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THE

NOBLE'S

HANDBOOK

MASTER
CLASS



By Rodney Thompson



GRR1305

THE

A Master Class™ d20® System Sourcebook

NOBLE'S HANDBOOK

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- Table of Contents -

Introduction	3	Chapter Three: Noble Equipment.....	32
Chapter One: The Noble Class	5	Amenities and Equipment.....	32
Prestige Classes	11	Magic Armor and Weapons.....	34
Commander	11	Wondrous Items	35
Master Diplomat	14	Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble.....	36
Impersonator	16	The Standard Noble.....	36
Lord Knight.....	18	Noble Archetypes.....	41
Mastermind.....	21	GM Notes for Nobles.....	48
Chapter Two:		Chapter Five: Noble Houses.....	50
Supplemental Rules	24	Chapter Six: Houses of the Haughty.....	54
Skills.....	24	Appendix: Dueling Cards	61
Feats	27	Index.....	63
Optional Rule: Duels	29		

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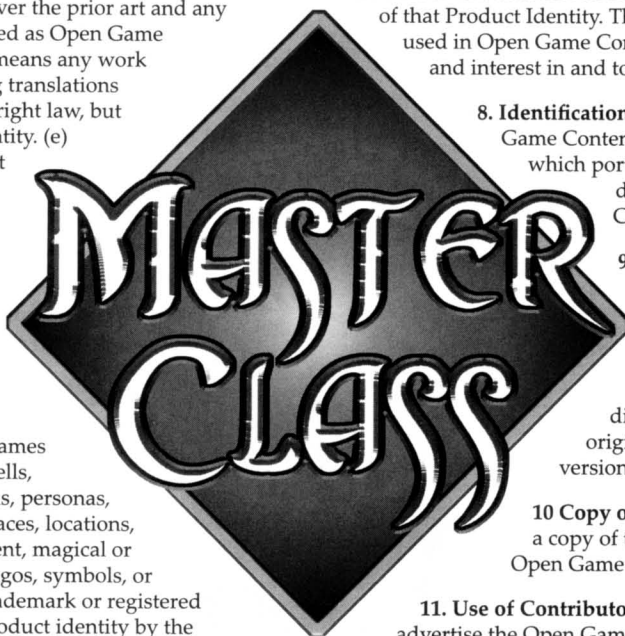
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Introduction

Welcome to *The Noble's Handbook*, part of Green Ronin's ongoing **Master Class** series of books presenting new core classes for use with the d20 system. Like the other books in the series, this sourcebook is intended as a stand-alone volume that presents everything a player needs to create a noble character as well as everything the GM might need to integrate noble characters into any campaign. This sourcebook also requires the PHB in order to use its contents in a game.

What is a Noble?

The traditional view of the noble is a character born into an aristocratic line of rulers and landowners who, by birthright, govern the lives and communities of the common folk. The noble class presented in this book holds to this definition, but also encompasses a much larger group as well. The noble class can be used to represent any character in a position of leadership, whether that character is merely the leader of an adventuring party or the head of a guild or organization. Nobles can be governors, aristocrats, military commanders, underworld crime bosses, and all manner of other leaders. How the noble class is used depends on the needs of the character.

Why Play a Noble?

Many consider the noble character a rather drastic departure from the standard fantasy hero. Unlike fighters, wizards, and rogues, the noble does not immediately conjure up notions of prowess in combat or dungeon delving. The noble typically uses more subtle methods for accomplishing goals and overcoming enemies than other characters, but remains an interesting choice for nearly any type of campaign. The following are some reasons to play a noble character:

- The noble wields power in the world: The noble has a significant amount of power and influence over those around him. As a noble, players will wield the power of kings and rulers and will be capable of ordering assassinations and procuring funds for the party's use.
- The noble is a leader: An adventuring party can rely on the noble to organize and focus them on a task. Whereas a party might be a rag-tag group of lone wolves without a leader, with a noble they become a driven and unified force to be reckoned with.
- The noble is versatile: Many of the noble's class abilities involve selections, meaning that no two nobles will necessarily be alike even at the same level. Additionally, the noble class allows for players and GMs to tailor characters to fit the needs of the party.

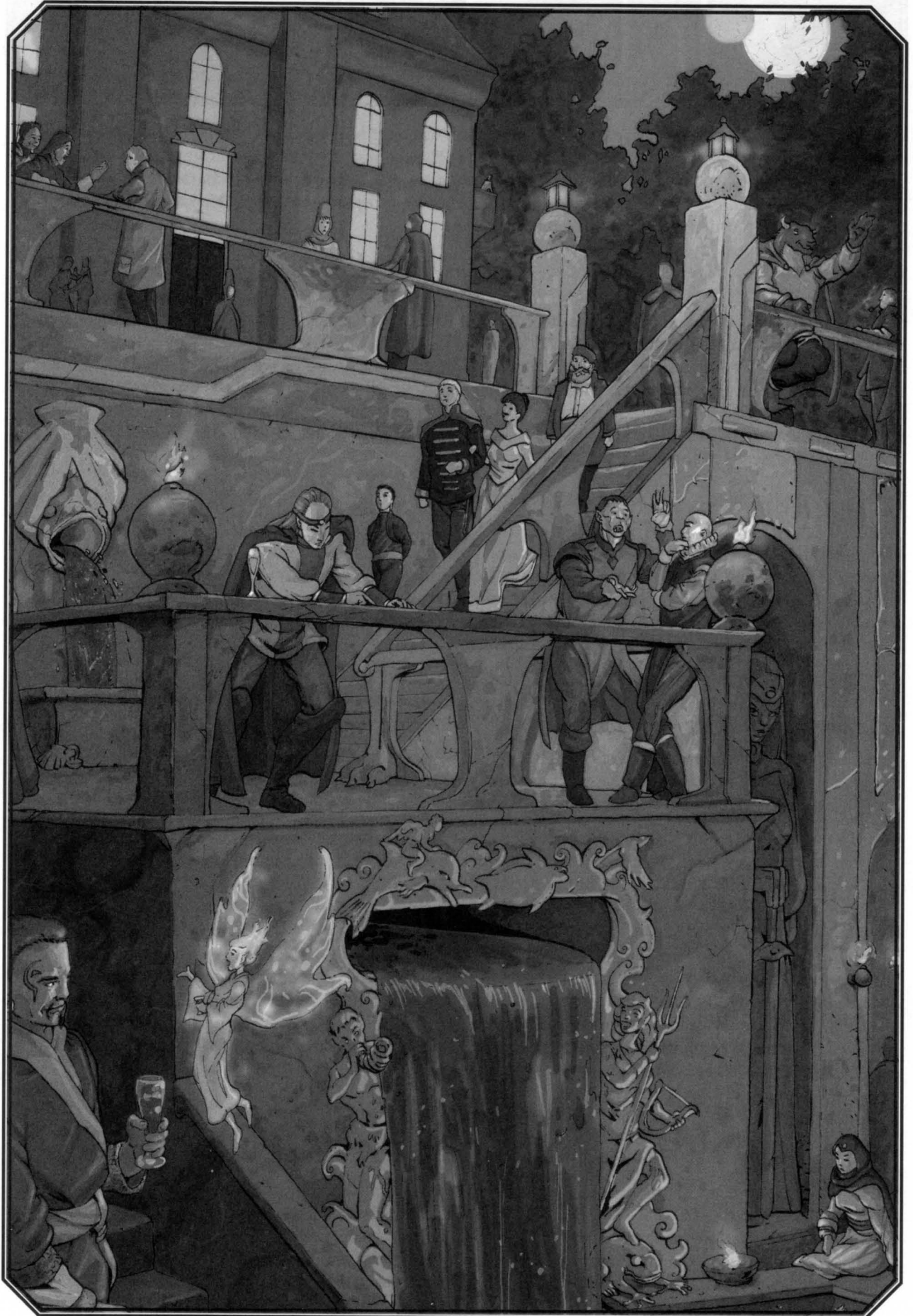
What Else is in this Book?

More than just information on the creation of noble characters, this book contains everything a player or GM needs to craft a fully functional and working noble house. It also contains new information on dueling, handling the concept of followers, and adding a degree of politics and power to any fantasy campaign. This book is designed for anyone wishing to give an element of depth to the inner workings of society or introduce foes that are far more dangerous outside of the field of combat than in it.

- About the Author -

Rodney Thompson is an ENnie Award-winning writer and designer from Chattanooga, TN. His work appears in books in the d20 *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* line from Wizards of the Coast, the *Stargate SG-1 Roleplaying Game* line from Alderac Entertainment Group, and in the pages of **Polyhedron** magazine from Paizo Publishing. Rodney is the co-author of the *Star Wars Hero's Guide*, the *Stargate SG-1 Roleplaying Game*, and is the webmaster of SWRPGNetwork (<http://www.swrpgnetwork.com>).

- Chapter One: The Noble Class -



- Chapter One -

The Noble Class

The noble is the king of interaction; he is the social elite, the commander of troops, the master of information, and the handler of political power all rolled into one. In many fantasy campaigns, the noble is a member of the ruling class who, by birthright, has been tasked with governing the commoners under his or her influence. Similarly, nobles can be classified as anyone in a position of leadership who has received special training to perform such a function well. More than just wealthy landowners, there are many heads of organizations, military commanders, and even natural-born leaders drawn from the lower classes that can be classified as nobles.

Adventures

For a noble, adventuring expands one's knowledge, influence, and wealth through traveling the world. Nobles who have not yet made their mark on the world might seek out adventures as a means of gaining fame and fortune. Likewise, those nobles brought up in a martial tradition might be part of an adventuring party in order to perform their duty as a leader. Others might use their powers and talents for truly just causes, or, conversely, purely selfish and vile purposes. A noble's motivations are typically all his own, but many are willing to travel the world in order to forward their goals and reap the rewards to benefit their house.

Characteristics

The noble is an exceptional leader, and he is blessed with natural social abilities. Whether manipulating others into doing his will or steeling the resolve of outnumbered troops, the noble is always in control of himself and his followers. A master of subtlety and social interaction, the noble reads the emotions and actions like words on a page and uses that knowledge as a weapon or a lure depending on the situation.

Alignment

Since a noble prefers to be in control of himself and those around him, the lawful alignment is most typical. A noble's motivations typically his alignment on the good-evil scale; those who are benevolent leaders are typically good, while those who have only their own interests and power in mind gravitate towards evil.

Religion

While some nobles consider themselves representatives of the common folk, other nobles see themselves as one step below the gods.

In many cultures, nobles hold powerful sway over religious institutions, with the positions of influence in the church being occupied by those with the money and power to buy them. Those nobles who actively practice religion revere gods of the highest power and esteem, as is fitting of their rank and importance. Nobles ask the gods for guidance, influence, power, and prestige in all their worldly doings. In the afterlife, nobles anticipate great rewards for their service to the people and their execution of the will of the gods.

A Note on Terminology

Whenever the phrase "follower" or "cohort" is used anywhere in this book, it means follower or cohort as defined by the Leadership feat. Other characters and NPCs who follow the noble will have different titles.

Background

Most true nobles are members of a noble house, an organization based on the noble family that exerts great influence over politics and the people around them. Some nobles, such as those who serve in the military, come from some type of officer-training background that instills the knowledge they need to be an effective leader. Other nobles, such as those who lead less regal (and legal) organizations, have promoted themselves through their own talents and leadership ability.

- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

Races

Humans are the most common race to choose the noble class. Their political power structures, especially in medieval campaigns, lend themselves best to the leadership-by-birthright philosophy that the noble relies upon for power. Elves and dwarves are the second most likely races to be nobles, as each race has its share of commanders and leaders who depend upon their ability to interact with others. Less likely to be nobles are half-elves and half-orcs, since, as outcasts from many societies, they frequently have an uphill battle when trying to exert their influence. However, members of these species could easily become mercenary leaders and military commanders, giving them a way into the noble class. Halfling nobles are more likely to be mayors and community leaders than aristocracy, while gnomes follow a similar, being guild leaders and family leaders of their own people.

Other Classes

Nobles pride themselves on their leadership and social abilities, and are able to work with many other classes without difficulty. Nobles get along especially well with paladins and clerics, whose service to the church gives them an understanding of social hierarchies and the subtle workings

of civilization. Fighters and rangers often find themselves benefiting from the complex tactical thinking possessed by many nobles, while sorcerers and wizards can be found in the service of a noble as arcane advisors or well-paid mages-for-hire. Likewise, bards (particularly court bards) are often highly valued by nobles for their artistic talents and ability to serve as information gatherers.

Barbarians and druids rarely work well with nobles. Not recognizing the authority of any institutions other than the spirits of nature, druids often find nobles to be filled with a false sense of importance, while barbarians usually reject any leaders but their own. Monks will sometimes form relationships with nobles to benefit both parties, using the noble's influence and wealth to improve the monastery while acting as the noble's bodyguard or advisor. Similarly, rogues, owing little allegiance to anyone, do not often throw in their lot with a noble (although many find themselves on the payroll of a noble house from time to time).

Game Rule Information

Nobles have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Charisma is the most important ability for the noble, as almost all leadership and social interaction depends on it. Intelligence and Wisdom can both be of great benefit to a noble, allowing him to remain perceptive of

Table 1-1: The Noble

Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Breeding, noble house
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Inspire 1/day, material aid
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Influence +1, retinue
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Connection (x1), inspire 2/day
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Organize +1
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	Leadership, inspire 3/day
7th	+5	+2	+5	+5	
8th	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6	Influence +2, inspire 4/day
9th	+6/+1	+3	+6	+6	Connection (x2)
10th	+7/+2	+3	+7	+7	Organize +2, inspire 5/day
11th	+8/+3	+3	+7	+7	Breeding
12th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	Inspire 6/day
13th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	Influence +3
14th	+10/5	+4	+9	+9	Connection (x3), inspire 7/day
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+9	Organize +3
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	Breeding, inspire 8/day
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+11	Influence +4, inspire 9/day
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+11	Connection (x4)
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+12	Organize +4, inspire 10/day

- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

the world around him and make connections based on subtleties and complex politics. Additionally, nobles from cultures that settle debates by dueling should consider Dexterity to be of secondary importance.

Alignment: Any non-chaotic.

Hit Die: d8

Starting Gold: 8d4 x 10

Class Skills

The noble's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (any), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), and Speak Language (n/a).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the noble.

Weapon & Armor Proficiency

A noble is proficient in all simple and martial weapons, and light and medium armor.

Breeding (Ex)

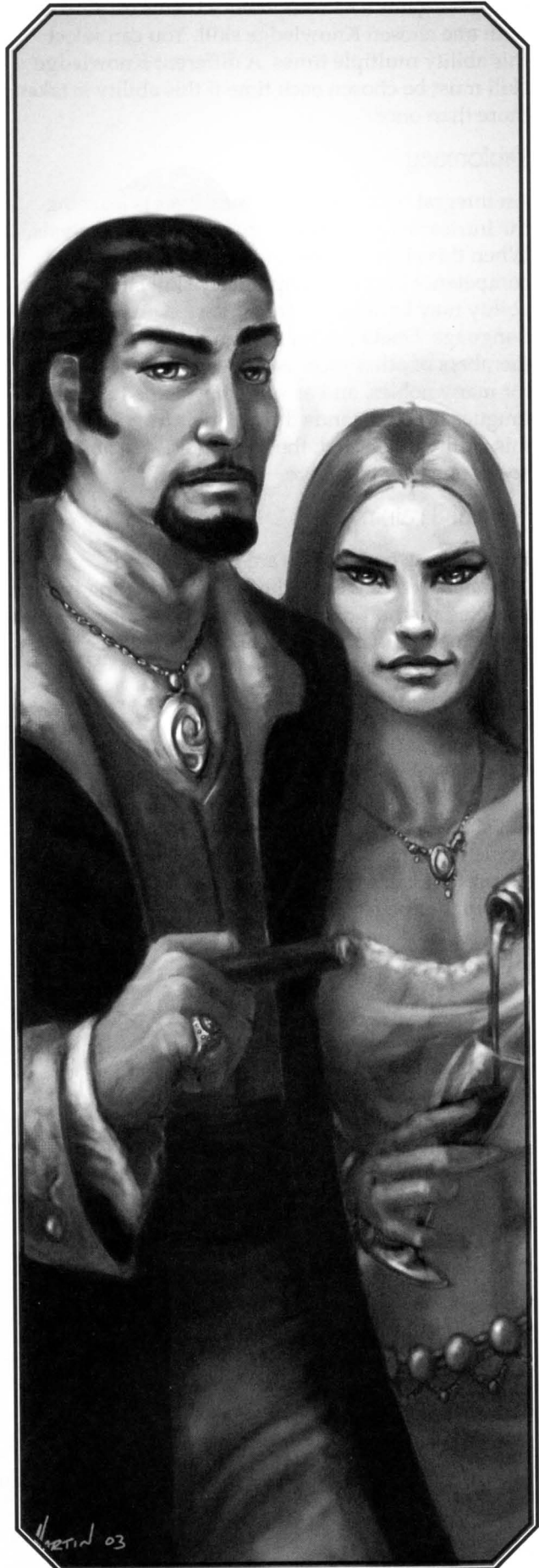
Nobles are often given special training and tutoring over the years, which gives them certain advantages over the uneducated and less fortunate commoners. Considered to be "noble breeding," this extra education often manifests itself as useful knowledge gleaned from endless hours of classes and training required by the leaders of a house. Each time the noble gains Breeding, he may choose one ability from the following list:

Arcane Training

Some societies demand that their nobles be well versed in arcane traditions, and have wizards train their young nobles in the basics of magic. When this ability is selected, the noble may choose one 0-level wizard spell. From that point on, the noble may cast the chosen spell once per day as a spell-like ability (caster level equal to noble class level, Charisma-based save DC). You can select this ability multiple times. You may either choose the same spell, granting the ability to use it one additional time per day, or you may choose a new spell.

Education

Many nobles spend years of their lives taking classes and undergoing tutoring by the most advanced scholars of their region. When this ability is selected,



- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

the noble gains a +4 competence bonus on all checks with one chosen Knowledge skill. You can select this ability multiple times. A different Knowledge skill must be chosen each time if this ability is taken more than once.

Diplomacy

An integral part of many nobles' lives is learning the intricacies of dealing with outsiders and rivals. When this ability is selected, the noble gains a +4 competence bonus on Diplomacy skill checks. This ability may be selected only once. **Bonus Language:** Dealing with foreign diplomats and members of other races is an everyday occurrence for many nobles, and as such they come to learn the tongues of many lands during their travels. When this ability is selected, the noble gains the ability to speak one new language.

Martial Training

In societies where nobles are warriors and commanders, as well as those where dueling is an accepted method of conflict resolution, many nobles are trained with traditional and/or ritual weapons. When this ability is selected, the noble gains Exotic Weapon Proficiency as a bonus feat.

Noble House

At 1st level, the noble gains the Noble House feat as a bonus feat. All prerequisites for this feat are waived. See page @@.

Material Aid (Ex)

At 2nd level, a noble is able to exploit the standing obligations of hospitality maintained by local rulers and other nobles. This means that as long as he is traveling in his home country, the noble can provide the party with basic lodging and food at no cost.

Retinue (Ex)

Beginning at 3rd level, the noble gains the ability to have a group of followers similar to those provided by the Leadership feat. The noble may attract a number of followers whose total levels equal

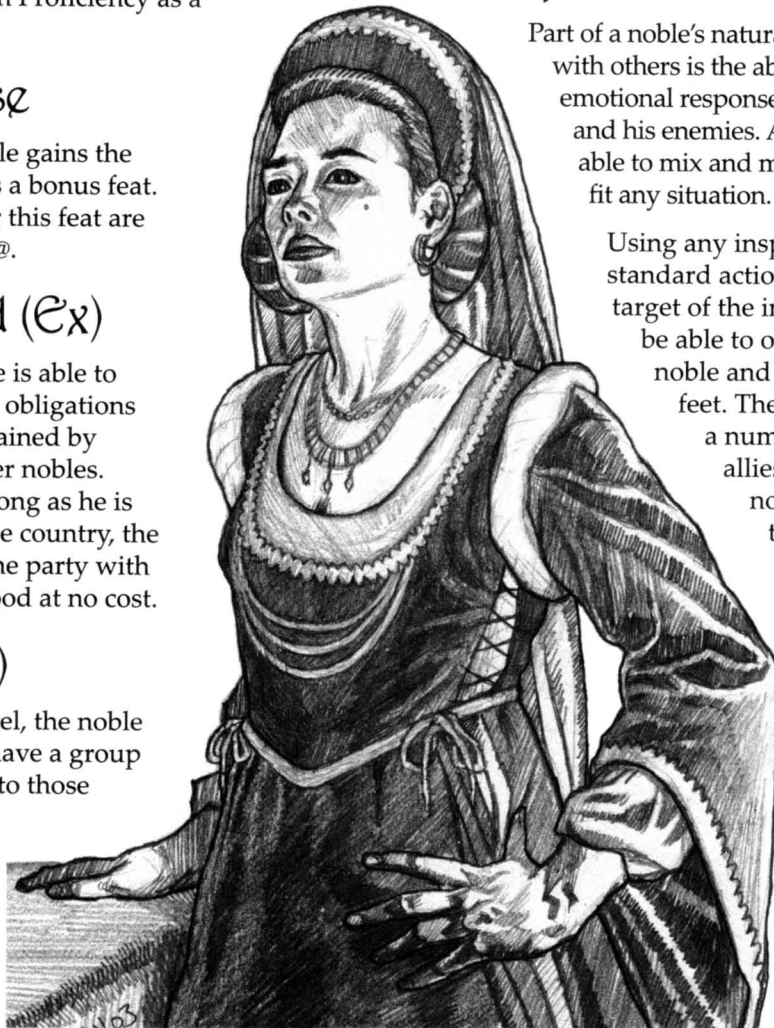
the noble's class level, and who have levels only in NPC classes. For example, a 5th-level noble might have five 1st-level warriors, or a 2nd-level warrior, a 1st-level expert, and a 2nd-level commoner, or any other combination whose total levels do not exceed the noble's level. Any given member of the retinue may be no higher than 5th level and no higher than half his level rounded down. Each time the noble gains a level he may choose to increase the level of one of his retinue, or he may discard any or all members of his retinue for a new combination of followers. Note that these followers do not count toward the noble's normal total number of followers as detailed by the Leadership feat, but are considered to be followers as defined by the feat for all other purposes.

For example, a commoner might be a handmaiden, squire, or manservant to the noble, while a 1st-level expert might be a teacher or a trainer, and so forth. Warriors might be bodyguards, while aristocrats may be officials or aides. These followers are chosen by the player with help from the GM as befits the setting and character.

Inspire

Part of a noble's natural talent for interacting with others is the ability to evoke various emotional responses in both his friends and his enemies. A truly talented noble is able to mix and match those abilities to fit any situation.

Using any inspire ability requires a standard action. Additionally, the target of the inspire ability must be able to observe and hear the noble and must be within 60 feet. The noble may target a number of enemies or allies equal to one-half his noble class level, and the effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to his class level. The ability may be used once per day per two class levels. The noble may not target himself with this ability. Each time the noble uses the inspire ability, he may select one of the following effects:



- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

Inspire Awe (Ex)

A character targeted by the inspire awe ability is overcome with amazement at the noble's presence and does not react as quickly to outside stimuli. Creatures targeted by this effect suffer a -2 morale penalty to all Reflex saves and a -1 morale penalty to armor class. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Complacency (Ex)

A character targeted by the inspire complacency ability has been convinced to relax his vigilance or let down his guard by the noble. Characters targeted by this effect suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to Listen and Spot checks for the duration of this ability's use. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Confidence (Ex)

A character targeted by the inspire confidence ability has steeled his resolve and prepared for victory following a noble's speech. Characters targeted by this ability gain a +1 morale bonus to all attack rolls and saving throws. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Fear (Ex)

A character targeted by the inspire fear ability is paralyzed with fear and anxiety at the sight of the noble. This ability causes targets to suffer a -1 morale penalty to attack rolls and saving throws. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Valor (Ex)

A character targeted by the inspire valor ability has prepared himself for the worst and spits in the face of danger. This ability causes targets to gain a +2 morale bonus to Will saves, and an additional +1 to saves vs. fear effects. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Zeal (Ex)

A character targeted by the inspire zeal ability puts forth greater exertion and feels compelled to throw the full weight of righteous fury or bone-deep hatred behind any attack he makes. Characters targeted by this ability gain a +2 bonus to all damage rolls for the duration of the effect. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Influence (Ex)

Nobles have a certain sphere of influence, and can coax others to perform tasks for them that would benefit the noble and his party. They may do so in a variety of ways: calling in a favor, bullying a weak-willed thug, blackmailing another powerful noble, or bribing a talented expert.

In game terms, using a noble's influence ability requires an influence check: roll 1d20 and add the noble's current influence modifier. The DC for the check is determined by the GM; simple tasks, such as procuring a simple item or locating a particular individual, will carry a DC of 10 or less, whereas more difficult, illegal, expensive, dangerous, or distasteful tasks might range as high as DC 20 or more. Noble characters cannot take 10 or 20 on this roll, and are not allowed to retry the same influence check until they have gained a level. Failure indicates that the noble does not have enough influence on the people around him to get what he needs, or that the person performing the act failed and was captured, killed, or otherwise prevented from completing the task. Nobles may attempt to use the influence ability a number of times per week equal to one-half their character level, rounded down.

The GM should be careful when adjudicating the use of the influence ability. Nobles shouldn't be allowed to bypass major encounters and plot points with this ability, nor should they be able to affect the

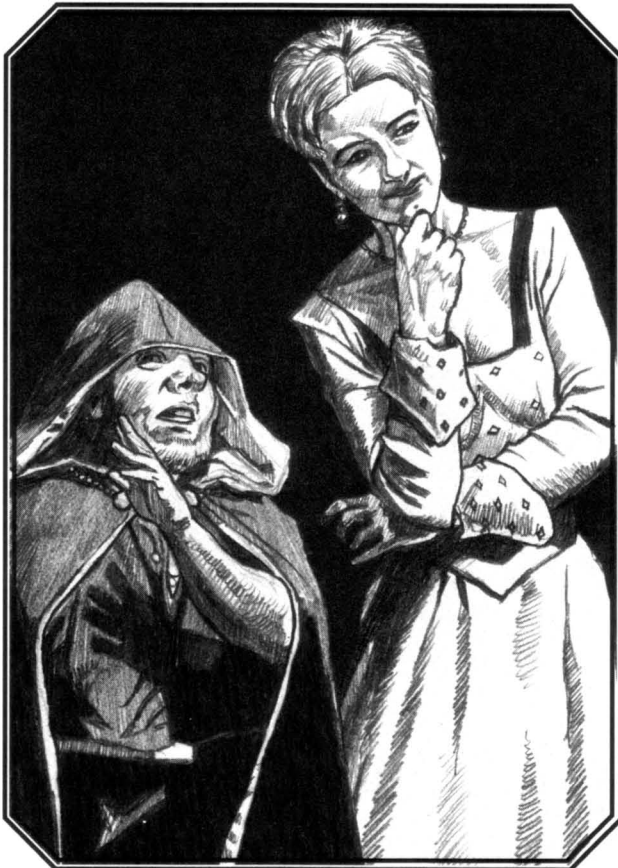
Table 1-2: Influence Check DC

DC	Influence Attempt
10	Borrow another noble's coach and horse team, get a private dining room at an inn, convince a blacksmith to forge a special sword.
15	Gain entrance to an exclusive dinner, convince an innkeeper to move commoners out of a room and give it to the party instead, book passage on a smuggling ship.
20	Get an ally out of jail, have an enemy thrown in jail.
25	Gain entrance to a fortified city during wartime, bypass customs and security when entering a port by ship.
30+	Get an audience with the king on the spur of the moment, have an enemy assassinated.

- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

entire outcome of the adventure. Using the influence ability should be an opportunity for roleplaying, not simply an automatic success. However, using an influence check gives the player a greater chance of success in convincing others, even total strangers, to perform tasks for the party.

An influence check is more than simply a different version of the Diplomacy skill; influence checks don't draw upon one's Charisma and choice of words, but on the strength of the noble's presence and the ramifications of refusing the noble's request. The GM may, at her discretion, disallow certain uses of this ability if she feels it would be disruptive or illogical in the context of the game. It can be used with far greater versatility and more significant effects than the Diplomacy skill. An influence check is used to get a character to do something they would not normally do or do not want to do. Additionally, the influence check can be used to call in favors, blackmail an enemy, or cajole a perfect stranger into going along with a plan. Influence typically cannot be used to change NPC attitudes; however, it may be used to make a character do something out of respect or fear of the noble's power, even if his attitude is poor and he disagrees with the noble. Since the GM sets the difficulty of the check, it is up to the player to come up with creative ways to use a noble's influence and let the GM decide how hard it should be. See **Table**



1-2: Influence Check DCs for some sample ways in which an influence check may be made.

As with all of the noble's abilities, one must be careful not to allow influence to get in the way of adventures and storytelling. If the party needs to obtain the Opal of the Sun from a long-forgotten temple on a remote continent, he should not be allowed to simply use the influence check to convince someone else to go on the adventure for him. Influence is typically used to achieve finite and short-term goals rather than changing the outcome of an entire campaign.

Connection (Ex)

In the course of his travels and interactions, a noble makes friends and allies who can be called upon from time to time. Whenever the noble gains a new connection, the GM should develop a supporting character or useful NPC to fill the role. Although connections can be wide and varied in their personalities and talents, most connections fall under one of three categories of usefulness: informants, professionals, and resources. Informants can provide information about people, places, and objects of which a noble may have no knowledge. Professionals can perform certain tasks and jobs for a noble. Resources can provide physical items and money to the noble when in need.

Connections have an attitude of friendly (see NPC Attitudes in the PHB) toward the noble at all times, but they typically will not go on adventures with the noble, nor will they risk their lives or the lives of their friends and family for the noble. After the initial meeting, a noble can call upon each connection only once per adventure, regardless of whether or not that connection can be of any assistance.

A connection exists to serve one of three main purposes: provide information, provide a service, or provide a particular item. A player can go to a connection for reliable information without the need to make a Gather Information check. Although most nobles will have at least some ranks in the Gather Information skill, often it is far easier to simply get in touch with the connection and save a night of bribes and buying drinks. For example, the party needs to know what the evil Archmage Azamemnon has been up to in the area lately. The party could spend all night in taverns and inns buying drinks and cozying up to the locals, or the noble could visit the home of his connection in the area and ask the same questions without the expenditure of gold and time. Similarly, connections can be relied upon to provide a particular service that otherwise the party might have to pay for or hunt down. Perhaps the party needs healing before they can storm Azamemnon's lair, but the only

- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

healers in town are priests of a deity none of the party follows. The noble's connection can provide that same healing so the party doesn't have to deal with potentially unfriendly priests. Connections frequently act as middlemen or "fixers", exploiting their own contacts and allies, or friends who deal in certain wares. For example, before setting off to slay Azamemnon, the party needs to procure a dozen arrows with adamantite arrowheads. Since such arrows are not for sale in the town, the noble's connection is tapped to acquire the weapons from a smuggler sailing into port that night.

A connection differs from a normal NPC ally of the party. A connection should have access to a wide variety of resources and knowledge, whereas normal allies to the party may be limited to one area of expertise. A GM may wish to make an existing NPC into a connection, for the party.

Organize (Ex)

As a leader, the noble must be able to ensure that all those who are working on a particular task are

contributing in a positive way. Likewise, the noble learns to give directions and lay out a plan of action for any task, making the group he commands more effective.

Whenever a group of characters is using the aid another action to enhance a skill check, the noble makes his own aid another check and then targets a number of characters equal to or less than half his levels (rounded down). If successful, the noble confers a bonus (+1 at 5th level, +2 at 10th level, +3 at 15th level, and +4 at 20th level) to the targeted characters' aid another results.

For example, a 5th-level noble can use the organize ability on 2 characters, conferring a +1 bonus on their aid another results (taking them from the normal +2 to +3). This ability can only be used for skill checks that can benefit from the aid another action.

Leadership

At 6th level, the noble gains the Leadership feat as a bonus feat.

- Prestige Classes -

There are many paths that a noble might take, but a few require specialized training and confer unique benefits. The prestige classes presented here—the commander, the diplomat, the impersonator, the lord knight, and the mastermind—are all designed to reflect the talents and skills of certain types of nobles. These generic prestige classes can be used in a wider variety of settings with almost any organization that would have such a noble as a member.

- Commander -

An army's strength and effectiveness increases dramatically with talented leadership in charge of it. The commander is the planner, the tactician, the maintainer of morale, and the trainer of these combat groups. An effective commander can give even the smallest and most ragtag group of soldiers the edge needed to emerge from combat victorious.

Commanders are found in a variety of employs in any setting. Most nations with standing armies have many commanders to keep the troops in line and in shape. Nobles who employ their own security forces or bodyguards often make use of a commander as their Chief of Security. Pirates, marauders, highwaymen, and other assorted thugs frequently have a commander who can organize raids effectively and ensure that everyone is left alive to share in the plunder at the end of the day. Looking at any organization employing some sort of martial emphasis or combat-ready force, one will almost always find a commander at the helm.

Commanders come from a variety of backgrounds. Some work their way up in the ranks of an armed force from the lowliest grunt to leader of the entire group. Others learn the essence of battlefield leadership in officer-training schools created for wealthy young leaders. The commander's career path is sure to influence his methods and attitude toward his troops; while a life-long soldier might be more tolerant of the quirks young recruits often develop, those coming from higher social standing might see their soldiers as rabble who must be molded through strict discipline. Regardless of his methods or his history, a commander is always measured by the loyalty of his troops and his victories in battle.

Hit Dice: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a commander, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

Alignment: Any non-chaotic.

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Skills: Diplomacy 6 ranks.

Feats: Leadership.

Special: The commander must have earned a position of leadership in a combat unit, military force, or other similar organization.

Class Skills

The commander's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), and Sense Motive (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

These are features of the commander prestige class.

Weapon & Armor Proficiency

The commander is proficient in all simple and martial weapons; light, medium, and heavy armor; and shields, including tower shields.

Battlefield Presence

A commander's presence is such that he can single-handedly affect the outcome of a battle. Using any battlefield presence ability requires a standard action; additionally, the target of the ability must be able to observe and hear the commander and must be within 60 feet. The commander may target a number of enemies or allies equal to one-half his class level (rounded down), and the effect lasts for one round per class level. The ability may be used once per day at 1st

level and once per day for every three levels thereafter. Each time the commander uses the battlefield presence ability, he may choose one of the following effects:

Goad (Ex)

A skilled commander can force the enemy's hand, goading troops into a rash attack. Any characters targeted by this ability must make a Will save (DC 10 + class level + Charisma modifier) or charge the closest enemy on their next turn. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Confidence (Ex)

A character targeted by the inspire confidence ability has steeled his resolve and prepared for victory following a commander's speech. Characters targeted by this ability gain a +1 morale bonus to all attack rolls and saving throws. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Fear (Ex)

A character targeted by the inspire fear ability is paralyzed with fear and anxiety at the sight of the commander. This ability causes targets to suffer a -1 morale penalty to attack rolls and saving throws. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Issue Orders (Ex)

Issuing correct orders to his troops can mean the difference between life and death for the commander when engaging in combat. Any characters targeted by this ability gain a +2 morale bonus to their AC for the duration of the ability's use. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Taunt (Ex)

Some commanders choose to assail their enemy with words and gestures before engaging in actual combat, causing their opponents to become enraged. Any characters targeted by this ability suffer a -2

Table 1-3: The Commander

Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Battlefield presence 1/day, chain of command
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Tactics
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Increased overland speed, leadership +1
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Battlefield presence 2/day
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Advanced tactics, chain of command
6th	+6	+5	+2	+5	Rally, leadership +2
7th	+7	+5	+2	+5	Battlefield presence 3/day
8th	+8	+6	+2	+6	Improvised tactics
9th	+9	+6	+3	+6	Leadership +3
10th	+10	+7	+3	+7	Battlefield presence 4/day, last stand

- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

morale penalty to their armor class for the duration of the ability's use. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Chain of Command (Ex)

The commander must be able to function as a part of a larger military organization and relay orders from above as well as make use of his fellow officers. At 1st level, whenever the commander is the target of any inspire or battlefield presence ability (as per the class ability of the noble and commander class), if he uses that same inspire or battlefield presence ability on a group of characters, he may increase any bonus or penalties he confers with the same inspire or battlefield presence ability by one.

Tactics (Ex)

At 2nd level, the commander is able to study the way his enemies are performing in combat and organize his forces to better take advantage of his opponents' weaknesses. By spending a full-round action to study the battlefield, he may grant an additional +2 competence bonus to any attacks made by his allies while flanking an opponent. This bonus stacks with the existing bonus for flanking an enemy and lasts for the remainder of the encounter. This is a language-dependant ability.

Increased Overland Speed (Ex)

At 3rd level, the commander is able to push his troops to move faster over long distances than more unorganized forces. The commander and his followers now move at one and a half times their normal overland speed. Note that this does not increase their base speed, only their speed over long distances.

Leadership (Ex)

A good commander attracts followers to swell the ranks of his forces wherever he goes. At 3rd level, the commander's Leadership score increases by one. The commander gains an additional increase to his Leadership score at 6th level and again at 9th level. Although this increase allows the commander to gain

new followers, a commander can still attract a cohort that is two or more levels lower than himself.

Advanced Tactics (Ex)

Beginning at 5th level, the commander may make use of his tactical skills to aid a small number of allies. By spending a full-round action directing a small squad of allies (up to a number of allies equal to his class level), the commander confers a +2 competence bonus to attack rolls. All allies affected by this ability must be within visual and hearing range. The benefits of this ability last for the remainder of the encounter. This is a language-dependant ability.

Rally (Ex)

Many times a commander will find himself outnumbered and with allies who are injured or not at full fighting capacity. In these situations, the commander is able to rally his troops and push them beyond their injuries to victory. Beginning at 6th level, once per day the commander may spend a full-round action rallying his troops; all allies within visual or hearing range who have fallen below half their total hit points gain the following morale bonuses: +2 to all attack rolls, +2 to armor class, and +2 to all Fortitude and Will

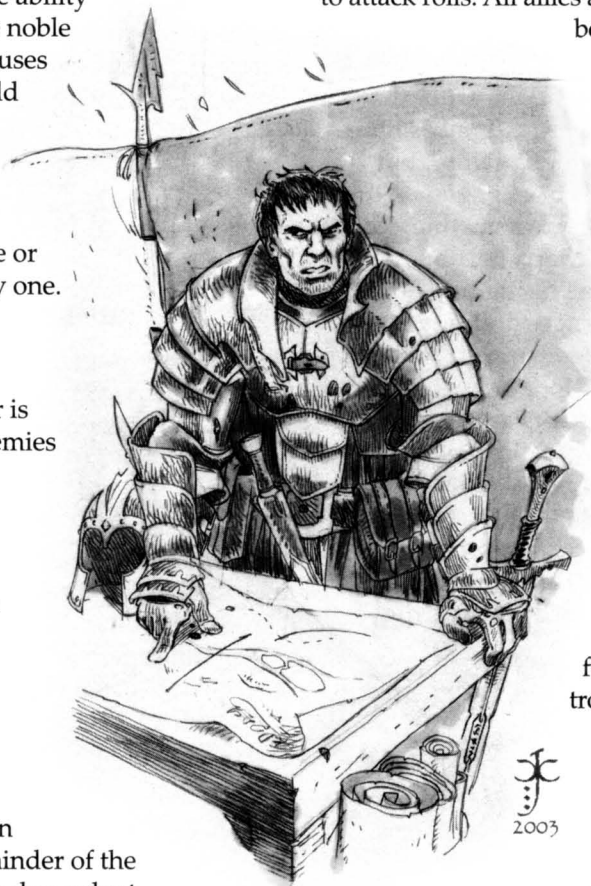
saves. These effects last a number of rounds equal to the commander's class level.

Improvised Tactics (Ex)

Beginning at 8th level, the commander's grasp of tactics becomes so ingrained in his mind that he is able to make tactical decisions with much less time to examine the field of battle. When using the tactics or advanced tactics class abilities, the time taken for use is reduced to a move action.

Last Stand (Ex)

At 10th level, the commander is a veteran of enough battles to be able to tell when the end is near and make a final stand against his foes. All of the commander's followers may continue to remain conscious and fighting until they reach -5 hit points.

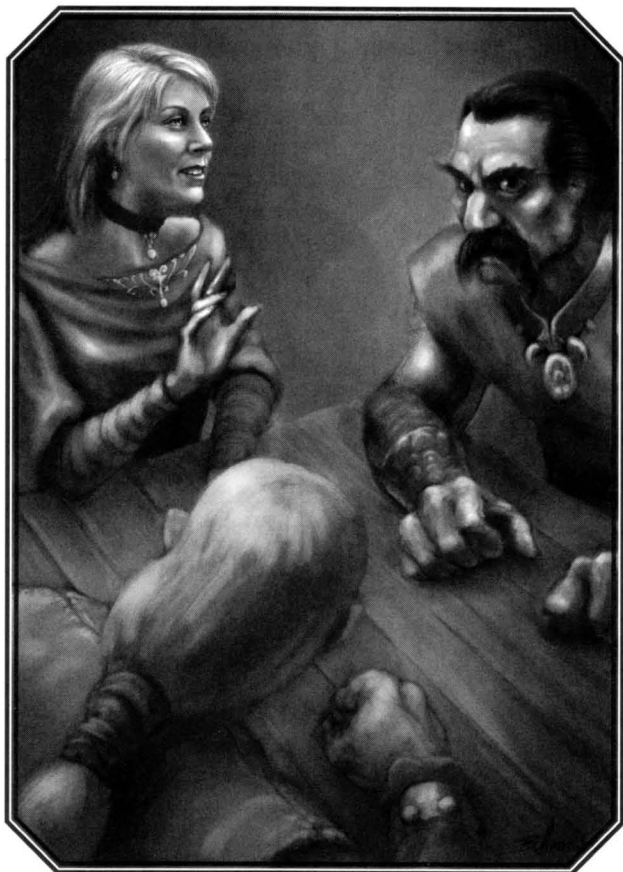


- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

- Master Diplomat -

The master diplomat is much more than merely the liaison between two factions. Anyone who negotiates, deals, or interacts with others on a professional or political level can be considered a diplomat. This includes everything from rulers and ambassadors to merchants and crime lords. Master diplomats are skilled in making sure that deals and cooperative projects go smoothly, and are often described as negotiators and hagglers.

For the various types of diplomat, the art of the deal is where the true challenges lie. It takes little more than brute strength to wield a sword, but to avert war using mere words or to negotiate the sale of an expensive commodity is something that requires intelligence, finesse, charisma, and inborn talent. The diplomat has honed his interpersonal skills in order to broker exchanges and forge treaties, to help allies come together or turn bitter enemies against one another. Not every diplomat acts out of benevolence; merchants are often seeking greater riches, crime lords manage the dealings of street gangs and thieves' guilds, and crooked politicians manipulate the system in order to bring themselves greater riches, power, and influence. The master diplomat can fill a variety of roles, all of them involving making sure the



interaction between large groups of people goes smoothly.

The master diplomat finds his skills useful anywhere conflict needs to be averted. As is common of large kingdoms, rival guilds, noble houses, and other organizations that wield considerable power, disagreements can often lead to violence and even war. The master diplomat makes sure that doesn't happen, or if it does, that his own interests are protected and he comes out on top.

Hit Dice: d6

Requirements

To qualify to become a diplomat, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Skills: Bluff 6 ranks, Diplomacy 8 ranks, Intimidate 4 ranks, Sense Motive 6 ranks.

Feats: Leadership.

Class Skills

The diplomat's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (n/a), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following are features of the diplomat prestige class.

Weapon & Armor Proficiency

The diplomat gains no new proficiency with weapons or armor.

Consular

While not every diplomat is exactly the same, most share some similar abilities that are common to all those who deal with the relations between groups of people. Regardless of the purpose for which they are used, these abilities play off of the interactions between people and are typical of the methods that a diplomat uses to resolve conflicts and bypass danger.

Table 1-4: The Diplomat

Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Consular
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Oratory
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Influence +1
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Consular
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Improvised language comprehension

Each time the diplomat gains the consular class ability, he may select one of the following abilities:

Barter

Some diplomats are exceptionally talented at haggling and negotiating the prices of goods. Based on supply, cultural concerns, craftsmanship, and other factors, the diplomat is able to determine fair prices and work the seller down to reasonable rates. By making a Diplomacy check, the diplomat may sell an item for 75% of its value (rather than the normal 50%). The DC for the appraise check is set by the Game Master; 10-15 for common items, 15-20 for rare or exceptional items, and 20-25 for unique or illegal items.

Defuse Hostility

An important aspect of the diplomat's job is ensuring that conflict and hostility are resolved peacefully whenever possible. The diplomat has learned the art of defusing these conflicts before they can explode into violence or vendettas, and uses this knowledge to his own benefit. Whenever you make a successful Charisma or Diplomacy check to influence an NPC's attitude toward you, increase the change by one level. For example, if your check was successful in changing the NPC's attitude from hostile to unfriendly, the NPC becomes indifferent.

This ability may be used only once on any target during each encounter.

Provoke Hostility

Sometimes it is necessary for the diplomat to influence someone's attitude in a way that provokes hostility rather than defusing it. The diplomat is able to turn allies against one another and make existing tensions

explode into full-blown conflicts. You may make a Charisma check to influence an NPC's attitude towards another character or group as you would normally do to influence that NPC's attitude towards you. This ability may only be used to cause the target to become less friendly toward the intended character or group than before.

Influence (Ex)

Much like the noble, the diplomat is able to extend his will into all kinds of areas in order to get what he wants. This ability functions exactly as the noble class ability of the same name, and the influence bonus from the master diplomat class stacks with any influence bonuses the character might have from the noble class.

Improvised Language Comprehension (Ex)

Starting at 5th level, the diplomat has spent so much time dealing with representatives of different nations and regions that he begins to form a rudimentary understanding of languages and is able to communicate using languages other than the ones in which he is proficient. When encountering a language

he does not know, the diplomat may make an Intelligence check (DC set by the Game Master based on the language's obscurity) to be able to communicate in basic words and phrases. The diplomat is limited to simple greetings (such as "hello," "welcome," and "we come in peace") as well as other simple phrases such as those used to request something or answers to simple questions.

Table 1-5:
Language Obscurity

Check DC	Obscurity
10	Common: Language spoken in all parts of the land
15	Uncommon: Regional language or dialect
20	Rare: Language of secluded race or region
25	Obscure: Dead or forgotten languages, extraplanar languages

- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

Oratory (Ex)

Beginning at 2nd level, the diplomat is able to captivate an audience by the strength of his voice and words alone. By making a rousing speech, the diplomat may cause both enemies and allies to pay rapt attention to him for a short while. Once per day, the diplomat may begin making a speech using the oratory class ability; for the duration of the speech the diplomat may take no other actions other than speaking.

Any character who comes within hearing range of the diplomat for the duration of the speech must then

make a Will save (DC equal to 10 + the diplomat's Charisma modifier + the diplomat's class level) or become enthralled with the speech. Characters who make their Will save must continue to do so each round they are in hearing range of the diplomat while he is speaking; those who fail their Will save may take no other actions than to stand and listen to the diplomat for the duration of the speech. If an enthralled character suffers an attack, he is considered no longer enthralled, may act as normal, and is no longer required to make a Will save to resist the oratory. The oratory ability lasts a number of minutes equal to the master diplomat's class level. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

- Impersonator -

Imagine if the people all around you weren't the people they pretended to be. Imagine if even your closest confidant was actually allied with your worst enemy. Imagine that the enchanting person you met at a party was actually up to some sinister purpose, and all along you never knew the difference. This is what it is like to have a brush with an impersonator. An impersonator is the master of disguise, a talented spy and saboteur, and most people never even know he is within striking distance.

Impersonators are drawn from the ranks of actors, con artists, nobles, and others who can use their talents to mimic another person (whether real or fictional) in order to discover the secrets that are supposedly safe from prying eyes. Impersonators are most often employed as spies and informants, funneling hidden information back to their masters and secretly thwarting the efforts of those they have deceived. Impersonators sometimes work as a continuing part of an organization, working their way up to positions of power and influence where they can better perform their tasks. Conversely, some

impersonators work on a schedule of individual forays, whether by posing as an important noble to get invited to a party or infiltrating the kitchen staff in order to steal an important letter from the desk of a rival lord. Whether his commitment is long term or simply a few hours, the impersonator gets into and remains in character, effortlessly becoming another person for the duration of his task.

As spies and saboteurs, impersonators have a distinct advantage over thieves and rogues, who try to get by on stealth alone. If discovered, an impersonator can simply concoct a reason for being where he is based on his character. He has access to people and locations without having to waste time on silence and secrecy. More important, should his cover be blown, the impersonator needs only to switch to another identity and carry on with his mission. The impersonator's strength lies in appearing to be someone he is not, and the misconceptions created by that ability can have severe repercussions.

Hit Dice: d6

Table 1-6: The Impersonator

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Deceptive appearance
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Avoid detection, sneak attack +1d6
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Infiltrate
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Vocal mimic
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Avoid detection
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	Infiltrate, sneak attack +2d6
7th	+5	+2	+5	+5	-
8th	+6	+2	+6	+6	Avoid detection
9th	+6	+3	+6	+6	Infiltrate
10th	+7	+3	+7	+7	Sneak attack +3d6

- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

Requirements

To qualify to become an impersonator, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Skills: Bluff: 6 ranks, Diplomacy 6 ranks, Disguise 8 ranks, Perform (act) 6 ranks.

Feats: Alternate Identity, Skill Focus (Disguise).

Class Skills

The impersonator's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read Lips (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Speak Language (n/a).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following are features of the impersonator prestige class.

Weapon & Armor Proficiency

The impersonator gains no new proficiency with armor or weapons.

Deceptive

Appearance (Ex)

One of the first things an impersonator learns to do is craft an impenetrable disguise. Since the visual appearance of the impersonator is one of the most noticeable aspects of a disguise, it is crucial for the impersonator to have a flawless appearance in line with the character he is assuming. The infiltrator gains a +2 bonus to all Disguise checks.

Avoid Detection

While most impersonators prefer to give the impression that their techniques are perfect, there are means of penetrating a disguise and seeing through to the person underneath. In these cases, particularly in situations where magical detection could potentially give him away, the impersonator must be disciplined and prepared enough

to maintain the illusion of his role. As such, the impersonator develops certain techniques and tricks that he may use to avoid detection.

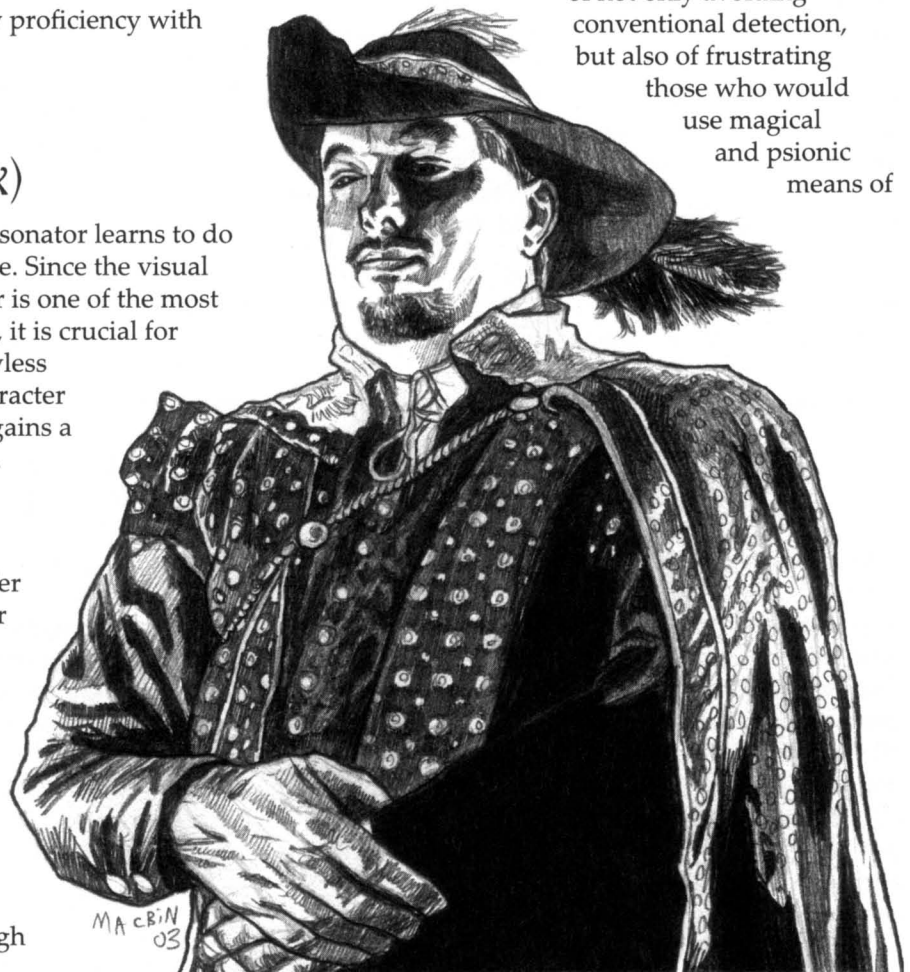
Whenever the impersonator gains the avoid detection class ability, he may select one of the following special abilities:

Change of Character (Ex)

A blown cover is one of the worst things an impersonator can experience, and he must be prepared to abandon one disguise and switch to another at a moment's notice. The impersonator may increase the DC of a Disguise check in order to reduce the time taken to use the skill by 5 minutes (the normal time is 1d3 x 10 minutes). The impersonator may do this until the time taken to change disguises is reduced to 0 minutes, in which case the change requires a full-round action. For each 5 minutes taken off the time to use the skill, increase the DC by 5.

Depth of Character (Ex)

Truly great impersonators are able to get so completely into their roles that they practically forget their own identity from time to time. This carries with it the advantage of not only avoiding conventional detection, but also of frustrating those who would use magical and psionic means of



- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

delving into an impersonator's mind. Whenever another character uses any form of divination magic or psionic powers that can read the thoughts of the impersonator, that character picks up only the thoughts and intentions of the particular role the impersonator is currently using as a disguise.

Immunity to Scrying (Su)

Through the rigorous application of mental techniques, the impersonator learns to avoid remote detection by scrying. The impersonator can no longer be detected by magical scrying. In the case of scrying that scans the area the impersonator is in, such as arcane eye, the spell works but the impersonator simply isn't detected.

Undetectable Alignment (Ex)

Often an impersonator can find himself given away by his previous actions and attitudes, particularly by the means of detecting alignment. The impersonator's alignment is concealed from all forms of divination.

Sneak Attack

At 2nd level, if the impersonator faces an opponent who is unable to defend himself effectively from his attack, he can strike a vital spot for extra damage. Basically, any time the impersonator's target would be denied his Dexterity bonus to Defense (whether or not he actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the impersonator flanks a target, the impersonator deals extra damage. The extra damage begins at 2nd level with a +1d6 bonus, and increases by an additional 1d6 at 5th and 8th levels.

Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 feet; the impersonator can't strike with deadly accuracy beyond that range. An impersonator can only sneak attack creatures with discernible anatomies (for example, a gelatinous

cube lacks vital areas to attack). Additionally, any creature immune to critical hits is also invulnerable to sneak attacks. Also, the impersonator must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot, and must be able to reach it. The impersonator cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment, or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

Infiltrate (Sp)

At 3rd level, the impersonator begins to have an almost unnatural talent for impersonation and spying. Each time the impersonator gains the Infiltrate ability, he may select one of the following spells: change self, charm person, comprehend languages, detect secret doors, ghost sound, and ventriloquism. Once per day, the impersonator may act as though he had cast that spell as a sorcerer with a caster level equal to his class level. Each time he gains another use of the infiltrate ability, the impersonator may either choose a new spell or gain another daily use of a previously chosen spell.

Vocal Mimic

Starting at 4th level, the impersonator may alter his own voice to perfectly mimic the voice of another person. To imitate the target's voice, he must study that person and hear them speak for at least 5 minutes. After that amount of time, he may imitate the target's voice perfectly for one hour per class level. The effect can be extended with successful Perform (act) checks (base DC 15, modified at the GM's discretion for particularly easy or difficult vocal ranges or accents). A check is required for each additional hour the impersonator continues to mimic the target. Once an impersonator has successfully mimicked a target, he can reactivate the ability with a DC 15 Perform (act) check, mimicking the same target without the need for additional observation.

- Lord Knight -

A knight is more than a warrior with a title and a heraldic crest. The lord knight in particular is responsible for hundreds, even thousands of people who live on his land and fall under his protection. The lord knight must fill many roles, from the people's champion to the protector of the realm, all while upholding a strict standard and code of honor for all to see. The lord knight is a landowner, a leader, a responsible noble, and a defender of the powerless. While some lord knights are benevolent and others cruel, they all ensure that their followers remain under their control and protection by whatever means necessary.

Most lord knights are nobles raised in societies where the strongest survive. An integral part of their upbringing involves combat training, as well as preparation for competing in tournaments. The most notable lord knights are those who win tournaments sponsored by other nobles and the sovereign leaders of their land. All lord knights must lead their sworn allies and liegemen into battle against rivals and enemies, and thus must be gifted with a natural ability to inspire and lead men.

Most lord knights come from a long line of knights before them. They are clad in the armor of their fathers, swords both antique and legendary, and

- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

concern themselves greatly with their appearances as well as their prowess. A lord knight must be a paragon to enforce the right of nobles to rule, and they must appear the part in all aspects. A lord knight is always finely dressed, comfortable in any situation, and wins the day through valor, skill, and knowledge.

Hit Dice: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a lord knight, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Alignment: Any non-chaotic.

Base Attack Bonus: +6

Skills: Diplomacy 6 ranks, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 4 ranks.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (heavy), Leadership.

Special: The lord knight must be a member of a noble house that is led by a knight.

Class Skills

The lord knight's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty)

(Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), and Sense Motive (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following are features of the lord knight prestige class.

Weapon & Armor Proficiency

The lord knight gains no new armor or weapon proficiency.

Heirloom

At 1st level, a lord knight is given a sacred heirloom that has been handed down over generations as a sign of his family's devotion to their followers. This heirloom is typically decorated ornately and well-known throughout the land, and draws all eyes to its splendor. This heirloom comes in one of two forms: a weapon or a suit of armor. The heirloom's form is determined by the game master.

The heirloom is a magic weapon or suit of armor with a +1 enhancement bonus. The weapon can be enhanced further normally and gains additional powers as the lord knight advances in level. These additional powers function only while in the lord

knight's hands and do not affect the value of the item nor the cost to further enhance the item with magic.

At 4th level, the weapon or armor grants the lord knight a +2 bonus to initiative rolls as long as the lord

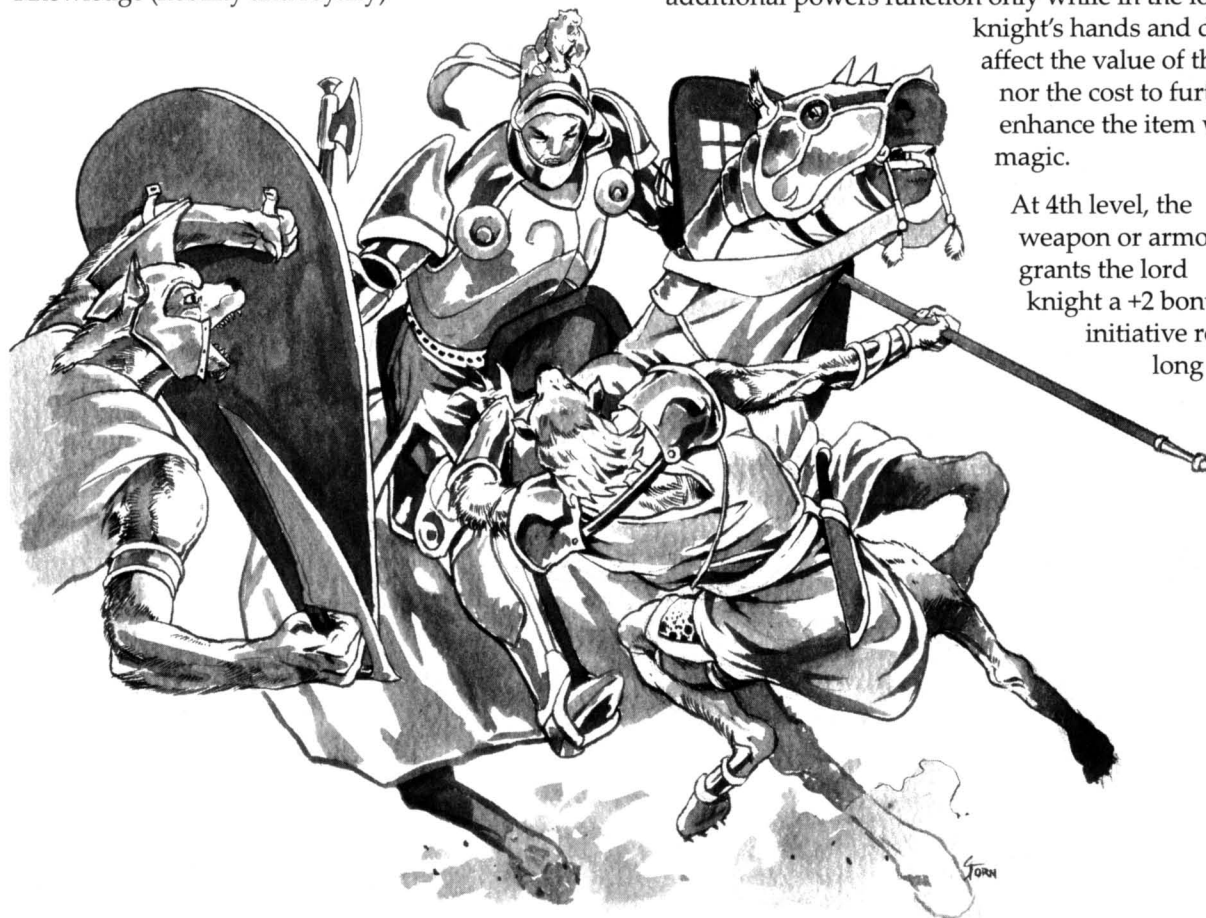


Table 1-7: The Lord Knight

Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Heirloom (+1)
2nd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Bonus feat, organize +1
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Champion
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Heirloom (initiative), stronghold
5th	+5	+4	+2	+4	Faithful steed
6th	+6	+5	+2	+5	Bonus feat
7th	+7	+5	+2	+5	Heirloom (saving throws)
8th	+8	+6	+3	+6	Organize +2
9th	+9	+6	+3	+6	Castle
10th	+10	+7	+3	+7	Bonus feat, heirloom (commune)

knight is carrying or wearing the item (although the item need not be readied).

At 7th level, the heirloom grants the lord knight a +2 morale bonus to all saving throws as long as the lord knight is carrying or wearing the item (although the item need not be readied).

At 10th level, the heirloom grants the bearer the ability to cast the commune spell once per week. However, unlike a normal commune spell that contacts the caster's deity, the spell contacts the lord knight's ancestors who bore the heirloom before him. The ancestral spirits may still answer questions that would normally be posed to the deity, with the GM making appropriate adjustments to the answers as fits the campaign.

Bonus Feat

At 2nd level, the lord knight gains a bonus feat to reflect his specialized training and style of ruling. The lord knight gains an additional bonus feat at 6th and 10th levels. In order to select a bonus feat, the lord knight must meet all prerequisites for that feat. The bonus feat must be chosen from the following list:

Battlefield Composure, Cleave, Mounted Combat, Mounted Defense, Noble House, Power Attack, or Weapon Focus.

Organize (Ex)

At 2nd level, the lord knight gains the ability to instruct his followers in an efficient manner. The lord knight gains the organize ability, as per the noble class skill of the same name. Any bonuses provided by the lord knight's organize ability stack with those from other classes. For example, if the lord knight had organize +2 from another class and gained organize +1 from this prestige class, he would have a total organize bonus of +3.

Champion (Ex)

The lord knight is a champion of his followers and a defender of the values he holds sacred. At 3rd level, the lord knight begins representing his followers and, in return, earning their respect and admiration. The lord knight gains a +1 increase to his noble house's House Strength Rating (described in **Chapter Five: Noble Houses**). Additionally, each additional level gained in the lord knight prestige class provides a similar +1 increase. This allows the lord knight to build up his noble house's strength as quickly as the standard noble.

Stronghold

At 4th level, the lord knight gains a small but defensible manor house. The exact layout, composition, and location of the manor house are up to the GM, but it should provide room for the lord knight, his cohort, and his followers.

Faithful Steed

At 5th level, the lord knight gains a loyal mount. This ability functions exactly like the paladin's special mount ability.

Castle

At 9th level, the lord knight gains a castle. The castle is granted in addition to the stronghold or other building, meaning that the lord knight now controls two (or possibly more) structures. This castle is fortified with high stone walls, ramparts, a moat, an iron gate, and any number of other fortifications as the GM deems fitting. This castle is a highly defensible fortress that usually contains barracks for housing the lord knight's loyal troops, siege equipment, and other wartime supplies.

- Chapter One: The Noble Class -

- Mastermind -

The mastermind's weapon of choice is information. More than anything, the mastermind craves knowledge and buys and sells snippets of gossip and overheard tales in order to piece them together. The mastermind is a plotter, a strategist, and is often accused of moving pawns around the board for his greater goals. For certain, the mastermind has an eye for the bigger picture and is not content to simply make do with small-time information brokering or spying; rather, the mastermind looks to larger and larger goals as he uses all his contacts and influence to make sure all plans fall into place.

A mastermind often comes from a criminal background of some sort, or from a noble house that spends a great deal of time dealing with plotting and politics. Crime bosses frequently are masterminds as they control a vast underground information network that sees and hears all. A criminal mastermind is an incredibly potent villain as he uses his knowledge of his adversaries in order to lure them into traps and feed them false information to keep them off his trail. Similarly, a noble who has ensconced himself in the arena of politics makes an excellent mastermind as the knowledge of one's enemies can be used to feel out weaknesses and, more important, for blackmail. A mastermind will many times find himself the target of another powerful noble's ire and must use his knowledge as a shield in order to keep his organization and even his life.

The mastermind typically works from behind the scenes. Subtlety is imperative, and a mastermind who exposes his activities too often runs the risk of losing his ability to manipulate others. Indeed, the mastermind's strength comes from knowing information that others do not, and from being able to use that knowledge against them. You will not find many extravagant or publicly flamboyant masterminds who are able to preserve their organization's advantage for very long; the key to a mastermind's control of information is not only how they obtain and distribute information but also how they hide such information from discovery.

Hit Dice: d6

Requirements

To qualify to become a mastermind, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Skills: Bluff 6 ranks, Diplomacy 6 ranks, Gather Information 10 ranks

Feats: Iron Will, Leadership

Class Skills

The mastermind's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read Lips (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Speak Language (n/a).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following are features of the mastermind prestige class.

Weapon & Armor Proficiency

The mastermind gains no new armor or weapon proficiencies.

Information Broker (Ex)

The primary talent of the mastermind is his ability to collect and control information. Through his network of spies and informants, the mastermind has garnered a great wealth of knowledge on any

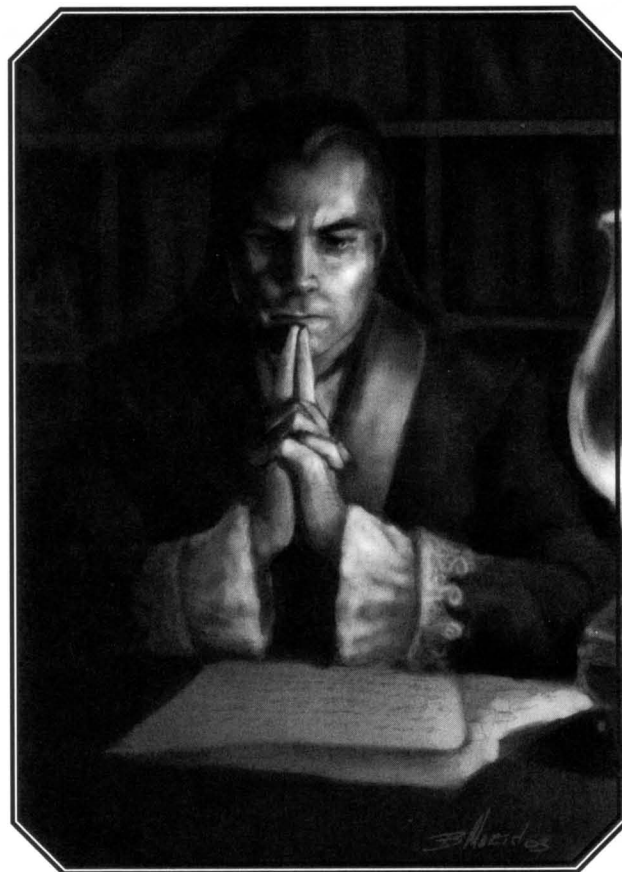


Table 1-9: Information Broker
Check Results

Result	Information Obtained
10	Common Knowledge: Lord Arris is a noble from the city; the castle is well guarded; the sword is elven in design
15	Uncommon Knowledge: Lord Arris has three sons; the castle was built by dwarven stonemasons; the sword is made of metal found only in elven provinces.
20	Rare Knowledge: Lord Arris also has a bastard daughter; the castle was torn down and rebuilt by the last king; the sword was forged by Galandril Malion
25	Hidden Knowledge: Lord Arris still sees the mother of his daughter; the castle is vulnerable to attack through underground tunnels; the sword bears magical enchantments.
30	Secret Knowledge: Lord Arris is plotting to kill his wife and marry his mistress; the tunnels under the castle are used for covertly murdering people; the sword grants a +2 bonus from its magic
35	Unspoken Knowledge: Lord Arris murdered his first wife as well; the castle walls are hollow and contain the bodies of those murdered in the tunnels; the sword is a +2 vorpal sword
40	Dangerous Knowledge: Lord Arris is planning the murder to spark a war; the castle is haunted by spirits of the dead craving vengeance; the sword was used to slay the avatar of an evil deity
45+	Deadly Knowledge: Lord Arris is a black dragon using polymorph; the castle is the source of power of a secret cult of necromancers; the sword is possessed by the soul of the dark god whose avatar it slew.

number of subjects that he can recall on a moment's notice. This knowledge is usually only half remembered, and the mastermind himself may not initially realize its relevance.

To use this class ability, the mastermind may make a Gather Information check concerning any character, object, locale, or event. The check may only be made on individual people, places, and things and may not be any complex combination of such elements; for example, this ability may be used on a single person or item, but may not be used on a trap or puzzle in a dungeon due to its many parts. The GM then consults the table below to determine how much knowledge the mastermind has on the subject. The mastermind may only use this class ability on a given piece of knowledge once per level. Using this class ability is a free action. This check grants the ability to use the Gather Information skill quickly and in any situation, with sure results of some variety.

Connection (Ex)

At 2nd level, the mastermind gains a connection as per the noble class ability of the same name. This

connection is in addition to any other connections already made by the mastermind as a result of another class ability. The mastermind gains one additional connection at 6th level, and again at 10th level.

Create Cipher (Ex)

At 3rd level, the mastermind begins to use one of the best tricks of preserving secrecy and information: the cipher. The cipher is a secret code with which to send messages. The mastermind can create one cipher at 3rd level and each mastermind class level thereafter. The mastermind may distribute keys to translation that allow others to read the cipher.

This cipher functions exactly as any other written language except that the cipher is exceedingly rare and can only be read with a translation key. If another character wishes to be able to read and write in this cipher, he must study an example of the cipher and the translation key and spend the skill points upon gaining a level to buy the appropriate Read/Write Language skill.

Table 1-8: The Mastermind

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Information broker
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Connection (x1)
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Create cypher
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Undetectable alignment
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Sleeper cell
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Connection (x2)
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Counterintelligence
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Detect scrying
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Know Thy Enemy
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Connection (x3)

Undetectable

Alignment (Ex)

Beginning at 4th level, the impersonator's alignment is concealed from all forms of divination. This ability functions exactly like the undetectable alignment spell, except that it cannot be dispelled.

Sleeper Cell

Beginning at 5th level, the mastermind is able to employ a well-known espionage tactic known as the sleeper cell. A sleeper cell is a small group that infiltrates another organization or community and lies dormant until called upon for information or aid. This means a group of seemingly loyal servants might suddenly reveal themselves to be agents of the enemy.

Whenever the mastermind would normally gain new followers as a result of an increase in his leadership score, he may assign those followers to a sleeper cell. If he does this, the mastermind declares a single organization, community, or region for those new followers to infiltrate. When the mastermind chooses, he may call upon this sleeper cell and make it active. At this point, their allegiances are revealed and they begin to function as normal followers for the mastermind.

The GM should be careful that a sleeper cell does not allow the mastermind to simply bypass an adventure or important encounter. For example, having the personal guard unit of the campaign's nemesis acting as part of a sleeper cell might be too much, given that they would have direct access to the group's enemy. A sleeper cell composed of the same adversary's gate guardians would still be useful, but would not allow the mastermind to simply order the death of an adversary.

Counterintelligence

At 7th level, the mastermind learns how to use information being sold by spies and informants within his own organization to his advantage. Whenever the mastermind discovers followers or connections belonging to another character within his own organization, those characters cease to provide useful information to whomever it is they are assisting. Moreover, if a character discovered is a connection for another character, the discovered character can no longer be considered a connection and will not be able to assist his previous ally. If the character or characters discovered are followers of another NPC, the mastermind may immediately recruit them as his own followers (although he may wish to have them continue providing false information to their original leader).

Detect Scrying (Su)

Beginning at 8th level, the mastermind immediately becomes aware of any attempt to observe him by means of a divination (scrying) spell. The mastermind knows the location of every such magical sensor within 40 feet.

Know Thy Enemy

At 9th level, the mastermind has learned how to turn basic information and knowledge of a character's personality type to his advantage in almost any situation. The mastermind may make a Sense Motive check against any one opponent as a move action. The following round, the mastermind gains a bonus to either a single attack against that opponent, or a dodge bonus to AC against that opponent, equal to one-half his mastermind class level. This reflects the mastermind's ability to use his natural talents to gather information in order to predict an opponent's next move.

- Chapter Two -

Supplemental Rules

This chapter presents a number of new feats for noble characters and non-nobles alike; no completely new skills are listed here, but several skills are analyzed and expanded for use by nobles and other characters making use of noble abilities. This chapter also includes alternate combat rules for dueling.

- Skills -

Certain skills are invaluable to a noble and should be emphasized when creating a character. What follows is a listing of skills with new uses and expanded analysis in order to give players new options and illustrate new roleplaying methods for noble characters.

Bluff

Possibly one of the most overlooked skills in all of the game, Bluff is a must to simulate the interaction of scheming nobles. The Bluff skill can be used to impregnate even the smallest gesture or most innocent phrase with a deeper meaning. Many times those who are unfamiliar with the hidden meanings can stumble into a dangerous situation. The Bluff skill can be used to communicate social or political messages to others without overtly stating intentions or plans. The following uses of the Bluff skill are best if used among those who understand the political maneuvering involved.

Declare Support

A nobleman or noblewoman often cannot overtly declare support for a house or a cause, but may wish to convey that they can be relied on for assistance. Doing so, however, can be risky. The person or house being supported may begin to request resources or favors that, if not granted, could be seen as a sign of deception. Similarly, the skill can be used to declare an absence of support, making it clear that the character does not back that house or noble in order to gain an advantage with their enemies. This use of the skill requires a successful Bluff check opposed by the listener's Sense Motive skill and grants a +1 circumstance bonus to all influence checks when dealing with a character who believes he or she has the noble's support.

Incite Suspicion

One of the most devious means of using the Bluff skill is to convince someone that a person they

thought was his loyal ally is truly plotting against him. Likewise, the mistrust spread by a dropped hint or offhand remark can be crushing to an alliance between noble houses, particularly if the informant is trusted or reliable. This use of the skill requires a successful Bluff check opposed by the listener's Sense Motive skill and causes a single NPC's attitude toward another NPC to shift one level in the direction of hostile on the NPC attitude table.

Forgery

Forgery can be an invaluable skill for those who need to extend their manipulations beyond the realm of face-to-face confrontations. While use of the Forgery skill seems rather obvious, the following ways of using the skill elaborate on methods of integrating results with noble class abilities. The uses of the Forgery skill below carry with them a base DC that must be surpassed in order for the document to seem authentic enough to be used. It can still be revealed by the use of an opposed Forgery roll.

Notes of Authenticity

A note forged by the greedy or conniving, the note of authenticity declares an object to be something other than what it actually is. Typically used with antiques, artwork, magical items, jewelry, and other assorted items of value, the note of authenticity can claim an antique is far older than it actually is, or that a painting was created by a famous artist. A note of authenticity can be created with the Forgery skill, and if it is used successfully, it provides a +2 synergy bonus on Bluff checks to describe the object as something it is not. Successful use of a note of authenticity and a subsequent Bluff check doubles the price result of an Appraise check used on the item.

Notes of Authority

Oftentimes a forger will create notes that appear to grant the bearer the authority of a higher power. For

- Chapter Two: Supplemental Rules -

example, one such note might be permission from the king to explore the royal library, or an arrest warrant for an enemy. Such documents are more highly scrutinized than simple love notes or other minor forgeries, and the penalties for being caught with one are far stricter; a forger would be lucky to get away with lifetime imprisonment. A note of authority can be created with the Forgery skill, and if it is used successfully, it grants a +2 synergy bonus on any influence checks made using the document, provided that the GM determines the note would be sufficient to alter the target of the influence check's reaction.

Notes of Currency

There are many times when a banker's seal must be forged in order to procure funds in an emergency situation. A note of currency is essentially a documentation of funds owed or being safeguarded by a moneylender or banker, entitling the bearer to that amount. An official note of currency is often sealed with the banker's personal sigil and is incredibly difficult to imitate. A note of currency can be created with the Forgery skill, but the forger must have access to sealing wax as well as the normal materials. The successful use of the note of currency allows the character to procure goods and services as if he had the material aid class ability. The character can use this ability for one small amount of time to

procure a meal, one night's lodging, or a similarly valued service. After its use, the banker making the exchange destroys the note of currency.

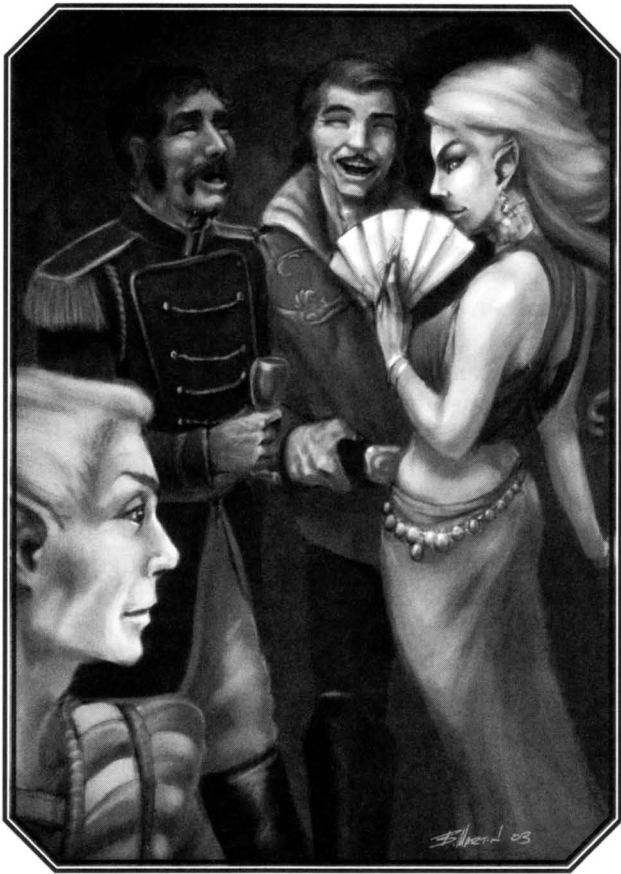
Notes of Invitation

Used to make someone appear to belong where they do not, a note of invitation declares that a character is a welcome guest. Used for far more than crashing royal parties, a note of invitation may grant the bearer an audience with a ruler or leader that normally would not be granted. A note of invitation can act as a summons, or may be as simple as a request for attendance at a social function. A note of invitation can be created with the Forgery skill. If it is used successfully, the character can gain entrance to most events. The GM should grant a circumstance bonus to Forgery checks made to determine the authenticity of the note based on the prestige of the event. The note of invitation grants the bearer a +2 synergy bonus to Bluff checks against anyone questioning the bearer as to whether or not he belongs at the event.

Notes of Warrant

A note of warrant is a declaration that a character is wanted by the authorities and promises a reward for bringing them in. It can place a price on an individual's head that will have bounty hunters and mercenaries across the land harrying him





Read/Write Fansigns

Fansigning is a unique language used primarily by female nobles and other women, although many men have learned to understand it. Fansigning involves the use of a lady's fan, which unfolds from a small handle into an arched shape, to convey ideas and emotions during normal conversation. Although not technically a written language, fansigning is a technique that does not require audible sounds, so it can be understood even in complete silence as long as the character can see the person doing the signing.

Fansigning is not as precise a language as most signed languages. It communicates basic concepts such as displeasure, trust/mistrust, negation of a statement being made, and other aspects of a conversation that the speaker might wish to reveal only to those versed in the language. Fansigning is done by a series of gestures and movements, such as snapping the fan closed or tapping one's chin with the handle. For example, waving the fan quickly on the left side of the face might signal a lie or misdirection on the part of the speaker, and an observer who knew the signal would realize the comment being made was false. However, anyone else capable of reading fansigns would immediately pick up on the changes to the statement being made.

and attempting to cash in on the bounty. A death warrant, however, is a much more serious type of note. A character with a death warrant on his or her head will be the target of execution, whether by law enforcement or by assassins hoping to make some extra money doing what they do best. A note of warrant can be created with the Forgery skill. Forgery checks made to detect the authenticity of a warrant gain an automatic +4 circumstance bonus, and Forgery checks made to detect the authenticity of a death warrant gain an automatic +8 circumstance bonus. Unlike other notes, the note of warrant does not carry with it a bonus for the bearer, but instead causes the target of the note to be harassed and attacked by other characters.

Knowledge (local)

The world of criminals is as diverse a political climate as the realm of nobles and royalty. With many notable personalities, gangs, guilds, crime syndicates, and families controlling the political climate, the underworld is a complex series of interrelationships that can be far more brutal than those found between noble houses. A Knowledge (local) check can reveal information about criminal organizations, individually renowned villains and lawbreakers, calling cards and markers of assassins, and a variety of other pieces of knowledge to help avoid a misstep where such mistakes can be instantly fatal.

Speak High Language

Almost all cultures that have nobility in one form or another have a more sophisticated version of their language used by the educated and the well-bred. These languages, known as the high languages, are elaborate and complicated forms of speech rarely used by the common man, and are reserved for those who speak them as a part of their noble birthright. Additionally, members of the clergy will often give their services and prayers in these versions of a language with the claim that only the refined speech of the high languages will reach the ears of the gods.

Each culture has its own high language that must be acquired separately during the placing of skill ranks. For example, dwarves would purchase the Speak High Dwarven skill for themselves, and then would have to purchase Speak Elven and Speak High Elven as separate languages. Most of the high languages use the same alphabet as their less-sophisticated versions, although the GM may rule that a given language requires a new Read/Write Language skill to use.

- Chapter Two: Supplemental Rules -

- Feats -

The following feats can be used by many different character types. Most are related to the fields of leadership and augmentation of other characters, and as such the noble will find them particularly effective. This should not deter non-nobles from taking a feat he or she can use, however.

Alternate Identity (General)

You have a second persona that you use for recreational escapism or to perform tasks you could not normally perform with a high profile.

Prerequisite: Disguise 6+ ranks.

Benefit: You gain an established identity with a legitimate history and reputation that allows you to slip away from your normal life. As a result, others are unaffected by your usual reputation when assuming your alternate identity. Any attempts to scry or locate you while using the alternate identity reveal your true identity.

Special: You may not make influence checks or material aid checks while assuming this identity. This feat may be taken multiple times; each time you take the feat, it applies to a new identity.

Battlefield

Composure (General)

You have a focus and determination that cannot be penetrated by spells or effects that cause normal men to fear, flee, or fail.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13+.

Benefit: When targeted by an item, spell, or other effect that would impose a morale penalty upon you without normally allowing for a save, you may make a Will save (DC 10 + the level of the character causing the penalty) to negate the effect. For example, a 10th-level noble using the inspire fear class ability would have a DC 20 to negate the morale penalty.

Black Market

Bargain (General)

You are especially adept at buying and selling items on the black market, and can pawn off stolen or illicit goods with great ease.

Benefit: When buying or selling an item on the black market, you are able to increase the sell value or decrease the cost by 5%.

Bloodline (General)

You have the blood of kings and nobles, and are descended from a long line of leaders, rulers, and other influential aristocrats.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to your Leadership score and a +2 bonus to all Diplomacy checks.

Special: This feat may be taken only at 1st level.

Cunning Defense (General)

You are exceptionally good at using your wits to predict the maneuvers and incoming attacks of an opponent, and know the best ways to counter them.

Prerequisite: Combat Expertise.

Benefit: When wearing light or no armor, you may substitute your Intelligence bonus for your Dexterity bonus to AC. This bonus is lost any time you would normally lose your Dexterity bonus to AC.

Disarming

Demeanor (General)

You are well known as an honorable person and have gained the trust, respect, and friendship of your peers and followers.

Prerequisite: Inspire complacency class ability.

Benefit: The morale penalty imposed by your inspire complacency ability is increased by -2.

Discreet Reputation (General)

You are not as high profile as other nobles of your stature thanks to your more subtle approach to politics and the social scene.

Benefit: Any characters making Knowledge (nobility and royalty) checks to determine whether or not they recognize you suffer a -5 penalty.

Special: You cannot gain the Discreet Reputation feat if you already have either the High Profile feat or the High Lord feat.

Exceptional

Leadership (General)

You have a knack for leading people and gather followers to you wherever you go.

Prerequisite: Leadership.

Benefit: You gain a +3 bonus to your Leadership score.

- Chapter Two: Supplemental Rules -

Frightful Aura (General)

You have a fear-inducing presence due to your appearance, manner of speaking, or the way you carry yourself.

Prerequisite: Inspire fear class ability.

Benefit: The morale penalty imposed by your inspire fear ability is increased by -1.

High Lord (General)

You are a lord among lords, raised to a higher status than other nobles and able to issue commands and make requests of them with greater ease.

Prerequisite: Noble level 8+.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Diplomacy checks and a +2 bonus to all influence checks when dealing with members of nobility or royalty.

Special: You cannot gain the High Lord feat if you already have the Discreet Reputation feat.

High Profile (General)

You are well known and easily recognized by others thanks to your reputation and fame.

Benefit: Any characters making Knowledge (nobility and royalty) checks to determine whether or not they recognize you gain a +5

bonus to this check.

Special: You cannot gain the High Profile feat if you already have the Discreet Reputation feat.

Instill Devotion (General)

Your followers and cohorts are exceptionally loyal to you and are resistant to enchantment magic while in your service.

Prerequisite: Leadership.

Benefit: All your followers gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against enchantment spells that could cause them to thwart you or your efforts in some way. For example, if one of your followers were targeted by a charm person spell, she would gain the +2 bonus to resist the spell since she might be made to harm you while under its influence.

Instill Discipline (General)

You have instilled a sense of emotional control in your followers who cannot be startled or frightened easily.

Prerequisite: Leadership.

Benefit: All your followers gain a +2 bonus to saving throws vs. fear effects.

Instill Etiquette (General)

You have ensured that all of your followers are well versed in the proper forms of etiquette and protocol when dealing with other nobles.

Prerequisite: Leadership.

Benefit: All your followers gain a +2 bonus to Diplomacy and Knowledge (nobility and royalty) checks.

Instill Martial Training (General)

You demand that your followers be prepared to defend themselves, and have had them trained in some form of weaponry.

Prerequisite: Leadership.

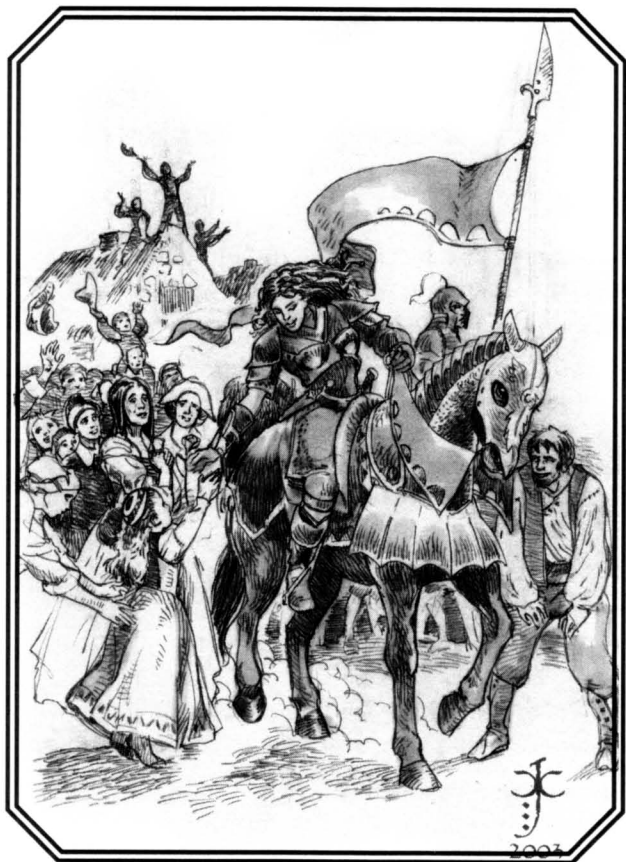
Benefit: All your followers gain a weapon proficiency in the single martial weapon of your choice.

Liege's Sway (General)

You have an exceptional amount of influence over your followers, allowing you to address them and lead them more effectively.

Prerequisites: Leadership, any inspire class ability.

Benefit: Each time you use one of the inspire class abilities (such as inspire awe or inspire complacency) you may target an additional



- Chapter Two: Supplemental Rules -

1d4 characters who are considered your followers. Note that this does not encompass allies or friends, but only followers gained with the Leadership feat.

Noble House (General)

You have been granted land, status, and title and may begin building up a power base using your connections and talent for leadership.

Prerequisites: This feat may be taken only by characters who have been awarded land and title by noble or ruler.

Benefit: You may run a noble house, as described in **Chapter Five: Noble Houses**.

Parry Opportunist (General)

You know how to wait for an opening in combat and can turn away blows in order to create a hole in your opponent's defenses.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +5, Combat Reflexes, Dodge.

Benefit: During a round in which you use both the Combat Expertise feat and the Dodge feat, if the target of your Dodge feat makes a melee attack against you and does not deal any damage to you during the current round, you may make a single attack of opportunity against that target immediately following his attacks.

Piercing Blow (General)

You are able to slip your weapon past the defenses of an enemy with such skill that you inflict a greater degree of damage.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +6, Weapon Finesse (any).

Benefit: When using the Weapon Finesse feat, you may inflict an additional 1d6 damage on a successful critical hit. This bonus is added to the weapon damage after the critical multiplier has been factored in.

Ruling Family (General)

You are the member of a family in control of a particular region and have certain privileges as a result of your status.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to influence checks when dealing with loyal servants of your homeland's sovereign leader.

Special: This feat may be taken only at 1st level.

Spanning Reach (General)

Your influence is both widespread and powerful, and your presence can be felt far from your base of power.

Prerequisite: Influence class ability.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all influence checks.

Terrify (General)

You may focus your frightening presence upon a single target, instilling within them a cold dread and maddening fear.

Prerequisites: Inspire fear class ability.

Benefit: Once per day, you may target a single character with your inspire fear ability; the morale penalty is increased by a number equal to one-half your total character levels, rounded down. This counts as one use of the inspire fear ability for the day.

- Optional Rule: Duels -

The duel is a staple of combat between nobles. An honor duel is a one-on-one battle of wits, speed, and talent far above street fights and scraps of common people. When a noble's honor has been marred, a challenge may be issued to settle the score with a blade. In most peoples' eyes, the result of the duel determines who was right and who was wrong in a disagreement.

The Dueling Mechanic

Engaging in an honor duel tests the wits and the prowess of each duelist. To express this, the standard combat system has been replaced by a dueling mechanic that reflects the fast-paced and nerve-racking action of dueling. The dueling mechanic

uses a predetermined set of maneuvers to reflect possible actions in a duel and resolves these actions with opposed rolls rather than a static AC bonus.

To engage in a duel, each combatant must use a single bladed weapon, preferably a light sword such as a rapier, cutlass, or saber. Other weapons may be used at the GM's discretion, but some small modifications to the maneuvers list might be required to account for different kinds of armaments. The duel begins with both combatants rolling initiative just as in normal combat. The duel then proceeds using rounds as in standard combat. Each duelist then selects a single maneuver from the list below, keeping it a secret until both combatants

- Chapter Two: Supplemental Rules -

have made their choice. The players (or the GM and the player, depending on whether an NPC is involved) then reveal their maneuvers to each other. The character with the higher initiative resolves his maneuver first, followed by the maneuver of the second character. Once these have been resolved, a new round begins and the process repeats. The duel ends when a predetermined condition has been achieved. Before each duel, combatants declare whether or a duel is to be to the death, to first blood, or to some middle ground (such as declaring that the first character to drop below 10 hit points loses).

Resolution of a maneuver is done by first examining the effects of the maneuver. Unless the maneuver specifically says otherwise, the character attempting the maneuver makes an attack roll at the highest attack bonus provided for the weapon being used. The opposing character then makes a defense roll, which is also an attack roll at the highest attack bonus provided for the weapon being used, to resist the maneuver. If the attacker's roll is higher, the maneuver succeeds; if the defender's roll is higher, the maneuver fails. This represents the defender's prowess with the dueling weapon as much as that of the attacker, and signifies that the defender is using his weapon to parry incoming attacks. With the success of a maneuver, the character applies any effects listed under the maneuver, including damage to the defender or other alternate effects.

Dueling Maneuvers

Each duelist selects one of the following maneuvers each round. (Note that some of the maneuvers are geared toward defense or deception.) Selecting the right maneuver requires some amount of strategy and analysis of the opponent's health, fighting style, and composure. Characters who find themselves outclassed with the weapon of choice might choose to fight conservatively, selecting the parry/riposte combination and dealing damage every other round, while other duelists may choose to be aggressive with lunges and slashes intended bring an opponent down as quickly as possible. Strong characters may choose to use their strength as an advantage and select maneuvers that deal damage each time, while finesse-based fighters may want to use their agility to draw an opponent into an unbalanced position. A duelist's fighting style is reflected in the maneuvers he favors.

Here is the format for the maneuver descriptions.

Maneuver Name: Description of what the maneuver does in plain language.

Previous Maneuver: You must have performed one of the listed maneuvers last round to use this one in the current round.

Effect: A description of what the maneuvers in game terms.

Disarm

You attempt to use your weapon to knock your opponent's weapon away.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You may make a standard disarm attack, as per the normal combat rules. You do not make an attack roll with this maneuver (except those made by the standard disarm rules).

Feint

You make a false move in order to lure your opponent into an unbalanced position.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: Next round, you gain a +2 bonus to any maneuver that deals damage to the opponent. You deal no damage with this maneuver.

Gutter Fighting

You use your fists and feet in addition to your weapon, and aren't afraid to fight dirty.

Previous Maneuver: Lock weapons or parry

Effect: You may make a single unarmed attack against your opponent's normal AC this round. Your opponent does not make an opposed roll to defend against this maneuver.

Hilt Blow

You use the blunt hilt of your weapon, attempting to daze and befuddle your opponent.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You deal subdual damage equal to your normal weapon damage with this maneuver. Additionally, your opponent must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer a -2 penalty to all maneuvers during the next round. Using this maneuver causes you to suffer a -2 penalty to your defensive roll for this round.

Dueling Cards

The dueling system can be made easier with dueling cards, a set of cards with the maneuvers listed on them. Each duelist simply chooses the card for his maneuver, and both cards are revealed at the same time. Dueling cards can be found on pages 61-62 of this book.



Lock Weapons

You use the clash of your weapon against that of your opponent to lock your weapons together, preventing further action.

Previous Maneuver: Slash

Effect: If this maneuver is successful, your opponent may not perform another maneuver until an opposed Strength check is made in your opponent's favor. Additionally, you may not perform another maneuver until your opponent wins the opposed roll (which you may voluntarily fail). You deal no damage with this maneuver.

Lunge

You dart forward with your whole body in order to throw the weight of your body behind your attack.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You deal an additional 1d6 damage on top of your normal weapon damage with this maneuver. Using this maneuver causes you to suffer a -2 penalty to your defensive roll for this round.

Parry

You use your weapon to deflect an enemy's blows and preserve your own defense.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You gain a +4 bonus to your defensive roll

for this round. You do not make an attack roll with this maneuver.

Riposte

You strike quickly while your opponent's weapon is out of the way.

Previous Maneuver: Parry

Effect: If you suffered no damage the previous round, you gain a +2 bonus to this maneuver. You deal normal weapon damage with this maneuver.

Slash

You use your weapon in a sweeping motion that does damage across the opponent's body.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You deal your normal weapon damage with this maneuver. Additionally, you may opt to use the flat of your weapon in order to deal subdual damage.

Thrust

You use the sharp point of your blade to pierce the flesh of your enemy.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You deal your normal weapon damage +2 with this maneuver, but suffer a -2 penalty to your attack roll.

- Chapter Three -

Noble Equipment

As with any character's gear, the noble's equipment is an important part of adventuring. Nobles are typically able to purchase more due to their resources and holdings, and often flaunt their wealth by purchasing outlandishly priced goods. This chapter details several pieces of equipment and new magic items that are especially appropriate for noble characters.

A noble purchases his equipment in the finest stores and buys only from the most renowned and expensive craftsmen. While this may seem foolish to many characters, the noble sees it as only fitting of his station and earnings; those who can afford items of great splendor should buy them as a sign that they possess great wealth and power. For the noble, expensive items are status symbols to be envied by those of a lesser station. He must always have the finest gear in the land in order to maintain his image and performance in combat. Additionally, such items will typically be hand-crafted for a particular noble and fit their his tastes; swords will be etched with a character's lineage, armor designed with the symbol of a noble house, lances decorated with

the colors of a leader's banner, and so forth. These modifications ensure that the weapon or armor cannot be mistaken as anything other than the chosen armaments of any given noble.

The Noble Cost Modifier

Most equipment in the game comes with standard pricing for mundane items. However, when a noble makes a purchase one can be assured that it will be from a vendor who caters to the upper-class customer. As such, the GM may wish to apply what is known as the noble cost modifier to any items purchased. Doing so increases the cost of the item by up to 30% and ensures that a noble will buy only items made of the finest materials, meals from the most renowned cooks, clothing from the most talented tailors. Additionally, this cost modifier can be applied to services as well in keeping with the idea that nobles stay only at the nicest inns or hire the most gifted experts in any given field. Note that this cost modifier should be applied only to nonmagical items.

- Amenities and Equipment -

Below is a listing of several new items and materials a noble character may wish to purchase. In addition to useful items for adventuring, some items have been included that epitomize the noble lifestyle and should be considered luxuries that can adorn homes and offices without necessarily serving any purpose other than to flaunt wealth.

Carriage

When a noble travels, he travels in style. A carriage is a four-wheeled enclosed vehicle drawn by a team of the finest and most well-bred mounts in the region. Most carriages are drawn by two mounts, but the more extravagant noble may have a coach drawn by four, six, or even eight mounts, depending on the noble's taste for extravagance. The coach itself is typically made of wood with metal trim, lavishly painted and encrusted with valuable metals and jewels in patterns that draw the eye. The carriage is an absolute must-have for any noble traveling overland.

Coat of Arms

The coat of arms is one of the most significant symbols in the noble house. A coat of arms not only represents lineage and heritage, but also the core values of a noble house. A coat of arms usually comes in the form of a cloth banner or wooden placard depicting a shield decorated with various designs and patterns. The colors and symbols on the coat of arms might represent several things: famous ancestors such as great conquerors or exceptional merchants; values like courage, honor, or aggressiveness; and devices of the family or house such as animals or fantastic beasts. A coat of arms is also found on the shields of knights and warriors, and on the war banners accompanying armies into the field.

Furniture

Nothing says wealth and power quite like plush surroundings, and in a noble's home the furniture

- Chapter Three: Noble Equipment -

can make all the difference in the world. A noble will buy large couches, ornate desks, exotic carpets and rugs, and massive dining tables, all for the sake of impressing guests. Examples of furnishings in a noble's home include but are not limited to four-post beds, luxurious baths, expensive armchairs, and delicate tea tables.

Horse, Carriage

The carriage horse is bred to draw the vehicle of a noble and appear both powerful and magnificent at the same time. Carriage horses come from the finest stock and most talented breeders, and are kept in prime condition by the attending stable hands. A carriage horse will bear expensive barding encrusted with jewels and precious metals as a sign that the noble is so wealthy that his horses are better dressed than many common people.

Horse, Racing

Bred for speed and acceleration, the racing horse is trained to beat all others at a dead sprint. Many nobles see horse racing as a sign of prestige and a means of friendly competition with other nobles. As such, the horses themselves become prized possessions that bring not only winnings but also renown.

Jewelry

Jewelry is the perfect complement to any noble's outfit. This includes necklaces, earrings, brooches, cufflinks, and more. Most nobles insist these decorations match perfectly with their ensemble of the day. Large gems often adorn jewelry made of solid metals such as gold bands or silver earrings, and most pieces are cut by expert jewelers. The creative combinations of stones, precious metals, colors, cuts, and styles are limited only by the noble's purse and the jeweler's imagination.

Litter

The litter is a popular means of transportation in crowded city areas where a coach or carriage could not easily pass. The litter is a reclining bed or couch covered with a low roof and furnished with pillows



and cushions, which can be enclosed by a veil or drapes on each side. At the base of the structure are four long poles, each one held by servants. The noble reclines in the litter while the servants lift the vehicle onto their shoulders and carry it around the city. The litter is a favorite means of transportation for nobles, and is a way to keep the noble hidden from the populace even while in public.

Portrait

Nobles often hire the most famous artists in the region to paint them in a flattering manner. Portrait artists often need to exaggerate or mute certain features of the noble on canvas in order to make them seem more attractive. A good portrait can earn the painter great praise and wealth, while an unflattering or substandard portrait has been known to result in imprisonment or death. Remember, the portraits can be used as a means

Table 3-1:
Adornments and Equipment

Item	Price	Weight
Carriage	1,250 gp	500 - 1000 lbs.
Coat of arms	360 gp	5 - 35 lbs.
Furniture	500-2,000 gp	50-150 lbs.
Horse, carriage	300 gp	-
Horse, racing	600 gp	-
Jewelry	50+ gp	1/2 lb.
Litter	400 gp	60 lbs.
Portrait	750 gp	15 lbs.
Seal	2 gp	1/2 lb.
Signet ring (poison)	50 gp	1/2 lb.
Tapestry	500 gp	40 lbs.
War banner	450 gp	4 lbs.

- Chapter Three: Noble Equipment -

of concealment; the works might cover up vaults, hidden panels, secret rooms, or passageways. There might even be slits cut in the eyes of the painting in order to observe others in the house.

Seal

The seal is an important part of communication in a fantasy setting. Usually a wooden or metal stamp, the base of the seal is carved with the noble's unique coat of arms. Like a signet ring, the seal is impressed upon wax or dipped in ink and pressed onto a page in order to leave the noble's mark, but leaves less mess on the noble's hands.

Signet Ring (Poison)

Some signet rings are specially designed to act as means of subtly delivering poison into a drink. The ring is designed to hold a few ounces of poison (or any liquid or powder for that matter) in a special container hollowed out in the center of the ring. By twisting the ring a quarter-turn in either direction, a hole is uncovered that empties the poison from the

top of the ring. This allows nobles and assassins to poison drink or food with maximum stealth. The GM may choose to grant up to a +2 circumstance bonus to Sleight of Hand checks when attempting to surreptitiously poison a glass.

Tapestry

Tapestries are massive illustrations depicting a scene or series of scenes of great importance, and are highly prized among art collectors. Tapestries can spread out over entire walls, and can easily be made into the focal point of any room.

War Banner

The war banner, also known as a battle standard, is a kind of flag carried into battle by armies fighting for a particular country, organization, or noble house. A war banner typically bears the symbol or symbols of a particular group on its surface, and is used not only to signify to other parties where a given regiment's loyalties lie, but also to inspire troops to fight harder for their leaders.

- Magic Armor and Weapons -

The following types of magic weapons and armor are designed to aid the noble or any other character in a position of leadership.

Moderate transmutation; CL: 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, cat's grace, true strike; Price: +2 bonus.

Magic Armor & Weapon Qualities

Glamour

An armor or sword that carries this magical quality gives the bearer enhanced beauty and a certain degree of charm they might not otherwise possess. Carrying a weapon of glamour or wearing armor of glamour provides a +2 enhancement bonus to the owner's Charisma score and allows the bearer to cast the charm person spell twice per day as a 5th-level sorcerer.

Dueling

Weapons of this type are enchanted to provide advantage to their wielders in dueling combat. A dueling weapon grants a +2 bonus to the wielder's initiative, providing its been drawn before initiative is rolled. When used in a duel (see **Chapter Two: Supplemental Rules**), the weapon gains an additional +1 enhancement bonus. Furthermore, its wielder is allowed to re-roll one attack roll and one defense roll per duel. The results of the second rolls are final. This enchantment may only be placed on one-handed weapons.

Faint enchantment; CL: 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, charm person; Price: +1 bonus.

Table 3-2:
Weapon and Armor
Special Abilities

Special Ability	Base Price Modifier Weapon/Armor
Glamour	+1/+1
Leadership	+1/+1
Radiance	+1/+2
Dueling	+2/-
Loveblade	+2/-
Terror	+4/+4

Leadership

Some magic weapons and armor are designed to augment a character's personal magnetism. These special items give the bearer an air of respectability and power that causes others to want to join his or her cause. A character

- Chapter Three: Noble Equipment -

bearing a weapon or suit of armor of this type gains a +1 bonus to his Leadership score.

Moderate enchantment; CL: 8th;
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, charm person, suggestion;
Price: +1 bonus.

Loveblade

A loveblade shows enemies why they are wrong. When a character takes damage from the loveblade, the character must succeed at a Will save (DC 13) or have his attitude improved one step with regard to the wielder.

Strong enchantment; CL: 6th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, charm person; Price: +2 bonus.

Radiance

Items of radiance are particularly popular among the religious elite. If the item's bearer has the inspire awe class ability, the penalties imposed by the successful use of the ability are increased by two.



Additionally, three times per day the bearer may cast the light spell on the item by uttering the command word.

Moderate evocation; CL: 11th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, light; Price: +1 bonus.

Terror

Composed of pitch-black materials and seeming to ooze darkness, these items instill nothing but unease and fear in all who behold them. If the item's

bearer has the inspire fear class ability, the penalties imposed by the successful use of the ability are increased by two.

Additionally, once per day the bearer may cast the insanity spell (Will save DC 22 to resist) upon any legal target of the spell after uttering the command word.

Strong enchantment; CL: 15th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, insanity; Price: +4 bonus.

- Wondrous Items -

Certain unique items have been created that, unlike the weapons and armor listed above, only exist in a single form. These wondrous items are much sought-after.

Five additional magic items appear in **Chapter Six: Houses of the Haughty**. These items are bound up with the sample noble houses described therein, but can be used more generally at the GM's discretion.

Banner of Inspiration

Like a normal battle standard, the banner of inspiration acts as a symbol of an army's allegiance on the battlefield. More than that, this wondrous item emits an aura of positive morale to all who can see it. Any ally within visual range of the banner of inspiration gains an additional +1 bonus to each of the effects provided by the inspire confidence class ability. Additionally, by uttering the command word, the banner visually transforms to take on

the appearance of any other existing war banner (allowing the bearer to personalize the banner).

Moderate enchantment; CL: 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, emotion (hope); Price: 4,100 gp; Weight: 2 lbs.

Sheath of Concealment

The sheath of concealment is a particularly useful item for characters who wish to hide their weapons from others. A sheath of concealment appears to be a well-made sheath sized for either a dagger or a sword of some variety. When empty, it seems unremarkable but gives off a faint aura of illusion magic. When a blade is placed in the sheath, both the weapon and the sheath of concealment become completely invisible, and act as though they are affected by an undetectable aura spell.

Moderate illusion; CL: 6th; Craft Wondrous Item, invisibility, undetectable aura, obscure object; Price: 3,400 gp; Weight: 2 lbs.

- Chapter Four -

Roleplaying the Noble

The noble differs from some character classes in fantasy roleplaying games in that his primary function is not usually combat or dungeon crawling. Rather, the noble's talents lie in areas of social interaction and leadership, and his abilities are meant to augment the skills and abilities of other characters. As a result, roleplaying a noble character can be a challenge to many players who are used to standard classes. This chapter will discuss different methods of roleplaying a noble character, including notes on several noble archetypes and how to use them in a game. The noble character can be both rewarding to play and incredibly valuable to a party with opponents whose power, rank, and position make them tough to combat by conventional means.

- The Standard Noble -

The noble class is geared toward the more traditional view of nobility: educated, powerful leaders whose wealth and rank in society are granted to them by birthright or by decree. Despite this generalization, the noble can be one of many different types of character, depending on how the player prefers to roleplay.

Personality Types

Like any character, the noble cannot be simply stereotyped. Not every fighter is a mindless brute; similarly, not every noble is snobbish and delicate. Nobles can be as diverse a lot as any other class depending on their culture, species, homeland, and society. The following section details several personality types common to noble characters and how they might be used in a game. Players should draw inspiration from the descriptions below in order to solidify their character's beliefs and actions.

The Champion

The champion is a celebrated hero who has risen to noble status. Especially common in cultures that value strength and prowess on the battlefield, the champion credits his superiority to his proven ability and willingness to represent the people in the arena. The champion is not afraid to focus on combat at the exclusion of social graces, arguing that a display of physical or martial strength is as effective, if not more so, than currying favor with others through

traditional means. The people look up to a champion because he embodies traits and ideals that are to be admired: courage, strength, skill, and power. Champions train rigorously for tournaments and their skills often bring them victory. Champions often begin their careers as nobles born into a martial tradition of some sort, usually due to the nature of the setting or merely as a result of family upbringing. The champion expands his wealth and influence through fighting; he wins the hand of a princess at the king's tournament, draws followers by leading a regiment in battle, or increases his holdings by capturing land from the enemy.

The Charlatan

The charlatan is a character who practices deception, mischief, and trickery in order to accomplish his goals. Many charlatans fancy themselves actors or entertainers. The charlatan hones his social skills in order to become adept as a con man, and can be invaluable to a party utilizing finesse in a bad situation rather than fighting their way out. The charlatan is the kind of character who can talk his way past the guards at the gate, bribe his way into a servant's uniform, bluff his way to the king's table, and return home with all the information he needs. Charlatans can be tricksters and swindlers who help an adventuring party bypass certain people-oriented obstacles such as guards, servants, soldiers, or thugs who block the party's progress. Most of all, the charlatan sees all his work as something of a game played out by those who

- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

have the sharpest wits. He is always trying to keep others on their toes, rarely letting down his guard and revealing his true intentions.

The Lord

Closer to the common stereotype, the lord concerns himself primarily with politics, governing, the protection of his holdings, and the welfare of those who have sworn their allegiance to him. Many lords are "liege lords"; in exchange for a promise of dedication and loyalty, followers are granted protection, training, and sometimes land and loans to help build up their own houses. The lord is a strong figure in the realm of politics and deals mostly with other nobles and royalty, ensuring a rise to power and connections in high places. When playing a lord as part of an adventuring party, the character will usually take part in adventures that benefit himself and his house. Fighting the dragon that's plaguing the local village may not immediately appeal to the noble, but adding its hoard to his treasury or displaying its skull as a sign of strength are certainly on his agenda. A lord is constantly seeking an avenue to higher power, seizing any opportunity to gain the upper hand in the political arena through careful maneuvering and hard work. This is not to say that a lord is necessarily greedy or power hungry; certainly, he could simply be working towards a better future for the people of his land.

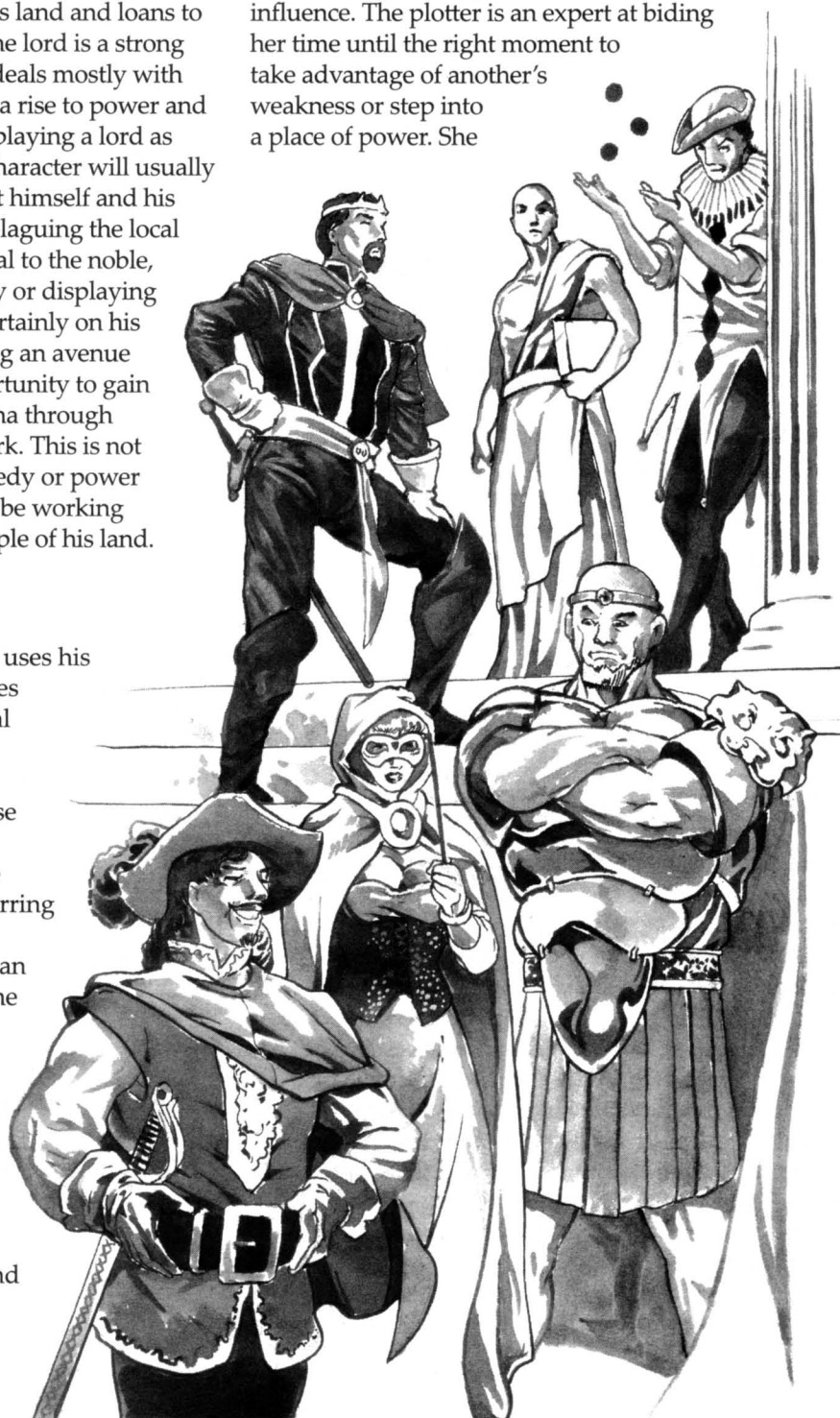
The Philanthropist

The philanthropist is a noble who uses his power and prestige for good causes while making a splash in the social scene. The philanthropist is the kind of character who throws an extravagant dinner in order to raise awareness of a political cause, or donates thousands in gold to help rebuild the local orphanage. Preferring to be more proactive rather than sitting on wealth and status, he is an adventurer because it gives him the sense he is making a difference in the world. A philanthropist seeks power and wealth because with it he can help those who are less fortunate. This doesn't necessarily mean the philanthropist ignores the perks of his position, as he spares no expense on his own comfort and luxury. Sycophants and hangers-on are common sights when the philanthropist begins tossing around money and buying

drinks at the local tavern. The philanthropist can be a wealthy do-gooder or a dashing socialite, but he always keeps a high profile and usually treats money as if it were no object.

The Plotter

The plotter is a devious noble who prefers to act in secret in order to further her agenda. Unlike the lord, the plotter does not seize just any opportunity to expand her power. Rather, the plotter meticulously crafts complex strategies to steadily gain influence. The plotter is an expert at biding her time until the right moment to take advantage of another's weakness or step into a place of power. She



- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

sees everything as a complex web of interconnected relationships; when one action takes place involving one house, another house might feel its effects. By monitoring this political skein to a greater degree than most nobles, the plotter determines where and when to apply pressure in order to achieve a desired result. She hears all rumors and innuendo, integrating them into her grand scheme much like moving pieces on a chessboard. A plotter might go on adventures for a number of reasons; expanding influence, gathering information, and increasing personal wealth could all play strongly into the plotter's need to travel. Sometimes her plans might need a personal touch in order to succeed, and in these cases she may find it useful to join an adventuring party in order to cause her plans to come together.

The Swashbuckler

The dashing, debonair swashbuckler has a flair for the fantastic and takes a very hands-on approach to

influencing the world around him. Swashbucklers are known for their love of action and their disarming charm, leading more pretentious nobles to believe that anyone who would dirty their hands in such a way cannot be considered true nobility. But this could not be further from the truth. A swashbuckling noble is merely one without fear of adventure who believes that in order to succeed one must be willing to take chances. Swashbucklers have a penchant for combat, making them a dangerous foe to engage in a duel. A swashbuckler is the kind of noble who will charge headlong into battle, storm an enemy fortress with only a handful of allies, or sail the high seas in search of new lands to claim for his own. A swashbuckler makes an excellent addition to adventuring parties that constantly find themselves caught in dangerous situations. His combination of wits and fearlessness allow the swashbuckler to concoct a brilliant battle plan with himself as the key heroic figure.

- The Role of the Noble -

Most characters have their niche in a party, yet that niche can change depending on the environment. Certain characters will be more adept at city adventuring, while others are more in tune with nature and the wilderness. The noble is an adaptable character who truly excels in adventures dealing with social interaction, and finds himself most useful when within an urban area. But this is not to say that the noble cannot excel in other venues. Below are several examples of the noble's role in several different environments.

The Noble in the City

Civilization is the perfect place for the noble to use his most potent class abilities. Influence and material aid are certainly two class abilities that depend on elements of civilization to function. In the city, the noble is the one who can seek out information and make life easier for the party. The noble can pull some strings and get access to the city's most powerful healers between adventures. Nobles are excellent at using their influence to harass and pester an opponent, or to cut off resources that an enemy might need. The noble can fight his battle with more subtlety (although not always less violently) than other characters, whittling the enemy down until he is too frustrated or irritated to act rationally. In this moment of weakness, the noble leads the party to strike.

A noble is also more likely to have his base of operations in a city or village than in some remote

area. Although the nobles of some cultures live in secluded castles and keeps, those with a flair for political maneuvering usually cluster around culture and civilization. In a city where he holds sway, the noble could obtain lavish accommodations for the party, as well as the finest services available. He might be able to gain access to the finest libraries in the city for the party's wizard, priests accompanying a noble might receive invitations to visit the city's temples and holy places, and fighters might be welcomed at the city's military academies and gladiatorial arenas as special guests. Simply being part of a noble's troupe often grants a level of prestige to the rest of the party.

Additionally, the noble can help cater to the party members' individual needs as well. Does the paladin need new horseshoes for his mount? The noble calls the finest blacksmith in the city to take care of it. Is the druid feeling out of place in the urban world? Perhaps the noble arranges a tour of the king's wildlife preserve to help restore peace of mind. Is the bard looking to practice her art for a larger audience? The noble arranges for her to perform at the posh banquet of a local lord.

The Noble in the Dungeon

The dungeon crawl is a staple of most fantasy adventuring. While it is easy to see the advantages of having a rogue or a fighter when delving into a dungeon, one should not discount the noble as a useful member of the party. Dungeon adventuring

- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

often features puzzles that must be solved to avoid traps or other obstacles that require teamwork to overcome. In this case, a noble becomes absolutely invaluable. With a few instances of the organize class ability, an entire party can work together with greater efficiency and a much better chance of success if the noble coordinates their efforts.

Like any good leader, the noble is able to make command decisions that significantly help with exploration. Should the party split up while exploring the dungeon, the noble makes an excellent leader for a single group. Any noble who brings followers to an adventure can make use of their talents as well and cover more ground with greater speed. Although it is not recommended that followers become "cannon fodder" for springing traps and allowing the party to proceed without fear, the right group of followers, including experienced adventurers and dungeon delvers, can assist the party in avoiding obstacles.

The Noble in the Wilderness

While the noble is most effective in an urban setting, he can still be useful in the wild. The organization of an encampment can be made more efficient by the noble. He can plan for eventualities such as attacks or encounters with beasts and animals. Similarly, a noble might choose to help scout out an area along with any rangers or rogues in the party in order to help find the most comfortable place to make camp.



Additionally, there can be times when the noble's ability to negotiate could save the party a great deal of trouble. For example, should the party run into a tribe of barbarians or wilderness-dwelling beings, a normally hostile tribe of primitives could be turned into a band of stalwart allies with a little diplomacy.

- Events for Nobles -

There are certain events common to fantasy settings at which the noble can be a tremendous asset. These events provide a chance for the noble to shine and display some of the special talents for which he has been trained. Often, a noble will go out of his way to make a good showing at these events, since they can be crucial in determining his reputation in the eyes of other nobles.

Banquets, Balls, and Parties

A noble's performance at gala events is essential to maintaining his social status. Especially when the noble himself is hosting such an event, such a celebration is a chance for the noble to show off his wealth and influence. The phrase "everyone who is anyone will be attending" holds especially true for the noble. At a celebration of this importance, the noble must outdo any competitors who might also be attending; he must look better, act more sophisticated, make a more extravagant entrance,

and so on. A ball is also a chance to show off the finer points of his noble upbringing; ballroom dancing and proper grooming not only make a good impression, but give off an aura of power and prestige as well.

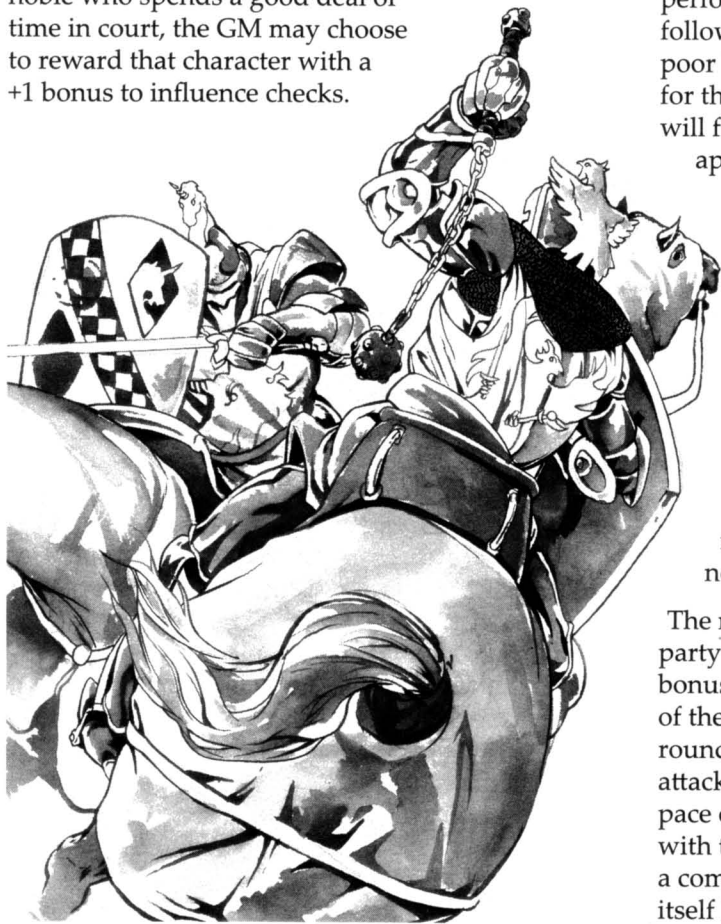
All primping and dancing aside, banquets are a great time to do some reconnaissance and information gathering. To find out if a rival noble is attempting to discredit your house, watch his behavior at the banquet, and with a few Sense Motive and Gather Information checks you might gain a better idea of what he has planned. To determine whether the untimely death of the local governor was an accident, see who his widow is flirting with at the dinner and make note of who might have benefited from his death. Celebrations are also great chances for making allies, friends, and finding new connections. Above all else, the celebration is a good time to make some social ties and keep an eye on an enemy without looking suspicious or tipping others off to your plans.

- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

Royal Court

In most societies, the court of the king or queen is the most powerful and dangerous political arena in the land. When dealing with prestige of this magnitude, every step must be carefully planned and executed, each word must be chosen carefully. Like the celebrations mentioned above, royal court is a time to look and act one's best, although even more importance should be placed on the words and political wisdom being bandied about. Most royal courts are composed of the king and/or queen, major officials, a few minor heads of state, the royal advisory council, and any number of invited lords and ladies.

If the noble is successful in gaining the monarch's favor, attending a royal court can have some advantages. Making a good impression on a king or queen can make things even easier for the party. For example, a noble might petition the king to have an ally pardoned and released from prison. A king might grant the use of a small band of soldiers for a military campaign against an enemy, or donate funds to pay for the purchase of a trading ship (provided that the king is paid back with a percentage of profits). Unless a massive coup takes place, it is a surety that any command given by a king or queen will be obeyed. For a noble who spends a good deal of time in court, the GM may choose to reward that character with a +1 bonus to influence checks.



Tournaments

Especially useful for those nobles who excel in martial skills, the tournament is a competition between knights and lords that can reap great rewards for the victor. These tournaments are typically tests of skill in various forms of mock warfare and one-on-one combat. The joust is one of the most famous events in a tournament; two horsemen line up on either side of a wooden fence and ride toward each other with blunt-tipped lances in an attempt to unhorse their opponent. The melee is another crowd favorite; a massive free-for-all fight between entrants attempting to knock out, daze, or otherwise incapacitate every member of the melee and be the last combatant standing. Swordsmanship events typically involve individual duels using blades, staves, or polearms. Archery competitors try to strike both mobile and stationary targets from various distances. The goal of winning an event, or the tournament itself, keeps the noble in training whenever possible.

The champion of a tournament might be rewarded with land, title, or the hand of a princess. Such a victory might provide a temporary amount of fame and power, and the GM is welcome to add a temporary bonus to influence checks when made in the vicinity of the tournament. Likewise, a good performance in a tournament might attract new followers, especially those drawn from the ranks of poor knights and warriors trying to make a name for themselves. Others who hope to rise in status will frequently approach the victor and request apprenticeship, or declare allegiance in exchange for training and the chance to compete in a later tournament under the noble's banner.

Combat

In combat situations, a noble's talents lie in finesse and intelligent fighting. Since the noble is likely to be a sharp-witted character, creativity and tactical thinking can give the noble an edge over more brutish fighters. Mounted combat will likely be useful to a noble, as training with horses is common in a noble's upbringing.

The noble's class abilities will serve the entire party well in combat. Inspiring his allies, granting bonuses to attack rolls, and weakening the resolve of the enemy can be beneficial. By spending a few rounds using various inspire abilities while his ally attacks a weakened foe, the noble speeds up the pace of battles and gives his party an edge. Coupled with the fact that the noble may bring followers into a combat engagement, any party would consider itself lucky to have a noble as a member.

- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

- Noble Archetypes -

The noble class can be used to represent a variety of character types and archetypes. Frequently, players will dismiss the noble class as being too focused on urban politics. Through multiclassing and character development, however, players of the noble class can craft multifaceted characters who have little or nothing to do with governing. The following archetypes contain information on general philosophies for a variety of roles, including multiclassing and mechanical development, followers, cohorts, and uses for organizations. Each archetype should give players and GMs enough information and ideas to effectively run and manage that character.

Barbarian Prince

Every tribe of nomads, every horde of barbarian warriors, and every village of primitive people has a leader who makes decisions that affect the entire group. The leader of a barbarian tribe is no less a noble than one from a large city. Many live a pampered life growing fat off the land, while others are at the place of honor leading every hunting party. In addition to barbarian princes, it is not uncommon to see barbarian princesses as well, especially in matriarchal cultures. The barbarian prince might have the choice of the finest companions and most comfortable living quarters, but these amenities come with great responsibility. The leaders among barbarian tribes must be ready to lead the tribe to war against rival clans, defend the weaker members of the tribe, and make sure that the entire clan benefits from the spoils of victory. A barbarian prince should be smarter and wiser than his average clansman in order to make the hard decisions that will bring prosperity to the tribe. Negligent barbarian princes will quickly find themselves deposed, abandoned, or killed. The life of a barbarian is a hard one, and their leaders must be ever vigilant to keep their clan alive.

Creating a barbarian prince involves the use of the barbarian class as the primary class, while taking levels in the noble class every so often in order to acquire the social and leadership skills needed to take command of the tribe. Class abilities such as inspire fear, inspire confidence, and inspire valor are among the most valuable that a barbarian prince can take. The barbarian prince draws his resources from the spoils of war and raiding parties. Combat feats will be among the most important; however, feats that augment the combat capabilities of followers should not be overlooked. In the constant struggle for dominance, ranks in the Sense Motive

skill can help identify usurpers relatively quickly. A barbarian prince might also consider levels in the commander prestige class in order to help bring victory to his side with a minimum number of losses. In such a violent environment, it is almost impossible to remain victorious for long if a tribe's warriors are decimated by combat. As such, keeping tribesmen alive and fighting is almost as important as defeating an enemy.

For a barbarian prince, loyal allies and devoted tribesmen can mean the difference between survival and defeat. A barbarian prince's followers are most commonly other barbarians. Nomadic tribes will often attract horsemen and other kinds of riders as well, giving the tribe mobility and range. Barbarian princes will sometimes attract outsiders such as rangers and druids who come to live among the tribe to keep from being isolated in the wilderness. Barbarian princes sometimes attract dire animals and other large creatures as cohorts. A barbarian prince is unlikely to draw followers away from civilization, and rarely draws them away from the service of another noble house. But if a barbarian prince is known to be reliable, trustworthy, and a strong leader of his people, he will develop a strong tribe on his own. A barbarian prince completes his tribe with healers, shamans, farmers, and craftsmen to help the tribe become self-sufficient.

Court Bard

Far more than a simple entertainer or storyteller, the court bard is a political manipulator who uses his position close to those in power in order to forward his own personal goals. The court bard trains in various performance arts and storytelling techniques much like most normal bards. But to cater to the upscale clientele of a royal court, he must be schooled in etiquette and the traditions of high society. As the entertainment at parties, banquets, at court, and on the road, few have the potential to get closer to the rich and powerful than the court bard. In fact, many of them are even brought into the close confidences of aristocracy and royalty as a person who will listen to the troubles of an isolated leader. The court bard must juggle a network of allies, information brokers, servants, and spies in order to keep track of the shifting power levels and behind-the-scenes gossip, then use that knowledge to his advantage. A court bard can shift the balance of power with a few words to a noblewoman here or a forged note there, making sure everything goes according to his designs.

- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

For the court bard, the most important multiclassing combination is that of the noble and bard classes. The bard's performance abilities allow him to slip into the role of a simple entertainer with ease. Likewise, the bardic knowledge ability can be used to glean many tidbits of information from interacting with noble houses. Among the noble class abilities, inspire awe becomes one of the most useful tools in the court bard's arsenal. Not only can he use it to stun a crowd to silence, he can also use it to cover the entrance (or escape) of allies, assassins, or thugs in his employ. A court bard draws his resources from his royal employer, and occasionally from less savory elements of society interested in buying news of the court. For feat choices, a court bard will likely select feats as does a traditional bard, relying on the noble class abilities to provide the social skills and connections to help with the politics of royalty and government.

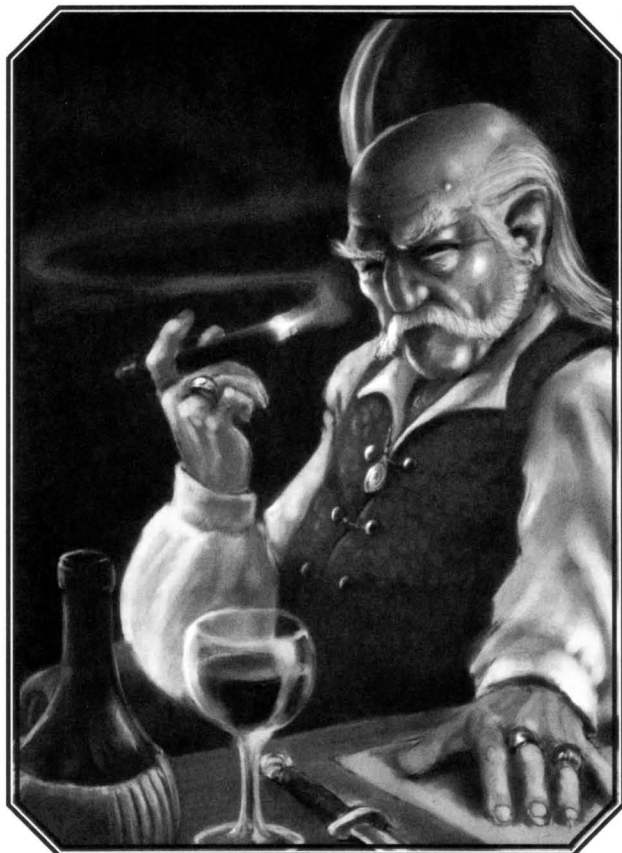
The right selection of followers and allies can act as an extended network of connections. A court bard's followers can be more subtle and may display different loyalties in order to fool observers. Moreover, a court bard will often attract other bards or apprentice bards who wish to study under him. These apprentices will many times act as additional eyes and ears for the court bard, extending his normal reach and information network to other houses and courts as well. Occasionally, some court bards attract a small cadre of fighters to act as bodyguards and

protectors. In a profession where politics dictate who lives and who dies, a court bard cannot be too careful about his own protection, as many times a powerful noble will target the source of gossip and information for punishment. It is not unheard of for a court bard to draw his followers from the staff and servants of other noble houses rather than recruit them from independent sources. A court bard's political strength can lie in being able to affect changes in several power bases, as well as the court at which he resides.

Crimelord

An expert of the underworld who wields the deadly power of society's dark side, the crimelord can be one of the most influential characters in any setting. As long as there have been laws, there have been lawbreakers, and where there are lawbreakers there are those who organize and control them. Even the legitimate elements of society tread lightly around the crimelord. Being uncooperative and making enemies in society's fringe can topple even the most stable and established houses. Crimelords come in many forms and professions, but they are all leaders of criminal organizations engaging in directed tasks and missions. Some crimelords are information brokers and blackmailers, while others engage in more direct forms of violence acting as smugglers or assassins. There are those crime syndicates that are led by a visionary who dabbles in a little bit of everything, spreading the organization's influence through all parts of the underworld. A crimelord is responsible for making connections with potential clients, negotiating deals, and keeping the rougher elements of society in line. A crimelord must be ruthless and able to order the most onerous tasks in order to maintain the respect of the rest of the underworld. If seen as soft or weak, a crimelord can find herself the victim of a brutal coup engineered by a rival syndicate.

A crimelord must be well informed and well connected, and should have power over other criminals. The crimelord works best as a combination of the noble and rogue base classes. This not only establishes her criminal background but also sets her up for leadership and control. Additionally, crimelords who wish to deal in complex and subtle planning should consider taking levels in the mastermind prestige class to gain experience in controlling information. This is especially good for information brokers and spymasters, providing both connections and insider knowledge. For the crimelord, the inspire fear class ability is one of the most important tools at her disposal. Fear can inspire more efficiency than respect. The crimelord draws her resources from the coffers of various guilds and smaller organizations, and even from the occasional protection racket run



- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

on legitimate businesses. A crimelord's connections are absolutely essential to her survival, as they allow her to keep tabs on rival syndicates and alert her to rebelliousness or betrayal in her own ranks. For the crimelord, the Bluff skill can be an exceptional tool, as it allows her to keep her enemies guessing.

As is to be expected, the crimelord accumulates followers from society's criminal element. Among the pirates, thugs, cutthroats, cat burglars, and hired killers, one may also find talented scribes, accountants, and merchants who are able to tally up the income and overhead of running a successful crime syndicate, and then fence black market goods to prospective buyers. It is not uncommon for a crimelord to draw her followers away from rival gangs, bearing in mind that of all types of leaders, the crimelord is the most susceptible to betrayal from within her own organization. For cohorts, she will most often have a lieutenant who acts as her right hand in many mundane affairs. Such cohorts must also be willing to get their hands dirty and be prepared to take the fall in case the authorities trace the crime back its source.

Green Ronin's *Freeport: The City of Adventure* sourcebook contains a crimeboss prestige class that works very well with the noble class. Aspiring crimelords take note!

High Priest

The high priest is a religious leader who not only watches over those in his order, but who can forward the worldly goals of his organization by throwing the weight of religion behind his words and deeds. A high priest with deep, powerful convictions will often use his position of power to ensure that his chosen faith is spread as far as his influence will reach. Sometimes a zealous high priest will use the threat of damnation in order to eliminate his enemies, branding them as heretics and blasphemers to be stamped out by followers of his religion. More often, however, the high priests who have achieved their rank through pure faith will use their power to bring the dogma of their deity to life. For high priests of good deities, that might include the construction of centers of worship and helping the poor and needy; for those who worship evil that might mean wreaking havoc and sowing destruction. Another alternative is the high priest motivated by greed. Whether it is a lust for power or the luxuries of status that the leader craves, such high priests often use their influence to increase their own wealth and draw more money out of unsuspecting worshippers.

A high priest usually works his way up from inside the church. As a result, the high priest archetype can begin with a religious class, adding levels in the noble class early on in the character's development. Using

the cleric or avatar (see *The Avatar's Handbook*) classes will often result in a more traditional high priest: a capable spiritual leader whose advice and direction enlightens all who seek his wisdom. Selecting the paladin class, on the other hand, can lead to a more active crusader who directs entire legions of his fellow paladins in a crusade for the church. Even the monk class can be used as a base for leaders of monasteries who recruit new members and organize their temples into perfect harmony. A high priest's connections will often come from government officials or fellow nobles who can help with any legal issues that might arise while furthering the goals of the church. In many campaign settings, religion and government go hand in hand, leading to natural relationships between church and state. A high priest's resources often come from the donations of followers flowing into temples and churches, and from donations of the wealthy hoping to curry favor with a powerful religious order. A high priest should be sure to cultivate the inspire awe class ability, as it can be an important tool when preaching to the faithful and converting the unwashed masses.

The followers of a high priest are usually worshippers and acolytes. A high priest, being a conduit to the favor of the gods, will attract a faithful retinue from all walks of life. Within the church itself, individual high priests will draw out acolytes who wish to aid their leader in hopes of one day rising to such a position themselves. High priests will attract religious crusaders as well, occasionally forming a cadre of loyal paladins who accompany him in the field and act as both protectors and enforcers. Such followers come from cities, rural areas, civilization, and the wilderness. Faith is one of the few universal traits that can transcend race, region, and lifestyle, and can give the high priest a diverse group of followers encompassing all character types. It can be difficult for a high priest to attract followers of other religions, as the deep faith of a follower commands such undying loyalty to the keepers of that religion. Likewise, a high priest is less likely to lose followers arbitrarily, resulting in more stability for the high priest's organization.

Lord of the Wilderness

In the wild places of the world, there is neither inherited wealth nor birthright, only survival of the fittest. However, there are some who become royalty in their own right by leading of rough bands of outdoorsmen. These lords of the wilderness are masters of their chosen environment, and they reap many benefits from their natural talent for leadership combined with their familiarity with the wilderness. As a result, they earn the respect

- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

of other wilderness folk, and can organize them into something far more than disconnected groups. These nobles from beyond civilization can come from many environments; forest lords, desert lords, mountain lords, and even subterranean lords are among the many varieties of wilderness leaders. Lords of the wilderness bring a touch of civilization to the wild folk as well. Constructing a village in the tree branches or organizing homes around the oasis of a harsh desert brings safety and prosperity to the people. A familiar name like Robin Hood, along with his band of merry outlaws, conjures the perfect image of a lord of the wilderness: at home in the wild, loosely organized but loyal to one another with a charismatic leader capable of delivering inspiring speeches and attracting new members for his retinue. A lord of the wilderness often works to protect himself and his men from outside hostility, and to protect nature from the violent encroachment of civilization. With the bounties of nature at his disposal, and the loyalty of salt-of-the-earth people to support him, the lord of the wilderness can claim that he truly lives like a king without the troubles and worries of civilization.

The lords of the wilderness are drawn from many castes and groups. In addition to using the noble class, the lords of the wilderness might benefit from taking levels in the druid, ranger, and shaman (see *The Shaman's Handbook*) classes to enhance their survival skills. Those who use the ranger class would be considered the "rogues of the forest," as they would be more prepared for physical confrontation with their enemies. Druids and shamans might take a more subtle approach to their ventures and use the power of magic to a greater extent than other wilderness lords. Most lords of the wilderness will find the inspire valor ability to be of great use in bolstering the courage of their followers in the face of danger. Likewise, the organize ability could prove invaluable to a lord of the wilderness,

as survival in a harsh environment often requires teamwork and the ability to function as a group. Influence checks made by a lord of the wilderness might involve a combination of threats (playing off the unpredictability of the "savages" from the wilds) and bribery (offering promises of the finest fruits, silks, or other natural resources) in order to induce cooperation from those locked within the confines of civilization. A lord of the wilderness seldom

uses his material aid ability in order to get hard currency; what little is available to the wilderness lord comes from banditry or thievery. A lord of the wilderness must be more creative when interacting with characters from within an urban society who might consider him a savage and less worthy of respect.

The followers of a wilderness lord often come from the same background as their leader. Rangers attract rangers, druids attract druids, and so on. The followers of a wilderness lord might be less rigidly organized than those under other nobles, owing to their history of lawlessness and being accustomed to acting as their own masters. Like the barbarian prince, the lord of the wilderness will sometimes attract dire animals and other large creatures as cohorts, especially if he lives in a fertile area with a large selection

of animal life in the surrounding lands. For the lord of the wilderness, it is common to welcome followers who have wandered away from civilization or other organizations. Criminals and vagabonds frequently join up with the wilderness lord to escape the rules and laws of society.

Merchant

When it comes to business and economics, few are as skilled as the merchant. Whenever there



- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

is trading to be done or a sale to be made, she can be the best person to ensure a fair price for quality goods. Merchants can be smugglers, arms dealers, and quartermasters skilled in making sure valuable merchandise turns a profit without the fuss of customs inspections or legal restrictions. A merchant can greatly benefit a party looking to acquire some rare or dangerous item. With enough money and just the right application of finesse, such an acquisition might be made with relative ease. The wares a merchant peddles can influence her business methods; a dealer of antiquities will certainly have different sales skills than one who trafficks in slaves. Regardless of what she sells, the income and connections provided by a merchant character can make her a powerful ally. A noble merchant could bring to bear relatively significant amounts of political power by threatening trade embargoes or flooding the market to cause an item's value to plummet.

Merchants are much like the standard noble when it comes to game mechanics. The diplomat prestige class would provide the merchant with significantly beneficial abilities. A merchant's connections are the lifeblood of her business. Merchants will often have connections with port authorities and city customs officials, making it easier to import and export goods without becoming entangled in a legal dispute. A merchant can also act as a connection for other merchants and vice-versa, essentially helping build up a larger network of commerce. If one merchant needs something, another can usually get it. She will draw resources from her own wealth as well as from bankers and moneylenders with whom she does business. A merchant is likely to focus heavily on the art of the deal, making the Diplomacy skill very valuable as a means of haggling with customers. Likewise, Bluff and Sense Motive take on more significant roles, as it is imperative to scrutinize a potential customer or trading partner in order to get the best deal.

A merchant's followers are those who can help her business succeed with the greatest efficiency. Traders are often prominent figures in a merchant's following. A merchant also attracts fighters and other warrior types to act as personal bodyguards or caravan guards. Her retinue can also include any number of expert craftsmen to create new trade goods and verify the quality of incoming products. It is common for a merchant to own shares in blacksmith shops, carpentry businesses, or other commercial ventures in order to generate product for her enterprise.

The Freeport merchant, a prestige class in the Tales of Freeport adventure anthology, is a good choice for characters on this path.

Military Officer

Grand-scale conflict is a mainstay of fantasy gaming. For truly epic battles to take place, massive armies are usually required to populate a battlefield. Wherever there are soldiers, there must be officers to organize the troops and lead them to victory. Any leader of a group in some sort of regimented military tradition, such as the captain of the royal guard or a battlefield leader of a squad of paladins, can be considered a military officer. The military officer is trained to use his mind as well as his sword, and must be prepared to make hard decisions in extreme combat situations. Additionally, a military officer is tasked with maintaining the discipline of his troops and keeping their skills and wits sharp while on campaign. A military officer must be prepared to be away from home for months or years at a time, depending on the condition of the war. Only those officers who follow orders given by their superiors and show tactical prowess will advance to higher ranks. A military officer can be a lieutenant with only a few soldiers under his command, or a general or lord captain commander of the highest order. Some military officers take part in a war council to advise the ruler they serve, keeping their leader abreast of all developments. For the most part, military officers have established themselves as skilled soldiers in their own right, and have earned the respect of their warriors through action.

Military officers often begin with the fighter class or other combat-oriented class. Levels in the noble class and the commander prestige class give a military officer the right combination of leadership abilities and battlefield competence necessary for giving orders to large groups of soldiers. In the face of overwhelming odds, class abilities like inspire valor and inspire confidence can go a long way in bolstering the wills of a unit and leading them to victory. A military officer's connections, which can be planted to spy on opponents, could help scout out the enemy's strengths and weaknesses, locate flaws in their formation, and find gaps in their defenses. A military officer typically draws his resources from a war chest or other funding provided by the government or aristocracy he serves. The Diplomacy skill is crucial to negotiating surrenders and peace accords, and the military officer must be capable of handling such a parley as well as the tactical aspects of battle.

Obviously, a military officer's main followers will be soldiers, warriors, and other combat classes. In campaigns where magic plays a regular part in warfare, many high-ranking officers will attract spellcasters versed in combative magic techniques. An officer can attract lower-ranking military officers

- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

to help manage the troops as part of an officer corps for larger armies. Groups of horse handlers, blacksmiths, fletchers, and other craftsmen might also join an officer's following if the military force were to grow large enough to require their skills on a regular basis. A military officer's reputation can be enough to draw recruits to his cause. Word of his exploits may spread across the land and perhaps inspire warriors of skill and talent to fight under his leadership, especially career warriors who seek promotion. Also, a good officer may be able to attract mercenaries and other swords for hire at a reduced cost, as their reputations might improve by joining the military officer's forces.

Spymaster

Knowledge is the key to victory—or so the spymaster would have you believe. Controlling a vast network of spies and informants is the spymaster's job, taking in large quantities of information and filtering out useless rumors. Often a spymaster is herself a spy, deep undercover and yet still able to control her organization from the field. Many times a spymaster will appear to be something other than what she really is, such as a financier, the owner of a business, or a courtier. When a spymaster is operating in an area, information becomes a valuable commodity, bought and sold as deftly as a merchant's wares. Moreover, when a spymaster is operating with other spies in her service, a network is formed that can pass information back and forth with speed and efficiency. The spymaster is able to place her agents like chess pieces in order to take advantage of more complex methods of gathering information. It is the leadership of the spymaster that makes her network function seamlessly.

For the spymaster, the noble class as a base provides the majority of leadership and organizational skills needed for success. Levels in the rogue class would obviously give the spymaster an edge. If the GM allows psionic classes in the game, they can be used with great success by the spymaster as well. The mastermind prestige class, however, could easily be a source of the spymaster's most useful abilities. Given that the mastermind is designed to be a more tactical and information-controlling character, the spymaster would be well served by taking levels in the mastermind class. The Gather Information skill should be one of the most important skills in the spymaster's arsenal, for obvious reasons. While espionage and infiltration will likely be the best sources of information collected by eavesdropping, simply spending time talking to connections and collecting rumors on the street can give the spymaster direction. Her connections will very often be found in positions close to those with power

or at a nexus of information. Keepers of carrier pigeons, messengers, advisors, and consultants make excellent connections for a spymaster, as they can be used to funnel information back to her with minimum risk.

Almost anyone could be a follower for the spymaster. All it takes is for that person to be willing to provide the spymaster with information and serve faithfully when called upon. Occasionally, a spymaster might do more than simply observe, and her followers should be able to make that transition as well. It is commonplace for a spymaster to draw followers from other organizations, although she will need to watch these particular followers for any changes in loyalty. As a spymaster's following grows, her network will also increase in size and potentially spread to other areas. It is common for a spymaster's followers to be dispersed over a large geographic area.

Thief-Prince

The dashing rogue and debonair thief are staples of fantasy literature. Oozing charm while picking the pockets of some unsuspecting victim is the modus operandi of the thief-prince; he specializes in crime with style. The thief-prince differs from the crimelord in that rather than attempting to amass wealth and power, the thief-prince's primary motive is the ostentatious heist that will boost his reputation, even if it doesn't line his pockets with much gold. The thief-prince is the kind of criminal who plans the theft of the world's largest emerald during the queen's coronation banquet. The thief-prince prides himself in being capable of performing the most outlandish and dangerous stunts while taking away a valuable prize. A thief-prince lives like a king off of the spoils of his escapades, and uses his followers as a means of perpetrating more complex heists that will add to his fame and reputation. More often than not, the thief-prince will fit nicely into the swashbuckler personality type due to the sometimes-reckless nature of his criminal exploits and the devil-may-care attitude he shows toward the repercussions of his actions.

Naturally, the thief-prince will benefit most from the rogue class. The noble class should round out the thief-prince with some class abilities that will be of great help in flaunting his skills and abilities. It is the natural instinct of the thief-prince to exact amazement and wonder from his audience; as a result, the inspire awe ability will prove effective in dumbfounding observers, evading capture, and leaving a lasting impression of astonishment in the minds of those present. Similarly, the inspire complacency ability should be useful in lowering

- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

the level of suspicion when a thief-prince is attempting to gain access to a target. A thief-prince's connections will likely be those who can provide him with information about the security and law enforcement presence around his targets. Similarly, a thief-prince may have connections within the criminal underworld who can fence stolen goods on the black market for him. A thief-prince's resources come from the selling of those goods as well as crimelords or other underworld patrons who may call upon his services.

A thief-prince might not have a massive number of followers, although he will often surround himself with friends and allies in a sort of mockery of law enforcement. The typical followers for a thief-prince will come from the ranks of cat burglars, mercenaries, scoundrels, gamblers, and all manner of hedonistic criminals who share the thief-prince's taste for excess. Like many criminal organizations, the thief-prince's cadre may consist of followers who have drifted to him after abandoning other crime syndicates. A thief-prince recruits his followers on the basis of personality as well as talent.

Vizier

In a campaign filled with the magic powers, it comes as no surprise that rulers and leaders want the power of the arcane on their side. Some cultures have grown into magocracies dominated by those who wield supernatural powers. The vizier is the result of combining arcane spellcraft with leadership and organizational skills, resulting in a character who wields potentially significant power. Viziers are often advisors to rulers who utilize their abilities to divine the future, deal with complex problems, and assist with court matters. Those viziers who opt for a ruling position themselves can use their arcane talents to predict uprisings and rebellions, bringing prosperity and strength to their followers. Some viziers use their spells to dominate the wills of the opposition, or use threats of mass destruction to keep their followers loyal. Others use their magic for more benevolent purposes and earn the respect and trust of their followers, working for the prosperity of their land rather than hoarding power. Whether selfish or selfless, the vizier typically learns spells that allow him to rule or advise more effectively. Depending on the vizier's personality type, spells from the divination and enchantment schools can be best. Some viziers make the study of illusions their focus, maintaining their power through deception and misdirection. Through the careful application of both magic and social graces, the vizier can be an effective character.

The foundations of the vizier's construction come from the arcane spellcasting classes, namely the sorcerer

and the wizard. Coupled with the noble class, the vizier can be a potent ally, as the influence ability combined with spells like suggestion and charm person can allow the vizier to get others to do almost anything. For characters who begin as nobles and then multiclass into sorcerers or wizards, the arcane training class ability can be a good start at lower levels. A vizier's connections will often be members of the wizarding community such as archmages or magic researchers. They can provide the vizier with obscure spells or give him information about certain magical theories. As sources of information, the vizier's connections provide information on history, science, and the arcane through the use of divination magic. The vizier often uses his resources to procure rare spell components or the high-quality items often needed for magic item creation. A vizier does not always have need of hard currency, but when he does he can draw from the ruler or governor he advises, or from his own treasury.

A vizier's followers can be a diverse lot. Like sorcerers and wizards, many viziers will take on apprentices in order to pass on their knowledge. Many viziers will attract a group of fighters or other warrior classes to serve as a protective cadre and ward off physical attacks. Viziers also employ a number of messengers, servants, and expert craftsmen. Viziers are typically very aware of their followers' allegiances, and as such rarely employ those of questionable loyalty for long.



- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

- GM Notes for Nobles -

It can be a challenge for some GMs to integrate noble characters and the associated politics into a campaign. A large number of concerns have been addressed prior to this section, and a GM who has read this far in the book should have at least some idea how to deal with encounters and situations involving the noble's unique abilities. The following segments offer more advice regarding the roleplaying of noble characters.

Handling Followers

A significant challenge facing the GM is the concept of followers. Characters with high Leadership scores should have a large number of followers, and that can be problematic when maintaining continuity and keeping background characters fresh and exciting. There are several ways for a GM to handle this aspect of noble characters. Find the one that fits your GMing style depending on how much you wish to micromanage the noble's entourage.

A noble character with a physical residence will often leave a large portion of his followers there. Some might accompany him in the form of servants and guards, and as a result may have little direct interaction with the party. Similarly, in a situation where the noble brings with him a military force of followers, most of their time will be spent in and around the encampment. Rarely will a noble's followers need constant supervision. The GM can limit the leader's interactions with his followers by introducing them in smaller encounters. On occasion, a noble will need to interact with his entire following, but it is far easier and more likely that small groups of followers will act as NPCs during an encounter. Whenever possible, handle followers in these small groups to reduce the amount of work needed to track individual statistics.

Regarding day-to-day interaction, a noble's followers will serve mostly as background dressing; a military officer might observe his followers as they train in the courtyard, or a crimelord may cross paths with a group of her loyal thugs in a tavern laughing over a mug of ale. Followers can be used to set a tone for a scene as well. For example, on the somber occasion of a party member's death, the noble's followers might dress in black and go through a period of mourning. When a quest is completed or an enemy vanquished, his followers might be the participants in a jubilant celebration, dancing in the hallways or throwing a party at a local inn. Followers give any locale a sense of business and belonging for their leader, and turn an empty manor into a bustling residence.

There are some cases where a large number of followers must be encountered individually, and these can be complex situations to run. While each follower should be important to a noble, it is probably a better idea to use such situations as a backdrop to smaller encounters than to micromanage each attack, each skill check, and so on. A battle scene could be initially described as two armies clashing to begin the encounter, but actual combat will take place between the adventuring party and perhaps a small company of followers depending on how ambitious the GM feels.

For the most part, the GM need only track a few bits of key information about the noble's followers. To help with this, begin a list of followers as soon as they become available to a character. Each time a new follower joins the retinue, add the name to this list. The list should be constructed in four columns and should include the following information: name, character type, current location, and health status. The first column should be left blank until a name is assigned to that particular follower, at

Table 4-1: Sample Followers for Lord Arris

Name	Type	Location	Health Status
Pyper	Squire	With Party	Alive
-	Bodyguard	With Party	Injured
Phendar	Bodyguard	-	Dead
Aynsley	Soldier	Manor	Alive
-	Soldier	Manor	Alive
Captain Richter	Soldier	Manor	Alive
-	Merchant	Ship at sea	Alive

- Chapter Four: Roleplaying the Noble -

which point the follower should be treated as an NPC and fleshed out accordingly. The character type is a generic description for the character, while current location should be short and general. The health column can be used not only to track injuries but also deaths, which can be useful in gauging the reactions of other potential followers. A sample chart for tracking followers appears on **Table 4-1**.

Monsters as Nobles

Player races are not the only species that might have noble characters. While most of the mechanics in this book are geared toward traditional races, monstrous creatures might have individuals who would benefit from the noble class as well. Certainly there are kings among the giants, lords among the dragons, and military commanders among the minotaurs. A GM wishing to add this element of complexity should certainly consider his options carefully and make modifications as needed. Still, there is incentive for doing so, as it gives monster societies more depth and credibility.

Monstrous nobles will be leaders of some sort. Very few monster societies have a true birthright aristocracy, so talented leadership is where most of the recognition and abilities will come from. For connections, a monstrous noble might have allies and friends who are not of his species. These kinds of connections mean that a monstrous noble might be a connection himself for another noble or creature, creating a new level of interaction. Inspire abilities will likely be important to monstrous nobles. Material aid will need to have a source appropriate to the species; dragon lords might have their hoards, but the GM will have to find some place for the goblin king to pull resources. Additionally, class abilities that rely on the respect or renown of a society, such as influence, will not necessarily translate from one species to another. As a result, monstrous nobles may find themselves unable to affect traditional races with any reliability.

Monsters that have the Leadership feat will pull followers almost exclusively from their own kind. With the exception of outcasts or monsters that live their lives in a truly diverse environment, monstrous followers should be of the same or closely related species in order to work well together. Many monsters will see the wisdom of having such a leader; the ogre raiding group becomes that much more deadly when they have someone to coordinate their attacks and plan their next strike. Monstrous nobles should be handled in much the same way as other nobles, but the GM should adjust social values accordingly.



- Chapter Five -

Noble Houses

Of utmost importance to the noble character is his noble house. This is the term given to his family and organization, and represents lineage, title, and lordship over the common folk. Not every noble comes from or establishes a noble house. These vagabond lords are often seen as irresponsible and remain something of a joke among other nobles, as they tend to shirk their lordly responsibilities. Those who do lead a noble house reap great benefits just as they accumulate dangerous adversaries, making nobility a duty that balances advantages with potential difficulties. This chapter discusses the mechanics of building up a noble house using the concept of a house strength rating to represent the power and prestige the noble has earned.

Establishment

Establishing a noble house requires the Noble House feat from **Chapter Two: Supplemental Rules**, illustrating the character's achievement of a leadership position. Once the character has taken this feat, he begins cultivating the members of his own noble house. Each follower he gains, each cohort traveling with him, and the servants and professionals he hires to do his work become a part of that noble house. As the noble progresses in level, his house grows in power and prestige. Once a house has been established, it remains until the noble disbands it or dies.

Taking Over

Occasionally, a noble will take over an existing house from another character. This can happen by way of inheritance or coup, either of which can change the existing organization significantly. Other nobles might view the change of leadership as something to be exploited, and the house often loses some of its strength and resources. Alternately, if a tyrant or usurper has been overthrown, the new noble leader might improve the reputation of the entire organization and draw more followers. When leadership of a noble house changes hands, the GM has two options. She may leave the house strength rating (discussed below) intact and assimilate the new leader's retinue into the house. Or she may alter the house strength rating to reflect the new

leader's influence and simply replace the house's existing members with the new leader's followers. Both the situation that brought about the change and the character's level of power should affect the GM's decision.

Leading a Noble House

Leading a noble house isn't the same as leading a party. Noble houses are usually much larger and can be a focal point for political power. The management of a house is directly related to its continued success. Neglecting the duties of a noble can mean discontent or betrayal from within, a loss of followers, and a dramatic drop in prestige and influence when doing business with other nobles. If members of the house see their leader as a disinterested or heedless nobleman, they will be much more likely to sell information to his enemies, steal from the treasury, or be lackluster in their day-to-day efforts. Guards might be more susceptible to bribes, letting assassins sneak into the manor, or allowing thieves to make off with valuables. The noble becomes responsible for the lives and livelihoods of all his followers and is praised for good leadership as well as derided for failure.

The Treasury & Material Aid

One aspect of a noble character class that differs greatly from the average classes is the concept of the house treasury. The treasury is the stored wealth of the noble house brought in not only by the actions of the noble himself, but also by the hard work and diligence of his followers. This treasury is the monetary lifeblood of the entire organization. As a stockpile of money and valuables, the treasury is the noble's equivalent of a dragon's hoard and can be just as sternly protected.

A certain percentage of the income made by each member of the noble house is taxed in order to fund the workings of the house. As a noble gains and loses members of his retinue, the GM should add up the ranks each member has in any Profession skills and keep a running total. At the end of each week, the GM



makes a single Profession check using this total as the skill modifier. The GM then takes that total and halves it, placing the new amount in the house treasury. The other half of the money is used for paying the wages of followers, expenses of the house, and so forth.

The noble must be careful not to drain the treasury for his own purposes. His money supply is not endless, and he'll face a large number of demands on this money, including hosting. Of course, nobles may take out loans or sell off treasure in order to augment their treasury's holdings just like any other character, but a situation where the treasury is nearly empty can be seen as a sign of poor planning and weakness by one's enemies. After all, if a noble can't afford to pay his guards, they are not likely to continue working at maximum efficiency.

It is important to note that the GM should use a healthy amount of discretion when allowing the use of this ability. Enhancing the noble's lifestyle is the primary purpose. Extravagant parties thrown to collect gossip about the royal family, a revealing designer dress to distract the guards, or sponsoring the tour of a minstrel who wrote a bawdy poem about the character's greatest adversary are but a few examples. By no means should the material aid ability become a never-ending source of scrolls, healing potions, equipment, and supplies for the party, and the GM should adhere to the monetary limitations in the game with respect to the noble's wealth. She should use her best judgment when encouraging her players' creativity without sacrificing the challenges she has in store for them.

Taking Care of Followers

More than just a reward for reaching higher levels, the followers of a character should be treated as any other NPC in the campaign. If the character has a noble house, however, the followers become a responsibility that the noble should treat as seriously as his responsibility to the adventuring party.

A noble is obligated to keep his followers safe and healthy. Even the noble who commands an army must do all he can to ensure that his followers are cared for, protected, and content. His duties may include leading the defense of his manor against an invading force, paying for healers to come and cure a plague, holding a funeral service for a follower killed in battle, or overseeing the training of new recruits. Whatever his duties may be to his followers, they should not be overlooked when making adventuring plans.

House Strength Rating

The key to gauging the power and influence of a given noble house lies in the house strength rating. This number can be compared with that of any other noble house to determine which has more power and influence. Noble houses with forceful leaders, vast resources, numerous contacts and connections, and great political power have a higher house strength rating number, while new or declining houses have a lower number.

- Chapter Five: Noble Houses -

Table 5-1: Noble House Strength Rating

Rating	Added Effects	Rating	Added Effects	Rating	Added Effects	Rating	Added Effects
1	-	11	-	21	-	31	-
2	-	12	Skill Focus	22	Majordomo	32	Bonus Feat
3	-	13	-	23	-	33	-
4	-	14	Manor	24	Land	34	Estate
5	Minor Title	15	Middling Title	25	Major Title	35	High Title
6	-	16	-	26	-	36	-
7	-	17	-	27	-	37	-
8	Influence +1	18	Influence +2	28	Influence +3	38	Influence +4
9	-	19	-	29	-	39	-
10	Adversary (x1)	20	Adversary (x2)	30	Adversary (x3)	40+	Adversary (x4)

The house strength rating is a function of its leader's character level; it is intended to reflect the idea that as a noble gains experience and tends to his noble house, the house will grow in strength and solidarity along with him. Characters who establish a noble house early in their careers and put in the time and effort needed to secure a strong foundation are quicker to build their house up to ruling status. Other characters who begin generating a house late in their careers do not have the advantage of such a head start, and sometimes find it harder to fully incorporate the noble's lifestyle and responsibilities into their own routine.

The house strength rating not only provides a concrete statistic measuring how powerful the noble house is, but also grants certain special abilities to all members of the house. These bonuses are balanced by certain burdens of power, like the accumulation of enemies, and they reflect both the perks and downfalls of being a member of a politically prominent organization.

Increasing Strength Rating

The primary way that a noble house grows in power is through the experience of its leader. The house strength rating always starts at 1, except when the leader is taking over an existing organization. Any time the leader gains a level in the noble class, his house strength rating increases by 2. Anytime the leader gains a level in a non-noble class, the house strength rating increases by 1. This represents the character's devotion to leadership and maintaining the house, while still allowing the organizations of other character types to grow along with their leader. Additionally, the GM may reward diligent players at her discretion by granting them a single-point increase for particularly crafty political maneuvers, recruiting a large crop of followers, or achieving a goal that earns the respect of a large group of people. Conversely, the GM may wish to deny an increase in this rating, or

even apply a reduction, for a particularly negligent noble who fails to care for his followers.

Noble House Effects

The following effects are the result of increases in house strength rating. When the house strength rating reaches a number as described on the table above, certain effects are applied to its leader and the members of that organization. Listed below are the effects granted by a house strength rating.

Minor Title

The leader of the organization is granted a low-level title that is appropriate to his station in the campaign. This title is placed before the character's name when being addressed by others as a sign of respect. Examples of such titles are: Baron/Baroness, Bishop, Lieutenant, Lord/Lady, Viceroy, Viscount/Viscountess.

Influence

At certain rating levels, a noble house's prestige can grant benefits to its members when they invoke the house name. Being a member of a prominent house carries with it a certain degree of weight and credibility. Each time the house strength rating reaches a level where there is an influence effect, the listed bonus is applied to any influence checks made by members of a noble house, including the house's leader.

Adversary

One of the chief perils of having a powerful noble house is that there will always be those who are envious of or threatened by that power. Just as growth can draw allies to a noble's cause, it can likewise draw enemies who would seek to undermine and destroy a noble house. Each time the noble's house strength rating reaches a level with the

- Chapter Five: Noble Houses -

adversary effect, the GM should create a rival NPC character who treats all members of the noble house as enemies. This is the opposite of the connections class ability, and should reflect the addition of adversaries to the campaign's roster of NPCs.

Skill Focus

Leaders groom their followers over time. To represent this evolution in a noble house's members, all of the noble's followers (but not servants, hired employees, or the leader himself) gain the Skill Focus feat as a bonus feat. The skill chosen for this feat must be a skill in which the noble house's leader has at least 5 ranks.

Manor

A noble must have a base of operations in order to have a treasury and a place to conduct business. Once the noble's house strength rating progresses to the level with this effect, the noble gains a manor house if he does not already have one. If the noble already possesses a mansion, palace, or some other structure from which the noble house is based, that building is remodeled to accommodate twice the number of followers and servants.

Middling Title

The leader of the organization is granted a mid-level title that is appropriate to his station in the campaign. This title is placed before the character's name when being addressed by others as a sign of respect. Examples of such titles are: Archbishop, Commander, Count/Countess, Duke/Duchess, Earl, Marquis/Marchioness, Senator.

Majordomo

The majordomo is a special servant who acts as the personal assistant and scheduler for the head of the noble house. The majordomo conducts most of the day-to-day business, and schedules audiences and hearings for those wishing to petition the noble lord. When this effect is reached, the leader of the noble house gains an additional cohort of the noble class to serve as his majordomo.

Land

In addition to a residential structure, most nobles own vast areas of land that they use for personal enjoyment or business like hunting and farming. Once the noble reaches this house strength rating level, he gains property equal to two square miles surrounding his base of operations. This land is the noble's to do with as he pleases, but must be maintained and protected.

Major Title

The leader of the organization is granted an upper-level title that is appropriate to his station in the campaign. This title is placed before the character's name when being addressed by others as a sign of respect. Examples of such titles are: Archduke/Archduchess, Captain, Cardinal, Chancellor, Governor, Grand Duke/Duchess.

Bonus Feat

Continuing with the idea that a noble influences the lives of his followers, the leader of a noble house can train them in more than just skill prowess. As such, all followers (but not servants, hired employees, or the leader himself) gain a bonus feat when the house strength rating reaches this level.

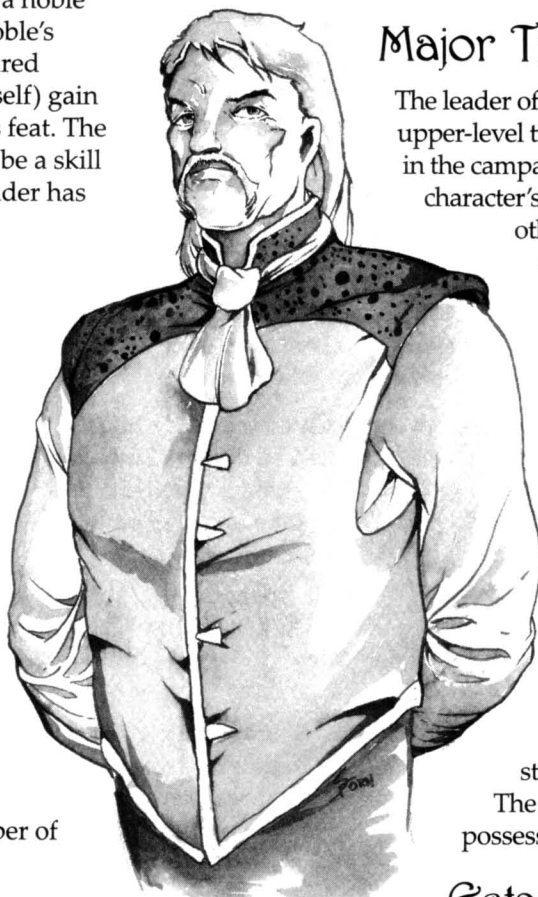
The chosen feat must already be possessed by the house's leader.

Estate

Very prestigious leaders and influential politicians are often able to expand their power in order to establish their presence in remote areas. When this effect is reached on the house strength rating table, the noble house gains a secondary estate in another location far from the noble's base of operations. This estate usually contains a smaller amount of land and is less extravagant in nature, but should still serve as a safe area for the noble and his followers.

High Title

The leader of the organization is granted an upper-level title that is appropriate to his station in the campaign. This title is placed before the character's name when being addressed by others as a sign of respect. Examples of such titles are: General, High Lord/Lady, High Priest/Priestess, Lord Captain Commander, Monarch.



- Chapter Six -

Houses of the Haughty

More powerful than a magistrate, more devious than an assassin, and more dangerous than a dungeon, noble houses play a vital role in most societies. Each noble draws his or her stature and power from a noble house, a term, which refers to both the literal residence and the organization to which he or she belongs. Different nobles run their houses in different ways, with each house reflecting its leader's personality and way of life. As noted in **Chapter Five**, noble houses can be much more than the family estates of wealthy aristocrats. Military academies, secret societies, and criminal syndicates are but a few possibilities of organizations that can use the rules for running a noble house.

The following five examples illustrate the ways in which the noble house system can be applied to organizations. Each example is fully rendered and can be dropped into any campaign setting with whatever modifications the GM sees fit to make. Each noble house features a complete description of the organization, its personnel, its lands and estates, its noble house effects, and a new magic item used by each house to further its own goals.

- House of Dorus -

The Dorus family is one of the oldest and most influential noble houses in the region. Members of the house can trace their lineage back to great military leaders and founders of major cities. The noble house itself is a permanent fixture in society. There is a saying among the common people that when the end of the world comes, all that will be left is the House of Dorus because they were able to bribe the gods themselves.

Culturally active and socially unrivaled, the House of Dorus prides itself on producing nobles of such civility and class as to make other nobles look like alehouse drunkards and hedge knights. The House of Dorus is famous for its banquets and parties, with the annual Dorus Ball drawing nobles from all across the land to what is considered the most fantastic and flamboyant spectacle of social showmanship held each year. Many noble houses hope to have their sons or daughters marry into the House of Dorus to increase their own holdings and stature. The younger generations of the Dorus family are among the most charismatic and physically attractive aristocrats in the entire region.

While few members of the House of Dorus ever participate in active governing, it is a sure bet that the organization has the ear of prominent politicians

and community leaders. Policies, laws, and tariffs that run contrary to the goals of the House of Dorus are rarely in place for long. Troublemakers under the organization's protection can find themselves pardoned by magistrates almost as quickly as the local constabulary can bring them in.

House Leader: Mikel Dorus

Mikel Dorus [male human, noble 14] leads his house with a combination of political savvy and cultural finesse. Regarded by many as strikingly handsome, Mikel stands six feet tall with long, wavy black hair and a fashionable goatee. Although graying at his temples, Mikel's appearance suggests dignity rather than age. Never wearing less than the finest clothes and the most stylish jewelry, Mikel is a true hedonist who never allows himself to be seen without the latest fashions. What few people know is that Mikel Dorus is actually a spy for an enemy nation and one of the most influential saboteurs to be found. The annual Dorus Ball is little more than an excuse to keep a close eye on prominent political figures,

- Chapter Six: Houses of the Naughty -

sow suspicion among them, and provide distraction while meeting with other spies.

Adversaries

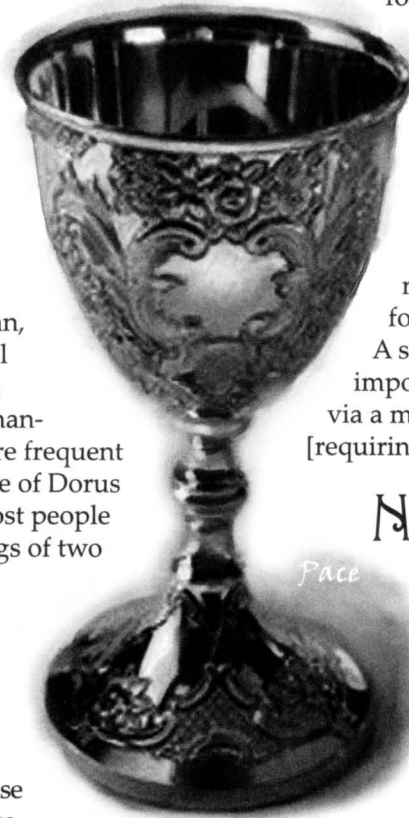
Few people suspect Mikel Dorus's duplicity even within his own noble house. Those who are aware of his treachery are encouraged to keep quiet for fear of losing their own heads. One of Dorus's most prominent adversaries is the local magistrate, Piell Ferron [male human, noble 10]. Ferron believes that Mikel is a spy, but has no proof other than circumstantial evidence from less-than-reliable sources. As a result, there are frequent clashes between the powerful House of Dorus and the local government which most people dismiss as the political maneuverings of two ambitious men.

Yet each time a member of the House of Dorus is arrested, the political system churns out another pardon or an innocent verdict at the trial. The constant struggle between the local government and the much-loved House of Dorus has turned other noble houses against the magistrate. Their lack of cooperation frustrates Ferron, making any efforts to uncover treason within the House of Dorus a futile pursuit.

Base of Operations

The House of Dorus owns a massive estate measuring several acres on the outskirts of town. It is one of the most lavishly decorated complexes in the area. Mikel Dorus has adorned the entire estate with fine art, velvet carpets, embroidered drapes, and ornate furniture of the finest craftsmanship

from all across the land. The estate has its own stables, wine cellars, and even a separate building for the servant's quarters. Various secret rooms and passageways are hidden throughout the house. The wine cellar contains a rotating wall [Search check DC 20 to find] leading to a hidden escape tunnel which travels for several miles before opening up into a natural cave system. Mikel uses a secret room underneath his private study for all of his treasonous business. A section of the floor beneath the imported carpets of the study descends via a mechanical device into the secret room [requiring a Search check DC 15 to discover].



Face

Noble House Effects

Adversary (x2), Influence +3, Skill Focus (Diplomacy)

New Magic Item: Goblet of Poison

The goblet of poison is a subtle item used by the House of Dorus to eliminate their enemies without having to get their hands dirty. The goblet of poison changes any liquid into a deadly poison (as per the spell). In addition to this ability, the goblet of poison is able to transform into any other beverage container. Touching the goblet of poison to another cup, glass, or other receptacle and saying the command word causes the goblet to alter its shape and become an exact duplicate of that receptacle.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, poison; Price: 4,015 gp

- House of Krass -

Smaller and less powerful than the House of Dorus, the House of Krass is regarded as one of the most dishonorable and devious houses around. Despite their reputation as underhanded backstabbers, the House of Krass has quickly risen to its position of power within the last few years. Just a decade ago, the organization was little more than a minor house whose origins were rumored to be in the knighted bastard son of a prince. Yet somehow the House of Krass has become a force to be reckoned with. Enemies of the House of Krass do not live long, and allies seldom live much longer.

The House of Krass has overtaken a number of smaller houses through marriage, blackmail, and financial means. Other nobles consider the House of Krass to be a collection of extortionists and intermarried minor nobles undeserving of the pure birthright of true aristocracy. Yet most of those same nobles tread lightly where they fear a member of the house of Krass holds sway. Nobles belonging to this house are ruthless cutthroats who will do anything to further their own goals. Any offense to the honor of the Krass house will almost certainly result in a duel to the death. Young Krass nobles will charge into a duel at the slightest provocation regardless of their opponent's skill level.

- Chapter Six: Houses of the Haughty -

Senior members of the House of Krass tend to be more careful and patient about their machinations than the foolhardy youth. The House of Krass is a product of deliberate manipulations of local politicians. The annexation of land here, the toppling of a merchant's business there, and the "accidental" death of a minor noble are all signs that the Krass leaders are on the rise.

House Leader: Derrick Krass

Many nobles know Derrick Krass [male human, noble 12] only as the "River Fox." Exactly how he came upon this name is unknown, but the implications of swiftness and cunning are highly appropriate. Derrick is rapier-thin and lanky, yet he moves with the speed of a snake. Derrick rose to his position by having his own father murdered, and his ruthlessness has not abated since. Krass does not publicly concern himself with most affairs of the house, preferring to seem distant from the brutal and thoughtless actions of his younger relatives. In actuality, Derrick uses his younger family members as pawns in a greater game. Sending a brash nephew of his house to pick a fight with another noble lord distracts an opponent long enough to slip another cousin in as a spy. His alluring aunt might be used to seduce a guard captain in order to obtain copies of the keys to the city armory. Derrick's most prominent feature is a long scar that runs the length of his neck. An uncle once attempted to slit his throat and take control of the house, but a healer was able to save Derrick's life. The uncle, however, has not been seen or heard from since the incident.

Adversaries

Although some of the House of Krass's adversaries come from within its own ranks, the cutthroat attitude taken by the noble house in the political arena has earned them many public enemies. Chief among them is a gang of ruthless pirates who call themselves the Crescent Moons. Some time ago, a promising young noble lord from the House of Krass enjoyed spending his free time in the port district. One day, several Crescent Moons came to the young Krass's favorite alehouse and took over the establishment. Like any arrogant noble who

thinks he is invincible, Krass picked a fight with the pirates and was killed in the melee. The city guard broke up the fight, arrested and executed several of the pirates, and the Crescent Moons were outlawed from the district. Forced into exile, the remaining members fled the area. The House of Krass has never forgiven the pirates for killing their young cousin. But the Crescent Moons have sworn a blood feud against the house, alleging that Krass bribes resulted in their comrades' executions and the bounties on their heads.

Base of Operations

The House of Krass operates out of a seaside estate on the edge of the nobility district. In addition to a large and comfortable mansion,

the House of Krass has its own private port where up to four small ships can dock at any given time.

This makes fleeing the city an exceptionally easy task for members of the House of Krass who get themselves into too much trouble. Many suspect that the Krass family uses this harbor for smuggling operations; port authorities have spotted late-night activity on the water in the same vicinity as the Krass port. One of the most famous

parts of the estate is the dueling yard. It was specially constructed to facilitate the many honor duels in which the younger nobles participate. Derrick

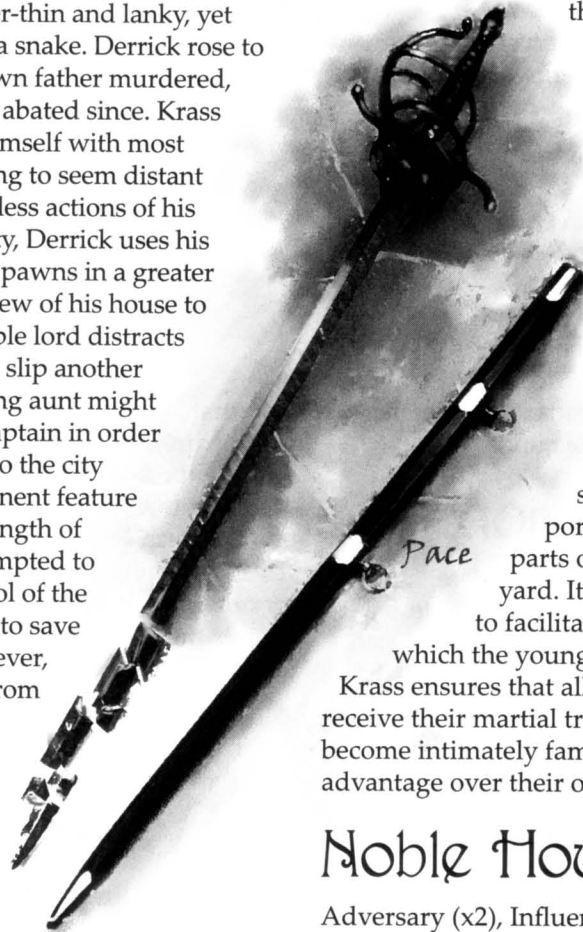
Krass ensures that all male members of the house receive their martial training in this yard so they become intimately familiar with it and gain an advantage over their opponents.

Noble House Effects

Adversary (x2), Influence +2, Skill Focus (Bluff)

New Magic Item: Shattering Sword

The shattering sword is a devious piece of weaponry designed to sabotage duels between nobles. Since so many members of the House of Krass charge blindly into duels, more sensible members of the house decided to commission a set of magic swords to keep the impulsive youths alive. The challenger in a duel is traditionally required to provide the dueling weapons of choice, so Krass duelists make sure to give their



- Chapter Six: Houses of the Haughty -

opponents a shattering sword in order to ensure victory. Whenever the shattering sword is struck by another weapon, its hardness is reduced to 0 and the sword breaks into thousands of metal shards, which leaves the opponent completely defenseless.

When the command word is spoken, the shattering sword reassembles itself and is visually indistinguishable from a normal weapon.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, shatter; Price: 5,520 gp

- Wolfcoat Arms Academy -

One of the most respected and revered military organizations in existence, the Wolfcoat Arms Academy trains young nobles in the art of warfare. Because it owes allegiance to no one nation or faction, two students from warring nations could be thrown together and trained to fight alongside one another. The Wolfcoat Arms Academy claims that this process gives graduating officers a first-hand understanding of foreign battle tactics, and instills in them the discipline and focus necessary for enemies to become allies. Although this is a hard lesson for many young nobles to learn, the Academy insists on having its students fight alongside their enemies for the duration of their training.

The Academy accepts students of noble heritage and commoners who are sponsored by a wealthy benefactor. Each student is trained in all aspects of martial prowess from weapons training to battlefield tactics. Every student progresses through the same training, regardless of their previous experience, until they have mastered the proven techniques of the Academy.

The instructors of the Wolfcoat Arms Academy make up a significant political body in their own right. Only the most talented military leaders who have retired from the battlefield are invited to come to the academy and teach. As such, most of the instructors are former military officers of great renown. When a member of the Wolfcoat Arms Academy needs a favor, most people jump to accommodate them. The Academy might return such a favor by making exceptions to their enrollment policy. They have been known to accept a student who otherwise would not be admitted, or conversely blacklist a student and embarrass his or her family. When the Wolfcoat Arms Academy trains an officer, he or she is guaranteed to be one of the best military leaders around.

House Leader: Lyra Craska

The current headmaster of the Wolfcoat Arms Academy is the first woman to have been chosen as leader of the school. Lyra Craska [female human, noble 6/fighter 8/commander 2] is a lithe, blonde-haired woman with sharp, angular features and a

voice that sounds like a whip cracking. She differs from her predecessors not only in gender but also by her common birth, having risen up through the ranks of gutter-fighters and gladiators. She was granted acceptance into the Academy thanks to sponsorship by a previous headmaster who recognized her potential. After graduating from the Academy at the top of her class, Craska was hired as the chief of security for a local noble house, and eventually became the commander of the house's entire military force. She eventually returned to the Academy to teach, and now leads the entire school. Unlike many nobles, Craska is blunt and straightforward with little patience for subtlety or political maneuvering. She runs her school like a military unit with strict discipline and a businesslike attitude, a philosophy which is appreciated by other commanders.

Adversaries

Since the Wolfcoat Arms Academy produces some of the most talented commanders in the region, many blame the school as the source of their military defeats. The Academy has been directly attacked only four times in its history, and each time the students were able to repel the attackers despite overwhelming odds. The most notorious opponent of the Academy at present, however, is not a military commander but a shrewd nobleman by the name of Hath Thereel [male human, noble 9/diplomat 4]. He alleges that the Academy uses its influence to place graduates in strategic positions of leadership to further their own goals, and has made it his personal crusade to see the school disbanded and its students ostracized. Although the school claims neutrality and goes out of its way to train students from all lands, Thereel has made accusations that the instructors show regional favoritism. He has even gone so far as to have some instructors arrested and tried for war crimes. As yet, however, there is no hard evidence against them or the Academy.

Base of Operations

The Wolfcoat Arms Academy is a converted castle that was constructed during wartime to act as a

- Chapter Six: Houses of the Haughty -

military fort at the edge of the city. The castle was designed with defense in mind, but contains ample living facilities (which are now barracks for the students), a fully stocked armory, and a huge training yard in the middle of the structure, which serves as the primary location for instruction. Additionally, some of the rooms that once held siege engines have been converted into libraries and study rooms filled with books on military history and tactics. A series of catacombs beneath the Academy lead to secret basements beneath the homes of several members of nobility and royalty. These tunnels were originally used to help bring important government officials into the castle if the city came under siege, but are now used for training exercises.

Noble House Effects

Adversary (x1), Influence +1



New Magic Item: Cloak of Daggers

The first lesson each student learns at the Wolfcoat Arms Academy is never to be caught without a weapon. Typically this fundamental principle is reinforced with hand-to-hand combat training, but another example of its execution comes in the form of the cloak of daggers. This simple cloak is designed to resemble cloaks worn by soldiers in the field, and is utilitarian in construction and decoration.

Its most significant benefit comes when the wearer is unarmed. By placing a hand against the inner lining of the cloak and uttering a command word, the wearer summons a standard dagger to his or her hand. Uttering the command word a second time causes the weapon to vanish. The wearer may have no more than one dagger drawn from the cloak of daggers at any given time. If the dagger is more than 200 feet away from the cloak, it vanishes.

Moderate conjuration; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, major creation; Price: 3,110 gp

Brotherhood of the Folded Hand

The Brotherhood of the Folded Hand is a particularly effective crime syndicate that deals in almost every illegal activity known to man. The Brotherhood employs all types of criminals from pick pockets, to assassins, to corrupt government officials. This notorious organization pays bribe money to at least one guard or servant in every noble house, professional guild, commercial business, and political establishment in the area. In return, the Brotherhood gains information about these enterprises and access to their bases of operations. The reach of the Brotherhood is wide. Anyone who has ever had a brush with society's underworld has most likely encountered the organization.

Many believe that the Brotherhood of the Folded Hand gets its name from folding a hand of cards when gambling, and they are partially right. Since the Brotherhood makes a good deal of money running gambling dens and crooked card

games, the name is certainly appropriate. Within the syndicate, however, the name has another significance entirely. When a person folds their hand in anger, it becomes a fist. This image suits the Brotherhood well; when the ire of the organization is roused, there will undoubtedly be violent retribution. The syndicate holds no regard for the law. Murder, thievery, and assault are routine consequences for someone who has displeased the Brotherhood of the Folded Hand.

Many political bodies have at least one crooked politician, and this weakness allows the Brotherhood to get its fingers into the local government on almost any level. Politicians who are less susceptible to bribery might be coerced by the Brotherhood's thugs to sway a vote or secure a pardon. Whether using gifts and kickbacks to secure a politician's favor or intimidating small-time officials, the Brotherhood always finds a way to influence the government and further its agenda.

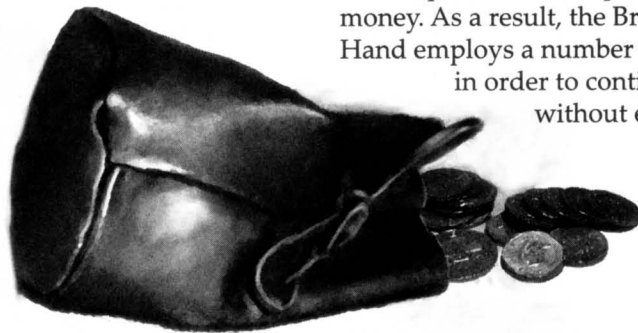
- Chapter Six: Houses of the Naughty -

House Leader: Donovan West

The mastermind behind the Brotherhood is a rakish figure called Donovan West [male human, noble 8/rogue 8], a former member of the pirate gang known as the Crescent Moons. After retiring from a life at sea, West began constructing a small criminal empire composed of a diverse group of unsavory characters. Recognizing the need for loyal followers from various fields, Donovan used his natural charm to win the confidence of several talented criminals, and began working as an organizer and information broker. In addition to being a fast-talking, swashbuckling con artist, Donovan is exceptionally good at reading people. He has mastered the art of examining small details and constructing a larger picture. Like many nobles, Donovan is an impeccably well-dressed man with dark hair and a well-oiled mustache curling over his upper lip. He wears a patch over his missing left eye and walks with a slight limp, yet he remains remarkably spry and is an accomplished duelist.

Adversaries

Like many crime lords, Donovan West and the Brotherhood of the Folded Hand have more enemies than they can count. Still, one of the most formidable opponents that the Brotherhood has to face is Reck Kimar [male human, fighter 6/rogue 4/noble 4], a bounty hunter who has targeted every member of the Brotherhood for elimination. Kimar is a consummate disguise artist who has a number of personas he can use while hunting bounties. In fact, some members of the Brotherhood whisper that no living person has



Guardians of Peace

The existence of the Guardians of Peace instills more fear into some nobles than any criminal organization ever could. Legends whispered among the commoners insist that the Guardians are watchdogs of the people. When an oppressive noble lord threatens to deny his followers even the most basic provisions, the Guardians of Peace remove that noble from his seat of power one way or another. Many commoners attribute a noble's sudden disappearance to the Guardians. But

ever seen his real face. Kimar has captured several high-ranking lieutenants in the organization and is currently gunning for West himself.

Base of Operations

The Brotherhood of the Folded Hand uses a tavern on the seedier side of town as its home base, and conducts most of its business from the bar's back rooms. The Striking Dragon is a smoky alehouse that was acquired by the Brotherhood from a shopkeeper who met with an "accident" shortly after failing to pay off his debts to the Brotherhood. All of the staff members who work in the tavern are loyal to the organization and report back to West or his allies. The Striking Dragon has several gambling rooms and a prostitution business on the upper floors of the building.

Noble House Effects

Adversary (x2), Influence +3, Skill Focus
(Knowledge [local])

New Magic Item: Purse of Fool's Gold

Coming up with the right amount for a bribe is one of the trickiest parts of influencing a politician. But frequent bribes require significant amounts of money. As a result, the Brotherhood of the Folded Hand employs a number of purses of fools gold in order to continue giving out bribes without expending all of their resources. When coins of any denomination or metal are placed inside the purse and the command word is uttered, those coins are automatically transformed into gold pieces. These coins remain gold pieces for 8 hours, then resume their original composition and worth.

Strong transmutation; CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item, polymorph any object; Price: 8,450 gp

other noble houses dismiss these rumors as the murmurings of a resentful population.

In truth, the Guardians of Peace are members of a secret society who have been charged with preventing any one organization or politician from gaining too much power. In the eyes of the Guardians, most major wars have begun when one person or group grew too powerful and decided to eliminate their enemies. When this occurs, the Guardians take it upon

- Chapter Six: Houses of the Haughty -

themselves to topple the offending leader and remove his or her power base. The Guardians are completely discreet and bear no identifying marks, weapons, or armor. Members of the Guardians of Peace blend in with society perfectly; any given person on the street could be a member of the group.

When not removing a power-hungry official from position, the Guardians of Peace work in subtle ways to keep the influence levels balanced between politicians. The Guardians rarely place one of their own in a position of power, preferring instead to join a politician's personal staff or to work as a clerical aide.

House Leader: Iren Jager

No one except for the members themselves knows that Iren Jager [male human, noble 12/paladin 6] currently leads the Guardians of Peace. An upstanding member of the church and a recognized civil servant, Jager is well respected and trusted by common folk and nobility alike. Even members of his immediate family do not know he is a secret protector of political balance and an enemy of tyrants. Jager is in his early fifties with clean-cut gray hair drawn into a widow's peak, cool gray eyes, and perpetual rough stubble on his chin. He works as an administrator in his church, and has fought in several battles to reclaim churches overrun by worshippers of an evil god. Jager is careful to keep a close eye on nobles in the region, and is always prepared to lead the Guardians of Peace when intervention becomes necessary.

Adversaries

Since few nobles or politicians even believe that the Guardians of Peace exist, they have very few enemies to openly oppose them. Almost anyone could be a member of the organization, so it is very difficult to rally a group who might be willing to confront them. Despite this complication, one young woman opposes the Guardians and has had some limited success. Miriel Nehanna [female human, noble 4/rogue 4] is the daughter of a former governor who vanished after the Guardians deemed him too powerful. Miriel has made it her goal to discover the truth behind her father's disappearance and see the Guardians disbanded.

Base of Operations

The Guardians of Peace operate out of a unique facility. The building is an ordinary-looking manor house situated in a remote part of the countryside. One of the original members was an expert in teleportation magic, and was able to transform a few innocuous doorways at strategic locations into portals through which the Guardians could reach this facility. The mansion is accessed by traveling through one of these portals scattered throughout the region and uttering the command word. The portals all lead to the same massive corridor, which is lined with ornately carved statues resembling many of the world's most powerful men and women. At the end of this hallway sits a pair of impenetrable doors where the Guardian gives a password and is allowed inside.

Noble House Effects

Adversary (x3), Influence +3, Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

New Magic Item: Portrait of Statues

One of the most powerful magical items used by the Guardians of Peace, the portrait of statues is a dangerous, highly guarded oil painting that measures 5 feet by 9 feet, and hangs on a wall in the organization's remote estate. When a being within 30 feet

of the item looks upon the portrait of statues, he or she must immediately make a Fortitude save (DC 19) or be permanently turned to stone. If the portrait of statues is ever destroyed, anyone who had been affected by it is immediately restored to their original form. Any character damaged while in statue form is returned to their normal, unharmed.

The Guardians of Peace use the portrait of statues to eliminate threats and tyrants by luring the target into a finely decorated room within the order's remote estate. After the portrait of statues is uncovered and

the target is turned to stone, he or she is carted off to serve as decoration in the front hallway. The Guardians of Peace wear blindfolds to protect them from the effects of this item while placing it back under cover.

Strong transmutation; CL 16th; Craft Wondrous Item, flesh to stone; Price: 26,000 gp



Face

- Disarm -

You attempt to use your weapon to knock your opponent's weapon away.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You may make a standard disarm attack, as per the normal combat rules. You do not make an attack roll with this maneuver (except those made by the standard disarm rules).

- Feint -

You make a false move in order to lure your opponent into an unbalanced position.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: Next round, you gain a +2 bonus to any maneuver that deals damage to the opponent. You deal no damage with this maneuver.

- Gutter Fighting -

You use your fists and feet in addition to your weapon, and aren't afraid to fight dirty.

Previous Maneuver: Lock weapons or parry

Effect: You may make a single unarmed attack against your opponent's normal AC this round. Your opponent does not make an opposed roll to defend against this maneuver.

- Hilt Blow -

You use the blunt hilt of your weapon, attempting to daze and befuddle your opponent.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You deal subdual damage equal to your normal weapon damage with this maneuver. Additionally, your opponent must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer a -2 penalty to all maneuvers during the next round. Using this maneuver causes you to suffer a -2 penalty to your defensive roll for this round.

- Lock Weapons -

You use the clash of your weapon against your opponent's to lock your weapons together, preventing further action.

Previous Maneuver: Slash

Effect: If this maneuver is successful, your opponent may not perform another maneuver until an opposed Strength check is made in your opponent's favor. Additionally, you may not perform another maneuver until your opponent wins the opposed roll (which you may voluntarily fail). You deal no damage with this maneuver.

- Lunge -

You dart forward with your whole body in order to throw the weight of your body behind your attack.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You deal an additional 1d6 damage on top of your normal weapon damage with this maneuver. Using this maneuver causes you to suffer a -2 penalty to your defensive roll for this round.

- Parry -

You use your weapon to deflect an enemy's blows and preserve your own defense.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You gain a +4 bonus to your defensive roll for this round. You do not make an attack roll with this maneuver.

- Riposte -

You strike quickly while your opponent's weapon is out of the way.

Previous Maneuver: Parry

Effect: If you suffered no damage the previous round, you gain a +2 bonus to this maneuver. You deal normal weapon damage with this maneuver.

- Slash -

You use your weapon in a sweeping motion that does damage across the opponent's body.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You deal your normal weapon damage with this maneuver. Additionally, you may opt to use the flat of your weapon in order to deal subdual damage.

- Thrust -

You use the sharp point of your blade to pierce the flesh of your enemy.

Previous Maneuver: None

Effect: You deal your normal weapon damage +2 with this maneuver, but suffer a -2 penalty to your attack roll.



Index

A

- Adventures 5**
- Alignment 5**
- Archetypes 41–47**
 - Barbarian Prince 41
 - Court Bard 41
 - Crimelord 42
 - High Priest 43
 - Lord of the Wilderness 43
 - Merchant 44
 - Military Officer 45
 - Spymaster 46
 - Thief-Prince 46
 - Vizier 47

B

- Background 5**
- Brotherhood of the Folded Hand 58–59**

C

- Characteristics 5**
- Class Features**
 - Commander 12–13
 - Advanced Tactics 13*
 - Battlefield Presence 12–13*
 - Chain of Command 13*
 - Improvised Tactics 13*
 - Increased Overland Speed 13*
 - Last Stand 13*
 - Leadership 13*
 - Rally 13*
 - Tactics 13*
 - Weapon & Armor Proficiency 12*
 - Impersonator 17–18
 - Avoid Detection 17–18*
 - Deceptive Appearance 17*
 - Infiltrate 18*
 - Vocal Mimic 18*
 - Weapon & Armor Proficiency 17*
 - Lord Knight 19–20
 - Bonus Feat 20*
 - Castle 20*
 - Champion 20*
 - Faithful Steed 20*
 - Heirloom 19–20*
 - Organize 20*
 - Stronghold 20*

- Weapon & Armor Proficiency 19*
- Mastermind 21
 - Connection 22*
 - Counterintelligence 23*
 - Create Cipher 22*
 - Detect Scrying 23*
 - Information Broker 21*
 - Know Thy Enemy 23*
 - Sleeper Cell 23*
 - Undetectable Alignment 23*
 - Weapon & Armor Proficiency 21*
- Master Diplomat 14–16
 - Consular 14–15*
 - Improvised Language Comprehension 15*
 - Influence 15*
 - Oratory 16*
 - Weapon & Armor Proficiency 14*
- Noble Core Class 7–11
 - Breeding 7–8*
 - Connection 10–11*
 - Influence 9–10*
 - Inspire 8–9*
 - Leadership 11*
 - Material Aid 8*
 - Organize 11*
 - Retinue 8*
 - Weapon & Armor Proficiency 7*

Class Skills

- Commander 12
- Impersonator 17
- Lord Knight 19
- Mastermind 21
- Master Diplomat 14
- Noble Core Class 7

Commander 11–13

D

- Dueling Cards 30**
- Dueling Maneuvers 30–31**
- Duels 29–31**

E

- Equipment 32–35**
 - Carriage 32
 - Coat of Arms 32
 - Furniture 32
 - Horse, Carriage 33

- Horse, Racing 33
- Jewelry 33
- Litter 33
- Portrait 33
- Seal 34
- Signet Ring [Poison] 34
- Tapestry 34
- War Banner 34

Events 39–40

F

Feats 27–29

- Alternate Identity 27
- Battlefield Composure 27
- Black Market Bargain 27
- Bloodline 27
- Cunning Defense 27
- Disarming Demeanor 27
- Discreet Reputation 27
- Exceptional Leadership 27
- Frightful Aura 28
- High Lord 28
- High Profile 28
- Instill Devotion 28
- Instill Discipline 28
- Instill Etiquette 28
- Instill Martial Training 28
- Noble House 29
- Parry Opportunist 29
- Piercing Blow 29
- Ruling Family 29
- Spanning Reach 29
- Terrify 29

Followers 48–49

G

- Game Rule Information 6–7**
- Guardians of Peace 59–60**

H

- House of Dorus 54–55**
- House of Krass 55–57**

I

Impersonator 16–18

L

- Liege's Sway Feats 28**
- Lord Knight 18–20**

M

- Magic Armor 34–35**
- Magic Weapons 34–35**
- Mastermind 21–23**
- Master Diplomat 14–16**
- Monsters 49**

N

Noble Houses 50–53

- Effects 52–53
- Establishment 50
- Followers 51
- Leading 50
- Strength Rating 51–52
- Taking Over 50
- Treasury & Material Aid 50

O

Other Classes 6

P

- Personality Types 36–37**
- Prestige Classes 11–23**

R

- Races 6**
- Religion 5**
- Requirements**
 - Commander 11–12
 - Impersonator 17
 - Lord Knight 19
 - Mastermind 21
 - Master Diplomat 14
- Role 38–39**

S

- Skills 24–26**
 - Bluff 24
 - Forgery 24–26
 - Knowledge [local] 26
 - Read/Write Fansigns 26
 - Speak High Language 26

W

- Wolfcoat Arms Academy 57–58**
- Wondrous Items 35**
 - Banner of Inspiration 35
 - Sheath of Concealment 35

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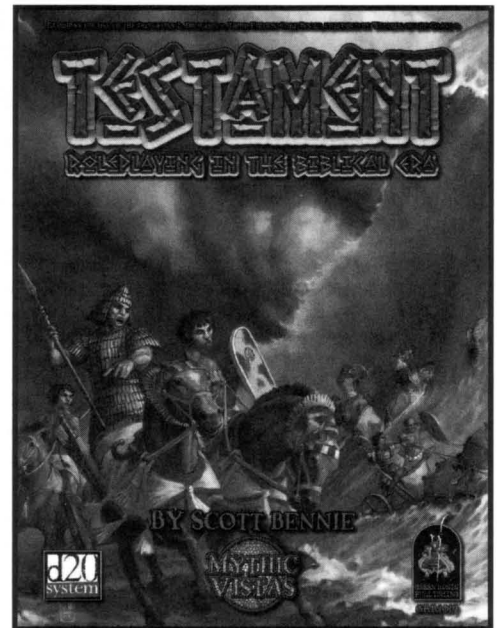
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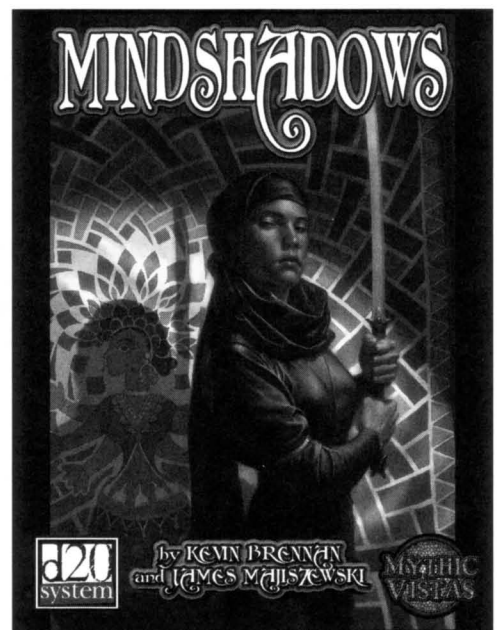
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