story. Getting captured may allow characters insight into your villain's ultimate plan and lets them and any allies who may have been separated earlier regroup. Of course, once you have the characters in your clutches give them a way to escape--torture them a bit first, give them a good beat down or feed a couple of disposable prisoners to the alligators to show the players that you mean business, but escaping from the enemy can and should play an important role in any adventure.

Outrageous Coincidence Happens ... A Lot

Coincidence is a mainstay of the Sword & Sorcery genre. Don't be afraid to use coincidence to further the success of your adventure.

Of course the charm that the old witch woman gave your character in the bazaar three years ago just happens to be the key needed to open the hidden tomb.

Naturally the only survivors of the battle are you and your comrades.

And yes, the young Prince just happens to be traveling in the same direction as you are, so giving him a hand against that band of assassins is no trouble at all.

Magic Items

Encountering a magic item in Legends of Steel should be a rare and special occurrence. In many fantasy games the players have at least one magic weapon and a half a dozen or so minor magic items. Magic items exist in Legends of Steel, make no mistake about that. However, in Legends of Steel there isn't the focus on them that you find in traditional fantasy games. There are no "magic shops" where you can buy a lightning wand or a "+3 sword". If the players somehow acquire an enchanted item, it should be so rare as to have a name and a history. In the genre of High Fantasy, magic is common to the point where it borders the mundane; not so in Sword & Sorcery tales.

With the exception of potions and maybe minor charms, magic items in the Sword & Sorcery genre are usually in the form of relics or ancient artifacts created for a specific task. The Barbarian Prince doesn't use a +2 axe; he wields The Blood-Axe of the Bear Killer Clan.

By making magic rare its value increases a hundred-fold. If and when your players gain a magic item, it should be a defining moment. Take into account that the heroes of Legends of Steel represent a tiny segment of the general population, and only one in twenty would choose the path of a Mage. Of those, how many will ascend to the level at which the crafting of magic items is even possible? The average NPC has more than likely heard stories of sorcerers, witches, and magical curses, but few will have had any dealings with authentic practitioners of magic. Workers of magic should be rare; therefore items with magical powers should be rarer still.

Magic vs. Monster

With the scarcity of magical items or weapons it's only fitting that supernatural creatures be given sufficient vulnerabilities that allow the heroes a chance at overcoming them. This is one of the central themes of *Sword & Sorcery*: a man with guts and cold steel in his hands can overcome any obstacle.

However, it shouldn't be easy for the heroes.

Maybe your heroes sword does hurt the Elder Demon, forcing it to dissipate and fight another day, but only the "Spear of Kings" can slay it forever, and therein lies the adventure. The magic could even lie within the hero: perhaps only "a son of the Kings of the North" can defeat the Dark One, or only a warrior-maiden of untouched purity can tame the fire-sword of Kamballah. Challenge the players but always give them the opportunity and tools to succeed.

Starting In the Middle - "The Adventure Pit"

Often the slowest part of an adventure is the start. Gathering the characters together, introductions, and finding a common reason why this group would even be together in the first place can be a time consuming challenge. Why even deal with it? *Sword & Sorcery* tales often begin with the hero already in a bad situation. They could be in jail, unconscious in an alleyway, lost in a desert, etc. When creating adventures for *Legends of Steel* try to emulate this style. Have the characters be part of an out-of-work mercenary unit, a crew of a small merchant ship that hasn't been paid in months, or the lone survivors of a caravan attack. Or jump right into the action and start the adventure in the middle of a battle or a back alley brawl. Nothing gets the game going quicker for the players than having to roll initiative right after they sit down at the table to play.

Starting adventures this way is also an excellent opportunity to divest the characters of any excessive loot or commitments. For example: in the last adventure the heroes could have been given lands and titles as a reward for a job well done. In the next, all of this could be lost following a military coup as the heroes find themselves branded enemies of the state and on the run from the new regime.





Taverns



Taverns have always been a mainstay of Sword & Sorcery fiction. The hero in your typical S&S tale is a loner, often a wanderer, and a hired sword wandering from city to city looking for opportunity. His free time is spent in taverns, drinking, gambling, whoring, and carousing.

Generally the characters in Sword & Sorcery tales frequent taverns and wine shops in the tougher parts of town. Every hero has a favorite place where they can drink their fortune away. But as their fortunes change so may the places they go to blow off steam.

Low-End Tavern

Every city has an area where decent folk steer clear of, a place where the usual rules don't apply, and even the powers that be turn a blind eye to the goings on. This is the part of town where you will find Rico's.

Example: Rico's

This is a nasty rat-hole of a place that only the truly desperate would frequent. Petty criminals, beggars, and other truly unsavory types make up the clientele. The city watch doesn't patrol the streets in this section of town, and if they have specific business in these parts, they never arrive at less than squad strength. The swill that's served here can barely be called wine, the beer tastes like horse piss on a good day, and the house stew is made from anything caught in the alley.

There are no entertainers because no one has coin to spare. The bar girls are toothless, poxed and at least 20 years past their prime (if they ever had a prime).

There are no gaming tables but someone always has dice. Be warned though, there are no friendly games here, gambling is a serious and bloody business at Rico's.

The owner asks no questions and serves anyone who can pay. For a price he can act as a go-between for anything from fencing to kidnapping. He knows quite a few high people in very low places. He doesn't trade in information, only in connecting interested parties with each other. What comes of it he neither knows nor cares. Rico's is a kind of unofficial neutral ground for the various gangs and criminals in the city. No one knows when it became so; just that it has always been that way.

Average Tavern

Looking for place that caters to working-class Joes? It could be a soldier's bar, dockhand's bar, or even an expatriate's bar. This is the type of place that is a couple of notches above the rat hole, but still interesting. You can get a meal and the girls working the trade still have most of their teeth, a couple might even be pretty. Conan most likely hung out here when he was working as a mercenary. Still, it's a rough

crowd. Count on most of the clientele being regulars and recognizing those who aren't. At best the regulars will get closed mouthed and beg off any attempts at conversation, at worst they will become territorial and confront the strangers stinking up their place. This is an excellent opportunity to utilize the social skills available in the game as the characters try to bluff or charm their way through this type of encounter. It will also make an excellent base of operations once the characters have established themselves, spent a bit of coin, and become regulars.

Example: Kruger's Tavern

Kruger's is a bar that caters to soldiers, both active and retired, mercenaries, and bodyguards, it has a dozen tables, several booths, and a bar. There is one private room that doubles as a storeroom but can be rented. There are also about 6 curtained stalls in the back where the "house girls" work their trade. Strong spirits and food are served all day and well into the night.

Entertainment is provided in the evening by a variety of performers as well as the girls who work the room. Dice, chess, and card games can usually be found with modest amounts of money changing hands. Disagreements arise from time to time and generally turn into fist fights. For a place alive with fighting men, few ever draw a blade. To do so in Kruger's is to incur the wrath of the staff and regulars who don't tolerate that type of behavior.

Even though it's a rough place Kruger's is known for a bit of respectability amongst the trade. Kruger's is the ideal place if you're looking for work as a sellsword or info in the soldier of fortune world.

High-End Tavern

There will be times when the heroes come into riches beyond their wildest dreams. And it's the job of every self-respecting GM to divest them of those riches as quickly as possible. But no one said they can't have fun while they're losing it all.

Welcome to the Purple Haze.

Example: The Purple Haze

"The Haze" is where the "Quality" go to commit their debaucheries, at least the young ones who want to look daring.

High priced drinks, exotic wines, beautiful women and plenty of black lotus (Stygian, the best!) are available here. There is high stakes gambling and even a decent pit in an underground arena for some illicit sport. Make no mistake, the owners are crooks, but they are refined crooks--into the long con. The fights are fixed, the games favor the house, and the girls are experts in spotting a mark. Everyone there has one goal: to separate you from your gold quietly and make you want to come back for more. Why should they roll you for one night's coin purse when they can get you hooked on the girls and the games and milk you dry? The digs are top notch as are the girls and the food. And as upscale as it is, there is an even more elaborate "room upstairs" for the high rollers; if you have to ask the price of something then you can't afford it.

Drinking Too Much

For each drink downed, a drinker must make a resolution check against his Stamina or General Endurance rating. If the check succeeds, he suffers no effects. If the check fails, however, all the drinker's ratings are temporarily reduced by 1. When the drinker's Stamina or General Endurance reaches 0, he passes out. Characters who began with no Stamina rating and a General Endurance of 0 are out cold after their first failed check. Once the drinker stops drinking, either by force of will or due to unconsciousness, his ratings return to normal at the rate of 1 point for each full hour he does not drink.

There are of course different types of liquors and the GM should allow modifiers for such. After all, watered wine is far less potent than whiskey. A weak brew gives the drinker a bonus of between +1CS and +3CS on the resolution check; rat-killing, tooth-pulling firewater imposes a penalty of between -1CS and -3CS.

The Morning After

Once your heroes are drunk and feeling no pain, have fun role-playing the night's carousing. Gambling, fighting, wenching and general mayhem are the order of the night. But don't forget the morning after. Someone has to pay the bill and the consequences could be an adventure in itself.

Sample Carousing results table (roll a d10)

- 1) **Spend 50% of your treasure on wenches, wine, narcotics, etc.**
- 2) **Spend 100% of your treasure on wenches, wine, narcotics, etc.**
- 3) **Robbed while drunk** - lose all your treasure and equipment
- 4) **Robbed and beaten while drunk**- as above but wake up with a wound (take 1 point of damage)
- 5) **Incarcerated for drunken hooliganism**- Wake up in jail.
- 6) **Make an enemy for life**- You shamed him in front of everyone. Yeah, you were drunk at the time. But no matter. Payback is a bitch and it's just a matter of time.
- 7) **Party with a VIP** - gain the acquaintance of a dissolute noble, up-and-coming merchant, or an entertainer of repute
- 8) **Married while drunk.**
- 9) **Rumor of treasure** - you overhear whispering thieves and gain a lead on a vast sum of wealth.
- 10) **Win a ship or deed**- The ship may be in need of repairs and the crew hasn't been paid in a few weeks. The land title is to a large but very rundown estate.





Campaign Section



We hope you find Legends of Steel so much fun to play that soon a full-blown campaign is born. To that end we have included a glimpse of our own campaign world of Erisa. On Erisa you will find mighty nations, hidden lands, and warring factions. We scoured dozens of resources to try and bring some of the most iconic staples of Sword & Sorcery together in one world. Erisa has both the glittering cities and the serpent haunted ruins fans of Sword & Sorcery love.

Bestiary

There are two types of opponents a PC may face in combat: enemies and foes.

An enemy is a common animal, frightful but not legendary monster, or typical human.

Enemies:

- may not take multiple actions in combat
- automatically suffer the effects of specific wounds
- are out of the action as soon as they first fail a damage resistance resolution check upon reaching zero damage

A foe is a PC's peer, a human who lives and dies by might and skill or a monster of great power and renown.

Foes:

- may take multiple actions in combat
- make resolution checks to resist the effects of specific wounds
- may continue to fight so long as they keep making successful damage resistance resolution checks upon reaching zero damage

Each creature or character in the Bestiary and Rogues' Gallery is identified as either enemy or foe.

Any bonus or penalty noted for a creature's natural armament is a weapon bonus (bonus to damage). All natural weapons have an initiative bonus of zero. Natural armor never imposes a Movement penalty.

List of Special Abilities

Aversion to (Item)

The creature must achieve acceptable (yellow) success on a Will resolution check to get within 10 feet of the object of its Aversion.

Drain (Talent) Attack

The creature's attack subtracts from the named Talent score instead of the Damage Resistance Talent

and adds the points drained to the creature's Talent of the same name (e.g. reduces the victim's Will rating and increases the creature's Will rating by the same amount).

Points drained from victims are lost at a rate of 1 point per hour if in excess of the creature's original Talent score.

If the victim does not have the named Talent or has lost the Talent's score, the next points are taken off the Target's Damage Talent.

Lost Talent points are recovered at the same rate Damage Resistance points are recovered. Drain attacks always are melee combat attacks that ignore armor and magic protection.

Ethereal

The creature has no physical body and thus no Prowess, Fighting or Endurance Talents save for Will and Drain attack Abilities.

Ethereal creatures exist on a different plane of existence that borders our own; they can see and hear what happens in the physical world but are invisible most of the time.

Ethereals can only interact with the physical world if they manifest an Apparition at the expense of one Will point per hour.

Apparition movement rates are determined using their Will Talent.

Apparitions can only be affected by magic and are immune to physical damage and specific wounds. Any damage they are susceptible to is subtracted from their Will score.

At 0 Will a manifest Ethereal creature that suffers extra damage must check its Will Talent. On a failure the creature is destroyed permanently; on any success but a heroic (black) one the creature is forced back to invisibility. On a black success the creature can keep manifesting an apparition.

Ethereal creatures recover all lost Will points at midnight.

Famed

The creature is notorious for some reasons. It is always considered a Foe and its defeat awards the characters 1 or more Fame point.

The referee should choose on a case-by-case basis when to grant an adversary this special ability.

Fearsome

The creature has the special Fear Talent (Insight Pool).

Whenever any character gets in sight of the Fearsome creature it must make a successful resolution check against Will minus the Fear score. On a White result the character is forced to flee the Fearsome creature and won't get within 30 feet of it. On a green result the character is shaken and gets a -1CS to all resolution checks if within 30 feet of the creature. Any other result allows the fear-struck character to act freely. Each new encounter requires a new test of Will.

Magic Protection

The creature is immune to all non-magical attacks. If the creature has any kind of armor it is used against damage sources that can bypass its magical immunity to damage.

Mindless

The creature is immune to all mind-affecting forces like mind control magic, hypnotism or even simple social graces. No communication can be made with Mindless creatures.

Petrifying Gaze

Anyone who meets the creature's gaze must make a Magic Resistance or General Endurance resolution check; a black result means the target suffers no effect; on a red result all the victim's Prowess and Fighting Talent ratings are halved for six hours; all other results mean the victim is turned to stone.

Small

The creature is much smaller than a human being and is thus a difficult target. All attacks against it by human-sized opponents suffer a -2CS penalty.

Susceptibility to (Item)

For each round of physical contact between the creature and the object of its Susceptibility, make a resolution check on the 0 Column. Damage inflicted by Susceptibility ignores any kind of armor, even magical ones and the Magic Protection special ability.

On a heroic (black) result, the creature must pass a Damage Resistance Check or die. If the creature is struck by a weapon crafted with the item or out of the material to which it is susceptible, it suffers an extra damage point.

Tiny

The creature is so small that it's hard to see, let alone hit in combat, and it leaves very little trace of its passage. All attempts to spot the creature with Observation or follow it with Tracking suffer a -2CS penalty. All attacks against it by human-sized opponents suffer a -3CS penalty.

Unliving

Unliving creatures have no need to eat, drink, sleep or breathe. Unliving are also immune to diseases and drugs.

Whenever an Unliving is threatened with a specific wound, regardless of the outcome of the check it is never affected by results that cause Stun, Death or Unconsciousness.



Ordinary Animals

All ordinary animals are treated as enemies for combat purposes. The bonus or penalty given after an animal's natural weapon(s) is applied to damage done with it.

Alligator

Alligators are dangerous in two directions at once. Every combat turn, an alligator can bite an opponent in front while at the same time flaying an opponent behind it with its powerful tail.

Prowess 2	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 4 Strength 10 Swimming 12	Bite 8 Claw 3 Tail 7	Damage Resistance 10 Stamina 8		Tracking 6	

Weapons: claws 0, bite +1, tail 0

Armor: natural armor +1

Special Abilities: none

Bear

Prowess 3	Fighting 2	Endurance 3	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Strength 25 Animal Reflexes 4 Movement 10	Claws 15 Bite 10	Damage 20 Stamina 10			Animal Senses 5

Weapons: claws +1, bite +1

Armor: natural armor +1

Special Abilities: none; polar bears have a Swimming Talent of 20

Boar

Prowess 2	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 12 Strength 15	Tusks 10	Damage Resistance 15			

Weapons: tusks 0

Armor: natural armor +1

Special Abilities: none

Buffalo/Bull

Prowess 3	Fighting 3	Endurance 4	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 15 Strength 20	Horns 18 Trample 15	Damage Resistance 25 Stamina 20			

Weapons: horns 0, trample 0

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Camel

All the members of the camel family (llamas, alpacas, and so on) are disgustingly accurate spitters. When attacked, they may spit in the eyes of assailants to buy time to escape. Camel spit in the eye blinds for a number of combat turns determined by the level of success the camel got on its resolution check.

Prowess 2	Fighting 1	Endurance 3	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 15 Strength 8	Kick 4 Spit 6	Damage Resistance 12 Stamina 20			

Weapons: kick -1

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Elephant

Whether it's their hearing or sense of smell no one knows, but elephants can track a quarry that even the finest hound has lost.

Prowess 5	Fighting 3	Endurance 4	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 0
Movement 10 Strength 40	Gore 10 Trample 20	Damage Resistance 40		Tracking 15	Animal Senses 8

Weapons: trample +2, tusks 0

Armor: natural armor +1

Special Abilities: none

Ferret

Prowess 2	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Climbing 10 Movement 15	Bite 4	Damage Resistance 2		Tracking 8	Danger Sense 5

Weapons: bite -2

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Hawk

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 2	Insight 1
Animal Reflexes 5 Movement 10 Strength 2	Beak 2 Talons 5	Damage Resistance 3 Stamina 5		Observation 20	Danger Sense 5 Direction Sense 5

Weapons: beak -2, talons -1

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Hippopotamus

Hippos may be herbivores, but they're territorial, unfriendly, strong and fast. One bite from a hippopotamus can chop a grown man into three segments in a heartbeat.

Prowess 3	Fighting 1	Endurance 2	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 7 Strength 15 Swimming 10	Bite 10	Damage Resistance 20			Animal Senses 5

Weapons: bite +1

Armor: tough skin +1

Special Abilities: none

Horse

Prowess 2	Fighting 0	Endurance 2	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 1
Strength 3 Movement 20	Hooves 3 Bite 1	Damage Resistance 15 Poison Resistance 3 Stamina 10			Animal Senses 10

Weapons: hooves 0, bite -1

Armor: none

Special Abilities: A combative horse may rush an opponent (see rushing under Combat) as a human, but unlike a human on a heroic (black) result the horse has trampled its foe for real damage.

Leopard/Panther

Smaller great cats such as these hunt by stalking their prey in silence, then leaping from a point of ambush.

Prowess 3	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 1
Strength 10 Movement 20	Bite 8 Claws 10	Damage Resistance 10		Tracking 15	Animal Senses 10

Weapons: claws 0, bite 0

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Lion

These stats may be used for any large cat, such as a saber-tooth tiger.

Prowess 3	Fighting 3	Endurance 2	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 1
Strength 20 Movement 15	Claws 20 Bite 15	Damage Resistance 15 Poison Resistance 5		Tracking 10	Animal Senses 10

Weapons: claws +1, bite 0

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Lizard, Giant

Lizards varying in size from that of a large dog to a small pony can be found in almost every warm or temperate climate, from desert to jungle to mountain forests.

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 4 Strength 10 Animal Reflexes 5	Jaws 8	Damage Resistance 8			Animal Senses 3 Fear 3

Weapons: fangs 0

Armor: natural armor +1

Special Abilities: fearsome

Man-Eating Ape

The deceptively still depths of the Green Death Jungle are haunted by troops of deadly primates with a taste for human flesh.

Prowess 6	Fighting 3	Endurance 5	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Climbing 20 Movement 10 Strength 30	Claws 20 Wrestling 10	Damage Resistance 20 Poison Resistance 15 Stamina 20			Animal Senses 5

Weapons: claws +1, crushing grasp +1

Armor: none

Special Abilities: A man-eating ape's grip is so powerful that it can do killing damage when wrestling.

Monkey

A hostile monkey will typically latch onto its opponent's chest and rake the face with its fangs. A specific wound to the head from a monkey does not, therefore, threaten death; rather, it means the monkey has gnawed out an eye.

Prowess 3	Fighting 1	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Climbing 15 Movement 18 Strength 5	Bite 5 Claws 5 Wrestling 8	Damage Resistance 5			Animal Senses 3 Danger Sense 3

Weapons: claws -1, bite -1

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Rhinoceros

Rhinos have terrible eyesight but a fantastic sense of smell. They'll come running from miles away to stamp out fires on the savannah, which makes them a danger to open camps.

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 1
Movement 7 Strength 8	Horn 8	Damage Resistance 15			Animal Senses 10

Weapons: horn 0

Armor: natural armor +2

Special Abilities: none

Shark

A shark's scales are incredibly sharp if brushed against moving from tail to head. A swimmer who rubs a shark the wrong way takes 1 point of damage and must make a Damage Resistance resolution check. Failure means the swimmer's skin is bleeding. A shark that smells blood in the water makes a resolution check against its Berserk rating. If the result is failure, it stays calm; otherwise it rips into whatever is bleeding with all its might.

Prowess 3	Fighting 1	Endurance 4	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 2
Movement 7 Strength 10 Swimming 20	Bite 15	Damage Resistance 10 Poison Resistance 15 Stamina 20		Tracking 17	Berserk 10 Directional Sense 15

Weapons: bite +1

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Snake, Constrictor

Prowess 3	Fighting 1	Endurance 2	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 5 Strength 25	Wrestling 13	Damage Resistance 10 Stamina 13			

Weapons: coils 0

Armor: natural armor +1

Special Abilities: a constrictor deals killing damage with its wrestling attack

Snake, Venomous

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 1
Animal Reflexes 10 Movement 3 Swimming 5	Fangs 3	Damage Resistance 1	Survival 8		Animal Senses 5 Danger Sense 3 Directional Sense 3

Weapons: fangs -2, poison 13/15/1 hour

Armor: none

Special Abilities: tiny

Wolf

Prowess 2	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 1
Acrobatics 5 Animal Reflexes 5 Movement 5 Swimming 5	Fangs 5	Damage Resistance 5 Stamina 5	Survival 8	Tracking 15	Animal Senses 5 Danger Sense 3 Directional Sense 3 Weather Sense 3

Weapons: bite +0

Armor: None

Special Abilities: none



MONSTERS

Basilisk (Enemy)

Prowess 0	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 3	Bite 7 Claw 5	Damage Resistance 10			

Weapons: claws +0

Armor: scales +1

Special Abilities: Small, Petrifying Gaze

Chimera (Enemy)

These three-headed, bat-winged beasts terrorize the lands around the High Mountains. Their lion head bites, the goat head gores with long horns, and the dragon head breathes searing magical fire.

Prowess 2	Fighting 4	Endurance 2	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Flight 15 Movement 13	Bite 15 Breath 10 Claws 20	Damage Resistance 25			

Weapons: claws +0, bite +1, fiery breath (successful breath attack exposes its target to a fire with a rating of 25 - see Hazards)

Armor: scales +1

Special Abilities: none

Demon/Djinn (Enemy or Foe)

Demons are highly individualistic, since any encountered in the PCs' world were summoned there for a specific purpose by a sorcerer. Their Talents and General Ratings reflect the purpose for which they were called forth from their noxious home. Demons summoned with simple spells serve a single, non-combat function; their Talents total no more than about 40 points. Demons of moderate stature are more capable and pack between 50 and 80 points. Powerful demons summoned with difficult spells have anywhere from 90 to 150 points of Talents. (See the description of the Summoning Talent rules for a more complete explanation of difficulty levels.) A demon encountered on its own has escaped from or destroyed its summoner; whether on the run or on the loose, it's even more dangerous than it was under its summoner's direction.

Djinn are similar to demons in that no two are necessarily alike, but unlike demons they are not always summoned by mortal sorcerers. Since Djinn are creatures of one of the four elements, they are sometimes sent to the mortal world as emissaries by the rulers of the elemental planes.

Prowess	Fighting	Endurance	Knowledge	Perception	Insight
varies	varies	varies	varies	varies	varies

Weapons: vary

Armor: vary

Special Abilities: vary (often include aversion, fearsome, and susceptibility to an item or material)

Dinosaur (Enemy)

Dinosaurs of all varieties prowl the Green Death Jungle. These stats are for a large carnivore such as an allosaur or T-rex.

Prowess 6	Fighting 3	Endurance 9	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 15 Strength 50	Bite 18 Claws 18	Damage Resistance 50 Poison Resistance 40			

Weapons: claws and fangs +1

Armor: natural armor +2

Special Abilities: none

Dragon (Foe)

These whale-sized winged reptiles inhabit the most remote mountaintops and rule the countryside for miles around. Snakemen revere them, sometimes to the point of forming a cult around a particularly mighty dragon. Such a dragon is happy to let its servitors do the dirty work of raiding villages and fields for its food and tribute, saving its energy for slaying any troublesome heroes who might try to put an end to its reign of terror.

The blood of some dragons is a deadly poison (15/20/5 min.) that will take effect if it so much as touches bare skin.

Prowess 8	Fighting 5	Endurance 7	Knowledge 4	Perception 2	Insight 1
Movement 20 Strength 60	Bite 20 Claws 15 Flames 18	Damage Resistance 75	Arcane Languages 20 Lore 20	Observation 20	Fear 10

Weapons: claws and fangs +2, fiery breath (rating 30)

Armor: natural armor +2

Special Abilities: fearsome

Ghoul (Enemy)

Ancient burial grounds and sites of epic slaughter are often haunted by these repulsive animated human corpses. They are fiercely territorial and although they dine primarily on the dead, they will happily make a still-struggling meal of any living man who stumbles into their labyrinthine warren.

Prowess 3	Fighting 2	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 1
Animal Reflexes 10 Movement 10 Strength 10	Claws 10 Wrestling 10	Damage Resistance 10			Animal Senses 5 Danger Sense 5 Fear 5

Weapons: claws and fangs +0

Armor: natural armor +1

Special Abilities: aversion to daylight, fearsome, mindless, unliving

Giant (Enemy)

Giants are enormous (15-20 foot tall), uncultured humanoids who live secluded on remote islands or in badlands and atop mountain peaks. Virtually their only interaction with humans is pillage, usually alone but sometimes as part of a gang of brigands or mercenaries. All giants are skilled boulder throwers.

Prowess 5	Fighting 1	Endurance 8	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 6 Strength 30 Throwing 16	Weapon 17	Damage Resistance 30 Poison Resistance 25 Stamina 30			

Weapons: varies; thrown boulder +2

Armor: varies

Special Abilities: none

Griffon (Enemy)

Griffons inhabit high mountains, but their appetite for beef and horseflesh often draws them down into valleys and plains on the hunt. A griffon raised from hatching can be trained as a mount, and the Emir of Padjistan is said to have several in his royal stables.

Prowess 2	Fighting 2	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Flight 20 Movement 8	Bite 13 Claws 13	Damage Resistance 17			

Weapons: claws and bite +1

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none



Hydra (Enemy)

These enormous (20-30 foot long) eight-headed serpentine creatures live in swamps and marshes, such as the Deathlands Swamp and the Moors of the Witch Queen. Each of the hydra's heads attacks separately every combat turn it's still attached to the beast's body. Every inch of these beasts is poisonous, from snout to tail - it's not so much that they're venomous as it is that even their saliva is deadly.

Prowess 2	Fighting 1	Endurance 7 (-1 for every two heads lost)	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 20 Strength 6	Bite 10	Damage Resistance 6 per head (total 48) Poison Resistance 30			Fear 8

Weapons: bite +1, venom (13/15/1 hr.)

Armor: none

Special Abilities: fearsome

Medusa (Enemy)

Medusas are reclusive inhabitants of the Broken Lands and the Deathlands Swamp. Many have the gift of prophecy, but almost all are mad and violent. Those who survive their petrifying gaze they will pepper with arrows, then attack with their short swords. Anyone who closes to within grappling range will be attacked by the nest of live vipers the medusa sports in place of hair.

Prowess 1	Fighting 2	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 0	Insight 1
Movement 12	Short Bow 13 Short Sword 7 Wrestling 9	Damage Resistance 8 Will 10	Arcane Languages 6 Lore 10		Information 18

Weapons: short bow, short sword, snake hair -2 (venom 13/15/1 hour)

Armor: none

Special Abilities: petrifying gaze

Minotaur (Enemy)

Brawny and bloodthirsty, minotaurs make ideal shock troops. They are sometimes used as scouts or guides as well, thanks to their amazing sense of direction.

Prowess 2	Fighting 1	Endurance 2	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 2
Strength 20	Axe 8 Horns 7	Damage Resistance 10 Stamina 15			Directional Sense 20

Weapons: fighting axe, horns 0

Armor: leather jack

Special Abilities: none

Mummy

Mummies come in two varieties: a simple- but single-minded guardian of tombs, temples and other holy sites; and an eternally preserved champion of great renown. Both types are most commonly encountered in or near the wastes of the Desert of Skulls.

Guardian Mummy (Enemy)

Guardian mummies are slow-moving, but strong and fearless. They have little intelligence, and are limited to following the directions given them when they were first created (usually to slay any who defile a location). They are often sought by powerful necromancers who use their magic to seize command of the mummies and press them into service as bodyguards or assassins.

Prowess 1	Fighting 2	Endurance 5	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 0
Movement 3 Strength 15	Brawling 15 Wrestling 8	Damage Resistance 20 Magic Resistance 30		Tracking 12	Fear 5

Weapons: fists +1

Armor: natural armor +2

Special Abilities: fearsome, susceptible to fire

Champion Mummy (Foe)

Millennia ago, a great empire flourished where now stretches the Desert of Skulls. It was the custom of this empire to extend the service of their greatest warriors and priests beyond death by enacting rituals that kept the soul bound to a magically preserved body. Wrapped in strips of perfumed linen, the mummy would lie at rest to be recalled to service at some dire time for the empire. But after the empire fell, the mummies who had not been destroyed waited on for thousands of years. Periodically one will be sought out by an aspiring necromancer or despot who has learned the ritual of reawakening and brought back to awareness. This never turns out well for the mortal. The superhuman force of the mummy's personality quickly makes magicians into the mummy's acolytes and turns would-by tyrants' confidants against them.

Mummies can use their necromancy to raise great numbers of skeleton and zombie warriors from any battlefield. Consequently a mummy who has been on the loose for any length of time is usually accompanied by a legion of undead warriors bearing arms and armor from a wide range of time periods. The warriors' weapons are always in perfect condition, no matter how tattered their other raiment.

Mummies have two appearances, and it's hard to say which one is the real one. Most of the time they appear to be a ridiculously attractive man or woman of indeterminate age, often with a shaven head. When using their necromantic powers or casting Information spells, however, they are shriveled gray corpses with dimly glowing red eyes.

Prowess 2	Fighting 3	Endurance 5	Knowledge 10	Perception 3	Insight 5
Movement 10 Strength 15	Dagger 10 Khopesh 15 Wrestling 8	Damage Resistance 20 Magic Resistance 30	Alchemy 20 Arcane Languages 20 Information 30 Lore 20 Medicine 10	Necromancy 30	Fear 10 Magic Sense 20 Personal Magnetism 25

Weapons: dagger -1, khopesh (treat as saber)

Armor: natural armor +1

Special Abilities: fearsome (in revenant form)

Ogre (Enemy)

Ogres are extremely large humanoids of horrific appearance. They most often lead solitary and violent lives of pillage in remote hills and forests, but will sometimes join large mercenary or bandit troupes.

Prowess 3	Fighting 2	Endurance 3	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 1
Strength 25 Movement 6	Axe 8 Brawling 5 Club 8	Damage Resistance 15 Poison Resistance 10 Stamina 13	Survival 5		Berserk 10

Weapons: variable

Armor: variable

Special Abilities: none

Skeleton (Enemy)

Sorcerers skilled in the black art of necromancy may animate the bones of the dead to do their bidding, including serving as guards or soldiers.

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 4	Sword 4 Spear 4	Damage Resistance 4			Fear 2

Weapons: broadsword or spear

Armor: target shield (1 point armor)

Special Abilities: fearsome, mindless, unliving

Snake, Giant (Enemy)

Giant snakes are triply deadly: they're enormous, they have powerful crushing coils, and they pack a lethal poison bite. Unlike humans, giant snakes deal killing damage with their wrestling attack.

Prowess 3	Fighting 2	Endurance 2	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 1
Animal Reflexes 5 Movement 5 Strength 15 Swimming 5	Fangs 8 Wrestle 15	Damage Resistance 10 Stamina 5 Poison Resistance 5	Survival 8		Animal Senses 5 Danger Sense 3 Directional Sense 3 Weather Sense 3 Fear 5

Weapons: constriction +1, fangs +0 (poison 15/15/5 minutes)

Armor: natural armor +1

Special Abilities: fearsome

Snakemen (Enemy)

Snakemen are the degenerate descendants of the race that once ruled Erisa. The empire of their forebears ended many eons ago, and though their lairs may rest atop rich troves of artifacts and tomes, no snakeman now living can understand or use them. Any being that can, they hate and fear beyond measure.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 4	Knowledge 3	Perception 2	Insight 0
Movement 10 Strength 8	Weapon 10	Damage Resistance 15 Poison Resistance 30	Survival 20 Trapping 15	Observation 20	Fear 5

Weapons: axe, javelin, spear

Armor: natural armor +2

Special Abilities: fearsome

Spider, Giant: Poisonous (Enemy)

Prowess 3	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 1
Strength 5 Animal Reflexes 5 Movement 10 Climbing 15	Fangs 5	Damage Resistance 8 Poison Resistance 5 Stamina 5	Survival 8		Animal Senses 5 Danger Sense 3 Directional Sense 3 Weather Sense 3 Fear 5

Weapons: fangs +0, poison 10/8/2 hours

Armor: natural armor +1

Special Abilities: fearsome

Squid, Giant (Enemy)

Prowess 2	Fighting 1	Endurance 5	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 2
Movement 8 Swimming 20	Tentacles 10	Damage Resistance 30 Poison Resistance 20			Directional Sense 20

Weapons: tentacles

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Troll (Enemy)

Trolls are huge, ferocious creatures that inhabit and fiercely guard areas of desert and mountain. These trollwarrens are inhabited by single families of no more than four. They are of low intelligence, easily fooled or persuaded by offers of gemstones, which they covet. From time to time, trolls hire themselves out to mercenary companies as shock troops. They may also serve as sappers, a task for which they are ideally suited because their affinity with the earth enables them to dig quickly and tirelessly.

Prowess 4	Fighting 3	Endurance 6	Knowledge 1	Perception 0	Insight 2
Strength 30 Movement 10	Claws 20 Weapon 10	Damage Resistance 30 Poison Resistance 35	Siegecraft 15		Directional Sense 20 Magic Sense 7

Weapons: axe, claws 0, javelin, spear

Armor: none

Special Abilities: fearsome

Weaknesses: dayblind (-2CS to all actions requiring sight attempted in bright light)

Vampire (Foe)

A vampire is the product of dark and blood-soaked rites done in honor of certain hideous old gods whose names are now long forgotten. The proper rituals are known only to the vampires themselves, who guard them jealously for fear that others may use them to usurp their power. They create progeny only after long consideration and move quickly to destroy any who show the potential to become rivals. Any vampire the PCs may encounter is older than many nations, and owes his survival to boundless wit, guile, savagery and mercilessness.

Vampires need feed only rarely, and the act of draining a victim is a highly ritualized one. It is also individual - one vampire may need to drink the blood that drains as his victim hangs upside-down, pierced with cursed skewers, from an altar; another must cut her victim's throat with an enchanted

dagger. The end result is always the same: the victim is reduced to a desiccated husk of leather and sinew.

A vampire's flesh is as hard and cold as marble, unless he has recently fed in which case he is only slightly cool to the touch. Although vampires can be physically hacked to pieces by mundane weapons, this will not slay them. A vampire that fails her damage resolution check after being reduced to zero Damage Resistance simply comes apart and sinks into the soil, to reform on the following sunset with cruel vengeance foremost on her mind. Each vampire can be permanently destroyed in only one way, which is unique to that vampire.

Prowess 5	Fighting 2	Endurance 8	Knowledge 5	Perception 1	Insight 8
Acrobatics 5 Animal Reflexes 15 Movement 10 Strength 20	Claws 8 Weapon 10 Wrestling 5	Damage Resistance 35 Magic Resistance 20 Will 30	Arcane Languages 20 Lore 30	Tracking 15	Animal Senses 15 Danger Sense 10 Directional Sense 10 Fear 8 Mind Control 25 Personal Magnetism 20

Weapons: claws +1

Armor: stone-hard flesh +2

Special Abilities: drain endurance, famed, fearsome, susceptible to sunlight, susceptible to running water, unliving

Weaknesses: animal aversion, nocturnal

Were-creature (Enemy)

The curse of lycanthropy renders its victims very - and literally - bloodthirsty. Werewolves and werebears inhabit large areas of the Darklands. Many serve as shock troops in the armies of Shen-Ka, Sorcerer-King of Radu. Warrior-lycanthropes fight in their hybrid human-animal form, and only revert to purely human shape when called upon to be stealthy.

Prowess 6	Fighting 2	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 0	Insight 1
Acrobatics 13 Climbing 20 Movement 13 Strength 20	Bite 10 Claws 17	Damage Resistance 15	Any profession/ trade 10		Animal senses 10

Weapons: bite 0, claws 0

Armor: natural armor +3 (0 against silver or magical weapons)

Special Abilities: none

Wyvern (Enemy)

Wyverns are elephant-sized winged reptiles, distinguished from dragons by having only one pair of legs and a wicked poisonous barb on the end of their tail. They are also much less intelligent than are dragons; it is reported that the Sorcerer-King of Radu has domesticated and trained a number of them as guard beasts and mounts.

Prowess 4	Fighting 3	Endurance 4	Knowledge 0	Perception 2	Insight 0
Movement 20 Strength 25	Bite 20 Stinger 15	Damage Resistance 40		Observation 23	

Weapons: bite +1, stinger 0 (poison 20/10/10 minutes)

Armor: natural armor +1

Special Abilities: none

Yeti (Enemy)

Savage, white-furred ape-like creatures of low cunning and great ferocity, the yeti haunt the high peaks of the Ice Spire Mountains. They will often ambush travelers in narrow passes by lying in wait along the cliff tops and pelting them with heavy rocks.

Prowess 5	Fighting 3	Endurance 3	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 1
Climbing 20 Movement 10 Strength 20 Throwing 8	Bite 15 Claws 18	Damage Resistance 15 Stamina 20		Tracking 8	Animal Senses 15

Weapons: bite -1, claws 0

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none



Rogues' Gallery

Character types not marked as foes should be treated as enemies in combat.

Assassin (Foe)

The constant interplay of plot and counterplot in the courts and cities of Erisa provides fertile ground for a class of mercenary killers whose only allegiance is to their bottom line.

Prowess 3	Fighting 2	Endurance 2	Knowledge 2	Perception 2	Insight 0
Acrobatics 3 Climbing 5 Movement 10 Sleight Of Hand 4 Throwing 8	Stiletto 12 Sword 5	Damage Resistance 7 Poison Resistance 13 Will 7	Herbalism (Poisons Only) 10 Languages (Pick Two) 5 Trapping 8	Picking Pockets 7 Observation 8 Tracking 5	Danger Sense 6

Weakness: none

Weapons: stiletto (DB -1)

Armor: leather jack

Special Abilities: None

Professional assassins are notoriously hard to poison. Their secret is that they regularly take small doses of a whole range of poisons to build up immunity.

Brawler

The bazaars and taverns of Erisa are full of brawny types who love nothing more than to join in a good punch-up for its own sake. They won't try to seriously injure anyone who doesn't pull a blade.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 5 Strength 10	Brawling 5 Club 5	Damage Resistance 6 Stamina 5	Any Trade 5	Observation 2	Danger Sense 3

Weakness: gambler, weakness to drink, weakness to women/men

Weapons: initially none, but knows how to fight using broken furniture

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Brigand

Bands of armed robbers can be found haunting forest and highway alike. These roaming thugs are somewhat less fearsome than bands of actual military men, whether mercenary or soldier.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 5 Acrobatics 3 Climbing 5	Sword 4 Dagger 3 Brawling 3	Damage Resistance 5 Poison Resistance 2	Lockpicking 2	Picking Pockets 3 Observation 4	Direction Sense 3

Weakness: one of: gambler, phobia, weakness to drink

Weapons: broadsword, dirk

Armor: leather jack

Special Abilities: none

Commoner

The common folk of the world are skilled in whatever profession they follow, but have next to no knowledge of the talents adventurers use every day.

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 1	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 3 Strength 2	Brawling 2	Damage Resistance 3 Willpower 2 Poison Resistance 2	Any Profession/ Trade 10		

Weakness: none

Weapons: small knife, tools of a trade (e.g. sledgehammer, leatherworker's awl, log pike, pitchfork)

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

A commoner will have little on his person beyond the tools of his trade and perhaps a few coppers.

Cultist

Most of Erisa's religions are a source of guidance and comfort to their followers. A few, however, inspire their adherents to become gibbering killers in the service of some foul god of evil.

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 4 Strength 5 Throwing 1	Weapon 4 Wrestling 4	Damage Resistance 4 Magic Resistance 3	Any Profession/ Trade 2	Animal Handling 3 Observation 3	Animal Senses 2

Weakness: fanatic, weakness to drugs

Weapons: see below

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Cultists will be most often be armed with ritual weapons such as daggers, sickles or garrotes.

Cultmaster Sorcerer (Foe)

Prowess 0	Fighting 1	Endurance 2	Knowledge 2	Perception 0	Insight 2
Movement 5	Dirk 7 Brawling 3	Damage Resistance 7 Poison Resistance 8 Will 5	Arcane Languages 8 Language 8 Lore 5 Reading/Writing 8	Fame 10	Observation 5 Hypnotism 5 Mind Control 10 Telepathy 3 Obsession 1

Weakness: disfigurement (e.g. cloven hoof for one foot)

Weapons: dirk

Armor: leather jack

Special Abilities: spells - Paralyzing Glare (easy), Sound (easy), Illusion (moderate), Long-Term Suggestion (Moderate), poisoned weapon (dirk) 15/20/5 minutes

Elite Warriors

A monarch's personal bodyguard, members of a crack military unit, or renowned mercenaries fall into this category. They aren't of the caliber of a famed adventurer, but they're a cut above regular soldiers.

Prowess 2	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Acrobatics 3 Climbing 5 Movement 5 Strength 4 Throwing 4	Brawling 5 Dirk 4 Spear 5 Sword 5	Damage Resistance 7 Magic Resistance 2 Poison Resistance 2	At Least Two Foreign Languages 3	Animal Handling 3 Observation 3 Tracking 2	Direction Sense 3 Personal Magnetism 2

Weakness: one of: gambler; taciturn; weakness to drink, women/men or drugs

Weapons: broadsword, dirk, spear

Armor: standard shield, basinet, chain shirt

Special Abilities: none

Freebooter/Soldier

A step up from the common mercenary, freebooters are professional military units that work for the highest bidder. Elite freebooter companies will even include cavalry.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 2	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 0
Movement 5 Strength 5	Sword 5 Short bow 5 Brawling 5	Damage Resistance 8 Magic Resistance 3 Poison Resistance 3 Will 6	At least two foreign languages 3	Animal Handling 5 Observation 3 Tracking 2	Direction Sense 3

Freebooter "knights" will also have heavy and light lance Talents at a rating of 5-8.

Weakness: weakness to drink, women/men or drugs

Weapons: broadsword, dirk

Armor: standard shield, basinet, leather jack

Special Abilities: none

Mountain Tribesman

The rugged peaks of Drujistan are home to dozens of tribes of eagle-eyed, flinty mountain men whose skill at survival is matched by their indomitability.

Prowess 2	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 2	Insight 0
Movement 6 Climbing 14	Handaxe 3 Shortbow 6 Shortsword 4 Wrestling 6	Damage Resistance 8 Stamina 6	Lockpicking 2 Survival (Mountains) 15	Animal Handling 4 Observation 8 Tracking 13	Direction Sense 3

Weakness: none

Weapons: shortbow, shortsword, handaxe

Armor: leather jack

Special Abilities: none

Overseer

Zandara's slavers employ large numbers of hulking brutes who keep their miserable human chattel cowed with free application of the lash. This template may be used to represent any sort of taskmaster or jailer who specializes in keeping large numbers of physically weak people controlled by threat of violence.

Prowess 2	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 0
Movement 4 Strength 16	Battleaxe 7 Whip 10	Damage Resistance 15		Medicine 5 Observation 8	Direction Sense 3

Weakness: none

Weapons: battleaxe, whip

Armor: leather hood (1 point H)

Special Abilities: none

The overseer's whip can be used to make an entangling attack with a called shot. The effect depends on the location against which it is directed. A hit on the legs means the target is hobbled and cannot move faster than a crawl until released. If the target was running when hobbled, he falls to the ground and suffers 1 point of damage. A hit on an arm immobilizes the arm and causes anything held in the hand to drop. A hit on the head means the target is now being strangled (see Drowning and Suffocation).

Priest King (Foe)

Yar's dreadful Priest Kings rely almost entirely upon their spies, flunkies, bodyguards and demonic familiars to do their physical bidding. Their personal energy they reserve for forming plots against other nations and never-ending research into communication with ever-fouler dimensions.

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 5	Knowledge 5	Perception 3	Insight 2
Movement 7	Dirk 3 Brawling 3	Damage Resistance 10 Magic Resistance 20 Will 20	Alchemy 8 Arcane Languages 13 Lore 17 Reading/ Writing 12	Physical Laws 15 Summoning 18	Information 10 Transmutation 10 Obsession 10

Weakness: animal aversion, disfigurement, endurance loss, nocturnal

Weapons: dirk

Armor: none

Special Abilities: spells - Paralyzing Glare (easy), Sound (easy), Illusion (moderate), Long-Term Suggestion (Moderate), poisoned weapon (dirk) 15/20/5 minutes

Sailor/Pirate

Merchant sailors and pirate crewman share much the same Talents (no surprise given that each may have been the other only a few weeks ago).

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Climbing 3 Swimming 5 Movement 3	Dagger 2 Cutlass 5	Damage Resistance 7	Sailing 6 Navigation 2	Medicine 2	Weather Sense 2

Weakness: one of: gambler, phobia (nautical omens of bad luck), or weakness to drink/women/men

Weapons: cutlass, dirk

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Scholar

A scholar could be anyone whose livelihood depends upon applied knowledge rather than manual labor: for example, a mid-level cleric in the Theocracy of Akkar, an Aragossean minister, or an Eme-san sage.

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 3	Perception 0	Insight 0
movement 3	brawling 1	damage 3 willpower 2	language 12 lore 15 reading/writing 10	observation 5	

Weakness: none

Weapons: none

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Spy

Good spies can fight when necessary. Their true talents, however, lie in forgery, disguise, deception and misdirection.

Prowess 2	Fighting 0	Endurance 2	Knowledge 2	Perception 3	Insight 0
Climbing 8 Movement 6 Sleight Of Hand 10	Brawling 4 Dirk 4	Damage Resistance 6 Poison Resistance 5 Stamina 5 Willpower 13	Lockpicking 8 Languages (pick three) 7 Reading/ Writing 10	Forgery 6 Observation 10 Pocket Picking 8 Tracking 8	Danger Sense 5

Weakness: none

Weapons: dirk

Armor: leather jack

Special Abilities: none

Sword Maiden of St. Raphine

Sword maidens are trained not just to fight, but to rally and lead others whether in battle or on long treks through the wilderness to freedom.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 6 Strength 4 Throwing 5	Broadsword 7 Brawl 5 Wrestle 5	Damage Resistance 6 Stamina 4	Lore 10 Survival (Forest) 8	Observation 6	Personal Magnetism 5

Weakness: none

Weapons: broadsword, dirk

Armor: chainmail shirt

Special Abilities: none





The World of Erisa



Erisa is a world conceived in the mind of its author close to twenty years ago. During that time it has gone through several revisions but always stayed true to its origins as a world of adventure. This gazetteer provides just enough information on the various regions, nations, and city-states to give the reader an idea of the land and the possibilities for adventure that each place holds.

It's our hope that these nuggets of information open corridors to possibilities and inspire you to create fun and exciting gaming sessions for yourself and your players.



Akkar

The holy city of Akkar, called Akkar the Golden, is dedicated to the celestial family of Roneth, God of the Skies; his wife Aviva, Goddess of Oceans; and their daughter Oram, Goddess of Rivers. The city is famous for its beautiful and elaborate system of fountains, park lined lakes and ponds, public wells and bathhouses. The fertile region surrounding the city is fed by the Masar River and produces an abundance of grains and exotic fruits. Akkar is an extremely orderly and well run city; however, this comes at a price. Individual freedoms are severely curtailed and any actions that lie beyond the acceptable norms sanctioned by the theocratic rulers are frowned upon.

Strengths

Holy city: Akkar happens to be the home of the three major temples honoring the Celestial Family. The temples are centers of learning for hundreds of worshipers. There are other smaller temples to the various gods of Erisa, but the city is dedicated to the celestial family.

Fertile region: Wheat, barley, dates, figs, oranges, limes, and many other crops are grown in this abundant land. Because of its fertile soil and pleasant climate, the Masar river valley is thought to be blessed by the gods. Many exotic fruits that are grown nowhere else are available in Akkar.

Orderly society: The government of Akkar is administered by a theocratic council headed by the three high priests of the Celestial Family. Order is the watchword in Akkar. The streets are clean, lit, and safe to walk at any hour. There are no beggars, the market place is muted, and there are Temple watchmen on every corner.

Weaknesses

Oppressive theocratic rule: The Council controls all facets of life in Akkar. Nothing of any significance occurs without permission by the council. The Eyes of Akkar are the equivalent of a religious secret police and they insure that the status quo is maintained and that any subversives who would undermine the harmony of the holy city are dealt with quickly.

Rifts within the temple of Aviva: Aviva is the goddess of oceans and patron of sailors. As of late many merchant seamen have been tithing and donating large amounts of coin to her temples looking for blessings in their seagoing mercantile ventures. This influx of worshipers and revenue was welcome at first, but recently there is a growing schism within the clergy between those who are pushing for the temple doctrine to move into the provinces of fortune and mercantile ventures, and the more conservative faction that want a return to the fundamentals of the faith. This rift has weakened the temple and is threatening to affect worshippers as lines are drawn and the debates become more heated.

Opportunities

Trade: The excess grain and exotic produce from the region is exported, much of it bought by Al-Khalid. But goods from the northern continent are highly prized. Fortunes can be made quickly by brave and enterprising men with fast ships.

Libraries of Akkar: Akkar boasts a number of religious libraries that contain documents, maps, relics and other items of historical and religious significance. There are also several rich private collectors of antiquities that are always on the lookout for rare items of lost or unknown origin.

Threats

God-War: The recent troubles within the temple of Aviva have given the agents of Yar a unique opportunity. The sphere of luck in new ventures and mercantile voyages was once the province of Kai-Na, the goddess of fortune. With the growing popularity among seagoing merchants to placate and tithe to Aviva, the temple of Kai-Na has seen a large drop in revenue. This has resulted in strained relations between the two temples, a situation that the agents of Yar are quick to exploit. Seeds of misinformation and veiled threats are being planted amongst the clergies and followers of both temples with the ultimate goal on instigating a full blown God-War between the two temples which

(amongst many other repercussions) will disrupt seaborne trade throughout the region.

Personalities in Akkar

Temple Watchman

Their official name is Devout Brotherhood of the Faithful for the Promotion of Virtue and the Suppression of Unrighteousness, but the unsmiling morality police who keep their eyes on Akkar's public are commonly referred to simply as The Watchmen. They're famous for the iron will that their unshakable devotion to the gods provides.

Prowess 0	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 0
Movement 4 Strength 4	Brawling 3 Scimitar 5 Wrestling 2	Damage Resistance 6 Will 7	Religion 3	Observation 5 Tracking 3	Danger Sense 3

Advantages: hard to fool

Weaknesses: fanatic

Weapons: scimitar (treat as saber)

Armor: small shield, basinet, leather jack

Special Abilities: none

Faramarz the Vain

Faramarz is one of the wealthiest men in Akkar, a very successful merchant who got his start in his family's vineyards some forty years ago. Now, his caravans travel far and wide, bringing Akkar's rare goods to faraway lands and returning him a healthy profit. Despite his nickname, he isn't a particularly handsome or indeed even kempt man. It's a bit of friendly needling, based on his peculiar history of sponsoring occasional expeditions to remote parts of the Southern Kingdoms, each of which has come back with a few lengths of cloth and an antique grooming item: a mirror one time, the next a razor, the next a comb. No one knows what Faramarz wants with these things – he sure isn't using them to primp! – and he isn't talking.

Faramarz may be the only person north of the Southern Sea who not only reads but can speak the language of the Old Kingdom that flourished where the Desert of Skulls now sprawls. How he managed to learn it is just one more question he always manages to avoid answering.

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 2	Perception 1	Insight 0
Movement 3 Strength 3	Brawling 2	Damage Resistance 4 Poison Resistance 2 Will 6	Arcane Languages 4 Language (Tyrossean) 5 Reading/Writing (Tyrossean) 5 Language (Old Kingdom) 3 Reading/Writing (Old Kingdom) 5 Lore 8	Artisan 7 Forgery 3 Observation 4	

Advantages: none

Weaknesses: none

Weapons: none

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none



Al-Khalid

Al-Khalid is a major trading city of the southern continent. It's located between the Great Sea and the Drujistan Mountains. Raids from Jaga and Morgal tribesmen in the mountains are plaguing the city's spice farms. Al-Khalid is governed by a council of senior guildsmen. Spices and exotic opiates are the main exports of the city. There is a fairly large slave trade because of the proximity to the jungles to the west. Slavers from Al-Khalid often brave the large jungle and raid villages in the interior for slaves.

Strengths

Location: Al-Khalid has no close neighbors. Any force thinking to invade it must cross a great deal of territory to lay siege to the city. The lack of food-producing farms and pasture land means that any invading force won't be able to do much foraging for supplies (regular food crops could be grown as well, but the money is in the spices). Any invaders will need a large logistics and support system to keep their soldiers fed and supplied during a siege.

Resources: The area surrounding Al-Khalid is one of the few in the world with the right combination of weather and soil conditions to produce a wide variety of rare and valuable spices and opiates; as such, Al-Khalid is a very rich city.

Weaknesses

Defense: Militarily, Al-Khalid is weak. The navy is small and only concerned with policing their immediate coastline. The army is manned by paid mercenaries that patrol the spice farms and try to keep mountain raiders from disrupting production and attacking caravans. Military expeditions into the Drujistan Mountains to eradicate the tribes have all failed miserably.

Opportunities

Tribal wars: Two of the major mountain tribes, the Morgal and the Jaga, are in a fierce territorial war right now. There are factions among the guilds that support the funding of one side in the hopes of gaining concessions from them once they defeat the other. Another faction advocates letting the tribes bleed themselves dry and then funding an army to destroy the survivors, ending the problem for good.

Threats

Tribal unification: more than anything else, the people of Al-Khalid fear the possibility of a leader rising from amongst the mountain tribes, a leader with enough strength and charisma to unite the disparate tribes and bring them down upon the city in a frenzy of blood and steel.

Personalities in Al-Khalid

Desta

The richest city of the south has naturally attracted its greatest burglar. Desta is a one-woman vertical monopoly on stolen goods. She has the skills to fake or break her way into all but the best-defended homes, along with the connections and knowledge to move her spoils at the best possible price.

Prowess 2	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 2	Insight 0
Acrobatics 5 Climbing 5 Contortion 3 Movement 6 Sleight Of Hand 4	Brawling 2 Katar 3	Damage Resistance 5 Will 5	Goldsmith 5 Lore 5	Artisan 5 Forgery 5 Observation 7 Tracking 3	Danger Sense 5 Animal Senses 2

Advantages: contacts, right back at you

Weaknesses: none

Weapons: katar

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

“Uncle” Jalad

Avuncular yet ruthless, Jalad is known throughout Al-Khalid as everyone’s uncle thanks to his good cheer and generosity to widows and orphans. He has won the affection of the drug and spice growers of the region with his bonhomie and keeps their loyalty with fear. He can knowledgeably talk soil, wind and rain with farmers; efficiently strangle an enemy with virtually anything at hand; and nonchalantly consume quantities of poison that would slay a draft ox.

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 1	Insight 1
Movement 3 Strength 5	Garrote 5 Dirk 2	Damage Resistance 5 Poison Resistance 7 Stamina 3	Gardening 5 Herbalism 7	Forgery 3 Medicine 6 Observation 6	Personal Magnetism 8 Weather Sense 5

Advantages: contacts, hard to kill
Weaknesses: weakness to women, weakness to drink
Weapons: dirk
Armor: none
Special Abilities: none

A successful attack with a garrote means Jalad has begun to strangle his opponent. Each level of success Jalad scored on his attack subtracts 2 combat turns from the amount of time the target has before beginning to suffer strangulation damage. If the resulting number of turns is 0 or lower, strangulation begins immediately. If the target can make a successful resolution check against his Strength minus Jalad's Strength, and achieve the same degree of success Jalad achieved with his attack, he has wrested the garrote from his throat and stops being strangled. Jalad may attack again on the next turn.



Albena

Albena is one of the four cities that make up the Free Cities League. It was once a major port. But, following a crushing defeat by the fleet of Radu, its power in the area has been broken. The city of Albena is a shadow of its former self. The government is barely functioning. Lawlessness and banditry are rampant in the city and surrounding countryside. The other cities in the league send support but it doesn't seem to be doing much good. The people left in the city appear to be simply waiting for the invading fleets from Radu to come and finish the job.

Strengths

Alliances: Albena is still a member of the Free Cities League. By treaty, the other cities are supposed to come to the aid of Albena if it is attacked.

Weaknesses

Military defeat: The navy has just suffered a very costly defeat against forces from Radu. Part of that defeat was attributed to Radu's use of sorcery and flying creatures. The "dragons" destroyed dozens of ships with their fiery breath and now the survivors of that horrific battle are warning anyone who will listen. With each telling, the tale of "The Sorcerer of Radu and his dragons" becomes greater.

Lawlessness: After news of the naval defeat reached the city, a large exodus took place, mostly from the members of the upper classes who could afford to leave the city quickly. Soon order broke down as most of the ruling class and officials had fled. There has been looting and several fires in various districts. The granaries are full, mainly because of the lack of transport to move the grain out, but they are well guarded by the grain merchants and their mercenary guards.

Opportunities

Hidden opportunity: The picture looks bleak for the people of Albena, but there are two sides to every coin. There may be an opportunity here for an individual of strong will and charisma or a small determined group of individuals to galvanize the people and dispel the sense of doom that pervades this once proud city.

Threats

Radu: An invasion by Radu is considered by many a foregone conclusion. The question is whether to put up a fight or just open the city and hope for the best.

Personalities in Albena

Viscount Cascaro

Few noble families remain in Albena, and those who do operate as laws unto themselves. They take what they want from the merchants of the city and demand tribute for their protection - partly from the banditti that lurk just outside the city walls, but mostly from the other nobles. Viscount Cascaro is the dissolute scion of the head of one of the Gopilli family, one of these noble lines. In effect, he's the titled head of a hereditary extortion ring. He's famed for his greed, capriciousness and cruelty, although he's also gaining renown as a drunkard and womanizer.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Animal Reflexes 2 Climbing 2 Movement 5 Throwing 3	Dagger 4 Rapier 7 Two-Weapon Fighting 7	Damage Resistance 8 Magic Resistance 2 Stamina 4		Animal Handling 6	Personal Magnetism 4

Advantages: good looking

Weaknesses: weakness to drugs, weakness to women, rash

Weapons: rapier, dagger

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Marquis Baçao

Baçao is the head of the armsmen of the Pilastri, the archrival family of the Gopilli. His claim to a title is more than a little dodgy, but given the state of the city's records after its sack it's pretty much impossible to disprove. More to the point, he's likely to skewer anyone who makes so bold as to challenge it. Baçao and Cascaro are in some ways diametrically opposed, and in others - most notably the dread they inspire in everyone else - remarkably similar. Baçao is formal, abstemious and focused, which means he isn't an embarrassment in polite company. But he's also stern, merciless, and almost surreally savage when angered. The leeches of Albena are still struggling to come up with terminology to describe, never mind methods to treat, some of the injuries Baçao has inflicted on his victims.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Acrobatics 3 Movement 5 Strength 4	Dagger 6 Rapier 6 Two-Weapon Fighting 6	Damage Resistance 8 Poison Resistance 2 Will 4		Medicine 3 Observation 3	Berserk 5 Personal Magnetism 4

Advantages: good looking

Weaknesses: taciturn, miserly

Weapons: rapier, dagger

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none



Aragos

Aragos is the second oldest city in the Kingdom of Tyros. It is a city of grand traditions and culture. The Baron of Aragos can trace his lineage back to the four founding families of Tyros (the royal family being the only other house that can make such a claim). During the great Sikkar invasion Aragos was sacked. Although the city was rescued by King Bron, the terror of those days is still recalled vividly and has left an indelible stamp on the psyche of the city and its people.

Strengths

Civic pride and tradition: As the second oldest city in the kingdom. Aragosseans are a very proud lot and will not hesitate to give you their full genealogy at the first opportunity. They are also, for the most part, very patriotic and loyal to the king.

Well trained militia and garrison: Aragos boasts a very well trained militia. Also, the Baron's personal guard is a large private force of professional soldiers, second only to the royal bodyguard in Tyros. In addition, the veteran 4th Legion is garrisoned outside of the city and the Baron's ministers in the capital of Tyros lobby constantly to make sure the 4th stays right where it is.

Sorcery: The Baron of Aragos is said to be a sorcerer of some skill. As of late he has turned over most of the day-to-day administration of the Barony to his eldest son. The Baron hasn't been seen in public for quite a while and there are rumors that he has unlocked some great sorcery that demands his full attention. The rumors of the Baron's sorcerous experiments have reached the royal court in Tyros and His Majesty is said to be concerned.

Weaknesses

Extreme bureaucracy: The government is surprisingly free of corruption. However, the ministers in Aragos are considered extremely conservative, as is the city government as a whole. The bureaucratic hoops that one has to jump through to get anything done are staggering.

Fear of invasion: As stated earlier, the Sikkar invasion has left a mark on the psyche of the people of Aragos. It was the only city in Tyros to be completely ravaged by the Sikkar hordes. Baron Aragos is said to be determined that his city is never again threatened.

Opportunities

Arcane refuge: Aragos is safe for practitioners in the arcane arts. It's one of the few places where researchers of magic are not persecuted outright. In fact, the Baron actively seeks learned individuals to supplement his own "research."

Settlers in woods: Homesteaders are beginning to clear areas in the northern tip of the Great Forest. Land grants in the Borderland area are cheap. And mercenaries can find ready work manning the new outposts.

Threats

Supernatural magnet: No one finds it surprising that Aragos has become a lightning rod of sorts for supernatural phenomena. Weird occurrences, sightings, hauntings, and other phenomena have become almost commonplace in the city and its environs.

The king is concerned: His Majesty's advisers in Tyros are becoming alarmed at rumors of the Baron of Aragos' delving into the supernatural. They are advising the king to convene a secret investigation into what the Baron is up to; possibly to summon him to court to answer a few questions. A summons to court is never done lightly, so solid evidence is needed that a threat to the throne exists.

Personalities in Aragos

Thoula

Thoula is a renowned alchemist, who decamped to Aragos from her native Pyrani. She was attracted by the magic-friendly regime and easy access to refined materials. She's a fount of knowledge on the subject, as well as a frequent patron of expeditions to retrieve rare substances from difficult locations.

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 3	Perception 1	Insight 1
Movement 3	Brawling 2 Nails 2	Damage Resistance 5 Magic Resistance 8	Alchemy 14 Arcane Languages 6 Herbalism 4 Lore 6	Medicine 6 Observation 4	Magic Sense 5 Obsession 6

Advantages: hard to fool

Weaknesses: disfigurement (hair and fingernails have turned to brass, teeth are turning to quartz crystal), obsession

Weapons: long brass fingernails (treat as tiger claw)

Armor: none

Special Abilities: alchemical potions

Kalidas

Kalidas was born in Aragos and raised on tales of the hordes of blood-mad barbarians forever lurking just outside the city walls; consequently, her lifelong ambition has been to arm the militia of her city with weapons that no mere plains rider could stand against. She started out winning great acclaim designing conventional fortifications and siege equipment, but her inventive spirit soon led her down less-trod paths. For the last twenty years her workshop has been turning out ornate and baroque wonder gadgets. Some are simply extensions of existing designs, like Kalidas' personal arbalest (equipped with mirrors and modified to let the user shoot around corners), and some are far more radical: gravity, water, weight-and-pulley, and even flame powered self-propelled engines of destruction.

Kalidas is motivated primarily by sheer love of invention, so she has never made much money with her creations. That hasn't diminished her love of dice and races, however, which often leaves her in debt – debt she has nothing to pay off with but her inventions. And when those get out into the wild, there's no telling what may happen...

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 2	Perception 1	Insight 0
Climbing 1 Movement 5 Strength 4	Arbalest 2 Brawling 2 Wrestling 3	Damage Resistance 5 Poison Resistance 5	Blacksmith 5 Goldsmith 3 Seigecraft / Engineering 16	Artisan 5 Observation 8	Magic Sense 6

Advantages: alcohol immunity

Weaknesses: gambler

Weapons: arbalest

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none



Belsa

Belsa is a large and prosperous province of the Kingdom of Tyros situated in a temperate valley. Belsa's harvests are more than enough to feed the province and much of the rest of the kingdom. This prosperity, however, is tempered with the fact that the King's tax collectors take a huge portion of each year's harvest to meet the needs of the rest of the kingdom. A great deal of revenue is lost feeding the legions in the north and filling the king's coffers. The Baron of Belsa and the grain merchants of the city realize this and there are rumors that the city may soon declare itself independent of Tyros. Coincidentally, large numbers of mercenaries have been arriving in the city and the majority of this year's trade with Hogar has been Belsa grain for Hogar steel.

Strengths

Self-sufficient: Belsa is far from the central government of Tyros and has prospered in a semi-autonomous state for several decades. They have excellent trade relations with the other cities in the region, particularly the City-State of Hogar, and the ruling classes enjoy the support of the people.

Weaknesses

Untried militia: While the provincial militia does a good job of keeping the peace and chasing the occasional band of river pirates or bandits about, they have never had any experience in combat on a large scale. If Belsa declares independence, it is certain that Tyros will send an army to crush the movement.

Loyalists: Not everyone is dead set on independence. There is a small but well organized opposition that is still loyal to the King. These "Loyalists" may prove troublesome for The Baron and the rebellious guildsmen.

Opportunities

Be all you can be: There promises to be steady employment for professional soldiers once the wheels begin to move the province towards secession.

Counterinsurgency: In an atmosphere of secession there are various factions at work trying to push forward their agendas. Each of these factions has plots and missions that require agents and operatives to carry them out. No doubt, the Baron has his own people working on thwarting any threats to the movement. Player characters can find themselves in a variety of roles either supporting or hunting down enemy agents.

Threats

Send in the Legions: There is no way that the throne of Tyros will let this secession take place. The king will send legions almost immediately to put down this revolt and hang all of the leaders.

Personalities in Belsa

Giscard

Giscard is a charming companion and a thrilling speaker who is a rising star among those seeking independence for Belsa. His rise among their number has been very fast, and has inspired a certain amount of jealousy among other leaders who have been involved in the movement for many more years. They have begun to spread rumors that Giscard is an agent of the King, and he's just compiling a centralized list of sovereignists so they can all be tidily swept up at once. Are the rumors true? Or are the ones doing the whispering the real spies, seeking to deflect suspicion from themselves?

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 4	Dirk 3 Cinqueda 6	Damage Resistance 6	Lockpicking 5 Sailing 3	Artisan (Potter) 2 Minstrel 4	Personal Magnetism 7

Advantages: rabble rouser

Weaknesses: none

Weapons: dirk, cinqueda

Armor: leather jack

Special Abilities: none

Tevdrig

Tevdrig the mercenary arrived on the scene some five or six months ago with a band of freebooters who hail from points from the Deathlands to Waylander's Pass and everywhere in between. His core group of ten boon companions has been with him from the beginning, but none of them will discuss just what that beginning was. Truth to tell, they'd be just as happy if no one ever found out that Tevdrig is the lost prince of a barbarian tribe that dwells on the edge of the Moors of the Witch Queen. Well, maybe lost isn't quite the right word; the absconded prince is more like it. Tevdrig and twenty-five boon companions set out on his first cattle raid one moonless night and bungled the job so completely that returning home was out of the question - the shame was too great. (Well, the fact bringing such shame on the ancestors would be punished by being tossed naked into the Moors might have had something to do with it too.) In the intervening years Tevdrig's skills have increased markedly, but he's still far too embarrassed to show his face at home.

Prowess 1	Fighting 2	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 1
Acrobatics 6 Movement 5 Strength 4	Fighting Axe 7 Javelin 6 Broadsword 7	Damage Resistance 8 Stamina 7	Seigecraft / Engineering 5	Animal Handling 6 Medicine 4	Berserk 2 Danger Sense 8

Advantages: birthright, war cry

Weaknesses: weakness to drink, vow (sworn never to leave a building by the south door; he'll climb out a window if he has to)

Weapons: javelin, broadsword

Armor: chain hauberk, small shield

Special Abilities: none



Boskar

Boskar is called the "city of thieves" by many. It is located just inside the Sikkar Plains, in the foothills that separate the High Mountains and the Druss mountain ranges. This is another city founded by adventurers (see Hogar) who happened to be in the right place at the right time. It began as a trading post established by a group of merchant-adventurers from Teve who secured permission to establish a trading settlement from the local tribe of Sikkar. This trading post soon grew to a decent sized town as the free cities of the coast began acquiring an appetite for Sikkar bison. A profitable trade in livestock was going on when a group of settlers came down from the nearby hills with huge gold nuggets. Boskar's main industry went from livestock to mining overnight.

Strengths

Mines: The discovery and mining of precious metals has enabled the "Bosses" to afford material and manpower to build improved defenses for the city and hire troops to man the walls.

Boomtown: People from all over are flocking to Boskar. Dozens of caravans and groups of people with “gold fever” enter the city every day. The demand for goods and services has far surpassed what the original inhabitants can provide, so now the call has gone out for artisans, laborers and other professionals to come to Boskar and seek their fortune.

Weaknesses

Greed and corruption: Those that aren’t able to stake a claim of their own are doing their best to take advantage of those who have. Corrupt officials, dishonest merchants, ladies of questionable virtue, and charlatans of every stripe prey on each other like piranhas. Taverns, lotus dens, and brothels provide their services at a premium price. Even a decent meal and a bed for the night could leave a man broke the next day. People are complaining, but the council of men who run Boskar (collectively known as “the Bosses”) is slow to react as its members are making coin hand over fist themselves.

Opportunities

Wide-open town: In such an environment it’s not hard for the enterprising adventurer to see opportunity at every turn. Law enforcement exists for those who can pay for it and consists of gangs of toughs working for the different bosses.

Gold! : Many people try their hand at mining in the hills. For some it’s profitable. For most it’s deadly. Hill tribes, bandits, wild animals, other miners, and nature herself will all conspire to end any dreams of riches.

Threats

Sikkar: If worrying about everyone else in the city wasn’t bad enough, there are still the Sikkar outside the walls. The wagon people are seriously starting to rethink this whole trading post idea. Seeing the large influx of people and the wooden stockades being replaced by stone walls is not helping their disposition. There are many calling for a council to gather the tribes for war and rid these dirt diggers from the “Sea of Grass” permanently.

Radu: All of this prosperity and growth hasn’t escaped the attention of Shen-Ka, the ruler of Radu. He has sent emissaries to the Bosses with pledges of friendship and military aid in case threats from the Sikkar become more serious. The Bosses aren’t too keen on any “help” from a sorcerer. While they haven’t turned Radu’s ambassadors away, they are wary of them.

Personalities in Boskar

Freydis

How Freydis arrived in Boskar is something of a mystery; one morning, she was simply there as if she had blown in with the wind from the mountains during the night. She hung a bundle of unidentifiable dried herbs on the door of her one-room shop to announce that she was open for business as a root-healer. Her real mark on the town she made that evening by putting daggers through the throats of two brothers who tried to cheat her at dice before they could put a hand to their own weapons. Three years on, Freydis is known as much as a hired blade as she is as a leech.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 1	Insight 0
Animal Reflexes 2 Movement 4 Throwing 8	Dagger 8 Wrestling 3	Damage Resistance 6 Will 4	Herbalism 8 Reading/ Writing 3	Forgery 4 Medicine 6 Observation 6	Danger Sense 3

Advantages: perfect memory
 Weaknesses: gambler
 Weapons: daggers (four, concealed about her person)
 Armor: none
 Special Abilities: none

Gedeminas

High in the peaks overlooking Boskar lives Gedeminas the trapper. It's said that he could follow a goat across ten miles of bare rock with no trace but a smell. It's also said that in his trapping is merely a cover for mining a secret vein of gold. The truth of that rumor remains open to debate, though, since everyone who has tried to sneak up on Gedeminas' mountain cabin has met an untimely - and often spectacularly gory - end. There isn't a better tracker and guide, or a more misanthropic hermit, to be found in these parts.

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 1	Perception 1	Insight 0
Acrobatics 2 Animal Reflexes 6 Climbing 3 Movement 4	Brawling 5 Dirk 2 Fighting Axe 2	Damage Resistance 7	Goldsmith 5 Survival (Mountain) 6 Trapping 10	Observation 7 Tracking 10	Animal Senses 6 Danger Sense 3

Advantages: hard to kill
 Weaknesses: taciturn, rash
 Weapons: dirk
 Armor: woodsman's leather coat (1 point of protection to C, G, RA, LA)
 Special Abilities: none



Broaq-Nohar

This powerful city-state was once the easternmost city in the Kingdom of Tyros. It broke from the Old Kingdom a generation ago and, with "aid" from the island nation of Yar, has since grown considerably in strength. Broaq-Nohar is governed by a military council. The people of Broaq-Nohar (Noharians) are said to make the finest soldiers in the world. Their bravery and iron discipline is legendary and it was a major blow to the Kingdom of Tyros when they seceded.

Strengths

Ties with Yar and Umbria: The Noharians openly allied themselves with Yar. Following their break from Tyros, Broaq-Nohar was immediately recognized as an independent state by Yar. Soon money and troops from Yar arrived in the newly formed nation in support against any attempts by Tyros to reclaim the city. Since then, the nations of Yar and Broaq-Nohar have maintained a strong alliance, citing their cultural origins as basis of their friendship.

Recently the allied forces of Yar and Broaq-Nohar spearheaded a successful "war of liberation" on the island Kingdom of Umbria. They quickly installed a new government. The Noharians call it an alliance; the rest of the world sees it as an annexation. Resources from Umbria are being exclusively exported to Broaq-Nohar and Yar.

Sons of Nohar: There are rumors of a secret government sponsored cult of Nohar (known as the Sons of Nohar) that is using sorcery to create a race of godlike warriors. These "Avatars of Nohar" are huge warriors, similar to men but with the strength, stamina and appearance of bulls. The "Avatars" are said to have been used as shock troops to devastating effect, in the final battle to usurp the Umbrian king's throne.

Weaknesses

Trade issues, limited room and resources: In recent times the most valued commodity in Broaq-Nohar is land. The Noharians are feeling hemmed in by Tyros to the south and the Erendor Forest to the north and west. High tariffs from the kingdom of Tyros on overland trade and the constant raids from Zandaran freebooters and pirates from the islands in the Sea of Teeth have taken their toll on the local economy.

Population: The lack of room and resources has forced the Noharians to limit their population. While they have adapted well to making do with limited manpower, the current situation is becoming a major concern for the ruling council.

Opportunities

Settlers in woods: There has been a recent push to clear and settle the eastern portion of the Erendor forest. Some want to reach as far as the Raven hills. Land grants are being issued and settlers are encouraged to clear and farm the new lands.

Occupation of Umbria: The recent occupation of Umbria has enabled Broaq-Nohar to exercise its military might and gain valuable trade concessions with the government of Umbria.

Threats

Tyros: The Occupation of Umbria, skirmishes on the border and signs of a strengthening of the Broaq-Noharian /Yar alliance have not gone unnoticed at the court of the High-King. The Lion of Tyros is stirring. Two legions are being dispatched from the capitol to the Tyros / Broaq-Nohar border. The situation is growing increasingly tense.

The Witch Queen: As the settlers from Broaq-Nohar destroy the forest, there are whispers that the Witch Queen of the Moors is angry at the incursions being made into areas she considers part of her realms. Hunters and settlers from Broaq- Nohar have been found ritually staked out and gutted along forest paths. Others have simply disappeared, presumably “taken by the forest.” Soon there will be a showdown between the Witch Queen and the armies of Broaq-Nohar.

Personalities in Broaq-Nohar

Haggadai

This so-called “military advisor” from Yar has access and influence in the Noharian army that’s oddly out of proportion to his allegedly diplomatic mission. That’s due partly to the regiment of Yari soldiers he commands, and partly to his political opponents’ habit of meeting a swift but agonizing death in the dead of night.

Prowess 2	Fighting 2	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 1	Insight 1
Movement 10 Strength 15	Dagger 5 Spear 6 Scimitar 9	Damage Resistance 13 Magic Resistance 5	Arcane Languages 3 Lore 3 Siegecraft/ Engineering 8 Survival (Jungle) 4	Observation 8 Tracking 3	Hypnotism 4 Personal Magnetism 8

Advantages: fast healer, divine boon of Yago: noxious blood (when his blood comes in contact with the air it emits a noisome miasma that acts as an inhaled poison rated 6/6/1 minute; if he receives a specific wound from an edged weapon, he has spilt so much that it also smokes thickly, imposing a -4CS on attempts to follow him as he flees the scene), familiar

Weaknesses: fanatic, obligation (indenture, Sorcerer-Kings of Yar)

Weapons: scimitar (treat as saber)

Armor: basinet, chain shirt, greaves

Special Abilities: Like most ambassadors from Yar, Haggadai was assigned a small, rat-like familiar spirit (even though Haggadai isn't himself a sorcerer). The rat-spirit can carry simple messages as well as repeating the gist of conversations it overhears. If Haggadai allows the rat-spirit to drink some of his blood (taking 1 point of damage), he may make a resolution check against General Endurance. If he succeeds, the spirit's bite becomes poisonous, doing the same damage as would be inflicted by inhaling Haggadai's blood fumes. The poison is exhausted after one bite, however, whether the attack is successful or not.

The summoning rite itself, Ears in every house, is a simple (green/marginal) summoning spell.

Loktakh

Many years ago, Loktakh sought to join the druids of Umbria but was rejected. Their leaders, Khes-trel in particular, easily saw he was motivated by lust for power rather than devotion to the land. Bitter and resentful, he took to the woods alone to study the dark arts of blighting and cursing. Whispers of his evil might spread and he attracted a small but diabolical cadre of followers that formed a sort of anti-druidry dedicated to enslaving the winds and woods. When the Noharians launched their campaign against Umbria, Loktakh saw his chance to avenge himself on the druids and threw in his lot with the invaders of his homeland.

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 1	Insight 2
Climbing 2 Movement 5 Strength 5	Dirk 3 Spear 2	Damage Resistance 8 Magic Resistance 7	Arcane Languages 3 Herbalism 7 Survival (Forest) 7	Physical Laws 10	Information 8 Natural Magic 11 Obsession 7 Weather Sense 2

Advantages: familiar

Weaknesses: disfigurement (forked tongue), madness, vow (destroy the druids)

Weapons: spear

Armor: none

Special Abilities: spellcasting



Crascia

Located between Dalan's forest and the mineral rich Red Hills, Crascia is a vibrant and powerful city. Trade abounds here as river traffic from the mighty river Tros and overland trade from the King's Road passes through Crascia massive bronze gates. In Crascia, commerce is king. The Council of Guilds and the powerful Walmar hold the true reigns of power and direct the Baron and his court of sycophants.

Strengths

Crossroads in trade: An abundance of natural resources and a secure location have ensured prosperity for the people of Crascia. As mentioned previously, Crascia is a major trading hub in the kingdom of Tyros.

Home of the Free Merchants Guild ("The Walmar"): The Free Traders Guild, better known as the "The Walmar" after its founder Guild master Walmar, is headquartered here in the city of Crascia. The Walmar is quite possibly the largest merchant guild on Erisa. It has thousands of members and their powerful caravans cross throughout the known world. The mercantile power of the Walmar is such that only the most powerful states can challenge them economically. They own a powerful merchant

fleet and employ enough mercenary guards for its ships, caravans, and warehouses, which, if mustered, would equal a large army.

Weaknesses

Weak Baron: Baron Orastes of Crascia is quite possibly the least capable Baron to hold the reins of power since the founding of the city. As such, he rules in name only: signing declarations and presiding over ceremonies as instructed by his “advisors.” His steadfast loyalty to the crown is the only thing that is keeping him in his position.

Organized crime: With so much money being made and businesses thriving, it almost goes without saying that there would be a strong organized crime presence. Several “Families” operate out of Crascia.

Politics and feuding guilds: For the most part the guilds work in harmony: after all violence is bad for business. However, there are times when disagreements and feuds boil over into the streets, especially during election years. At such times there is plenty of opportunity for fighting men or those with specialized skills.

Opportunities

Mercantile opportunities: For merchant adventurers, Crascia offers many opportunities to find funding for new ventures into distant lands, and return with exotic goods that can be sold at great profit. Small companies and private expeditions are funded everyday by the powerful lending houses of the city. The gates of Crascia have seen the first steps of many legendary journeys.

Threats

Bandits from the forest and hills: Though the Legion provides security for the city and surrounding farms and villages, it can’t be everywhere at once. Dalan’s Forest and the Red Hills are home to many groups of desperate men who prey on the commerce and riches that travel the King’s Road. Much adventure can be found fighting or better yet, joining these vicious outlaws.

Personalities in Crascia

Sable the Honest

Despite her being a professional smuggler, Sable’s eponym isn’t ironic. The stern, unsmiling master rider and fighter is famous for keeping her word and telling the truth, at least to the people she’s doing business with. Sable has worked with - and against - all the Families in Crascia at one point or another, but she’s so forthrightly mercenary that no one holds it against her. She’s also extremely loath to kill anyone she doesn’t absolutely have to, so she hasn’t earned herself a blood vendetta. Besides, no one in the city can beat her skill on horseback and at the reins, and damn few can match her in a hand-to-hand fight.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 0
Acrobatics 3 Movement 7 Swimming 2 Throwing 3	Arbalest 2 Brawling 8 Dirk 4 Shortbow 3	Damage Resistance 7 Stamina 4	Navigation 5 Sailing 3	Animal Handling 13	Animal Senses 4

Advantages: one foe at a time

Weaknesses: taciturn

Weapons: dirk

Armor: leather jack

Special Abilities: none



Emesa

The southernmost member of the Free Cities League, Emesa has avoided much of the depredations caused by the pirates of Radu. Emesa is a beautiful city with “broad streets and temples that kiss the sky.” Its bustling port is filled with ships plying the coast of the Southern Sea. The renowned University of Alcides is located in Emesa. Students from all over the world come here to study at the feet of some of the most learned sages and scholars in the land, making Emesa a truly cosmopolitan city.

Strengths

Trade hub: Emesa is at a crossroads of trade. The city is a primary trading partner with the western lands across the sea.

Merchant fleet: Emesa boasts a large merchant navy which can be pressed into service to defend the city should the need arise.

Center of learning: The University of Alcides enjoys autonomy within the city-state. Its council of regents recognizes that the interests of the University often coincide with the interests of the city, so the two governments often work hand in hand. In case of emergencies, the resources and talent of the university will be at Emesa’s disposal.

Weaknesses

Small army: Emesa’s small army has always met their needs; they mostly patrol the roads and man a series of small border forts along the Deathlands Swamp. Should a significant threat present itself to the city, the army may not be enough to defend it.

Opportunities

Crossroads for trade and culture: There are few places in the world with academic resources and libraries comparable to that of the Great Library of Alcides. Scholars from all lands meet here to discuss, debate, and research lost knowledge and new innovations.

Gateway to the Western Kingdoms: Emesa is currently the only port that regularly receives ships from the Western Kingdoms. If an enterprising group of merchant adventurers decide to invest in a ship, who knows what opportunities they will find in the exotic lands of the Western Kingdoms?

Threats

Red Snake Cult: A secret cult has been spreading amongst many of the intellectuals in the city. The cult advocates a hedonistic lifestyle and promises forbidden pleasures for their followers. Mind-altering substances and exotic orgies are used to recruit followers. The cult is a front for an elaborate plot from Yar to eventually destabilize the current government and replace it with officials who are members of the cult and, thereby, unwitting agents of Yar.

Personalities in Emesa

Mahir the Wanderer

Emesa is the closest thing to a home port this renowned sailor has. Born aboard a trader's caravel, it's said he has spent more days at sea than he has ashore. He and his doughty crew have called at every port worth mentioning on both continents, as well as a few that he would prefer not to mention. Infinitely resourceful and fearless in the face of storm and sea monster alike, Mahir is the man to call on when a captain for a perilous voyage at sea is needed.

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 2	Perception 0	Insight 1
Acrobatics 4 Climbing 3 Movement 5 Swimming 3	Dirk 3 Saber 5	Damage Resistance 7 Magic Resistance 5	Carpentry 2 Lore 4 Navigation 9 Sailing 10		Directional Sense 3 Personal Magnetism 3 Weather Sense 7

Advantages: fearless, just the thing

Weaknesses: weakness to women

Weapons: saber, dirk

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none



Hogar

A Member of the "Free Cities League," Hogar is located high in the mountains. Hogar's main industry comes from timber, mining, and metal smithing. The armorers and weapon smiths of Hogar produce the finest swords and mail in the known world. They also benefit from overland trade with the City of Belsa across the mountain pass. The city is ruled by a self-appointed Duke (actually a wily and brave mercenary captain, who just happened to be in the right place at the right time). "The Duke" is a man of the people. He keeps the people of Hogar and the outlying settlements warm, fed, and safe--what more can one ask of a ruler?

Strengths

Excellent defense: Hogar possesses a good-sized militia that are well trained and very well equipped. The city is only accessible through certain mountainous passes that are well defended.

Stability: Economically, Hogar is very stable with a ready market for all their exported goods. Their arms and armor bring top prices as do all of their finished metal goods. Timber from Hogar is sought after by the shipwrights in Emesa.

Weaknesses

Isolation: Hogar imports all of its grain and much of its other food as well. The winters are fierce in the mountains and there is always rationing in the winter months when the passes are snowed in.

Opportunities

Small investment, big returns: Because of Hogar's remote location, their weapons and armor are rare in most of the world. For the few hardy souls who make the journey--braving the mountains, bandits, hill tribes, and other perils--the profits from even a modest sized caravan of such weapons can allow a man to retire in comfort.

Ruins in the Mountains: There are several large areas in the mountains littered with ruins from ancient kingdoms. The native mountain tribes consider them ill favored places of sorcery and evil with vile creatures haunting them. Every so often though, word spreads of some lucky band of treasure hunters who manage to return from these cursed places with ancient treasures.

Threats

As stated earlier, much of the foodstuff for Hogar is imported. The limited domestic food supply is always a concern. If, during the winter months, something were to occur to taint the stored food supply, famine would quickly spread in the isolated region.

Personalities in Hogar

Smith-Priest

Hogar's position as the pre-eminent producer of steel weapons in the world has given rise to an unusual sect of priests of Kesh. These brawny women and men work the forge as an act of devotion. Their arms and armor are much in demand and command a high price, not just because of their quality but also because it's said that tools of war made by a smith-priest are blessed.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 3 Strength 8	Brawling 7 Sledgehammer 4	Damage Resistance 8 Stamina 6	Blacksmith 8	Artisan 5	

Advantages: none

Weaknesses: none

Weapons: sledgehammer (treat as maul)

Armor: leather apron (1 point armor to C, G, RL, LL)

Special Abilities: none



Jandahar

Jandahar is the smallest, poorest, and most remote of the "Southern Kingdoms." The land is filled with feuding tribes, roaming bandits, vine-covered ruins, mysterious statues, haunted temples, and monolithic stone carvings. Centuries ago, the lands of Jandahar were rich and known for their exceptional vineyards. But their king, in a gambit for power, unleashed demonic powers beyond his control. The king died horribly and the land was cursed with plague and pestilence. Since then, Jandahar has limped along. The lands are ruled by a loose council of tribal chiefs and weak warlords. The city is ruled by a supposed Prince, but his authority ends at the gates of his palace. The true power in Jandahar belongs to a group of assassins known as the Shades of Hala. The "Shades" are a religious death cult that specializes in quick and silent assassinations. None of the cult's members have ever been taken alive. Their high priestess is rumored to be the avatar of the death goddess herself.

Strengths

Hidden cult: Jandahar is the home of a very secretive and powerful cult of assassins "The Shades of Hala." It is whispered that there is no escaping from the Shades once they have laid claim on your soul.

Weaknesses

Poor land: Economically Jandahar is the poorest of lands. There is literally nothing of value exported. Most people live at subsistence level.

Weak government: The government of Jandahar is riddled with members of the Shades of Hala.

Opportunities

Oracle: In the ruined village of Hagath there resides an Oracle, a priestess of the goddess of fortune, Kai-Na. She is said to grant every soul the answer to one question, but always at a great cost. Kings and peasants, scholars and madmen from throughout the world make the pilgrimage to the oracle.

Threats

Agendas: The Shades of Hala are weaving great schemes of world domination. They dream of bringing everyone under the thrall of their death goddess and are secretly building an army of drugged, mindless “zombies” to act as cannon fodder in their holy war against the unbelievers. Adventurers will be drawn to Jandahar by the rumors of lost treasures in the ancient ruins, but will end up tangling with the evil cultists. The cultists seek to capture rather than kill, so they can “enlighten” their victims and use them to their own ends.

Personalities in Jandahar

Amut, Headman of the Qaradir

This ferocious old chieftain has led his tribe through thirty years of constant battle against rivals, bandits, and the unnatural things that haunt Jandahar’s precipitous mountains and steep valleys. The tale of how he lost his right eye changes a little with each retelling, but it’s always a ripping yarn. He respects little other than valor, and condemns little other than cowardice and disloyalty.

Prowess 0	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 1	Insight 1
Climbing 3 Movement 3	Dirk 3 Scimitar 8 Wrestling 5	Damage Resistance 9 Will 5	Lore 6 Survival (Mountains) 4	Animal Handling 2 Observation 5 Tracking 4	Danger Sense 3 Personal Magnetism 8

Advantages: serious backup (the Qaradir tribe)

Weaknesses: impaired sense (sight; one-eyed)

Weapons: scimitar, dirk

Armor: chain hauberk, iron helmet

Special Abilities: none



Kobar

Kobar is also called The City of Stone. It is located in the heart of a remote region of the Drujistan mountain range. Kobar’s days of glory are long past. Some of the residents claim to be remnants of the ancient Juna peoples whose empire stretched the length of the Drujistan Mountains. The city is ruled by an Emir known as “Rosan of Kobar”. He is a sorcerer of some power, said to be able to command the demons of the earth. Once a large horde of Morgal warriors attacked the city. The Emir is said to have animated the 20 foot tall statues that surrounded the city walls. These golems of stone smashed and scattered the attacking horde and saved the city.

Strengths

The Citadel of Stone: A brotherhood of sorcerers are said to live in a citadel upon nearby Mount Alba. They are powerful, but extremely reclusive. It is rumored that the Emir is their master, and therefore at his bidding.

Temple of Na-Ko: The Desert God's main temple is located in Kobar. The priests are said to be powerful elementalists, able to magically manipulate earth and stone.

Weaknesses

Poor city: Despite its more powerful denizens, Kobar is not exactly a going concern. The Emir is much more concerned with attaining sorcerous power for his order than providing for the well being of his subjects.

Opportunities

The Citadel's treasures: A citadel of sorcerers? Such a thing is unheard of. Surely the most horrific of deaths await anyone foolish enough to venture there. And yet, some have mentioned that The Citadel of Stone holds riches beyond imagining.

Pest control: Every so often something big and evil escapes the citadel. Usually the Sorcerers can handle it. But from time to time a large steel blade with a lot of muscle behind it is the only thing that will do the trick. Enter our heroes.

Threats

The Jaga and Morgal: Just as in Al-Khalid, Kobar suffers from the depredations of the savage mountain tribes that make their home in the Drujistan Mountains. While they keep their distance from the city and the Citadel, they play havoc amongst the outlying villages, farms, and roads.

Personalities in Kobar

Nes-Abtai

The trouble with being a wizard in a city of wizards, as Nes-Abtai is discovering, is standing out from the crowd. Sure, he may be able to travel as a cloud of dust on the wind or squeeze cool water from a rock, but in this town that's barely enough to get a fellow noticed. Six months have passed since he arrived in Kobar and he hasn't managed to get a foot in the door of the Citadel yet. His money is about to run out and watering camels at the caravanersai is definitely not the career move he was hoping to make, so Nes-Abtai is growing more and more willing to take on any job, no matter how outlandish.

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 1
Movement 3 Sleight Of Hand 2	Wrestling 2	Damage Resistance 5 Magic Resistance 3 Will 5	Arcane Languages 3 Lore 4	Animal Handling 2	Natural Magic 7 Obsession 3

Advantages: none

Weaknesses: none

Weapons: dagger

Armor: leather vest (1 point C, G)

Special Abilities: natural magic spells

Adoption of the Wind God

Type: Natural Magic

Difficulty: Average (yellow/partial)

In this case, it's the Wind God doing the adopting. This spell allows the user to temporarily join "The Grandsons of Vistriba", as the desert winds are sometimes called by the nomads of the Southern Kingdoms. On a successful resolution check, the caster blows away as a cloud of dust and reforms at the desired destination. He can't stop along the way, and doesn't perceive anything during the trip. He can only take with him what clothing and small items he can carry on and about his person.

Stone Gourd

Type: Natural Magic

Difficulty: Average (yellow/partial)

When the caster of this spell picks up a rock and squeezes it, on a successful resolution check the stone releases an amount of water that would fill the stone's volume (so a pebble lets out a few drops, a fist-sized rock releases about a mug's worth, and so on). The caster must be able to lift the rock and grasp it in one or both hands.



Kumar

One of the major Southern Kingdoms, Kumar's wealth comes from its many gold and gem mines. Kumar is often in armed conflict with Padjistan over the control of border mines and other territorial issues. As such, there is steady employment for mercenaries in Kumar. The beautiful Queen Sybillia of Kumar is obsessed with defeating Padjistan and having Kumar become the dominant power in the south. It is whispered that she has even gone so far as to entertain an alliance with Priest-Kings of Yar in order to gain an advantage that will break the military stalemate with Padjistan. Queen Sybillia rules with an iron fist. She is personally involved and has the final say in any major policy decisions.

Strengths

Strong army: Kumar has one of the best trained and well equipped armies in the world. The constant skirmishes with the forces of Padjistan have created a battle hardened force as tough as the rugged mountains they call home.

Economic power: The mines of Kumar supply a great deal of wealth. Queen Sybillia spends much of that wealth on her army and her network of spies in her quest to destroy Padjistan.

Weaknesses

Border war: Kumar is currently involved in a series of costly border disputes with the city-state of Padjistan that disrupt mining production. Neither side is able to make any significant progress against the other, nor is negotiation an option.

Unhappy populace: For a country as rich as Kumar, you wouldn't know it to look at the place. There are few luxuries outside of those afforded to the Queen and her court. Public works function adequately and the people are fed but almost all of the money goes to the military. The Queen's secret police see that any talk of revolution is quickly crushed but the whispers continue as the people become unhappy with their Queen.

Opportunities

Opportunities for fighting men: Anyone skilled in the arts of war will find a ready market in Kumar. Ending the stalemate: There are rich rewards awaiting anyone who can provide the Queen with a way to gain the upper hand in her struggle with Padjistan.

Instigate a coup in Padjistan: The Queen will be more than willing to back any type of real effort to destabilize or overthrow the current government in Padjistan.

Threats

Threats from Padjistan: All of this animosity is not going unanswered. The Emir of Padjistan would like nothing more than to add Queen Sybillia to his private collection of oddities and he has a way of getting what he wants.

The peasants are revolting: The populace has had just about enough of their uncaring Queen and her mad obsessions of conquest. Domestic forces may soon act on their plans to stage a coup.

Personalities in Kumar

General Ranujja

The General has the thankless job of commanding Kumar's militia. His crack squad keeps crime in the capitol down to nearly nothing, but it also keeps the citizenry in mortal fear of being carried off in a raid on a house of suspected revolutionaries. The General himself, meanwhile, is growing sick of seeing his comrades in arms fall needlessly in this endless, pointless war against Padjistan. It may not be long until Ranujja throws down his baton of command and retires to private life - or takes up the sword against his own queen...

Prowess 1	Fighting 2	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 5 Strength 6	Brawling 4 Broadsword 8 Dirk 3 Halberd 5 Shortbow 6	Damage Resistance 10 Poison Resistance 2 Stamina 3 Will 3	Siegecraft/ Engineering 5 Survival (Desert) 3	Animal Handling 3	Personal Magnetism 6

Advantages: none

Weaknesses: none

Weapons: broadsword

Armor: breastplate, iron helmet, greaves, armets

Special Abilities: none



Padjistan

A southern Emirate built on the wealth of its mines, Padjistan is in a constant state of conflict with Kumar over mining rights. The Emir of Padjistan is a collector of oddities. His palace is reportedly the most magnificent in the known world. He will spare no expense to attain any wonder or artifact for his collection. (He recently heard reports of a sorcerer in the north who raises dragons--now he wants a dragon.) The Emir is the actual head of state but most day-to-day business is conducted by a dizzying collection of ministers.

Strengths

Resources: The mines of Padjistan produce huge amounts of mineral wealth.

A strong and unconventional army: The Emir of Padjistan spares no expense to keep his army well equipped. And, as is his nature, the Emir has gone to great lengths to hire a wide variety of unconventional forces. Among the many special units, the army of Padjistan has a war elephant contingent, two companies of Sikkar horse archers, a “Foreign Legion,” and the Emir’s personal Royal Bodyguard of female warriors, none of which are under 6 feet in height.

Weaknesses

It’s good to be the Emir: With each passing day it becomes more apparent to the nobility of Padjistan that the Emir is mad. Unfortunately, the Emir has the support of the military and the people, so there is little anyone can do about it.

Secret factions plotting overthrow: In every country there are those who believe they could do a better job of running things and Padjistan is no exception. These groups are secretly aided and financed by Kumar. One serious misstep by the Emir and several factions wouldn’t hesitate to shake up the status quo.

Opportunities

Now hiring: As in Kumar, there is plenty of work for a mercenary, both the average sword swinging trooper and those who possess unique skills that may not be fully appreciated by other more conventional armies.

The Great Game: Assassinate the Emir, or protect the Emir. Either job could prove to be lucrative and deadly.

Threats

Kumar and its Queen: Queen Sybillia has a special pit in the bowels of her palace waiting for the Emir of Padjistan.

Assassins from the Cult of Hala: The Cult of Hala has just sent the Emir a gift to add to his collection of oddities - a garrote made from the braided hair of maidens sacrificed to the Grey Queen. It’s a message - they are coming.

Personalities in Padjistan

Ioan calde Fanfare nberg

Fanfare nberg is the commander of the Emir’s foreign legion. He’s a short, pale, but astoundingly muscular man from a small town not far from Belsa. He speaks seven or eight languages well enough to be understood, but often gets words or syntax from one mixed up with the other. As a result, even what he intends to be his plainest statements often come out sounding like obscure oracular pronouncements. He also tries to know a little something about the religion of each nation under his command, which has led to his personal faith being an odd synergistic mix of animism, theism and skepticism.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Acrobatics 6 Animal Reflexes 2 Movement 6 Strength 5	Brawling 8 Falc hion 4 Francisca 4	Damage Resistance 7 Stamina 6	Languages 3 Religions 3	Tracking 3	Personal Magnetism 4

Advantages: lightning attack

Weaknesses: weakness to women
Weapons: falchion
Armor: armless leather jack, leather leggings
Special Abilities: none



Pyraní

Pyraní is a major port city on the shores of the southern sea. It is ruled by a Governor-Regent appointed by the King of Tyros. Economically, Pyraní is vital to the Kingdom of Tyros, which is why the king appointed his brother, Prince Crixus, as Governor-Regent rather than trusting one of his Barons to rule there. He also gave his brother two well equipped legions with which to maintain trade and defend the city.

Strengths

Busy Port: Pyraní is an established trading partner with the city-state of Zandara. It is also one of the few ports that welcomes trade with Yar.

Two strong Legions at hand: The 9th and 12th Legions are stationed in Pyraní and its environs. The 12th legion is currently training in shipboard combat and will eventually serve as a marine legion.

Weaknesses

Cruel governor: While Prince Crixus is loyal to his brother, he is a cruel and ambivalent ruler.

Opportunities

Graft and corruption: The Governor and his cronies are always on the lookout for new opportunities to line their pockets. With the right bribes and payoffs, almost any action short of rebellion will be overlooked. Crixus was given one mandate by the king: keep order enough to ensure trade. Anything else is at the governor's discretion.

Threats

Agents from Al-Khalid: Organized criminal elements from Al-Khalid have set up several illegal operations in the city. This has had a detrimental effect on income of the local criminal element. A turf war that will affect the entire city is about to break out.

Personalities in Pyraní

Commander Livius

Livius is head of the 9th Legion and never lets anyone forget it. He's a hardened veteran of dozens of brutal campaigns and considers the Tyrossean legions a breed apart from dirt-eating civilians. The 9th in particular he thinks of as practically a higher life form. The citizenry under his protection are well aware that he would just as soon feed them all to his dogs if he didn't have a direct order to keep them safe. Naturally, the rest of the 9th have come to share his attitude toward their charges.

Prowess 0	Fighting 2	Endurance 2	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 1
Movement 4 Strength 5	Broadsword 8 Dirk 5 Sling 4 Spear 6 Wrestling 4	Damage Resistance 10 Stamina 5 Will 5	Siegecraft/ Engineering 7	Medicine 4	Magic Sense 3 Personal Magnetism 8

Advantages: serious backup (9th Legion)

Weaknesses: none

Weapons: spear, broadsword

Armor: breastplate, helmet, greaves; medium shield when in the field

Special Abilities: none



Radu

Radu, also known as the Dark City, is not part of the Free Cities League. It is a nest of outlaws, pirates, beast-men, barbarians, and priests of forbidden gods. Radu is reportedly ruled by a powerful sorcerer from Yar known only as Shen-Ka. In a recent battle with the City-State of Albena, it's said the sorcerer summoned several dragons to set the enemy ships afire.

Strengths

Unconventional forces: Radu's forces include a large pirate fleet, mercenary troops, barbarian tribesmen, were-creatures, and sorcerers. Shen-Ka has also managed to domesticate the "dragons" (actually large wyverns) that live in the frigid northern mountains. The fire that they reportedly breathe is actually canisters of highly flammable oil that their riders light and hurl at ships during battle. In the chaos of combat, it appears that the dragons are setting the fires.

Magic: Radu is one of the few kingdoms that actually uses sorcery openly. It makes this fact known to its enemies and lets the implication of summoned demons and vile curses work for it. The effect on enemy morale is very apparent as can be seen in the campaign against Albena.

Weaknesses

Resources: Radu is a land of thick forests and high mountains. There is little arable land, most of the food is imported or comes from the sea.

Factions: The same "unconventional forces" that make Radu a formidable enemy also have the potential to tear the land apart. Beast-men, outlaws, priests, etc. each have their own agendas. Rifts and feuds are frequent and bloody. Much of Shen-Ka's time and energy is spent keeping these factions in line.

Opportunities

Chaotic region: By its very nature, Radu is a chaotic land. Shen-Ka's generals keep order to an extent, mostly in the city and the border forts. The countryside is wild and deadly. Heroes undertaking missions or quests in Radu might be able to slip in without notice.

Threats

Loss of control: If Shen-Ka should show even the slightest weakness, there will be several factions, including a few in his own circle of under-priests, who would gladly kill him and attempt to take over.

United front: Though the defeat at the battle of Albena was a staggering blow, the Free Cities could still manage to unite under a strong leader and keep Radu's aggression in check.

Personalities in Radu

Wyvern Rider

The wyvern riders of Radu are fearless, mad, or both. Strapped into thin saddles aboard huge, vicious flying reptiles, carrying twenty half-gallon gourds of highly flammable oil and a slow-burning fuse, they harry ground-based foes with a rain of fire and arbalest bolts. Wyverns need no more than two hours of sleep in every thirty, so to keep pace with their tireless mounts many riders resort to using stimulant draughts and powders to stay awake for days on end. Many become dependent on these drugs and will suffer agonizing withdrawal if access to them is denied. Even when they aren't going through withdrawal, constant nervous excitement leaves them prone to sudden rages and occasional fits of paranoia.

Prowess 2	Fighting 1	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 1
Movement 5 Strength 8 Throwing 10	Arbalest 6 Fighting Axe 8	Damage Resistance 8	Navigation 8	Animal Handling 10	Direction Sense 7 Weather Sense 5

Advantages: none

Weakness: weakness to drugs

Weapons: arbalest, fighting axe

Armor: leather jack, steel helm

Special Abilities: none

Rem Aradol

Aradol is a cipher in a nation of enigmas and mysteries. A remorseless killer from parts unknown with no history anyone has been able to discover, he works with many of the factions in Radu without ever exactly aligning himself with them. All anyone can say for certain is that with a blade in each hand he's a merciless wheel of destruction. His ghostly pallor, prematurely iron-gray waist-length hair and yellow eyes would have attracted enough attention even without the mysterious beast that seems to shadow him. Some say it's an enormous wolf, some say it's a mountain lion, and some say it's Aradol himself or at least a psychic projection of him.

Prowess 2	Fighting 2	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 1
Acrobatics 3 Climbing 5 Movement 7 Throwing 5	Cinqueda 8 Dirk 6 Two-Weapon Fighting 8	Damage Resistance 10	Survival (Forest) 5	Observation 4 Tracking 8	Animal Senses 5 Berserk 6

Advantages: familiar? shapechanger? (both? neither?); night vision

Weaknesses: distrusted

Weapons: cinqueda, dirk, 4 throwing daggers

Armor: leather jack

Special Abilities: none



Taurus

Taurus is the westernmost city in the Old Kingdom. The region Taurus oversees is an untamed wilderness bordering the Deathlands Swamp. Taurus is sparsely populated by settlers taking advantage of the large land grants offered by the crown to develop these wild lands for lumber and farming. Other cities in the kingdom see Taurus as a rough and uncultured oversized village (still protected by a wooden stockade) and the men of Taurus as simple bumpkins. The truth is that the men and women of Taurus are of hardy stock, used to defending their homes at a moment's notice from enemies, both human and monstrous, that emerge from the Deathlands Swamp. As such they have little time for entertainment or gossip. Even amongst the local nobility, the intrigues and niceties of "court" are a world away from their daily reality.

Strengths

Self-sufficiency: The folk of Taurus are a tough bunch. Every man, woman and youth old enough to bend a bow is trained as a warrior. Weapons are never far from their hands and they are always ready to defend themselves or aid their neighbor. They have an extremely strong sense of community. The people of Taurus more than make up for their small numbers in determination and pure stubbornness. They have tamed the land and are starting to see a return on their investment of sweat and blood. They have pride in their accomplishments and intend to hold on to the homes they have built.

20th Legion garrison: The city of Taurus is the garrison home of the 20th Legion (4,200 officers and men). Normally a city proudly boasts of having a legion to patrol its lands and defend its walls. Unfortunately the 20th has the worst reputation of all the Legions of Tyros. Almost the entire outfit consists of misfits, convicts, troublemakers, repeat deserters and worse. The officers are no better, with command slots being filled by disgraced nobles and incompetent fools. However, it is a full strength Legion and can still fight as such when properly motivated.

Weaknesses

Small population: It takes a certain type of person to try and tame wild country. And those types are very rare. The people of Taurus may be determined and stubborn but there are still too few of them to properly secure their lands beyond the walls of the city.

Siege mentality: If the people of Taurus walk around carrying boar spears and long bows looking as if they are going to be attacked at any minute, it's because they probably are. The people are dour, stoic, no-nonsense types. Even the children seem to have an edginess to them from living on dangers doorstep.

The 20th: Often the 20th Legion is more trouble than its worth. 90% of the crime in the city can be directly linked to soldiers of the legion. The relations between the Baroness and the Legion's commander are strained to the point of breaking. Despite curfews, harsh punishments, and even hangings misconduct by the Legionnaires is still a major problem. In the garrison itself, morale is non-existent. Every trooper knows why they are there and some even take perverse pride in their disgraced status.

Opportunities

Intrigues with Belsa: The Baron of Belsa has been trying to convince his cousin the Baroness of Taurus that secession from Tyros and an alliance with him will strengthen their situation. The Baroness has always been loyal to the crown, but recently she has become increasingly frustrated that her requests for supplies and her complaints about the 20th are falling on deaf ears.

Swamp ruins: There are rumors of an ancient, treasure-filled, half sunken city somewhere in the Deathlands swamp. Over the years groups of mercenaries and other adventurers have allegedly braved the swamp ghouls and other monsters to return loaded with ancient coins and other treasures. Taurus is an ideal staging area for such an expedition.

Land grants: Land on the border near the swamp is cheap. A group of strong determined men could establish a freehold.

Rebuild a Legion: Could your heroes be the ones to change the fortunes of the 20th? Imagine the challenge of taking a rag-tag bunch of losers and turning them into a first class fighting unit. Imagine the fame your heroes would gain as commanders of such a unit. Not to mention the loyalty of the soldiers who would follow you to the gates of hell, or at least into that great big treasure filled ruined city in the swamp.

Threats

Denizens of the Deathlands Swamp: Serpent-men, savage tribes, outlaw gangs - the people of Taurus must remain forever vigilant against all of these threats.

Treason! : The path the Baroness of Taurus may be taking is a dangerous one. There will be direct consequences if she decides to ally herself with Belsa.

Personalities in Taurus

Centurion Sallust, Commander of the Lost Century

Centurion Sallust is a man of many talents. Soldiering, sadly, isn't one of them. The black sheep of a family with a long and honorable military history, Sallust discovered soon after enlisting in the officer corps that his real gifts lay in boozing, flirting, cheating at dice, forging correspondence to and from superior officers, and avoiding combat at all costs. Although he's a whiz at organizing parties, trysts, black market commerce and surreptitious casinos, he finds the day to day grind of running a century unspeakably tedious. That's probably why when his century loses a man - gone AWOL, wandered off with another unit, lost to a Zandaran slaver in a game of hounds and geese, or (rarely) wounded in action - Sallust can't bestir himself to find a replacement. Fewer men means less bureaucratic overhead, which is never a bad thing. After five years under his direction, the unit is down to 43 legionnaires, which has earned it the nickname "The Lost Century".

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 1	Perception 2	Insight 0
Movement 3 Sleight Of Hand 4 Throwing 2	Javelin 2 Short Sword 4 Spear 2	Damage Resistance 6	Lockpicking 3 Lore 5 Siegecraft/ Engineering 4	Animal Handling 2 Artisan 7 Forgery 6 Minstrel 5	Personal Magnetism 8

Advantages: just the thing, serious backup (what remains of the Lost Century)

Weaknesses: gambler, weakness to drink, weakness to women

Weapons: short sword

Armor: bronze helm, breastplate and greaves; he was issued a medium shield but hasn't seen it in years

Special Abilities: none



Teve

The city-state of Teve is controlled by the War-Priests of Kesh and the resulting religious fervor is strangling the city. What started as an answer to the threat of Radu has quickly turned into a full blown coup led by the Priests of Kesh. Martial law has been declared and every able bodied person has been pressed into service. The War-Priests control the government, the military, and the granaries. Any protest is treated as treason or, worse yet, blasphemy.

Strengths

War-Priests of Kesh: Teve is at war and, as fate would have it, the city is the home to the largest temple in the known world dedicated to the war god, Kesh. The temple also serves as a military academy and offers a large, well trained core force of warrior priests.

Strong military: The War-Priests promised to strengthen Teve's defenses, and that they have done. The army and navy have been bolstered by the new conscripts. The War-Priests are a tough and dedicated cadre and their experience is shaping a well trained fighting force. While the military has only seen limited action in skirmishes with raiders from the northern forest, they have conducted themselves well.

Weaknesses

Populace under pressure: War priests don't generally make good governors. The people of Teve are being "motivated" to face the threat from Radu, but the strain is starting to show. Teve was once a vibrant port of call and folks were used to a few liberties that have been drastically curtailed since the Priests declared martial law.

Opportunities

Forays against Radu: Anyone wanting to get in a little "sword time" can find quick employment in the army and navy of Teve. If marching and drilling aren't your particular fondness, then work in one of the scout ranger units might fit the bill nicely.

Threats

Agents from Radu: The Dark City is the largest threat to Teve at the moment. There are doubtless agents of Shen-Ka in the city, possibly even in the clergy of Kesh.

Personalities in Teve

Thyrza Catfoot

Teve's rangers operate for weeks, sometimes months in the wild without support - or oversight - from the War Priests, which makes this elite branch of the military an ironic oasis of freedom. It's that relative liberty that attracts fierce individualists like Thyrza Catfoot, so called because of her great stealth. She and her Darkland Foresters spend all but the most bitterly cold part of the year living in the greenwood, making life miserable for any forces Radu might try to send overland.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 1	Insight 0
Acrobatics 3 Climbing 4 Movement 4 Swimming 3	Dirk 5 Longbow 5 Saber 5	Damage Resistance 7 Stamina 5	Herbalism 3 Survival (Forest) 6 Trapping 3	Observation 7 Tracking 7	Direction Sense 3 Weather Sense 3

Advantages: none

Weaknesses: none

Weapons: dirk, longbow, 30 arrows, saber

Armor: leather jack, greaves, steel bracers

Special Abilities: none



Tyros

Also known as The Old Kingdom, Tyros is the largest realm in the known world. The nation is ruled by a hereditary king and a council of Barons. The Barons are responsible for keeping order and providing taxes to the king. In exchange, the King maintains the legions for the defense of the realm and regulates trade throughout the land. The central government of the king has become despotic and corrupt. More and more of the Barons are becoming unhappy with the situation. Unfortunately, they have yet to unite and spend most of their time squabbling amongst themselves -- raiding each other's villages and nursing blood feuds. But even if they unify, civil war is out of the question. There is the constant threat of the Sikkar tribes from up north. At the first sign of internal strife, hordes of bloodthirsty barbarian tribesmen will overrun Waylander's Pass and invade Tyros. It was over fifty winters ago when last the Sikkar hordes swept down from their cold plains and laid waste to much of Tyros. Only the Hero-King, Bron "The Hammer," was able to lead the knights of Tyros and turn the hordes in time to save the kingdom. Ever since then, a great deal of gold has been spent on fortifying the mountain passes through the plains and keeping the garrisons manned and fed.

Strengths

Pride: Tyros's main strength lies in her tradition. Citizens of Tyros are proud and rightly so. They have civilized much of the world around them. Their legions are now few but they are still well trained and formidable. If roused the Lion of Tyros could prove to still have some bite left.

The Legions: The Legions of Tyros are perhaps the largest and most professional force on the entire Northern Continent. Each Barony sends its young men and women for a mandatory five year service in the Legions. From their arrival at the training center outside the capital, all ties with their home Barony are stripped and they are indoctrinated in the "Code of the Legion" and service to the King. After training, they are subject to posting anywhere from the northern borders and Waylander's Pass, to sea duty in the south. When not defending the realm and ensuring security, the Legions are responsible for maintaining public works and helping with the annual harvests. The discipline in the Legions is harsh but the esprit de corps is high as is their loyalty to the king.

Weaknesses

Corrupt government: The government of Tyros is as corrupt as they come. If you any have any dealings with the government bureaucracy, be prepared to be gouged with demands for bribes and "gifts." Politics in The Old Kingdom are a subtle and deadly art, with various Baronial houses, guilds, and factions vying for power and influence. All of this corruption and jockeying for position makes it very hard to get anything worthwhile done.

Plotting nobility: The king's position has never been a secure one. This is why he is such a strong supporter of the Legions. His Majesty's barons are always looking for ways to improve their lot and secure a pathway to the throne.

Opportunities

Games of Tyros: every five years the city of Tyros holds a series of grand games and contests in honor of its patron deity, Obar. Athletic, artistic, and martial competitions are held. The games are open to anyone. Nations throughout the known world send their best to the games to compete. For five weeks every five years, under the amnesty of the games, competitors from Sikkar Horsemen to Padjistani Lore Masters to wrestlers from Hogar come together to see who is the best in their respective fields.

Threats

The Sikkar: To the north of Tyros across the High Mountains lie the vast plains of the Sikkar; these barbaric tribesmen once almost wiped Tyros from the map. Their invasion was checked and repulsed at great cost. But everyone knows all it takes is one strong leader to emerge and unite the tribes and the Sikkar will be back.

Yar: While Yar is not an overt threat, the land of the priest-kings schemes and plots to weaken the old kingdom at every opportunity. These threats are almost always covert. The agents of Yar have refined espionage to a fine art form.

Personalities in Tyros

Yenisei

Yenisei may yet prove to be the Tyrosseans' worst nightmare: a leader who can unite the fractious Sikkar into a nation of common purpose. His grandfather, Hetman Idanthyr, was the last Sikkar leader to fall under Bron's maul. Yenisei has been training his entire life with one goal in mind: to break Tyros and kill each and every one of Bron's descendants with his own hands. His illustrious ancestry and skill at arms have earned him a loyal following within his own tribe, and go a long way in furthering his claim to hereditary leadership of the plains riders. Too long a way, in fact, for the liking of quite a few of the other chiefs; as a result, the number of Tyrossean assassins dispatched to nip his ambition in the bud is nearly matched by the number of homegrown killers on his trail.

Prowess 1	Fighting 2	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 0	Insight 1
Movement 5 Strength 8	Saber 8 Short Bow 8 Wrestling 7	Damage Resistance 10 Stamina 8	Tracking 6 Survival (Plains) 6	Animal Handling 8	Directional Sense 4 Personal Magnetism 9 Weather Sense 5

Advantages: birthright

Weaknesses: vow (give the grandsons of Bron the Sikkar traditional scoundrels' death: dragging to death behind a swift horse)

Weapons: saber, short bow, 30 arrows

Armor: chain shirt, steel helmet, small shield

Special Abilities: none



Umbria

Umbria is a large island kingdom south of Yar and to the east of Broaq-Nohar. It had been a long standing free monarchy; a decade ago there was a coup by a group of nobleman and military officers led by Marshal Jagan. King Tarn Ironhawk III and the rest of the royal family were assassinated in their sleep. After several battles with loyalist forces the usurpers (with considerable aid by Noharian forces) were victorious. Martial law was immediately declared and the new government headed by Marshal Jagan allied itself with Yar and the city-state of Broaq-Nohar.

Strengths

Military rule: The military, headed by Marshal Jagan, has unified the nation under its strict rule. Umbria boasts a large modern army. No expense has been spared in equipping the troops with the best arms and training available.

Navy: Umbria's navy is its pride; the ships are modern and the crews are well trained. They have a great deal of experience in dealing with the pirates from the Sea of Teeth as well as raiders from the Southern Kingdoms.

Alliance with Yar & Broaq-Nohar: Umbria has strong economic, political and military ties with both Broaq-Nohar and Yar. Much of the raw materials mined and harvested from the island are sold to these nations at bargain rates. In exchange for these generous concessions Yar and Broaq-Nohar ensure the military government's continued rule of the land. The Noharians have a security force of 500 troops for their embassy in the capital and most high level government posts are administered by advisors from Yar.

Weakness

Inexperienced military: As stated earlier, Umbria has a large and well equipped army; however, it is an army that has never been tested in combat against any other force larger than a group of bandits. The army is more like a large police force whose main duty is keeping the military government running. The lack of experience is further evidenced the government's refusal to employ experienced mercenaries to act as training cadre.

Puppet of Broaq-Nohar and Yar: Umbria's status as an independent nation is a façade. The country is a puppet of Broaq-Nohar and Yar. Marshall Jagan and his Generals make no official moves without the approval of "advisors" from Broaq-Nohar and Yar.

Unhappy populace: The general populace of Umbria is unhappy with the current state of affairs. Unfortunately there is little the people can do about it considering the stranglehold the government has on the island. The populace usually expresses their displeasure with a general bad attitude towards government representatives and a "go slow" work mentality.

Opportunity

Dreams of glory: King Tarn was popular with the people but he wasn't the best administrator or politician. Marshal Jagan and the council feel that under their government, Umbria will be able to take its place amongst the great nations.

Threats

Revenge and revolution: It was always assumed that the entire royal family had been killed on the "Night of Blood." However, it has recently been discovered that Prince Talon Ironhawk escaped that night and has been raised by one of King Tarn's closest advisors and friends, Brother Stern, a warrior priest of Heldar. Talon is now a young man and has secretly returned to Umbria to retake his throne and settle the blood debt between his family and the Usurpers. He has reportedly established himself in the mountains north of the capital. Patriots are flocking to the highlands to join him.

Druids: The Druids of Umbria have always remained neutral in the politics and affairs of the nation and have been left to practice their ancient rites in peace far away from the eyes of city men. Since the ascent of Jagan and his advisors from Yar there has been a steady movement to do away with the Druids and destroy their sacred sites by erecting dark chapels to the demon gods of Yar. At first this was only talk and idle threat but now it is coming to pass. The Druids have retreated to the highlands and are making plans themselves.

Pirates of the Sea of Teeth: The Pirate raiders who emerge from the isles in the Sea of Teeth play havoc on all shipping in the region. Umbria's navy is strong but stretched to the limit by patrolling coastal villages and escorting merchant fleets.

War with Tyros: There is a great deal of saber rattling going on between Broaq-Nohar and Tyros. It is certain that if war breaks out between the two, the Noharians will look to Umbria for troops and

material. With the situation in the highlands worsening, Jagan's government may find itself hard pressed to provide troops for a demanding ally and quell a growing revolt.

Personalities in Umbria

Khestrel

The Druids of Umbria are first and foremost holy men and women who preserve the land and lore of their people. But they're also rugged and hardy foresters who can live off the land - and carry on a guerilla resistance - indefinitely. Their leader, Khestrel, is a man of astounding skill in magic and woodsmanship. He sees all too well that the militarization of the state will exact a terrible toll on the island's natural spaces as well as on the freedom of its people. The Druids have been heartened by the news of Prince Talon's survival, and are carefully drawing plans to surreptitiously aid his rising.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 2	Knowledge 3	Perception 3	Insight 3
Animal Reflexes 3 Climbing 5 Movement 4 Strength 4	Short Bow 6 Spear 5	Damage Resistance 6 Poison Resistance 10 Will 10	Herbalism 15 Navigation 10 Survival (Forest) 12	Animal Handling 18 Medicine 5 Observation 8 Tracking 8	Animal Senses 3 Directional Sense 6 Natural Magic 15 Obsession 3 Weather Sense 8

Weakness: obsession

Weapons: short bow, spear

Armor: leather jack

Special Abilities: natural magic spells

Common Druid

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 2	Insight 1
Animal Re- flexes 2 Climbing 3 Movement 4	Short Bow 3 Spear 3	Damage Resistance 5 Poison Resistance 7	Herbalism 8 Navigation 4 Survival (Forest) 5	Animal Handling 10 Medicine 3 Observation 4 Tracking 4	Directional Sense 2 Natural Magic 5 Obsession 3 Weather Sense 3

Weakness: obsession

Weapons: short bow, spear

Armor: leather jack

Special Abilities: natural magic spells

Each druid knows between 1 and 3 natural magic spells. These are usually idiosyncratic to the druid, custom-crafted to serve some purpose in the past and kept in reserve ever since.

Druids' obsession is relatively benign. It manifests as a determination to unlock the secrets of the natural world and insatiable curiosity about all living beings.



Yar

To the east lies Yar, a mysterious island kingdom. Few have ventured there. Fewer yet have ever returned. The bleak island kingdom of Yar is the last vestige of an ancient empire that once stretched from across the Broken Lands, past the Moors of the Witch-Queen, and down to the Desert of Skulls. The people of Yar are the descendents of that once great race. They brood on their cold island plotting, communing with their Demon-Gods, and waiting for an opportunity to regain their former glory. The people of Yar are distinctive in that they consider body hair filthy; the priesthood and nobility especially go to great pains to rid themselves of all growth. The government of Yar is a highly structured theocracy consisting of followers of the Demon-Prince, Yago.

Strengths

Sorcery: The Priest-Kings of Yar are demon-worshipping sorcerers and they are proud of it, revel in it, and dare anyone to try and do something about it (defeated foes make especially succulent sacrificial offerings).

Masters of intrigue: What the Priest-Kings lack in military strength, they more than make up for in the realm of espionage. Agents of Yar have infiltrated every royal court, key government post, and guild house in the known world.

Gathering power: Slowly but surely, through their plots, alliances, and intrigues, the Priest-Kings are widening their web of influence and power throughout Erisa. Just about every government and organization has been infiltrated by at least one agent from Yar. They influence the direction of policy and steer many heads of state.

Weaknesses

Disliked: Because of their blatant worship of demons, most people are uncomfortable around Yarians. They are always the first ones suspected of any crimes or wrongdoings and are always blamed when ill fortune or pestilence strikes.

Closed society: The Priest-Kings go to great lengths to keep their aura of mystery. It is rare to ever encounter a Yarian outside of a few traders or diplomats. Yarian ports are closed to all but authorized traders. Any non-Yarians visiting the island are closely watched and only allowed in certain areas of the cities. The only non-Yarians that one would encounter in the interior of Yar are slaves or escaped slaves.

Opportunities

Become an agent: The Priest-Kings of Yar are always on the lookout for a few men and women who are able to check their ethics at the door and join one of the most powerful organizations in the world. When the eventual conquest is complete, the rewards for those who have shown their loyalty will be beyond belief.

Alliance with Broaq-Nohar: Yar has alliances with both Umbria and Broaq-Nohar. Broaq-Nohar is the only true ally as Umbria is a puppet state in all but name. The Noharians however, provide military might and muscle that Yar lacks.

Threats

Demons: The Priest-Kings of Yar treat with demons regularly. The arcane powers that the Priest-Kings have been given are great, but this is all at a horrendous cost. The demons demand souls for their services and the Priest-Kings aren't very particular where the sacrifices come from. If they stop coming though, there will be consequences.

Counterinsurgency: Not all nations are simply allowing the Yarians to have their way. There is a concerted effort by several kingdoms such as Tyros and Al-Khalid to ferret out nests of Yarian spies and other agents. Their success has been limited up to now, but they are gaining ground.

Personalities in Yar

Sunanda

A formidable necromancer and demon-summoner, Sunanda has established contact with several rival governments and offered her services as an agent against the Priest-Kings. Most of what she feeds them is of little value, though, and she lets slip at least as much to the Priest-Kings as she passes on to Tyros and Al-Khalid. Her real game is much more dangerous: she's maneuvering both forces into such a position that, when she feels the time is right, she can call upon foreign assistance to help her topple the Kings, then assume control of Yar herself before the other nations can arrange for a friendlier government to take its place. If the PCs have come to Yar as agents of a foreign government, she may be assigned to be their handler. But who exactly will she really be handling them for?

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 1	Insight 1
Movement 4 Sleight Of Hand 5	Dirk 3	Damage Resistance 5 Magic Resistance 8 Will 4	Alchemy 7 Arcane Languages 5 Herbalism 3 Reading/ Writing (Yarian) 5	Necromancy 7 Summoning 8	Hypnotism 6 Telepathy 5 Obsession 6

Advantages: none

Weaknesses: obsession, distrusted, animal aversion, nocturnal

Weapons: dirk

Armor: none

Special Abilities: spells

Testimony of the Judge of the Hell of Ten Thousand Vipers

Type: Necromancy

Difficulty: Moderate (yellow/acceptable)

The Judges of the various Yarian Hells extract confessions of misdeeds from at least one and possibly several lifetimes from their charges. This spell compels the Judge to relate the crimes of a named penitent in his particular Hell.

Recipe for the Creation of a Guardian Devil

Type: Summoning

Difficulty: Moderate (yellow/acceptable)

The name of this spell stems from the originator's misunderstanding of what was going on when he developed it. The rite involves a long list of hard-to-obtain (not to mention immoral) ingredients steeped in a large celadon urn for three months. At the conclusion of that time, assuming the spell has succeeded, a ... thing ... that's somewhere between a mammoth centipede, a lizard, and a warped human being slithers out. Thenceforth it will serve the summoner as a bodyguard as long as it's regularly fed a sufficient quantity of fresh raw meat.

Azure Sleep Powder

Type: Alchemy

Difficulty: Simple (green/marginal)

This powder will cause any who eat or drink it to fall into a deathlike slumber for 1 hour per level of success obtained when compounding it. As the name implies, this powder is a bright blue and leaves indelible stains, so it's easy to detect unless the tainted foodstuff has a pretty strong color already.



Zandara

Known as “The City of Golden Chains,” Zandara is the nexus of the slave trade in the southern lands. Kumar and Padjistan have a constant need for strong backs to work the mines, and the slave masters of Zandara are more than willing to meet their demands. In addition to slaves for labor, Zandara also provides exotic slaves from all the known lands to fulfill any desire or vice, from expertly trained gladiators to amply endowed pleasure slaves. Slave Raiders from Zandara are feared throughout the lands of the known world. Zandara is governed by a council of merchants who elect one of their number to act as Prime Minister for a ten year period.

Strengths

Economic power: Zandara has profited well from the taxes on the slave trade. Whatever the city needs it is more than able to buy.

Merchant fleets: In addition to the trafficking in human lives, the fleets of Zandara travel the known world carrying trade items such as walrus ivory from the northern seas to cinnamon of the orchards of Jandahar.

Weaknesses

No respect: Though much of the known world profits from trade with Zandara, they are generally condemned as slavers and pirates. Zandarans are considered by many governments a necessary evil that must be tolerated for the economic good.

Opportunities

Raiders of Zandara: The slave trade is a dangerous yet very profitable endeavor. Few know the oceans, seas, and major waterways of the known world as well as Zandaran sailors. Many hidden coves and uncharted islands are used by the raiders. Some of these sanctuaries may hold long lost secrets and treasures of their own.

Fort Melas: The Zandarans have established a military outpost on the silver coast at the edge of the Green Death Jungle. They refer to it as a “trading post.”

Threats

Slave revolt: Whenever you have large numbers of slaves, you will have revolts, especially if the slaves are former soldiers. An entire campaign can be devised around the characters either leading a slave revolt or thwarting one.

Personalities in Zandara

Slavemaster

The typical slave trader is essentially like any other businessman, except that the commodity in which he trades is other humans. He’s not much of a fighter himself; he doesn’t soil his hands with the true degradation of his trade, instead leaving that to hired overseers and other muscle.

Prowess 0	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 2	Perception 1	Insight 0
Movement 3	Brawling 2	Damage Resistance 4	Languages (three languages from slave source countries) 5 Reading/ Writing (Zandaran) 6	Medicine 6 Observation 2	

Advantages: none

Weaknesses: none

Weapons: none

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Payyitakri

An up-and-coming star on Zandara's gladiatorial circuit, Payyitakri exists in the ill-defined half world between slave and freeman. He hasn't earned enough to buy his freedom from his owner, but has virtually free rein of movement and association around the city. Of course he can't leave it - no captain in his right mind would give him passage, for fear of his owner's wrath - but with his limited skill set, where would he go? He's a gifted instructor, and is coming to be much in demand as a teacher of new fighters.

Prowess 1	Fighting 2	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Animal Reflexes 4 Movement 5 Strength 5	Brawling 4 Shortsword 8 Spear 7 Two-Weapon Fighting 4 Wrestling 5	Damage Resistance 10 Stamina 6	Blacksmith 2 Language (Jandahari) 1	Medicine 4	Danger Sense 5

Advantages: hard to kill

Weaknesses: obligation (indenture to his owner)

Weapons: dirk, shortsword

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none



Amra Isles

In this tropical island chain there is a monastery dedicated to St. Raphine, run by a religious order of women known as the Sword Maidens. These Warrior-Priestesses are extensively trained in the arts of combat and are sent into the world to defend women and children from the lust and greed of men. They directly oppose slavers and followers of Nogar-Sai.



Broken Lands

These lands were once part of the ancient empire of Yar. Three major cities were located here, but their names, once cursed and forbidden, have since been forgotten.

Whatever transgression the people of the forgotten cities committed, it was enough to have the gods wipe them and their civilization from the world of man. Today, these lands barely sustain life at the most basic and barbaric level. Even so, small groups of escaped slaves from Yar and elsewhere eke out a living of sorts here and, from time to time, treasure hunters have been known to brave the Broken Lands in search of the ruined cities.



Corsair Coast

The Coast is so named because the Pirates from the Sea of Teeth and slavers from Zandara raid the villages and towns in this region. The raids have subsided a bit since the growth of Broaq-Nohar's navy.



Erendor Forest

This primeval forest serves as a buffer between the lands claimed by the city-state of Broaq-Nohar and the Moors of the Witch-Queen. The dark forest of Erendor is virtually impenetrable and often seems alive. All sense of time and place is lost for anyone brave enough to enter its embrace.



Dalan's Forest

Dalan's forest is a picturesque area of tall redwoods and thick oak. The woods are carefully harvested and much of the forests have been parceled to noble families and men of wealth to be used for hunting and relaxation; however, there are still areas with ancient ruins, stone altars and barrow mounds that even the hardest forester will not enter.



Darklands

The Darklands are a collection of deep conifer forests that lead into the great Ice Spires. These forests are home to savage tribes of were-beasts and other monsters. Many of these tribes have fallen under the influence of the sorcerer who rules Radu. They worship the sorcerer (who is himself said to be part beast) as a god, and serve him with fanatical loyalty.



Deathlands Swamp

The Deathlands Swamp is nearly impenetrable. The air is humid and oppressive; the water is fetid and as thick as sludge in some places. The insects are large and carry death. Carnivorous plant life

struggles with huge reptilian creatures for dominance in this emerald tinged hell. Deep in the heart of the Deathlands there are tribes of wild men (descendants of escaped slaves, convicts, and outlaws) who call the swamp home. They are rarely seen but actively raid settlements on the outskirts of the swamp.



Desert of Skulls

The Desert of Skulls is an unforgiving place. Unlike the rocky scrub desert of the Broken Lands, the Desert of Skulls consists of endless miles of sand dunes, with only an occasional oasis or monolithic ruin to break the monotony.



Drujistan Mountains

The Drujistan Mountains are home to the ancient Juna, Morgal, Jaga, and a hundred other blood-thirsty tribes. The mountains are treacherous and filled with treasure for anyone brave enough to test their luck against the wicked steel of these savage mountain tribesmen.



Great Forest

This ancient forest lies in the Kingdom of Tyros but it has in no way been tamed by civilization. Semi-barbaric tribes and monstrous beasts call the Great Forest home. There are also areas littered with the haunted ruins of long forgotten kingdoms.



High Mountains

These are the located in the center of the northern continent. The mountains are home to many dangerous creatures and extremely territorial tribes. Even the barbarian Sikkar and the Legions of Tyros avoid tangling with the tribesmen of the High Mountains.



The Ice Spires

The Ice Spires are home to the tallest of the mountains on Erisa. Living in this frozen and inhospitable land are hardy tribesmen who eke out a living in a state of semi barbarism hunting mammoths, ice worms and other creatures that call the cold barren spires their home.



Moors of the Witch-Queen

Whether she is a witch, a queen, a demon, or a goddess, she has lived in the moors since the kingdoms of men first arose. In her moors her power is supreme: every living thing from the swamp cats to the giant willow trees pay her homage and obey her commands. There are several tribes of escaped slaves and other outlaws who now make their home in the moors and pay the Witch-Queen tribute.



Red Hills

The Red Hills separate the Moors of the With-Queen from the Kingdom of Tyros. The Witch-Queen's influence stretches into the hills but much of the range is a "no man's land." Because the Red Hills act as a buffer of sorts between Tyros and the Witch-Queen's domain, it is an ideal destination for criminals, outlaws, and escaped slaves.



Sea of Teeth

Hidden amongst the maze of islands and deadly reefs in the Sea of Teeth are bands of pirates who raid the nations of that region with impunity. There have been several military expeditions into the archipelago to hunt down the pirates but none of the expeditions has been the least bit successful.



Sikkar Plains (Sea of Grass)

The mighty Sikkar are a nomadic people who call the "Sea of Grass" their home. Dozens of tribes travel in their wagons following the herds of bison. Each tribe is independent of the others, though they do meet throughout the year in large gatherings to trade and arrange marriages. They live for the simple pleasures of hunting and raiding each other for horses and women. They worship the Bull-God and talk of a day when the tribes will unite and plunder the stone walled cities of the south.



Silver Coast — Jungle of Green Death

It is known as the Silver Coast because of the profit it brings those who can survive its dangers. Slaves, spices, ivory, and rare woods are here for the taking if you can survive the ancient ruins, monstrous beasts and bloodthirsty savages.



Voltan Range

Separating the Broken Lands from the Sikkar Plains, the Voltan Range is said to be the home of the great dragons.



Waylander's Pass

Waylander's Pass has been the avenue for several invasions of Sikkar hordes in the past. After the most recent invasion half a century ago, a series of fortifications were built to defend the pass against further incursions from the Sikkar.



Gods of Erisa

Almost every hero in Sword & Sorcery literature eventually runs afoul of the Gods, and it is no different on Erisa. When the Gods interfere with mortals it's usually to relieve boredom, advancing some elaborate strategy that involves improving their position in the Pantheon, or to oppose the strategy of a rival God. The Gods sometimes act as patrons to the heroes, using and abusing them as the situation warrants. Heroes will rarely come into direct conflict with the gods though they may interact with their agents or avatars.

Though the Gods rarely play a direct hand on Erisa, their influence is undeniably felt through their worshippers. They are invoked often in oaths, prayers, and pleas. Their agents are abroad furthering the mysterious agendas of their masters. The following is a brief list of some of the major deities worshipped by the peoples of Erisa. The list is by no means complete as many demi-gods, hero-gods, family gods etc. are venerated as well. The names given are the ones most associated with the deities in question – different cultures, however, may have different regional names for the same deity.

Ashar: Goddess of thieves and the night

Ashar is invoked by thieves, watchmen, and anyone who does business during the dark of night. There is no known organized following for Ashar, but shrines to her are often found in hidden grottos.

Aviva: Goddess of the oceans and seas

Aviva is one of the three gods in the "Celestial Family". She is the wife of Roneth and the mother of Oram. Sailors and those traveling or making their living on the seas pay her homage.

Bol-Vy: God of strength and of the Sikkar

Bol-Vy was an ancient Sikkar Chieftain who legend says was raised to Godhood for his bravery and love of his people. Warriors dedicate fallen enemies to him. Shamans offer prayers to him to ensure healthy herds and rain. Because of his legendary strength and fighting prowess, he is known as the Bull-God.

Hala: Death goddess

Hala is a goddess who is revered more out of fear than love. Most seek to show respect and placate her in order that her attentions turn elsewhere.

Heldar: God of light, the dawn, duty and oaths

Heldar is the truthsayer and the guardian. He is said to see the truth of everything and cannot be deceived. Oaths made in his name are the strongest. If broken not only is the transgressor damned, but his line as well, for five generations.

Honir: God of nature, beasts, and hunters

Honir is the personification of nature, as man sees him. Therefore he is worshipped as a provider and teacher to mankind. The lessons of hunting, agriculture, husbandry, and generally living at one with the land as a partner rather than a despoiler are foremost in the teachings of his clergy.

Grun: God of the common man, the laborer, the slave

Grun is the god venerated by most of the people of Erisa. His temples and shrines are found in every city and village. He is the god of perseverance and hope.

Inisa: Fire goddess

Inisa represents the destructive force of fire rather than its beneficial uses. As with the goddess Hala, offerings to Inisa are made not to entreat her but to ensure that her fiery gaze and wrath are directed elsewhere. Temples to Inisa are very powerful in the larger cities of Erisa where the offerings from various guilds are quite substantial.

Jeris: Goddess of lovers, passion, lust and vengeance

Jeris has a dual aspect, that of passionate love but also carnal lust and infidelity. She is invoked by young lovers as well as adulterers who seek to keep their liaisons secret. She is also the goddess of vengeance and of those who have been slighted. As you can imagine, mans nature being what it is, her temples are rich in offerings.

Kai-Na: Goddess of fortune

Kai-Na is the patron goddess of merchants, gamblers and anyone in need of good fortune - which is to say, everyone offers this goddess prayers. Unfortunately, she is fickle and at times very particular with her favors.

Kesh: God of battles

Lord Kesh is representative of Warfare as a noble endeavor. Kesh is revered by professional soldiers and mercenaries. His most devoted followers administer the finest military academies in the world. Kesh also has several orders of Warrior monks who are dedicated to the art of warfare and often hire themselves out as elite troops.

Obar: God of honor and perfection

Patron of Tyros, Obar is the god of honor, perfection, and nobility (at least the ideal of nobility). Obar is also the patron of the games of Tyros. The current royal family of Tyros is believed to be descended directly from Obar, and therefore infused with his wisdom.

Obra-Irca: God of travelers, scholars, knowledge.

Obra-Irca is known as the Journeyer, and his priests travel throughout the lands of Erisa gathering knowledge and exchanging news. Priests of Obra-Irca never remain in one place for long; a year at the most. The priests maintain libraries in remote areas where the accumulated knowledge of their travels is cataloged and kept safe. They also maintain hostels and roadside shrines where one can find safety from the elements. It is generally considered an honor to offer a "follower of the path" a meal and bed for the night. Conversely turning away or harming a traveling priest of Obra-Irca is considered very bad luck.

Oram: Goddess of rivers, daughter of Aviva

Oram is the goddess of lakes, rivers, streams generally any fresh waterways natural or manmade. Bridges are sacred to her and most folk utter prayers to her before and after their crossing.

Na-Ko: God of the earth, mountains and desert folk, also known as The Scorpion God

Na-Ko is the patron deity of the desert peoples of the Drujistan Mountains and the Desert of Skulls. Scorpions are sacred to Na-Ko and his gem-filled desert temples are said to be guarded by giant man-scorpions.

Nohar: God of war and victory

Unlike Lord Kesh, Nohar is the god of war for the sake of conflict. Followers of Nohar revel in the

lust of battle and the taste of victory at any price. Nohar is of course the patron god of the city-state of Broaq-Nohar.

Nogar-Sai: Evil, undead

The “Dark One” is evil personified. His followers worship him in the hopes that he will bless them with power. This power comes in the form of unlife that he bestows upon them. Many of Nogar-Sai’s priests and high-placed worshipers are vampires, liches, and necromancers who yearn for the power of immortality. Nogar-Sai’s sacrificial altars are stained with the blood of innocents.

Ranni: Goddess of secrets.

As one would expect, the followers of Ranni meet in secret. Their numbers and hierarchy are unknown. Because they worship that which is hidden and covet knowledge that no one else possesses, they are a force to be reckoned with in a world steeped in hidden lore and intrigue.

Roneth: God of the sky, rains, and crops

Roneth is the sustainer of life who showers the world and ensures the harvests. He is also the storm that brings the bite of winter and the winds which nothing made by man can stand against.

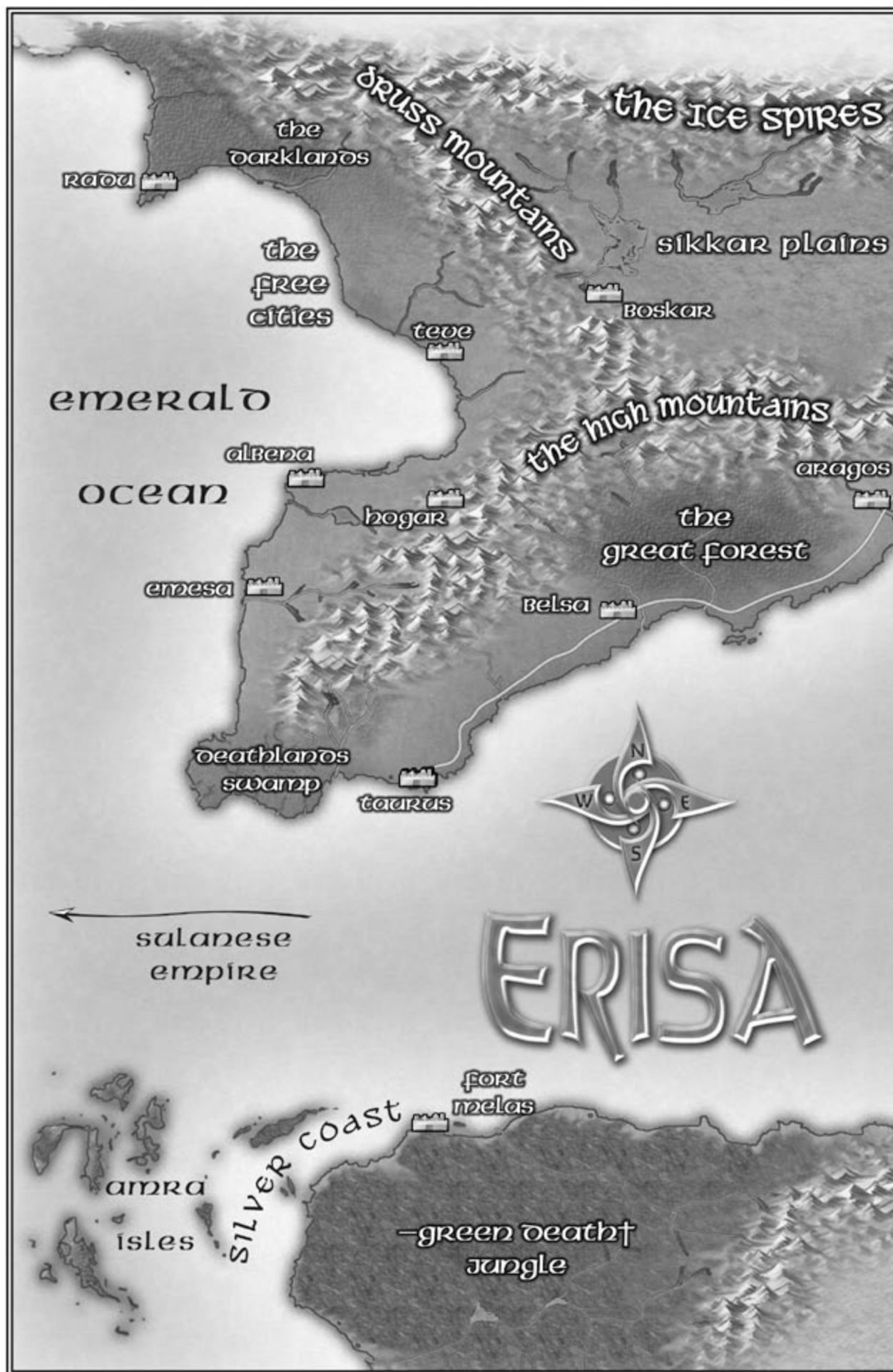
St. Raphine: Demigoddess of righteous vengeance and the protector of children

St. Raphine was a warrior priestess of Heldar who died single-handedly defending an orphanage from a horde of ghouls. Her cult has a growing following and is spreading throughout the nations of Erisa. St. Raphine is the guardian of homes and children. There is a monastic order in the Amra Isles where priestesses are trained in the arts of combat and sent forth to defend the faithful. St. Raphine holds a special enmity towards Nogar-Sai, the god of undead. Her priesthood will go out of their way to root out and destroy any worshippers of the Dark One.

Yago: Demigod of violent death, murder, and chaos

The Lord of Murder is a prince amongst the demons who serve Nogar-Sai. His area of influence is violent death, murder and the chaos that they create. He is the patron of a cult of assassins known as “The Children of Yago”.







River Pirates of the Belsa

The heroes have arrived in the city of Belsa, located on the river of the same name. They have just been hired by a local merchant, Dagoberto, to bring a bandit named Joubert to justice.

Dagoberto is a moderately successful businessman who owns several wine shops in and around the city of Belsa. His only son, Murillo, was killed in a raid when the river pirates, headed by the bandit Joubert, attacked the caravan he was leading. The authorities of Belsa made only a half-hearted attempt to investigate. But Dagoberto suspects that Joubert has connections within the government who protect him.

Joubert and his men are based in the forest and strike quickly from the river bank in their fast moving canoes. They disappear into the woods and reappear weeks later further up or down river from where they last struck, to raid again.

Dagoberto has agreed to pay the PCs 300 pieces of silver if they bring Joubert to justice. In addition, there is a bounty of 100 silver pieces sponsored by the rivermen's guild.

A Spy

Dagoberto has, at great cost, found a man who can provide an "in" for the PCs. Jonah is a brigand who has worked on Joubert's crew, but holds no love or loyalty to the bandit leader. Dagoberto has paid to have Jonah vouch for a number of the PCs to join the river pirates. Jonah will lead the PCs into the great forest to a large campsite where over 30 brigands are preparing for some mischief. Jonah will remain with the PCs and aid them in getting back to Belsa with Joubert.

Blood in, blood out

Unfortunately, even with Jonah vouching for them, the heroes can't just join up and become trusted members of the band. There is an initiation. Though Joubert is not present, the initiation is conducted by his lieutenant, a pirate by the name of Madoc. There are several ways that the PCs may prove their worth in joining the river pirates. They can choose from the following:

Trial by combat - They must best Vitar, the band's "Master at Arms," using cudgels.

Trial of might - The challenger PC and one of the pirates each take up a sword chosen at random. Before each is placed the carcass of a pig that will be roasted that night. At a signal from Madoc, each must hew her/his pig in half as quickly as possible. PC and pirate take turns making Strength or General Prowess resolution checks. Each level of success counts as one point (so a green result counts for one, a yellow for two, and so on); a failure counts for none. The first one to reach six points has chopped his pig in two.

Trial of skill - They must insert their hand in a puzzle box and unlock it from the inside. This requires three Lockpicking or General Knowledge resolution checks. If all three checks succeed, then the box is unlocked. If any of the rolls fail, the PC's hand is severed by a razor sharp trap in the box.

Trial of bravery - Stripped of clothing and weapons, they must cross the Pit of Death: a very slim plank over a pit containing two alligators. Three successful Acrobatics or General Prowess resolution checks are needed to cross the pit safely.

Trial of agility - The challenger must climb a large net, 15 feet wide by 30 feet high. On the other side of the net are arrayed a number of pirates wielding staves. As the challenger climbs, the pirates jab their staves through the net, trying to knock the challenger off. The challenger must succeed at three resolution checks against her/his Climbing or General Prowess rating minus the pirates' staff talent (rated at only 1, since it isn't their primary weapon). Each successful check means the

challenger has climbed 10 feet. Failure means the challenger climbs no higher that round; two failures in a row means the challenger has been knocked off the net and falls.

If they refuse a trial then they will be killed outright. If the heroes attempt any one of these trials and succeed, they will be accepted into the band with much drunken revelry. If they fail any of the trials and yet somehow survive, they will be beaten half to death and left for dead in the wild (which would be a great way to introduce a “man in the wilderness” scenario, with the PC surviving, tracking down the pirates and exacting revenge). Additionally, any PCs with sufficient woodcraft or survival skills could remain hidden and silently track the pirates back to their lair while the other PCs “join” the pirate band.

River booty

Once they are accepted into the band, they will be expected to participate in the upcoming raid. Madoc has learned that a shipment of slave girls is being brought to several of the city brothels by a slaver from Tyros. There are two river barges, eight rivermen, 20 slave girls, and 15 guards. The pirates, led by Madoc, will wait till late night and then attack under the cover of darkness. The riverboat men will flee if they can, but will fight if cornered. The guards are well paid and will fight. In addition to the slave girls, there is assorted loot aboard: foodstuffs, cloth, spices, tobacco, etc.

At The Lair

Following the successful raid on the river barges, the bandits gather the slaves, load them with loot, and lead them into the forest. Madoc leads the pirates to their base, a complex they call “The Lair.” It is not so much hidden as it is out of the way, lying beyond the forest in the hills. The Lair itself is a maze of smaller interconnected caves fed by the cavernous maw entrance. The pirates have made this into a home of sorts. A spring provides fresh water, and, if one considers fungi as edible, there is food aplenty! A slight draft can be felt moving back and forth through the caves, though not strong enough to rid the caves of the smell of smoke, cooked meats and unwashed bodies. Outside the cavern at the base of the hill is an earth and wood stockade. This contains a shed for the canoes and a small corral for livestock.

Besides the pirates from the raid, there are 30 brigands and a dozen slaves in camp. There is much celebration as the loot and the new girls are brought into the main cavern. Word of their arrival was sent ahead, so, by the time the raiding party reaches the lair, a raucous feast is well underway and the PCs are finally introduced to Joubert.

Joubert is a tall, handsome rogue with dark features and an aristocratic air about him. He wears a Legionnaire’s short sword, dirk, and under his shirt can be seen the glint of fine chainmail. While not rude, he is not overly friendly, at least not to those he doesn’t know yet.

Amongst the carousing brigands are several huge hairy men in buckskins, sporting bone-handled knives, obsidian tipped spears, and stout curved bows. These are members of the Bear Clan, one of the savage tribes that live in the wild lands of the great forest. Joubert is courting their friendship. There is also a very exotic looking woman at Joubert’s side petting a leopard. The woman is clad in skins similar to those of the wild men but of softer pelts and cut so as to expose her curvaceous charms. If any ask, her name is Puna. She is Joubert’s “advisor” and a witch woman. Anyone inquiring is advised to give her a wide berth, as it is common knowledge she cavorts with demons.

The celebration goes on well into the night and everything one can imagine happening with drunken brigands and helpless slaves happens. There are fist fights, knife fights, and food fights. There is singing, dancing, and gambling. The brigands waste no time in taking their pleasure with the slaves and they aren’t gentle about it. One slave girl and two brigands don’t live to see the next day. Joubert watches it all with an evil grin, and participates in most of it. But, if anyone takes care to notice, he drinks nothing stronger than cider.

The following morning most of the pirates are hung over and pretty much useless. The half dozen that are on guard duty are sober enough, but even they are inattentive as they take their turns with the slave girls and sneak in a cup or two. Joubert had taken his leave of the revelry in the early hours, taking a slave girl and Puna with him. He retired to his private quarters; a side cave that has been fitted and secured with a heavy oaken door. Puna's pet leopard rests on a pile of furs outside of the room, next to the entrance.

At this point, the PCs should have enough information to formulate a plan of action. Jonah will insist on being kept informed. He intends to stay with the PCs until he can collect the rest of his reward and get far away. He knows that if he stays behind someone might remember that he was the one who brought the bounty hunters into the band to begin with. This isn't to say that Jonah is in any way reliable, but, as long as the PCs present the best odds for his survival, he's steady enough. The only person Jonah is loyal to is Jonah. Following the latest raid, the pirates will lay low for several weeks while the authorities in Belsa go through the motions of sending out extra patrols along the river and the river barges are more vigilantly guarded. This will generally be "downtime" for the pirates, who will feast every night and enjoy the fruits of their labors. Eventually though, the wine will run low and the slave girls will start to lose their novelty and freshness. This is where Joubert and his lieutenants will begin to enforce discipline and initiate make-work gangs to keep the men from getting bored as the boss plots the next raid.

If the PC's decide to stay a while and get to know the Lair and the surrounding area, they will discover the following over the course of several days:

- The alliance with the Bear Clan (the delegation at the feast) is tenuous at best.
- Security at the Lair is rather lax. The pirates have such a fierce reputation and their base is so well hidden that they have become complacent.
- The Lair is about three days' travel from the nearest civilized village at the edge of the forest. The dense woods make travel by horse impractical.

Rumors at the Lair

These rumors could be true or false as the GM sees fit to expand the adventure.

- Joubert is rich and has treasures in his room. He is attempting to amass enough to buy a title and relocate to Tyros or Pyrani.
- Joubert has a secret identity in the city of Belsa and is courting a noblewoman named Vorena. He's hoping her father's connections will help him realize his own goals.
- Puna is insanely jealous of Joubert's "fancy girlfriend." She knows she can't compete with a noble woman and is getting increasingly bitter.
- Madoc has been promised command of the pirates once Joubert leaves, but he is getting impatient. He is also in love with Puna but, despite several dalliances with her, Madoc knows that Puna will never leave Joubert.

If and when the PC's manage to bring Joubert to the city of Belsa, the bandit will hang for his crimes. The river raids will continue as someone else (Madoc perhaps) assumes leadership of the pirates. If Joubert is slain by the PCs, Madoc will make a show of swearing revenge but, in reality, the PCs have done him a favor and, once tempers cool, it will be business as usual on the river.



Dramatis Personae

Joubert

Joubert is the leader of the river pirates. He is a handsome rogue who exudes a definite quality of leadership. Joubert is charming and an accomplished bladesman. Rumor has it that he is an exiled member of a minor noble house from Emesa. He has occasionally mentioned his time as a legionnaire, so many assume he may have served as an officer. Joubert is a callous man and will use whomever he needs to in order to attain power. The activities of his band of river pirates serve as a means for him to build a quick fortune so that he may live the life of privilege that he feels he is entitled to. To this end, he has assumed an alias of a young gentleman trader in the city of Belsa and is currently courting the daughter of a powerful noble, hoping the connections will pave his way to a life amongst the quality.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 5 Strength 2 Swimming 3	Dirk 5 Saber 7	Damage Resistance 8	Navigation 5 Sailing 3	Forgery 3 Observation 5	Danger Sense 1 Personal Magnetism 4

Advantages: serious backup (Belsa river pirates)

Weaknesses: none

Weapons: saber, dirk

Armor: leather jack (1 point LA, RA, C, G)

Special Abilities: none

Jonah

Jonah is a willow thin bandit with a hook nose and a nasty disposition. His one talent is survival and his only loyalty is to himself. Those around him seem to come to bad ends eventually. Jonah is a coward, but has some skill with a knife, usually demonstrated when stabbing an unsuspecting victim from behind.

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 0
Movement 8 Throwing 4	Dirk 5	Damage Resistance 4	Navigation 3 Survival (Forest) 3 Trapping 1	Artisan 3 Forgery 2 Observation 7	Danger Senses 5

Advantages: hard to kill

Weaknesses: miserly

Weapons: dirk

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none



Madoc

Madoc is an escaped slave and gladiator. He has been with Joubert for three years. Madoc is a steady lieutenant and a strong enforcer with little imagination. However, he has recently acquired a desire for Puna, the boss's woman. And this has led to thoughts that maybe he could run the outfit as well as or better than Joubert. Though Joubert has spoken of retiring and handing leadership over to him, he is becoming impatient.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Animal Reflexes 2 Movement 4 Strength 5	Brawling 5 Cinqueda 7	Damage Resistance 8 Stamina 3 Will 3		Animal Handling 3 Medicine 2	Directional Sense 2

Advantages: hard to kill

Weaknesses: rash

Weapons: dirk, broadsword

Armor: leather jack (1 point C, G, RA, LA)

Special Abilities: none

Vitar the "Master at arms"

Vitar is a defrocked Warrior-Priest of Kesh and an outlaw. He is a mountain of a man standing over 6' in height. Vitar is skilled in the use of just about any weapon and uses a large war club in combat. His loyalty, such as it is amongst bandits, belongs to Madoc who once saved him from drowning in quicksand.

Prowess 0	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 3 Strength 6	Fighting Axe 2 Maul 1 Sword 2 War Club 7 Wrestling 4	Damage Resis- tance 9 Poison Resistance 2	Lore 3 Reading/Writ- ing 2 Religion (Kesh) 7	Observation 3	

Advantages: thunderblow

Weaknesses: gambler, weakness to drugs

Weapons: war club (weapon bonus +1, initiative bonus +0)

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Puna

Puna is a true mystery. She appears to be from one of the many savage tribes that call the borderlands home, but she seems to hold no allegiance to any of them. Her beauty is wild and exotic but no one besides Joubert (and more recently Madoc) has ever sampled her charms. When other savages encounter her, they give way and make warding signs when she passes.

The pirates think of her as a sorceress or witch. She has uncanny powers over beasts in the forests and has been known to brew both poisons and healing elixirs for use by the pirates. She wanders the camp in next to nothing, flaunting her beauty and daring any to react to it. The pirates benefit from the potions that she brews for them, but they worry about the plans she might be planting in their leader's ears at night. Also, seeing all that beautiful flesh walking around, but never being able to touch it makes them surly. They do not understand her--what she is or where her powers come from--and what they don't understand they dislike. Puna's constant companion is a large forest leopard she can apparently communicate with.

She loves Joubert, but lately she is realizing that his honeyed words may be hollow. Feeling spurned by him, she has begun a dalliance with Madoc to try and get a rise out of the pirate leader. Puna is a cipher. At the referee's discretion, she could be given several magical charms or spells to bend the will of men, control beasts, or command nature (vines that bind victims at her command or ground that turns to quicksand come to mind). Also, Puna's loyalties could vary as it suits the referee and the direction of the adventure. Feeling spurned and wrathful, she could take her revenge on all the band including the PCs. She could be loyal to Joubert and hunt down the PCs using her own unique skills, or she might possibly fall in love with one of the PCs and open a whole new set of complications.

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 0	Insight 2
Acrobatics 3 Movement 7 Throwing 3	Dirk 2	Damage Resistance 4 Magic Resistance 4 Will 2	Alchemy 2 Arcane Languages 2 Herbalism 2 Survival (Forest) 4 Trapping 3	Physical Laws 6	Animal Empathy 6 Natural Magic 6 Obsession 6 Magic Sense 2

Advantages: animal familiar (leopard), sexy defense

Weaknesses: distrusted

Weapons: throwing knife

Armor: none

Special Abilities: natural magic and physical laws spells

Joubert's Pirates

The river pirates are a collection of bandits, deserters, convicts and slaves, with a spattering of out of work mercenaries. They are a bit harder than most outlaw gangs since Joubert insists on conducting "initiations" to weed out the weak and inept. Under Joubert's leadership, they have had a run of good fortune lately so morale is high. The wine and women have been flowing freely and even the lowliest of the band has silver in his pocket and meat in his belly.

Prowess 1	Fighting 0	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 0
Climbing 3 Swimming 5 Movement 3	Dirk 2 Cutlass 5	Damage 6	Sailing 6 Navigation 2	Medicine 2	Weather Sense 2

Weakness: one of gambler, phobia (nautical omens of bad luck), or weakness to drink/drugs/women

Weapons: cutlass, dirk

Armor: none

Special Abilities: none

Among the crew of cutthroats the PC's will encounter are :

Unger

Unger is pretty much despised by everyone (and among this bunch that's saying a lot).

He has a nose for trouble and enjoys fanning the flames of discord. Unger has dirt on everyone and will not hesitate to use his knowledge to his advantage. He always seems to be slinking around, listening and eavesdropping. The only thing that keeps him alive is that for some reason the boss has taken a shine to him. Joubert knows Unger's true nature but, as long as he remains loyal, Joubert will protect him.

Koll

Koll is a six year old boy. His mother was taken in a raid two years ago; by her dress and demeanor it was believed she was a noblewoman or the wife of a merchant. The plan was to ransom her and the boy, but the abduction and subsequent abuse addled her mind and she died before revealing her family name. Koll was allowed to live and has been cared for by the slaves of the camp and the occasional gesture of kindness by the pirates. Koll earns his keep by emptying the slop buckets, gathering firewood, and doing anything useful to earn a scrap of bread to eat.

He admires the pirates and longs to be one of them. He has one possession that no one knows of: a locket with a picture of his mother and a man, possibly his father. He keeps it hidden behind some rocks near his sleeping place and often looks at it when the others sleep.

Fat Ethel

Fat Ethel is a repulsive, ugly, she-beast. Weighing close to 300 lbs, towering near six feet, and sporting a shaven head, Ethel is a sight to behold. She is in charge of the day to day running of the Lair, a job that she takes to with an iron fist and a rawhide bullwhip. The slaves tremble in fear of her and even the pirates give her a wide berth. To Joubert and Madoc she is respectful, but to all the other pirates she is a hellion. Fat Ethel is a bully and a sadist. She is happiest when applying her lash with glee to the backside of a squirming slave girl. The only person in the lair she noticeably avoids is Puna.

Ingko

Ingko has been a soldier, a pimp, a thief, and an assassin. His last occupation ended badly and brought him here. He is a bit paranoid since the man he killed was connected to a powerful criminal guild--a guild that is known to be vengeful. Ingko seems to see something familiar in one of the PCs. It may be his usual paranoia, but still...

Bear Clan Savages

The closest of the tribes to the pirates' lair is the Bear Clan. Joubert has been trading with them regularly and has even lent them some of his men and canoes when the Clan crosses the great lake to raid other tribes. However, there are still older members of the clan that feel city men, of whatever breed, only bring more city men who will eventually cut down the trees, fence off the land, and begin building stone houses. They are advocating the pirates be wiped out.



Iconic Characters

Following are a number of iconic characters from the original Erisa adventures as they were played out by the author's gaming groups over the years. Don't bother trying to reverse engineer their point costs; the versions presented here were constructed without regard to numbers. Instead, each character was assigned talents, advantages and equipment that fit him or her as imagined by Jeff. It's an approach he recommends for any significant NPC, for that matter: slap down the numbers and abilities that fit your mental image of the character, not what the rules say they can or must have.



Anteus

Gladiator

Equipment

weighted cesti (i.e. Brass knuckles) +0
healer's bag containing a variety of bandages, salves, poultices and instruments for treating illnesses and injuries.

Background

At 6'3 and 300 pounds Anteus is one of the most physically imposing gladiators to ever fight in the Grand Arena of Pyrani. He is a former champion in unarmed combat and favors a fighting style which relies on his strength to deliver punishing blows. Despite his violent career in the arena, Anteus is a somewhat soft hearted and introspective soul. His father was a physician, and Anteus is trained in those arts as well. He is especially adept at delivering babies.

Prowess 2	Fighting 4	Endurance 2	Knowledge 1	Perception 0	Insight 0
Animal Reflexes 8 Movement 4 Strength 12 Swimming 4	Brawling 15 Two-Weapon Fighting (fists) 15 Wrestling 10	Damage Resistance 15 Will 10	Area Knowledge (Pyrani) 8 Area Knowledge (Tyros) 8	Medicine 8	Personal Magnetism 6

Advantages: one foe at a time, sexy defense

Weaknesses: impaired sense (hearing), soft spot for children

Weapons: cutlass, dirk

Armor: none

Fame: 8



Brother Stern

Warrior Priest of Helder

Background

Brother Stern is 50 years old. He has dark skin, grey hair, a full beard, a broken nose, and is built like a bear. He is a Warrior-Priest of Helder and a former general in the Umbrian army. When the king of Umbria was overthrown Stern was entrusted with Prince Talon and they escaped into exile.

Stern's massive great axe Red Maiden is plainly blessed by Helder, since Stern wields it as deftly as an ordinary man would handle a saber. Whether anyone other than Stern would be able to do so remains to be seen.

Prowess 2	Fighting 3	Endurance 2	Knowledge 2	Perception 0	Insight 1
Movement 5 Strength 8 Throwing 8	Dirk 8 Great Axe 12 Shortsword 10	Damage Resistance 12 Will 14	Lore 13 Religion (Helder) 10 Siegecraft/Engineering 5	Animal Handling 6	Personal Magnetism 10

Advantages: divine boons (4)

Essence of Helder - Once per day, Stern can grant a +3CS bonus to any resolution check against a talent that falls under the Endurance pool, or against General Endurance itself.

Fist of Helder - Stern can smite the foes of Helder at a distance with a blast of divine wrath that does damage as a javelin (weapon bonus -1).

Righteous Fury of Helder - At the beginning of a fight, Stern's opponents must make a resolution check against their Will or General Endurance minus Stern's Personal Magnetism. If they fail, they flee and will absolutely refuse to get within 30 feet of him. On a green success, they suffer a -1CS penalty to all actions while within 30 feet. On any higher degree of success, they may act normally.

Dawn-flame - Stern can summon a divine light as bright as a large bonfire to light his way.

Weaknesses: obligation (indenture to the Church of Helder)

Weapons: great axe "Red Maiden" (weapon bonus +2, initiative bonus 0),

Armor: hauberk

De Silva

Sorcerer



Background

De Silva is the fourth son in a minor noble house from the city of Aragos. As befits a noble scion of Aragos he was given an education in the arcane arts and sent forth by his father to make his fortune. Despite his lack of lands or fortune, De Silva carries himself as an Aragossean noble would be expected to.

Spells:

Stregocula

Type: Information

Difficulty: Simple (green/marginal)

The witches' eye lets its user see the aura of any magical power in effect in an area or upon a living being.

Trollflesh

Type: Transmutation

Difficulty: Moderate (yellow/acceptable)

For five minutes per level of success on De Silva's resolution check, his skin turns as grey and flinty hard as a troll's. He gains 1 point of armor protection to his entire body but suffers no movement penalty.

Warding Daemon's Breath

Type: Physical Laws

Difficulty: Moderate (yellow/acceptable)

This spell surrounds the caster in a sheath of swirling winds that deflect incoming missiles. Light or slow-moving missiles (e.g. arrows, thrown rocks) suffer a -6CS to hit; heavier or faster ones (e.g. arbalest bolts) suffer a -4.

Prowess 0	Fighting 1	Endurance 2	Knowledge 3	Perception 0	Insight 1
Movement 7	Dirk 4 Saber 7	Damage Resistance 8 Magic Resistance 13 Will 8	Gambling 8 Information 5 Lore 15 Physical Laws 8 Transmutation 6	Artisan 4	Obsession 6 Personal Magnetism 8

Advantages: just the thing, perfect memory

Weaknesses: none

Weapons: rapier (treat as saber), dirk

Armor: none



Risa

Mercenary Archer

Background

Risa is a warrior woman of Sulanese origin. She was raised on the great plains of the Goban. Fleeing an arranged marriage, Risa made her way south and soon began earning a living as a mercenary. As part of a guard force to a visiting Sulanese merchant, Risa eventually came to the Akkarian continent. She has since met and fallen in love with the gladiator Anteus of Pyrani.

Prowess 1	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 0	Perception 1	Insight 0
Acrobatics 6 Movement 8 Throwing 3	Dirk 3 Shortbow 8 Short sword 5	Damage Resistance 7 Stamina 4	Survival (grasslands) 6	Animal Handling 7 Tracking 5	

Advantages: good looking, rapid fire

Weaknesses: phobia (enclosed spaces)

Weapons: Shortbow, short sword

Armor: leather top and leggings (1 pt armor to C, G, RL, LL)



Talena ***Veteran Pirate/Brigand***

Background

Talena was a city-bred urchin who eventually found herself on a pirate ship. Her quickness and agility soon made her a welcome member of the crew. She came under the protective wing the ship's first mate who taught her the skills of a sailor and warrior. Now in her early 20's Talena has been at sea for most of her life, serving aboard all manner of vessels from pirate carracks to Zandaran slave galleys.

Prowess 2	Fighting 1	Endurance 0	Knowledge 0	Perception 0	Insight 1
Acrobatics 4 Climbing 4 Movement 6 Swimming 3 Throwing 5	Dirk 3 Handaxe 5 Sling 3	Damage Resistance 6	Lockpicking 4 Sailing 4	Artisan 2	Directional Sense 2 Personal Magnetism 5 Weather Sense 3

Advantages: good looking, fearless

Weaknesses: gambler

Weapons: throwing axes (3), dirks (3), sling

Armor: none

Equipment: lock picks, grappling hook & silk rope



Talon Ironhawk

Veteran Exiled Prince

Background

Talon is the son of the late King Tarn Ironhawk of Umbria. Ten years ago Tarn was killed in his sleep by assassins and his throne usurped by Marshal Jagan, a demon-worshipping nobleman, and his military council. Unbeknownst to the usurpers, Prince Talon, then a young lad of 8 years, was spirited away by Brother Stern, one of the King's most trusted advisers. Stern has raised Talon as his foster son. The two have traveled across Erisa, serving as warriors for hire. Talon is now of age and is determined to regain his throne and free his people from the grip of the evil Marshal Jagan.

Prowess 0	Fighting 1	Endurance 1	Knowledge 1	Perception 0	Insight 0
Movement 4 Strength 5	Dirk 3 Shortbow 3 Saber 6	Damage Resistance 6 Will 4 Stamina 3	Heraldry 4 Military Organization 7	Animal Handling 3	Personal Magnetism 6

Advantages: good looking, one foe at a time

Weaknesses: vow (reclaim his kingdom), phobia (heights)

Weapons: saber, dirk, short bow

Armor: chain shirt

