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BY THE SWORD:
DUELING IN REALMS OF FANTASY

BY THE SWORD: DUELING IN REALMS OF FANTASY

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Introduction

About This Book

By the Sword: Dueling in the Realms of Fantasy describes a variety of medieval-fantasy arms, equipment, prestige classes, fighting styles and dueling societies that can be used with multiple games and campaign settings.

For the sake of consistency, item descriptions and flavor text refers to one particular campaign setting: the Kingdoms of Kalamar. In this realistic, dynamic world of Tellene, complex political alliances mix with marauding bands of humanoids, and medieval technology and culture come face to face with magic and the fantastic. Whatever type of adventure you seek, you can find it here.

Of course, while certain classes, races and items have a racial name specific to this setting, you may notice that others have the same name as they do here on Earth. These non-Tellenian names or words are considered the Merchant's Tongue name for this item. (Merchant's Tongue is the international language of trade, often considered equivalent to the Common tongue in other settings.) If you are not using this setting, you can either disregard setting-specific information or adapt it to fit into your own world.

As always, use what you want and adapt the ideas to the specifics of your game. Remember, though this book is very comprehensive, there are always other items available, limited only by your imagination (and that of your Dungeon Master). For in a universe of magic and multiple planes of existence, anything is possible!

Chapter 1: The Basics of Dueling introduces you to the topic of dueling, and discusses dueling among different races, duels and the law, steps of a duel, and several types of duels, both physical and mental. Both player and Dungeon Master will certainly find many ideas to incorporate into their own characters or campaigns.

Chapter 2: Tools of the Trade provides the reader with information on basic dueling weapons, armor, weapon modifications, skill options, new feats and new spells.

Chapter 3: Fighting Styles describes a variety of basic and fighting styles, and the combat benefits and penalties they receive from adopting such a style.

Chapter 4: Prestige Classes includes eight prestige classes for D&D, as well as eight new packages for the HackMaster system. These include the dwarven axelord, gnome tumbler, halfling slinger, hand of the deity, iron fist, melee weapon master, ultimate archer and voyageur.

Chapter 5: Dueling Societies provides three examples of dueling societies: a renowned school of arms, a social club, and an adventurer's guild. Players may wish to form such an organization, while DMs may use these for adventurer hooks or nearly any other reason.

Appendix A: Notes for the DungeonMaster includes notes specific for the DM, regarding integrating duels into his or her campaign, and the rules of interpretation.

Appendix B: Sample Duelist NPCs provides some ready made opponents for your players utilizing this book's rules.

How to Use This Book...

As noted above, this supplement can be used with multiple game systems and campaign settings. Details on this follow below.

...with the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting

For players and Dungeon Masters who already use the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Campaign Setting Sourcebook*, most of the information in this book is applicable. Each description divulges where the item is found on Tellene, and who is most likely to use it. This supplement is for use with D&D 3.5 edition. Other recommended (but not required) references include the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*, *Villain Design Handbook*, and *Dangerous Denizens: the Monsters of Tellene*. One of our many other fine supplements or adventures would also be useful when running your campaign.

Game statistics for weapons and armor are presented in tables. Most of the items that appear herein do not have wide circulation, meaning that DMs should feel free to introduce only those items that they choose. Many items can be found only in certain areas of Tellene, and can only be constructed or repaired by trained smiths or crafters. On the other hand, DMs should also feel free to increase the availability of items they like. Finally, the prices listed with the items are merely suggestions. Each vendor on Tellene is likely to have differently priced items. Unfamiliar or rare items are likely to be more expensive when found.

...with other campaign settings

Even if you do not use the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting, this book is an excellent resource for your game. In fact, many of Tellene's human cultures have general characteristics that could appear in any campaign.

Brandobians are vibrant and proud, with a love of exploration.

Dejy are diverse, nomadic and tribal, but are also skilled craftsmen.

Fhokki are tall, bearded and clannish, with bodies adapted to the cold north.

Kalamarans are proud and militaristic, with a love of grandeur.

Reanaarians are artistic, open-minded, and often sailors or merchants.

Svimohz are dark-skinned, wise and strong, with an ancient, rich culture.

Dueling habits from most nonhuman cultures, such as dwarves and elves, can easily be substituted into another campaign setting with little difficulty. Hobgoblin duelists might become orcs, humans or other hobgoblins, depending on the campaign setting.

In this supplement, item specific statistics are generally listed in their own tables. Note that the DM may want to adjust the listed prices so that they fit within his or her campaign.

Throughout this book, you may notice references to unfamiliar character classes such as Basiran Dancer (Dan), Brigand (Brg), Gladiator (Gld), Infiltrator (Inf), Shaman (Sha) or Spellsinger (Spl). These are variant core classes, defined in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*.

...with HackMaster or earlier editions of D&D

As the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting can be used with multiple game systems, you may already be using it for your HackMaster game, or an earlier edition of D&D (pre-version 3.0). In this case, you may keep the flavor text as is. Otherwise, you may alter it to fit your own campaign setting.

For the rules, however, HackMaster players will need a copy of the *HackMaster Player's Handbook*, and would benefit from one or more of the four class books (either the *The Spellslinger's Guide to Wurld Domination*, *The Combatant's Guide to Slaughtering Foes*, *The Zealot's Guide to Wurld Conversion*, or *The Griftmaster's Guide to Life's Wildest Dreams*. GameMasters (GMs) will also need a copy of the *HackMaster GameMaster's Guide*.

In this supplement, HackMaster-specific statistics are generally listed in their own tables (indicated by a small HackMaster logo in the table). When no HackMaster-specific statistic appears, the listed value applies. In addition, any non-campaign specific information in the item descriptions still applies to the HackMaster version of the item. Finally, most HackMaster-specific rules are called out in italics for ease of reference.





CHAPTER ONE: THE BASICS OF DUELING

In most civilized kingdoms, dueling is an essential part of a young noble's education. After all, with the possibility of peasant uprisings, feuding noble families and bandits along the roads, it is best to be prepared. Of course, different races perceive duels differently, be it because of their divergent opinions on combat, respect for combat prowess, or simply because of their culture. We begin with a short outlook on general preferences and racial tastes in matter of duels.

Dwarves

In general, dwarves of all races have such respect for great warriors and battles that they enjoy duels, or at least do not stop them. Moreover, the dwarven people are so sturdy that they do not frown at the idea of drawing blood in a more-or-less friendly contest, and do not necessarily associate a loss of blood with the concept of injury or death. To a dwarf, as long as a duel abides by the rules, there is no reason to prevent or stop it. Moreover, since dwarves often worship gods that glorify war and conflict, duels in dwarven culture often receive arbitration from the clergy. Dwarves usually prefer melee duels, but ranged duels do exist for use among elite dwarven sharpshooters. Dwarves seldom engage in mounted duels of any kind.

Elves

Many elven cultures, particularly those of the gray elves and dark elves, hold dueling in high regard. While most elves (at least those who reside on the surface) attempt to find a way around the drawing of blades and the shedding of blood to resolve their differences, they also respect the need for some to defend their family or their beliefs with the edge of their sword. Non-lethal duels are most frequent among surface elves, while dark elf duels always result in fatalities.

Gnomes

In general, gnomes prefer non-violent alternatives to prove their point or their superiority; an offended gnome may forgive and forget, or repay his offender by other, nonviolent ways (such as mischief, pranks or, for a serious matter, a duel of wits). However, duels among gnomes are certainly not unknown. In fact, gnomes with an interest in combat and a

certain martial training may agree to duel over matters of grave importance. Gnomes favor ranged duels, but also use melee duels from time to time. Mounted duels and duels to the death are rare.

Half-Races

Though they have no established societies of their own, half-elf, half-hobgoblin and half-orc duelists tend to be highly competitive and like to prove themselves in all kinds of activities. Indeed, it is not uncommon for such characters to carve themselves a place and a name by way of duels, as part of their larger quest for acceptance. Most half-breeds have no marked preference for any type of duel.

Halflings

While sharing neither a taste for blood nor a competitive nature with the other races, halflings tend to incorporate duels in their customs, for they appreciate its spontaneity and the danger it creates. While duels are not frequent in halfling settlements, where everybody knows and respects everybody else, young halflings learn how to duel so they can survive in other cultures. Halflings have a marked preference for ranged duels; while they do not flinch at the idea of shedding blood, they prefer to keep things as friendly as possible.

Hobgoblins

Hobgoblins, due to their heritage, respect strength and honor in combat. Moreover, they are highly competitive and seek honor in any form. Those two traits make hobgoblins devoted duelists; their innate strength makes them good ones. Since hobgoblins have notoriously short tempers, they also frequent dueling grounds, using duels to quench their thirst for blood the same way they use raids.

Cheating is almost unheard of among hobgoblins, although it does exist. For example, Tullum of Ronazagh is a deadly swordsman known for his willingness to cheat in duels and for his legendary stamina. Tullum once suffered over 100 nicks, cuts and even serious stabs in a duel that he won.

Hobgoblins tend to favor melee duels.

Humans

There seem to be as many human outlooks on duels as there are human cultures. Being very competitive and uncontrollably ambitious, humans like the concept of duels as a way of comparing skills. Most cities made duels illegal because of their sometimes selfish and dangerous nature, though punishments are mild, not unlike public drunkenness or disorderly conduct. However, some humans, particularly the noble Kalamarans, have a highly developed concept of honor that fuels the need to avenge offenses or pain. In fact, Kalamar's 1st Legion, also known as "Kabori's Legion" or the Guardians of the Imperial Throne, contains many noble duelists chosen for their fighting abilities. Although officially prohibited from it, some secretly duel in the Grand Amphitheater, both to propagate their reputation and to keep in practice.

Likewise, the arena of U'Rudaketa is a nighttime dueling ground for nobles. Even later at night, quarreling thieves use it for the same purpose (albeit with less formal procedure).

Humans practice all types of duels.

DUELS AND THE LAW

Since duels are little more than an actualization of the "law of the strongest," and because they constitute a way for the people to make their own rules, the government or local

authorities may outlaw such practices. Indeed, if everyone had recourse to a duel to get their vengeance or rule their differences, prisons and officers would be of little use. Moreover, some duels, if not most, imply the death of one of its participants, and to kill another person in an unlawful duel is nothing less than murder in the eyes of the local legislature. Because of this, characters wishing to organize a duel should put some thought into finding a quiet spot to resolve the matter.

Of course, other lands may also distinguish between lawful and unlawful dueling. So-called lawful dueling is usually only permitted to the power and authority of certain social classes, churches or even town officials. It is also relatively frequent in certain cities to authorize dueling only among gentlemen; sometimes, the duelists ask allow a town representative to arbitrate the event. Even when the law does not explicitly exclude nobles from dueling, guards often overlook this particular transgression of the law due to generous bribes or fear of retribution. Certain churches and religions, too, benefit from a privileged treatment in regard to duels. Temples of certain military deities, such as the Temple of Armed Conflict, may not be subject to anti-dueling laws. In smaller cities where clerics and followers of a military deity act as judges and are asked to enforce the law, a common method to resolve differences is to order a duel of a certain type; the winner wins the issue. Among some Dejy or Fhokki tribes, and often among hobgoblins, duels may be the



Duelists come in all shapes and sizes.

only legal way to resolve a conflict, which explains why chieftains are often the strongest warriors of the tribe.

Unlawful dueling is generally punishable by light fines plus the pillory and/or public flogging, or a ban or edict against the individual. On the other hand, if a participant dies while engaged in a duel, the punishment may be harsher. Slaying another person in a lawful duel and failing to report the death is punishable by either exile for life, hard labor, or dungeon imprisonment, including confiscation of property or heavy fines. There is no crime if the duel and death are reported by a participant.

HackMaster: Fangaerie, for example, requires any armed traveler to have permits by weapon class: bows, crossbows, swords, pole arms and other weapons. While no one can legally carry weapons without permits, officials usually let one single dagger or knife slide (if they're not in a bad mood). These permits last for one month and must be renewed to remain active (yearly permits can be purchased at a slight discount, if the official believes you have a valid reason).

Purchasers receive a special wooden disk with the date of the permit and an imprint of the weapon type. A monthly sword permit costs 1 gp, while a permit for a bow costs 3 sp. People who are found illegally carrying weapons (of any type) generally face a light fine. In the capital city of Fangaerie, guards at the Gate are supposed to check every armed entrant for weapon licenses. City officials within will often confront non-noble bearers of weapons (watch out for disheveled types who look like they need money – scam artists in Fangaerie frequently pretend to be after licensing fees).

Anyone wearing chain mail armor or better in Fangaerie is assumed to be a noble, by all except the government officials. A non-noble does not need an armor permit, but he will be followed, watched and often face the maximum penalty for any crime he does commit.

FOUR WAYS TO PROVOKE A DUEL

There are four primary ways a character may provoke another character into a duel. These include the unintended offense, the intended offense, vengeful offense and reputation settlement.

Unintended Offense

An unintended offense can be anything someone could be offended about without losing anything or really suffering physically, mentally or socially from it. This includes any accidents in which the offender did not intend to offend anyone. Accidentally spilling tea on someone's lap, unknowingly failing to acknowledge a person's authority or status through formal greeting or gesture, inappropriately commenting one's private matters or marriage, gazing for too long at a baron's wife, insulting someone's hobby, flirting with someone's fiancée, doubting a notorious swordsman's or swordswoman's abilities, bumping into a hot-headed

character, telling a jest of bad taste, and discussing unflattering rumors are all examples of unintended offenses.

Unintended offenses can readily serve as a provocation to a duel, although death is seldom a desired result for either party. Duels to the first blood, to yield or until disarmed are all popular options, as well as any other type or variant of duel in which the duelists defend their honors without any permanent ill effects (other than social).

Intended Offense

Intended offenses include all those made intentionally by the offender with the purpose of hurting or diminishing the victim. Having an affair with a noble's wife, directly or indirectly insulting someone's family or friends, jesting inappropriately at someone's funeral, defying a noble in his own house, showing obvious distaste for someone, exhibiting an outright lack of respect for someone's authority or status, knowingly destroying a symbol or icon, mocking someone's mannerism or voice in public, and proposing one's superiority over a host are all examples of intended offenses.

Intended offenses open the way to almost any kind of duel, whatever the consequences. Duels provoked by a intended offense are often spontaneous and require little, if any, preparation; consequently, it is rare indeed to see a jousting duel arranged in response to a intended offense. The consequences of the duel tend to vary proportionally with the gravity of the offense; duels to the death tend to be rather frequent.

Vengeful Offense

The vengeful offense suggests time, planning and the nurturing of a vivid desire to hurt the opponent. Beside the classical "avenging the death of a loved one," vengeful offenses include being humiliated in public, suffering an excruciating defeat, being rendered temporarily powerless, and being victim of the character's past actions.

Because of their intensity, cravings for vengeance can be resolved in only one manner: death. The exact type of duel proposed by the vengeful party is either a direct, instantaneous confrontation or a carefully planned encounter inspired by the circumstances that led to the vengeful feelings.

Honor or Reputation Settlement

The character's honor or reputation can be a good reason for one character to challenge another to a duel. A character said to be the finest swordsman of Cosdol is bound to attract accomplished fighters and vigorous youngsters alike who wish only to compare their skills to that of said character's. Likewise, a character with the reputation of being irresistible to noble women would often find himself challenged to a duel by the ruling male noble upon entering his castle, in the hope that defeat would prevent the character from wooing the castle's lady.

Duels issued because of a character's reputation are rarely fought to the death. Since they tend to greatly focus on the duelists' compared skill-at-arms, any duel that can clearly establish the best warrior will suffice.

HackMaster: All duels are, in a way, a matter of Honor, even if no one involved utters the hallowed words "Honor Duel." The GMG lists Honor awards and penalties for various actions, and you'd better believe that many of those relate to fighting. These, at least, apply to virtually any duels you'll have.

Honor Duels, though, have more significant consequences. Aside from delivering an ass kicking with the full blessing of tradition, spectators and often even the law, you can actually remove Honor directly from your opponent and add it to yourself. Use *The Combatant's Guide to Slaughtering Foes* Table 4A: Duels and Honor to determine the percentage of base Honor you can claim from an opponent. Add the values for each appropriate factor and apply this number as a percentage to the loser's Honor. He loses this much Honor, while the victor (which should be you) gains it. Your GM may begin with a base of 1% or 5%, depending on circumstances (he may not even share the base amount with you. In that case, you'll be left to wonder just where your Honor award/penalty stands at the end of the duel.). This percentage comes out of base Honor and adds to your base Honor. Penalties apply to the character's temporal Honor.

Of course, there can often be more than Honor at stake in a duel. Avenging insults, romantic interests, and possession of certain items are all classic reasons to take up the blade. The complete terms of victory are put forward so that (honest) misunderstanding and ambiguity are rare. The loser might agree to let the winner have full ownership of a ring, sincerely apologize for calling the victor's mother a bloated warthog, or agree not to persist in making advances towards the victor's sister, wife, or sheep. Any of these conditions may apply, whether it is technically an Honor Duel or simply a run-of-the-mill, everyday duel.

Failure to live up to the terms of a Duel of Honor automatically costs the violator 25% of his base Honor. In almost all cases, it is the loser who violates the terms, as the winner has no reason to do so. Even if he deigns to grant the loser something he wants (giving the ring to his opponent, agreeing that his mother is a bloated warthog, or invites the loser to go on courting his relative) he does so graciously. He may even gain 1 or 2 points of Honor for doing so, if he does not grant a ridiculous, evil or thoroughly foolish request.

THE STEPS OF A DUEL

Initiating a Duel

As noted above, what provokes a duel depends vastly on the context. Since duels are usually a matter of honor, it takes some kind of offense to start the whole process. The offense itself may also determine in part the type of duel as well as

some of its modalities. For instance, killing or mortally wounding a character's sibling is opening the door to a duel to the death, while spilling some tea over one's lap might require a simple first cut duel in order to defend the honor of the offended party (if it leads to a duel at all).

Most of the time, a deliberate offense in itself constitutes a provocation to a duel. In such instances, the offended party really has no choice but to accept. One has to be careful, though, as relentlessly issuing duels without good reason tends to result in a reputation of a rash, uncouth and otherwise socially unacceptable individual.

Regardless of the situation, refusing a duel is a sure sign of weakness. In some societies, the provocation to a duel (as well as the acceptance) occurs through ritual gestures, such as a slap in the face with a glove, which properly constitutes a valid deliberate offense.

Setting the Duel

Once both participants have agreed to fight a duel, they have to agree on the terms. Usually, these revolve around the time and place for the duel, what type the duel will be, the choice of weapon, whether the duel will be private or public, and if arbiters or aids will be present, as well as the consequences of loss and how the winner is to be determined.

The time and place of a duel varies with the exact type of duel. Hence, a duel might be set to happen here and now, or scheduled for the next full moon by the great oak tree. Most trite or accidental offenses are covered by a short, immediate duel, while grave offenses and matters of importance (such as an offense to the king) are planned for a future day, giving both participants some time to prepare. The place of the duel is sometimes symbolic, sometimes purely pragmatic. For example, a duel issued by an offense to one's ancestors could be fought near the ancestor's crypt or burying place, while a simple quarrel among minor nobles could be resolved at night in the streets or in the forest, far from the town's militia. Matters of urgency are usually resolved immediately.

Participants generally choose the type of duel depending on their race, social rank, alignment and their cultural background. There are three broad types of duels: melee, ranged, and mounted. There are also other, more "evolved" types of duels, such as the magical duel or the duel of intellect (also known as a battle of wits).

The type of duel also heavily influences the choice of weapons. Some duels may require an extremely specific weapon, such as a particular ritual dagger. Certain types of duels allow only a certain weapon, such as a longsword, while others might allow a broader category, such as any edged weapon, any mace, or any ranged weapon. Finally, some duels allow a greater flexibility. It is then up to the participants to decide whether they will wield the same equipment, or use different sets of weapons and armors.

Needless to say, the duelists must agree on the offense. Duels are often fought for the sole sake of honor; although

The Basics of Dueling

some characters may demand a duel to determine who wins a certain woman's favor, who receives a piece of (generally inherited) land, who was right and who was wrong, and so on.

Determination of the winner is also strongly linked to the type of duel. It usually involves being the first to achieve an effect. In the classic case of the duel to the death, the winner is the one that kills the other. In a duel to first blood, the winner is the first duelist to score damage on their opponent.

Seconds

Each dueler chooses a second as his representative and assistant. Since duels are set for the future, however, the main duty of a second is to fill in for the individual he supports (or "stands for") should that individual be unable to fight at the appointed time (for example, if he becomes severely ill, dead or runs off like a chicken with its head cut off).

If he need not take the place of the primary dueler, the second assists his first by helping to carry, prepare and maintain weapons, helping the primary train and prepare, making sure he arrives on time, and so on. Your second should be a close and well-trusted friend. Sloppy work (or treachery) before heading into any duel is a quick ticket to a hastily dug grave. Your second need not be a great fighter, though, since if you can't fight on your own you're probably dead, so what do you care?

Moderators

Despite careful rules and restrictions concerning duels and the conditions of victory, sometimes interpretations are necessary. Thus, most duelers rely on a moderator that both trust (or both distrust equally, anyway), to insure things proceed fairly. This person must be a respected citizen (in HackMaster, the moderator cannot be in dishonor). Ideally, he need do nothing but announce the outcome of the duel when all is said and done. If there are any questions concerning the proceedings, everyone looks to the moderator.

A moderator is not, strictly speaking, entirely necessary. Without a designated moderator, spectators decide on these issues. After all, spectators like duels to go on for as long as possible and they like dramatic action as opposed to simple, efficient hacking without flair. If you find yourself in a duel with no moderator, consider that element of spectacle if you want to win. A daring maneuver, even if it fails, can win more crowd support than a simple blow to the torso.

Spectators

The presence of spectators is purely a matter of publicity. Victory is much more rewarding and defeat more humiliating when the public are present, especially when considering the speed at which gossip spreads. The public may gather if the duel is lawful, of public importance, or immediate. One of the parties might also insist on allowing public viewing when it gives the party an advantage, such as when the other duelist

is known to be uncomfortable in crowds, or when the public favors the demanding party.

Rules of Magic

In a campaign setting where magic is common, or at least is not unknown, it is possible that a duelist will seek to improve his chances by the use of magic spells, weapons and armor. Naturally, the duelists themselves must also agree upon the use of magic in their duel. Common rules follow.

Magic Prohibited: No magic can be used by either combatant (or their allies) to affect the outcome of the duel. Any attempt to do so instantly discredits the combatant being helped; he loses the duel immediately.

Magic Weapons Only: Either combatant can use magical weapons, but not artifacts or spells.

Magic Arms and Armor: Either combatant can use magical weapons and/or magical armor, but not artifacts or spells.

Spells Only: Either participant can use spells to enhance his own fighting ability or attack his opponent. Note that anyone else using spells constitutes a breach of the duel and an automatic loss for whoever is helped by that use.

Magic Limited: A character can use up to two items each. These can be weapons, armor or other items, but not artifacts or spell effects.

Magic Inclusive: A character may use magical weapons, items, spells, armor or whatever they have.

No Spells: Any type of magic item is allowed, but neither side can use spells to damage their opponent or enhance their own fighting ability.

Magic Mandatory: Each combatant must have at least one magic weapons, piece of magical armor or shield, or other type of useful magic item to proceed.

Anything Goes: As it says, anything goes. However, outsiders are not to interfere during the duel. It is not uncommon for allies to use spells on these warriors before the duel officially commences.

MELEE DUELS

By far the most popular and widespread, the melee duel is practiced throughout the campaign world for its accessibility and its spontaneity. Although there exist many variants, the basic concept of a melee duel is to prove your superiority over your opponent in melee combat. This can be done through killing your opponent, disarming him, hitting him, forcing him to surrender, and so on. In all melee duels, the participants first salute each other, after which the fight begins.

The Salute

An important overture to the duel, the salute is an acknowledgement of the duelists' respect and recognition for each other. A salute greets an opponent, indicates that you

are ready and invites him or her to prepare for the combat. It is composed of three elements: eye contact, a certain presentation of the weapon and the adoption of a fighting stance. Anyone can still refuse to salute the opponent and surrender at this point. Otherwise, the duel begins.

Different races often have different official salutes. A dwarven "knockdown" duel, for instance, usually requires both warriors to acknowledge their adversary with a grunt or snarl. Likewise, gnomes and halflings sometimes require their duelists to shake hands before the duel. Finally, hobgoblins like to wave their weapons in the air and yell, in the hope of intimidating their opponent and impressing any spectators. Duels held or moderated by clergy, particularly the followers of the Battle Rager, often open the duel with a shout or prayer to their deity.

Using the D&D game rules, saluting the opponent is an essential part of the duel, as it takes a standard action for each duelist and therefore ensures that no one starts the duel flat-footed.

Types of Melee Duels

A number of factors apply to a duel, and certain descriptions have developed as shorthand methods of conveying specific conditions of the duel. Common terms for various conditions of a duel include the following:

To the Grave

The meaning of this duel should be obvious. If not, check your head for giant welts and see if you can find your brain by staring through your ear in a mirror. The winner of such a duel is also obvious, if there is one – the loser dies. These sorts of duels to the death have no provision for yielding, and if both combatants die there is no winner. Otherwise, they resemble duels to the death (below).

To the Death

The duel to the death remains a classic in almost all cultures and races. Effectively, sometimes the only stake a duelist desires is the death of her opponent: avenging the death of a loved one, preventing him from achieving an end, and so on. Three things alone can end a duel to the death: the death of one of the two duelists, the yielding of one of the two duelists, or an outside intervention that disturbs the duel. In a duel to the death, the winner has proven beyond doubt her superiority to the loser.

A duel of this type is always exciting because of the prize at stake: the character's very life. Losing a duel to the death has terrible consequences, either by death or by yielding. Yielding is rare, however, as mortal duels are rarely fought over trivial matters. Yielding indicates complete responsibility for all wrongs, retraction of all insults, and acceptance of all insults directed at him by the victor.

Since this type of duel exists in almost any culture, there are no broad restrictions on weapons or armors. In fact, characters invited to a duel to the death must present

themselves armed and defended to the best of their capacity; of course, some cultures expect their duelists to attire themselves in the ceremonial garbs and wield a certain, cultural weapon.

Most combat systems work well for duels to the death. Two characters are pitted one against the other and every trick they know can be of some use. A detailed battleground, with special features such as holes, staircase, arches and other elements, can add a lot to a duel while staying within the established combat system.

Variant: A duelist falling to or below 0 hit points could be staggered instead of dying and either drop his sword or be automatically disarmed. This option gives more freedom to the other duelist as to whether she wants to finish her enemy or not.

To the Pain

In this duel, one combatant must beg the other to stop, thereby yielding and losing the contest. Unconsciousness and/or death are also considered yielding. Otherwise, this duel resembles a standard duel to the death (above).

To First Blood

A common choice among duelists who do not wish (or cannot afford) the death of their opponent, the first blood duel remains a good indication of who is the best warrior. A duel to the first blood, declared as any other duel, ends as soon as one of the two duelists successfully scores a hit upon the other. While this type of duel is especially common among fencers and other finesse fighters, it is also gaining popularity among other warriors and cultures.

Although less gory and sadistic than other types of duels, the first blood is not necessarily less exciting. Indeed, since the duel ends and a victor is declared upon the first draw of blood, both duelists tend to opt for overly defensive fighting styles, thus making the duel just as long and sometimes even longer than a duel to the death. The use of armor is prohibited during a first blood duel.

Whoever first stains his opponent's clothes with his enemy's blood wins. Such duels are usually fought with puncturing or slashing/hacking weapons (but then most duels use such weapons anyway). Most standard fantasy combat rules allow you to easily determine when the first hit is struck and by whom, as the first character to lose 1 or more hit points from an opponent's blow also loses the duel.

Variant: To make the combat lengthier and more exciting, both duelists only deal nonlethal damage until one of them loses an agreed-upon percentage of his hit point total (such as 50%). The hit that causes him to drop below that percentage deals normal damage and sheds the "first blood" of the combat.

To First Blood: *The Mehelavime*

Being notorious finesse fighters and having distaste for needless violence, surface elves are very fond of the first blood

The Basics of Dueling

duel. The elven *mehelavrime*, roughly translated “dancing star duel” in Merchant’s Tongue, is an honorable and mostly harmless way of comparing the skill of two duelists. The *mehelavrime* works the same way as the duel to first blood. Both duelists acknowledge each other via a salute and then enter a fight that ends upon the first damaging hit. A *mehelavrime*, however, differentiates this duel from its founding type. First, a *mehelavrime* takes place only at night, beginning at sunset. Armors are strictly prohibited.

To Second Blood

As first blood, but victory goes to the second successful hit. Some believe that this reduces the pure luck factor. Third blood is not unknown, but fourth blood is very, very rare. Fifth blood and higher is right out.

To the Knockdown

Though it is said the mountain dwarves created this type of duel, other races (mostly gnomes and hobgoblins) also participate in such duels on occasion. Although human sages consider it a variant of the duel to the death, the knockdown duel usually only results with the death of one of its participants when the two duelists have a profound hatred for each other. Most of the time, a knockdown duel takes place to resolve an unintended offense, or as a more-or-less friendly competition of skills. In these instances, the loser automatically yields unless he specifies otherwise.

The knockdown duel uses much more established rules than the more general duel to the death. In this specific type of duel, both duelists keep both feet firmly planted on the ground. Of course, duelists often wear a strong suit of armor to make up for this loss of defense. After the salute, only by knocking one’s opponent down can one win a knockdown duel. A dropped duelist, though not necessarily dead (or even seriously injured) automatically yields to his standing opponent. However, he can continue the duel by standing up again, replanting his feet on the ground and brandishing his weapon. Of course, doing so indicates that he wishes to continue the duel “to the grave,” and no further yields are offered or accepted.

Since neither duelist can move, they are considered flat-footed, and gain no Dexterity bonus to AC. Damage occurs as normal and a character automatically drops down upon reaching zero or less hit points. A character can attempt a trip attack as a melee touch attack with certain weapons. A character can also attempt a trip attack with a different weapon that normally deals lethal damage, but she takes a -4 penalty on the attack roll.

Variant: Each successful blow delivered by a duelist forces the victim to succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC damage dealt). Failing this check means the character is knocked down and loses the duel.

HackMaster: In all knockdown duels, both duelists gain a +4 to their to-hit rolls, and gain no Dexterity bonus to AC, since neither duelist is allowed to move. Tripping maneuvers

are detailed on page 106 of *The Combatant’s Guide to Slaughtering Foes*. Duelists who choose to attempt nonlethal damage suffer an additional -4 to their to-hit rolls. The damage from such an attack is 50% normal; one-half of this damage is temporary.

Knockout

The first duelist to fall unconscious (or dies) first is the loser. Otherwise, this acts as a duel to the knockdown.

Fall (One, Two or Three)

Each time a combatant loses his footing (as with a duel to the knockdown), it counts as a “fall.” The fallen duelist must be down for a certain number of seconds (usually three, counted by an impartial moderator) for the fall to be official. Thus, a knockdown match differs from a one-fall match. The number indicates how many falls it takes to lose the duel. Four or more fall bouts are unknown.

RANGED DUELS

These types of duels, although less common than melee duels, are slowly becoming popular, for they appear more sophisticated than melee duels; indeed, some consider it more refined to vanquish an opponent without actually touching him. Despite the countless adaptations of ranged duels among a multitude of cultures and races, the basic concept remains the same: defeat your opponent at a distance. Overall, ranged duels tend to be quick, stressful, and merciless. This characteristic also makes ranged duels a popular choice for settling disputes that have no personal basis, such as ideological differences.

Contrarily to melee duels, most fantasy combat systems hardly apply to ranged duels. While a fight between two skilled swordsmen can be exciting and breathtaking, it would be outrageous for two legendary archers to fire volleys of arrows at each other until one of them is dead. The following variant rules for ranged duels make these kinds of encounters much deadlier as they reduce, or even eliminate, the security cushion provided by many hit points.

The two basic types of ranged duels are the first shot duel and the three-arrow duel.

To First Shot

The first shot duel is the quickest and the deadliest of ranged duels. It consists of two duelists, standing a certain number of feet apart, who challenge each other’s speed and accuracy by firing at each other upon a certain signal. The first shot duel is primarily a duel of speed; only among less skilled duelists does hitting the opponent represent any challenge. A first shot duel usually ends right after the first shot fired, regardless of whether or not a shot hits. In this case, the duel is considered a draw, and both parties depart satisfied. However, parties may elect to continue the duel until one of the duelists suffers a hit.

Rapidity is what fuels this duel's excitement. Instead of being a matter of minutes of dodging, feinting, parrying and attacking, winning a first shot requires a fraction of a second, enough time for one unique shot. Since the first shot duel is a competition of speed and accuracy, duelists may not wear armor during such a duel. Characters may use shortbows, longbows or crossbows, depending on the duelists' choice.

Both players roll initiative when a certain signal is given, be it the call of a rooster, a whistle blow from a third party, the end of a twenty paces countdown, or so on. The duelist that wins initiative gains the first attack against her flat-footed opponent, who automatically loses the duel unless the parties agreed to fire until one of them dropped. The duelists usually stand at least 30 feet apart during a first shot duel. Since duelists in a first shot duel are not supposed to be moving, they are considered flat-footed, and gain no Dexterity bonus to AC. Damage occurs as normal and a character automatically drops down upon reaching zero or less hit points.

Variant: This optional system adds a few modifications to the base system. First, since the entire first shot duel rests on a single initiative roll, it seems fitting to make a few modifications to the standard rules regarding that statistic. Before initiative is rolled, both duelists are allowed (for the duration of the duel only) to increase their initiative bonus by +1 by reducing their attack bonus by 1, up to a maximum of points thus exchanged equal to each duelist's base attack bonus. In addition, each duelist may add her Charisma modifier to the initiative roll.

Then, a first shot duel would lose most of its meaning if neither duelist is afraid of a single shot from their opponent. To counter this attitude, here are some tweaks to the damage resolution system. During a first shot duel, a successful attack inflicts damage as if it was a coup de grace: the attack, if it hits, automatically scores a critical hit, and the attacked duelist is forced to succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage done) or die. To make things more interesting, characters in this type of duel inflict an additional +1d6 points of damage (non-multipliable) for every 10 points by which their attack roll exceeded their opponent's Armor Class.

HackMaster: As in knockdown duels, both duelists gain a +4 to their to-hit rolls, and gain no Dexterity bonus to AC, since neither duelist may move.

The Three-Arrow Duel

This ranged duel consists of having two duelists confront each other while armed with only a finite number of ammunitions (usually three). As a first shot duel, both duelists face each other at 30 feet or more apart. When the signal is given (for example, a shout by a third party, or the action by one of the duelists of fetching his ammunitions), the duel begins. It ends when either one of the duelists is dead or yields, or when one or both of them run out of ammunitions, in which case they do one of three things. They may agree upon a refill, finish the matter with melee

weapons or end the duel and declare the winner based on the compared number of successful shots.

In this duel, duelists are allowed to move around, defend themselves, take their time to aim, and so on, unlike the first shot duel where they have to stay still. Because of this, this type of duel is often a better indication of who the best warrior is. The only unbreakable rule in such a duel is to never run away. The three-arrow duel is especially popular among cultures that respect archery skill (such as elves), or those that frequently use such tactics to defend themselves (such as gnomes and halflings).

Given the small quantity of missiles, duelists in a three-arrow duel must make particularly good shots if they wish to disable their opponents. In contrast to the first shot duel where it is relatively easy to hit your immobile target, it is much harder in a three-arrow duel to score a good hit on a moving, alert opponent while continuing to defend yourself. Any type of missile weapon is acceptable in a three-arrow duel, with each duelist using her weapon of choice. Armors are acceptable, although most duelists decline to wear any.

Duelists roll their initiative and begin combat as normal. Since they have only three shots or so, most fire one arrow per round while using their move-equivalent action to find a relatively secure spot, preferably with cover. Duelists have the choice of action when one or both run out of ammunition. Should they choose to end the duel by comparing the shots, the winner is the duelist who scored the most hits on her opponent. If both duelists made the same number of hits, compare the total damage dealt instead.

Variant: Because three arrows are barely enough to inflict a flesh wound on most characters, this variant offers some modifications to the damage system. In this type of duel, any successful hit deals double damage, and a critical hit adds a +1 bonus to the critical multiplier of the weapon for that attack only. Moreover, in the context of a three-arrow duel only, a duelist gains a +1d6 points of damage for each full 5 points by which her attack roll exceeded her opponent's armor class.

It might be a good idea for a duelist in a three-arrow duel to use a standard action to attack instead of emptying her quiver in a single full-round attack action. By doing so, not only does the duelist benefit from her full attack bonus for each missile, but also retains a move or move-equivalent action at her disposal each round. Beside the basic possibilities of such actions (as discussed in the Base System paragraph), a character can use a move-equivalent action to actively move in an evasive pattern or take aim. Actively trying to evade your opponent's fire by evading his attacks is a move-equivalent action that adds a +2 circumstance bonus to your Armor Class until your next action while moving your usual movement rate for the round. Taking aim is a move-equivalent action that requires you to stand still (but not being immobile). Doing this action before taking a shot gives you a +2 circumstance bonus to your attack roll.

HackMaster: A three-arrow duel in *HackMaster* terms works just as normal combat.

MOUNTED DUELS (JOUSTS)

The feudal nobility, who have both the luxury of war-trained horses and the skill to use them, favor this type of duel. Unlike other types of duel, the mounted duel involves more than simple combat skill, for it does little good to fight or shoot well if one does not know how to remain in a saddle. Therefore, the risk of being unhorsed exists in all mounted duels. How this occurs varies depending on the exact rules of the duel; nevertheless, it always results in undesirable consequences. An unhorsed duelist loses the duel, although it is sometimes possible that the unhorsed duelist can continue the duel on foot, at a disadvantage. Because of the importance of a horse in a duel, and because of the fact that the duelists are supposed to be facing each other, it is outright treachery to harm an opponent's horse. Purposely injuring or killing a horse during a duel is one of the lowest moves a duelist can make.

The joust developed from early cavalry warfare and training techniques, but has become a popular sport in its own right, as well as a duel option for settling differences. Ideally, the joust takes place on a colorful and entertaining joust list, or level grassy field free of rocks, marshy areas and trees. Legally recognized joust duels usually take place as part of a local festival or tournament, where bright flags snapping in a strong breeze and the elaborate tents of the various nobles' lend an air of grandeur, but the joust can take place in any ordinary field (for lone duels or tourneys struggling to keep expenses down).

At a legally recognized tournament joust duel, the field consists of a long strip of ground with a low fence installed along the middle of its length. Jousters ride toward one another at top speed, each rider keeping the fence to his left, and each attempts to strike his opponent's shield. The riders continue past one another to the end of the list and turn their mounts swiftly for another pass, continuing to tilt, or charge toward their opponent until one rider is forcibly thrown from his mount.

In tournaments, along one or both long sides of the list, wooden benches are set up for onlookers. Often the local ruler and his upper-class retinue have a special seating area constructed, somewhat apart from the crowd, for themselves and guests. At both ends of the list, where the horses turn around, are racks for spare lances, ready for the riders' use and attended by their squires. At one end of the list is an exit to a nearby field where knights and other competitors have set up their tents. Around this area is a constant buzz of activity, as squires tend horses and armor, pages deliver messages and royal men-at-arms patrol. It is considered very bad form to allow thieves to have access to your important guests. Only the boldest and/or most foolish would attempt to make

unauthorized visits to this area. Still, you might be wise to post your own guards while away from your tent.

Whether for tournament or special duels, each joust must supply his own equipment: mount, armor and lances (see below for more on lances). He also employs a squire or page (at least for the duration of the joust, though any true knight has a devoted squire or three) to maintain his armor, care for his horse and wait by his lance rack to hand him a new lance when one breaks.

In a tournament competition with multiple jousters, the event begins with all participating fighters announcing themselves to the seneschal, knights' marshal, or other minor dignitary who does the actual work of running the tournament. In some areas, all entrants must be members of the nobility, but most keep a few slots open for famous heroes, adventurers, crowd favorites and other special guests.

Tournament jousting competitions also proceed with single elimination. The field of entrants is broken down into randomly chosen pairs (though these may be fixed, if organizers want to pit especially particular duelists against one another or to rig the tournament results. Such things are dishonorable, of course, and could never happen – unless they do.). Each pair makes a number of jousting passes until one is dismounted (or yields the field, surrendering in order to avoid further damage). If both combatants are dismounted in the same pass, they get up, remount, and start over. The winner of the pair advances to the next round of matches; the loser is consoled, ridiculed or simply ignored.

When the number of entrants is an odd number, one fighter has no opponent. He fights "the bye." The seneschal or marshal chooses an opponent for this joust: someone who lost an earlier match, a warrior not entered in the competition, etc. Regardless of who wins the match, the jouster is advanced to the next round, but he is just as tired and injured as any other fighter. He will, of course, also be mercilessly booed if he loses the bye.

No fighter may fight the bye more than once in any tournament; the organizers rearrange things if the same fighter ends up without an opponent in another match (even if it was truly random to begin with). This is not dishonorable. By the last matches of the competition, the tournament numbers will have evened out and byes become unnecessary.

With each subsequent round, the number of entrants is halved, until at the end only two are left; the winner of that match wins the jousting tournament. The winner of the jousting competition chooses the tournament's "Queen of Love and Beauty." The local ruler or tournament organizer provides the winner a crown or coronet, which the fighter may bestow upon any lady (at the tournament) of his choosing. Typically, the fighter places the crown over the end of his lance, so that he can present the crown at lance-point to the lady of his choice. The Queen of Love and Beauty sits with the fighter and local ruler at the night's feast, and the

award is a sign of status and respect, but has no other inherent meaning and confers no lasting benefit.

In a tourney where women also fight, the female fighter could present a crown to designate the "King of Grace."

Either of these awards must go to spectators. Attempting to present the crown to a fallen participant disgraces the victor (in HackMaster, -50% Honor). It does humiliate the recipient, but he or she suffers no special penalties. He may even find some new allies against a new (or old, perhaps...) blood enemy.

Joust Rules (General): A jousting without the Ride (or riding skill in HackMaster) skill, should he find his way into the lists, makes an untrained Ride skill check. For dramatic purposes, a jousting who barely fails his Ride check slowly lists to one side before losing his balance and falling (some say this is the origin of the term "tilt").

In theory, each jousting only aims for his opponent's shield or body. Generally, both sides charge, though this is not strictly necessary. Aiming for or even striking a mount inadvertently is tremendously dishonorable (in HackMaster, this incurs a -25% penalty to Honor). It is also automatic disqualification and a loss.

All jousts are generally fought with jousting lances, because it would be inconvenient to simply kill the best warriors in the realm. Nonetheless, while not common, it is hardly unknown for jousting and other fighters to die at tourney. Such blunted lances are described in Chapter Two: Tools of the Trade. Blunted lances have flat wooden heads as opposed to pointed or metal tips. Though they are heavier than normal heavy horse lances, they break just as easily.

Joust Rules (D&D): Both riders roll initiative; the winner uses a ready action to attack while moving toward her opponent, who charges ahead as well. Somewhere in the middle of the jousting ground, the initiative winner uses her readied charge action; her opponent, if neither unhorsed nor dead, gets a chance to reciprocate using her own charge attack. A duelist that takes damage must succeed at a Ride skill check (DC 10) to stay in saddle. Remember that a lance automatically deals double damage when used from the back of a charging mount. Should a rider be unhorsed and choose to continue the duel on foot, use the rules for a duel to the death, with one of the duelists being allowed the use of a horse.

Variant (D&D): For purposes of resolving the joust, roll initiative as normal but assume both riders perform a charge attack at the same time, meeting and attacking somewhere in the middle of the jousting area. Do not forget that lances deal double damage when used from horseback; the Spirited Charge feat can improve this to triple damage. Moreover, because the impact of the weapon is even greater since your opponent is moving toward you as well, both duelists gain a +5 bonus to damage, which is multiplied as normal.

Once attack and damage rolls for both duelists have been resolved, duelists who received damage during the charge

must succeed at a Ride check with a DC equal to the damage received that round. If both duelists received damage at the same time, the one who had a lower initiative score rolls the Ride check first; the other duelists does not need to roll a Ride check should the slower one fail. The duel continues each round with this system until a rider either dies or gets unhorsed; in the latter instance, start a new combat using the rules for a duel to the death, with the exception that neither duelist is flat-footed.

Joust Rules (HackMaster): Each character starts on horseback, approximately 180 feet apart, then begin their charge upon receiving a certain signal (such as the dropping of a scarf or handkerchief). The character that rolls the highest initiative strikes first (characters may also strike simultaneously). A character that suffers any damage must succeed at a riding skill check to remain in the saddle. Remember that charging increases the character's movement rate by 50%, and adds a +2 bonus to his attack roll. Furthermore, lances inflict double the rolled damage during a charge.

Note that using a jousting lance requires a proper military saddle as well, or else the jousting is really setting himself up to lose. All the statistics for jousting assume that both combatants use military saddles. Any other type of saddle inflicts a -40% penalty on all riding skill checks during jousting. Having no saddle results in a -95% penalty.

The winner gains temporal Honor depending on the prestige of his victory. Your GM assigns this, but a typical award for a minor tourney would be 5 points. Winning a major joust in front of the king could be worth as much as 50!

More information on jousting and tournaments can be found in *The Combatant's Guide to Slaughtering Foes* and *Lord Flataroy's Guide to Fortifications*.

THE DUEL OF WITS

This type of duel, similar to other duels only by its purpose and principle, is especially popular among intellectual circles and characters whose minds are sharper than their swords. The duel of wits is a general category of duels in which some kind of intellectual challenge takes place. In this kind of duel, the physical exploits of its participants are of no importance: only their ability to think matters.

There are almost an infinite number of ways to pit two opponents' wits against one another in such a fashion. In fact, there are relatively few established duels of wits; most consider it wittier to come up with a dueling concept on the spot. Even then, a few duels tend to come up quite often. One example is the contest of wits in which poison is placed into one of two goblets by one of the participants, and the other one has to decide how to distribute the cups. Another classic duel of wits, one gaining an imposing reputation, is the game of chess. This game differentiates itself from the other duels of wits in that it has a social recognition in some areas or organizations, such as Pekal's College of Magic.

The Basics of Dueling

There are no established rules in the actual game system for generic contests of wits. However, two contestants might roll opposed Knowledge or Profession skill checks for a trivia-like duel. On other occasions, such as the poisoned goblet duel, a player should roleplay his decision, possibly with the help of skills like Sense Motive, or Intelligence and Wisdom checks, to gain clues from the DM.

Alternate Duels and Confrontations

Of course, there exist other ways than duels to resolve disagreements, the most popular being to talk things through. Plenty of alternatives to duels exist for those who absolutely must resort to some sort of confrontation to resolve their differences, but who do not care to hurt anyone in the process.

Examples of alternate problem-solving methods to duels include harmless challenges, in which the two participants oppose their skill and their strength. Two farmers, for instance, could opt for a challenge of strength (such as arm wrestling) or endurance, such as a race or a drinking contest. Two card players or such professionals could pit their skills in a competition in which the stakes far exceed their usual wagers. Finally, other characters could decide to settle their dispute with a contest of sheer luck, such as flipping a coin or tossing dice.

Duel of Wits: The Chess Game

The game of chess is a classic contest of intellectual prowess and skill in which two players move different themed pieces across a chessboard with the intent of trapping the opponent's "king" piece. Two skills govern chess in the D&D game system: the Knowledge (gaming) skill and the Profession (chessmaster) skill. Characters have the choice of which skill they take; the related attribute (Intelligence for Knowledge, and Wisdom for Profession) determines which style of play the character uses. Hence, a character playing chess using the Knowledge (gaming) skill bases her moves on theory and analysis whereas a character using the Profession (chessmaster) skill refers to all her practice, experience and hunches. Of course, a very proficient character can mix those styles to any degree she wishes: to this effect, having 5 ranks in Knowledge (gaming) grants a +2 synergy bonus to all Profession (chessmaster) skill checks, and vice versa.

While an opposed check of the pertinent skill suffices to settle any chess game, some extra rules make this duel of wits more exciting. See below for a supplemental system for chess games (based on actual rules and principles for a greater realism). The variant chess games presented can be interesting twists for chess players who think they have seen it all.

HackMaster: Both HackMaster characters use opposed gaming skill checks.

Duel over the Chessboard: Extended Chess Rules

Among proficient chess players, a game takes place in three distinct phases: the opening, the middle game and the endgame. Thus, both opponents make opposed skill checks for each of these phases, each carrying the difference in score over to the next roll. If the difference after the third roll is 10 or less, the game ends as a draw (since neither player could clearly establish his dominance on the board). A difference of 20 or more in the modified scores during any phase of the match automatically determines the winner.

For example, Telarai (an elven chessmaster with a +7 modifier from ranks and Wisdom) is dueling Galborn (a gnome gamer with a +6 modifier from ranks and Intelligence) over the chessboard. In the opening phase, Telarai rolls a 14 on his Profession (chessmaster) skill check for a total result of 21, while Galborn rolls an 8 on his Knowledge (gaming) skill check for a result of 14; the difference is thus of 7 in favor of Telarai ($21-14=7$). The match continues onto the middle phase, where both players make a second skill check. This time, Telarai suffers in the exchange of chessmen, rolling a 2. With his +7 modifier, and the difference of 7 carried over from the last round, he has a total of 16, but his gnomish adversary rolls an 11 for a total of 17. The difference is now of 1 in favor of Galborn ($17-16=1$). Finally, Telarai towers over his opponent in the endgame with a brilliant deception, rolling an 18. With his +7 modifier, he has a result of 25. Galborn, however, rolls a 6, adding his +6 modifier and 1 difference for a total result of 13. Telarai wins the match with a total difference of 12 ($25-13=12$).

Continuing the example above, had Telarai rolled a 19 in the middle phase (instead of a rather mediocre 2) for a total result of 33 ($19+7+7=33$), and if Galborn had only scored a 10 ($4+6=10$), the difference of scores during the middle game would have reached 23 in favor of Telarai. In consequence, Telarai's deceiving and cunning tactics forced the gnome into an inescapable web of traps, and a checkmate occurred during the middle game.

HackMaster: Both opponents make opposed gaming skill checks for each phase. The winner is the character that wins at least two out of three rolls, one of which must be the third roll. Otherwise, the match is a draw.

Simultaneous Games

A simultaneous chess game consists of a match in which a strong player takes on many adversaries (all on different chessboards) at the same time. A simultaneous chess game uses the same rules as a normal three-phase game, but the player waging the simultaneous game receives a -2 penalty to all her rolls for up to every five opponents (-2 penalty when against 2-5 opponents, -4 penalty when against 6-10 opponents, -6 penalty when against 11-15 opponents, and so on).

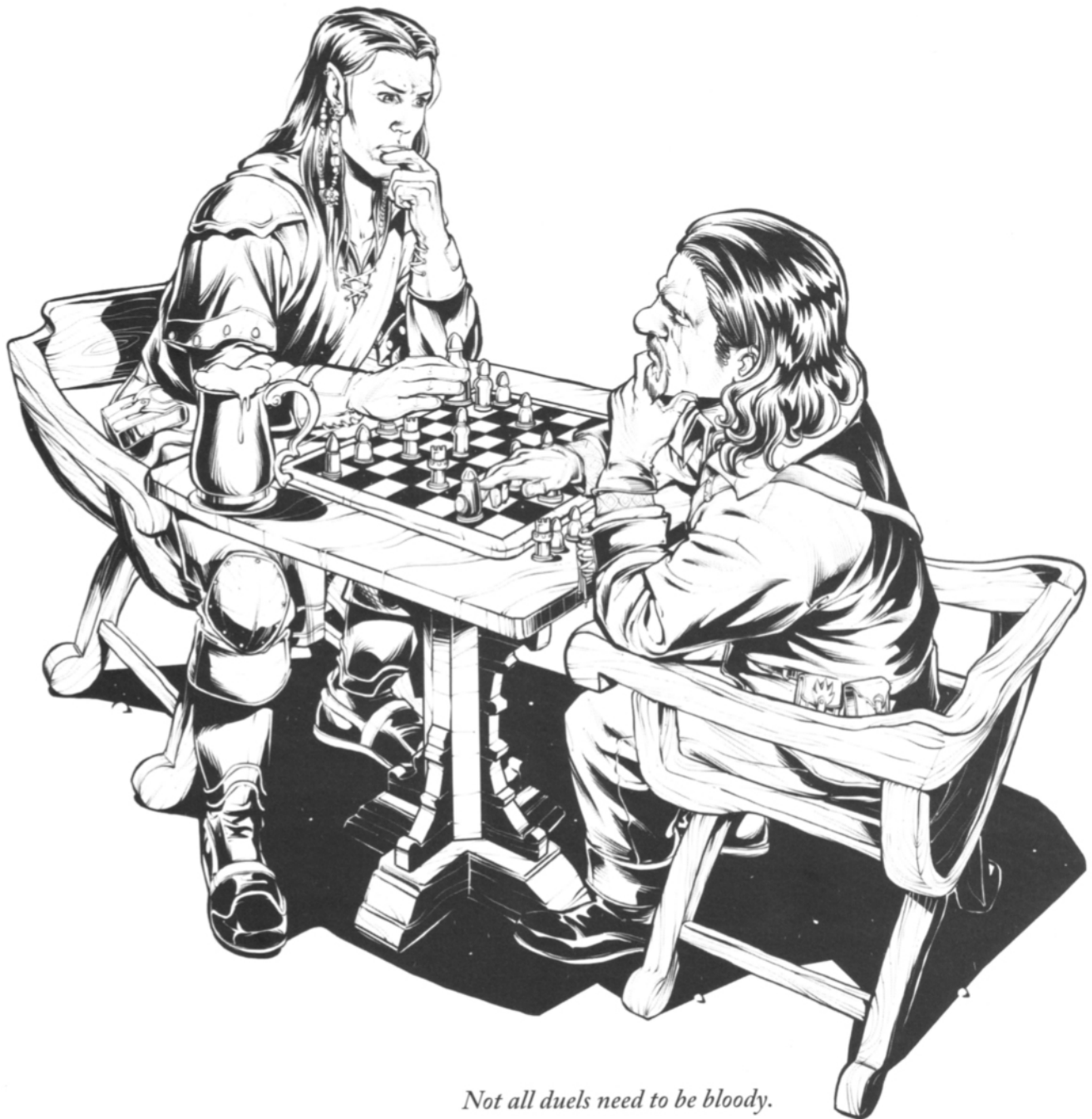
HackMaster: HackMaster characters suffer a -10% gaming skill check penalty for every five opponents.

Blindfolded Games

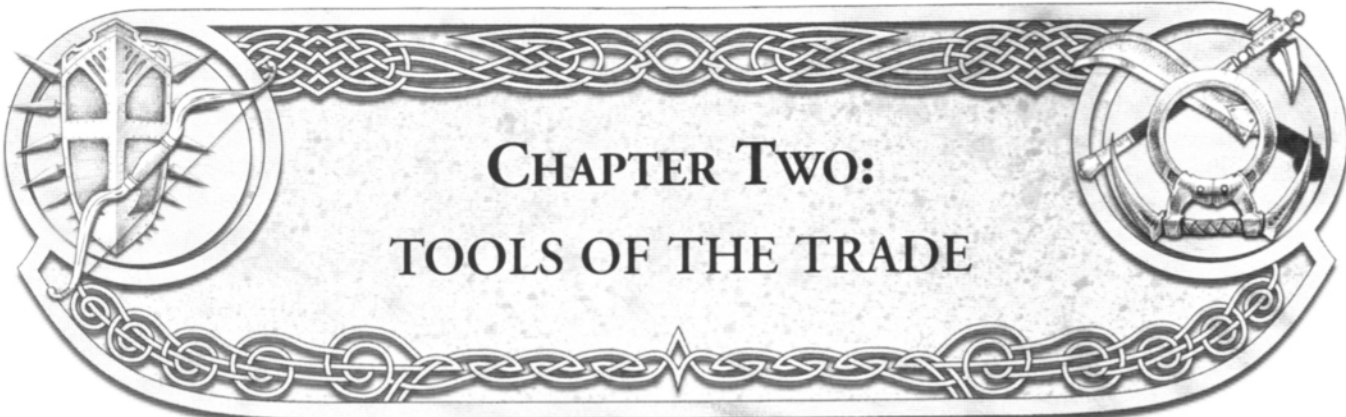
A blindfolded game is a chess game in which an extremely gifted player cannot see the board. This means that the player in question has to remember precisely where each piece rests on the chessboard and keep up with the announced moves. Needless to say, blindfolded games are impressive displays of memory.

A player attempting a chess match blindfolded suffers a -5 penalty on her relevant skill check for her middle game and endgame checks, since it requires so much focus and effort simply to picture the chessboard.

HackMaster: A blindfolded character suffers a -20% gaming skill check penalty.



Not all duels need to be bloody.



CHAPTER TWO: TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Naturally, there is more to winning a duel than how each combatant's sheer combat skills differ. There are, for instance, tricks and tools you may use to either improve your chances or outright humiliate your foe. Those most frequently used, unsurprisingly, are tools of war. The weapons, armors, skills, feats and spells presented in this chapter are well suited to dueling conditions, but also to characters with other interests.

COMMON DUELING WEAPONS

Characters often encounter the following weapons in dueling circles, as well among nobles and adventurers. They are rare among the commoner (such as the farmer, carpenter, scribe and so on).

Adarosh: This Fitonshir (Dejy) sword has a blade and crossbar hilt both forged of a single piece of bronze. The blade is single-edged except at the tip, where it is double-edged. The adarosh is worn as a sign of mourning, and it is considered dishonorable to use this weapon in combat. The

TABLE 2-1: COMMON DUELING WEAPONS

Weapon	Region/User	Cost	Damage (S)	Damage (M)	Critical	Range	Weight	Type
<i>Simple Weapon: Light Weapon</i>								
Main Gauche	Young Kingdoms	4 gp	1d3	1d4	x3	20 ft.	1 lb.	Piercing
<i>Martial Weapons: Light Weapons</i>								
Borfast sword	Gnome (Forest)	8 gp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	-	1 lb.	Piercing
Colbren sword	Eldoran	10 gp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	-	2 lb.	Slashing and Piercing
Leaf Blade sword	Elf (any)	10 gp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	-	2 lb.	Piercing
Naaneari sword	Reanaarian	15 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	-	2 lb.	Piercing
Small sword	Gnome (any)	12 gp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	-	2 lb.	Piercing
<i>Martial Weapons: One-Handed Weapons</i>								
Adarosh sword	Dejy (Fitonshir)	20 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x2	-	2 lb.	Slashing and Piercing
Banarak lance	Gnome (any)	8 gp	1d3 N	1d4 N	x2	-	5 lb.	Bludgeoning
Borelka sword	Elf (Gray)	25 gp	1d6	2d4	x2	-	2 lb.	Piercing
Foil	Any	15 gp	1d3 N	1d4 N	x2	-	2 lb.	Bludgeoning
Hurraaar sword	Reanaarian	45 gp	1d6	2d4	x2	-	2 lb.	Piercing
Patukk-Thul sword	Hobgoblin (any)	18 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x2	-	3 lb.	Slashing and Piercing
Pekino sword	Kalamaran	15 gp	1d6	1d8	x2	-	3 lb.	Slashing and Piercing
Rapier	Reanaarian	30 gp	1d4	1d6	18-20/x2	-	3 lb.	Piercing
Rapier, Elven	Elf (any)	30 gp	1d4	1d6	18-20/x2	-	3 lb.	Piercing
Scimitar		15 gp	1d4	1d6	18-20/x2	-	4 lb.	Slashing
Shamashno sword	Zazahni	15 gp	1d6	1d8	x2	-	3 lb.	Slashing and Piercing
Sulamir sword	Basiran	15 gp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	-	2 lb.	Slashing and Piercing
Tuck sword	Halfling (Lightfoot)	15 gp	1d6	1d8	x2	-	2 lb.	Piercing
<i>Martial Weapons: Two-Handed Weapons</i>								
Dueling sword	Dwarf (any)	10 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x2	-	6 lb.	Slashing
<i>Exotic Weapons: One-Handed Weapon</i>								
Nelzuk sword	Dwarf (Hill)	24 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x2	-	5 lb.	Bludgeoning and Piercing
<i>Exotic Weapons: Two-Handed Weapons</i>								
Lance, jousting	Any	20 gp	1d4 N	1d6 N	x3	-	20 lb.	Bludgeoning
Two-bladed sword	Any	100 gp	1d6/1d6	1d8/1d8	19-20/x2	-	10 lb.	Slashing

only exception is when avenging the death of a loved one. As such, they often appear during duels of vengeance.

Banarak: While gnomes are not generally renowned for their horse-riding skills, they still occasionally find themselves participating in jousts. The banarak is a gnomish lance painted with elaborate scenes of jousting or hunting. The head of the lance is deliberately weakened so that it splinters on contact.

Borelka: This long and thin thrusting sword possesses a blade with a diamond-shaped cross section and no cutting edge, similar to that of a foil. The borelka has a stirrup hilt, and gray elves often carry it with no scabbard.

Borfast: This is a small, thin forest gnome thrusting sword with a half-basket hilt and drooping quillons.

Colbren: The Eldorans use this single-edged sword with a slightly curved steel blade and a steel crossbar hilt.

Dueling Sword: The dueling sword is an ancient dwarven weapon with a design dating back to the earliest iron swords. The blade is wide and thin, with a single cutting edge and a dull, rounded tip. The weapon has a long, straight crossbar guard and an overextended tang jutting past a handle made of ornamental stone. It is normally wielded with two hands.

The dueling sword sees almost no use in the present day. The only exceptions are when it is worn as a ceremonial weapon or for extremely formal, ritual duels on rare occasions. Many older dwarven homes have a dueling sword tucked away as a family heirloom. Certain orders of knighthood or royal dwarven families still make use of the dueling sword, especially in Karasta and the Malachite Heights.

Foil: The foil is a long, straight fencing weapon with a thin, dull blade guarded by a cup hilt. As the dull blade is useless for slashing, and the blunted tip is useless for piercing, the foil is used only to demonstrate skill with the sword. On occasion, cunning opponents have secretly attached a "collar of death," a sharp iron point, to the tip of the foil, giving it some piercing power. All Slenish foils are forged with the sharp point. The damage roll for these Slenish foils is treated as actual damage rather than nonlethal damage.

Hurraaar: This Reanaarese thrusting sword features a tapering steel blade with a square cross-section and a swept hilt.

Lance, Jousting: This heavy horse lance has a blunted tip to reduce the chance of serious, permanent injury. It deals nonlethal damage.

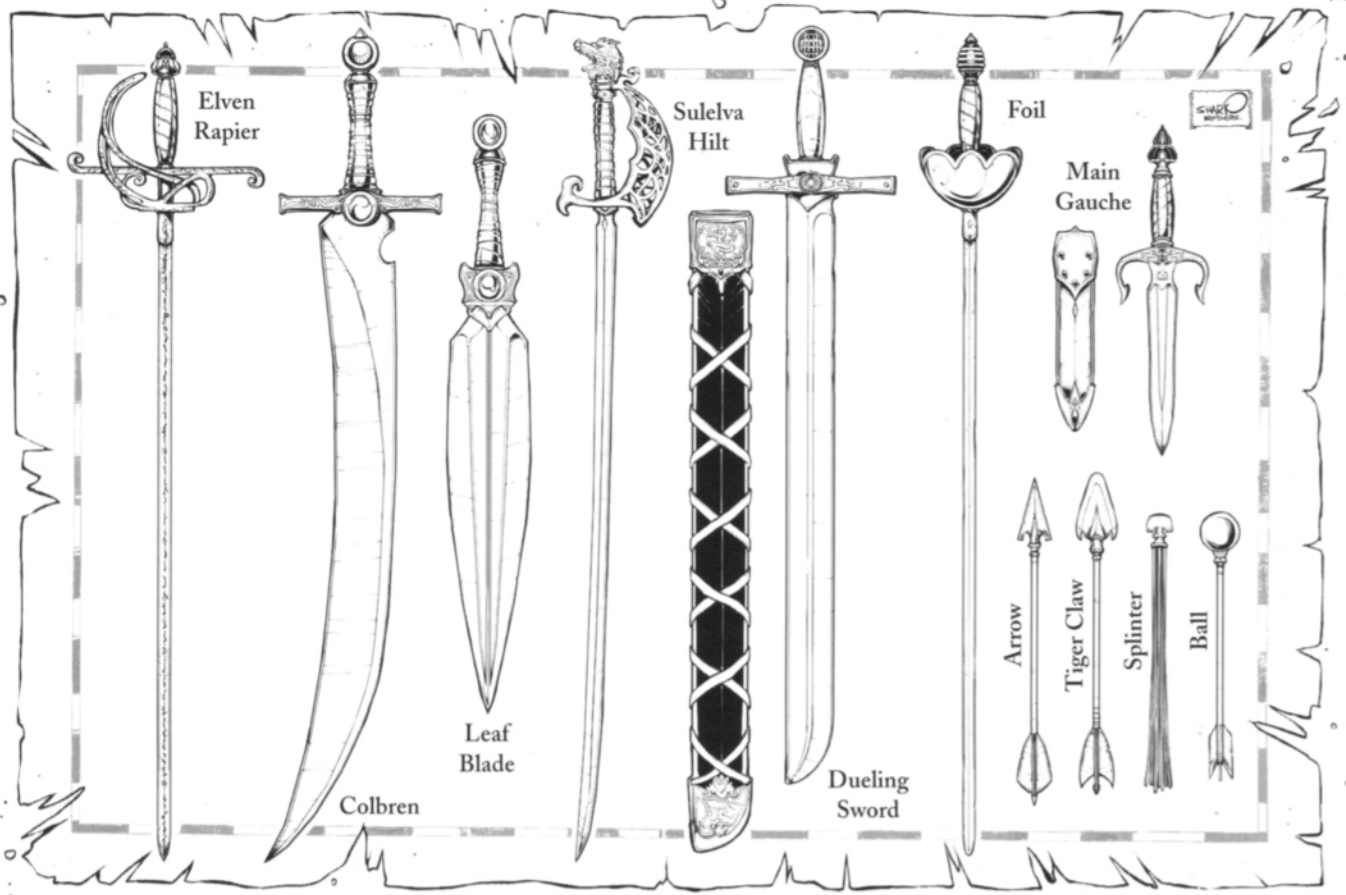
Leaf Blade: The leaf blade is a short sword with a wide blade at the guard that grows slightly wider before tapering to a sharp point after 2 feet. It has either no guard or a small wooden circle guard, although if unguarded the wooden handle might be padded with a covering of leather or hemp.

Elves use these weapons with great frequency because they qualify for the Weapon Finesse feat. Elves who fight orcs or hobgoblins prefer this quick, lightweight weapon to the human-designed short sword.

Main Gauche: This double-edged dagger is fitted with a triangular guard. This intricately detailed guard often has prongs with which to parry an opponent's blade. The main gauche is most effective as an off-hand weapon for users trained in wielding two weapons at once. The main gauche is most common among humans living in the Young Kingdoms.

TABLE 2-1: COMMON DUELING WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Weight (lbs.)	Size	Dmg Type	Speed Factor	Damage vs.					Base Availability			
						T	S	M	L	H	G	Hi	Med	Low
Adarosh sword	20 gp	2 lb.	M	H/P	4	1d8	1d8	1d6	1d4	1d4	1d3	75	55	45
Borelka sword	25 gp	2 lb.	L	P	3	1d6	1d8	2d4	1d10	1d12	2d6	60	40	20
Borfast sword	8 gp	1 lb.	S	P	-2	1d4	1d5	1d6	1d6+1	1d8+1	2d4+1	70	60	50
Colbren sword	10 gp	2 lb.	S	H/P	-1	1d6	1d6	1d6	1d6	1d6	1d6	60	50	40
Dueling sword	10 gp	6 lb.	L	H	6	1d4	1d5	1d8	1d12	2d8	2d10	70	60	50
Foil	15 gp	2 lb.	M	C	-2	1d6	1d5	1d4	1d3	1d4-1	1d4-2	70	60	50
Hurraaar sword	45 gp	2 lb.	L	P	2	1d6	1d6+1	1d8	1d10	1d12	2d8	50	30	10
Lance, Banarak	8 gp	5 lb.	M	C	5	1d8	1d6	1d5	1d4	1d3	1d4-3	55	35	15
Lance, jousting	20 gp	20 lb.	L	P	5	1d6-2	1d6-3	1d6-2	1d6-4	1d6-4	1d6-5	85	80	75
Leaf Blade sword	10 gp	2 lb.	M	P	1	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1d8+1	1d10	1d8	70	60	40
Main Gauche	4 gp	1 lb.	S	H	-1	1d6	1d6-1	1d4	1d4-1	1d4-1	1d4-2	60	30	15
Naaneari sword	15 gp	2 lb.	M	P	-1	1d10	1d8	1d6	1d6-2	1d6-4	1	50	30	10
Nelzuk sword	24 gp	5 lb.	M	C/P	2	2d8	2d6	1d12	1d8	1d6	1d6	80	70	60
Patukk-Thul sword	18 gp	3 lb.	M	H/P	0	1d6	1d6	1d8	1d10	1d10	1d8	40	20	1
Pekino sword	15 gp	3 lb.	M	H/P	0	1d6	1d8	1d8	1d6	1d5	1d4	65	40	15
Rapier	30 gp	3 lb.	M	P	1	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1d8+1	1d10	1d8	70	50	25
Rapier, Elven	30 gp	3 lb.	M	P	1	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1d8+1	1d10	1d8	60	30	5
Rapier, petite	15 gp	0.5 lb.	T	P	-4	1d6-3	1d6-2	1d6-1	1d6	1d6-1	1d6-2	80	75	70
Scimitar	15 gp	4 lb.	M	H/P	0	1d8	1d8	1d8	1d8	1d8	1d8	95	90	85
Shamashno sword	15 gp	3 lb.	M	H/P	0	1d10	1d10	2d4	1d6+1	1d6	1d4	50	30	10
Small sword	12 gp	2 lb.	S	P	-3	1d6-2	1d6-1	1d6	1d8	1d8	1d6	75	60	45
Sulamir sword	15 gp	2 lb.	M	H/P	0	1d8	1d8	1d8	1d8	1d8	1d8	70	35	5
Tuck sword	15 gp	2 lb.	M	P	2	1d5	1d6	2d4	3d4	3d4	4d4	50	30	10
Two-bladed sword	100 gp	10 lb.	L	H	2	1d6	1d8	1d8	1d12	2d6	2d8	35	25	5



Naaneari: This light, flexible Reanaarese fencing sword has an unusual blade. The naaneari blade is thick and triangular for almost 8 inches from the hilt, and then narrows to a sharp, flat section that continues to the tip. The stirrup hilt is generally very elaborate.

Nelzuk: This hill dwarf warhammer has a wooden handle and a steel head, one side of which is hammer-like and the other side that resembles a short pike. The shaft is often reinforced with vertical steel strips. Among dwarves, the nelzuk is popular for duels of honor.

Patukk-Thul: Hobgoblins of all nations use this curved, single-edged sword with a stirrup hilt, a half basket knuckle guard and a disc-shaped pommel.

Pekino: This steel Kalamaran sword has a long, thin blade and stirrup hilt. One edge of the blade is sharpened from hilt to tip, while the other edge is only sharpened from the mid-point up to the tip. The Kalamarans call this a "cut and thrust" sword.

Rapier: This single-edged, slightly curved sword has a half basket hilt and a round pommel.

Rapier, Elven: The elven rapier is similar to the standard rapier in appearance, but both blade and hilt are intricately inscribed with gray elf designs. An elven rapier functions the same as the standard rapier.

Shamashno: Zazahnii favor this single-edged sword with an angled pommel and a curved, scimitar-like steel blade.

Small Sword: The so-called "small sword" is a dull-edged gnomish short sword with a hollow, triangular blade and a cup hilt crossed with a stirrup hand guard. The small sword is only used as a thrusting weapon, and it was from this gnomish design that the fencing foil developed. The small sword was once popular among Kalamaran and Brandobian noblewomen as a fashion accessory.

Sulamir: This light Basiran cut-and-thrust sword features a flexible blade, double-edged only near the tip. From just below this tip to the half basket hilt, the blade is left unsharpened.

Tuck: This lightfoot halfling thrusting sword is made with a diamond-sectioned blade and a swept hilt.

Two-bladed: This unusual sword consists of a long unguarded hilt with two double-edged swords attached, one on each opposite side. This is a difficult weapon to store and carry, as it is over 6 feet long and requires two scabbards when transported.

In HackMaster, treat the wielder of a two-bladed sword as if he wields two weapons.

Dueling Arrows

The following arrows are often used in duels, though they occasionally appear in combat situations as well.

Ball Arrow: The tip of this arrow is a solid round ball, and is designed to damage creatures that resist piercing weapons. Their tips are ungainly and cause erratic flight giving the user a -2 circumstance penalty to all attacks made with them. A ball arrow delivers damage as a bludgeoning weapon.

Splinter Arrow: This arrow is composed of several thin shafts lightly bound together by a blunt head. Upon impact, the tip inflicts a painful sting and the shaft shatters. It is primarily used for warnings and in duels. This arrow deals 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. They are awkward to shoot and the archer suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to his attack roll.

Tiger Claw Arrow: This broad head inflicts slashing damage instead of piercing. Its critical range changes from 20 to 19-20 and the multiplier is x2 instead of x3. Aside from the increased cost, it is otherwise identical to normal arrows.

DUELING WEAPON ACCESSORIES

Sometimes the weapon itself just does not meet a character's needs or wants. These weapon enhancements are available at most good weaponsmiths and may enhance style, abilities and/or efficiency. Each added accessory adds +2 to the Craft DC to construct this weapon (or, in HackMaster, a -5% penalty to weaponsmithing checks).

Coronal: A lance with a coronal head ends in three blunted tips for jousting instead of one point sharpened for mortal combat. The multiple tips further reduce the damage of the attack by spreading the point of impact. Using a coronal on a standard lance reduces the damage by one die type. If the die type is already a d4, the coronal lance does nonlethal damage instead of actual damage. Only non-jousting lances may benefit from this enhancement.

Weapon price modifier: +0 gp; *Weight adjustment:* insignificant

Finely Balanced: The weapon has an exquisite balance designed to allow a smooth fighting style. This modification makes the weapon count as a light weapon for purpose of determining the weapon's eligibility for the Weapon Finesse feat. However, weapons modified in this way become unwieldy when used two-handed. In consequence, a character using such a weapon with both hands does not receive one and a half times his Strength bonus to damage rolls as usual. Only one-handed melee weapons may benefit from this enhancement.

HackMaster: If used as an off-hand weapon, this weapon may be of equal size and weight to the primary hand weapon. The character still suffers the standard penalties to his attack roll.

Weapon price modifier: +1/2th; *Weight adjustment:* insignificant

Poison Tipped: The weapon's tip is hollow, with enough space for a single dose of poison that is delivered (or spilled) with the first blow. This modification is mainly useful to people who do not have time to poison their blade in combat, and to those who expect to kill in a single blow (such as assassins). However, this modification weakens the blade and makes it more vulnerable to sunder attacks: the weapon loses 1 point of hardness. Furthermore, the poison dries up and becomes useless after 4d6 hours. It takes 4+1d4 minutes to refill the tip. Only piercing melee weapons may benefit from this enhancement. Poison-tipped weapons are illegal in most duels.

Weapon price modifier: +1/4th; *Weight adjustment:* insignificant

TABLE 2-2: DUELING AMMUNITION

Ammunition	Cost	Dmg		Range			Type
		Sm.	Med.	Critical	Inc (ft.)	Weight	
Martial Weapons: Ranged Weapons							
Long bow							
Arrow, Ball (1)	1 gp	1d3	1d4	x3	-25%	-	Bludgeoning
Arrow, Splinter (1)*	2 sp	1d4 N	1d6 N	x3	x1	-	Bludgeoning
Arrow, Tiger Claw (1)	1 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x2	x1	-	Slashing
Short bow							
Arrow, Ball (1)	1 gp	1d3	1d4	x3	-25%	-	Bludgeoning
Arrow, Splinter (1)*	2 sp	1d4 N	1d6 N	x3	x1	-	Bludgeoning
Arrow, Tiger Claw (1)	1 gp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	x1	-	Slashing

* Deals nonlethal damage.

TABLE 2-2: DUELING AMMUNITION

Weapon	Cost	Dmg Type	ROF	Dmg						Range (yards)			Base Availability		
				T	S	M	L	H	G	S	M	L	Hi	Med	Lo
Long bow															
Arrow, Ball (1)	1 gp	C	2	1d8	1d6	1d5	1d4	1d3	1d4-2	40	80	120	70	50	30
Arrow, Splinter (1)*	2 sp	C	2	1d6 S	1d6 S	1d6 S	1d6 S	1d6 S	1d6 S	50	100	170	75	55	35
Arrow, Tiger Claw (1)	1 gp	H	2	1d5	1d6	1d6+1	1d8	1d8+1	1d10	50	100	170	70	40	10
Short bow															
Arrow, Ball (1)	1 gp	C	2	1d4-1	1d4-1	1d4-1	1d4-1	1d4-1	1d4-1	38	75	112	70	50	30
Arrow, Splinter (1)*	2 sp	C	2	1d5 S	1d5 S	1d5 S	1d5 S	1d5 S	1d5 S	50	100	150	75	55	35
Arrow, Tiger Claw (1)	1 gp	H	2	1d6	1d6	1d6	1d6	1d6	1d6	50	100	150	70	40	10

*Deals nonlethal damage.

Tools of the Trade

Reinforced: A reinforced blade is, obviously, harder to destroy. The blade's Hardness and Hit Points are increased by 1 each for purpose of resisting damage, such as when targeted by a Sunder attack. For example, a reinforced longsword's blade has a Hardness of 11 and 6 hit points. Only melee weapons may benefit from this enhancement.

HackMaster: A reinforced blade gains +1 AC and +1 hit points for purposes of resisting damage.

Weapon price modifier: +1/2; **Weight adjustment:** insignificant

Secret Compartment: The pommel of your weapon is detachable, revealing a small area of up to 1 inch in diameter by 2-5 inches in length (the exact measures are weapon specific; a large weapon has a large compartment) where the character could hide, for example, a set of lockpicks, small gems or even a scroll or a small wand. A character must succeed at a Search DC 15 check to locate the compartment. Only melee weapons with a pommel may benefit from this enhancement.

Weapon price modifier: +1/4th; **Weight adjustment:** insignificant

Spiked Pommel: A spike, pick or point has been integrated to the weapon pommel. In consequence, the weapon gains the piercing type in addition to any damage type it previously had. The spike does not transform a normal weapon into a double weapon; the user may use only one end in a given round, not both. The spike deals 1d4 points of damage and x2 critical. Only melee weapons may benefit from this enhancement. The use of a spiked pommel is illegal in most duels.

Weapon price modifier: +1/5th; **Weight adjustment:** +1 lb.

Sulelva Hilt: This fanciest of hilt designs has a large, carved pommel, a single cross bar on only one side of the grip, and a full "basket" on the other, often made of gold or

other precious metal. The "basket" is comprised of many thin strips that wind in opposite directions toward and away from the single quillon. The overall appearance of a sulelva is that of a coarse, gilded mesh. Though most often used in decorative or ceremonial swords, the sulelva hilt is still perfectly functional in combat and is often seen in the duels of nobles. The sulelva hilt is said to be a high elf invention, though the Svimohz also claim the honor. Likely variants have their origins in both cultures. Any sword may benefit from this enhancement.

Weapon price modifier: +1/3rd; **Weight adjustment:** insignificant

Weighted: In this weapon, extra weight is distributed strategically along the blade and hilt. As a result, the weapon feels heftier when wielded. When attempting to disarm, the wielder of a weighted weapon gets an additional +2 bonus on attempts to disarm or rolls to avoid being disarmed. Only light and one-handed weapons may benefit from this enhancement.

HackMaster: A character with a weighted weapon suffers only a -2 penalty to-hit against the target's normal AC, during attempts to disarm.

Weapon price modifier: +1/4th; **Weight adjustment:** +100%

DISCREET ARMOR AND OTHER EQUIPMENT

As duels sometimes erupt at social gatherings, a few crafty duelists developed pieces of armor that can be worn anywhere, without the risk of social stigma.

Coat or Jack: This armor is a quilted jacket that can be worn over other ordinary clothing. It incorporates metal plates woven into the fabric and is easy to get on and off. It is often extravagantly decorated to distract observers into believing it is ordinary clothing and not armor at all. Sometimes the fabric is reinforced with leather pouches to hold the metal plates and reduce ripping of the fabric. It can be worn over other armor to confer its armor bonus, but doing so reduces the maximum Dex bonus of the underlying armor by 3 (a negative number results in a Dex penalty equal to that number). The armor check penalty, arcane spell failure and weight associated with the jack are cumulative with the underlying armor. Furthermore, when running you move only triple your speed, not quadruple. The watch-cotaars of Geanavue wear jacks over their chemise.

**TABLE 2-3:
DISCREET ARMORS AND EQUIPMENT**

Armor Type	Cost (gp)	Armor Bonus	Dex Bonus	Maximum Armor Check Penalty	Arcane	Weight (lbs)
					Spell Failure %	
Light						
Corset, hardened	10	+1	+4	-1	5	2
Medium						
Coat or jack	100	+4	+3	-4	20	30
Shield						
Dueling belt (as buckler)	4	+1	na	+0	5	1

TABLE 2-3: DISCREET ARMORS AND EQUIPMENT

Armor	Cost	AC	HP	Weight	Bulk	Hi	Base Availability			Maintenance
							Med	Low	Adj.	
Corset, hardened	15 gp	8	3	2 lbs.	fairly	80	70	60	-	
Coat or jack	120 gp	6	5	30 lbs.	fairly	95	80	65	-	
Shield										
Dueling belt (as buckler)	5 gp	+1	2	2	non	80	75	60	-	

Dueling Belt: While virtually any leather belt can be used as a makeshift buckler, the dueling belt has been reinforced and does not mark easily. Using a dueling belt requires proficiency with shields. Unbuckling a belt requires a move-equivalent action (but the Quick-Draw feat can reduce this time as normal).

A dueling belt, while not a weapon in itself, can be used as an off-hand weapon to make a disarm attack. The dueling belt is considered a one-handed weapon to this end and the user receives a +2 bonus to opposed disarm checks. Using the dueling belt in this fashion prevents the user from benefiting of the belt's shield bonus for the round. The dueling belt does not deal damage. A dueling belt has 2 points of hardness and 10 hit points.

Hardened Corset: A corset is a recent undergarment slowly becoming popular with Brandobian noblewomen. The hardened corset is a piece of luxury that serves the purpose of improvised armor, and consists of a tailored leather corset hardened for extra support. It only protects the upper torso, leaving the head, arms and legs unprotected, and does not allow much freedom of movement (after all, the whole point is to keep the upper body in a certain shape). Note that a regular corset is not socially considered as armor; most people wearing one have never considered hardening one for use as a defensive device.

NEW FEATS

It takes a particular knack with weapons and a way with combat to survive many duels. The following combat tricks often find use among duelists who seek to gain this extra edge over their opponent.

Dirty Sneak

You use outrageously dishonorable tricks and excuses in combat.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +4, Improved Feint, sneak attack +1d6

Benefit: If you perform a sneak attack on your opponent immediately after succeeding at a feint, your sneak attack damage increases by a further +1d6.

Double Strike

You can strike with two weapons at the same time.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +8, Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting

Benefit: When both your primary (the one with the highest attack bonus) and off-hand attacks successfully hit the same opponent, and one of them scores a confirmed critical hit, the other weapon automatically deals an extra 1d6 points of damage. If both weapons score confirmed critical hits at the same time, each weapon deals an extra 1d6 points of damage.

Expert Feint

You are expert at using feints in combat.

Prerequisite: Improved Feint

Benefit: You get a +4 bonus to Bluff checks when made to feint in combat.

Normal: See the Bluff skill description in the D&D Player's Handbook.

Effective Footwork

You move around very effectively when granted freedom of movement, allowing you to dodge and parry blows more efficiently.

Prerequisite: Dex 18+, Dodge

Benefit: You gain a +3 bonus to Armor Class when wearing no armor.

Masterful Parry

You can parry incoming melee attacks of opportunity.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Int 13+, Weapon Focus (any weapon)

Benefit: Once per round, if you suffer an attack of opportunity, you may make an opposed attack roll against the attack roll being parried. If you succeed, you parry the attack and hence suffer no damage. You may only attempt to parry an attack of opportunity with a weapon with which you have taken the Weapon Focus feat.

Off-Hand Guard

You can block or deflect incoming attacks with your off-hand weapon.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Shield Proficiency

Benefit: You gain an additional +1 shield bonus when you use a dueling belt, main-gauche or other common dueling weapon (see Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons) in your off-hand.

Normal: It takes a buckler or a small shield, not a weapon, in your off-hand to gain an armor bonus.

Twin-Weapon Fighting

You are used to fighting with the same weapon in each of your hands.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +4, Dex 17+, Weapon Focus

Benefit: Any one-handed weapon with which you have chosen the Weapon Focus feat is considered a light weapon in your off-hand. You must be using the same type of weapon in your primary hand. For example, a character fighting with two longswords with the Two-Weapon Fighting and Two-Weapon Fighting feats would suffer a -2 penalty to his attack rolls with both hands.

SKILL OPTIONS (D&D)

Your fighting prowess include more than mere swordplay. A true duelist knows to exploit every situational characteristic to his advantage. Jumping on a platform, pulling the carpet, fighting on the upper stairs, and using backup plans are all possibilities for the witty (and ultimately successful) duelist. Suggestions and new options are noted here.

Balance: You can use your Balance skill in combat. As a move-equivalent action not provoking an attack of opportunity, you can bounce on a tightrope, tap on an angled board, or any other action that shakes or move the surface on which you and your opponent both stand. As a result, both you and your opponent must make an immediate Balance check to stay on the surface; standard Balance rules apply to this test (a failure by a margin of 5 or more indicates a fall).

You may decide, when using this skill, to raise the stakes for both you and your opponent. In other words, you may decide to raise the DC of the precarious surface by a number not exceeding your ranks in the Balance skill. For example, a character with 8 ranks in Balance could raise the DC of a 3 inch surface (normally DC 15) to a DC of 23 (15+8=23) for both herself and her opponent.

Bluff: Using Bluff, you can camouflage your fighting prowess by pretending to be weaker than you actually are. Your Bluff check result is opposed to your opponent's Sense Motive skill to determine whether your opponent believes you or not.

There are several inherent advantages at being underestimated by an opponent. Indeed, an enemy who believes you to be less protected than you actually are might be tempted to deliver more powerful but less precise blows (in other words, using the Power Attack feat) that you can in fact easily dodge or parry. Similarly, an opponent who wrongly believes you are mostly harmless may decide not to use all of his stronger defenses and techniques, or to deal nonlethal damage to show his superiority. In any case, the exact benefit of leading an opponent to believe you are weaker than you really are is up to the DM.

Intimidate: Just as you can use the Bluff skill to appear weaker in combat, you can use Intimidate to lead your adversary to believe you are much tougher than you really are. This use of the Intimidate skill works essentially the same as using Bluff to feign weakness, with the opponent getting a Sense Motive skill check to see beyond the deception.

When you give the impression of being more skilled in combat than you really are, it forces your adversary to overestimate your capacities. Such an attitude might lead them to fight much more defensively, to remain hesitant or to retreat out of fear. Once again, the exact game effect is up to the DM.

Jump: Jumping is a useful skill to have during a duel. Not only is it a fast and easy way to get the upper ground advantage, it is sometimes the only possible method of getting to

or away from an opponent. Since the Jump skill's mechanics can be cumbersome to calculate in the middle of an action sequence, Table 2-4: New Jump DCs contains some pre-calculated Difficulty Classes for common actions.

TABLE 2-4: NEW JUMP DCs

Action	Jump DC
Standing high jump onto a chair (1 1/2 to 2 ft high)	10
Running high jump onto banquet table (2 1/2 to 3 ft high)	14*
Jumping back up a staircase (per foot)	4
Jumping up onto small fountain ledge, well ledge, balcony rail (2 ft high)	10

*Requires at least a 10 foot running start.

Moreover, remember that jumping does not require an action in itself, but counts as part of the character's allowed movement. Thus, a character could jump 5 feet up onto a piece of furniture (and gain the higher ground advantage) instead of moving 5 feet in a random direction while taking a full attack action. Alternately, a character could decide to drop from a 15-foot-tall roof down onto an opponent, declaring it a charge action and gaining the related advantages.

Knowledge (fighting styles): A character with this Knowledge skill (from the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide) recognizes warriors and fighters by their style in combat. She can watch a character fight and identify which feat she is using, gauge how skilled the fighter is and where she learned to fight. Table 2-5: Knowledge (fighting style) DCs contains both new and old pre-calculated Difficulty Classes for common actions.

TABLE 2-5: NEW KNOWLEDGE (FIGHTING STYLE) DCs

Action	DC
Identify fighting style feat in use	10
Assess opponent's relative combat proficiency	15
Identify other feat in use	15
Identify attack bonus	15+attack bonus
Identify culture or school	25

You can also use Knowledge (fighting styles) to assess your opponent's relative combat proficiency. The base DC to do this is 15, and your check result is opposed to your opponent's Bluff or Intimidate skill as he tries to mask his true abilities. Succeeding at this check lets you know if your opponent is either weaker or stronger than you are. Succeeding with a margin of 10 or more (or a DC of 25) allows you to determine your opponent's skill with more exactitude, in other words, whether your opponent's base attack bonus is five points better or worse than your own.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (Fighting Styles), you gain a +2 synergy bonus on Sense Motive checks to know if your opponent is using the Bluff or Intimidate skills in combat.

Sense Motive: You can use this skill to determine if your opponent is faking in combat. You can oppose your Sense Motive skill check to your opponent's use of Bluff or Intimidate when trying to mask his true combat competence.

Sleight of Hand: As well as hiding a weapon, you can stealthily ready a weapon you have already concealed on your person. Doing so is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. You must make a DC 15 Sleight of Hand check to ready the weapon, opposed by any observer's Spot check (most likely including the person upon whom you intend to use the weapon). If you effectively readied the weapon in melee combat, your opponent is denied his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against the first attack made with the newly prepared weapon.

This is a useful way to get an edge in an uncertain combat, especially if you do not mind being caught cheating.

SPELLS

Contrary to popular opinion, not all magic-users are old, grumpy bookworms interested in nothing but their library and their magical widgets. In fact, magic in a fantasy realm can find broad applications in everyday life, particularly during a duel.

Existing Spells

Common spells used before or during a duel include: *aid*, *antimagic field*, *bane*, *bear's endurance*, *bestow curse*, *bless*, *bull's strength*, *delay poison*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *divine power*, *expeditious retreat*, *false life*, *foresight*, *guidance*, *haste*, *heroism*, *jump*, *keen edge*, *mage armor*, *magic vestment*, *magic weapon*, *mirage arcana*, *prayer*, *protection from arrows*, *rage*, *slow*, *stone-skin*, *taunt* (see below), *true strike*, *vanishing armor* (see below), and *virtue*.

Less subtle spells, used during duels where magic is allowed, include: *blink*, *blur*, *cloak of chaos*, *create obstacle* (as normal or greater, see below), *entropic shield*, *fire shield*, *flame arrow*, *flame blade*, *fog cloud*, *globe of invulnerability*, *iron body*, *mirror image*, *obscuring mist*, *righteous might*, *shield*.

Paladins generally refuse to use any magic before or during a duel, though clerics often feel little or no qualms about doing so. Curing and healing spells may only be used after the duel.

HackMaster: The magic duelists of Aldrazar often use some of these spells: *Aid*, *Anticipation* (SG), *Antimagic Shell*, *Armor*, *Bless*, *Blink*, *Blur*, *Cheetah Speed*, *Create Obstacle* (see below), *Delay Death* (SG), *Detect Magic*, *Disable Foot* (SG), *Disable Hand* (SG), *Dispel Exhaustion*, *Dispel Magic*, *Emotion Control* (ZG), *Fog Cloud*, *Globe of Invulnerability*, *Haste*, *Invulnerability to Magical Weapons*

(SG), *Jump*, *Karnaac's Transformation*, *Magic Shield*, *Magic Vestment*, *Mirror Image*, *Murgain's Migraine*, *Neutralize Poison*, *No Fear*, *Perceived Malignment*, *Phantom Armor*, *Slow Poison*, *Stoneskin*, *Strength*, *Taunt*, *Unluck* and *Vanishing Armor* (see below).

NEW SPELLS

Create Obstacle

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Clr 2, Drd/Sha 2, Sor/Spl/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft.+10 ft./level)

Effect: One battleground obstacle (see text)

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

A single, usable "background element" springs forth from the ground at the spot you determine. It can be anything from a large rock to a crude stairway, as long as it does not exceed 10 feet x 10 feet. This battleground obstacle provides higher ground, can be used as cover, a hiding spot, and so forth. The obstacle abruptly sinks in the ground when the spell duration ends, leaving no trace of its existence.

Examples of obstacles you can create with this spell include: stairs, elevated platforms, archways, rocky formations, fountains, wells, trenches, columns, and so on. Fountains and wells only have water if a water source already exists at that location (DM's call).

Arcane Material Component: A bit of clay.

HackMaster: As above, but level is only Magic-User 1, and casting time is 3 segments.

Create Obstacle, Greater

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Clr 3, Drd/Sha 3, Sor/Spl/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft.+10 ft./level)

Effect: One obstacle/2 levels

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

As create obstacle, but you can create one such obstacle per two caster levels.

Arcane Material Component: A few stone pebbles.

HackMaster: As above, but level is only Magic-User 2, and casting time is 3 segments.

Taunt

Enchantment (Compulsion)

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Spl/Wiz 1

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft.+5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature with Intelligence 3+

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The target of this spell becomes so offended by your comments, insinuations or outright insults that it lunges at you, ignoring other potential threats and frivolous social disapproval. All affected creatures attack the caster in melee if physically capable of doing so, seeking to use melee or unarmed attacks rather than ranged weapons or spells. Separation of the caster from the victim by an obviously impenetrable or uncrossable boundary (a large chasm, wall of fire, row of pikemen, etc), causes the spell to end.

At the DM's option, the target humanoid may either end the battle or continue fighting when the spell's duration expires.

HackMaster: Use the Taunt spell as detailed in the HackMaster Player's Handbook.

Vanishing Armor

Illusion (Glamer)

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Spl/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal or touch

Target: One suit of armor or outfit of clothing

Duration: One hour/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless, object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

Vanishing armor makes one suit of armor or set of clothes fade from view and become invisible. The illusion makes the garments underneath the invisible armor appear normal (instead of pressed to the body). Sounds made by the armor (such as clanking footsteps) are inaudible, but those made by exterior contact (such as a sword hitting the armor), are not. The armor retains all its properties while it is invisible, including armor bonus, armor check penalty, reduced movement and chance of arcane spell failure.

Note: Creatures receive a Will save to recognize the glamer as an illusion if they interact with it (such as by touching the person and feeling the metal links of invisible chainmail).

HackMaster: As above, but level is Magic-User 1, casting time is 3 segments, and saving throw negates.





CHAPTER THREE: FIGHTING STYLES



There is a huge difference between a character's use of a weapon and a fighting style. A fighting style is a form of art, and its masters are artists. The beauty of a fighting style comes from its subtleties, its magnificence, and its deadliness. To some, few paintings or pieces of music are truly as breathtaking as a deadly fight between two skilled swordsmen.

In the broad sense of the term, a fighting style is the way a character wields his or her weapon or weapons. Thus, it could be said that a character's fighting style might be "single weapon" or "weapon-and-shield," for example. In other words, a fighting style is the simplest answer to the question "How does she fight?" Most people are content with this definition.

However, anyone with a first-hand experience of melee combat would agree that there is more to one's way of fighting than how many weapons one wields. Ultimately, the footwork, the feints, the balance, the attitude and even the mindset matter at least as much.

GAINING A FIGHTING STYLE

The system used for fighting styles is feat-based. As such, you may purchase one fighting style with one available feat slot. Of course, like feats, many fighting styles are improvements upon another and thus have another fighting style as a prerequisite. The benefits from a character's fighting style stack with his or her feats and other abilities, unless otherwise noted.

HackMaster: To gain a fighting style, you must learn the technique of these special combat skills. Only fighter types can learn a basic fighting style; simply pay the amount of Building Points (BP) listed in the description.

Only fighter types can learn advanced fighting styles, with one exception: thief types can learn the cloak's skullduggery fighting style. To learn advanced fighting styles, you must seek out the appropriate teacher and learn from him after getting a little bit of experience under your belt.

BASIC FIGHTING STYLES

Styles in this category are, as the title suggests, simpler and somewhat more elementary than styles of other categories. They have few prerequisites, are purposely general and allow a broad interpretation. Moreover, they are common prerequisites for other, more advanced fighting styles.

HackMaster: A HackMaster character treats basic fighting styles like weapon proficiencies. He need not make a skill check for that fighting style, as he normally would with advanced styles (see below) or named styles (see *The Combatant's Guide to Slaughtering Foes*). Like normal weapon proficiencies, these fighting styles require an open weapon proficiency slot. However, they are only available to fighter types. A GM may allow fighting styles to other martial classes, such as a cleric of a War gawd, if he desires.

Single Weapon [Fighting Style]

You are exceptionally skilled at fighting with only one weapon. While masters of other styles sneer at single weapon style due to its lack of efficiency (since you leave one hand unused), masters of this style focus all their attention on their relevant hand instead of splitting it between several actions. Moreover, this style is one of the easiest to learn.

Benefit: You gain a +1 competence bonus to attack rolls made against a single opponent each round while leaving your off-hand free. You can designate a new opponent at the beginning of each action; however, your designated opponent cannot change during the round.

HackMaster Benefit: A character wielding a one-handed weapon in melee (with which he is proficient) improves his speed factor by 2. His off hand must be free (not holding anything) to gain this initiative bonus. Cost: 1 BP.

Double Weapon [Fighting Style]

You are adept at fighting with a double weapon, such as a two-bladed sword. While this style is hard to learn, let alone master, it can be very rewarding. Masters of this style combine the use of strength, speed and agility to create what some consider the ultimate fighting style.

Fighting Styles

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Two-Weapon Fighting

Benefit: You gain your full Strength bonus to damage with your off-hand attack while using a double weapon.

Normal: Characters fighting with a double weapon are considered to be fighting with a light weapon in their off-hand, therefore receiving only half their Strength bonus to their off-hand attack.

HackMaster Benefit: You improve your speed factor by 1 while wielding a double weapon (two-bladed sword, faakeiraa, alivazoor, dornan, grudomel, and so on; see the Player's Advantage book entitled *Goods and Gear: the Ultimate Adventurer's Guide* for many double weapons) with which you are proficient. Treat the wielder of a double weapon as if he wields two weapons, to determine his number of attacks. Cost: 1 BP.

Two-Handed [Fighting Style]

Your two-handed fighting technique is so good that you can deliver very powerful blows. Although some consider this style brutish and reckless, masters of the Two-Handed Fighting Style are no less efficient and deadly.

Prerequisites: Str 13+, Power Attack

Benefit: You gain an additional +1 bonus to damage while wielding a two-handed melee weapon. Double weapons only benefit from the bonus if the wielder uses the weapon two-handed instead of using it as a double-weapon.

Normal: You add one and a half times your Strength bonus to damage (provided you have a bonus) to attacks made while holding a weapon of your size or larger with both hands.

HackMaster Benefit: The character improves his speed factor by 1 when using melee weapons that require two hands for Man-sized characters (polearms, quarterstaff, two-handed swords, etc), or only require one hand but can be used with two hands (battle axe, club, footman's flail/mace/pick, horseman's flail/mace/pick, morning star, long sword, war hammer, etc). Small characters, though they cannot wield a Man-sized weapon without two hands, still gain the initiative bonus. He must be proficient with the weapon to gain the initiative bonus. Cost: 1 BP.

Weapon and Shield [Fighting Style]

You make optimal use of your shield. Although many melee fighters use shields, you are trained in blocking and deflecting incoming blows, and hiding behind your shield after launching an attack. This style is very popular, as it provides some additional defensive abilities.

Benefit: Your shield provides an additional +2 shield bonus to your AC while you perform a defensive action. Defensive actions include total defense, fighting defensively, or using the Combat Expertise feat.

HackMaster Benefit: With this proficiency, a character fighting with a weapon (with which he is proficient) and a shield or buckler gains a chance to repel an otherwise

successful attack against him. The defending character must roll to-hit with his shield (including magic bonuses for the shield and his Strength) and successfully hit the highest AC his attacker would have hit or better. This costs him one attack. He can only do this once per three rounds, but he can do it against a melee or a ranged attack so long as it comes from the front or flank. He also gains +1 to hit on shield bash and shield punch attacks. Cost: 1 BP.

ADVANCED FIGHTING STYLES

The fighting styles described below represent focused combat maneuvers coupled with a strong sense of melee combat. The techniques described in the style's entry are the signature moves; a character using this style does not necessarily use the same move repeatedly. Whenever you use an advanced fighting style in combat, you should declare it as part of your action. You cannot use two advanced fighting styles simultaneously, unless one style is a prerequisite for the other. However, if you are familiar with multiple fighting styles, you can change fighting styles at the beginning of each round; any effects from the previous fighting style that would have carried over to the current round are lost when you switch styles.

HackMaster: When using one of the advanced fighting styles, a HackMaster character must make a skill check for that fighting style. If he succeeds, the maneuver functions as described. If he fails, he must make a normal attack instead, and suffers -2 to hit and -1 to damage on that attack.

Bad Hand Deception [Fighting Style]

You make your enemies wrongly believe you only use your off-hand weapon for parry.

The Bad Hand Deception fighting style uses feints, lies, and surprise attacks. It is an offensive style; the point being to strike at your opponent with an unexpected attack. Because it depends on quick movements, the deception requires a swift off-handed weapon, usually a dagger or main-gauche.

Tricksters, gamblers, liars and dandies are naturally attracted to this style; indeed, they have the capacity to "pull the bluff" needed for successfully using this style, and enjoy seeing the look on their opponent's face. Like Hovaran's Pretense, Bad Hand Deception is especially useful against capable warriors with a tendency to underestimate their adversaries. Users of this style love to use it in a duel, where the presumed good faith makes it even more effective.

Restrictions: Bad Hand Deception works with any light melee weapons, as well as any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons, and any armor. A character may not use bludgeoning weapons or use a shield.

Prerequisites: Two-Weapon Fighting, Bluff 11 ranks, base attack bonus +8.

Benefit: Once per round, you may make an attack of opportunity against an opponent you missed in melee combat by succeeding at an opposed Bluff check against your opponent's Sense Motive (plus his base attack bonus). This fighting style does not allow you to make more than one attack of opportunity against a single opponent in any given round, nor does it allow you to exceed the number of attacks of opportunity per round. Your opponent gets a cumulative +4 bonus to his Sense Motive check for every time you attempt this maneuver on him within 24 hours, and a +2 bonus for each time he saw you use it on somebody else.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: dagger or main gauche in off-hand and one-handed sword from Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons in main hand; Course Prerequisites: proficiency with each weapon, feint 50%+; Restrictions: cannot use bludgeoning weapons or shield; Relevant Ability: (Dexterity + Wisdom)/2; Course Cost: 100 gp; Course Difficulty: +5%. The feint skill can be found in the Zealot's Guide.

HackMaster Benefit: Once per round, you may again attack an opponent you missed in melee combat by succeeding at a Wisdom check. You may only make one bad hand deception attack against a single opponent in any given round. You suffer a cumulative -4 penalty to your Wisdom check for every time you attempt this maneuver on him within 24 hours, and a -2 penalty for each time he saw you use it on somebody else.

Cloak's Skullduggery [Fighting Style]

You are a master at circling around your opponent and striking sideways where it is most vulnerable.

Cloak's Skullduggery is an offensive fighting style that, as its name implies, involves a great deal of evasion and swift movements. The style normally uses light weapons, as heavier and bigger arms make their wielder slower and thus easier to follow. Masters of this style are able to pace their movements to always stay at their opponent's flank, giving the impression of being "everywhere at once."

This style is an eternal classic among thieves and rogues with the opportunity to learn some fancy swordplay; they favor the style's evasive outlook to combat and their practical sense appreciates the style's efficiency. However, the style has also seen extensive use in academies, monasteries, and even royal courts. It is unknown whether the style was nicknamed after its creator, one of its greatest masters, or simply after the piece of cloth worn by many self-respecting rogues.

Restrictions: This fighting style works with any light melee weapon, as well as any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons, and any light armor. A character may not use bludgeoning weapons, medium or heavy armors, or use a shield.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Hide 6 ranks, Balance 4 ranks, Bluff 4 ranks, Dodge, Mobility, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: When you perform a full attack action, you may make a single attack roll at your highest attack bonus against your opponent. You are considered to be flanking your opponent (+2 attack bonus) for this attack and until your next action. Note that Cloak's Skullduggery cannot be used to determine sneak attack damage. After all, the style requires fast movement, twirling and spinning, and a precise sneak attack is not possible.

Normal: It takes two characters, one on each side, to successfully flank an adversary.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: dagger or one-handed sword from Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons in main hand; Course Prerequisites: Dex 13+, proficiency with each weapon, acrobatic skill suite; Restrictions: cannot use



A successful use of Cloak's Skullduggery

bludgeoning weapons or shield, cannot wear fairly bulky or bulky armor; Relevant Ability: (Dexterity + Intelligence)/2; Course Cost: 100 gp; Course Difficulty: +10%.

HackMaster Benefit: When you attack using this fighting talent, you negate the defender's Armor Class additions for shield. Note that cloak's skullduggery cannot be used to backstab. After all, the talent requires fast movement, twirling and spinning, and a precise backstab is not possible.

Diviner's Trick [Fighting Style]

You quickly identify your opponent's fighting style and anticipate his attacks.

This fighting style, developed by a weapon master with an insight in the magical arts (hence the style's name), may be one of the best styles against weaker warriors. While it is of little use against monsters using their natural attacks, it is especially deadly against weapon masters. Indeed, what better advantage is there than knowing your opponent's next move? The Diviner's Trick fighting style is about discerning feints from actual attacks, knowing when to press an advantage and when to retreat depending on the opponent's fighting style, and the actual exploitation of the weaknesses in the opponent's fighting style.

This style is an eternal favorite among gnomes and scholars, who simply love its theoretical aspect. Elven weapon masters, in their usual thorough and methodical researches, often learn this style at the beginning or end of their career. After all, this style can be both a solid foundation upon which the student learns other fighting styles, or a "concluding" style the master learns after having tried every other fighting style and tested their mettle. This style is useful only against less skilled opponents, as true masters know how to disguise their style, improvise and eventually improve upon it so to make it unrecognizable.

Restrictions: You can use Diviner's Trick with any weapon, and you can utilize any armor or shield.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (fighting styles) 4 ranks, Combat Expertise, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: When facing a single opponent in melee combat who has a lower base attack bonus than yours, you may attempt an opposed Knowledge (fighting style) skill check versus your opponent's attack roll to negate the benefits of one of their fighting styles.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: any; Course Prerequisites: Wis 13+, proficiency with each weapon; Restrictions: none; Relevant Ability: Wisdom; Course Cost: 75 gp; Course Difficulty: +5%.

HackMaster Benefit: When facing a single opponent in melee combat who has a lower hit probability than yours, and succeeding at a Wisdom check, you negate the benefits of their fighting style.

Double Inverted Grip [Fighting Style]

You fight with two weapons, holding both of them upside-down.

Some say there are more rumors than fact to this legendary style. Given the extreme difficulty of wielding skillfully a single weapon blade down, it seems downright impossible some people might be able to wield two weapons this way and not look clumsy. However, in the event it does exist, some think it would be the pinnacle of fighting styles, a perfect flow of movements made possible with a coordination that can only be dreamt of. These are, of course, exaggerations, but the truth is that this fighting style is rare indeed, and that it is certainly a breathtaking sight.

Restrictions: Double Inverted Grip works with any light melee weapon, as well as any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons. A character may not use bludgeoning weapons, wear armor or use a shield.

Prerequisites: Dex 17+, Dodge, Two-Weapon Fighting, Inverted Grip Fighting Style, Tumble 10 ranks, base attack bonus +7.

Benefit: You can use the Inverted Grip style with a weapon in your off-hand.

Normal: The Inverted Grip fighting style may only be used while the off-hand is empty.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: dagger in the off hand, and dagger or any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons in the main hand; Course Prerequisites: Dex 17+, proficiency with weapon, acrobatic skill suite, inverted grip fighting style 50%+; Restrictions: cannot use crushing weapons, shields or armor; Relevant Ability: (Dexterity + Wisdom)/2; Course Cost: 250 gp; Course Difficulty: +10%.

Note: a character with the advanced two-weapon fighting proficiency (see *The Combatant's Guide to Slaughtering Foes*) may use a one-handed sword from Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons in his off-hand, instead of a dagger.

HackMaster Benefit: You can use the inverted grip fighting style with a weapon in each hand.

Hovaran's Pretense [Fighting Style]

You pretend that your opponent has the upper hand in combat, leading him to underestimate you and become overconfident. You then exploit this overconfidence and score a seemingly "lucky hit" while maintaining your façade.

Hovaran's Pretense is all about deception, opportunities, and masquerade. Primarily offensive in nature, it works with any melee weapon, although lighter, "less dangerous" weapons are preferred for the deception to work even better. However, some experts of the style favor heavier weapons, feinting to be barely able to lift them off the ground (a strategy that works well against really strong and stupid brutes).

This style is especially popular among groups of people that are generally seen as weak warriors: women, beggars, or dandies are just a few examples, although anyone may learn a trick or two from it. The style is surprisingly effective against overconfident weapon masters, stupid thugs, and generally any judgmental or strongly opinionated person. However, it is effectively useless once the opponent decides he is being manipulated, or against an opponent aware of your notorious use of the style.

Restrictions: A character can use any melee weapon, and light or medium armor. He can wield any shield except for tower shields.

Prerequisites: Int 13+, Cha 13+, Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Bluff 10 ranks, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: You can make a Bluff check to feint in combat as a full-attack action. You apply the benefits of a successful feint to a single attack against the same opponent; the attack need not be made on or before your next turn, but must be made before the end of the combat or the feint is wasted.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: any melee weapon; Course Prerequisites: Wis 13+, proficiency with each weapon, feint 50%+; Restrictions: cannot use body shields or bulky armor; Relevant Ability: (Dexterity + Wisdom)/2; Course Cost: 300 gp; Course Difficulty: +10%. The feint skill can be found in the Zealot's Guide.

HackMaster Benefit: You give up all your attacks and movement for one round in exchange for gaining a +4 to hit and a +2 to damage on your next attack against the same opponent.

Inverted Grip [Fighting Style]

You hold your weapon upside down.

This unique fighting style concentrates on movements of the entire body, in contrast with the usual focus on steps or arm swings. Indeed, since the arm alone cannot wield the weapon due to its unusual condition, the only way for the student to land a blow is to coordinate various spins, dashes and rolls into a single whole of pure fighting prowess. While this makes the style especially beautiful to watch, it also renders the style incredibly hard to master. This style is very demanding physically, as it requires extensive and continuous movement from virtually every major muscle of the body. Those who succeed at learning it, however, become deadly warriors.

The Inverted Grip fighting style is rare, for it is difficult to master and the lack of armor that comes with it is often a too high price to pay. The style is more common in warmer regions, where the climate does not accommodate heavy armors. Elves also master this style, thanks to their natural agility (and their unnaturally long lifespan that allows them the time needed to learn its complexities).

Restrictions: This fighting style works with any light melee weapon, as well as any one-handed sword on Table 2-

1: Common Dueling Weapons. A character may not use two weapons, bludgeoning weapons, wear armor or use a shield.

Prerequisites: Dex 15+, Dodge, Tumble 6 ranks, base attack bonus +5.

Benefit: When you perform a full-attack action, you may add your Dodge bonus to Armor Class to your damage roll, instead of your Strength modifier (although you retain your Strength penalty if you have one). Doing so does not prevent you from also applying the Dodge bonus to your Armor Class for the round. You may not use this style while you are denied your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: dagger or any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons in the main hand; Course Prerequisites: Dex 14+, proficiency with weapon, acrobatic skill suite; Restrictions: cannot use crushing weapons, shields or armor, and cannot use off-hand for any purpose; Relevant Ability: (Dexterity + Wisdom)/2; Course Cost: 200 gp; Course Difficulty: +10%.

HackMaster Benefit: When you make an attack, you may add your defense adjustment from Dexterity to your damage roll, instead of your damage bonus from Strength (although you retain your Strength penalty if you have one). Doing so does not prevent you from also applying the defense adjustment to your Armor Class for the round. You may not use this style while you are denied your defense adjustment to Armor Class (such as when attacked from behind or when prone, magically Held, climbing a rope, etc.).

Lightning Strike [Fighting Style]

You have exceptionally sharp reflexes that allow you to seemingly react faster than the speed of thought.

Having sharp reflexes does not constitute a fighting style in itself: relying on them, however, qualifies. Although scholars debate whether or not students of this style properly "think" while they fight or act on pure instinct, it is generally recognized that since Lightning Strike can be taught, learned and mastered, it is a fighting style. This fighting style is, as one might suspect, highly reflexive by nature and thus is hard to qualify in terms of offense or defense: the student simply does what her guts tell her without asking questions.

The Lightning Strike style is gaining in popularity among young and rash fencers. However, anyone with a natural affinity for combat and, needless to say, sharp reflexes, has the potential to become a master of Lightning Strike.

Restrictions: The Lightning Strike fighting style works only with light melee weapons, or with any one-handed swords from Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons. A character may not wear armor or use a shield.

Prerequisites: Dex 18+, Combat Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes.

Benefit: Whenever you make a full-round attack, you may make a Reflex saving throw against a DC equal to the target's

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AC. A success makes the opponent vulnerable to an attack of opportunity.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: dagger or any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons; Course Prerequisites: Dexterity 17+, proficiency with each weapon; Restrictions: cannot use shields or armor; Relevant Ability: Dexterity; Course Cost: 250 gp; Course Difficulty: +10%.

Note: a character with the advanced two-weapon fighting proficiency (see *The Combatant's Guide to Slaughtering Foes*) may use a one-handed sword from Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons in his off-hand, instead of a dagger, if he chooses to wield two weapons.

HackMaster Benefit: Whenever you make your first attack on a target, you make opposed Dexterity checks. A success allows you to make an additional attack that round against the same target, even if you could not normally do so.

Low Roll [Fighting Style]

You make heavy use of tumbling in combat, mixing offensive and defensive rolls to position yourself properly for a low blow.

Practitioners of the Low Roll fighting style rely heavily on proper use of tumbling and quick movements. Interestingly, most scholars consider this style more defensive than offensive. Indeed, while careful positioning and quick strikes are vital, the true heart of the style lays in the harassingly close-quarter fighting technique. Nonetheless, the style is widely known for its deadly efficiency against tall opponents.

Humans sages say that dwarven warriors, in search of the ultimate means of fighting giants, developed this style. Whether this tale is true or not, the vast majority of today's Low Roll practitioners are dwarves, gnomes and halflings.

Restrictions: Low Roll works only with one or two light melee weapons, as well as any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons. A character may not wear armor or use a shield.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Dodge, Mobility, Tumble 2 ranks, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: You gain a +2 dodge bonus to your Armor Class and a +2 attack bonus against monsters of the giant type. These bonuses stack with other bonuses (such as the dwarven and gnomish racial bonus against monsters of the giant type).

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: dagger or any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons; Course Prerequisites: Dexterity 13+, proficiency with each weapon, tumbling 50%+; Restrictions: cannot use shields or armor; Relevant Ability: Dexterity; Course Cost: 150 gp; Course Difficulty: +5%.

Note: a character with the advanced two-weapon fighting proficiency (see *The Combatant's Guide to Slaughtering Foes*) may use a one-handed sword from Table 2-1: Common

Dueling Weapons in his off-hand, instead of a dagger, if he chooses to wield two weapons.

HackMaster Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to your Armor Class and a +2 attack bonus against giants, Ogres, Ogre Magi, Titans and Trolls. You gain a +1 bonus to your Armor Class and a +1 attack bonus against Bugbears and Gnolls. These bonuses stack with other similar bonuses (such as the dwarven and/or gnomish racial bonuses against such creatures).

Moving Bastion [Fighting Style]

You are a master at using a tower shield, protecting yourself from your opponent's attacks while retaining the ability to strike him with relative ease.

Unsurprisingly, Moving Bastion is a defensive fighting style. It is static, solid, reliable, and generally dwarven. The prime objective of this style is to allow its practitioner to be as well defended as possible.

Restrictions: The use of a tower shield is mandatory for this fighting style, leaving a free hand for weaponry. You may use any one-handed melee weapon, excluding reach weapons. You can wear light, medium or heavy armor.

Prerequisites: Str 13+, Shield Proficiency, Tower Shield Proficiency, Weapon and Shield Fighting Style, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: You receive no penalties to your attack rolls when using a tower shield.

Normal: Using a tower shield imposes a -2 penalty to all attack rolls because of the shield's encumbrance.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: dagger or any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons in one hand, body shield in other hand; Course Prerequisites: Strength 13+, proficiency with weapons, weapon and shield fighting style 50%+; Restrictions: none; Relevant Ability: Strength; Course Cost: 50 gp; Course Difficulty: +5%.

HackMaster Benefit: Your training with a body shield allows you to treat body shields as "fairly" instead of "bulky" when determining bulk and encumbrance.

Nallué [Fighting Style]

Your movements are fluid yet straightforward, thus saving your energy in combat.

Nallué is an elven fighting style that teaches its students how to maximize their efficiency when fighting. Masters of the Nallué style are exquisite combatants who seem to execute their moves following a single pattern. Indeed, this style teaches its students to limit (and eventually eliminate) rash movements, focusing instead on long-term planning of the fight and the intermediary steps to reach the ultimate goal: the defeat of their opponent. This general outlook on combat makes Nallué a style both suited for offense and defense.

Restrictions: Since practitioners are usually elven, traditional Nallué weapons are the longsword and rapier. However, it is equally possible to use this style with any other one-handed melee weapon, excluding bludgeoning weapons and reach weapons. You cannot use this fighting style when wearing armor or wielding a shield.

Prerequisites: Dex 15+

Benefit: You gain a +1 competence bonus to attack rolls or Armor Class (determined at the beginning of your action) against all opponents who rolled a lower initiative than you did.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: any one-handed hacking or puncturing weapons; Course Prerequisites: Dexterity 15+, proficiency with each weapon, eye of the tiger advantage 50%+; Restrictions: cannot use crushing weapons, reach weapons, shields or armor; Relevant Ability: Dexterity; Course Cost: 150 gp; Course Difficulty: +10%.

HackMaster Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on your to-hit rolls or +1 bonus to Armor Class (determined at the beginning of your action) against all opponents who rolled a lower initiative than you did.

Ropefight [Fighting Style]

You fight along an imaginary straight line, starting from behind yourself and extending toward your opponent.

Ropefight is an offensive fighting style putting great emphasis on movement and positional advantage. The style “prohibits” lateral movements, rather concentrating on strategic advance and retreat, relying on powerful lunges to strike the opponent. Due to the style’s one-dimensional approach to combat, the sideways stance of single weapon fighting is a requirement as the practitioner naturally wishes to expose as little of his body as possible.

Pirates originally developed this fighting style, as they dealt with the particular conditions of ship boarding where combat often took place on ropes and wooden planks, hence the style’s name. Several weapon masters and accomplished duelists manifested great interest in the style once they discovered it, for they found it could be used successfully in any one-on-one situation, when the student’s attention focuses on a single opponent that cannot be flanked. Naturally, the style’s greatest weakness lies in its inadaptability to situations where attacks come from different angles, notably from behind or when flanked.

Restrictions: You may use Ropefight with a single light weapon or one-handed melee weapon. You cannot use this style with two weapons, bludgeoning weapons, two-handed weapons, double weapons or reach weapons. You cannot wear heavy armor or wield a shield.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Dodge, Single Weapon Fighting Style, Balance 2 ranks.

Benefit: Your Dodge and Single Weapon Style bonuses to Armor Class and attack rolls, respectively, increase to +2.

These bonuses only apply to the opponent you designated at the beginning of your action; you cannot split the bonus between two adversaries. The character loses the benefit of this style if she is denied her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class or if she is flanked.

Normal: The Dodge feat gives a +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class against an opponent designated at the start of your action; Single Weapon Style gives a +1 competence bonus to attack rolls against a single opponent each round.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: dagger or any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons in the main hand; Course Prerequisites: Dexterity 13+, proficiency with weapon, single weapon fighting style 50%+; Restrictions: cannot use two weapons, shields or bulky armor; Relevant Ability: Dexterity; Course Cost: 200 gp; Course Difficulty: +10%.

HackMaster Benefit: Your Single Weapon Style bonus to attack rolls increases to +2, and you gain an additional +1 to AC. These bonuses only apply against a single opponent you designate at the beginning of your action; you cannot split the bonuses between two adversaries. You may not use this style if you are denied your defense adjustment to Armor Class (such as when attacked from behind or when prone, magically Held, climbing a rope, etc.).

Shield Blade [Fighting Style]

You keep your weapons close to you in combat, offering better protection against attacks from your enemy.

By keeping both blades crossed and near to the body, the practitioner of this style can protect herself from harm at the cost of sheer attack power. While this style requires two weapons to use, weapon masters tend to prefer identical weapons to varied pairs.

The Shield Blades style has gained much in popularity among all kinds of warriors. Elves remain the most prominent users and (generally) undisputed masters of the style. Unsurprisingly, humans promptly learned the style and spread its use, making it one of the most commonly taught fighting styles in military schools. Gnomes and halflings show an interest in this fighting style, as most care little about the lost strength behind the blow. Some dwarves also exhibit a liking to the style’s defensive nature.

Restrictions: You may only use this style while using the full-attack action to fight with two light weapons or one-handed melee weapons. You cannot use this style with bludgeoning weapons, two-handed weapons, double weapons or reach weapons.

Prerequisites: Str 12+, Dex 16+, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense

Benefit: By giving up your Strength bonus to all your damage rolls for the round, you increase your shield bonus granted by the Two-Weapon Defense feat to +2 (or +4 when

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fighting defensively). You may not use this style while you are denied your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: any one-handed hacking or piercing weapon in each hand; Course Prerequisites: Strength 13+, Dexterity 16+, proficiency with each weapon, advanced two-weapon fighting proficiency; Restrictions: cannot use crushing weapons, two-handed weapons, double weapons or reach weapons; Relevant Ability: (Strength + Dexterity + Wisdom)/3; Course Cost: 150 gp; Course Difficulty: +5%.

The advanced two-weapon fighting proficiency can be found in *The Combatant's Guide to Slaughtering Foes*.

HackMaster Benefit: When you make an attack, you lose any damage bonus from Strength, but apply that damage bonus to your Armor Class instead. You may not use this style if you are denied your defense adjustment to Armor Class (such as when attacked from behind or when prone, magically Held, climbing a rope, etc.).

Striking Cobra [Fighting Style]

You hit hard and fast when your opponent leaves himself open.

Sharp reflexes and a good awareness of combat are the focus of this style. Striking Cobra is an offensive style that focuses on striking at the right moment. While assassins mostly use this style, some weapon masters (as well as elves and halflings) have an interest in it. Though it is offensive in nature, this style works well in situations where the opponent is on the attack: it is therefore especially useful against any kind of aggressive opponent, from most monsters to city thugs to high sea pirates.

Restrictions: You may only use this style with light melee weapons or one-handed melee weapons, none of which can be of the bludgeoning type. You cannot use this style while wearing armor or wielding a shield.

Prerequisites: Dex 15+, Improved Initiative, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: You may hold your attack without reducing your initiative result; you retain the same place in the initiative order. For example, holding your action this way could allow you to exploit the advantage you have over a prone enemy for two consecutive rounds (by attacking after his action on round 1, then attacking before his action on round 2). You can never act twice in the same round using this ability.

Normal: Delaying your action reduces your initiative result to the count on which you take action.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: any one-handed hacking or piercing weapons; Course Prerequisites: Dexterity 15+, proficiency with each weapon; Restrictions: cannot use crushing weapons, armor or shields; Relevant Ability: Dexterity; Course Cost: 100 gp; Course Difficulty: +5%.

HackMaster Benefit: You forego all your attacks for one round in exchange for gaining a +5 bonus to initiative for the

following round. If you choose not to make any attacks on the following round, you keep the +5 bonus, but gain no additional initiative bonus from this fighting style (i.e., it is not cumulative).

Sword Dance [Fighting Style]

Your footwork is dance-like, making you appear unpredictable to your opponent as well as making your movements gracious and fluid.

Sword Dance is both offensive and defensive in nature, making it a very efficient style. Indeed, the steps keep the practitioner out of danger when the enemy is attacking, then position her conveniently for an attack when the enemy is unbalanced. This style is especially popular among the Basiran dancer, where its grace and seemingly easy maneuvers fit as well in the middle of a ballroom as during a duel. Because this style contains theoretical concepts and requires practice on the dance floor, only Basiran dancers or those with a strong interest in dance study it.

Restrictions: You may only use this style with any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons, or a single light melee weapon not of the bludgeoning type. You cannot use this style while wearing medium or heavy armor, or wielding a shield.

Prerequisites: Cha 13+, Single Weapon Fighting Style, Perform (dance) 5 ranks, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: At the beginning of each round, you may make a Perform (dance) check against a DC equal to a single opponent's AC. If you succeed, for every point your roll exceeded the DC, add +1 to your Armor Class against attacks from that opponent, and +1 to your attack rolls against that target this round.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: dagger, or any one-handed sword on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons in the main hand; Course Prerequisites: Dexterity 13+, proficiency with each weapon, single weapon fighting style 50%+, ballroom dancing 50%+; Restrictions: cannot use crushing weapons, shields, fairly bulky or bulky armor; Relevant Ability: Dexterity; Course Cost: 100 gp; Course Difficulty: +10%.

HackMaster Benefit: At the beginning of each round, you may make a successful ballroom dancing check. For every 10 points you rolled over your mastery, you may add a +1 bonus to your Armor Class against attacks from that opponent, and to your attack rolls against that target, during that round. You may not use this style if you are denied your defense adjustment to Armor Class (such as when attacked from behind or when prone, magically Held, climbing a rope, etc.).

Three-Movement Defense [Fighting Style]

You know a quasi-unbreakable defensive motion.

Three-Movement Defense is a highly technical (though not so complicated) set of steps and dodges designed to get

the student out of harm's way. The style's adaptability allows it to work effectively with virtually any weapon and in conjunction with almost any other basic fighting style.

Use of this style is, some would say, almost universal; at the very least, it must be recognized as a very widespread technique. Some military-oriented characters even consider it a basic technique. Users of this style exist at any level of society and in any part of the world, though it is more frequent among nobility (as they can afford the education and training schools that teach the technique).

Restrictions: Three-Movement Defense works with any melee weapon(s). A character may utilize any light or medium armor, and any shield except for tower shields.

Prerequisites: Int 13+, Combat Expertise, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: Instead of your regular allotment of attacks in melee combat, you can perform an exclusively defensive move as a full-round action, adding your full attack bonus to your Armor Class until your next action. Your full attack bonus includes bonuses from feats such as Weapon Focus, magic and masterwork weapons, Strength or Dexterity modifiers, and so on. You cannot take any offensive action while performing the Three-Movement Defense.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: any melee weapons; Course Prerequisites: Dexterity 13+, proficiency with each weapon; Restrictions: cannot use body shields or bulky armor; Relevant Ability: (Dexterity + Wisdom)/2; Course Cost: 100 gp; Course Difficulty: +10%.

HackMaster Benefit: You hold all your attacks for one round in exchange for gaining an additional Armor Class bonus equal to your to-hit bonus from Strength and any other to-hit bonuses you would normally receive, such as those from magic weapons, talents and so on. The Armor Class bonus applies only for those rounds in which you hold all your attacks. You may not use this style if you are denied your defense adjustment to Armor Class (such as when attacked from behind or when prone, magically Held, climbing a rope, etc.).

Three-Quarters Stance [Fighting Style]

Your two-handed fighting style combines with superior footwork.

Like Three-Movement Defense, Three-Quarters Stance is a highly technical fighting style. It consists of a merge between the footwork and the general evasive attitude of most single-weapon styles with the power of the two-handed style. The user of Three-Quarters Stance places both feet in a perpendicular fashion, shoulder width apart, with the front foot pointing toward the opponent. The torso then twists as the student's rear hand moves forward to complete a two-handed grip, putting the upper body in a facing position. While it is not as defensive as the Single Weapon style, Three-Quarters Stance allows its practitioner to combine rapidity with power, at the cost of reach.

This widespread style spawned many variants among different cultures. For example, most elven weapon masters call it the "Swift River" fighting style, while some halflings have adopted the name "Noonbasket's style." The style is a favorite among human weapon masters who enjoy its technical yet efficient approach. Halflings also prefer deft use of two-handed weapons using this style. Dwarven soldiers tend to dislike the emphasis this style puts on footwork and dodges, while few elven warriors use a two-handed grip regularly enough to make this style popular among the race.

Restrictions: This fighting style works with any light melee weapon, one-handed melee weapons or two-handed melee weapons, excluding reach weapons. A character may wear any armor, but cannot use shields with this fighting style.

Prerequisites: Str 13+, Int 13+, Combat Expertise, Power Attack, Two-Handed Fighting Style, base attack bonus +7.

Benefit: Whenever using a one-handed weapon in both hands, or a two-handed weapon, you may use both your Power Attack and your Combat Expertise feats at the same time, taking the attack roll penalty only once.

For example, a character with Three-Quarters Stance using her Combat Expertise feat to gain a +5 dodge bonus to AC also gets a +5 bonus to damage rolls while taking a penalty of only -5 (and not -10) to her attack rolls. The maximum benefit you can get from this feat is +5 to your Armor Class and damage rolls, since the Combat Expertise feat is limited to this number.

Normal: The penalties you receive from using the Combat Expertise and Power Attack feats stack.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: one-handed or two-handed melee weapons; Course Prerequisites: Strength 13+, Dexterity 13+, proficiency with each weapon, advanced two-weapon fighting proficiency, two-handed fighting style 50%+; Restrictions: cannot use reach weapons or shields; Relevant Ability: (Strength + Wisdom)/2; Course Cost: 150 gp; Course Difficulty: +10%.

HackMaster Benefit: Your advanced two-handed fighting proficiency bonus to speed factor improves to +3, and you inflict +1 point of damage per successful strike with both two-handed melee weapons (polearms, quarterstaff, two-handed swords, etc) AND melee weapons that only require one hand but can be used with two hands (battle axe, club, footman's flail/mace/pick, horseman's flail/mace/pick, morning star, long sword, war hammer, etc). Furthermore, you gain an additional +1 on to-hit rolls when using this style.

Towering Defense [Fighting Style]

You are exceptionally good at pressing your higher-ground advantage.

Some sages claim that the name of this fighting style is a corruption of a dark elf fighting style named "Towareine's Defense." It is a very technical, offensive style developed by a certain dark elf strategist shortly before the official beginning of the War of All Darkness (see *Blood and Shadows: the Dark Elves of Tellene*). Towareine and his troops were, at that time, required to secure a cavern area for three days, armed with little more than longspears, against hordes of grimlocks and umber hulks. To make a long story short (some versions of the tale take several hours to recite), the wise Towareine developed this style and taught it to his troops to help them fend off the foul creatures rushing from a lower tunnel.

Although developed by dark elves, this style is slowly gaining popularity among other races. Many hobgoblins and humans from western Svimohzia have heard of this style, though few of them are familiar with its technique. Some rangers, who live in the Krimppatu Mountains, are fond of this style, as it often gives them the upper hand in combat - provided they manage to position themselves correctly. This style is especially effective against stupid enemies who fail to realize the tremendous advantages the practitioner of Towering Defense can get out of the surrounding terrain.

Restrictions: Due to the circumstances from which it originated, the Towering Defense fighting style only works with two-handed melee reach weapons. A character may wear any armor, but cannot use shields with this fighting style.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2

Benefit: You gain an additional +2 circumstance bonus to attack rolls when you are on a higher ground than your opponent. This bonus stacks with the normal

+1 to attack rolls for characters on higher ground, for a total of +3.

HackMaster Requirements: Weapon: any polearm or two-handed spear (see the *HackMaster Player's Handbook* and/or the *Player's Advantage* book, *Goods and Gear: the Ultimate Adventurer's Guide*); Course Prerequisites: Strength 16+, proficiency with weapon; Restrictions: cannot use shields; Relevant Ability: (Strength + Dexterity)/2; Course Cost: 100 gp; Course Difficulty: +5%.

HackMaster Benefit: You gain an additional +2 modifier on to-hit rolls when you are on a higher ground than your opponent. This bonus stacks with the normal +1 modifier to attack rolls for characters on higher ground, for a total of +3. Due to the technique's style, it provides no additional bonus to initiative beyond the standard -1 initiative modifier for characters on higher ground.



Even Dwarves can use Towering Defense...

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESTIGE CLASSES

Prestige classes offer a form of multiclassing, though characters must first meet certain requirements before they can take their first level of a prestige class. If a character does not meet the requirements, he or she cannot take the first level of that prestige class.

As this book focuses on duelists and dueling, the following text includes prestige classes useful for duelists, as well as some prestige classes that provide good opponents and challenges for the average duelist.

DWARVEN AXELORD

As the title suggests, the dwarven axelord is a master of the axe. At the beginning of his career, the axelord crafts a masterpiece of dwarven weaponry and keeps the same tool throughout the years. Eventually, a bond is forged between wielder and weapon. Dwarven characters with the opportunity to become axelords do so out of instinct. No specific training is required to become an axelord, only a unique connection with an axe, a strong awareness of combat and, of course, dwarven blood.

Fighters make the most common axelords. They possess the combat capabilities, the endurance and the instinct. Barbarians and rangers become axelords to focus their training on combat rather than religion, nature and wilderness, respectively. Some clerics of Ragmar the Battle Rager, or Solin the Dark One, also pursue this path to deepen the connection they feel with their deity's favored weapon. Other classes seldom become dwarven axelords.

As NPCs, dwarven axelords usually remain in their homelands, providing training, military support and advice at

the forges. Some axelords with strategic affinities become leaders, while others prefer to train elite units in the event of war.

Hit Die: d12

Requirements

To qualify for this prestige class, a character must meet the following prerequisites.

Race: Hill, mountain or stone dwarf.

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Skills: Craft (weaponsmithing) 10 ranks, Knowledge (fighting styles) 2 ranks.

Feats: Weapon Focus (one type of axe), Weapon Specialization (one type of axe). Both of these feats must use the same axe.

Special: The character must craft his personal masterwork axe before taking this prestige class.

Class Skills

A dwarven axelord's class skills (and their relevant ability) are Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (fighting styles), Profession (Wis) and Sense Motive (Cha).

Skill Points per Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A dwarven axelord is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, as well as with light armors, but not with shields.

Signature Axe (Su): The dwarven axelord faces a special

restriction concerning weapons. He refuses to wield any weapon other than a masterwork axe he crafted with his own hands, prior to selecting this prestige class, and he gains no experience

TABLE 4-1: THE DWARVEN AXELORD

CLASS LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL	SIGNATURE WEAPON BONUS
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Signature Axe	+1
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Willing Weapon, bonus fighting style	+2
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Greater Weapon Focus, Greater Weapon Specialization	+3
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Anarchic/Axiomatic Axe, bonus fighting style	+4
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Signature Hit	+5

points with any weapon other than his signature axe. Upon attaining the dwarven axelord class, the axe becomes magical; gaining an enhancement bonus (see Table 4-1: The Dwarven Axelord) on attack and damage rolls that improves as the character progresses in this class. He may not imbue this axe with other magical powers.

Losing a Signature Axe: In the event of the loss of the character's axe, he must make a sincere attempt to recover it. If he fails to recover it, or it is destroyed, he may craft a new axe. The new axe immediately becomes magical upon completion, with an enhancement bonus equal to the character's current level in the dwarven axelord class.

Willing Weapon (Sp): When a dwarven axelord reaches 2nd level, his axe becomes even more bound to him. As a move action, he can concentrate, stretch out his arm and open his fist, at which point the axe flies (hilt first) towards his waiting hand. In game terms, this otherwise acts as a mage hand spell (caster level equals dwarven axelord class level). The axe never flies fast enough to deal damage as a thrown weapon. If the axe is prevented from reaching the dwarven axelord, it drops to the ground in the square where it is halted.

Bonus Fighting Style (Ex): The 2nd-level dwarven axelord gains a fighting style (see Chapter Three: Fighting Styles) of his choice, for which he meets the prerequisites. He gains this ability again at 4th level.

Greater Weapon Focus: The dwarven axelord gains Greater Weapon Focus as a bonus feat. The bonuses from this feat apply only to his signature axe.

Greater Weapon Specialization: The dwarven axelord gains Greater Weapon Specialization as a bonus feat. The bonuses from this feat apply only to his signature axe.

Anarchic/Axiomatic Axe (Su): At 4th level, a dwarven axelord may imbue his axe with the anarchic or axiomatic special ability as a move action. Chaotic axelords may only imbue the anarchic special ability, while lawful axelords only imbue the axiomatic ability. True neutral dwarven axelords may imbue either, but not both simultaneously. This ability may only be used once per day, and the effect lasts a number of rounds equal to the dwarven axelord's class level.

Signature Hit (Ex): A 5th-level dwarven axelord can use his signature axe to deal a critical hit to creatures normally immune to critical hits.

GNOME TUMBLER

Gnome tumblers are elite melee fighters who use their size advantage to its fullest. Unlike most warriors who rely on heavy weapons and armors to defeat their opponents, gnome tumblers prefer to trust their agile muscles and honed reflexes to get the upper hand in combat.

Gnome tumblers are mostly rogues and monks because of their rapidity and nimbleness, two qualities required to



A Dwarven Axelord, Gnome Tumbler and Halfling Slinger ready for a contest.

TABLE 4-2: THE GNOME TUMBLER

CLASS LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Full Speed Ahead, Tumbler Bonus
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Tumbling Charge
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Improved Tumble
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Tumbling Feint
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Tumble Mastery

perform their incredible feats of dexterity. Bards can also become gnome tumblers to complement their array of combat-enhancing abilities. Barbarians, fighters, rangers and paladins become gnome tumblers to improve their effectiveness when unarmored, as well as to gain some offensive abilities. Clerics, druids, sorcerers and wizards usually make poor gnome tumblers and seldom pursue the class.

NPC gnome tumblers are likely to be found alone, protecting gnome settlements, or on the road looking for adventure. Some work as mercenaries or cutpurses, and have a large part of responsibility in tainting the gnome tumblers' reputation. Only in exceptional circumstances will several gnome tumblers band together, usually to defend a territory against a large-scale threat.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify for this prestige class, a character must meet the following prerequisites.

Race: Gnome.

Skills: Knowledge (fighting styles) 2 ranks, Tumble 8 ranks.

Feats: Acrobatic, Dodge, Mobility.

Class Skills

A gnome tumbler's class skills (and their relevant ability) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (fighting styles), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), Tumble (Dex) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points per Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Gnome tumblers are proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with light armors, but not with shields. Note that some of the gnome tumbler's class features rely on her not wearing armor.

Full Speed Ahead (Ex): An unarmored gnome tumbler can tumble at full speed as part of her normal movement. (Normally, she suffers a -10 penalty on her Tumble checks to do so.) She provokes attacks of opportunity as normal.

Tumbler Bonus (Ex): An unarmored gnome tumbler receives a dodge bonus to her Armor Class. This bonus is

equal to her gnome tumbler class level. She loses this dodge bonus when she is denied her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class, or if she wears armor or carries a shield.

Tumbling Charge (Ex): A 2nd-level gnome tumbler does not have to charge in a straight line. If she succeeds at a DC 15 Tumble check, she provokes no attack of opportunity when she charges through

threatened squares.

Improved Tumble (Ex): Thanks to her study of tumbling, a 3rd-level gnome tumbler gains a +5 bonus on her Tumble checks.

Tumbling Feint (Ex): A 4th-level gnome tumbler may choose to use her Tumble skill instead of her Bluff skill when feinting. She can also use her Tumble skill instead of her Sense Motive skill when defending against feints or against benefits of an opponent's fighting style (see Chapter Three: Fighting Styles for more on fighting styles).

Tumble Mastery (Ex): A 5th-level gnome tumbler, thanks to much study and experience, gains a +10 bonus on her Tumble checks.

HALFLING SLINGER

Halfling slingers are usually heroes among their kin, for although most halflings have a natural agility and grace with the sling, only the halfling slinger has the skill and patience to master the art. Throughout halfling history, the slinger has been a force for light and dark, helping to destroy evil villains and armies as well as bringing shadowy disorder to cities and towns.

Halfling slingers love telling tales of their favorite slings and their favorite sling bullets to those they wish to train. Certain halfling children seen as "having the eye" for the sling are taken from their families and tutored in the ways of the sling. Most often, the halfling slingers act under the local sheriff and function as an interdictory force with their own set of skills and tactics. Those few who do travel in search of adventure often return to their homes to recharge their motivation to leave again. For example, many halfling slingers complain about how long the road is, how cold it is or how no one can bake a blueberry pie like their old auntie. Once back home, they feel that perhaps auntie's pies were not that great in the first place, and perhaps its time to move on and find a better pie.

Slingers are notoriously roguish characters, having a knack for nearly everything yet trained to deliver precise enough blows to halt dead a charging thug. However, fighters also make good halfling slingers for they have remarkable aim and are unafraid of combat.

NPC slingers have few specific, predetermined roles, although their people expect them to behave according to halfling customs. While most of them use their talent to help

and protect others, some less righteous slingers use their skill and sometimes their reputation for their own selfish needs.

In the lands of Tellene, halfling slingers tend to be trained assassins, and are rare outside of the city of Prompeldia, except when on a job. These halflings were originally known as the “fingers of Gremply” or the “fingers of Slivers,” referring to Mayor Gremply Slivers. However, the training skills and ambitions of these slingers took them far and wide, searching for more prestige than the average halfling often earns from the sometimes-xenophobic humans of Tellene.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify for this prestige class, a character must meet the following prerequisites.

Race: Lightfoot or golden halfling

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Skills: Craft (weaponsmithing) 2 ranks, Knowledge (fighting styles) 2 ranks, Spot 5 ranks.

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (sling).

Class Skills

A halfling slinger’s class skills (and their relevant ability) are Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (fighting styles), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex) and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points per Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Halfling slingers do not gain proficiency in any kind of weapon, armor or shield.

Slinger Bonus (Ex): When using a sling, a halfling slinger receives a competence bonus on his attack roll. This bonus is equal to his halfling slinger class level.

Ricochet (Ex): A 2nd-level halfling slinger can launch a sling bullet that bounces off an armored enemy only to hit another one. Whenever a halfling slinger misses an armored opponent (or a creature with a natural Armor Class of 4 or higher), he may immediately roll a second attack (at a -2 penalty) against another enemy in a square diagonally or sideways adjacent to the missed enemy. The ricochet cannot strike a square directly behind or in front of the missed enemy.

Style Sense (Ex): Thanks to his study of fighting styles, a 3rd-level halfling slinger gains a +4 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive and Spot checks when using these skills with or against feints, or against benefits of an opponent’s fighting

TABLE 4-3: THE HALFLING SLINGER

CLASS LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Slinger Bonus
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Ricochet
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Style Sense
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Opportunity Knocks
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Fatal Strike

style (see Chapter Three: Fighting Styles for more on fighting styles).

Opportunity Knocks (Ex): A 4th-level halfling slinger threatens all squares into which he can make a ranged attack with his sling. Any enemy moving out of this range, or performing a distracting act within this range, provokes an attack of opportunity from the halfling slinger.

For example, a sling’s normal range is 50 feet. An opponent 50 feet away from the halfling slinger, moving to 60 feet away, provokes an attack of opportunity from the halfling slinger. As usual, this attack of opportunity interrupts the normal flow of actions, and the halfling slinger may make a ranged attack against that target while he is moving, before the target moves out of range.

This ability does not give the halfling slinger any additional attacks of opportunity. He can only make one attack of opportunity per round, unless some other ability (such as the Combat Reflexes feat) would give him additional attacks of opportunity. A halfling slinger using a melee weapon threatens only his adjacent squares as normal.

Fatal Strike (Ex): A halfling slinger that studies his foe for 3 rounds, then succeeds at a Knowledge (fighting styles) check opposed to his target’s Armor Class + target’s Constitution modifier, and then successfully deals ranged damage to the foe with his sling within a further 3 rounds, may kill his opponent. If the opponent fails her Fortitude save (DC 10 + halfling slinger’s class level + halfling slinger’s Int modifier), she dies. If the opponent succeeds at her Fortitude save, she is stunned for a number of rounds equal to the halfling slinger’s class level.

HAND OF THE DEITY

A hand of the deity is supposedly a handpicked agent of a certain deity, charged with the duty to uphold and protect the ideals of that religion. The hands practice magic, art and swordplay, which often place them in high regard, and their ability to masterfully weave these symbols into one beautiful combat style earns them the respect of many others. They rarely, if ever, practice healing. While hands of the deity are not required to serve a temple, they may be asked to perform sacred or venerable duties for the temples that they happen to visit.

The calling, as it is often referred to, to become a hand of the deity is always very personal in nature and compelling in effect. Some such chosen relate having an unusually clear

dream while in their trance, in which the deity itself asks the young character to make an act of faith, seek a temple, perform a small duty or the like. Others have described their calling in a variety of ways, including a sudden revelation, a succession of random occurrences converging toward a single, unexplainable goal, or even a more direct intervention of the deity. No matter how the calling arrives, few are they who chose to ignore it. It takes a little of everything to be chosen to become a hand of the deity. Only those who exhibit a genuine interest in art, magic and swordplay receive an invitation to further these passions.

As NPCs, the hands may be found almost anywhere, upholding ideals and destroying their enemies. Many join the ranks of adventuring parties, but some choose to settle down in isolated communities to serve as protector against a constant threat.

Adaptation: This prestige class emphasizes a high elf hand of Devamaeriel (the Shimmering One) that sacrifices his spontaneous casting and ability to turn or rebuke undead, to focus on specific martial arts instead. The hands of the deity could be a disillusioned cult, a group of special characters chosen for a secret higher purpose, or even followers of another deity entirely, as the DM sees fit.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify for this prestige class, a character must meet the following prerequisites.

Base Attack Bonus: +3.

Skills: Bluff 2 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 2 ranks, Knowledge (fighting styles) 4 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 2 ranks, Perform (any) 2 ranks, and Sense Motive 2 ranks.

Feats: Weapon Focus.

Spells: Ability to cast 1st-level arcane spells and 1st-level divine spells.

Class Skills

A hand of the deity's class skills (and their relevant ability) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (fighting styles) (Int),

Knowledge (religion) (Int), Perform (Cha), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int) and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points per Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A hand of the deity is proficient with all simple and martial one-handed slashing weapons, and with light armor.

Spells Per Day: A hand of the deity can cast a variety of spells. Casting requires him to have a Charisma ability score of 10 + the spell's level. His bonus spells are based on Charisma. When the hand of the deity gets 0 spells at a particular level, he only receives bonus spells for that level. Saving throws against the hand of the deity's spells have a DC of 10 + spell level + hand of the deity's Charisma modifier.

The hand of the deity uses his own spell list that appears below. A hand of the deity prepares and casts spells like a cleric, but he cannot spontaneously cast cure or inflict spells, nor can he turn or rebuke undead. If a spell requires an arcane material component or a divine focus, the hand of the deity can use either.

Gracious Strike (Ex): A 1st level hand of the deity knows how to weave a form of art, such as dance or song, into his fighting style. This training allows him to add his positive Charisma modifier (if any) to all his attack rolls made while wielding the weapon for which he chose Weapon Focus, and while wearing light or no armor.

Combat Sense (Ex): The hand of the deity instinctively feels the subtle variations in the battlefield. Starting at 2nd level, the hand receives a +1 competence bonus to resist special attacks such as disarm, trip or bull rush made by his opponents. This bonus increases to +2 at 5th level and +3 at 8th level.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): A 2nd-level hand of the deity gains the extraordinary ability to react to danger even before he would normally be aware of it. He keeps his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or hit by an invisible attacker. However, he loses Dexterity bonus to AC when he is immobilized.

TABLE 4-4: THE HAND OF THE DEITY

CLASS LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL	SPELLS PER DAY			
						1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Gracious Strike, bonus fighting style	0	-	-	-
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Combat Sense +1	1	-	-	-
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Uncanny Dodge, bonus fighting style	1	0	-	-
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Blade Dance	1	1	-	-
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Combat Sense +2	1	1	0	-
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Improved Uncanny Dodge, bonus fighting style	1	1	1	-
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Gracious Swipe	2	1	1	0
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Combat Sense +3	2	1	1	1
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Fine Cut	2	2	1	1
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Perfect Harmony	2	2	2	1

Prestige Classes

If the hand of the deity already has uncanny dodge, then he gains improved uncanny dodge instead. To determine the minimum rogue level that can flank the character, his levels from classes that grant him uncanny dodge stack.

Blade Dance (Ex): Gained at 4th level, this ability allows the hand of the deity to add his Charisma bonus (if any) to his Armor Class while wearing light or no armor, representing his ability to evade attacks gracefully as if he were dancing the fight.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): The hand of the deity cannot be flanked, except by a character at least four rogue levels higher than the hand of the deity.

Gracious Swipe (Ex): At 7th level, the hand's mastery over his unique fighting style increases as his attacks become deadlier due to his near-perfect precision and balance. He may add his positive Charisma modifier (if any) to his damage rolls while wielding the weapon for which he chose Weapon Focus, and while wearing light or no armor.

Fine Cut (Ex): A hand's attacks are always made with confidence and precision. This becomes especially true at 9th level, when he may increase his critical threat range by two (for example, from 19-20/x2 to 17-20/x2) while wielding the weapon for which he chose Weapon Focus, and while wearing light or no armor. This bonus stacks with any other effects, such as from a keen weapon or from the Improved Critical feat.

Perfect Harmony (Su): The 10th-level hand of the deity uncovers the secret equilibrium between art, magic and swordplay. In consequence, the hand's Charisma is considered two points higher for the purpose of applying his Charisma modifier to checks and statistics pertaining to these three elements (art, magic and swordplay). For example, the two additional points of Charisma increase the hand of the deity's attack rolls from gracious strike, damage rolls from gracious swipe, Armor Class from blade dance, Bluff and Perform skill checks, and his spells' DC by +2. The Charisma increase could also give him a bonus spell.

Hand of the Deity Spell List

Hands of the deity choose their spells from this list.

0 Level: *detect magic, flare, guidance, light, mending, read magic, resistance.*

1st Level: *bane, divine favor, mage armor, magic weapon, sanctuary, shield of faith, taunt*, true strike, vanishing armor*, virtue.*

2nd Level: *aid, align weapon, bear's endurance, blur, bull's strength, create obstacle*, eagle's splendor, fox's cunning, owl's wisdom, protection from arrows, resist energy.*

3rd Level: *create obstacle (greater)*, dispel magic, haste, heroism, keen edge, magic weapon (greater), magic vestment, prayer, rage, slow.*



A Hand of the Deity proudly displays her weapon to an Iron Fist.

4th Level: *blinding beauty*** , *cure critical wounds*, *death ward*, *divination*, *divine power*, *freedom of movement*, *holy sword*, *inflict critical wounds*, *restoration*, *righteous might*, *shout*, *stone-skin*.

*New spell found in Chapter Two: Tools of the Trade.

**Spell found in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*. If you do not have this tome, you may replace *blinding beauty* with the *fear* spell.

Ex-Hands of the Deity

A hand of the deity cannot turn away from his calling. If a hand of the deity gains a level in a class other than hand of the deity or paladin, he may never again increase his hand of the deity level. He retains his existing hand of the deity abilities in any case.

IRON FIST

The highly competitive iron fists are veteran warriors who pride in the precision and strength of their blows. Iron fists follow an extremely rigorous training, usually at an elite monastic order, to reach a high level of confidence and ability. Compared to standard monastic orders or their trainees, iron fists are even more martially minded, trying to reach the status of ultimate warrior instead of a spiritual goal such as perfection. Since their training is more intense and focused on combat, iron fists consider themselves superior to the standard monk, sometimes even jesting about the way their peers learn to soften their fall.

The typical iron fist training revolves around the concept of competition. The goal is not to learn fighting techniques: the goal is to become the best. Iron fists yearn to prove themselves by besting adversaries, rivals and sometimes allies (preferably in a friendly competition).

Monks make excellent iron fists since they possess the required initial training and are used to fighting unarmed. Fighters, on occasion, also study the iron fist prestige class to complement their abilities. Other core classes seldom take this prestige class.

NPC iron fists try to improve their skill at arms in any possible way. Good-natured iron fists could try to access a lonely master or win friendly competitions among adventurers. Evil characters might initiate duels to the death against anyone who seems worthy enough, to prove their own superiority, or truly in an effort to augment their skill.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify for this prestige class, a character must meet the following prerequisites.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Skills: Bluff 4 ranks, Knowledge (fighting styles) 4 ranks, and Tumble 2 ranks.

TABLE 4-5: THE IRON FIST

CLASS LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Signature Strike
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	Breaking Blow
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Hasty Hands
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Style Stopper
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Power Punch

Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike).

Class Skills

An iron fist's class skills (and their relevant ability) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (fighting styles), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Str), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Swim (Str) and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points per Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Iron fists do not gain proficiency in any kind of weapon or armor.

Signature Strike (Ex): By focusing on his target, an iron fist gains an attack bonus to his unarmed strike attacks against one (and only one) creature or object per round. He may designate a new opponent each round. The signature strike bonus is equal to the character's level in the iron fist prestige class.

Breaking Blow (Su): Starting at 2nd level, the iron fist can channel his power into a single, destructive blow. As a full-round action provoking an attack of opportunity, the iron fist can reduce the hardness of any object he hits with an unarmed strike. The object loses a number of points of hardness equal to the total unarmed strike damage + the iron fist's level. The hardness of an object cannot be reduced below 0.

Hasty Hands (Ex): A 3rd-level iron fist gains a bonus to grapple checks and to Bluff checks made to feint. This bonus is equal to his iron fist level.

Style Stopper (Ex): After facing a single opponent in melee combat for one round, the iron fist may attempt an opposed Knowledge (fighting style) skill check (where the DC is equal to his opponent's Armor Class + opponent's Wisdom modifier) to negate the benefits of his foe's currently active fighting style during the second and later rounds. If the opponent changes fighting styles, the iron fist must again wait one round before using this ability. If the opponent is not using a fighting style, this ability has no effect. The DM determines whether the iron fist recognizes the fighting style or simply notices a particular pattern of movement.

Power Punch (Ex): A 5th-level iron fist knows just where to deal the most damage. He applies his Intelligence bonus (if any) as a bonus to damage with unarmed strikes, along

with his Weapon Specialization (unarmed strike) bonus, any Strength bonus, and other such bonuses.

MELEE WEAPON MASTER

With years of training to perfect their technique and natural talent to spare, melee weapon masters are said to be invincible, boundless, and perfect. Melee weapon masters are more than very good, flawless fighters; they improve upon widely known techniques, inventing their own combat style while towering over the existing ones. To a true melee weapon master, melee combat is not reactive, it is instinctive. The melee weapon master sees patterns and variations in a fight where others see chaos and disorder. He reads movements, feints and attacks as if they were unfolding one by one before him.

As the only class that truly immerses itself in combat, fighters make the obvious weapon master. In truth, fighters are the only ones who can truly appreciate the nuances in a combat; all the other classes being too occupied with nature, honor, magic, religion, and so on.

NPC melee weapon masters, besides being overwhelming opponents, like to kill their time looking for their equal - someone who shares their passion for combat and with whom they can practice or prove themselves. Older melee weapon masters often decide to settle down and pass on their knowledge by serving at a fighting school, taking apprentices or writing a treatise.

Hit Die: d10

TABLE 4-6: THE MELEE WEAPON MASTER

CLASS LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Melee weapon maneuver
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Melee weapon maneuver
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Melee weapon maneuver
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Melee weapon maneuver
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Melee weapon maneuver

Requirements

To qualify for this prestige class, a character must meet the following prerequisites.

Base Attack Bonus: +12.

Skills: Craft (weaponsmithing) 6 ranks, Knowledge (fighting styles) 8 ranks.

Feats: Masterful Parry, Simple Weapon Proficiency (one type of melee weapon) or Martial Weapon Proficiency (one type of melee weapon) or Exotic Weapon Proficiency (one type of melee weapon), Weapon Focus (one type of melee weapon), Weapon Specialization (one type of melee weapon), Greater Weapon Focus (one type of melee weapon), Greater Weapon Specialization (one type of melee

weapon). All of these weapon feats must use the same melee weapon.

Special: All characters, excluding druids, monks, rogues and wizards are considered to already have the Simple Weapon Proficiency feat. Barbarians, fighters, paladins and rangers are considered to already have the Martial Weapon Proficiency feat, as are clerics with the War domain and a favored martial melee weapon. Races with a natural familiarity with an exotic melee weapon are considered to already have the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat.

Class Skills

A melee weapon master's class skills (and their relevant ability) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (fighting styles) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex) and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points per Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Melee weapon masters do not gain proficiency in any kind of weapon or armor.

Melee Weapon Maneuver (Ex): A melee weapon master gains a melee weapon maneuver at each level. He can only use these maneuvers in conjunction with a weapon for which he has taken the Weapon Specialization feat. Unless noted otherwise, each maneuver can only be chosen once and cannot be changed once selected.

Bonus Fighting Style: The weapon master gains a fighting style (see Chapter Three: Fighting Styles) of her choice, for which she meets the prerequisites. This maneuver may be selected more than once.

Counterstrike: As a veteran of melee combat, the weapon master knows how to exploit her adversary's mistakes. Once per round, a weapon master with this ability may attempt an attack of opportunity against an adversary who missed her in combat by a margin of 5 or more.

Death Blow: The weapon master knows how to inflict the greatest damage with her weapon of choice. The critical multiplier of this weapon increases by x1 (from x2 to x3, for example). This increase stacks with the perfect swing melee weapon maneuver and with the Improved Critical feat, but not the keen enhancement, keen edge spell, or any other similar effect. This ability can only be taken with weapons that have an x2 or better critical multiplier.

Flurry of Blows: A weapon master can unleash a series of rapid strikes at her opponent, reducing her efficiency but increasing her damage potential. This maneuver allows the weapon master to gain an extra attack in a round at her highest attack bonus, but this attack and any other attack made this round suffer a -2 penalty to hit.

Lethal Blows: The weapon master's blows are merciless. This maneuver adds a +2 bonus to the weapon master's damage rolls with her chosen weapon.

Mastery of Defense: The weapon master can parry and sidestep incoming attacks. This maneuver grants the weapon master a +2 bonus to her Armor Class as long as she holds her weapon of choice in her hand.

Mastery of Offense: The weapon master always strikes true. This maneuver adds a +2 bonus to the weapon master's attack rolls.

Mirror Hands: The weapon master is perfectly ambidextrous and suffers no penalties at all when using her off-hand. She always receives her full Strength bonus to damage rolls with her off-hand.

Perfect Swing: The melee weapon master knows where it hurts. This maneuver augments the weapon of choice's critical threat range by 1 (from 19-20/x2 to 18-20/x2, for example). This increase stacks with the death blow melee weapon maneuver and the Improved Critical feat, but not the keen enhancement, keen edge spell, or any other similar effect. This ability can only be taken with weapons with a 19-20/x2 or better critical threat range.

ULTIMATE ARCHER

As suggested by its name, the ultimate archer is peerless in the use of a ranged weapon, be it a bow, crossbow, thrown daggers, and so on. Being an ultimate archer does not, as some might think, constitute a natural career for one who likes to use a ranged weapon; it is a prestigious title, available only and exclusively to those few archers who dedicate their lives to ranged combat. The ultimate archer is to the simple Bowman what the mighty Archmage is to the frisky apprentice. Ultimate archers can perform acts of precision most other archers can only imagine.

Fighters make the best ultimate archers because of their natural talent for everything pertaining to combat and the large amount of time and practice they spend on their preferred weapon. Rangers are close seconds for they are natural archers and accustomed to firing in difficult conditions. Even though barbarians and paladins are less common, they can be very efficient ultimate archers if they truly dedicate themselves to a ranged weapon. It is rare for any other character class to become an ultimate archer, and those who do must sacrifice much of their original career plans in order to attain the necessary aptitude.

NPC ultimate archers like to show off their skill wherever possible, such as in archery contests. True ultimate archers have reached a status far above the mercenary who sells his skill for money. As such, they often spend their time doing something more productive than earning coins. Honing their seemingly perfect skill is a common hobby, but they also like to work for their own benefit or to train new archers.

Hit Die: d8

TABLE 4-7: THE ULTIMATE ARCHER

CLASS LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Trick Shot
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Trick Shot
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Trick Shot
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Trick Shot
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Trick Shot

Requirements

To qualify for this prestige class, a character must meet the following prerequisites.

Base Attack Bonus: +12.

Skills: Craft (bowmaking) 10 ranks.

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Far Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (one type of bow or crossbow).

Special: A 2nd-level ranger with the archery combat style is considered to already have the Rapid Shot feat if he wears light or no armor. Fighters may choose Rapid Shot as a fighter bonus feat.

Class Skills

An ultimate archer's class skills (and their relevant ability) are Climb (Str), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis) and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points per Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Ultimate archers do not gain proficiency in any kind of weapon, armor or shields.

Trick Shot (Ex): An ultimate archer gains a trick shot at each level. She can only use these trick shots in conjunction with a bow or crossbow for which she has taken the Weapon Focus feat. Unless noted otherwise, each trick shot can only be chosen once and cannot be changed once selected.

Bullseye: The ultimate archer can hit the tiniest mark with disconcerting ease. The ultimate archer ignores a target's Armor Class bonuses gained from size.

Deadly Shot: The ultimate archer knows where it hurts. This ability grants the ultimate archer a +2 bonus to damage rolls with her chosen weapon.

Long Distance Accuracy: The ultimate archer gets a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls with the bow or crossbow with which she has the Weapon Focus feat at a range of more than 30 feet.

Mastery of Distance: The ultimate archer can send volleys of arrows to incredible distances. She may increase the range increment of the bow or crossbow with which she has the Weapon Focus feat by 20 feet. This addition stacks with feats such as Far Shot and other abilities and spells. This ability may be taken three times.

Prestige Classes

Perfect Aim: The ultimate archer rarely misses her mark. This ability grants her an additional +2 bonus to all her attack rolls. This ability may be taken twice.

Piercing Shot: The ultimate archer can fire a devastating arrow that pierces through several enemies. The archer's arrow shots are now considered a "line" area of effect, similar to some spells (such as lightning bolt), but the archer must make a separate attack roll for each target. The arrow can pierce through a number of Medium creatures equal to the archer's positive Strength modifier (if any) before stopping. Tiny creatures count as one-fourth a Medium creature, Small creatures count as half a Medium creature, Large creatures count as two Medium creatures, Huge creatures count as four Medium creatures, and so on. The arrow stops piercing enemies the moment it misses a target, or the equivalent number of Medium creatures pierced equals the archer's Strength modifier. The ultimate archer cannot use this trick shot with a crossbow.

Power Shot: Much like a warrior taking a wilder swing, the ultimate archer can channel extra power into her shot at the cost of accuracy. The ultimate archer can subtract a number from her ranged attack roll and add that number to her damage roll. The ultimate archer cannot increase her damage by more than 5, and this trick shot can only be used on targets at ranges of up to 30 feet. The ultimate archer cannot use this trick shot with a crossbow.

Ricochet: Being a true master of her weapon, the ultimate archer can launch a projectile that bounces off an armored enemy only to hit another one. Whenever an ultimate archer with this trick misses an armored opponent (or a creature with a natural Armor Class of 4 or higher), she may immediately roll a second attack (at a -2 penalty) against another enemy in a square diagonally or sideways adjacent (within 5 feet) to the missed enemy. The ricochet cannot strike a square directly behind or directly in front of the first missed enemy.

Take Aim: Once per day, as a full-round action provoking an attack of opportunity, the ultimate archer can fire a single arrow that has the kind of precision legends speak of. This single arrow uses the ultimate archer's full attack bonus and benefits from the following enhancements: a +6 competence bonus to the attack roll, +60 feet of range increment (applied after any other multiplier), and a +4 bonus to weapon damage.

The ultimate archer cannot apply the weapon damage bonus when firing a crossbow, but her crossbow does receive the bonus to attack and range.

VOYAGEUR

The voyageur is an unarmored wanderer with an attitude. He relies on his agility, his charm and his wits to extract himself from tricky situations. Becoming a voyageur usually does not necessitate any specific training. In fact, most



Face-off: A Melee Weapon Master, Ultimate Archer and Voyageur.

voyageurs learn what they must by themselves in response to a local threat. Indeed, the spark needed to become a voyageur often appears in those people compelled to redress a wrong situation or deed. Thus, voyageurs often work for the common people, gaining a good reputation among those they protect.

The voyageur's attitude is as much a defining part of himself as his weapon or his cause. They like to put on a show wherever they go and at whatever they do, be it fighting, running or dancing. Voyageurs also have a very daring and dashing personality, and prefer entering the villain's manor by the front door and exiting by a stained glass window while pursued by half a dozen guards. This attitude, however, does not prevent the voyageur from being a heroic figure, both very courageous and ultimately dedicated to his cause, his alignment or, at the very least, his personal enjoyment.

NPC voyageurs are constantly on the move, and make very colorful sailors. While on their travels, good voyageurs notoriously fight off the evil tyrant, and evil voyageurs cause trouble to destroy the established order, or simply to further their own cause, whatever that may be.

Hit Die: d8

TABLE 4-8: THE VOYAGEUR

CLASS LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Graceful, Charming Defense
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Bonus fighting style, Daring Disarm
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Hero's Wits
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Bonus fighting style, Lucky Hit
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Greater Lucky Hit

Requirements

To qualify for this prestige class, a character must meet the following prerequisites.

Alignment: Any non-lawful.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Skills: Balance 2 ranks, Bluff 4 ranks, Jump 2 ranks, Knowledge (fighting styles) 2 ranks, Sense Motive 2 ranks, and Tumble 2 ranks.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Weapon Finesse.

Class Skills

An voyageur's class skills (and their relevant ability) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Dex), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (fighting styles) (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points per Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A voyageur is proficient with all simple weapons and all weapons listed on Table 2-1: Common Dueling Weapons, and with light armor, but not with shields. Note that some of the voyageur's class features rely on his not wearing armor.

Graceful (Ex): When unarmored, a voyageur's movements are always fluid and gracious, granting him a +2 competence bonus to Reflex saving throws.

Charming Defense (Ex): When unarmored, voyageurs add their Charisma bonus (if any) to their Armor Class as a dodge bonus. If the voyageur has the Dodge feat, he may designate the same target or a different target for this ability; if the same target, the bonuses stack. The character loses this canny defense when he is denied his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class or if he is flanked.

Bonus Fighting Style (Ex): At 2nd and 4th levels, the voyageur's mastery of combat continues to grow, granting him any fighting style (see Chapter Three: Fighting Styles) for which he meets the prerequisites.

Daring Disarm (Ex): The 2nd-level voyageur is so confident in his abilities and willing to take risks that he may add his positive Charisma modifier (if any) to his disarm attempts.

Hero's Wits (Ex): At 3rd level, the voyageur can flank an opponent from the square she stands in and any adjacent square, including squares that are occupied or impassable. The opponent must be between the flanking square and a voyageur's flanking ally, as normal.

Lucky Hit (Ex): A 4th-level voyageur's attack (with a weapon he is proficient in) deals damage to a creature with damage reduction just as if the weapon was magical.

Greater Lucky Hit (Ex): A 5th-level voyageur can deal a critical hit to creatures normally immune to critical hits.

PRESTIGE CLASSES IN HACKMASTER

"Prestige" classes are not a function of the HackMaster game. After all, the core classes offer more than enough challenges and possibilities to keep any player active and interested for at least a single lifetime. On occasion, however, a character may wish to take a "package." A character does not need to take a package; it is the player's option. If you wish to do so, choose one just after Step 9 of character creation, but before rolling for priors and particulars (see the details on character creation in the *HackMaster Player's Handbook*.) Only single-classed characters can take one of the packages described here. Note that these packages share little more than the names of the prestige classes above. They

Prestige Classes

are specific to the HackMaster system, and should not be compared to the D&D prestige classes (it would be like comparing apples and oranges, as they say).

Dwarven Axelord (Building Point Cost: 11)

See the prestige class text for the description and role of the dwarven axelord.

Ability Scores: A dwarven axelord needs a Strength score of at least 10, but most have considerably higher Strength scores.

Races: Only a dwarf can take this package.

Preferred Types: Fighter. Berserkers, bounty hunters, rangers and soldiers must pay a 5 BP penalty to take this package.

Barred Types: All other cleric, fighter, magic-user and thief types are barred from this package.

Skills: The dwarven axelord gains the blacksmith tools skill, weapon maintenance skill and weaponsmithing skill at no cost (each skill receives two rolls of the mastery die in addition to that normally gained when purchased).

Weapon Proficiencies: All dwarven axelords must be proficient in one or two axe types (battle axe, or hand/throwing axe). Dwarven axelords can specialize only in one type of axe. They can achieve higher levels of mastery with that axe as well. Typically, their other weapon proficiencies are in various hammers and maces.

Talents: The dwarven axelord gains the axe bonus talent at no cost.

Equipment and Money: The dwarven axelord faces a special restriction concerning equipment. He refuses to wield any weapon other than a signature axe he crafted with his own hands.

Special Boons: Aside from any standard bonuses from specialization or mastery, the dwarven axelord gains the ability to make an extra axe attack every other round. Alternatively, the dwarven axelord may choose to take a bonus of +1 to hit for every three experience levels he has. He must declare which boon he wishes to use whenever he enters into combat; that boon applies for the remainder of that combat.

Special Banes: A dwarven axelord gains no experience points with any weapon other than his signature axe. He also suffers a -1 penalty on to-hit rolls with any weapon other than his signature axe (-3 if he is not proficient with it). In the event of the loss of the character's axe, he must make a sincere attempt to recover it. If he fails to recover it, or it is destroyed, he must craft a new axe as soon as possible.

Gnome Tumbler (Building Point Cost: 13)

Use the jongleur package from the *Griftmaster's Guide*, with the following changes.

Races: Only a gnome can take this package.

Skills: The gnome tumbler gains the tumbling skill at no cost (receives two rolls of the mastery die in addition to that normally gained when purchased). He also receives the juggling, jumping, and tightrope walking skills at no cost (receives only the one roll of the mastery die normally gained when purchased).

Talents: The gnome tumbler gains the quick movement talent at no cost.

Halfling Slinger (Building Point Cost: 12)

See the prestige class text for the description and role of the halfling slinger.

Ability Scores: A halfling slinger needs a Dexterity score of at least 10, but most have considerably higher Dexterity scores.

Races: Only a halfling can take this package.

Preferred Types: Fighter, ranger, soldier; Thief, brigand.

Barred Types: All other cleric, fighter, magic-user and thief types are barred from this package.

Skills: The halfling slinger gains the leatherworking skill and leather working tools skill at no cost (each skill receives two rolls of the mastery die in addition to that normally gained when purchased). He also gains the blacksmith tools skill and metalworking skill at no cost (each skill receives only the one roll of the mastery die normally gained when purchased).

He can use the leatherworking skill to make normal slings, with a construction time of 10 slings/day and material cost of 1 sp each. He can use the metalworking skill to make normal sling bullets, with a construction time of 20 sling bullets/day and material cost of 2 cp (1 cp/10 sling bullets). If he purchases the weaponsmithing skill, he can make sling bullets that deal even more damage (see special boons below). Each of these skills requires a successful skill check to use in this manner.

Weapon Proficiencies: The halfling slinger gains the benefits of specializing with the sling at no cost.

Talents: The halfling slinger receives the keen sight talent for free. He need not meet the race/class requirements to take this talent.

Equipment and Money: Halfling slingers gain no special bonuses with regards to equipment. Still, he always wants the best sling, and the best sling bullets he can find. Clever dealers find it easy to swindle halfling slingers.

Special Boons: Aside from the standard bonuses for specialization, the halfling slinger gains the ability to fire an extra shot every other round. Alternatively, at a normal rate of fire the halfling slinger may choose to take a bonus of +1 to hit for every three experience levels he has, when using a sling. He must declare which boon he wishes to use whenever he enters into combat; that boon applies for the remainder of that combat.

A halfling slinger that succeeds at a weaponsmithing check can create a single metal sling bullet so aerodynamic that it deals one additional point of damage on a single hit. Failure means that the sling bullet does no extra damage on a successful hit. Critical failure means that the sling bullet hit does -1 point of damage on a successful hit (this cannot reduce damage below 1 point).

Special Banes: The halfling slinger disdains melee weapons, and suffers a -1 penalty with any melee weapon (this penalty stacks with any other penalties for non-proficiency). He cannot take any talent that would give him a bonus to hit in melee. After using a melee weapon for three experience levels (two advancements), this penalty goes away. However, a halfling slinger can never gain a bonus to hit with a melee weapon (for Strength, racial talent, specialization, etc.). He can gain damage bonuses, however. Each weapon is a separate category for purposes of this restriction: the halfling slinger may suffer no penalty with a mace but still be at -1 (or more) with a short sword.

Hand of the Deity (Building Point Cost: 12)

See the prestige class text for the description and role of the hand of the deity.

Ability Scores: To be a hand of the deity, the cleric must have a minimum Dexterity score of 12, a minimum Wisdom score of 11 and a minimum Charisma score of 13.

Races: Any.

Preferred Types: Cleric, chosen one, shaman, zealot of Aknar, Francor'Dieus, Gronfyr, Hokalas, Pangrus, Zelaur. Other clerics must pay a 5 BP penalty to take this package. In any case, the character's gawd must allow one or more hacking weapons.

Barred Types: Druids, fighters, magic-user and thief types. Clerics whose gawd does not allow any hacking weapons are also barred from this package.

Skills: Clerics who take this package gain the arcane lore skill and one art skill (either artistic ability, ballroom dancing, poetry writing and comprehension/interpretation, or singing) at no cost. Each skill receives two rolls of the mastery die in addition to that normally gained when purchased. They may purchase the jugular swipe skill for a mere 6 BP.

Weapon Proficiencies: The cleric may choose any hacking weapon proficiencies that his specific cleric class allows him; he may not take any crushing or puncturing weapons, or any hacking weapons that his class does not allow him.

Talents: The character may take the following talents for a cost of 1 fewer BP: attack bonus, axe bonus, blind-fighting, dagger bonus, damage bonus, hit point bonus, short sword bonus, and sword bonus. He need not meet the race/class requirements to take these talents.

Equipment and Money: The character may only wield hacking weapons allowed by his cleric class. He has no other restrictions.

Special Boons: The hand of the deity can permanently give up three of his daily 2nd-level or greater spell slots for a hacking weapon specialization instead. After he specializes in a hacking weapon, he may give up three of his daily 6th-level or greater spell slots in exchange for mastery of that hacking weapon. He may not gain high mastery or grand mastery. He gains no extra attacks per round for specialization. The knowledge comes to him from his deity, and so he does not have to pay any training fee or train with the weapon to specialize in or master it. He may specialize and master multiple hacking weapons, as long as he has the spell slots to give up.

Special Banes: All hands of the deity suffer from the HackLust flaw.

Iron Fist (Building Point Cost: 14)

See the prestige class text for the description and role of the iron fist.

Ability Scores: To become an iron fist, the character must have a minimum Strength score of 14.

Races: Any.

Preferred Types: Monk.

Barred Types: Cleric, magic-user, thief and other fighter types are barred from this package.

Skills: The character gains the brawler skill and the iron fist skill (see page 113 of *The Combatant's Guide to Slaughtering Foes*) at no cost. He does not gain the proficiencies for the iron fist skill. Each skill receives two rolls of the mastery die in addition to that normally gained when purchased. He may purchase the groin punch skill for 6 BP, and the kidney bruiser skill for a mere 10 BP.

Weapon Proficiencies: The iron fist gains no new weapon proficiencies with this package.

Talents: An iron fist receives the critical hit bonus talent (see *The Combatant's Guide to Slaughtering Foes*) for free.

Equipment and Money: Iron fists gain no special bonuses or penalties in regards to equipment and money.

Special Boons: The iron fist gains the ability to make an additional open hand attack every other melee round.

An iron fist monk can use his open hand attack to target an opponent's weapon. The AC of the weapon is base 10 minus any Dexterity modifier the wielder may have. The effective AC of a magic weapon is further modified down for each plus it is enchanted with. If the attack succeeds, the weapon must save versus a crushing blow or become broken and useless.

Special Banes: An iron fist monk disdains the use of all weapons besides his own hands. He does not receive the normal +1 bonus to hit with weapons from among the list that they are trained with, as detailed in the HackMaster Player's Handbook, but they receive no penalty for using these weapons. All other weapons, including improvised

Prestige Classes

weapons, suffer a -2 penalty to hit. This penalty is cumulative with the normal -1 penalty, for a total of -3 to hit.

Melee Weapon Master (Building Point Cost: 25)

See the prestige class text for the description and role of the melee weapon master.

Ability Scores: A melee weapon master needs a Strength score of at least 16 and a Dexterity score of at least 10.

Races: Any.

Preferred Types: Fighter, ranger, soldier. Other fighter classes must spend an additional 5 BP to take this package.

Barred Types: Berserker, cavalier, gladiator, holy knight, knight errant, monk; Cleric, magic-user and thief types are also barred from this package.

Skills: A melee weapon master gains the expert disarm and weapon maintenance skills at no cost (each skill receives one roll of the mastery die in addition to that normally gained when purchased). He also receives the weaponsmithing skill at no cost (he receives no free rolls, but initial mastery is 50%).

Weapon Proficiencies: The melee weapon master gains the benefits of mastery with one type of melee weapon, at no cost. However, he must already have proficiency in that weapon.

Talents: The melee weapon master gains the attack bonus talent and the damage bonus talent at no cost.

Equipment and Money: Melee weapon masters gain no special bonuses concerning equipment. However, the melee weapon master always seeks a better weapon. He must have the sharpest blade, the finest hilt, best-carved pommel, and so on. He must be able to imagine that his weapon is superior in every way. Clever dealers also find it easy to swindle melee weapon masters.

Special Boons: Aside from the standard bonuses for mastery (+2 to attack and +3 to damage), the melee weapon master gains the ability to make an extra melee attack every round. Alternatively, at a normal rate of fire the melee weapon master may choose to take a bonus of +2 to hit for every three experience levels on called shots.

In addition, provided that he keeps his weapon maintained, the melee weapon master's blade has a special effectiveness. As long as it is properly maintained, the weapon inflicts one additional point of damage on a successful hit. Failure means that the weapon does no extra damage on a successful hit. Critical failure means that even if it does hit it does -1 point of damage. However, this cannot lower a successful hit below 1 point of damage.

Special Banes: The melee weapon master hates ranged weapons. He suffers a -3 penalty with any ranged weapon (-5 if he is not proficient in its use). He cannot take any talent that would give him a bonus to ranged attacks, and can never gain a bonus to hit with a ranged weapon (from racial talent,

specialization, mastery, etc.). He can gain damage bonuses, however.

The melee weapon master's obsession with the quality of his weapon so intense that he can never knowingly use inferior weapons, even when he or his companions are in mortal danger.

Ultimate Archer (Building Point Cost: 25)

See the above prestige class text for the description and role of the ultimate archer.

Ability Scores: An ultimate archer needs a Dexterity score of at least 16.

Races: Any.

Preferred Types: Fighter, ranger, soldier. Other fighter classes must spend an additional 5 BP to take this package.

Barred Types: Berserker, cavalier, gladiator, holy knight, knight errant, monk; Cleric, magic-user and thief types are also barred from this package.

Skills: An ultimate archer gains the disarm and weapon maintenance skills at no cost (each skill receives one roll of the mastery die in addition to that normally gained when purchased). He also receives the bowyer/fletcher skill at no cost (he receives no free rolls, but initial mastery is 50%).

Weapon Proficiencies: The ultimate archer gains the benefits of mastery with the long or short bow, or a single type of crossbow at no cost. However, he must already have proficiency in that weapon.

Talents: The ultimate archer gains the bow bonus talent OR crossbow bonus talent, and the keen sight talent at no cost.

Equipment and Money: Like archers, ultimate archers gain no special bonuses with regards to equipment. Just because he is good with a bow does not mean he has his own expensive weapon to haul around... (Be glad you get no special penalties regarding equipment.) Still, the ultimate archer always seeks a better bow. He must have the best strings, the finest wood, and be able to imagine that his bow is superior in every way. Clever dealers also find it easy to swindle ultimate archers.

Special Boons: Aside from the standard bonuses for mastery (point blank bonuses increase to +2/+2 and all other ranges receive an additional +1 to hit, plus the ability to shoot a nocked missile before normal combat ensues), the ultimate archer gains the ability to fire an extra shot every round. Alternatively, at a normal rate of fire the ultimate archer may choose to take a bonus of +2 to hit for every three experience levels on trick shots (trick shots are described in the Art of Hack section in *The Combatant's Guide to Slaughtering Foes*).

Also, given two weeks to tend his bow and arrows, the ultimate archer can (with a successful bowyer/fletcher skill check) hone his arrows to special effectiveness. Such arrows inflict one additional point of damage on a successful hit. Failure means that the arrow automatically breaks on a

fumble (in addition to any other effects of the fumble) and does not deal extra damage on a successful hit. Critical failure means that the arrow breaks no matter what (whether it hits or misses) and even if it does hit it does -1 point of damage. However, this cannot lower a successful hit below 1 point of damage.

An ultimate archer can move up to half his allowed distance, fire and move again, even if he is not an elf. He cannot move further than his normal movement rate overall, nor can he fire more than once per round in this manner. He could also fire, move up to half his allowed distance, then stop and fire his remaining shots if he wishes.

Special Banes: The ultimate archer hates melee weapons. He suffers a -3 penalty with any melee weapon (-5 if he is not proficient in its use). He cannot take any talent that would give him a bonus to hit in melee, and can never gain a bonus to hit with a melee weapon (for Strength, racial talent, specialization, mastery, etc.). He can gain damage bonuses, however.

The ultimate archer's obsession with the quality of equipment extends to his bows and arrows. He can never knowingly use inferior items, even when he or his companions are in mortal danger.

Voyageur (Building Point Cost: 10)

See the above prestige class text for the description and role of the voyageur.

Ability Scores: A voyageur needs a Dexterity score of at least 11, though most have scores much higher.

Races: Any

Preferred Types: Fighter, bounty hunter, pirate, swash-buckler; Thief, bard, charlatan, minstrel.

Barred Types: Cleric, magic-user and other fighter and thief types are also barred from this package.

Skills: The character gains the disarm, graceful entrance/exit, mingling, social etiquette and weapon maintenance skills at no cost (each skill receives one roll of the mastery die in addition to that normally gained when purchased).

Weapon Proficiencies: Voyageurs must be proficient in either the short sword or long sword. They must always keep their weapons well polished and in perfect order.

Talents: A voyageur receives the grace under pressure talent and the sword bonus talent for free. He may purchase the ambidextrous talent for only 3 BP.

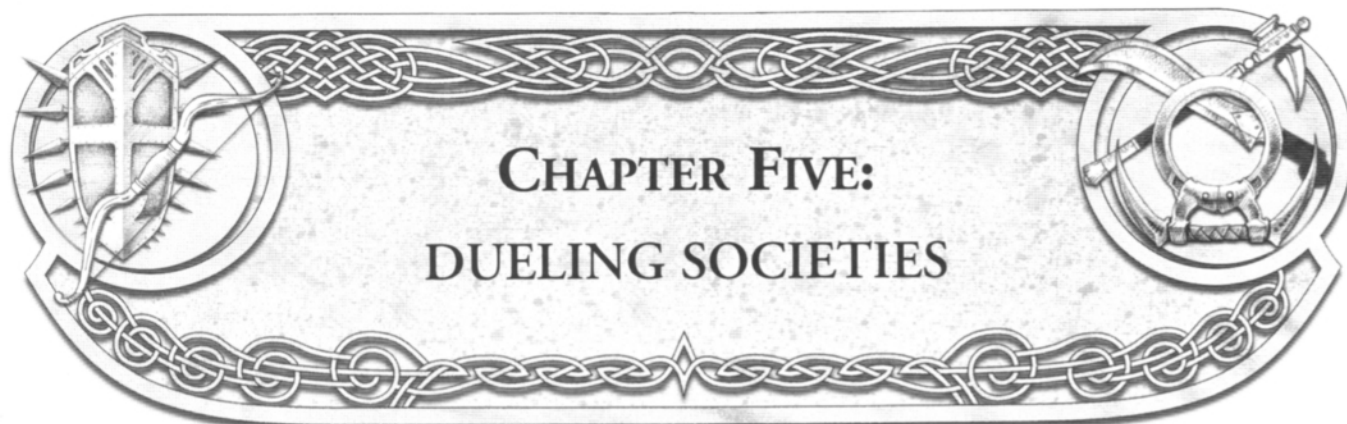
Equipment and Money: Voyageurs prefer to only wield long swords or short swords, wear only non-bulky armor, and dislike shields. They gain no benefits (and suffer no penalties) concerning starting money. They lose all their boons (but keep their banes) while they use fairly bulky or bulky armor, or shields.

Special Boons: The voyageur that spends a full round whirling one or more swords around him in a display of skill lowers opponents' morale by -2 (but does not require an immediate morale check) and gives a +1 morale bonus to allies' attack rolls, so long as they can clearly see the display and have not already been engaged in combat. They must also be within 30 feet of the voyageur. The effect lasts for one round per character level of the voyageur. This boon may only be used once per encounter; any successful attack on the voyageur during this display of skill, or a failed saving throw by the voyageur, disrupts the display.

Voyageurs also know how best to speedily inflict damage. On any round after the first, a voyageur that wins initiative gains a +2 bonus to his attack rolls and a +1 bonus to his damage rolls.

Special Banes: A voyageur disdains the use of all weapons besides long swords and short swords. Anytime he uses another type of weapon, he suffers a -1 penalty to hit. This penalty is cumulative with any other penalties, such as lack of proficiency with that weapon.

Voyageurs love to travel, and dislike remaining in any one village, town, city or similar settlement for more than three days. For every day longer he spends in the same permanent settlement, he suffers a cumulative -1% penalty on all skill checks. (This does not apply to dungeons, ships and other non-town-like areas, except for unusual settlements at the decision of the GM.) Voyageurs may not build strongholds for themselves, or own any type of property intended for their own routine personal use. They may, however, own buildings or strongholds that they rent out to other PCs or NPCs.



CHAPTER FIVE: DUELING SOCIETIES

Duelists, just like any other hobbyist or professional, tend to gather in more-or-less small groups to discuss, confront, support or just share their passion for duels with others who feel the same. Since duels have such a strong physical aspect, however, dueling societies also often have practicing features, either to help their members get better or to study the weaknesses in potential adversaries' fighting styles. In addition, dueling societies tend to have a developed social aspect because of the duel's noble and fancy nature. This sometimes causes the nobility and other high-authority figures to show interest in these groups. However, long political discussions are rare among such men and women of action.

Following are three examples of dueling societies: a renowned school of arms, a social club, and an adventurer's guild. Players may wish to form such an organization, while DMs may use these for adventurer hooks or nearly any other reason.

THE DISOTAL ACADEMY

Numerous fighters' guilds exist in Korak, and people looking for instruction in weaponry or fencing need only to choose their school. One school exclusively for women, the Disotal Academy, produces fencers of unparalleled skill and speed. They hope that soon one of their graduates will become General of Korem.

According to local tales, a martially minded female fighter, Inala Disotal, founded the school nearly a dozen years ago. Her original purpose was to prepare more young women for battle, should the hobgoblins raiders of Norga-Krangrel make unexpected progress along the Koraki border, should P'Bapar fail to send its spring allotment of soldiers, or both. With the future still uncertain, the academy remains open.

Inala invited known female swordsmen and weapons masters from nearby cities to offer a broader range of courses (and thereby attract more students) and officially opened the "Disotal Academy." The establishment greeted many adventurers at first, all of whom greatly enriched the school's military knowledge. Eventually, the school gained a positive reputation and the local nobles became interested. Today Inala's dream is reality and her establishment is home to many fighting styles, preserving that information for future generations.

The diversity of the courses offered here, as well as the quality of its teachings, make this establishment one of the most respected fencing schools in this part of Tellene. Despite its designation as a "fencing school," students learn many styles of combat within its walls.

The Disotal Academy attracts students from all levels of society. While being noble-born may alleviate the weight of the tuition fees, virtually any female regardless of race or social class is eligible, with one exception. Hobgoblins are, of course, banned. Only one sil-karg (half-hobgoblin) has ever attended the academy, and she required frequent disguise magicks to do so. Upon discovery, she died before she could utter a word in her own defense, and no one yet knows her reasons for attending the academy.

Adventurers and duelists also make use of the academy's dueling policies. Indeed, duels are permitted (some might say encouraged) inside the academy's walls. Moreover, such duels benefit from a strictly neutral ground and a safe dueling environment, all of which forces the duels to be conducted honorably. The academy possesses some field healers to tend the wounds after the duel, and some teachers quite readily agree when asked to arbitrate.

Conditions of Admission

The Disotal Academy is no petty school teaching noble brats how to hold a weapon. While it does offer basic education to less experimented students, the school's true strength relies in its reputation of unparalleled skill and speed, advanced fighting styles and otherwise rare and valuable knowledge. Therefore, a prospective student needs more than just money.

Each student must be tested in combat before admission, in order to ensure she possesses the required level of expertise to fully benefit from the lessons. In this school, a teacher's energy is not to be wasted. Teachers are free to monitor the tests as they see fit, however, and they retain the final decision whether a student attends classes or not.

Costs and Services

The exact fees vary with the specific courses, and advanced lessons cost more. However, the school is always very interested in new fighting styles and exchanges between wandering weapons masters and the schools are relatively

frequent. As such, it might be possible for a potential student to offer a fighting style instead of payment in exchange for training.

The fighting style classes are the most popular feature of the academy. They are more or less general, depending on the exact style, and are often led by one or two teachers for a class of 3-6 students (although it is always possible to receive private lessons). The course generally extends over a period of 2 to 8 weeks, depending on the exact style, the number of students and the number of teachers. Students who successfully pass the course become proficient with the fighting style. In game terms, this means that a character attending such an activity has the possibility of permanently replacing one of her current combat feats (that is, any feat on the fighter's bonus feat list) by a fighting style for which the character meets the prerequisites. If the character does not wish to replace one of her feats, she does not benefit from the fighting style's bonuses, but instead receives an automatic success at a Knowledge (fighting styles) check to recognize that particular fighting style.

To determine the cost of participating in a fighting style course, use 200 gold pieces as the base cost, and add 50 gold pieces per prerequisite. The Three-Quarters Stance fighting style, for example, costs 500 gold pieces. This is based on the base cost of 200 gold pieces, plus another 50 gold pieces for the Strength requirement, and 50 gold for the Intelligence requirement, for a total so far of 300 gold pieces. Next comes another 50 gold pieces for the two required feats (putting us to 400 gold pieces), plus another 50 gold pieces for the prerequisite Two-Handed fighting style, and another 50 gold pieces for the base attack bonus requirement, for a grand total of 500 gold pieces. (DMs may see fit to change this formula based on the amount of wealth in their campaign setting.)

In general, however, Inala charges based on the needs of the school and the wealth of her students. A poorer student may pay only a tenth of this cost, or nothing at all, paying the school back by serving as cook, animal tender, or so on. Nobles and wealthy persons always pay the full cost, and sometimes more.

As mentioned above, the Disotal Academy is always eager to purchase new fighting styles. Travelers and adventurers able to teach one of the academy's teachers a new fighting style or write a treatise on it, which takes about 4+1d4 weeks respectively, would be warmly welcomed in the academy and offered payment for their contribution. Although many within the academy admit that a fighting style does not have a monetary value, typical payment for such service varies from a gift in the form of a magical item to the opportunity to follow one of the academy's courses, free of charge.

The Disotal Academy offers all of the basic fighting styles, and the following advanced fighting style courses: Bad Hand Deception, Diviner's Trick, Hovaran's Pretense, Lightning Strike, Ropefight, Shield Blade, Striking Cobra, Sword Dance, Three-Movement Defense and Three-Quarters Stance.

Hierarchy and Personalities

The Disotal Academy staff works in a loose hierarchy in which every teacher other than the school's founder, Inala herself, holds a status determined only by her combat ability. Indeed, a teacher's assignment within the school remains her personal choice. As such, teachers in charge of the advanced classes are not necessarily more powerful (though these inner statuses are often determined by the teacher's ability to fight and thus coincide with their "real" rank within the academy). A special rank of teacher, called the "Head Weapon Masters," of which there are currently three, benefit from a special reputation while inside the school's walls. While every teacher of arms holds the title of weapons master, these special characters are all supposed to be among the finest swordsmen and swordswomen in the area. Each of them undertook specific (and frighteningly dangerous) quests to attain their status. This special title, however, is little more than a sign of respect toward the teacher's achievements and does not seem to confer any real benefits to its owner, other than the right to counsel Inala and even replace her in the event of an absence. Still lower (but of a higher rank than the junior students) are the squires (teaching assistants) living in the academy. Below them are the guards and servants, all of whom know at least one fighting style, or are in the process of learning one.

The Disotal Academy in HackMaster

When using the HackMaster system in conjunction with the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* campaign setting supplement or simply choosing to place the Disotal Academy on Aldrazar, treat the Disotal Academy as a standard kobar (school) with a +1 modifier to quality of instructors.

The Disotal Academy in Your World

This establishment can be placed virtually anywhere on your world map. It is just as viable at the heart of a vibrant city as it is alone in the middle of a luxuriant forest or of an isolated mountain. The building itself should be relatively large, about the equivalent of a small keep. In any case, it should be big enough to accommodate several students and teachers permanently, as well as several training rooms with different configurations and a large courtyard for outdoor exercise.

The Disotal Academy has several potential uses for both players and game masters. Players will be delighted at the large selection of courses available at the academy and might consider spending some of their hard-earned treasures there instead of the local magical item retailer. It is then up to the DM whether or not to use the adventure hook the players themselves provided and set an adventure within the academy.

Additionally, the DM could make use of the knowledge-hungry nature of the academy. Traveling teachers could be

interested in one of the character's unique fighting style and try to convince or force them to go with them to the academy to pass the knowledge of the style on to others, or the characters themselves could be envoys from the academy who discover someone with a unique fighting style.

THE SWORDS OF THE CIRCLE

Once a fencing club formed by the Circle of Six (the six noble Geanavese families named in the Code of Standing proclaimed by Lord Halasaar in YND 242), this club eventually evolved into a routine meeting of the elder nobles of those houses. These are the Houses Arioohon, Celaarivan, Daraan, Malasiikaar, Muahuuro, and Velauril. Although opinions on specific subjects can vary from one member to the other, members are supposed to try to keep an open mind. Popular topics include politics, economics, games and duels, and it is not rare to hear them comparing fighting styles or even gossiping about the prowess or demise of another noble or his offspring. Members of the Swords of the Circle have always held duels in a high esteem, believing them to be their noble birthright. Some of its members have been defending the existence of duels in the city for decades.

Most non-members of this organization think of them as a handful of old nobles reminiscing on the past and defending indefensible positions for simple amusement. Even though this definition holds some truth, most of the time the club is a serious and relatively ancient institution from where the noble population of the city meets and indirectly affect the city's affairs. After all, this club is composed of some powerful figures!

Conditions of Admission

Due to the informal and localized nature of this society, admittance is very difficult - if not nearly impossible. First, the candidate must be sponsored by an existing member of the organization (usually his father or other family member) and be presented to the other members. Secondly, the candidate should be a member of the Talasaara. This particular interdiction has survived despite the club's open-mindedness to new ideas and concepts, although a few members have dared to present a non-Talasaaran candidate. Such exceptions, however, have only included accomplished duelists of noble blood that also happen to be quite wealthy and landowners in the own right. Since meetings take place in the residences of the members, possessing a relatively large household is an absolute must. Finally, the present members of the club must accept the candidate's membership unanimously.

Costs and Services

Once a member, the only fees to pay depend upon the accommodation of your guests. Whenever a meeting is supposed to be held at your household, ample quantities of liquors, foodstuffs and good topics of conversation must be available, as well as a large, well-aerated room free from disturbance for a full evening. The cost in supplies may be several hundred gold pieces per evening, depending on how many guests arrive. Fortunately, the meeting places are

decided by a rotation of the households of all its members, and there is rarely more than two meetings each month, which means that the costs discussed above might have to be met about twice per year.

Members of the organization receive several exclusive benefits. Apart from a place among some of the city's mightiest nobles, members enjoy access to a large network of contacts in the highest spheres of society as well as a certain legal immunity, which is of particular importance to duelers. Indeed, since some guard captains and other high-ranking officials are members of the Swords of the Circle, duelists interrupted by the city guards will have a much easier time talking things through with the guards' superiors than any other commoner or adventurer. Even "partial" members (those who do not possess households) will be granted almost any favor by other members on demand, even perhaps a refuge from the law among some of the less righteous noblemen.

Hierarchy and Personalities

There is no strict or established hierarchy among members. In fact, every member is reputed to be equal regardless of personal wealth or political status. Of course, this is not necessarily true. Members of the six houses always have more say than others.

Two particularly noteworthy members right now are Lord Sir Serulier of House Arioohon, a dangerous young man given to feuds and cruelty and displays of impressive sword-play, and Lord Sir Goolokaut of House Malasiikaar, whose father Kevoorin cold-bloodedly maneuvers his heir into frequent duels.

The Swords of the Circle in your World

This organization works best in a large city, where political intrigue is at least viable. The organization as presented here would take most of its meaning in a city where the laws are vigorously enforced by the city guards, and where duels are at least partly prohibited by laws (see Chapter One: The Basics of Dueling for more information about the relation between duels and the law).

The Swords of the Circle are most useful in a social context. Indeed, the characters would have little use of the gentlemen composing the group in a fight against giants. However, if the task consisted of breaking a comrade out of prison, getting in touch with Lord Haar, or making political deals within the established order, the Swords of the Circle would prove invaluable.

THE UNVOLEN ADVENTURER'S GUILD

The Unvolen Adventurer's Guild is the result of a homogeneous blend between an espionage network, a merchant's guild and a mercenary company. The Guild's job consists of several things. First, its "resident" (or non-adventuring) members collect information through an elaborate (and semi-secretive) spying network and receive job offers from particulars. It then offers jobs to the most adequate or the most interested

registered adventuring party. Finally, it administrates its resources, gathered from several sources, trying to further its causes and help its members.

This organization formed only a few years ago, as four treasure hunters brought magical elven artifacts out of the nearby Lendelwood, and found that the royal family would purchase such items for a great deal of money. Over time, the treasure hunters banded together, and their group grew larger and larger as the elves in the forest become bolder and (according to many Eldorans) more belligerent. It grew so much, in fact, that it could no longer function properly without an adequate administrative system. Eventually, the so-called adventuring party held so many members that it split into a number of smaller parties, each heading their way but with the common idea of belonging to a single organization. Today, the administrative system has settled down in its own small building and the party's name changed to that of the Unvolen Adventurer's Guild.

Conditions of Admission

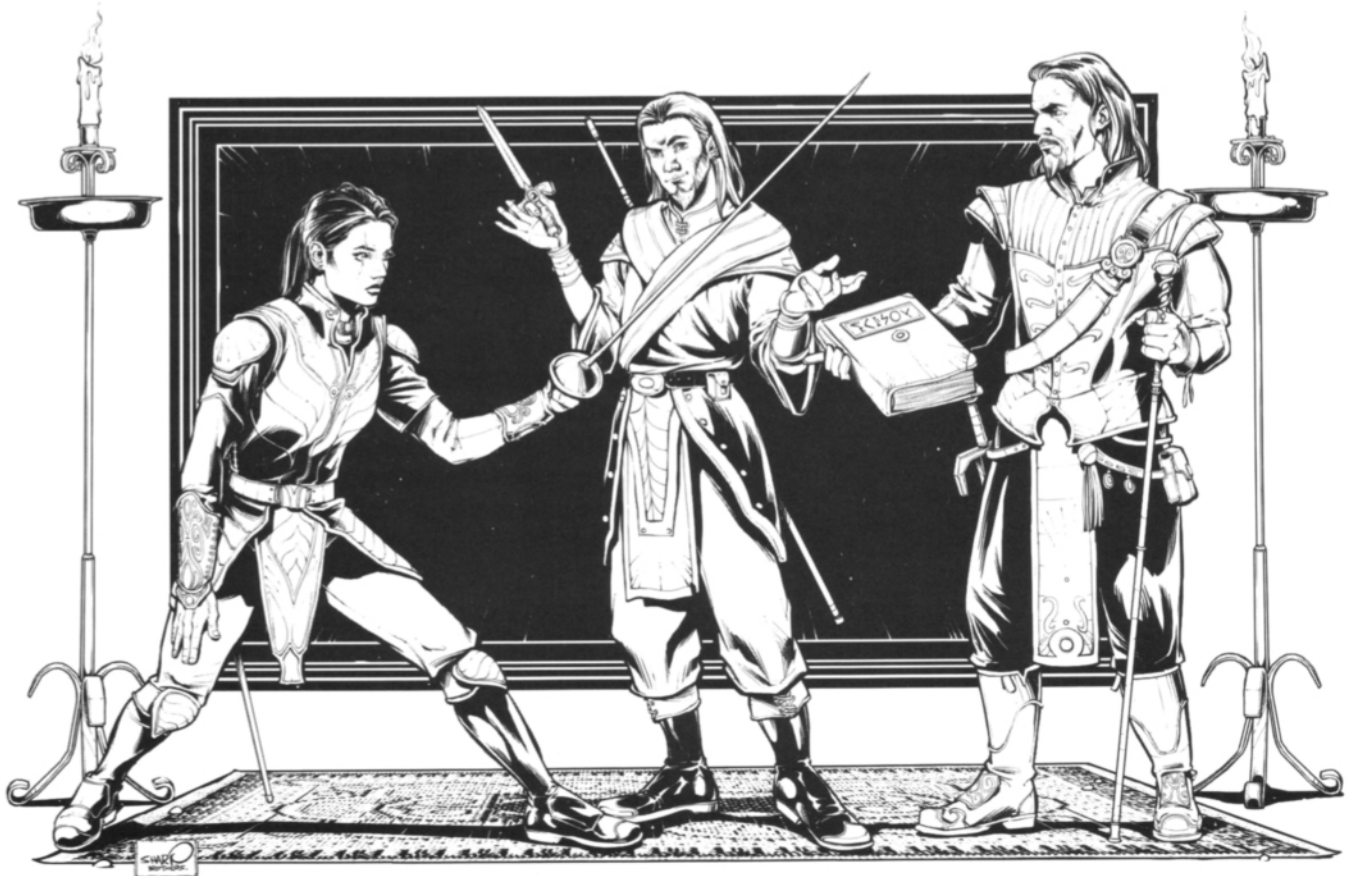
The guild tries to attract as wide a clientele as possible, but makes it a point not to blindly accept any wandering adventurer into its ranks, and has a loose filtration routine designed to ward off unwanted individuals. There are three tests to succeed in order to become a full-fledged member of the Unvolen Adventurer's Guild: the test of skill, the test of motives and the test of attitude. First, the candidate must show some adventuring talent. This can be done in any number of ways, such as convincingly wielding a sword,

casting a spell, sneaking past a guard, pocketing a purse, singing a song, bashing a door open or healing a scar. The sole purpose of this exercise is to insure that the candidate actually is some kind of adventurer, not a commoner seeking to become one. Then, the test of motive consists of a short interview with one of the guild's resident members. Although the guild does not mind accepting evil individuals, it neither recruits nor employs assassins. Finally, in order to be worthy of the title of "Unvolen Adventurer," the candidate must show a certain degree of adventuring spirit. This last condition includes retrieving an elven item (not necessarily magical) of some sort from the Lendelwood, which is given to the guild - and then sold for profit.

Costs and Services

Upon admittance within the guild's ranks, the character receives a small brooch in the form of a closed treasure chest with the Brandobian letter "U" engraved onto it. While it is devoid of any magical properties, it is a symbol of affiliation with the Unvolen Adventurer's Guild and allows the wielder to shroud him in the organization's reputation. Depending on the exact reputation of the guild in the Kingdom of Eldor where the character invokes it, doing so might have different effects such as discounts (or higher prices) in a store, quick friendships toward people favorable to the guild, or even help from the authorities.

However, the main services offered by the Unvolen Adventurer's Guild to their members are those available at the guild's headquarters. Since most of the guild's resident



Members of the Disotal Academy, Swords of the Circle and Unvolen Adventurer's Guild.

personnel consist of retired adventurers, services offered there are both varied and expensive. The most popular services include the guild's smithy, spells-for-hire, pleas for help and the famous "Quests Journal."

The guild's smithy, a hearty dwarf named Mieka, is known throughout the region for her skill and her vast knowledge of exotic weapons. She can also craft masterwork weapons, armors and other metallic items. Mieka charges up to twice the standard wage for her services, depending on the time required to complete the item and the difficulty of the task. Members of the Unvolen Adventurer's Guild can also benefit from a small library of arcane spells, and a small discount on spells and services at the Parish of the Prolific Coin.

Pleas for help are another of the guild's popular features. Whenever an adventurer or an adventuring party has a hard time completing a quest or are lacking certain options necessary for achieving an end, they can make good use of the guild's contacts network and ask for assistance from another adventurer or adventuring party. While roguish adventurers are a common request, valiant warriors and cunning riddle masters are much in demand. These helpers are also good makeshift friends for a duel into which you really do not care to venture alone. Typical costs for such a service are either a fixed fee based on the difficulty of the task, a share of the treasure or nothing in particular, although this effectively indebts the demanding party to their benefactor.

The pride and joy of the Unvolen Adventurer's Guild is the Quest Journal. The Quest Journal is the information network that allows the guild to perceive, administrate and dispatch job offers, and is the way by which information goes from a person seeking help to the adventurers. This particular service comes in the form of a rather immense logbook into which available quests are listed. These entries are then annotated with the name of the adventuring company that resolved the problem and the date when they succeeded. Highly prestigious adventures are handled a different way, however.

Adventures considered to have a potential for high rewards or glorious deeds are not consigned in the Quest Logbook. These special adventures are given either to handpicked companies or to individuals if they are of capital importance, or are proposed to senior members of the organization before opened to ordinary members.

Each member of the guild must pay monthly dues of 60 gold pieces (it is a running joke in the guild that an ettin pays double price). However, adventurers that perform casual services for the guild may see their costs reduced or even totally negated.

Hierarchy and Personalities

Being an administrative system, the Unvolen Adventurer's Guild requires a strong hierarchy. At the top of the hierarchy is founder Forlen Celborn, the last surviving member of the original four bounty hunters, and a former advisor to Bloody Vrasten (missing ruler of Unvolen). Beneath him is a Council of Three, elected every year among the flock of senior members. The Council administrates the administra-

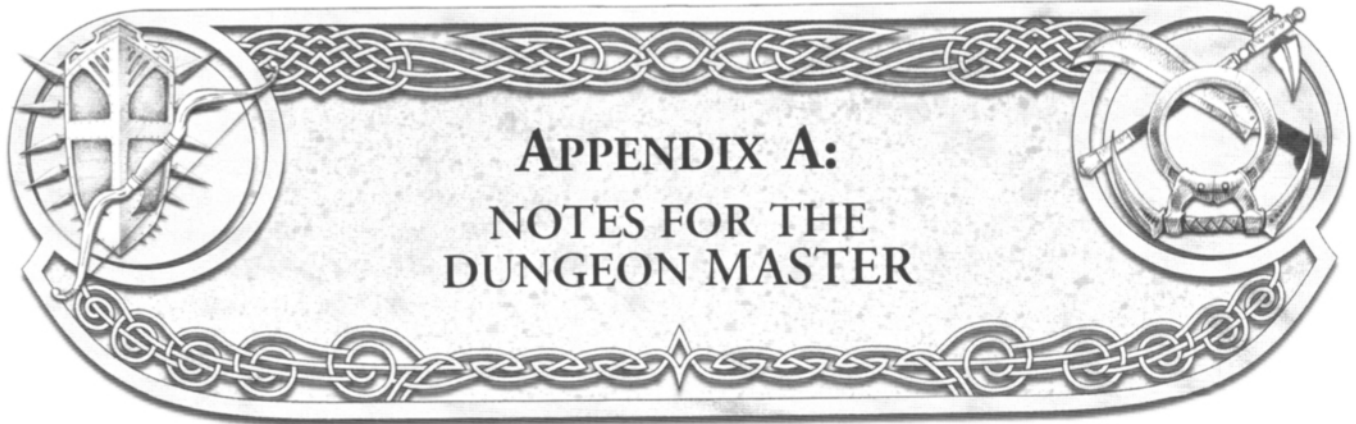
tion, so to speak, by keeping the accounting straight, dealing with the city's officials, and so on. Next in the hierarchy come the senior members, who create and develop new projects, visit cities to expand the guild's influence or create an outpost, and handle the daily higher-level business. Any guild member judged (by the present senior members) to have accomplished sufficiently worthy deeds or have been a member of the organization for over ten years is automatically bestowed the status of senior member. Resident members are those who handle the daily activities of the guild, such as the weaponsmith and minor spell-for-hire services. Finally, normal members, sometimes referred to as the guild's "clients," are those members of the community who are on the road and actually use the services provided.

The Unvolen Adventurer's Guild in Your World

Because of its very nature, this organization is best suited to a campaign world in which adventurers are rather frequent. While the organization does not necessarily require the presence of high-level adventurers, it needs the existence and even the popular acknowledgement of adventurers to justify an entire society dedicated to organizing them.

The Unvolen Adventurer's Guild comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. The guild's headquarters should be situated in at least a somewhat prosperous city, but the building itself may be quite opulent, with the accumulated treasures of three generations of adventurers to decorate its halls, or a more spartan building where comfort is secondary. Following the main building are the smaller outposts, disseminated throughout the kingdom (or any other location that better suits your campaign world). These outposts receive information directly from the headquarters from time to time about the availability of major quests. However, their focus is to investigate the immediate area with a smaller spy network, report to the headquarters, and offer available quests to local (or passing) guild members. These outposts offer the same kind of services as the headquarters, only to a lesser degree. Last, but not least, every members of the guild could be considered traveling agents of the Unvolen Adventurers' Guild with the power to alter the organization's reputation by their actions.

This guild works in your campaign in several ways. The Quest Journal provides an easy method of introducing adventures for the DM, as do the several other guild members who can ask the characters for favors of all kinds. Player characters that are members of this guild have access to a lot of resources and possibilities, a fact that the DM can take into consideration when designing adventures. Finally, the guild's interior hierarchy might intrigue and interest some characters. In fact, the struggle to go up the guild's social ladder could become a long-term side quest in the campaign!



Naturally, players interested in using the rules in this book for their own games should consult with their Dungeon Master, who may also find this book useful. The following sections are intended specifically for DMs. Unless you want to ruin some surprises your DM may have in store, don't read this appendix.

INTEGRATING DUELS IN YOUR GAMES

Duels make wonderful climactic battles against recurring villains that a certain character has learnt to hate or respect over time. Loyal triumphing over an enemy during a duel gives a sense of complete victory, with no loose ends or regrets. As such, a duel is supposed to be more exciting than a wild melee against orcs. However, to create a truly unforgettable duel, several elements that require somewhat more thinking and planning need to be present. Most important among those elements is the existing relation between the two duelists. Thus, the duel is much more involving for both participants if they have a long history of treachery, uneasy alliances and so on. In other words, a duel with a nemesis is more memorable than a duel with a random enemy.

Second in importance comes the motive behind the duel. Why are these characters dueling? It may be for a question of principle, which enhances the importance of the duel as its implications go even beyond the simple lives of those "debating" it. The stakes of the duel are also high, making the excitement proportionately greater when a vengeance is being resolved. As a rule of thumb, a character feels more involved in a duel if the stakes matter to her.

The last tip to making a memorable duel is to set the scene carefully. When a character has a chance to fight a duel against an old enemy, it should not occur in a standard 30-foot by 30-foot dungeon room. There are plenty of interesting settings for a duel to prevent this from happening. A few examples of exciting dueling moments and places include: a party or other social event where plenty of people are watching, on a cliff, in a mansion with plenty of props to give some originality to the duelists' attacks, on a rocky or uneven terrain where it is easy to slip or gain the upper

ground advantage, on rocky platforms surrounded by lava, in a place relevant to the duel's object, or a place with a personal meaning to one or both duelists.

There is a major problem with duels in role-playing games, however - they usually only involve one of the characters, leaving the remaining of the adventuring party to be observers. Besides asking the other players to sit tight and wait for their turn (which is not necessarily as bad an idea as it sounds), there are several tricks the DM can use to involve all the other players in the duel as well. The easiest such trick is to have the other characters involved in a different, parallel combat with different opponents. Both combats can be resolved simultaneously or one at a time, as long as it is understood that they happen at the same time in the campaign world.

This secondary combat could even be fought to protect or ensure the freedom of the duelists, such as fighting off guards determined to end the duel. The other characters could also be standing by as backup for their duelist friend (in case the other duelist tries to cheat, or if his own retinue interrupts the duel when odds are not in their favor). Other examples of occupations for players serving as backup include: getting rid of the snipers hired by the other duelist before they get in position, taking bets among the crowd, and discreetly cheating on behalf of their friend. Another possibility is to admit their characters have no part in the duel and find them something else to do, such as flipping through your new book about duels, getting snacks, playing tic-tac-toe, and so on. As the Game Master, you could even try to time your game session so to resolve the duel alone with the interested player either before or after the session.

THE RULES OF INTERPRETATION

The endless possibilities offered by your game system, once written on a character sheet, need to be integrated into play. Indeed, a character has to do something between the moment you roll the dice and the moment a goblin dies. More precisely, a character swings a sword - how high, how hard, how fast, how many times, and so much other details are yours to decide. These details are not written on a character sheet, and they are not a reflection of base attack

bonus or character level. They are what defines a character, what differentiates her from the lot.

Here are a small number of suggestions as to how you may interpret the rules to better represent a character. Remember that, unlike game statistics that are concrete and comparable numbers, interpretations are abstract, sometimes subtle, and can be applied differently to different characters.

Favor the Flavor

This rule means that any variation that does not affect game balance or does not possess any game statistics should be integrated in the game. "Can a family crest be engraved on a character's shield?" or "Can a character's rapier look like the one in this picture?" or "Can my hair flow when I cast a spell?" There is little reason for a Dungeon Master to disallow these wishes, unless they contradict some pre-established element in the campaign world.

This rule allows players to shape and customize their characters with the greatest freedom. Some may even see it as an extension of a player's right to choose the sex, race, class, hair color and eye color of his character.

Moreover, this rule implies that the Dungeon Master should not limit player initiative. Flashy or detailed maneuvers should not be penalized simply because they look harder to accomplish, as long as they do not affect an established rule. In other words, a character should not get a penalty to attack roll because she declares her intent to "parry low, retreat a step and suddenly lunge forward" if this maneuver is intended for flavor and does not have a game effect in your system.

DM/Player Cooperative Setting

When fighting in a colorful environment full of props and background objects you can manipulate, remember that a Dungeon Master cannot always give a perfect picture of the setting. Players should feel free to ask for specific items or furniture if the Dungeon Master does not specify their existence. In a fast-paced action sequence, a player may even invent props on his own, and the DM may allow this so long as it is adequate to the environment in which the fight takes place.

For example, a noble house in which the characters are attending a banquet contains numerous forks and knives, chairs, portraits on the walls, candles, sheets, decorative shields and swords, plates, fireplace tools, pans, rugs, chandeliers, staircases, and so on. Generally, a player can assume these are readily available within this particular setting even if the DM did not specify them. Of course, a DM retains the final word if he or she does not want such an item to be available.

Direct Hit Points

Hit points are very subjective and abstract. A dagger hit that deals 4 points of damage does not necessarily hold the same meaning to the 1st-level barbarian as it does to the 1st-level wizard. The same dagger hit can also mean a completely different thing to a 20th-level barbarian. Why? Because 4 hit points can represent three totally different things: 100% of a 1st-level wizard's physical integrity, 33% of a 1st-level barbarian's vitality, or roughly 2.5% of a 20th-level barbarian's hit points. During play, all those different numbers combine and their differences become even more apparent. The classic question generally runs something like this: if a wizard who takes 4 points of damage from a dagger hit gets the dagger right in the throat and dies, would not the same dagger hit do the same thing to the barbarian? The correct answer is: yes and no. The same 4 points of damage may only injure the barbarian, not kill him as it did the wizard. At the same time, if the barbarian received a blow that amounted to 100% of his hit points, then he would obviously drop as well. In conclusion, each fixed number of damage has to be interpreted depending on the hit points total of the character who receives it.

Another facet of this rule is that different characters react differently to damage. This rule of interpretation ties in with the first one, in that it requires the interpretation to stay neutral in relation to the game statistics. For example, let us compare how an elven finesse fighter and a half-orc barbarian with the same hit point total (for example, 48 hit points) react to the same sword blow dealing 6 points of damage. A dodging finesse fighter might claim that such a blow inflicted a flesh wound, whereas the barbarian might claim that the blood splashes from his flank and drips along his arm as he swings his battleaxe for the return blow.

Whatever interpretation you give to your character's damage, remember that it must conform to the game balance.

Twist the Game and Warp the System

This rule means that, if in the end it all amounts to the same, go for it. For example, a player wants his elven finesse fighter to use a longsword in combat, but would rather use the statistics of the rapier (undoubtedly because he wishes his character to use the Weapon Finesse feat). As the DM, you may allow that player to fight with a "variant longsword" with the statistics of a rapier since fighters are proficient with all martial weapons, and that includes the rapier. Another way to consider the problem is that it might make sense for the character to fight with a rapier that looks similar to a longsword. Of course, the Dungeon Master and player should discuss these interpretations before allowing them into the game.

SAMPLE DUEL ENCOUNTERS

Below are three different ways of incorporating a duel into a campaign. Of course, because not all regions regard duels in the same way, each encounter works best in a different land.

Trial by Combat

While visiting a barbarian outpost, the players are accused of a crime and must fight to clear their name.

Location: This sort of duel works well in insular, primitive places. It is easy to imagine a barbarian settlement on the edge of nowhere, and it is even easier to imagine that such a place would be innately hostile to strangers. In addition, it makes sense that an illiterate barbarian settlement would use a trial by ordeal to determine the truth of an accused criminal's guilt or innocence. A small town in the northern Wild Lands might work well for DMs using the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting.

Reason for Duel: The PCs are accused of a crime by one of the townspeople. The crime can be just about anything, as long as there is no proof that the party actually committed the crime. Examples might include fraud (such as claiming a mundane item had magical properties), adultery (or flirting too much with the tavern-keeper's pretty wife), or plotting to murder a local.

How: Perhaps the players were only overheard plotting the crime, but it won't matter. After the group has been officially accused of the crime, the duel will be scheduled for a future day and time, maybe the next day, or in a week's time, maybe the next full moon, it's up to you, the GM, to decide. In the interim, the party may not be arrested, but they certainly will be watched. If they try to leave town before the fight, they are arrested.

In the meantime, the PC's opponent will choose allies to join in the fight; both sides must have equal numbers. The PCs and their opponents would also choose their weapons - any weapons of war are permitted. Of course, if you want to make life more difficult for your players, you can limit the party's choice of weapons; they can only use weapons that are easily available in the settlement. If the party wants to use falchions, for example, but this mountain-bound barbarian tribe has no falchions, then the PCs must choose something else. Another limiting option would be to rule that the assortment of weapons has to be the same. In other words, both sides must agree on the weapons used. If one side uses a sword, a mace, an axe, and a flail, the other side has to use a sword, a mace, an axe, and a flail.) Then the two sides would have to decide what types of spells, if any, are allowed. Perhaps only divine, not arcane, magic is allowed, or vice versa, at the DM's discretion. Maybe magic is limited to defensive spells. On the other hand, maybe spell-casting is not allowed in the fight at all. (See *Twist on the Theme*, below, for another variation on the use of magic.)

The Duel: On the day of the combat, the PCs and the entire town gather at the a pre-determined location (the "lists"). A marked field outside of the settlement is a good choice. The chief of the tribe will be there, as well as the people who accused the party and virtually everyone else in the settlement. The chief consecrates the combat to the tribe's deity (or deities), and then hears an oath from each combatant in turn. An oath might go as follows: "I charge thee, challenger (or defender), upon thy faith, that thou do thine uttermost by endeavor and force to prove thine affirmation, either by death or denial of thine adversaries, before they departeth these lists, and before the sun goeth down this day, as the gods shall help thee." The PC then responds with "I do so swear," or something similar. If anyone in the party refuses to take the oath, they must leave town, or be attacked outright.

At this point, the chief of the tribe warns the audience to remain silent, so as not to contaminate the outcome of the match. At that point, the fight begins. The party's opponents might attack as a group, or each member of the opposing side might fight one-on-one with a PC. In any case, no one can leave the limits of the field. To do so is to admit defeat and, consequently, guilt. Similarly, any magic that makes it seem as if a PC has left the field counts as leaving the field. In other words, PCs cannot use invisibility or any other magic that makes them disappear.

The fight ends in death. If, in an attempt to end the fight, one side confesses, either to actually committing the crime, or to lying about the accusation, then those combatants are executed for being liars.

Resolution: If the players are victorious, they likely gain all sorts of advantages. The barbarian tribe might become their lifelong allies. They might even get a new party member (or perhaps a cohort) out of the proceedings. If the party loses, but manages to escape, they will have made permanent enemies of the tribe, who may choose to send men to hunt them down.

Twist on the Theme: Set the duel in a society that fears and hates magic. Magic is completely forbidden in the fight, and the spellcasters in the group must use whatever weapons they can manage. Before such a duel, the combatants are searched, to make sure they have no magic items, and they would have to swear an oath. One sample oath follows: "Hear this, you Judge, that I have this day neither eaten, drank, nor have upon me either bone, stone, plant, or any such wizardry, where through the power of good might be increased or diminished, and the power of evil increased: and that my appeal is true, so help me [insert PC's deity name here]."

However, if the barbarian tribe really hates magic, they might not know enough to recognize it when they see it. For example, they may not realize that the players might have increased their Strength and Dexterity before they even arrived on the field. They may not realize that the PC wizard is actually on the field, invisible, and stealthily participating in the fight.

A Duel of Honor

The PCs insult members of the local gentry, and the party must defend their reputations in a duel.

Location: Any town that is big enough to have a ruling class, or a local lord. Ordinary commoners generally do not have the skills to fight a duel, and the gentry rarely permits such commoners to fight.

Reason for Duel: Maybe the party gossips publicly about the cowardice of the Baron's knights, or the group is overheard laughing about the ignorant practices of the local landowner. Perhaps a rumor starts that the party suspects the children of local nobility to be colluding with an enemy. As soon as this tidbit of gossip begins to spread, the party can be sure that the slandered person(s) will seek a duel.

How: The slandered person posts a written challenge throughout the town (and on the party's door.) The challenge is addressed to the PCs, and it may read something like this: "Forasmuch as lately in public, you spoke impudently, indiscreetly, and over boldly of me, then I say you have wickedly and maliciously lied, in speaking so basely of me, and you shall do nothing else but lie whenever you dare tax my honor. Therefore, I do defy you, and challenge your persons to mine, with such manner of arms as you shall like or choose. If you consent not to meet me hereupon, I will hold you, and cause all to know you as the worst cowards, and the most slanderous slaves, in the entire realm. I expect your immediate answer."

Upon receiving such a challenge, the party cannot refuse. They might flee, but flight has repercussions: the PCs are believed to be liars, and no one in town will do business with them. They may lose their base of operations, if any, and if they were hired to clear out the local dungeon, that deal is off. In some cases, the PCs cannot even reenter the dungeon until they have fought this duel.

After assenting to the duel, the party must ask the local lord to manage the proceedings as "constable." (If the PCs are dueling the local lord, then they must find a noble to act as a neutral party; their opponents' liege lord would be ideal.) The chosen constable picks the dueling field and sets the date, while the PCs (as the recipients of the challenge) choose the weapons and armor (if any), as well as whether or not magic will be used, and what form that magic will take (i.e. magic items only, defensive spells only, etc.) The party gets the choice, but their opponents must agree. Then each side picks a second. The seconds do not fight under any conditions, but they protect the interests of the party by making sure that each side's weapons and armor are the same.

The Duel: On the chosen day, the players arrive at dawn to see a temporary stadium set-up. Risers are erected around the field, and their seats quickly fill with spectators. Each side has a tent wherein they may prepare themselves. In the middle, on one of the sidelines, is a platform for the constable. The constable examines the field, and then the seconds search the participants for unapproved magic items

or hidden weapons. Both the players and their opponents would swear that they told the truth in insulting (or denying the insults of) the others. Then the constable declares the fight's beginning.

Like the trial by combat, the two sides may gang up on each other, or break into smaller groups. Once again, the PCs cannot leave the field (or appear to leave the field) in any way; if they do so, they lose. However, unlike the trial by combat, this fight does not necessarily end in death. The constable can end things at any time, and declare a winner in the process.

Resolution: If the players lose, they have the reputation of proven liars, and few people in town will trust them. To restore their reputations, they might have to take on a great feat of bravery - perhaps they must destroy a fearsome local monster, or clear out the dangerous ruin nearby. Alternatively, maybe they simply have to leave town, and reestablish themselves elsewhere. If they win, they likely gain the respect of the duel's chosen constable. This lord has the power and authority to reward the group, to give them special missions, or to introduce them to even more powerful people.

Twist on the Theme: The expert duelist. Your players may imagine that their opponents are soft aristocrats with little experience of fighting. However, the opposition may be soft aristocrats, but many such types are actually trained to fight duels. Such people have a wide experience with all sorts of weapons, and are far more experienced with this sort of fight. Expecting an easy time of it, the group finds themselves at a disadvantage in the fight.

It's Not Who You Know, It's What You Know (The Legal Cheat)

The PCs insult (or are perceived to insult) members of the local gentry. The main difference between this and the duel of honor encounter (above) is that the opponents do everything they can to sway the fight. In short, they cheat - but only in ways that are technically legal.

Location: Any area with an appreciation for hard bargains, a reputation for following the letter of the law, and distaste for outsiders. Generally, this is any money-focused, merchant-centered town. Again, the town should be wealthy enough to support an upper class; the opponents may be either nobility or social climbing bourgeoisie.

Reason for Duel: Once again, the PCs are overheard sneering over some "weak" nobles. In a place like this, however, other options abound. Perhaps the opponents gain a liking for the party's armor and weapons, or perhaps some rash young aristocrats want to make their reputation by taking out the party, which they are sure they can do if the fight is weighted in their favor. Such people take offense at the slightest comment. An apparently simple difference of opinion over the local ale, or even a badly timed sneeze from one of the party might serve as an excuse. In other words, the opponents pick a fight.

How: These same opponents are very careful not to challenge the PCs to a duel. Instead, they force the party to challenge them. For example, the players may be in an expensive inn that caters to the wealthy. They notice that the locals get service faster than they do. When they comment on this discrepancy in voices loud enough to be overheard, some brash young types come up to them and say, "How dare you malign a fine place like this. You're lying through your throat." It sounds like nothing to the players, but that sentence "you're lying through your throat" puts the party in a very difficult position. They have been told in public that they are liars. The only way to rescue their reputations is to challenge the brash young types to a duel. If they do not, they appear to accept the insult, and the whole town will consider them untrustworthy.

Of course, the PCs may not realize what they are supposed to do. Of course, everyone else in town will. People grow silent and whisper when they enter a room, and a genial local may ask if they have challenged the brash types yet. If the party ignores the suggestion, and they do not challenge the opposition, then people do more than look at them strangely. They might refuse to do business with them, and the local lord who had contracted their services in the first place might suddenly refuse to speak to them at all. Though eventually, some well-meaning person (maybe the lord's steward) tells the PCs what is wrong, and that to make things right they must present a challenge. The players can then write up a challenge (there is a model for one presented in the duel of honor encounter, above), and post it throughout the town, where their opponents are sure to see it.

Does this sound like a bizarre process? After all, why wouldn't the brash types just present a flat-out challenge to the party? The answer is simple, and quite devious. By waiting for the players to challenge them, the brash types gain a critical advantage - they get to pick the weapons and armor for both themselves and the party. Moreover, the opponents can use that advantage to cheat in ways that are perfectly legal.

For example, assume that the PCs are elves, halflings, or other shorter-than-average characters. Since the opposition is taller than the party is, they naturally choose body armor, but no helmets at all, and short-reach weapons. On the day of the fight, the PCs are at a severe disadvantage - any blows to the head are particularly dangerous. However, their (taller) opponents fight unaffected; with short-reach weapons, the party will not be able to take advantage of the lack of helmets. On the other hand, if the opponents are shorter than the PCs' huge fighter is, they can argue that he has a height advantage, and he has to wear a collar that would prevent him from tilting his head down. The fighter would not be able to easily see his enemies, and that alone might throw the fight, but it is all perfectly legal.

As another option, the opponents schedule the duel for summertime, and they hope for a bright sunny day. On the day of the duel, they show up in the chosen armor, but it has

been polished so brightly that it is difficult for the PCs to look at their opponents. Alternatively, perhaps one, or more, of the opponents have some sort of disability - blind in one eye, missing an arm, etc. By the rules of the duel, the PCs must mimic that disability; one or more of them might have to wear a helmet that covers one eye, or be forbidden to use their hand corresponding to their enemy's missing one. Of course, the party does not learn this particular equality rule until the day of the duel. They may complain that their opponent has had considerably more time to adjust to any disability, but such complaints will simply be dismissed.

The opponents could also refuse to allow magic in the fight, and force the party's spellcaster to take up arms. (Will the opponents care if the wizard cannot fight? Why would they? It is the party's problem.) To compound the problem, the party's best fighter may be a half-orc, hobgoblin, or simply of illegitimate birth. In all of these cases, the opponents can refuse to fight him because he is not their social equal. The opposition would then graciously reduce one of their own number, so that the number of combatants are equal, but they won't listen to any comments that the party's fighter could take on three at once. Then the party's ranger, an excellent archer, but an average fighter, is told that only melee weapons are allowed. And so it goes...

The group's opponents simply pile technicality on top of technicality, until the party has a severe disadvantage. Some of these traps can be avoided if the party carefully chooses a second (as an advisor and advocate) who is genuinely on their side and who knows the local practice. However, such a person might not be available, or she might not want to help strangers. Of course, the party may never realize that local expertise is necessary; they may never choose a second at all.

The Duel: The party arrives (with their second) at daybreak on the chosen field; their opponents and the judging constable are already there. The seconds (or the party themselves) inspect the chosen armor (graciously provided by the opponents), and they test the appointed weapons (also provided by the opponents). It is important that the armor and weapons of both sides are the same; it is not significant if the chosen accouterments leave one side at a disadvantage. (The opposition would not give the party genuinely inferior armor or defective weaponry. That would be cheating.)

Then both sides suit up. At this point, the party will probably notice certain discrepancies (like the inability to look down). However, to argue would be to forfeit the fight, with the subsequent loss of honor, reputation, and, more importantly, money and personal arms. Next, both sides swear that their cause is just, and then the fight begins. Their opponents fight in any way that takes advantage of the PCs' weakness - they attack on the player's blind side, or gang up on a defenseless wizard. In other words, whatever it takes to win.

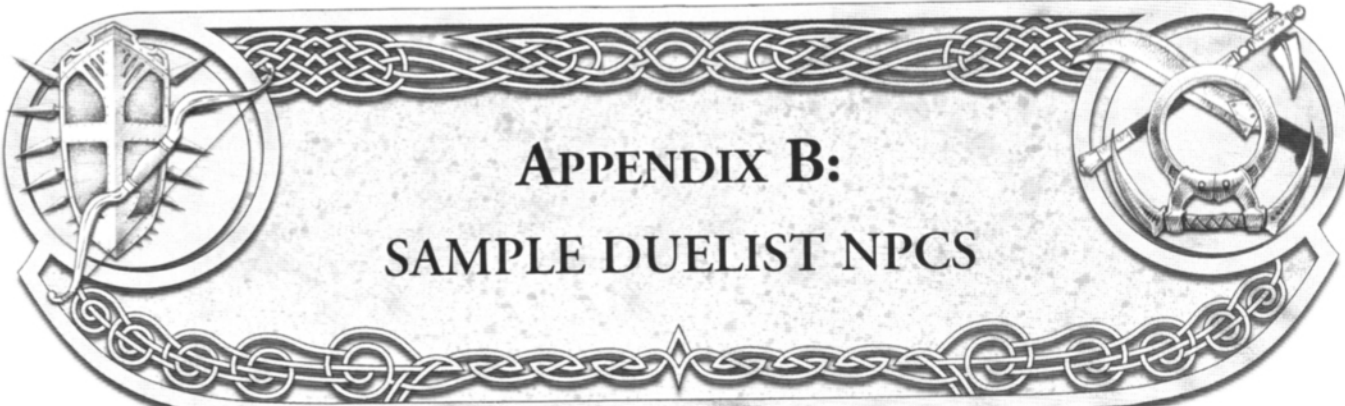
Notes for the DungeonMaster

Resolution: This could be a fight to the death, but it probably will not be. Most likely, the constable calls an end to the bout before the damage becomes permanent. On the other hand, one side could surrender. In any of these cases, the consequences are primarily financial - the winners get to claim the spoils of war from the losers. This booty would definitely include the PCs' personal weapons and armor. (The vorpal falchion that is the PC barbarian's pride and joy? Now it belongs to her opponents.)

Furthermore, the spoils of war could include the party themselves; they may be held as servants, and have to pay their way out of semi-servitude. In a land where oppression and slavery is common, the PCs may even lose their freedom. Duels in Pel Brolenon or the Theocracy of Slen often end in this manner (assuming they do not end in death).

This could lead to further adventures, especially if the party pretends to skulk out of town, but instead sneaks back to steal their stuff back. Of course, the PCs may overcome the odds and win. In that case, they receive the spoils of war - arms and armor, and perhaps money or a new bunch of torchbearers, for a certain period. This can be a great way of gaining valuable new items. Perhaps part of the spoils includes an ancient map or a rare magic item that will help the party defeat an old foe. In addition, if they win against the odds, they might gain a grudging respect from the locals, and perhaps gain some allies among those who never liked the opponents in the first place.

Twist on the Theme: After receiving the challenge, some, or all, of the PCs' opponents become suddenly ambitious to hold some sort of public office, or maybe to become clerics in the church of a peace-loving god. In either case, they could no longer fight the duel. Of course, they can appoint handpicked substitutes to fight for them. These powerful ringers are paid to take on the party, but the spoils from the fight go to their employers.



APPENDIX B: SAMPLE DUELIST NPCs

Crend Torist: Male Brandobian human bard 3/rogue 4/fighter 2; CR 9; HD 3d6+3 plus 4d6+4 plus 2d10+2; hp 56; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +2 keen speed dagger +10 melee or +11 ranged—10 ft. (1d4+3/17-20); Full Atk +2 keen speed dagger +10/+10/+5 melee (1d4+3/17-20); SA bard spells, sneak attack +2d6; SQ bardic knowledge +8 (+10 Unvolen), bardic music 3/day, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL LN (polytheistic); SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Balance +8, Bluff +12, Climb +5, Concentration +4, Craft (string instrument) +6, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +6, Gather Information +4, Hide +8, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (fighting styles) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Perform (oratory) +8, Perform (string instruments) +8, Ride +6, Search +2, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +4, Spot +6, Swim +5; Combat Expertise, Diviner's Trick Fighting Style, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Ropefight Fighting Style, Single Weapon Fighting Style (not factored into attack rolls above; see Chapter Three: Fighting Styles).

Languages: Brandobian, Deji, Elven, Merchant's Tongue.

Bard Spells Known (3/2, base save 12 + spell level): 0—*daze, ghost sound, light, lullaby, mage hand, summon instrument*; 1st—*charm person, comprehend languages, sleep*.

Bardic Knowledge (Ex): Crend can make an Intelligence check with a +8 bonus (+10 if the information pertains to Unvolen) to see whether he knows some relevant information about local notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places.

Bardic Music: Four times per day, as a standard action, Crend can use his voice or a string instrument to produce any of the following magical effects.

Countersong (Su): For up to 10 rounds, Crend can use his voice or a string instrument to counter a sound-based magical effect that allows a saving throw. Each round, Crend makes a Perform check that any creature within 30 feet of Crend (including himself) may use in place of its saving throw. If a creature is already under the effect of a non-instantaneous sonic or language-dependent magical attack, it must use Crend's Perform check for its save instead of its own.

Fascinate (Sp): Crend can use his voice or a string instrument to fascinate one creature within 90 feet. Nearby distractions prevent the ability from working. To fascinate a creature, Crend makes a Perform check opposed by the

creature's Will save. If the creature's save succeeds, Crend cannot attempt to fascinate that creature again for 24 hours. If the save fails, the creature sits quietly and listens to Crend, taking no other actions, for as long as Crend continues to perform (maximum of 3 rounds). While fascinated, the target takes a -4 penalty on Listen and Spot checks. Any potential threat allows the creature to make a new Will save against a new Perform check result. Obvious threats automatically break the effect. Fascinate is an enchantment (compulsion), mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Courage (Su): Crend can use his voice or a string instrument to grant his allies (and himself) a +1 morale bonus on saving throws against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls. The effect lasts for as long as the ally hears Crend perform and for 5 rounds thereafter. Inspire courage is a mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Competence (Su): Crend can use his voice or a string instrument to grant an ally within 30 feet a +2 competence bonus on skill checks with a particular skill. The effect lasts as long as Crend performs, up to a maximum of 2 minutes. Crend cannot inspire competence in himself. Inspire competence is a mind-affecting ability.

Evasion (Ex): If Crend is wearing light armor or no armor and makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he takes no damage. If helpless, Crend does not gain the benefit of evasion.

Trapfinding (Ex): Crend can use the Search skill to locate traps with a DC higher than 20. Crend can also use the Disable Device skill to disarm magic traps. If Crend beats a trap's Disable Device check DC by 10 or more he can bypass it without disarming it.

Trap Sense (Ex): Crend has a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Unless immobilized, Crend retains his Dex bonus to AC even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: +2 keen speed dagger, +2 ring of protection, amulet of proof against detection and location, dagger sheath, traveler's outfit. Crend has a masterwork lute, masterwork mandolin, disguise kit and 2,600 gp in assets in his Unvolen home.

Sample Duelist NPCs

Other: Crend is a member of the Unvolen Adventurer's Guild (see Chapter Five: Dueling Societies), and can serve to introduce the PCs to that organization.

Haraman Esamil: Male Kalamaran human fighter 2; CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+3, longsword); AL CE (polytheistic); Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Craft (weaponsmithing) +2, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +1, Listen +2, Ride +4, Spot +3; Alertness, Single Weapon Fighting Style (not factored into attack rolls above; see Chapter Three: Fighting Styles), Weapon Focus (longsword).

Languages: Merchant's Tongue, Kalamaran.

Possessions: Chainmail, longsword, 4d6 gp.

Inala Remel: Female Kalamaran human rogue 2; CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d6; hp 9; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d6/19-20, short sword); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ trapfinding; AL CN (polytheistic); SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Hide +7, Intimidate +4, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Search +5, Spot +5; Single Weapon Fighting Style (not factored into attack rolls above; see Chapter Three: Fighting Styles), Weapon Finesse (short sword).

Languages: Kalamaran, Merchant's Tongue.

Sneak Attack (Ex): If Inala can flank an opponent or attack him while he is denied his Dex bonus to AC, she can strike a vital spot for +3d6 points of damage.

Trapfinding (Ex): Inala can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a DC higher than 20. If she beats a trap's DC by 10 or more with a Disable Device check, she can bypass it without disarming it.

Possessions: Short sword, leather armor, black cloak, 3d6 gp.

Other: Inala trained at the Disotal Academy (see Chapter Five: Dueling Societies), and can provide the PCs with information about it.

Jish: Male Deji human rogue 5/fighter 2; CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+4 plus 5d6+10 plus 2d10+4; hp 43; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk/Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+1/19-20, masterwork longsword) or +8 melee (1d6, club) or +8 ranged—30 ft. (1d4 plus sleep venom/19-20, hand crossbow); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL CN (Miazaar the Master of Stealth); SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Bluff +5, Climb +8 (+13 with ring), Disable Device +5, Escape Artist +11, Hide +11 (+16 with armor), Intimidate +10, Jump +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +9, Search +7, Spot +9, Tumble +9; Cloak's Skullduggery Fighting Style, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Deji, Dwarven, Merchant's Tongue.

Evasion (Ex): Jish takes no damage if he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Jish can only be flanked by a rogue of at least 9th level.

Sneak Attack (Ex): If Jish can flank an opponent or attack him while he is denied his Dex bonus to AC, he can strike a vital spot for +3d6 points of damage. His hand crossbow attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 feet.

Trapfinding (Ex): Jish can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a DC higher than 20. If he beats a trap's DC by 10 or more with a Disable Device check, he can bypass it without disarming it.

Trap Sense (Ex): Jish has a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Jish retains his Dex bonus to AC even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: Masterwork longsword, hand crossbow, 10 darts, +1 shadow leather armor, ring of climbing, five doses of sleep venom, dark clothing, black cloak.

Sleep Venom: Injury DC 13 (initial unconsciousness 1d4 hours, secondary none).

Mizovohr Yahul: Male Svimohz human aristocrat 4/rogue 3; CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 4d8-4 plus 3d6-3; hp 21; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +5; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +8 melee (1d4-1/x3, +1 punching dagger) or +8 ranged—30 ft. (1d4/19-20, masterwork hand crossbow); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1; AL CE (Foobia the Vicelord); SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 7, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +4, Bluff +8, Decipher Script +3, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +6, Handle Animal +6, Hide +7, Knowledge (fighting styles) +4, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +5, Ride +6, Search +5, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +3, Spot +10; Alertness, Combat Expertise, Diviner's Trick Fighting Style, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Merchant's Tongue, Svimohzish.

Possessions: +1 punching dagger, masterwork hand crossbow, 10 bolts, armor, chime of opening (5 uses), elixir of vision, potion of cure serious wounds (CL5, 3d8+5), potion of protection from arrows (10/magic, 20 pts), cold weather outfit, 2d6 gp.

Puramal Darisek: Male Kalamaran human aristocrat 4; CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 4d8-4; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+2/18-20, masterwork rapier); AL CG (polytheistic); SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +9, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +5,

Listen +8, Ride +8; Combat Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Strike Fighting Style.

Languages: Dwarven, Fhokki, Gnome, Halfling, Merchant's Tongue, Kalamaran, Reanaarese.

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, *ring of protection* +3 (platinum with a gold inlaid shield design), *elixir of hiding*, noble's outfit, 55 gp.

Savano Zelden: Female Svimohz human rogue 5/assassin 2; CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 5d6+10 plus 2d6+4; hp 40; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk +8 melee (1d4/19-20, masterwork dagger) or +8 ranged—10 ft. (1d2 plus black adder venom, masterwork shuriken); SA death attack, sneak attack +4d6; SQ evasion, improved uncanny dodge, poison use (+1 save), trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL NE (Zael the Unseen One); SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +8, Disable Device +9, Escape Artist +11, Hide +11, Listen +9, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +11, Search +9, Spot +9, Tumble +12; Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (shuriken), Single Weapon Fighting Style (not factored into attack rolls above; see Chapter Three: Fighting Styles), Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Merchant's Tongue, Svimohz.

Assassin Spells Known (2 per day; save DC 11 + spell level): 1st—*feather fall*, *jump*, *true strike*.

Death Attack: If Savano studies her victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (Savano's choice). If Savano chooses to kill the victim, he must make a successful DC 13 Fortitude save or die. If Savano chooses the paralysis effect, the victim must make a successful DC 13 Fortitude save or be rendered helpless and unable to act for 1d6+2 rounds. If the victim's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack.

Evasion (Ex): Savano takes no damage if she makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Savano can only be flanked by a rogue of at least 11th level.

Poison Use: Savano never risks accidentally poisoning herself when applying poison to a blade.

Sneak Attack (Ex): If Savano can flank an opponent or attack him while he is denied his Dex bonus to AC, she can strike a vital spot for +4d6 points of damage. Her shuriken attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 feet.

Trapfinding (Ex): Savano can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a DC higher than 20. If she beats a trap's DC by 10 or more with a Disable Device check, she can bypass it without disarming it.

Trap Sense (Ex): Savano has a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Savano retains her Dex bonus to AC even if she is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: Masterwork dagger, 10 masterwork shurikens, +1 *studded leather armor*, *brooch of shielding* (72 points left), two doses of black adder venom, dark clothing, floor-length black cloak, 7 gp.

Black Adder Venom: Injury DC 11 (initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con).

Scrulier Arioohon: Male Reanaarian human aristocrat 3/fighter 4; CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8+12 plus 4d10+16; hp 63; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2/+4; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d6+4/18-20, rapier); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+4/18-20, rapier); SA -; SQ -; AL CE (polytheistic); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +6, Climb +6, Craft (painting) +4, Handle Animal +7, Hide +6, Jump +7, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (fighting styles) +6, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +6, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +7, Move Silently +4, Perform (dance) +9, Ride +7, Sense Motive +5, Spot +6; Combat Expertise, Diviner's Trick Fighting Style, Improved Initiative, Single Weapon Fighting Style (not factored into attack rolls above; see Chapter Three: Fighting Styles), Sword Dance Fighting Style, Three-Movement Defense Fighting Style, Towering Defense Fighting Style.

Languages: Infernal, Merchant's Tongue, Reanaarese.

Possessions: +1 *rapier*, *ring of protection* +2, *amulet of natural armor* +1, masterwork studded leather armor, 6d6 x10 gp.

Other: Serulier is a member of the Swords of the Circle (see Chapter Five: Dueling Societies), and can introduce the PCs to that organization.

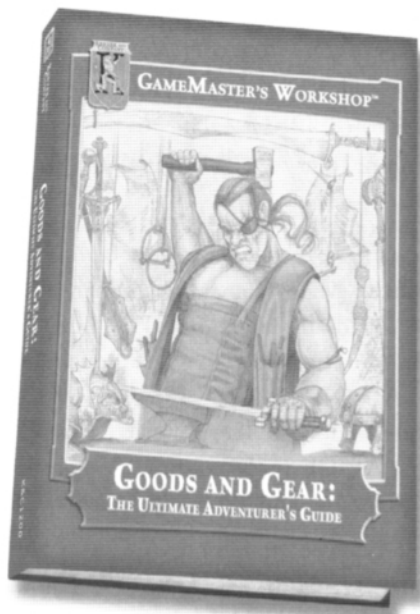
Swords of the Circle Bodyguard: Male Reanaarian human warrior 2; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, short sword); AL LE (polytheistic); Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +3, Jump +3, Ride +4; Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon and Shield Fighting Style.

Languages: Merchant's Tongue, Reanaarese.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, heavy wooden shield, short sword, 2d6 gp.

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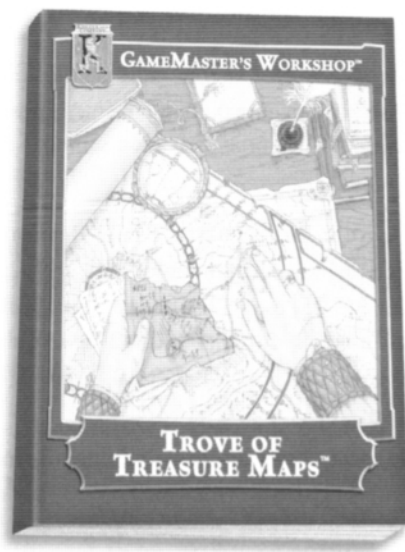
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- **Common Dueling Weapons, Accessories and Armor!** From the adarosh to the two-bladed, this section contains a wide variety of dueling swords, as well as new weapon accessories, and common legal and illegal dueling armors.
- **New Feats!** Whether you prefer the dirty sneak, double strike, effective footwork, expert feint, masterful parry, off-hand guard or twin-weapon fighting, there's a feat here for you.
- **Skill Options!** New ways to use Balance, Bluff, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge, Sense Motive and Sleight of Hand await a clever duelist's eyes!
- **New Spells!** Along with detailed listings for spells commonly used in duels, this section also contains new spells, such as create obstacle, taunt, and vanishing armor!
- **Types of Duels!** Choose to fight to the grave, to the death, to the pain, to first blood (or second blood), to the knockdown, to the knockout, and to the fall. Learn about ranged duels, jousts, and even duels of mental intellect over the chess-board!
- **Provoking a Duel!** Learn about the unintended offense, intended offense, vengeful offense, and the honor or reputation settlement! If you want to provoke a duel, this is how!
- **Steps of a Duel!** Discover how to proceed with a duel, once you've initiated one! Find out about seconds, moderators, spectators, and the rules of magic.
- **Duels and the Law!** Read about how kingdoms regard duels and those who practice them, as well as punishments for illegal dueling.
- **Dungeon Master Tips!** Along with details on integrating duels into your game, this section provides suggestion for the rules of interpretation - how you may interpret the rules to better represent a character.

