GARY GYGAX'S INSIDIAE

THE BRAINSTORMERS GUIDE
TO ADVENTURE WRITING

BY DAN CROSS

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INSIDE

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Author: Dan Cross
Contributing Author: Brant Bollman
Cover Artist: Matt Milberger
Titles & Cover Design: Stephen Chenault
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Editors: Davis Chenault, John Troy, Mark Sandy, Gary Gygax
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FOREWORD

What you have in hand is a true gem. This book will enable you to devise a vast array of different plots for your fantasy world. If you are one who holds that the proof of the pudding is in the eating, page ahead a bit and have a look at the Table of Contents, then come on back here to read on. You'll see how the elements of the adventure are set forth beginning with events that shape things, the different roles the characters can be placed in, the array of other persons they will interact with for better or worse, the many sorts of plots and their elements, and finally how to put all of that together so as to craft a setting for the players to engage in their derring do.

Serving as the series editor in addition to authoring some of the works in this collection means I must wear several hats. The editorial role is the one that demands a variety of headgear, for this series is broad and wide-ranging. As a matter of fact, the individual books in it are likewise of comprehensive scope. A perusal of this particular one will amply demonstrate the truth of my statement, so you'll note that the hat I am wearing now is one with a tall crown. This work is one that is both scholarly and practical. The author approaches the subject of plot creation from an academic standpoint that will educate and equip the reader with the practical knowledge necessary to craft role playing game adventures…and more.

Daniel Cross has gone to considerable lengths to provide the reader with clear, step-by-step instructions of how to create what is needed for compelling adventures. After that he has put the pieces together in several ways so as to not only demonstrate how the whole works, but to supply the reader with a vast array of ready-made plots that can be used with little effort on your part. To assist in this latter shortcut, the author has also supplied a chapter containing a Sample Adventure that sets forth just how all the information given is put to work for you in creative manner. What this means for the harried creator is that this work can serve as a handbook from which pre-generated plots are extracted and developed for game play. There is nothing wrong in so doing either, as such use is simply on the job training. To make full use of the information, though, and thus devise even more in the way of exciting adventures, there is no substitute for building your own story lines for player interaction.

Armed with this book the reader is empowered to devise more than game material for his campaign. The information herein is such that a fantasy game adventure module author will be supplied with sufficient plot ideas, the means of developing them, to last a lifetime, write scores of modules each of which having a different plot.

While Daniel Cross makes the difference between a role playing game adventure and a story abundantly clear, this is not a deterrent to use of the information he has set forth herein in writing fiction. It takes only a bit of alteration for the game adventure material found herein to be changed to suit fantasy fiction. By mentally substituting the term "protagonist(ists)" for "Player Character(s)," the reader bent on story writing has all that is needed in the way of mechanical operations for such effort, and with imagination and creativity from within his own mind, the plots ideas supplied by this book might well inspire a great library of novels.

There is little more I need to say, for the author has covered the subject thoroughly in the text of the book. Be prepared to become much more learned in the subject of devising plots from beginning to conclusion. When you apply the knowledge, be ready to accept the accolades of your audience as a master of adventures.

Gary Gygax
Lake Geneva, WI
February 2004

INTRODUCTION

Adventure scenarios are an indispensable part of all role-playing games. No player would be content generating fictional characters who engage only in activities outside of any meaningful narrative. Combat, role-playing, and problem solving are all essential, but each requires the "sovereign glue" of plot.

An oft-forgotten aspect of role-playing game scenarios is that the game master does not create the story in isolation. The present volume therefore distinguishes between game masters (GMs) who are interactive storytellers and those puppet-masters who force the heroes into situations with foregone conclusions. Weaving together multiple events leading to gratifying conclusions, while maintaining for the players a sense of actual danger without the threat of certain doom, and the capacity to use or disregard rules when appropriate are the hallmarks of good game mastering. Adventures must not "lead by the nose", dragging characters lock-step through a clunky, linear plot. And resolution should allow for continuance; the promise of greater glory and danger in an ongoing campaign.

Story in a role-playing game means the chronological unfolding of events as determined by the interaction of all players, including the GM. The present volume will henceforward refer to plot not yet realized through actual play as "story-latent".

So story is plot actualized through play, while plot is here synonymous with story-latent, and an adventure is any scenario consisting of one or many plot threads, all built upon independent, modular events and encounters which can be dropped into the story-latent in whatever logical order needed.

This volume is organized to aid in creating events which facilitate matrix style adventures, promoting freedom of choice and movement for the players, avoiding linear, constrictive scenarios. Note that some linearity is acceptable. For example, the classic dungeon crawl can be so constructed as to be a type of (popular) linear scenario within a larger story-latent matrix.

The following chapters are arranged so that each in succession builds upon the details of the last. Working through the book will aid the beleaguered game master in creating adventures for the most complicated game form on the planet; providing a large array of ideas, character types, individual backgrounds, places of encounter and danger, coupled with the plot devices needed to propel characters deeper into the story-latent. The capacity to improvise is strongly encouraged and considered a major focus within the design of this sourcebook.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Creating an adventure using this book is easy. In Book One, Milieu Events, you'll choose or randomly determine the major events in your game world; past, present, or future. This sets the backdrop against which the adventures in your campaign will be taking place. You may choose one or more events—or none at all if a setting of great prosperity, happiness, and achievement is assumed—all depending on the desired complexity of the campaign. This is the "spice" giving the setting its theme, and sets the tone.

In Book Two, Story-Roles, the GM will choose the number of major and minor enemies, allies, neutrals, and other types of major story-roles with whom the heroes inevitably interact. It is in this section that the GM determines the number and kind of story-roles that will serve to drive the plot forward, those roles filled by NPCs and monsters destined to be encountered in one or more adventures of the ongoing campaign.

In Book Three, Characteristics, an array of motivations, common goals, and specific character types are chosen and then matched logically by the GM to those story-roles determined in the Book Two. Also, dozens of character types are considered within the context of the major story-roles. At this stage the GM should have a good idea of the causes behind major events within the milieu, and how these events impacted the key non-player characters of the adventure.

In Book Four, Plot, fantasy writing and GMing RPGs is briefly compared and contrasted, followed by an extensive section on encounter types, story functions, and plot elements. This section treats plot events in the most overarching way possible, dealing not with specific actions on the part of individuals but events as orientating generalizations.

Book Five, Adventure, begins to narrow the focus toward a single adventure scenario. The places of encounter chosen randomly or by choice will aid in weaving together a tapestry of events, serving as an obvious interface between player characters and the designs and machinations of the opposition. In other words, the action starts here. Events can be arranged according to some loose time frame, some having prerequisite events in order to occur, and others will not be time-dependant at all, the GM dropping in the encounter whenever desired.

Book Six provides a sample adventure, using all of the parts of this book.

Finally, the volume concludes with a form designed to aid in weaving all of the information together into a coherent basis for writing anything from a campaign module, to running a single adventure "off the cuff".

BOOK ONE

MILIEU EVENTS

There is a fatality, a feeling so irresistible and inevitable that it has the force of doom, which . . . compels human beings to linger around and haunt, ghostlike, the spot where some great and marked event has given the color to their lifetime.

~ Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter

EVENTS

Choose or randomly determine the background event(s) in your game setting; disasters, renaissances, wars, or cataclysmic events that will serve as the themes for future adventures. You can choose one or several events, depending on the desired complexity of the campaign. This is the "spice" that gives the setting its theme. It also sets the tone, but need not serve as the direct basis for any one adventure scenario. Events chosen may be placed in the past, present, or future. The "default" assumes an everyday backdrop featuring no momentous trouble or strife.

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21-40 Disasters
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81-00 Cataclysm

Political and Civil Strife

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58-71 Impending Doom
72-86 Interplanetary Conflicts
87-00 Pantheon Wars

POLITICAL AND CIVIL STRIFE

POLITICAL

Spellcasters vs. Nobility: Wizards and sorcerers traditionally have been pictured as the advisors of nobility, granting advice on matters arcane or aiding in defense of a kingdom or land. But havoc would be sure to follow if some mages were to form a cabal designed to overthrow the ruling class. Or, it could be but a single wizard or sorcerer who has beguiled a local baron or landed noble, using enchantment and insinuating thoughts of sedition. Conversely, it could be that the nobility has grown distrustful of the powers of spellcasters; and, due to unsubstantiated suspicions, begins a pogrom against all magic users.

Nobility vs. Nobility: If the king dies, the heirs might vie for the throne. And civil war could very well be the result, if not handled with caution. Shifts in power created by treasonous nobles can create a very unstable sort of environment. with much persecution of those on the "wrong side of the fence". Forming alliances, espionage, mercenary activities, assassinations, and widespread war offer an exciting backdrop to adventure.

Peasantry vs. Nobility: Peasant uprisings can occur for many reasons. But the most common causes are starvation, a sudden and dramatic increase in taxes, tyrannical subjugation, or religious/ethnic persecution. A revolt also could be perpetrated by a leader with more ignoble goals, or a group of anarchists who care nothing for justice. Whether the reason for rebellion is a just or ignoble cause usually determines on which side the player characters will be associated.

Priesthood vs. Nobility: In this sort of conflict. the existing ruling priesthood might decide that the nobility has grown decadent; or, perhaps, even dispensable. Depending on whether the priesthood in question worships good or evil deities. the conflict could be one of overthrowing the existing regime or outright elimination of the existing order through a series of covert or overt executions. In other situations, a noble class might decide (and, probably, quite unwisely) that the dominant pantheon ought to be replaced. This happens most often in situations involving a conquered land, where the new ruling class seeks to convert the populace to a new religion by force.

ECONOMIC

Local Guilds vs. Merchants: In this sort of situation, local merchants might be importing goods that undermine the work of the provincial guilds. Or, some local guild might be attempting to bully others of the local merchant class into selling only its goods. Espionage, sabotage and assassins could very well be utilized in such situations. Successful merchant foreigners often will be resented, because they tend to have a detrimental effect on local merchants; even to the extend of running them out of business because they're unable to complete with the greater selection and prompter service the traveling merchant guilds provide. Sometimes, the local suppliers are abandoned for these cheaper services; a situation that easily can spark violence, spelling certain ruin for the town or manorial village.

Merchants vs. Nobility: Herein the conflict is between the merchant class gaining wealth and resenting the fees or mandatory gifts demanded of them by the nobility, or the nobility fearing or resenting the growing wealth and power of the merchant class. Merchants often trade in raw materials, such as wool, fur, wood, cloth, silk, and spices. Medieval merchants sailed the vast seas, bringing wealth to those lands where trade took place. Because of this great wealth, merchants often find themselves struggling with manorial officials, upon whose land they make a substantial profit. If the lord of the manor refuses to offer a charter allowing the merchants to be free and rule themselves, violence could erupt.

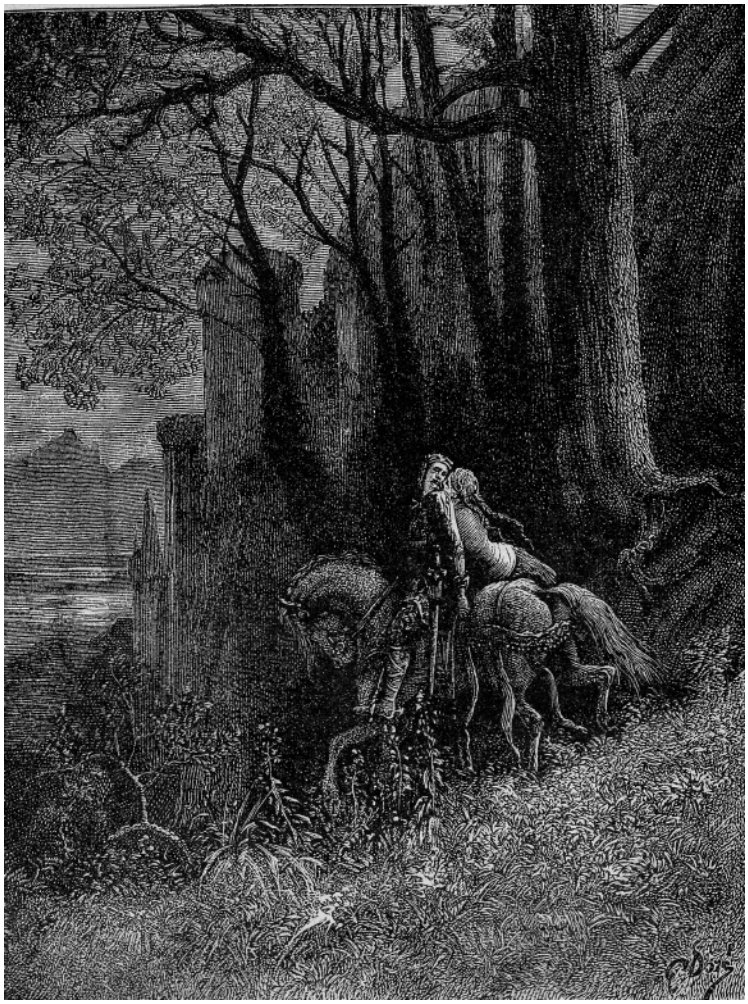
Peasants vs. Merchants: It's not uncommon for powerful merchants to act like nobility, pouring derision upon the peasantry. In a free city, there might be price gouging, especially where there's little competition. If there is a wealthy middle class to buy the goods, and relatively few merchants, prices might be inflated to increase profit, leaving the lower classes in a terrible lurch. Unwise peasants might resort to violence. But driving out the merchants would be likely to raise taxes and make crucial goods scarce or unavailable; possibly, bringing the wrath of the middle and upper class down against the local citizenry.

RELIGIOUS STRIFE

Peasants vs. Priesthood: A peasant uprising is directed at the priesthood due to ill treatment. The peasantry might have been subjected to an inquisition, or denied healing services. Or, perhaps, the priesthood is the corrupt ruling class, such as in an evil theocracy. Or, perchance, a new deity has revealed itself to a small number of the underclass. Such a god might cause anarchy, stirring up a rabble which wishes to harm followers of the existing pantheon, especially if they are Lawful.

Priesthood vs. Nobility: The great priests and priestesses nearly are as powerful as the nobility. Sometimes, a cleric is tempted to overstep his bounds, seeking greater secular power. Perhaps he/she feels that it is nigh time for a theocracy, and starts a bellicose sect to dethrone the sovereign. But, in fact, it is unlikely that any deity will support actions which do not serve the state. Even an evil deity might balk at the idea of promoting theocracy without the realistic, mortal means of a *coup d'éta*t (violent overthrow of existing government by a small group).

Heresy: The charge of heresy is a serious one in a fantasy setting dominated by active deities. Any challenge to accepted religious beliefs and practices is likely to be investigated by the Lords Spiritual. But the GM must keep in mind that what might



be considered heresy by one deity could be the correct doctrine of another. So the quarrel ultimately is left to mortals. Some gods punish those who violate the letter of the law; guidelines applicable to all adherents of the pantheon or deity. Others are tricksters, like the Norse Loki, who foster confusion and dissention just for the fun of it. In any case, heresy is a spiritual crime, tried by an ecclesiastic court.

Sometimes, mortals are left to duke it out so that the gods do not engage in a catastrophic war that would tear apart the planet. In other cases, such as the severe (and stupid) heresy of atheism, the gods might manifest themselves fully and teach the heretic a valuable, but potentially deadly, lesson. Occasionally, there is a doctrinal quarrel between the Lords Spiritual and Lords Temporal; such as debating which god or pantheon best represents a city or nation. This can get very ugly, because the monarch also is a high ranking lord spiritual, probably representing the established patron deity.

If the charge of heresy has merit, a sovereign head of state may assemble his or her own court of ecclesiastics and find the charge of heresy to be valid. If found guilty of heresy, a cleric or citizen can lose everything and possibly be excommunicated or exiled, thereby losing his land holdings. And. as stated within Vol. III of this series, Living Fantasy, "Ecclesiastical holdings can be seized by the monarch only if the holder is proven to be of heretical sort. Even then, the higher spiritual authorities might resist such a seizure. This is one area where the temporal overlord might run afoul of the lords spiritual."

DISASTERS

Drought & Famine: A severe decrease in the food supply caused by drought or severe weather changes (like perpetual cold or heat) can test to the limit the restorative magicks of the temples. But, such events are unlikely in a fantasy milieu; unless the gods whose portfolios it is to control the weather relinquish their assumed duties. Either as divine punishment resulting from the "death" of a key god or goddess, the land could be plunged into turmoil, where war and pestilence cause the starving populace to battle each other to secure whatever food remains. The nobility might be inclined to crush those less able to provide for themselves. And a bloody civil war is not unlikely.

Earthquakes: Earthquakes rating low on the Richter Scale usually don't qualify as backstory, unless they're rumblings of an awakening volcano. But a massive earthquake that levels an entire city, killing thousands, and destroys fortifications, compromising the security of the kingdom's or empire's populace; now there's a story in the making! Perhaps, an earthquake rips open a rift in the earth out of which pours extradimensional creatures of horror, or demonic monsters surging up from the bowels of Hades. Or, perchance, the earthquakes are more localized, targeting specific buildings or regions, and guided by the will of the gods and/or powerful clerics of the temples. Such is the stuff that can precipitate full-scale wars.

Fire: Widespread destruction is characteristic of wildfires, which can consume entire woodland states. Fires could be triggered by Mother Nature's lightening strikes, human accident or arson, alchemical mishaps, the backlash of magical artifacts activated by fools, or supernatural experiments gone awry (such as accidentally opening a vortex into the Plane of Fire). The widespread chaos caused by fire provides excellent cover for enemies' nefarious activities.

Floods: Local flooding can create all manner of havoc. Besides the destruction of crops and property, aquatic races such as amphibious humanoids might attack swamped villages. Flooding might be caused by the will of a deity who wishes the destruction of some group or region, where the weather is controlled by priests bent on carrying out the task of drowning the local populace. Wizards and sorcerers also might find reasons to cause flooding, for reasons of escape or providing tactical advantage in war.

Storms/Tornados: Severe weather can provide for challenging conditions in combat, bringing creatures of horrendous power out that feed on chaos and destruction during violent storms. Powerful dragons and clerics, sorcerers and clerics have been known to summon nasty weather to accompany them on a strike against the populace. Such storms can be omens of a coming doom. And the resulting strife can keep PCs busy for a long time. Natural (or unnaturally caused) disasters tend to weaken an area, which makes it prime for attack by malign creatures, opportunistic tyrants, or villains who seek to attain their goals during times of greatest confusion.

Tidal Waves: Tsunamis wiping out entire cities can spawn all manner of adventures where ruined cities are explored to find lost and/or determine the danger of rebuilding on that spot. Whether the massive wave was caused by an angry kraken, the powerful spell of an angry cleric or wizard, or the direct intervention of the gods, the results always are impressive. A series of tsunamis could indicate disturbances in the far depths of the ocean with less than mundane causes; such as a race of aquatic monsters attempting to kill and terrorize the land-dwelling creatures that dare live too near the shores of their hunting grounds.

SOCIAL UPHEAVAL

Intellectual Revolution: The backdrop of the story involving a revolution of thought, a renaissance of ideas and art, changing culture, motivating substantial change in the social fabric is one rife with potential for adventure. These things could fuel hatred and can spawn violence by the establishment, the keeper of tradition. Any weird, democratic ideas would be seen as a threat to the "natural order" as upheld by historical precedent, as well as by the fiat of the gods. Traditionalists always harbor the fear of a small group of radicals attempting a *coup d'état*, meaning the violent overthrow of the existing government. But even more problematic would be situations in which a deity or many deities actually encourage or instigate such political upheavals and changes; either for the sake of anarchy or because it is in accord with the personality or portfolio of the god(s).

Religious Revolution: Strife between adherents of different creeds within a pantheon or followers of different pantheons is a well-known theme. That is because it is one common to our own world. Both racial and socio-economic classes might be involved in such a revolution. The opposing forces are those of the established belief system and the new one contending for

dominance. The latter will usually be led by zealots and empowered by rebellious members of the affected society, typically the disenfranchised and/or students. Note that such a conflict need not involve active intervention by potent deities honored by the opposing sides. There might be sufficient justice involved in the cause of each faction to have the great supernatural entities concerned agree to allow matters to take their course without interference from them. Such an agreement might be more honored in the breach than the keeping of it, of course. If the conflict escalated to the point where deities are actively engaged, then the classification of this strife moves from Social Upheaval to Cataclysm.

Technological Revolution: Inventions are a hallmark of all intelligent races, especially the contraptions and gadgets of gnomes and dwarves. Revolutionary architecture could be the work of elves, whose designs and create colorful backdrops to a setting. Some things always are inappropriate, in a purist sense, to a sword & sorcery realm, at least if you want to have some realistic sense of what technology would realistically do to a civilization—that includes the use of active stable gunpowder, the introduction of mass production and what we know as the industrial revolution, and perhaps the introduction of electrician power. What would a technological revolution look like in a fantasy setting? It would be something along the lines of magic as technology, with several of our modern conveniences simulated by magical means: For example, items that heat or cook food, provide warmth or cooling, entertainment etc. As a rule of thumb, items should improve the life of the wealthy (gentry/aristocrats) and society without significantly changing the campaign milieu outside of the standard. (Of course, if you are not aiming for the type of classic European-Late Middle Ages model—such as the one presented in Living Fantasy--feel free to make whatever modifications you want

Cultural Decline: Large kingdoms, empires, and other states that become very prosperous may fall into a state of decay. Excessive wealth and complacency, along with unrealistic expansions may bring decadence into society and corruption into government. Signs of this in a culture include a lack or stagnation of intellectual progress, a decline in spiritual values (be it philosophical or ecclesiastical), a desire towards selfishness and hedonism by the general populace, a loss of cultural and national identity, and lots of corruption by the aristocracy, government and military—either palace *coup d'état*, bribery, increasing bureaucracy, etc. The classic example mentioned in history (while debatable) is the Roman Empire.

If you use the concept of cultural/national alignment, a culture like this would not be "good" and would tend towards chaos and evil. Note that decadence usually equates evil (or at least selfishness), but not all evil equates decadence. An evil empire might still be powerful due to a powerful yoke, leaders, and strict discipline and not tolerate vices, or their vices don't interfere with discipline. A true sign of cultural decline would be a civilization that slowly dies under its own decay.

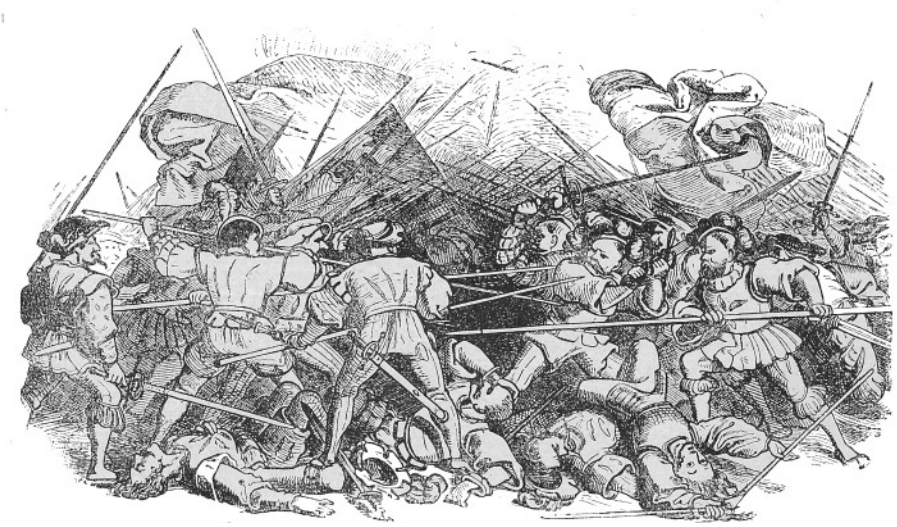
Players involved in this situation would likely either be trying to fight the forces of corruption internally, just trying to survive, or taking advantage of the corruption to serve their own ends, depending on both their own moral characteristics and whether the civilization in question is the one they are allied with or enemies of.

WAR

REGIONS

Local: Fighting between the small powers of an area such as opposing nobles, a noble and a free city, or commoners in an uprising against their overlord. In such conflicts the opposing sides number in scores, hundreds at the outside. They feature raids, ambuscades, and on occasion sieges of castles and fortifications. One might think of the tales of Robin Hood to get a sense of the scope and scale of such fighting. Obviously the involvement of player characters in such strife will have considerable impact, and it is in such local wars that most players will feel personally involved. Their game personas will most likely be of the status suited for these kinds of conflicts, easily able to relate to them, interact meaningfully with both the noble and ordinary non-player characters concerned. The abilities of the player characters will certainly have their greatest direct, hands-on impact in such events.

Regional: Much like the local war, a regional one is a natural for involvement of the player character group. A regional war is one involving a state or major parts of it. That is it might be one or more powerful nobles in arms against the sovereign rules, or two nobles or groups of nobles fighting each other for land, or even a powerful outlaw attacking a noble in hopes of besting him and assuming his lands and titles. The motivation for such conflicts can be of just about any sort—envy, greed, power, feuding, religious differences, oppression, etc. Again, the relatively small scale of the warfare, the limited forces and capacities of the opposing sides, empowers the player characters with considerable meaning when they become involved.



Subcontinental: Armed conflict between nations or states in a major subdivision of a continent, whether for reason of defense, conquest, revenge or unbridled ethnocentric hatred, is the usual purview of a backstory involving war. War between kingdoms, or a gigantic, bloody civil war may serve as either the main backdrop to adventures, or simply create random conditions for danger and intrigue for the adventurers.

Continental: Warfare spread out among every nation of a continent is a violent, barbaric backdrop. Totally anarchy is often the theme with such a background, involving warring bands, tribes, kingdoms or empires struggling for supremacy. Or, it could be a war-torn land of independent city states. In this instance, continental refers to any land mass which is not dominated by a single, stable kingdom or empire, and which has become a giant battlefield as each side vies for supremacy.

Environment vs. Environment: This type of conflict involves a civilization—usually a non-human one—that occupies a different but neighboring environment that the typical terrestrial dwells. Most of the times such conflicts are skirmish or raiding level because of either having limited access to these environments. They include the following:

Underground: Underground races that might end up raiding the surface either for revenge (the dark elves against elves), or for resources such as wealth or slaves, or monster might end up raiding for food. The sub-dwelling races usually have trouble with solar radiation, while it is hard for humans to navigate the mazes of caverns and deep pits.

Underwater: Underwater races might raid seacoast, ships, or others, either because they feel they are being invaded or for nefarious purposes. Some races can exist short-term on land and thus conflict can ensure—albeit short battles. Land dwelling humanoids are limited by their ability to breathe water and thus taking the fight underseas become difficult.

Aerial: In fantasy campaigns, floating cities, winged creatures, may exist. Humans might find a winged race coming into conflict with their kingdoms—a war with a race of winged elves, creatures that might control the weather like storm giants (wreaking more havoc), or monstrous creatures like Dragons could end up battling the surface dwellers.

Sylvian/Faerie: In fantasy campaigns, there might be isolated wooded areas that are home to races of civilizations such as treants, dryads, sprites, pixies, or other natural or wee folk. Conflict can occur when the two civilizations encroach on each other—going into an "enchanted forest" is a risky business, especially if you plan on taking the timber.

Other: With the existence of other planes and spheres, depending on the campaign, there could be natural nexus points to other spheres—alternate worlds, etc—for example the mountain peak leads to the realms of otherworldly humanoids. If one can just walk through to these other realms, they might come into conflict if in close proximity.

Other: Not included on the random determination table, but offered here for consideration by the game master whose world setting is of grand scope are two further war options, Intercontinental and Worldwide conflicts:

Intercontinental: Wars between continents will involve titanic battles where entire pantheons clash, causing that part of the world to explode into chaos and violence. Kingdoms will fall, and empires will crumble. This sort of setting is perfect for PCs who are a part of a mercenary band, or who fight for one kingdom, defending it against all odds against the forces of evil and destruction in the world. Naval combat is common in intercontinental war and provides a good opportunity for the GM to break out his knowledge of seafaring vessels and nautical warfare. But don't get too mired down in the details of tactical movements and war strategy, unless it is the PCs themselves who are making such decisions on behalf of their kings and commanders. This theme works very well for high-level play.



Also, rather than the clash of empires between two continents, it could be a matter of a civilized society invading the untamed wilds of a land populated only by savages and prehistoric beasts, such as dinosaurs.

Worldwide: A world war in the sword and sorcery genre involves the clash of both mortal and supernatural forces, with the fate of the entire planet at stake. The themes should be big: Good versus Evil and Law versus Chaos. A war might be waged between men and dragons, or between the more ambitious and aggressive (not to mention prolific) humans versus the humanoids of the world. Low-level adventurers can get in the action for the long haul; their ultimate

goal being to prevail over ancient evil, saving the world from doom prophesied by sages of old.

MOTIVATIONS

Assimilation: If the dominant culture happens to be an aggressive, conquering and expansionistic empire that feels its culture and mores are the de facto best in the world, this spells trouble for the neighboring lands. The PCs might be forced into the role of rebel, if their homeland is taken over by a foreign people who expects the local populace to convert to its gods and way of life. This motivation promotes an overall campaign theme of rebellion, and works well with conflicts of any size.

Destruction: Sometimes an empire cares not to assimilate their neighbors, but to destroy them utterly. Pillaging and destroying their neighboring countries is the law of such an evil kingdom or empire. A nation that worships gods of war, or is led by humanoids or other monstrous creatures bent on destroying all of humanity, fits quite well into a racial conflict theme.

Holy War: A heresy completely out of control, creating powerful sects supporting gods and goddess which are alien to the Lords Temporal and Spiritual of the people in power instantly can trigger a jihad or holy war against the infidels who would dare break with tradition and offend the gods. It is advisable that the PCs be on the side of the stronger pantheon of gods. But, occasionally. the underdog can win the struggle. The theme can be one of internal persecution of cults and sects, or a clash of worshippers between differing pantheons of gods. Normally, such a campaign would consist primarily of PCs faithful to one deity or pantheon.

Insurrection: Civil war, a peasant revolt, or a war between nobility and ecclesiastical powers are common themes to a fantasy campaign. The theme of insurrection is invoked by any revolt against civil authority, and whenever the PCs challenge an established government. The overlap between insurrection and assimilation is natural, in that a conquering nation or a change in leadership quickly can spark a revolt. Other conditions that cause insurrection are disasters which threaten the survival of the average persons living off the land; especially, if the priesthood and nobility withdraw to save their own hides without aiding the common man.

Invasion: With this sort of conflict, the theme revolves around the various kingdoms of the land likely banding together to assuage or neutralize disaster created by some alien; either a supernatural or other-dimensional invading force. The invading force might come from other planes of existence, and could be infernal or celestial in nature. That force also could be coupled with a rival pantheon or elemental powers, or hale from some distant, mysterious land or island. The threat might be local or continental in scope. And, if the invasion is covert, the attack might take the guise of other sorts of conflict (as in the alien force being doppelgangers and replacing the nobility).

Integration: The conquering nation could be generally benign, possessing a more enlightened morality and/or bringing a pantheon of basically good, aligned gods into a land dark and twisted by evil gods and bands of depraved, sub-human denizens. Against this sort of backdrop. the PCs could find themselves fighting to cleanse the land via the systematic removal of negative forces.

Occupation: Here is the middle ground between a conquering nation attempting to assimilate the culture of the lands it overtakes and wiping out everything with incredible violence and destruction. The new rulers of the defeated might not care to acknowledge the previous culture, nor actively persecute those who hold sympathies for the old order. The individual doesn't matter at all, in fact. But those who would dare to claim rights for themselves and/or speak out against the sovereign authority of these occupiers will be dealt with in the most brutal methods available to the imagination. Too often, such occupations are achieved under the pretense of "peace keeping" or disposing of a tyrannical leader by a so-called benevolent aggressor for the good of the whole region. What is most often the case is that one tyrant simply is replaced by another, until some insurrection lead by the heroes takes place.

It is perfectly reasonable, however, to set up a campaign theme where the PCs are fighting for a nation that is expansionist; and, therefore, perpetually at war without being consummately evil. Death and destruction are byproducts of what might be a legitimate grab for resources and geopolitical strategies which simply make sense for the survival of the empire or kingdom. The PCs could be on the front lines of those expansionist armies; engaging in espionage and small skirmishes on the sidelines of major battles, or dealing with the consequences of those who sympathize with the conquered back in the homeland, taking down would be troublemakers.

Resources: Battles over water sources, arable and/or defensible land, or regions rich in natural ores and gemstones are commonplace economic reasons for war. Some evil nations will invade another state to abduct their commoners; men, women, and children destined to be pressed into slavery. Sometimes, sadly, outright pillaging is the chief motivation of localized wars.

UNUSUAL ASSAILANTS

Ancient Evil: A rather gloomy situation is provided by a previously well-ordered world in which the gods are being subdued by an older generation of deities that has awakened from a long, deep slumber to reclaim the earth for its own. The problem is that the ancients wish to feed on the souls of mortals rather than cultivate them as worshippers. And their allies are the most horrible, demonic creatures ever encountered on the planet. Such a background theme is Lovecraftian (Cthulhu Mythos), but made interesting when a war breaks out between the Ancient Ones and the various Pantheons of the world. As a subtext, this theme has a cosmic imbalance, with the chief motivation of the invasion being the destruction of all good and/or law.

Monstrous: A great flight of dragons, obliterating entire town and cities, turning the night sky into an inverted cauldron of fire and smoke. Huge beasts tunneling up from the depths of the earth to ravage the land. A great monster of ancient horror and nearly incomprehensible power awakening from an age-old sleep and sending its minions to do its dirty work. Sea monsters taking down an entire armada of ships. Were they summoned by some insane wizard? Are they a punishment sent by the gods? The PCs are forced to contend with these forces or face their own demise, along with that of civilization as a whole.

Barbarian Horde: Hordes of wild-eyed barbarians crashing in waves against the kingdom borders; burning, raping, pillaging, destroying entire villages. Whether human antagonists of the nature of the Huns, Mongols, or Tartars, or bands of gnolls, goblins or orcs, the effect is the same. The borderlands of any kingdom require protection from the marauding hordes of bandits, primitive tribes and goblinoids. This sort of theme supports a "seek and destroy" type of campaign well, in which the PCs are conscribed to hunt down the dire forces of invaders threatening the borders of their homeland or another ordinarily peaceful state.

CATACLYSM

Cosmic Imbalances: The age old conflict between Good and Evil and/or Law and Chaos can be the overarching theme of any campaign. In the case of a cosmic imbalance, one side has the upper hand and is threatening to tip the entire balance of the world out of whack. Maybe the force of chaos is so strong, and the influence of those gods so powerful, that the powers of the gods of law are getting hedged out and the natural order of the world is starting to go haywire. Gravity begins to operate abnormally, the weather patterns begin to go out of whack. Or, conversely, the force of law are so favored that the powerful are able to predict nearly everything that will happen in the future, making everybody lacking such knowledge pay dearly. Sometimes, quests to right the balance will involve a number artifacts or challenging the existing order of the government and the reigning pantheon of gods. But such goals usually are "incarnate" in one dominant power versus pockets of resistance representative of the other order. The struggle between good and evil is implicit in nearly all sword and sorcery, becoming only a major theme when one evil empire or race threatens to take over everything of importance to the PCs and their allies.

Deital Strike Against Lords Temporal: Under most circumstances, the gods agree to disagree on many matters, allowing the mortals to duke it out on the prime material plane. To fully manifest on the earthly plane and lead their followers to some Final Battle is not likely to be in the interest of any deital being. But, sometimes, the nobility become so corrupt that the gods might decide to wipe them out; a little proverbial "house cleaning." Warrior clergy killing nobility in the name of the One True Faith in a city whose leaders betray the interests of the patron deity is the theme.

Deital Strike Against Lord Spiritual: Sometimes, the gods can be rough on their clergy. Failure to follow through with a holy command, to properly organize and lead the temple, to defend its monks, and/or to help the weak and underprivileged, sometimes means that the priest or entire temple will be stripped of their granted spells and divine favor. A priesthood stripped of its powers probably would be extremely reluctant to admit their folly to the Lords Temporal for fear of being deposed. If the infraction was severe, the punishment could be showy; a reminder the gods' power to destroy their mortal followers in a heartbeat. Who is to protect them if not their gods? Imagine the cities principle temple suddenly engulfed by fire, exploding in a shower of stone from a thunder bolt hurled from the heavens on a clear day by Zeus (who controls lighting, thunder, and rain), Thor (the Norse god of thunder), or Raiden (the Japanese god of thunder and lightning). The possibilities for adventure in the ensuing chaos are endless.

Deities as Instigators of war: Wars between deities commonly are battled out between those living on the mortal plane. Hesitant about fully manifesting themselves on the earth, the deities avoid direct confrontation with each other by sending their warrior clergy to resolve their differences on the battlefield. Sometimes. the clash is between two deities of differing alignment within a pantheon. At other times, even deities of similar alignment squabble for dominance over that most precious of resources: the faith of their followers. The military aspirations of deities can draw the Lords Temporal into a larger conflict if the reasons for war involve the interests of the state's patron deity.

Impending Doom: Total destruction, or certain doom, such as getting caught in the devastation caused by the worst of volcanic eruptions, is not an "exciting" event for player-characters; especially, if they have no access to mass teleport spells. Obviously, certain doom ought to be avoided by GMs wishing to continue their campaign. Exploring a devastated city like Pompeii might be fun, but sadistically burying the hapless PCs under a ton of volcanic ash, or obliterating them in a shower of meteorites, whether from natural or supernatural causes, is just too depressing. Impending doom is quite another matter. Any sort of doom that the PCs might prevent is a great theme for adventure. For example, if the land is under threat of a prophesied disaster, preordained by an ancient curse of the gods, there are plenty of seeds for adventure. It could become the charge of the PCs to enlist aid from priests of rival pantheons and nations to prevent such disasters, or dispose of the errant and possibly heretical priesthood whose actions threaten the land.

Interplanetary Conflicts: Some campaigns feature several planets interconnected by an unscientific sort of outer space, a place of vast emptiness where there might still be breathable air and wind. Magical flying airships travel between the slowly revolving planets. Themes of interplanetary pirates on huge flying warships threatening trade leads to interesting adventures, but is not a general feature of the milieu assumed in this book.

Pantheon Wars: Outright war between the Aztec, Norse, Greek, Egyptian, Japanese, Chinese, and innumerable other possible divine pantheons might be the reason behind continental, intercontinental, or a world war between cultures. If the gods manifest themselves on the planet during these wars, then all hell breaks loose. The difference between a pantheon war and deities as instigators of war is that, in the latter case, the subtext is not total annihilation of the other ethnic group. Because the deities are real and powerful, Pantheon wars aren't likely to be fought on the stage of some intellectual revolution. Wars between pantheons usually are genocidal toward a particular ethnicity, race, or sub-race.

BOOK TWO
STORY ROLES

Sow a thought, and you reap an act;
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.
~ Samuel Smiles

FEATURED ROLES

Once one or more background events are chosen, it's time to determine the major and minor characters featured in the work at hand, be it a module or a campaign. Each non-player character created will serve a definite story role; be it patron, ally, neutral party, hinderer, competitor, enemy, or wild card. Each of these roles is a generalization, independent of race and character type. A single adventure might well incorporate all of these roles; which would be commonplace within a highly politicized game. Or, the adventure possibly will feature only a few, major NPC roles, as with the typical short scenario such as a dungeon crawl.

Once the number and the types of roles to be featured are selected, it's important to consider which of those roles emerge from the background events. Such context can add depth to each non-player character. However, these story-roles do not require background events to serve their purpose. Although each role is archetypal, many of the more complex NPCs will not fit neatly into just one function, and might serve many roles over the course of a campaign. Good sense and planning can aid in anticipating how many roles a single non-player character will encompass.

The first question to ask is, "under what conditions will these NPCs fulfill their roles"? And secondly, "what race, sex, age, character class, socioeconomic class, goals and motivations make sense for a character shaped by the circumstances chosen in Book One?" Choices to answer that question are presented in Book Three, in the next section.

The first question can be answered in part by assigning each non-player character to circumstantial triggers covering the three major types of encounter, role-playing, combat, and problem-solving. Triggers are contingencies requiring certain actions or conditions before being actualized in play. Sometimes, they are written in advance; bound to a planned encounter in a series of "if-then" statements. And, other times, they are unbound from any predestined event; a random encounter actualized only if stumbled upon by the player characters.

Here we speak only of triggers concerning NPC reactions. Triggers bound to planned rather than random encounters dictate non-player character response to certain player character actions or other conditions. While it's impossible to list all of the possible combinations of action and reaction in non-player character encounters, all triggers follow the basic format of "IF this happens, THEN the NPC(s) reacts in such a way". Consider it a basic guide to behavior when arbitrating the interactions during an encounter. It's no more complicated than that.

It's simple to create triggers unbound from predestined encounters. In such cases, it's only certain actions, including skill or ability use, which lead to encounters with NPCs of the chosen story-role. In other words, unbound triggers are contingencies depending on specific player character actions.

Some unbound-trigger ideas are given in the descriptions below. And each of them is associated with a major story-role. The ideas are just examples of dozens of possibilities, but should adequately spark the brainstorming process. Note that actions which trigger or "activate" the given story-role may not initiate an immediate encounter with the non-player character. Sometimes, even though the NPC's story-role has been activated, he will operate surreptitiously; affecting subtle changes, or setting up traps and hazards from "behind the scenes". Also, skills and abilities most useful in direct encounters with each type are given.

Below are listed the roles and their accompanying story functions (hook, obstacle, or prospect), most common to a fantasy RPG. Brief descriptions of the role within the context of major background considerations are given, plus some example skills and actions relevant to triggering an encounter with that type of NPC. Note that "peacetime" is a deliberately vague and entirely relative term; meaning only that conflict past and present have no influence on, or significance to, the current adventure. At any point, the GM might decide to introduce plot elements derived from events of the distant past. Or the game master might opt to set up a political, social, military or supernatural event for the near future which will impact the attitudes and involvement of all major characters in the game, player and nonplayer alike.

Roll on the table below to randomly determine generic story-roles for the adventure. Each story-role considered can kick-start the process of fleshing out one major or minor non-player character. Catering to a "kick in the door" play style might require featuring only a single story-role, such as enemy, while "deep immersion" style play could feature dozens of NPCs filling all story-roles conceivable. A character is considered major when his interaction with, or influence upon, the heroes (whether the result is benign or helpful or malign and hurtful) is anticipated to be prominent. A minor character is, of course, less prominent in terms of interaction and/or influence. But, whether a character is major and minor should not dictate his degree of difficulty in overcoming that individual in terms of combat prowess. Other, less significant monsters and NPCs will be subordinate to a single encounter; and, hence, require no special treatment here. Regardless of the number of times rolled, once the major and minor roles are chosen, go to the next section and, using the story-role descriptions below as a guide to further selection, link story-roles to desired character types and motivations in Book Three of this work.

Random Story-Role Determination

01-15	Ally
16-29	Competitor
30-43	Enemy
44-57	Hinderer
58-72	Neutral
73-86	Patron
87-00	Wild Card

ALLY

Hooks: Friend in Need. **Obstacle:** n/a. **Prospects:** any.

An ally is a non-player character outside the control of the player characters, who usually aids the heroes by joining the party, or by providing equipment, useful information, or shelter. An NPC might become an ally through common causes or personal friendships, but cannot be coerced into service or ordered about like a hireling or cohort. An ally can represent the prospect for support through funding or equipment, fellowship through joining a guild or association, or by providing knowledge inac-

cessible by normal means. He or she can serve as the hook to an adventure under the premise of a friend in need (see plot hooks).

Allies should not be used by the game master as a means to bail the PCs out of trouble; as such, becoming functionaries of Deus Ex Machina. Only an inept GM will allow allies to become the primary movers and shakers of the ongoing campaign. Allies ought to support the adventurers in their efforts without eclipsing their deeds. But, the GM should not allow an ally to be taken for granted. An ally, whether the association is born of treaty or friendship, quickly can become an inhibitor to success; or even an enemy, if mistreated or disrespected by the PCs, especially if they belong to the upper class or ranks high in the criminal underclass.

In games focusing on political strife, an ally is likely to be an individual of some real influence or authority, and one who sides with the PCs on any major conflicts. If not an overlord or king in his or her own right, the ally will help the PCs in dealing with petty officials, aid in bypassing bureaucratic red tape, and may grant access to important people in any socio-economic tier, including masters within the criminal underclass. Common types of political allies include ambassadors, ecclesiastics, nobles, government officials, scholars, high-ranking soldiers, the head of assassin or thief guilds, and spies.

During disasters, the best allies often are those with healing powers, or further information on how to quell the danger. Common types of allies to be found during times of disaster include: watchmen and soldiers to help keep the peace; rangers to aid in locating the identifying or warning of nature's fury; sages and scholars holding wisdom on prevention or correction of disastrous events; seers to forewarn; wizards and clerics to cast spells which protect from the elements; malign magical energies; friendly criminals willing to disarm traps; a benefactor to lend financial aid to efforts of stemming the tide of destruction; deital proxies to help protect the PCs from supernatural evils.

Through social upheaval, an ally to the player characters is any sympathizer of influence within the society undergoing massive change. Whatever attitude PCs demonstrate toward current cultural upheavals are likely to be shared by an ally who has some influence in the state or empire. This influence could be political clout, general prestige in society, or some type of influence achieved through infamy and rebellion against the establishment.

In wartime, it's necessary that the ally support those combatants favored by the player characters. If not serving in the capacity of a patron or mentor (which is another story role), he or she is likely to be a source of knowledge about the abilities and movements of the enemy, and apt to support the heroes with such things as equipment, money, healing, food, magic, transportation or obtaining hirelings. Wartime allies, outside of the standard classes and orders, frequently are guard captains, counselors, military generals, knights, seneschals, sergeants, sheriffs, or stewards of the realm.

In the face of a cataclysm, an ally is one who recognizes the threat and is brave enough to aid in furthering the goals of the PCs, thereby avoiding doom. Such an ally might not be accepted in society, could be considered mentally "unhinged," or could be an authority heralding the need for heroic action in order to stem the tide of evil and destruction. Allies faced with a cataclysm, or any End of the World scenario include augurs, clerics, deital proxies, experts, fanatics, hierarchs, holy warriors, oracles, and wizards.

Throughout peacetime, an ally simply is any non-player character who offers support, knowledge, or fellowship to the PCs. It's assumed that such interest in the adventurers is due to common interest, as opposed to competition or misdirection. Such an ally might give the player characters opportunities for all sorts of exploits.

Triggers unbound from destined encounters:

Role-Playing: IF the player characters actively seek support, information, fellowship, or specialized equipment, THEN they will encounter a potential ally, an encounter involving a prospect

Problem-Solving: IF the player characters are in need of an ally to help them in event of political strife, disasters, social upheaval or cataclysms, THEN they must utilize the most appropriate skills or abilities to find and convince the appropriate NPCs to help them.

Combat: IF the player characters fight bravely and demonstrate themselves to be heroes, they might attract the attention of some potential ally. THEN they must use the appropriate skills to recognize the potential ally when approached.

Skills and Abilities applicable to encounters with allies include:

D20 skills: Diplomacy (for making allies), Bluff (to seek a potentially short-lived ally), Gather Information (to find a suitable ally), Forgery (to get falsified access to a potential ally).

LA Abilities: Chivalry, Commerce, Evaluation, Learning, Luck, Planning, Pretense, Theurgy, Tricks, Urbane.

COMPETITOR

Hooks: Legends and Rumors (your competitor wants same prize), Nuisance, NPC Grudge, Sudden Attack, Calamitous Threat. **Obstacles:** any. **Prospects:** n/a.

A competitor is a non-player characters who is a rival of one or more of the PC team that is likely jealous of one of the hero's accomplishments, envies their fame or riches, and doggedly is attempting to thwart or outdo their deeds. However, sometimes the envy is not so strong as to cause bitterness and hostility, since a an honest (good, aligned) NPC will compete fairly. A good competitor will avoid allowing rivalry to endanger the other party, but still might create predicaments which are mischievous and could set down red herrings, false clues to mislead the PCs. This sort of competitor makes the most sense in relation to Story Hooks involving legends and rumors of treasure. In this case, both parties are attempting to be the first to reach the prized item or information.

But evil persons will attempt to undermine the efforts of the PCs in whatever means are at their disposal, including the most despicable sort. Competitors might attempt to waylay the heroes, or use their Abilities of Pretense, Stealing, Stealth, Tricks, or even Divination to thwart them. Devious and intelligent competitors will attempt to spread lies about the player characters, possibly causing them enduring disrepute until they are able to



clear their names; which even can become a Story-Hook like Mistaken Identity, or lead to an NPC Grudge.

Malign competitors often will set diversionary fires, literally and figuratively speaking, creating exigencies to draw the PCs away from their major goals. An NPC, person or competitive group of persons that constantly are creating diversions set against the heroes' goals can constitute a story-hook, being the nuisance.

In games focusing on political strife, a competitor will be another non-player character or association of them vying for favor with those persons of influence, clout, and power. Or, the competitors will be those who attempt to undermine all of the efforts of those factions or individuals that the player characters would support, engaging in a vicious game of quid pro quo. This will be an individual or group whose ultimate aims usually are not as noble as those held by the PCs. Common types of political competitors are: Other adventurers seeking glory and treasure; bards who flatter key personages with music and word in an attempt to turn their favor; bounty hunters who seek to find ransomed individuals before the player characters can rescue them; devotees of rival associations and/or guilds; religious sects at odds with the PCs patron gods; fanatic supporters of a broken royal lineage; nobles who love to play "real-life" chess with the player characters; politicians who don't support the same factions; spies and turncoats.

During disasters, the competitors often are those who seek to hoard glory and fame for themselves, taking all of the credit for the accomplishments of the PCs. A competitor might steal information or items retrieved by the player characters and then proceed to "save the day" with those same, hard-won things. Common types of competitors to be found during times of disaster: Adventurers; bards; bounty hunters; rogue glory-hounds; common soldiers; deceitful mountebanks.

Through social upheaval, a competitor is any creature of power and influence within the state that is unsympathetic with the catalysts of change. Whatever attitude is held by the player characters toward cultural upheavals will not be held by these non-player characters, who will try to undermine any efforts toward technological or intellectual progress in the land. Any progress, that is, which does not support the power structure of the association, guild, or order of the NPC and his allies.

In wartime, the competitor will support whatever side the player characters fight against, although he is often surreptitious in his efforts to backstab and confound. If not directly acting as the enemy (another story role), he or she is apt to be a source of misinformation about the abilities and movements of the primary foe. Or he might attempt to destroy the heroes' equipment, food, and transportation, or remove access to money and healing. A wartime competitor might try to outbid or outmaneuver the PCs when attempting to hire local mercenaries. Wartime competitors, outside of the standard classes and orders, frequently are assassins whose targets are not the player characters themselves; augurs whose visions serve the masters of the enemy, pirates who act like vultures taking the spoils of war, spies, sorcerers, or thieves gathering information for the enemy.

In the face of a cataclysm, a competitor is one who recognizes the threat and attempts to solve the problem without the help of the player characters. Such competitors might become formidable enemies; especially if they are so fierce in their efforts that they seriously threaten the lives of the PCs. Competitors seeking to become "Stemmers of Doom" usually are fanatics. Common types of non-player characters within this role are clerics, paladins, crazy adventurers of all classes and orders, holy warriors, lunatics, or a jealous tyrant who cannot abide any but his hand-picked heroes averting what appears to be certain doom (how naive is that?).

Throughout peacetime, a competitor simply is any non-player characters who attempts to counteract any prospects for support, knowledge, or fellowship that the player characters may have. It's assumed that such interest in the adventurers is due to common interest, fostering direct competition. Such a competitor might have been given the same opportunities as the PCs; and, accordingly, the two parties could find themselves racing each other to the finish line.

Triggers unbound from destined encounters:

Role-Playing: IF publicly accepting a mission when others were rejected from performing the same task—especially if accompanied by much fanfare—THEN a jealous competitor may arise.

Problem-Solving: IF the player characters are not careful to cover their tracks when investigating something, THEN a competitor may take advantage of information gathered and try to beat them to the destination or goal.

Combat: IF the heroes eliminate all combat-oriented obstacles and then are forced to rest, THEN their competitors might take advantage by hurrying on to the goal or destination to claim the prize as the PCs languish.

Skills and Abilities applicable to encounters of this type are:

D20 skills: Engendering envy and, therefore, sparking competition (rather than simple admiration) on the part of an onlooker or investigator: Bluff, Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Disable Device, Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge or profession, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Spellcraft, and Survival.

LA Abilities: Engendering envy and therefore sparking competition (rather than simple admiration) on the part of an onlooker or investigator: Chivalry, Commerce, Creativity, Evaluation, Hunt, Learning, Planning, Pretense, Tricks, Urbane, Waylaying, Weapons.

ENEMY

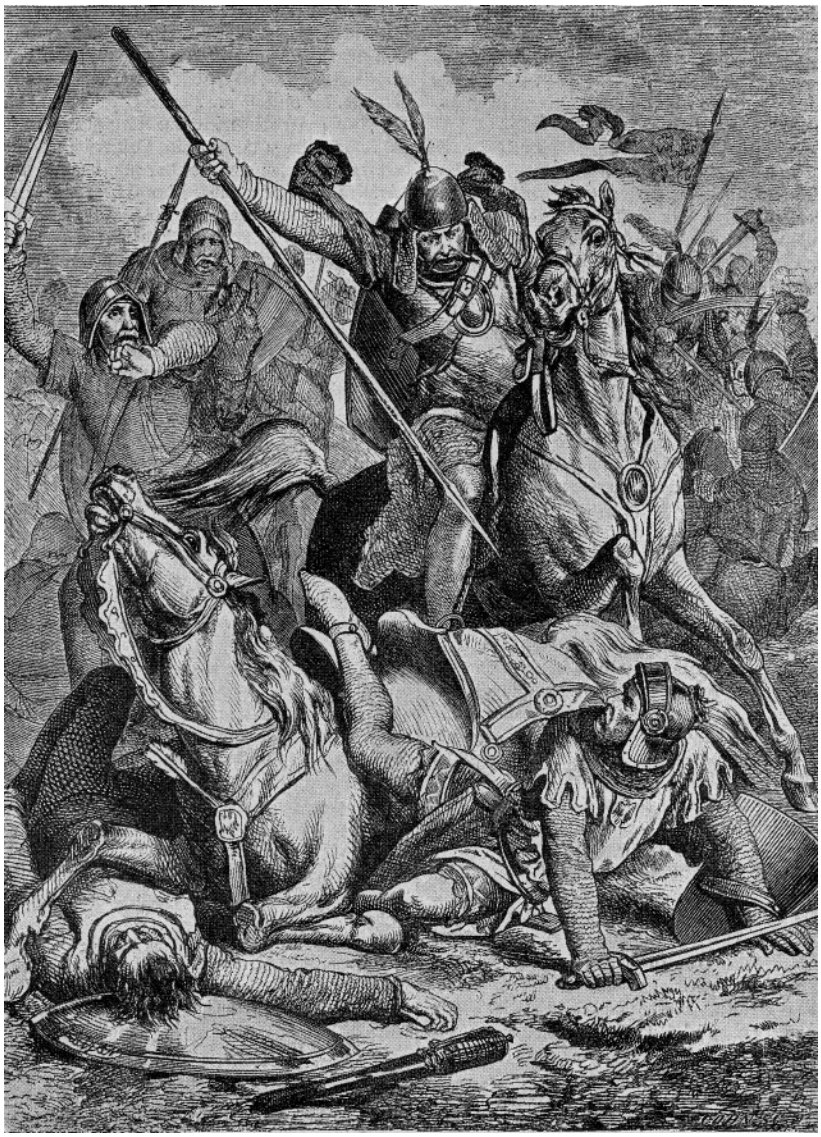
Hooks: Sudden Attack, Calamitous Threat, NPC Grudge, Vengeful Foe. **Obstacles:** any. **Prospects:** n/a.

An enemy non-player character, as one filling a specific story-role, is considered to be either a major or minor antagonist. If major, he/she/it prominently will be featured in the plot. If minor, he is one step above "cannon fodder", but still is more significant to the plot than a born-to-die combatant. A true enemy wishes to injure, confound, cause the downfall of, or outright slay his opponents. Note that the difference between a competitor and an enemy is, in general, the level of personal animosity, desire to do evil, or sadistic tendencies directed at the PCs. However, a competitor role can evolve into a full-blown enemy in time, if his jealousy, envy, and greed increase.

Not all enemies are pure evil. Some actually are good at heart but terribly misguided, or just plain stupid, following orders blindly, or adhering to false precepts told to them by their evil masters. Such precepts, although lies, can goad good NPCs into the role of antagonist, if only temporarily. Other types of enemies are not evil per se, but creatures of chaos, enjoying the thrill of conflict and the challenging career of promoting havoc. Then, there always are the pure villains to consider; the evil wizards, warriors, humanoids, and dragons of the world, all of whom wish to subjugate or destroy whatever they find displeasing in the world.

So, an enemy probably is the mastermind behind the obstacles that trouble the player characters; or, perchance, merely an immensely evil person or creature that threatens the populace and deserves to be slain. Either way, the principle antagonists usually are behind the scenes of inciting incidents leading into adventures, if not the direct catalysts by means of sudden attacks (a story-hook function). An enemy either will attack the PCs directly, or go after those people or places which the heroes care most about, depending on motivations. The rising action of any adventure almost always will involve obstacles created by the enemies of the player characters. After all, it's difficult to have an escapade with no living antagonists, unless the entire story involves a maze of inanimate traps and no monsters. If the NPC considered is a minor enemy, he or she probably is a minion of some greater foe, and is likely to be slain at the hands of the PCs should he cross their path, i.e. low Challenge-Rating cannon fodder.

In games focusing on political strife, the enemies can be powerful subversives existing within the state; individuals or monsters who wish to undermine or overthrow the existing government. Sometimes, the enemy will be working clandestinely, organizing into cabals, or criminal networks. Or, the enemy might be involved in the government openly as hostile political rivals to the established temporal and/or spiritual lords. Examples of such types include: Diabolists, sorcerers and vile summoners who wish to replace the sovereign people with demons and devils, thus ushering in an epoch of evil; followers of evil deities, clerics or devotees whose sacred duty it is to subvert any just, ruling class; religious hierarchs who wish to replace the official pantheon or deity of the state; mages who wish to establish a mageocracy, and so on. Anarchists, supporters of despotism, or advocates of theocracy under a single evil deity are all prime examples of political enemies.



Regarding disasters, the enemies probably are those critters who themselves are the cause of the environmental ruin. Examples include: Floods caused by weather magic or elementals on a rampage; earthquakes caused by angry clerics or large monsters tunneling under a town or city; tidal waves, caused by sea monsters, which crash into a city; enraged deities seeking to destroy a city. Or, the magic of an elementalist could cause a town to erupt into flames. Alternatively, there could be: Droughts and famine caused by curses; supernatural drainage of the land; environmental havoc caused by dimensional vortexes; hurricanes and/or tornados caused by incantation; a variety of disasters caused by the innate abilities of dragons, giants, or gods. And so on.

Through social upheaval, an enemy is one who: (A) reacts violently and without compromise against those who support technologies and ideas which prove subversive to the government; (B) carelessly supports technologies or ideas which are, in fact, horribly dangerous to society, and promotes such ideas through a tangle of lies, leadership skills, and flashy showmanship. Such a person or creature need not be a lord. The enemy could be any loyalist to the traditional order, or a charismatic rebel with a hazardous idea or technology to promote. Examples of this type include: Soldiers and guardsmen loyal to the conservative elements in government who fear change; mad, gnomish inventors; mountebanks and like masterless folk, including gypsies selling snake-oil to the populace. Or, the enemy could be druids, rangers, foresters, barbarians, and savages who wish to overthrow the government, destroy civilization, and herald in an age of "harmony with nature." Ah, the noble savage! After all, nobody said that an "intellectual" revolution must involve rational ideas. Or, consider cults holding beliefs considered heretical by the dominant ecclesiastical order: False seers who predict radical societal change and exhort their followers to make those predictions come true.

In wartime, the chief enemies in the story usually are not the generals of clashing armies, because fantasy RPGs normally don't require that the player characters deal with mass combat. Unless the game is about military conquest and tactics, the game master should ensure that the enemies remain pitted against the immediate goals of the PCs, whatever those objectives may be. That said, adventures set against the dark, and bloody backdrop of war are exciting (exciting, that is, as long as the good guys win the battles). And, although player characters typically are not expected to engage in mass combat, such a backdrop serves well as a basis for adventure. Involving the PCs in the war by means of a Patronal Mandate (Story-Hook) is acceptable; possibly, to assassinate a high-ranking individual of the opponent's army. Otherwise, it's usually not a good idea to pit them against enemies who should be the concern of their own kingdom's generals. After all, any adventuring party that's daring enough to sneak into the encampment of a large army to slay an important official had better be powerful, crazy, or both. Examples of wartime enemies might involve assassins, avengers, clerics of the adversary's deities, soldiers and holy warriors, paladins, rangers and scouts, parasitic rogues, rabble-rousers, spies (including spell-casters), turncoats (off any class or order), wanton murderers, and so on down to "neutral" looters.

In the face of a cataclysm, assuming the PCs want to avoid the catastrophe, an enemy is always in cahoots with those who wish to see the cataclysmic event occur. If not a supporter or sympathizer with agents of the impending cataclysmic event, then the enemy likely is that agent of doom. Examples include: Lunatics who desire the end of the world; powerful chronomancers who want to change history; theurgists worshipping gods of entropy and destruction; crazed spell-casters of all types who threaten the land with their dangerous arcane research and experiments; dragons on the rampage; potent undead; planar outsiders of immense power; deities defeated only via means of a lost artifact.

Throughout peacetime, an enemy remains true to his story-role without his actions being based upon background events. Instead, his antagonism is dictated by a more generic set of personal goals and motivations, tailored so that conflict with the aims of the adventuring group becomes inevitable. For example, spurned and angry ex-lovers might wish to see unrequited love avenged. But, even if there are not major past or present events to consider, background events chosen to occur in the future easily are intertwined with the enemies' principle interests and goals, all in advance.

Triggers unbound from destined encounters:

Role-Playing: IF the adventurers anger or antagonize a minion, ally, or associate of the potential enemy, THEN that non-player characters will take notice and react accordingly. This is a prime example of an unbound trigger easily leading into a Story-Hook involving NPC Grudge, Sudden Attack (albeit in reaction to some perceived slight), or Vengeful Foe.

Problem-Solving: IF the heroes decide to trust a "mole" (an apparent ally who actually is an enemy minion engaging in espionage), THEN the major enemies will know their plans in advance, perhaps leading to an ambush.

Combat: This is the most common encounter trigger of them all. All random combat encounters are triggers unbound from specific key locations, although they are usually restricted to a certain region or level of a dungeon. Actions which can trigger an encounter with a hitherto unidentified enemy are countless, but the most basic example is the acceptance of almost any story-hook. Wherever and whenever conflict is to be found, an antagonist is sure to follow. So, as a general rule, IF the PCs choose a path of conflict (which is inevitable in a RPG, right?), THEN somebody will violently resist their involvement and ultimate success.

Skills and Abilities applicable to encounters of this type are:

D20 skills: Gather information and various knowledge (to learn of a potential enemy) Sense Motive (to discern an enemy). Bluff (if failed, angering the one who would've been duped), Diplomacy (if failed, botching etiquette, angering the host, forgetting the cultural sensitivities, etc), Disguise (if failed, discovered), Forgery (if failed, discovered as fraudulent), Intimidate (when failing or even successful...how better to make enemies?).

LA Abilities: Chivalry (identifying enemies who threaten ones honor), Divination (to learn of an enemy), Evaluation (to discern an enemy), Pretense (used to discover the lies of an enemy), Waylaying, and Combat Abilities. Tricks (dirty tricks win people few friends).

HINDERER

Hooks: Enigmatic Stranger, Nuisance, NPC Grudge. **Obstacles:** Hazard, or Predicament. **Prospects:** n/a.

The role of the hinderer is to impede the progress of the heroes. The hinderer is one who will place traps, or consciously (or even unconsciously) create predicaments for the player characters to face. The hinderer usually represents some sort of obstacle within the story; though, usually, not one involving battle. He is the sort of character who will create indirect barriers; perhaps, through the (mis)use of bureaucracy, or the possession of valuable information or items which he refuses to share. Few hinderers have pleasant personalities, and most are quite selfish. The hinderer could be a mysterious deceiver, one who arrives in town looking to hire heroes, hoping to distract them from the true machinations of evil. But always give the PCs plenty of opportunities to see through red herrings, especially if they're featured as part of a story-hook. Or, a hinderer could be a brigand who takes advantage of the weakness of adventurers as they leave a dangerous locale, such as a dungeon or battlefield. A hinderer might be one who just dislikes the PCs, perhaps out of envy. Most hinderers' goals are not to see the player characters killed but, rather, to revel in their failures, perhaps to see them disgraced or exiled. Possibly the hinderer has the personality of a jealous trickster, who enjoys throwing a curve ball into the plans of any person or group which appears to be too successful.

It does not take much for a character who starts out as a mere hindrance to "upgrade" to the role of competitor or enemy. Sometimes, a hinderer is used as a foil to a cantankerous ally or deceiving enemy. Using a hinderer as a foil is to magnify certain negative or positive characteristics of an important non-player characters; thereby, perhaps, preventing player characters from quickly distinguishing between friend and foe.

In games focusing on political strife, the hinderer usually is a bureaucrat, an unsympathetic noble, or a criminal using diversionary tactics to distract the player characters from achieving any sort of peace. All types of characters will take sides in a civil conflict and, when opposite the PCs' allegiances, will serve in the role of inhibitor. This includes other adventurers, desperados, ecclesiastics, fanatics, politicians, rebels, rogues, or even the local guardsmen.

Regarding disasters, a hinderer is one who does not wish to see the disaster averted or the plight of the populace in any way alleviated. He or she might believe that the disaster was deserved or preordained; and, therefore, dangerous to alter or prevent. Or, the hinderer might feel that the victims of a disaster got what they deserved, for whatever reason. He might have solutions or resources which could be of great service, but steadfastly refuses to share them.

Through social upheaval, a hinderer could be one who does not wish to see a technological or cultural revolution take place. As a traditionalist, he is loathe to relinquish control to these upstarts who think they know what's best for society. Or, as a rebel, he or she will hinder all the efforts of law enforcers who seek to enslave the minds of the populace. Regardless of where the hinderer's sympathies lie, his or her role is to impede the progress of his opposition, either through propaganda or more direct means. Examples include: Ruthless inquisitors; augurs who use their visions to deter; bards who spin tales of dark repute; experts or scholars who refuse to share their knowledge; gypsies and mountebanks seeking fame and fortune at the expense of the PCs; politicians who seek their agendas while sacrificing the innocent; cowardly nobles who keep order through unwarranted fear; spies who hinder by spreading misinformation; vandals who obstruct attempts to rebuild ruins.

In wartime, a hinderer is one who sympathizes with the enemy while remaining on the sidelines of battle. The hinderer could be an advisor to the crown who deliberately gives poor advice that's designed to bring the kingdom to the breaking point, or an insurrectionist who spreads lies about the nobility or the actions of the heroes. A wartime hinderer most often fits the mold of turncoat, coward, deserter on the battlefield, or dishonest scout or spy. Any organized, armed so-called hindrances are better described as minor enemies, even if easily dealt with in combat.

In the face of a cataclysm, a hinderer is a devotee of the forces of chaos or evil; those who which to bring about the destruction of some place, or region that is of significance to the PCs. Such a hinderer might not be an obvious enemy. Rather, he or she usually serves in a minor role and merely acts as the catalyst of misdirection in the plot. Examples include: Seers, oracles or augurs deliberately giving false divinatory advice; a deceptive advisor of any class; an ally or patron who is magically charmed, or generally under the control of a mind-altering agent.

Throughout peacetime, the hinderer is any minor nuisance who deceives the heroes, turns them in the wrong direction against their goals, or refuses to give them information, equipment or support that easily is within his power to provide. Hinderers are the sort of characters who would give tips, or advice to the enemies of the player characters, or those who generally sympathize with the selfish and/or evil personas of the realm. Other types of hinderers are merely annoying, such as beggars or crazed fanatics of any sort who hound the PCs.

Triggers unbound from destined encounters:

Role-Playing: IF the player characters require anything of importance, whether specific items or facts, THEN it is entirely possible that the sole source of desired material is kept by a would-be hinderer; one who is unsympathetic or even slightly hostile to their needs and/or plight.

Problem-Solving: IF the player characters are overly successful in their careers, THEN one or more hinderers may emerge to foil their future actions. These non-player characters might be jealous and petty, but not competitive. Nor must they be underlings of a major enemy. Or, sometimes the motivations of hinderers are entirely mischievous, such as faeries who revel in setting tripwires for those with inflated egos.

Combat: IF the player characters discover hinderers, THEN it is quite possible that they will attack them on the spot. The game master must consider such triggers in advance, if he plans to make hinderers act openly. That said, the role of hinderer is not one which usually involves combat. Once a hinderer becomes a combatant, for all intents and purposes, his status instantly is changed to enemy.

Skills and Abilities applicable to encounters of this type are:

D20 skills: Appraise (revealing that a dishonest NPC is attempting a rip-off), Bluff (if failed, NPC will likely become recalcitrant), Diplomacy (to defeat a hinderer in negotiations, or if failed, inadvertently create a hinderer where there was none before).

LA Abilities: Commerce (to overcome hinderers being swindlers or those who inflate prices), Evaluation (to recognize a hinderer for whom he/she is), Learning (leading to the hinderer who refuses to grant access to needed materials), Mechanics or Metallurgy (knowing what is needed but encountering a hinderer who won't give or sell needed materials), Necrourgy (the stubborn graveyard attendant won't let the necromancer though the gates?) Panprobability (the Avatar knows that a certain hindering NPC holds a necessary key before traveling into another dimension is possible), Pantology (the hinderer holds that last, hard-to-get ingredient or combination, preventing a complete jury-rig), Scrutiny (which might reveal little more than a hinderer who is a master of concealment), Stealing (if failed, prompting an encounter with the city guard), Waterfaring (a aquatic race or mage hinders the vessel's movement over the water).

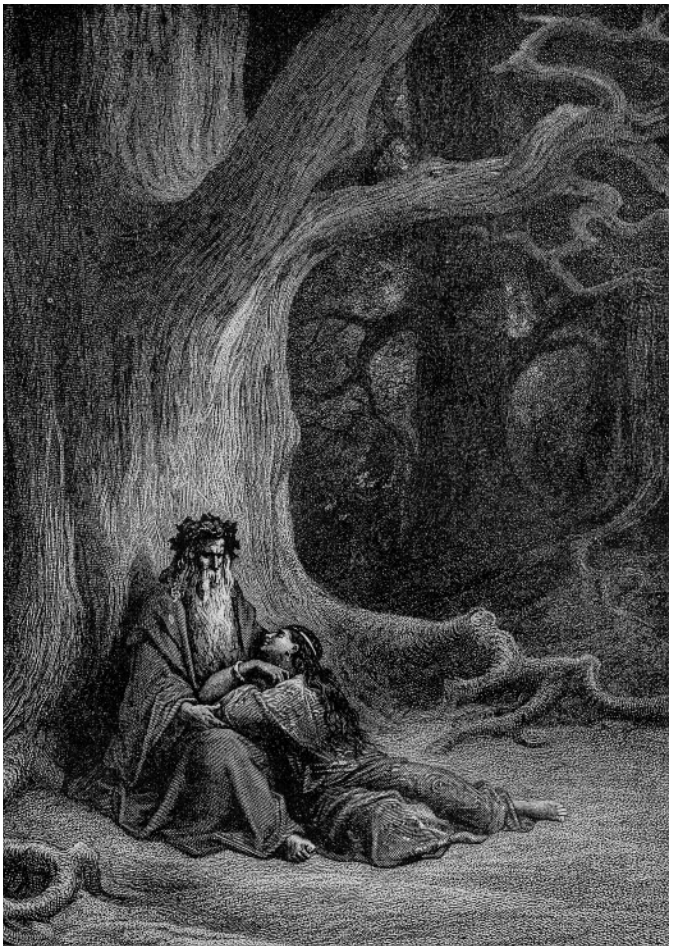
NEUTRAL

Hooks: Legends & Rumors. **Obstacles:** predicament. Prospect, knowledge. **Prospects:** n/a.

A neutral non-player character does not favor or support any side in a dispute, contest, or war. Nor is he or she aligned with specific ideological or political groups. Not to be confused with the character alignment, not all neutral NPCs are "true neutral", or committed to a philosophy of neutrality. The story-role of neutral is rather self-serving and generally avoids dealing with the plight of others. In an adventure, a neutral character might be a commoner of relatively mundane occupation, such as a peasant farmer, local proprietor selling his wares, housekeeper, butler, or cook. Or, more generally, a neutral is any passive, generally disinterested NPC (of any level & class). Commoners sometimes are the victims of public enemies, the unfortunate innocents who find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. But, this is not to say that a neutral character can't be of a different social class, or serve an important role within an adventure. For example, they can be the source of legends and rumors, or the unbiased keepers of knowledge, such as scholars, sages, experts, and seers.

And yet, adventurers attempting to gain local support for their goals can find themselves in a predicament regarding neutrals. This is because any refusal to take sides makes it difficult for heroes to engage in rabble-rousing. Still, it's possible to change a neutral into other story-roles, given sufficient effort and skills like diplomacy or intimidation. Note that a neutral who holds some important item or information but who refuses to give it up due to his professed impartiality is better described as a hinderer.

In games focusing on political strife, neutrals aren't one homogenous group. Individuals on all socio-economic levels will choose a side or remain impartial, more concerned with day to day survival. Hence, neutral non-player characters are of any



type and class, and their story role commonly remains minimal within a political campaign, unless they're used as witnesses, unwilling pawns, or intimidated informants. Dragging a neutral person or creature into political strife is like relying on a wild card. His response will depend on a myriad of factors, including alignment, resources, power, class, etc.

Regarding disasters, neutral non-player characters usually are those innocents most affected by the floods, storms, plagues, droughts, and other terrible events which easily can decimate the population: Foresters and druids trying to protect the woods from fires; an elementalist unjustly blamed for the incident; holders of knowledge with no cause to hinder; clerics of neutral gods who seem coldly disinterested in the suffering of others; or prisoners who escape ruined jails. Opportunists who are neutral in alignment but who choose to loot and/or take advantage of the weakness of the populace are better cast as enemies or hinderers.

Through social upheaval, neutral characters are apolitical, caring in current events only insofar as they are directly affected. Trying to engage neutrals in times of social upheaval is like dealing with wild cards, since they quickly can be converted into the role of hinderers and enemies but are not likely to become allies. Followers, incidentally, usually are not cultivated from the ranks of neutrals because it would contradict the definition of this story-role. As such, followers are passionate individuals, unlikely to be neutral in attitude from the outset. Examples of neutral characters during times of cultural change and social upheaval are disinterested members of the landed gentry, peasants afraid

to "rock the boat", and anyone who sympathizes with the status quo. These people don't care who is in charge as long as their possessions and station remain safe. Opponents of ideas involving the redistribution of wealth are more likely to become major antagonists if the PCs champion socialist ideas (not a smart idea in a feudal society).

In wartime, neutrals are any characters who desperately want to be left out of the fight. They will enter battle to protect their property or families. But, unless bound to military service under their lord, they will be perfectly happy to hunker down and wait out times of trouble. Alas, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to remain neutral in times of war, unless the person is a wandering freeman.

In the face of a cataclysm, neutral characters act as they would during political strife, disasters or other events. "Fix it or leave me alone!" is their typical motto. Even if the threat directly involves them, neutrals often will expect their lords to take care of the problem. Naturally, outside of mandatory military service, there are few heroes to arise from the ranks of neutrals. However, as has been noted previously, more complex NPCs can span many story-roles during a single adventure. So the reader is warned not to get too bogged down in strict boundaries between story-roles.

Throughout peacetime, a neutral non-player character is the usually the commoner on the street; the shopkeeper, stablemaster, innkeeper, and other commonplace personalities to be met in a hamlet, village, town, or city.

Triggers unbound from destined encounters:

Role-Playing: This is an obvious trigger for an encounter: IF the player characters seek common information, equipment, transportation, lodging or anything else of that sort, THEN there always will be some neutral non-player character who offers such a service. The quality of the service is variable. But, if the service is particular poor, or leads the PCs into danger, the NPC encountered probably would become more of a hinderer. And, if the knowledge leads the player characters into unknown danger, or the equipment is cursed, the role is that of an hinderer or enemy, depending on whether the non-player character actually is aware of the peril.

Problem-Solving: IF the player characters use Information Gathering or Learning Ability, THEN neutral non-player characters of all races and classes may be interviewed and encountered. Some of them actually might possess clues, gleaned inadvertently from more important characters. This is a "no-brainer" sort of trigger, but mentioned here for the sake of inclusiveness.

Combat: Neutrals avoid combat with the player characters and their enemies at all costs. But, if dragged into the fight, they can be as dangerous and vicious as any other non-player character. After all, there is no level or power restriction on neutral NPCs. For example, IF the PCs bumptiously demand anything of a neutral, despotic feudal monarchy, THEN they are likely to find themselves threatened with imprisonment or death.

Skills and Abilities applicable to encounters of this type are:

D20 skills: Skills involving aiding individuals, fixing things imperative to the common person, or commerce are important . Appraise, Craft, Heal, Knowledge, Perform, Profession, Sense Motive (to discern a neutral), Survival (aiding bewildered neutrals in times of disaster), Swim (to help one who's drowning), Use Rope (to release neutral prisoners in war, or to restrain potential informants).

LA Abilities:. Chivalry (to establish rank in relation to neutrals encountered), Commerce, Evaluation (to discern neutrals), Hunt (to help a struggling community eat), Learning (to teach the ignorant), Mechanics, Metallurgy, Rustic (to improve husbandry).

PATRON/MENTOR

Hooks: Friend in Need, Legends and Rumors, NPC Grudge, Patronal Mandate, Sudden Attack, Vengeful Foe. **Obstacles**: Predicament. **Prospects:** Support, Fellowship, Knowledge.

The patron or mentor is one of the most useful story-roles within a fantasy role-playing game, and usually is a noble, a high-ranking priest, or a wealthy person. A patron is one who champions the player-characters, granting protection and favor to them in exchange for fealty. Whether acting in the role of wise and trusted counselor, or guardian and protector, or sponsor and benefactor, the patron is one who is both lord and ally to the PCs. When considering story functions, the patron can fulfill any one of the three sorts of prospects, which are financial support, fellowship, and useful knowledge. What sets him or her apart (and, in a sense, above the role of ally) is that the patron becomes a driving force of the campaign who rarely, if ever, feels beholden to the player characters (a fact which can become a character flaw).

In games focusing on political strife, a patron is apt to have some stake in the outcome of the conflict. Whichever side he supports, he expects the player characters to support it as well. This is not always a good thing. In fact, fealty can cause a terrible predicament if whatever the patron supports is against the better judgment of the PCs. This is an idea compatible with the predicaments (as explained in part 5) Onerous Command, Mulish Superior, and Unattainable Goal. But, most of the time, it's better create a patron who is compatible with the goals and ideologies of the principle heroes of the campaign. Otherwise, the patron is practically expected to morph into the role of hinderer; or even, if things really go poorly, an enemy. In times of political strife, patrons usually are high-ranking nobles and ecclesiastics, if not the leaders of "adventurers guilds".

Regarding disasters, patrons are likely to command the player characters to fix the source of the problem. Or, if that is an impossible task, to get the innocents out of the way of trouble, or pluck them from the proverbial quagmire. Such a task might well be thwarted by competitors, evil hinderers who for some reason want to see a great number of people die, or psychotic enemies who are determined to prevent anyone from being saved. Patrons of a powerful sort usually don't accompany the PCs on their adventures. Not only is the Patron busy with the administration of his or her domain, but direct involvement risks overshadowing the deeds of the heroes.

During times of social upheaval, the patron will expect the player characters to sympathize with whatever attitude he holds toward the changes and unrest. Disagreement would come as a great shock, and might threaten the relationship. In the majority

of campaigns, the game master should take care to make compatible the beliefs and general political orientation of a patron and his player-character subjects.

In wartime, the player characters necessarily will support whatever side the Patron favors. The patron might need to send the PCs forth to find allies, seek out other sources of knowledge about the abilities and movements of the enemy, further support the heroes with equipment, money, healing, food, magic, transportation, or serve as a source of hirelings. A patron's resources might be severely stretched. Wartime patrons, if not a king or prelate, include renowned, influential, and/or powerful fighters, mages, rogues, and clerics.

In the face of a cataclysm, a patron is one who recognizes the threat and commands the player characters to sally forth and prevent the coming of catastrophe. The patron might know what actions, items, and/or sacrifices are required to prevent vast demolition and upheaval. Or, he might know the nature and cause of the trouble, but is clueless as to possible solutions. Sometimes, the patron only can intuit the threat, expecting the adventurers to positively identify the warning signs, figure out the true nature and cause of the peril, and then proceed to solve the problem, hence preventing the cataclysmic event. Examples of non-player characters suitable as patrons against a backdrop of cataclysmic events include: Eccentric, paranoid scholars who've been tracking cosmic anomalies for decades; Priests who receive revelations of possible catastrophe; Deital Minions who act as patrons to the PCs but are forbidden by their own masters from directly interceding; kings and emperors terrorized by overwhelming evil on the borders of their kingdom or empire, and desperately in need of heroes to prevent their downfall.

Throughout peacetime, a patron is a source of wealth and valuable experience, attained by quests, which benefits both himself and his heroic subjects. Whether the mission is to find and defeat an enemy, gain underground information, explore uncharted territory, rescue a lost prisoner of war, or retrieve some legendary artifact, the patron remains one of the greatest catalysts to adventure.

Triggers unbound from destined encounters:

Role-Playing: IF the player characters express allegiance to a particular facet of government, THEN a potential patron might take notice (initiating a Prospect encounter).

Problem-Solving: IF the player characters are at odds with their patron on issues of policy, or feel a task they are given is burdensome or even repugnant, THEN they will find themselves in a predicament (initiating a Obstacle encounter and possibly changing the story-role of the Patron. if all does not go well in diplomacy).

Combat: IF the player characters are alert, using D20 skills like sense motive, or LA Abilities such as Evaluation, Pretense or Scrutiny (or Psychogenic Thought Reading Power) THEN they might have the opportunity to prevent an assassination attempt on their patron or mentor.

Skills and Abilities applicable to encounters of this type are:

D20 skills: Bluff (to avoid telling your patron the truth, buying time when the party has failed to complete some facet of a mission) , Diplomacy (always useful in dealing with the patron), Disguise (to gain a patron through pretense...probably, not for long), Escape Artist & general Feats (if the patron wishes to test the skill of a PC in escaping the clutches of the enemy) , Gather Information (an activity a patron is likely to request), Profession or Craft (any which is related to the needs of the patron).

LA Abilities: Chivalry (for dealing with noble patrons), Commerce (for dealing with powerful merchant or rogue patrons), Creativity (for advising), Divination (for giving counsel), Evaluation (for discerning a true patron), Learning (for advising), Minstrelsy (for entertaining...always a plus), Pretense (if trying to dupe or bluff to gain allegiances), Psychogenic (to bravely, or stupidly, read the patron's mind), Theurgy (for dealing with ecclesiastics), Waterfaring (for dealing with patron sea captains or pirates). And abilities useful for relating to a patron of unusual background: Nomadic, Panprobability, Ranging, Rustic, Savagery, or Urbane (to deal with the criminal patron).

WILD CARD

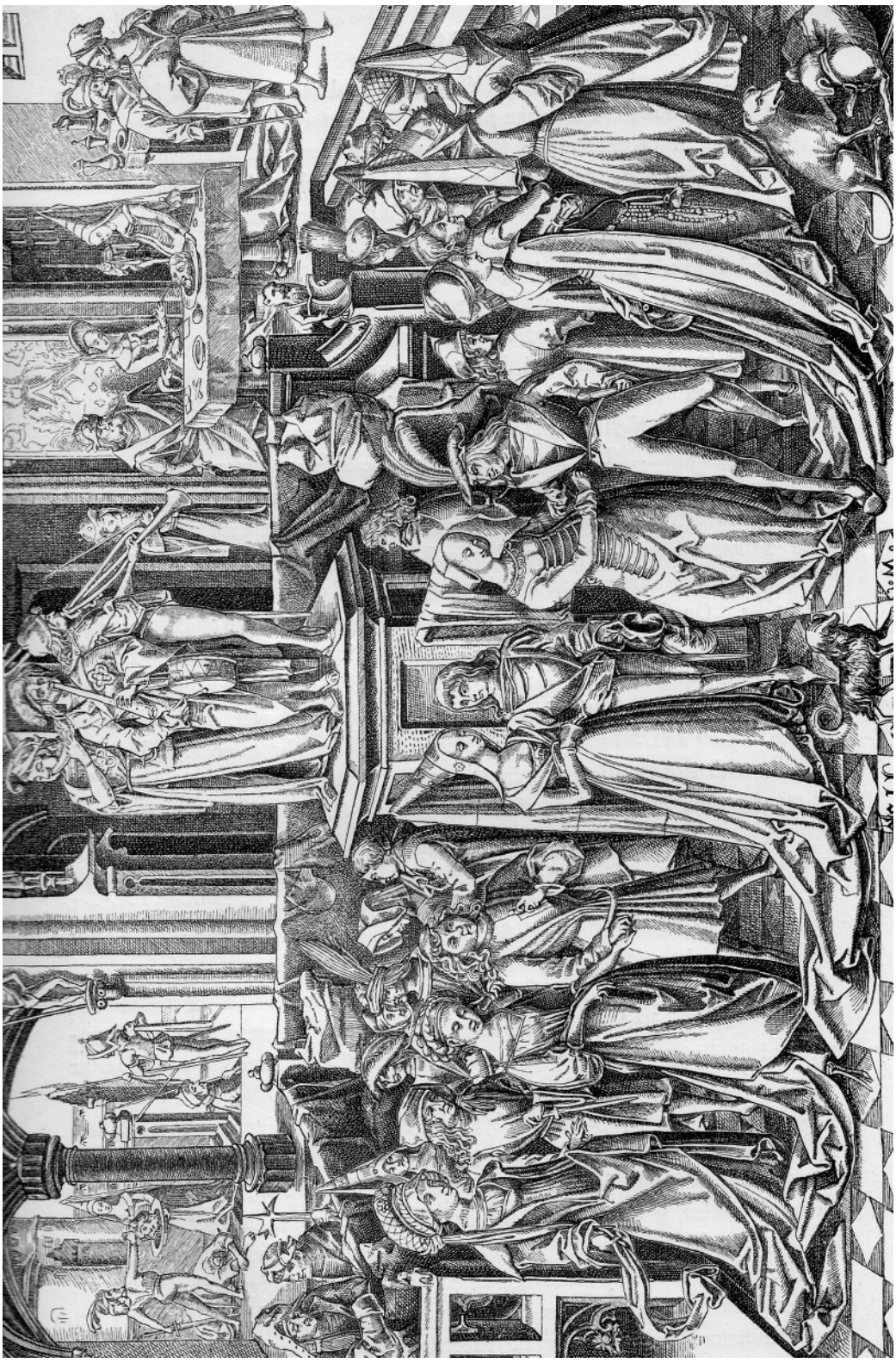
Hooks: Anonymous Plea, Dream Message, Enigmatic Stranger, Mistaken Identity, Sudden Attack. **Obstacles:** any. **Prospects:** support, knowledge.

The wildcard is a shape-shifting character, and either an non-player character who is capricious and unpredictable (a trickster), or several characters who are not what they seem. Masters of deception and illusion, or completely insane, the wildcard serves the story-role of one whose purpose is unclear; and like a will-o-wisp, may misdirect the heroes onto perilous paths. While avoiding overuse of veritable or literal doppelgangers, or making the campaign setting one of Ubiquitous Evil and total paranoia, it never hurts to throw in a curve-ball now and then.

In games focusing on political strife, the wildcard can be a seemingly unimportant beggar, or peddler on the street, who actually is a powerful mage or cleric in disguise. Or, it could be an opportunist, selling equipment or deadly magic to both sides of the conflict without caring which side is victorious. Good examples of political wildcards include: Double agents; rebel spies; duplicitous thieves; diviners who use their scrying knowledge only to deceive.

Regarding disasters, wildcards are the sort of non-player characters who might try to help the situation but, by doing so, make the situation even worse. Or, a wildcard is an opportunist who sees the disaster as a perfect time to seek selfish goals. Such an opportunist is not technically an enemy or hinderer, because they do not directly intend to hamper the success of the PCs. Examples include: Bumbling Elementalists who unintentionally stoke the volcano's fire, increase the violence of the storm, accidentally turn a flood into a tidal wave, etc.; conjurers who treat the unusual conditions as perfect for summoning elementals and quasi-elemental creatures to do their bidding; Demonurges (LA game sorcerers) who find the disastrous conditions perfect for making pacts with demons, perhaps due to long periods of darkness and cold; mutual enemies taking advantage of chaos to eliminate each other without the interference of the local authorities and watchmen.

Through social upheaval, the wildcard NPC(s) is one or many characters who try to sabotage everybody's efforts, sometimes on both sides of a conflict. Perhaps, it's a bunch of disaffected kids (heck, imagine a pack of angry young, half-orc children), or



any band of misfits determined to make life difficult for the authorities of the realm. In the event of a technological revolution, wildcards could be a group of outlaws who steal banned technologies (magical or otherwise) and create a black market. Another type, in the context of an intellectual revolution, is an insane, anarchist bard who attempts to defame those whom he most admires due to jealousy. Sado-masochist non-player characters are rare, but make excellent wildcards.

In wartime, a wildcard usually is a powerful character who can single handedly change the tide of battle; but will do so only if his own interests are threatened. This is like the role of a neutral, but is a character operating under a contingency; which, when triggered, will provoke him into action. Examples include: Peaceful but powerful treants enraged after their precious woods are cut down by an invading army; a neutral guardian of some location; a monster or character of enormous power provoked into action; ancient evil accidentally invoked; a once neutral state persuaded to join the battle on one side or the other.

In the face of a cataclysm, wildcards often are instigators of panic, spreading chaos and fear wherever they go. Types commonly encountered against a theme of cataclysmic events are charlatans demanding favors and gifts to prevent the coming apocalypse, or well-meaning but totally misinformed clerics demanding converts, else be sent straight to perdition. Other examples include a priest deceived by supernatural outsiders posing as gods (spirits which might regret such a decision when the gods discover identity theft), or a sovereign convinced by some fork-tongued advisor to pursue the very course of action which would bring about doom.

Throughout peacetime, a wildcard either can help or hinder an adventuring party, depending on how the player characters choose use their skills. Whether it is to manipulate, intimidate, or befriend the NPC, the wildcard serves an amorphous story-role, one quickly changing into nearly any sort of encounter. When encountered as a Prospect, a wildcard can temporarily provide support or important knowledge. Of course, such characters never fully trustworthy or predicable in any sort of fellowship. When encountered as an obstacle, the PCs often will be forced to deal with common trickster traits such as chicanery, duplicity, hedonism, gluttony, or even cruelty and avarice. Examples of Wild Card prospects and/or obstacles include: other adventurers with whom alliance is sought; any opportunistic non-player characters of evil alignment; bards who cause trouble to gain inspiration for his next epic song; clerics of trickster gods; lunatics with valuable information or items; or, intelligent but untamed monsters good and evil.

Triggers unbound from destined encounters:

Role-Playing: IF the player characters seek aid from a truly chaotic character (and, if applicable to the game system, not necessarily chaotic neutral in alignment), THEN they will have unwittingly evoked the Wild Card story-role. Roll 1D6 and choose the story-role the person or group will choose to imitate (whether capable or not). (1) Ally (2) Competitor. (3) Enemy (4) Hinderer (5) Neutral (6) Patron. The role-playing challenge would involve deciding whether they are encountering a real prospect or potential obstacle. Any change of status subsequent to this initial random determination should be dictated by circumstances as decided by the game master, but change is quite possible if the Wild Card is sufficiently whimsical in nature.

Problem-Solving: IF the player characters seek a clue or wish to obtain a specific item, THEN they must deal with a Wild Card non-player character. However, the character responds unusually well to one kind of skill use. Roll a 1D4, the result granting a +20 bonus to the skill listed: (1) Bluff. NPC is gullible. (2) Diplomacy. NPC is easily flattered (3) Intimidate. NPC is a coward (4) Sense Motive. NPC is lying but terrible, his thoughts practically transparent.

For LA Game play the response is modified by a -20 on the Ability check dice roll, the following Abilities being considered: (1) Chivalry, the NPC is impressed with noble behavior. (2) Minstrelsy, the NPC is pleased with entertainment. (3) Pretense, the NPC is easily influenced by such acting. (4) Theurgy, the NPC is concerned with approval from his deity.

Combat: IF one of the player characters performs a certain action, one considered innocuous by most sane people, THEN the Wild Card non-player character instantaneously (1) becomes enraged, (2) faints dead away, (3) covers his ears and starts to scream, or (4) curls into a ball on the ground and weeps. It's not required that the NPC actually know the adventuring party; he could just be a random bystander. If enraged, the NPC will attack the perpetrator with fisticuffs, or even armed. Whether the non-player character is a friend or foe, the action will always provoke an instant, irrational reaction. Some ecclesiastic spells can permanently remedy this character flaw.

Skills and Abilities applicable to encounters of this type are:

D20 skills: Sense Motive. Good luck.

LA Abilities: Evaluation, Luck, Pretense, and Tricks (to fight fire with fire).

BOOK THREE
CHARACTERISTICS

This Being of mine, whatever it really is, consists of a little flesh, a little breath, and the part which governs.

~ Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Meditations

NPC TYPES & MOTIVATIONS

Once the major events of the milieu have been chosen, and the number of story-roles featured in the next adventure have been determined, it's time to impart some personal traits to the associated major and minor non-player characters. Using the tables below, either roll randomly or choose a D20 Class or LA game Order (or develop an unordered Avatar), race, personal goals, and motivations for each story-role. Refer to the DMG or Lejend Master's Lore book for filling out game-specific statistics for each Class or Order. Individual character backgrounds should be filled in logically, based on character occupation and socio-economic status. Keep in mind that socio-economic status is not to be rolled randomly. Instead, a possible range of status is given in the description for each type below, in the section following the random tables. Prestige Classes are not listed because they should be chosen with care; each tailored to the campaign setting, or disallowed entirely.

Random NPC Types

D20 Classes

01-09	Barbarian
10-18	Bard
19-28	Cleric
29-37	Druid
38-46	Fighter
47-55	Monk
56-64	Paladin
65-73	Ranger
74-82	Rogue
83-91	Sorcerer
92-00	Wizard

D20 NPC Classes

01-25	Adept (shaman)
26-50	Commoner
51-75	Expert
76-00	Warrior

LA Game Orders

01-03	Alchemist—Alchemia
04-06	Assassin—Tricks
07-09	Augur—Necrourgy
10-12	Barbarian—Savagery
13-15	Beggar—Evaluation
16-18	Bravo—Swashbuckling
19-21	Demonurge—Sorcery
22-25	Desperado—Stealing
26-28	Ecclesiastic—Theurgy
29-32	Elementalist—Geourgy
33-36	Explorer—Ranging
37-39	Forester—Hunt
40-43	Friar—Learning
44-46	Guard—Physique
47-49	Holy Warrior—Weapons
50-52	Inquisitor—Scrutiny
53-55	Jongleur—Minstrelsy
56-58	Mage—Enchantment
59-61	Mariner—Waterfaring
62-65	Merchant—Commerce
66-68	Monk—Pantology
69-72	Noble—Chivalry
73-75	Outlaw—Waylaying
76-78	Pirate—Waterfaring
79-82	Rogue—Pretense
83-86	Scholar—Learning
87-89	Scout—Ranging
90-93	Soldier—Weapons
94-96	Troubadour—Chivalry
97-00	Warrior-Monk—Unarmed Combat

Castles and Crusades classes

01-16	Fighter (ranger)—Strength
17-32	Knight (bard, paladin)—Charisma
33-49	Wizard (illusionist)—Intelligence
50-66	Rogue (thief)—Dexterity
67-83	Cleric (druid)—Wisdom
84-00	Monk (barbarian)—Constitution

NPC Types, general

01-03	Adventurer
04-06	Avenger
07-09	Criminal
10-12	Deital Minion
13-15	Destroyer
16-18	Devotee
19-21	Fanatic
22-24	Follower
25-27	Freak
28-30	Guardian or Gaoler
31-33	Gypsy
34-36	Henchman
37-39	Heretic
40-42	Hierarch
43-45	Hireling
46-47	Judge or Official
48-50	Lunatic
51-53	Minion
54-56	Monster
57-59	Murderer
60-62	Noble
63-65	Oracle
66-68	Peddler or Shop Keeper
69-71	Rebel
72-74	Sage/Scholar
75-77	Seer
78-80	Spellcaster, arcane
81-83	Spellcaster, divine

84-86 Spy
87-89 Turncoat
90-92 Tyrant
93-95 Usurper
96-97 Vagabond (mountebank)
98-00 Watchman

D20 Race (if other than human)

01-05 Bugbear
06-11 Dwarf
12-17 Elf
18-22 Demon Kin
23-27 Giant Kin
28-32 Gnoll
33-38 Gnome
39-43 Goblin
44-49 Half-elf
50-55 Halfling
56-60 Half-orc
61-65 Hobgoblin
66-71 Kobold
72-77 Lizardfolk
78-83 Locathah
84-89 Merfolk
90-95 Orc
96-00 Troglodyte

LA Game Race (if other than human)

01-08 Dwarf
09-16 Gnome
17-24 Ilf
25-33 Kobold
34-41 Oaf, Major
42-49 Oaf, Typical
50-58 Orc
59-66 Orc, Greater
67-74 Orc, Lesser
75-83 Trollkin
84-92 Veshoge
93-00 Wylf

GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS

Physiological Needs: Often, personal motivations are no more complex than the pursuit of basic needs, such as water, food, sleep, and sex. It's not surprising that archaic-instinctive, formative cultures, or the underclass of civilized lands, are primarily concerned with alleviating sickness, pain, and discomfort. Sometimes, this situation is associated with squalid living conditions, caused by cruel or tyrannical lords. Of course, in many fantasy states, the presence of ecclesiastics and active deities in the milieu can do much to assuage such hardship; but divine resources are never unlimited. Where greed, apathy or political strife take sway, the underclass will probably be the first to suffer. When war tears a kingdom apart, or where natural disasters threaten to unravel the fabric of society, even the upper classes can find themselves concerned, once again, about their basic physiological needs.

Safety Needs: Safety is the second concern in a natural hierarchy of needs. Once physiological needs are met, all sane creatures wish to establish some stability in their lives. It's the temples and their respective deities that support and validate such a social order; establishing law, which is a prerequisite to the security of family and home. And this structure is reinforced by the might of lords temporal. The pseudo-medieval setting will reflect strongly the cosmological dimensions of its adopted, divine pantheon—as above, so below—with the deities inspiring wonder, awe, devotion, and likely terror as well in the populace, especially amongst the commoners who perforce live closer to the edge. But deities can threaten as well as uphold security and stability, since some gods and goddesses and like entities exist only to promote strife, chaos and death. Hence, divine teachings vary considerably on the issue of how to properly live ones life; which is why the worship, aside from propitiation, of evil deities probably is outlawed by any but the most wicked of sovereign powers.

Social, Material, and Developmental Goals: Beyond the basics requirements of physiological and safety needs, most sentient creatures desire both accomplishment and comfort. This need manifests itself in a desire for things both tangible and intangible. Naturally, in what method aspirations are sought depends upon the general temperament of each creature, their cognitive abilities, perhaps alignment if used, and a myriad of other factors. But, most long-term goals of individual creatures can be divided into the categories of social, material and self-oriented. A need for love and belongingness is a nearly universal factor; except within the blackest of hearts and purely evil monsters, such as devils and demons. Those who possess goodness and dignity will seek these things in honest ways, but endless conflict arises from the aspirations of criminals and evil creatures bent on destroying what a proud society has constructed. Creatures good and evil seek repute, favor, social status, although some villains revel in infamy, and material goods. There's never-ending story-latent within the struggle for dominance by means of wealth and/or land ownership. Some non-player characters, as well as the heroes themselves, are seeking puissance in the form of excellence in their field, magical or spiritual knowledge. Others, obsessed with honing their skills, perform feats which are to become legendary examples of potential within their chosen field. Whether interested in repute or infamy, treasure or property, or power, skill, and knowledge, the motivations for each are nearly endless.

So, using the tables below, the GM can mix and match common goals with motivations, picking logically or at random, to spark the creative process of fleshing out dozens of unique NPCs. Short-term goals also are listed, and the game master may want to pick one or more which matches his anticipated plot hook(s), so that the non-player characters' goals inevitably will lead him into an encounter with the heroes, for better or worse.

GOALS

Basic Needs
01-50 Food & Shelter
51-00 Safety, Health, Survival

Social
01-25 Repute: Concern with prominence, reputation.
26-50 Dark Repute: A desire to be regarded as sinister.
51-75 Infamy (disrepute): An aspiration to be feared.
76-00 Status: A desire for prestige and high standing.

Material
01-50 Treasure/Wealth: Desiring riches and affluence.
51-00 Property: Acquiring land for the sake of power.

Self
01-33 Power: A concern with personal might and/or puissance.
34-67 Skill: A focus on improving one's abilities.
68-00 Knowledge: Wishing to achieve greater erudition.

Goals, short term
Choose one or many. See Book Five for descriptions.
01-04 Attain knowledge
05-07 Attain truth
08-11 Avenge event
12-14 Avenge person
15-18 Avenge place
19-21 Conceal identity
22-25 Conquer locale
26-29 Defeat creature(s)
30-33 Destroy item or artifact
34-37 Destroy knowledge
38-41 Discover identity
42-44 Escape Place
45-47 Explore place
48-51 Find item or artifact
52-54 Find person
55-58 Find place
59-61 Hinder creature(s)
62-65 Learn fact(s)
66-69 Prevent event
70-73 Prevent truth
74-77 Repair item or artifact
78-81 Repair reputation
82-84 Rescue creature
85-88 Rescue locale
89-92 Retrieve item, artifact, or beast
93-96 Solve predicament
97-00 Solve riddle

NPC Motivations
Roll once or more. Disregard incompatible results, except for wild card types.
01-03 Adventurousness: Enjoying risky enterprises.
04-06 Altruism: Noble concern for the welfare of others.
07-09 Anger: Usually indignation in reaction to unjust.
10-12 Benevolence: A penchant for performing charity
13-15 Bigotry: One who acts out of intolerance and prejudice.
16-17 Caprice: Propensity for unpredictable actions.
18-20 Cold-heartedness: One who is lacking feeling.
21-23 Compassion (Sympathy): The wish to relieve suffering.
24-25 Curiosity: The desire to learn new things.
26-28 Delusion: A strong, irrational belief.
29-31 Devotion: Heartfelt dedication to a principle/individual.
32-33 Dignity: Self-respect and honor; general goodness.
34-36 Loyalty/Duty: Motivated by station, law, social custom.
37-38 Envy/Rivalry: Wanting other's qualities or possessions.
39-41 Fanaticism (Zealotry): Excessive zeal.
42-44 Fear: Apprehension, severe anxiety, dread, or disquiet.
45-47 Friendship: A bond of goodwill and trust.
48-50 Generosity: Willingness and liberality in giving.
51-53 Greed: Excessive desire.
54-56 Hubris: Presumptuous, condescending, scornful pride.
57-58 Indifference: Having no feeling for or against.
59-61 Justness/Fairness: Acting in accord with morality.
62-64 Laziness: Someone who is idle to work or exertion.
65-66 Love: An ineffable feeling of deep affection.
67-69 Lust: An overpowering craving or desire.
70-71 Madness: Violent mental illness.
72-73 Magnanimity: An attitude of noble forgiveness.
74-76 Malevolence: Generally wishing to cause suffering.
77-79 Meanness: One who is selfish, stingy, and spiteful.
80-81 Misanthropy: Mistrust or hatred of humanoids.
82-84 Mischievousness: Capriciously causing mischief.
85-87 Monomania: An obsession with person, place, or thing
88-89 Obcessiveness: One haunted by various ruminations.
90-92 Obstinacy: Resistant to authoritative control.
93-94 Rage/Fury: Explosive, violent and/or destructive anger.
95-97 Resentment: A smoldering, indignant sort of anger.
98-00 Wrath: A rage related to vengeance but justifiable.

Social Class
Abridged, from *Living Fantasy; Volume III, "Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds"*

Upper

Upper Upper: About 0.005% of the total population, or 1 in 50,000 persons. Sovereign royalty, grand priests & priestesses of pantheons, elected heads of great states, great palatine nobles, non-sovereign royalty, elected heads of lesser states, great noble royal major officers, great nobles, chief priests/priestesses of a state-honored pantheon, palatine religious warrior orders' masters, great diviners, knights of the governing retinue.
Middle Upper: About 0.01% of the total population, or 1 in 10,000 persons. Petty palatine nobles, noble royal (major) officials (a baron who is a marshal, or a lord and justiciar, for example), nobles (marquises, counts, viscounts, and great barons) great mages, great priests & priestesses, lords mayor of free cities, nobles' palatine (major) noble officials, knights commander.

Lower Upper: About 0.985% of the total population, or a bit fewer than 1 in 100 persons. Petty nobles (minor barons, lords, baronets), admirals (knighted or a petty noble), generals (knighted or a petty noble), lords mayor, chief priests & priestesses, state judges, knights (the most numerous), gentlemen (of

considerable land holdings), great scholars, royal officials of second rank, great nobles' (major) officials, famous explorers, renowned poets, renowned artists, renowned authors, renowned sculptors, potent diviners, banker-financiers, great merchants, great alchemists, and renowned composers.

Middle

Upper Middle: About 2.5% of the total population, or 1 in 40 persons. Wealthy esquires, gentlemen (wealthy), wealthy merchants, guild masters (major), royal officials of third rank, great nobles' (lesser) officials, nobles' (major) officials, abbots & abbesses, substantial mages, important priests & priestesses, lawyers, great scholars, architects, engineers, ship owners, major community officials, large landowners, magistrates, landless knights, high-ranking naval officers, high-ranking military officers, armingers, composers, successful authors, renowned fencing masters, explorers, great mechanics, diviners, bankers, gemners, jewelers, gold smiths, alchemists, sword smiths, stable masters.

Middle Middle: About 6.5% of the total population, or 3-4 in 50 persons. Gentlemen (petty holdings and engaged in business), guild masters (lesser), ordinary merchants, innkeepers, ordinary mages, ordinary priests & priestesses, notaries, scholars, fencing masters, nobles' (lesser) officials, millers, artisans, landless esquires, tradesmen, craftsmen, impoverished gentlemen, socmen, freemen, mechanics, ordinary naval officers, ordinary military officers, marshals (law), justices of the peace, grand serjeants, scutifers, petty diviners.

Lower Middle: About 12% of the total population, or 1 in 8 persons. Petty merchants, shop keepers, ordinary fencing masters, bailiffs, minor town officials, petty mages, minor priests & priestesses, ordinary traders, poets, artists, authors, sculptors, petty scholars, serjeants, small farmers, renowned actors & actresses, renowned singers, renowned musicians, renowned entertainers (other), men-at-arms, journeymen guildmen, large tenant farmers.

Lower

Upper Lower: About 22% of the total population, or a bit more than 1 in 5 persons. Royal officials (very minor), village officials, tavern keepers, waggoners, carters, huntsmen, stall vendors, fishermen, apotropaists, local constabulary, tenant farmers, apotropaists, healers, dancing masters, skilled tutors, household servants (chief), commercial servants (chief), healers, monks & nuns, wherry owners, hedge magicians, apprentices (artisans).

Middle Lower: About 26% of the total population, or about 1 in 4 persons. Great nobles' and nobles' officials (very minor), hamlet officials, deputy marshals (law), gardeners, local constables, household servants (ordinary), commercial servants (ordinary), herdsmen, pack traders, cabbies, boatmen, chimney sweeps, street vendors (chapmen), healers, apotropaists, apprentices (other).

Lower Lower: About 30% of the total population, or 30 in 100 persons. Household servants (menial), commercial servants (menial), ordinary actors & actresses, ordinary singers, ordinary musicians, ordinary entertainers (other), ordinary sailors, ordinary soldiers, peasants, dock workers (stevedores), woodcutters, laborers, chair-carriers, link boys, street sweepers, nightsoil carriers, itinerant workers, villeins, mendicant monks, licensed beggars.

The Underclass

This group consists of between 10% and 15% of the total socially classed population, or 10-15 additional for every 100 persons of those classes. Its members include: Itinerant workers, bondservants, serfs, slaves, debtors.

Criminal Underclass

This group consists of 5% to 10% of the total socially classed population, or 5-10 for every 100 persons of those classes. It consists of: Assassins, beggars, gypsies, masterless folk (entertainers, strolling players, etc.), outlaws, peddlers, prisoners, rebels, runaways (bondservants and serfs), thieves, vagabonds (mountebanks). (An extensive enumeration of the criminal underclass is found in The Canting Crew, Vol I, "Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds").

CHARACTER TYPES

The following general descriptions cover many types, classes, and Orders. Each type has listed its range of social class, primary long-term goals (listed in order of most common importance), and compatible story-roles. A social class of "n/a" indicates that the character type exists outside of the default feudal system. Additionally, some example motivations are considered for each story-role. Note that story-roles which are generally incompatible with the type have been omitted. Use the tables in Appendix D: Human Physical Traits, to aid in creating details of a (humanoid) NPC's personal appearance.

Usually, the story-roles featured in the adventure are chosen first, and then matched to character types. But, the GM can reverse that order, if desired, by choosing the character type first, and then picking one of the possible, associated story-roles.

Note to the Game Master: Where the name of a character type matches a specific core D20 class or LA game Order, the emphasis is placed on how that type interacts in a Gygaxian Fantasy World rather than on mechanics. Differences in nomenclature are heeded, but the point of this section is to illustrate how each type is used within various story-roles, not as a compare/contrast guide between D20 and LA game systems. One exception is the hierarchy of ecclesiastics and shamans, recapped under relevant entries below, herein assumed as the default for the milieu.

Adept: ***Social Class***: n/a ***Common Goal(s)***: Knowledge (divine). ***Story-Role(s)***: any.

An adept is a spellcasting member of a primitive society, mixing arcane and divine magic. He or she might be the chief shaman, regular shaman, or assistant shaman.

As an Ally, the adept or shaman is akin to a cleric, motivated by compassion to help the heroes. An adept Competitor contends with the PCs, fearing the loss of some resource or item that he feels belongs to his tribe. If an Enemy, the adept is motivated by racial hatred, especially if nonhuman; or, xenophobic fear; anger at some perceived infraction of custom; or, hurt pride if insulted. When acting as a Hinderer, the adept is likely acting under the aegis of some adversary to the heroes, motivated by duty or fear.

When Neutral, the adept probably represents the attitude of his tribe, is motivated by laziness, bigotry, egocentrism, or all three. He is unlikely to offer warmth or welcome, healing skills, or divinatory visions. An adept in the role of Patron often wants the PCs to protect the interests of his tribe or to carry out missions to bring back knowledge or items that would strengthen the tribe. Adepts as Wild Cards are motivated by caprice at the behest of their trickster god, extreme egocentrism, or insanity.

Adventurer: ***Social Class***: any. ***Common Goal(s)***: Any. ***Story-Role(s)***: any

The category of "adventurer" covers all player-character classes and orders within a fantasy RPG, and includes fortune-hunters, explorers, buccaneers, and swashbucklers. As an Ally, the adventurer might be an old friend, share an ideology or allegiance (to a noble or ecclesiastic), belong to a common network (such as a thieves guild), organization or guild (like an 'adventurers guild'), or be related by blood. Naturally, the most common motivation is friendship. Adventurers in the role of Competitor are jealous of the heroes' repute and, inspired by envy, wish to outshine their deeds. As an Enemy, the adventurer might be malevolent, because the PCs threaten to foil his goals.

PRIMITIVE SOCIETY SHAMAN ECCLESIASTIC HIERARCHY (14)

(From *Living Fantasy, Vol III*, "Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds")
The less-sophisticated societies generally will have a shamanistic priesthood. In the primitive society, the classes are akin to these:

Ruler & Family
Chief Shaman
Counselors
Leading Warriors & Hunters
Shamans
Craftsmen
Warriors & Hunters
Assistant Shamans
All Other Accepted Adult Persons
All Other Accepted Non-adult Persons
Slaves
Pariahs

The upper class is shown in boldface type. While unquestionably the greatest, the separation between it and those below actually is not great. In more primitive societies, the leaders are honored and deferred to; but, otherwise, in close social proximity to the lower tiers. Thus, the middle ranks, shown in bold italics, mingle freely with both the upper and lower strata of the society. The lower class, indicated by a normal typeface, is less apt to mingle with the uppermost tier; but by no means is oppressed. The underclass of slaves and outcasts are treated as property; or shunned but tolerated, in the case of the pariahs.

In all, such primitive social organizations will recognize its priesthood, the shamans, as integral and very important members without whom the society could not function.

When acting as a Hinderer, an adventurer could be motivated by duty to a patron, or by fear of an overlord. When Neutral, he does not care to help or hinder the heroes, is indifferent, and has his own agenda. Of course, if crossed, he might become an enemy or hinderer. An adventurer usually is not a Patron, unless retired. If an old, retired adventurer becomes a patron, the missions upon which he sends his subjects will be motivated by concerns too numerous to list. If Wild Cards are not moved by caprice or mischievousness, then the GM may roll randomly on the motivation table.

Alchemist*: ***Social Class***: Middle-Middle to Middle-Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Knowledge. ***Story-Role(s)***: any

The alchemist as Ally is one who helps the PCs with arcane knowledge, potions and remedies out of altruism. If a Competitor, the alchemist might feel resentment toward the party mage for his greater knowledge or repute. As an Enemy, the alchemist could be in the employ of an assassins' guild, supplying the adversaries with what's needed to kill or delay the PCs with alchemical poisons and tricks. An alchemist makes an excellent Hinderer. Motivated by greed associated with payment, an alchemist might, for example, slip a fresh sprig of agrimony into an unwitting PC's meal, making him sleep like the dead. A neutral alchemist usually is one who runs an apothecary, herb shop, or wizards' laboratory at a mage college; and, while indifferent to the needs of the PCs, such an alchemist might be willing to trade information and/or potions for money. Alchemists can be a mentor to a single PC, but are unlikely to become the Patron of the entire adventuring party. The alchemist as Wild Card is compatible with the idea of a mad scientist of sorts; motivated by curiosity to concoct dangerous, possibly explosive, alchemical substances.

*See the World Builder, Volume II, "Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds" Series for an extensive lists of magical herbs, poisons, potions and magical effects.

Assassin: ***Social Class***: Criminal Underclass. ***Common Goal(s)***: Skill, Infamy, Wealth. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Wild Card

An assassin is a member of the criminal underclass who kills for money. A professional rather than a common thug, this character type is feared greatly. In a campaign allowing the Assassin Prestige Class, an assassin might become an Ally to the party; but not unless there's common allegiance to an assassins' guild. Treading on the turf of a known assassin usually does not inspire competition—but could result in dispassionate murder. As an Enemy, the assassin is a cold-hearted killer, motivated as much by the thrill of the hunt as the compensation. Assassins do not merely hinder PCs, they kill them. Of course, this does not preclude sadistic assassins from playing "cat and mouse" games. An Assassin can make an excellent Wild Card if he is a lone operative, since his services usually go to the highest bidder. Admittedly, that's bad business. But some assassins keep a low profile and have no qualms about betrayal.

Augur: ***Social Class***: Middle-Middle to Upper-Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Knowledge, Repute. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Hinderer, Neutral

An augur is a diviner, soothsayer or seer; one who foretells

events by reading omens or visions. The augur either is a priest specializing in divination, like an oracle, or a person with psychogenic ability and other divinatory means. Some necrourges conceal themselves behind this appellation; their information actually obtained from demonic sources. The true augur can make a valuable Ally, warning the PCs of various dangers in advance. Normally, such services would come at a hefty price. Such an ally would be a prime target for assassination or abduction by an intelligent enemy. Ordinarily, augurs don't find reasons to become competitive with the heroes (which does not preclude them from becoming rivals with each other). When acting as the Enemy, an augur serves exactly like an ally, except that he makes predictions for the sake of the heroes' adversaries. When merely a Hinderer, the augur might be in the employ of the enemy, yet reluctant to give too much information. He might grant only enough foresight to delay the PCs, rather than severely harm them. Typically, an augur remains Neural, preferring to keep his visions and knowledge to himself; unless such information is demanded of him by a superior or lord. Augurs do not like to take the role of Patron, and tend to devote themselves to introspection and meditation; unless their practice of augury is secondary to an extraverted role as priest or priestess. Augurs who become Wild Cards might, for any number of reasons, impart false information to one side or the other within a conflict. Or, they actually might be necrourges.



Avenger: ***Social Class***: n/a. ***Common Goal(s)***: Dark Repute, Skill. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Competitor, Patron, Enemy

An avenger is any NPC bent on destroying an individual person, creature, or group. He or she can be of any character class, order, or social strata. As an Ally, the avenger can be a boon; but instantly can turn into an enemy, if one of the PCs kill his quarry, thus depriving him of revenge. If the PCs are wary of this, and merely want to detain or imprison the person whom the avenger hopes to kill, he might become a Competitor; not wishing the PCs harm, per se, but willing to attack them, if they get in his way. An avenger is a relentless Enemy, perhaps the family member of a innocent bystander killed accidentally by one of the adventurers. The motivations for an avenger to hinder the party on some level are likely to actually set him up as the competitor. In such a case, use the stronger story-role. The Avenger, by his very nature, is not neutral in his attitude, but relentless and single-minded in his pursuit of his quarry. Few avengers are going to place themselves into the role of a Patron, unless the avenger is a lord spiritual or temporal wishing to exact revenge on a political rival and hires PCs for that reason. A patron so obsessed probably will be negligent in many ways, thereby causing problems for the PCs. Avengers are not wild cards. Instead, they're rather predicable.

Barbarian: ***Social Class***: Underclass Pariah in civilized Society, Low to Upper in Primitive/Tribal Societies. ***Common Goal(s)***: Power, Treasure. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Neutral, Patron, Wild Card

A barbarian is a member of a primitive civilization, stereotyped as a fierce and brutal fighter. The appellation usually implies a powerful, berserking warrior. Indeed, many are skillful combatants; especially, those brave enough to wander the civilized lands. The barbarian as Ally obviously is the safest relationship to have. A barbarian who is a friend to the adventuring party probably is motivated by an alliance forged in actual hardship. And barbarians, by and large, are not subtle people. In fact, when being competitive, it's likely for them to appear like an Enemy, and, when motivated by rage, barbarians are fierce enemies. A neutral barbarian nearly is an oxymoron; although a barbarian society can be neutral with respect to the affairs of the civilized lands, so long as they're left alone. A barbarian who ranks high within his tribe or clan can become a Patron; if all of the PCs presumably would agree to be ruled by a savage. That's a concern which the GM should consider carefully. Functionally, barbarians become a Wild Card of sorts every time they go berserk during combat. Even allies are well advised to stay clear when a barbarian swings his blade in wild abandon, causing bloody carnage.

Bard/Jongleur: ***Social Class***: Lower-Lower to Middle-Middle. ***Common Goal(s)***: Repute, Skill (musical or class based). ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Competitor, Enemy, Hinderer, Wild Card

A bard or jongleur is a wandering minstrel or poet, or a member of an order of minstrel poets reciting verses. Their songs inspire or celebrate the legendary exploits of heroes. The adventurous bard makes an excellent Ally, as he or she is likely to know many rumors concerning legendary items, important people, or remarkable places. A bard's music might be magical in and of itself; countering the effects of sonic magic, transfixing foes, or inspiring courage, competence, and heroism. But, if there is a bard or jongleur in the adventuring party, he or she quickly might inspire the envy of lesser minstrels. Such NPCs easily could become a Competitor, trying to steal the PC bard's thunder. But not all bards are good, and no one wants to make an Enemy of a bard; considering the risk of having ones defeats immortalized in song! Sometimes, the competition can become quite underhanded. Most bards are roguish, are likely to be in the employ of the criminal underclass and, therefore, tend to be first-rate sources of misinformation and deceptions. That is the basic recipe for a Hinderer. After all, nobody spins a story quite like a wayward jongleur. Most bards are too involved in the affairs of others to be compatible with the story-role of a neutral. Principal motivations for a bard in the role of enemy, competitor, or hinderer include some combination of greed, hubris (typical for musicians), and mischievousness. A wandering bard makes a lousy patronbecause he's not apt to be wealthy or influential and rarely stays in one place long enough to be contacted easily. Knightly troubadours are a better candidate for the role of patron. A capricious or mischievous bard of chaotic alignment is a good Wild Card' especially, if he enjoys haranguing the PCs for the sheer fun of it!

Beggar: ***Social Class***: Criminal Underclass to Lower-Lower. ***Common Goal(s)***: Basic Needs. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Hinderer, Neutral, Wild Card

A licensed beggar is a pauper who makes it his business to ask alms; and, therefore, is dependent upon others for support (and, unlicensed, is considered to be a member of the criminal underclass). He usually fills a small role in the capacity of Ally, but makes an excellent eavesdropper and supplier of rumors, sightings and basic information. A beggar possibly can be made into an amateur spy, with enough coinage and coaxing. Rarely does a beggar have the skill or resources to compete with the PCs on any level. Nor does he make a convincing enemy, unless he is a villain in disguise. A beggar can be a Hinderer, if the enemy hires him to eavesdrop or spy on the PCs, but such an informant tends to be discovered and dispatched with relative ease. Usually, the beggar is a Neutral; willing to give directions or basic information, but quite reluctant to get involved with conflicts that could land him in hot water. A beggar as a Wild Card might appear to be harmless, but actually is a major or minor enemy in disguise. Perhaps he's a shapeshifter, or a lycanthrope who doesn't even know he poses a danger to the heroes.

Bravo: ***Social Class***: Criminal Underclass. ***Common Goal(s)***: Treasure, Power, Repute (with commoners) or Infamy (with authorities). ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Hinderer, Neutral, Patron

The bravo is a daring outlaw, a swaggering bladesman, or a swashbuckling rogue; possibly a good hearted entity akin to Robin Hood. The bravo as an Ally is motivated by an adventurousness sort of altruism, and will help PCs who show genuine concern for the underdog. Bravos motivate themselves with loftier goals than merely competing for fame or riches; except where those things support his personal crusade. "Let those who truly deserve respect and status have it," is his motto. But, for those who gain power through spreading fear and subjugation, the answer is not competition. The answer is in becoming a formidable Enemy; either by organizing peasant revolts or engaging in guerilla warfare. When the PCs represent or are vassals to individuals whom the bravo despises, he quickly will become an enemy to them, regardless of alignment. That said, if the heroes' masters are truly nefarious, it's just as likely that the bravo will convince the PCs to rebel. If the bravo has few resources, or isn't terribly powerful, he might resort to indirect means of foiling the plans of the sovereign powers. Such a one will become a Hinderer to PCs who are in league with the bravo's enemies; guilt by association. A Bravo can be Neutral if the PCs care not for his cause nor work for his enemies. Disinterest in their personal aspirations is the likely reception. A powerful bravo can make a great criminal Patron, especially to a band of PCs who are a subversive element in a corrupt or despotic kingdom. This could spark a campaign with rebellion as the theme. A bravo's tactics might make him seem like a "wild card" in the eyes of his enemies, because of his surprise attacks and subterfuge. But, this type doesn't fit neatly into the story-role (even if of chaotic alignment), due to its altruistic nature.

Cleric: see ecclesiastic

Commoner: ***Social Class***: The Underclass through Upper-Lower. ***Common Goal(s)***: Basic Needs, (agricultural) Property. ***Story-Role(s)***: Neutral, Hinderer, Wild Card

This is a general type of NPC, typified by those who lack privilege, such as ordinary members of the middle, lower, and under-classes. In this sense, those of the criminal underclass are not "mundane" enough to be considered commoners. The type includes serfs, menial servants, ordinary soldiers, peasants, household and commercial servants, tavern keeps, fishermen, tenant farmers, hedge magicians, artisan apprentices, etc. As ordinary folk, commoners do not make ideal allies to PCs; nor would they be a source of real competition on most levels…except, perhaps, for those with notable, craft, trade, commerce, or farming skills. As an archetypal enemy, they are almost laughable; although a hostile, 20th level commoner constitutes a nasty "curve-ball" to toss at a low-level party. A commoner can be a Hinderer, if enemies of the PCs bribe him to spread misinformation or to act as a false guide; perhaps leading the heroes into ambushes. The only people to whom commoners might become patrons are their own slaves and children. On the other hand, one who appears to be a commoner can make an excellent Wild Card; when, in actuality, he or she is a spy or shapeshifter.

Deital Minion/Proxy: ***Social Class***: n/a. ***Common Goal(s)***: Greater power and Repute in service of their masters. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Neutral, Wild Card

On the Lejendary Earth world (abbreviated "Learth") the world setting for the Lejendary Adventure game), an experienced Ecclesiastic Order Avatar can summon a Deital Minion. These are powerful extraplanar proxies of the deities. Such beings are summoned by theurgists to become material; appearing in virtually any conceivable guise, from that of a beautiful woman, or handsome man, to a hag or supremely ugly humanoid. There are four, specific Deital Minions germane to the world of Lerthe (see Beasts of Lejend for statstics): Avengers, Destroyers, Guardians, and Protectors. And it's apparent that these four types are associated strongly with specific story functions. Accordingly, the GM might allow D20-system-based clerics of sufficient level to cast Summon Monster spells; for example, to summon angels, archons, guardinals, to avenge, destroy, guard, or protect. Evil clerics would do the same, to summon demons and devils in the name of their evil, patron deities. In D20, allowing the summoning of deital proxies requires only the use of the "Summoning Specific Monsters" rule found in the DMG. In the Lejendary Earth world setting, all it takes is the proper ritual.

A deital minion is a perfect albeit temporary Ally, motivated by duty to his gods to aid the summoning ecclesiastic. Whether good or evil, such a being will not resent the command to avenge, destroy, guard, or protect, as long as the cleric's interests also serve those of its master. Ordinarily, it makes little sense for a summoned monster to act in the story-role of competitor; yet one does not have to think hard to envision such a creature in the role of Enemy. A Destroyer summoned by a rite of Glorification and Hallowing, or an angel materializing by means of a Summon Monster spell, will act according to different rules; but, in either case, their story-role is powerfully clear. A guardian or protector minion can be the most formidable Hinderers imaginable. For instance, virtually nobody can shove aside a guardian Balrog! But a deital minion is Neutral, as long as its purpose is not challenged. Hence, one may be encountered without altercation. But woe to interferers who cannot back their contentions with might. Deital proxies and minions are extremely unlikely Patrons, because their appearance on the primary material plane often is short-lived. But such an arrangement is conceivable for adventures taking place in outer planes. These creatures act as a type of Wild Card, in many cases, because the PCs cannot anticipate which of their enemies has the power to summon one.

Deital minions, whether angels or demons, serve the gods and goddesses of any pantheon conceivable. In D20, use the deities' alignments to determine the sort of creatures summoned with the Summon Monster spell of appropriate level. Or, if adventuring in the Lejendary Earth world, use the correspondences listed in the table below, between Learth Pantheons and their real-world inspirations, to assist in determining the culturally-variable appearances of summoned deital minions.

Demonurge: ***Social Class***: Middle-Middle to Upper-Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: As demonurge, either Infamy or Anonymity. As some other outward vocation; Repute. Treasure, Power, Knowledge. ***Story-Role(s)***: any

A demonurge is one who practices the art of sorcery; defined, in this case, as one who traffics with fiends, demons and devils. Organized groups only are found in large cities, or in isolated secret communities. They associate via clandestine meetings, using guilds and temples as fronts. Typically, they meld into society. A D20 Sorcerer should be called a Nethercraefter, if a member of a secret society focusing on the learning of evil spells and the conjuring of demonic monsters.

A demonurge can make a strange companion, and his actions are likely to bring dark repute to the adventuring party. As a true Ally, the demonurge is a rare bird. If such a character is not evil, then he might enjoy the thrill of attempting to harness evil powers and force dangerous creatures to do his bidding. Whether such unhallowed, demonic sorcery might suffice to corrupt an otherwise well-intentioned mage, thereby causing dark energies to seduce his mind toward evil, is a question which companions should ask themselves. A demonurge is liable to become a Competitor to those within their own society, so as to gain greater knowledge and

MAJOR PANTHEONS & SYMBOLS

Danneen Family of Deities-A harp - CELTIC
Karnecian Family of Deities-A bull's head - PHONECIAN
Khemitic Family of Deities-An ankh - EGYPTIAN
Marazdian Family of Deities-A winged star of six points - PERSIAN
Maztacian Family of Deities-A winged, feathered snake - AZTEC
Nopponic Family of Deities-A chrysanthemum-JAPANESE
Olympian Family of Deities-A laurel wreath around a lightning bolt - GRECO-ROMAN
Otamask Family of Deities-An eagle rising from flames -SLAVIC
Payliconain Family of Deities-A rayed sun - INCAN
Suakadian Family of Deities-A three-tiered ziggurat - BABYLONIAN
Sungkinese Family of Deities-A dragon & phoenix - CHINESE-TIBETAN
Tenoric Family of Deities-A raven with a thunderbolt in its claws – NORSE-GERMANIC
Urfinic Family of Deities-A kantele (lyre) - FINNO-UIRGIC
Vedsudic Family of Deities-A fire wheel - HINDU

LESSER PANTHEONS & SYMBOLS

Lyrdian Family of Deities-A scallop shell - FABLED SOUTH PACIFIC
Manitoian Family of Deities-A thunderbird - AMERINDIAN
Neyanic Family of Deities-A jaguar's head - MAYAN
Tengralic Family of Deities-A septacal (seven-pointed star in outline) - MONGOLIAN
Vubenic Family of Deities-A palm leaf - AFRICAN TRIBAL
Yattemic Family of Deities-A star fish - FABLED SOUTH PACIFIC

power. A powerful PC demonurge, especially one acting alone, is a prime target for such competition. A demonurge Enemy is formidable, but often remains a lone enemy ,with his own agenda and few allies, who's motivated by greed, envy, delusion, hubris, or madness. A demonurge might be a Hinderer, if the secret society fears being uncovered by the PCs and becomes more hostile as members draw closer to their secrets. A demonurge serves the role of Neutral only when his goals and motivations do not clash with those of the PCs. A demonurge is unlikely to become a Patron, unless he's already the powerful leader of an enclave; and the PCs don't mind chasing down errant demons, being sent on missions of subterfuge, or hunting for rare spell components. A demonurge acts as a Wild Card when exposed as dangerous to society.

Desperado: ***Social Class***: Criminal Underclass. ***Common Goal(s)***: Treasure, Dark Repute, Skill. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Competitor, Enemy, Neutral, Patron, Wild Card

A bold criminal ranging from a lowly crook, to a master criminal, some even becoming the overlord of an order of desperados. Desperados associate in criminal guilds such as assassins' societies, beggars' brotherhoods, and thieves' guilds. In D20 terms, the desperado is a classification of rogue; one who is "street wise," focuses on the art of stealing, and possesses superior powers of observation and foresight.

A desperado is an Ally when motivated by greed, or possibly lust, but rarely for other reasons. This is not to suggest that friendship among desperados is impossible. But such criminals are, in a way, business men who don't let social entanglementsinhibit their ability to advance personal goals. The desperado is a good candidate for becoming a Competitor to any roguish elements in the adventuring party; for example, by having outlaws or rogues steal from the PCs, if they pull off a successful heist. Such competition could be used as a form of "persuasion" to get a adventuring party to join the desperados on the level of contact. Otherwise, stepping on the toes of organized crime by stealing on their turf makes Enemies fast. Whether aiding outlaws to ambush heroes, to steal their treasure, or arranging to have them murdered in the streets (in association with rogue orders), the members of desperado are a favorite source of allies and minions for folks such as powerful mages, demonurges, or corrupt nobles.. If encountered as a Neutral, it means that they are prohibited from stealing from the PCs, or are unaware of the opportunity for ransom or treasure that the heroes could represent. Desperados in the role of Hinderer usually are running a distraction for some larger operation. Paying attention to some desperado attempting to exasperate the PCs rather than kill or coerce them is dangerous. Desperado princes and overlords can be Patrons to the PCs, if their party is prone to follow such a person. Desperados are sufficiently unpredictable to become Wild Cards, given the fact that their tactics often are underhanded and tricky.

Destroyer: ***Social Class***: n/a. ***Common Goal(s)***: Power, Destruction. ***Story-Role(s)***: Enemy

A destroyer is a type of creature that borders on being a story-role in itself; a sort of a "super enemy." Monsters such as the legendary tarrasque or an ancient, marauding red dragon are good examples. Sometimes they're evil, potent spellcasters bent on wreaking havoc on a state, hoping to crush the populace and its government; or a warlord leading an army of holocaustic conquest; or an LA game Elementalist who summons forth nature's fury to annihilate her enemies, but causes innocents to be swept away by gale force winds and floods. They might be pyromaniacs who enjoy setting cities on fire. If unable to cause mayhem by their own powers, chances are good that they've found some magical item that's potent enough to do so. An interesting twist would be an unwitting destroyer who carries an artifact that he believes will save people;; but, if activated, actually will trigger the ruination of all. A destroyer can be an NPC or monster, of any class or level. The destroyer always constitutes an Enemy, whether he serves that role unwittingly or not.

Devotee: ***Social Class***: Upper-Lower to Middle-Middle. ***Common Goal(s)***: Repute, Knowledge. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Hinderer, Neutral

The devotee is anyone who's an ardent supporter or follower of an ideology, deity, ecclesiastic order, or allied champion. A devotee of a government might be a jingoist (fanatic) or a more rational patriot, while the devotee of a religion could be anything from a fanatical cultist to a dedicated cleric. But, while the average devotee is adamant about his beliefs, and might possibly allow himself to be martyred for the cause, he is not herein classified as the violent fanatic (which is a character type unto itself).

The devotee can be a loyal Ally, perhaps considered a "cohort" under the Leadership feat of a PC of 6th level or higher, or allied with the party cleric's religion. As the Enemy, the devotee willingly will die for his cause, whatever or whomever that might be.. Bravery bordering on martyrdom is a hallmark of the devotee. If the PCs try to undermine the master or belief system of a devotee, that NPC quickly will place himself in the role of Hinderer and attempt to thwart or confuse the PCs efforts. Otherwise, the devotee will be Neutral when encountered. Devotees are too busy being followers to become patrons or competitors to the PCs, and are too predicable to be in the story-role of wild card (unless it is another type pretending to be a devotee).

Druid: ***Social Class***: n/a. ***Common Goal(s)***: Power, skill, Knowledge . ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Hinderer, Neutral

Druids are reclusive individuals who're mystically in accord with nature and, unlike Elementalist Orders, usually seclude themselves in mysterious and sacred groves deep within the forests. On Learth, they are nature priests, following the Observance of Natural Pathways. They are known to cooperate with foresters and rangers and sometimes organize themselves into loose druidical affiliations. They're also apt to be found in the company of centaurs, satyrs and other fey creatures. Less frequently, a nature priest will be found heading a small community on land that's as yet unclaimed by any feudal government (called an allod).

As an Ally, the druid is motivated by a duty to nature. If the PCs interests are in the interest of the flora and fauna, then a druid is likely to befriend them; if only temporality. Conversely, where the PCs threaten the local ecology, the druid's province, or the scared grove, druids swiftly will become the Enemy. If a druid wants to keep PCs out of a grove or surrounding lands, he/she will be the Inhibitor, summoning animals and drawing on

the power of the green earth to repel the invaders. If the heroes do not threaten the druid's land, or have a common enemy, then he/she remains a Neutral character. As nature priests, druids rarely are motivated to compete with other people for mundane things such as money or status. And the druid as patron would probably be too limiting in terms of story goals, unless the members of your player group are fanatical ecologists.

Ecclesiastic: ***Social Class***: Middle-Middle to Upper-Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Repute (Divine Favor), Power, Knowledge (spiritual). ***Story-Role(s)***: any

An ecclesiastic can serve any story-role within an adventure. Whether he serves as a major or minor character might depend on his status in society; which also corresponds strongly to the level of divine magic at his or her disposal. Because understanding the ecclesiastical hierarchy is important to running a truly "Gygaxian" adventure, the table below is provided, excerpted from Living Fantasy.

Ecclesiastics are important Allies, whose motivations often are polarized between benevolence toward their friends and malevolence toward the enemies of the PCs (regardless of the attitude held toward the heroes). A cleric's outlook depends mainly on the portfolio of his respective deity. A cleric typically is a Competitor only to individuals who are rivals attempting to ascend within the temple hierarchy. Because clerics represent forces of good, neutrality, evil, law, and chaos, they normally become the Enemy of diametrically opposed forces. Also, personal motives might be trumped by the will and whim of the gods and goddesses worshipped; lest they loose their divine favor and associated powers. Any functionary of the temple can become a Hinderer when forcing PCs to jump through hoops to meet with a high-ranked priest or priestess. Or, a good cleric might hinder a group of adventurers from interfering with temple plans by means of non-lethal rites and powers. Neutral clerics might serve quietist gods or be ascetic monks trying, for example, to reach nirvana, satori, or moksha.. In any case, such an entity generally is disinterested in the tribulations of the world. A high-ranking priest makes an excellent Patron and is an ideal source of adventure. After all, the interests of the temple, under the purview of its pantheon or deity, often coincide with the interests of the state, as well as the needs of the populace. Clerics of trickster gods fill the story-role of Wild Card very well, and usually should have access to Animal and Trickery domains (and for flavor—pets common to clerics of trickster gods: Spider, hare, coyote, raven, mouse, frog, fox, bluejay, mink, opossum).

See Chart Page 38.

Elementalist: ***Social Class***: Middle-Middle to Middle-Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Knowledge (Geourgy, Arcana) and Skill (Ranging). ***Story-Role(s)***: any

Elementalists are powerful conjurers; men and women who focus on the summoning of elemental creatures and controlling the powers of earth, air, wind, and fire. Whether (D20) they're sorcerers with innate ability of controlling the elements, or wizards prestigiously studying primal forces, elementalists typically are found among members of "explorers" organizations, guilds, and places of high learning.

An elementalist is likely to join the PCs, becoming an Ally out of curiosity leading to the discovery arcane secrets, or pure adventurousness. Like most practitioners of the arcane, this type also becomes envious of others, taking on the mantle of Competitor to contend with a reputable elementalist. The elementalist as Enemy feels compelled to challenge anyone who would threaten his livelihood or ability to advance in knowledge. Many are so obsessed with controlling elemental forces that they risk loosing control of summoned creatures, which quickly can evolve into a "natural" disaster virtually anywhere. As Hinderer, an elementalist can create many obstacles to the progress of PCs including storms of wind, hail, lightning, and rain, or by summoning extra-dimensional assailants. Most elementalists in society will be Neutral, holding a passive attitude toward the PCs, and content to mind their own business. As a Patron, it must be that the PCs have interests in common with an elementalist adept or wizard; and, thus, are willing to undertake missions related to Geourgy and Arcana.

Expert: ***Social Class***: Middle-Middle to Lower-Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Repute, Knowledge. Treasure, Power, Knowledge. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Neutral

Experts are the professionals and craftsmen in the world, such as scholars, artisans, tradesmen, craftsmen, mechanics, and sword smiths; important commoners all.

Experts in helpful association are Allies, whether paid or aiding out of goodwill. The emphasis here is on the word "helpful": Allied experts will not knowingly aid both the heroes and their foes. Experts may be competitive with each other in the guild or academy, but not often in relation to PCs. Few experts care to take on adventurers in a hostile fashion and, instead, merely focus on increasing their competence and skill. Experts who develop a hatred of PCs, thus fitting the role of Enemy (perhaps, after being discredited or humiliated in public) might hire outlaws or rogues to harass or waylay. If the expert is renounced for his knowledge in battle tactics or unique weaponry, then the heroes will find themselves doubly in trouble! The difference between a Neutral expert and an ally is the partiality of the ally in contrast to the cold indifference of the neutral. Experts don't make good patrons to adventurers, unless their expertise is a hobby and secondary to some other societal role.

Explorer: ***Social Class***: Upper-Middle to Lower Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Knowledge, Treasure, Repute. ***Story-Role(s)***: any

Explorers, as a group, are extremely varied, and include fortune-hunters, madcap opportunists, pioneers, pirates, swashbucklers, colonizers, frontiersmen, pathfinders, trailblazing adventurers, expeditionists, even gypsies, and others. They always have a purpose; to discover new things. And they're never mere itinerants or wanderers.

An explorer is an ideal Ally, serving sometimes as a guide in strange lands, a ranger, forester, or survivalist. But there is much rivalry among explorers. A lone party of PCs gaining lots of recognition for discovering new places might provoke the ire of the local explorers' guild. Such a guild quickly can become Competitors; possibly resorting to dirty tricks and espionage for the sake of one-upmanship. A particularly pertinacious explorer might become violently competitive; consequently, ele-

ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHY

Prelate: representing the entire pantheon, equal to an emperor in precedence.
Sub-prelates: representing a major deity of the pantheon, equal to king or palatine noble, a prince or duke.
Sub-prelates: representing a minor deity of the pantheon, equal to a lesser noble, from viscount to baronet.

Hierarchy serving a Pantheon

Grand High Priest/Priestess (equal to a duke)
Serving a state or region of the world
in a grand temple
High Priest/Priestess (equal to an earl)
Serving a part of a state or region
of the world in a grand temple
Master of an order of warrior clergy (equal to a baron)
Prior of an order of friars (equal to a lord)
Chief Priest/Priestess* (equal to a baronet)
Serving a High one in the state or region
in a temple
Abbot/Abbess (equal to a lord)
Officiant Priest/Priestess* (equal to a grand knight)
Serving a Chief one in the state or
region in a temple, alone in a fane or chapel
Warrior-clergy (equal to a grand knight)
Priest/Priestess* (equal to a esquire)
Serving a locale in a chantry
Under Priest/Priestess (equal to a gentleman)
Serving a locale at a shrine
Friars, Almoners, Monks/Nuns

Hierarchy Serving a Deity

Grand High Priest/Priestess (equal to a marquis)
Serving a state or region of the world
in a grand temple
High Priest/Priestess (equal to a viscount)
Serving a part of a state or region
of the world in a grand temple
Master of an order of warrior clergy (equal to a lord)
Prior of an order of friars (equal to a baronet)
Chief Priest/Priestess* (equal to a grand knight)
Serving either a High one in the state or region, or else
representing a lesser deity in a temple
Abbot/Abbess (equal to a baronet)
Officiant Priest/Priestess* (equal to a knight)
Serving a Chief one in the state or region
in a temple, alone in a fane or chapel
Warrior-clergy (equal to a knight)
Priest/Priestess* (equal to a gentleman)
Serving a locale in a chantry
Under Priest/Priestess (equal to a gentleman)
Serving a locale at a shrine
Friars, Almoners, Monks/Nuns

Lay Warriors & Ecclesiastical Servants, Friars/Monks

*Here is about the level at which a shaman fits in.

The above sort of structure, altered to suit the culture and society of a people, thus provides multiple layers of ecclesiastical care. At the top we have the prelate in some especially holy place where pilgrimages come for special things. Below that we have special grand temples in special places in the state, also places for pilgrimage, of course, with clerics of great potency. In the middle we have temples, places in cities and towns, with potent heads and various lesser clergy because of the needs to be served. Closer to the bottom are the "parish" places of worship -fanes and chantry- located in metropolitan wards, small communities, and in the domiciles of warrior-clerics, priories, abbeys, and convents. Scattered form middle to bottom there are chapels and shrines for the immediate, and sometimes also special, needs of the populace.

Warrior-clergy protect the people.

Friars preach and also educate, go from place to place to assist with mundane and special problems.

Monks educate the young, serve travelers, pray, and create medicines and the like.

Nuns help protect women and children, pray, teach, and create medicines and the like.

vating himself to the role of Enemy. Explorers are famously apt Hinderers, especially in a wilderness where they know the territory far better than the PCs. Those who are on good terms with local druidical circles or mischievous Alfar communities might find very creative ways to harass the PCs; and ensure that they remain at the bottom of the totem pole. Plainly, there are benefits to joining an Explorers Guild, such as avoiding harmful competition and perhaps gaining a Patron who can supply and pay adventurers for expeditions. Explorers who are reckless daredevils or thrill-seekers with no regard for the safety of their companions make good Wild Cards.

Fanatic: ***Social Class***: any. ***Common Goal(s)***: Reputation for undying loyalty. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Hinderer

A fanatic is a broad-spectrum characterization; one who is like a devotee but possessing excessive zeal for some person, organization, government, pantheon, or deity. A fanatic might seem like a madman, at times, due to his overwhelming fervor. Examples include: a fanatical fighter as brutal and feared warlord; an obsessive sorcerer attempting to usurp the throne; a crazed cleric inquisitor; a jingoist hateful of other nationalities; or a monomaniac rogue fixated on a unique gem carried by the queen.

A fanatic can make a convenient, albeit unruly, Ally, who acts out of loyalty, duty or devotion to a cause or people. Conversely, a fantastical Enemy doesn't allow for surrender. And, if powerful

and/or influential, a fanatic is a horrendous opponent to face. Few fanatics would view themselves as mere Hinderers. But, if a bunch of low-level or relatively unthreatening zealots throw themselves upon the blades of the PCs, it can become a miserable hindrance.

Fighter: ***Social Class***: Lower-Lower to Upper-Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Repute, Power, Skill. ***Story-Role(s)***: Any

The fighter is a character class which subsumes dozens of possible military, mercenary, or heroic occupations within society: Ordinary soldiers, deputy marshals (law), local constables, ordinary fencing masters, men-at-arms, fencing masters, ordinary military officers, marshals (law), grand serjeants, landless knights, high-ranking naval officers, high-ranking military officers, armingers, generals (knighted or a petty noble), knights, knights commander, palatine religious warrior orders' masters, and knights of the governing retinue. Also, other than fighters recognized in society, there are those classified as fighters simply because they excel at swordplay or brawling. Such a person could fit within the definition of dozens of other types; be it a swashbuckler, bravo, explorer, or violence-prone barkeep.

Fighters serving as Allies have countless motivations, such as a sense of duty, dignity, compassion, love, or a sense of justness. Those who become Competitors frequently are professional fighters with a strong gladiatorial bent, perhaps galvanized by rumors of some other fighter's celebrated prowess. The fighter probably is the most common Enemy encountered. Any humanoid skilled with weapons qualifies for the part: Lesser minions of a lich-lord, experienced mercenaries, armed followers of an evil cleric, cronies of a big crime boss, knights, underlings of a nethercraefter, hardened killers, or a puissant king wielding a magical, legendary blade. Fighters become the Hinderers when commanded by their superiors to impede, subdue, or capture without harming their quarry. As always, it's a fine line between hinderer and outright enemy, but the distinction mostly has to do with the attitude of the individual NPC toward the PCs. Neutral fighters probably are soldiers, or any armed persons who have no truck with the PCs. Great knights, the masters of religious warriors' orders, generals, or commanders make likely Patrons; perchance, using the PCs as soldiers expressly chosen, trained, and armed to lead an attack. The PCs might find themselves in numerous small skirmishes on the sidelines of a war, sent on missions of infiltration, or commanded to help the patron fighter clear a dangerous areas of monsters, for the safety of the state, city, or town. Fighters are Wild Cards only when their individual personalities and circumstances dictate. As such, a story-role is not intrinsic to this general type.

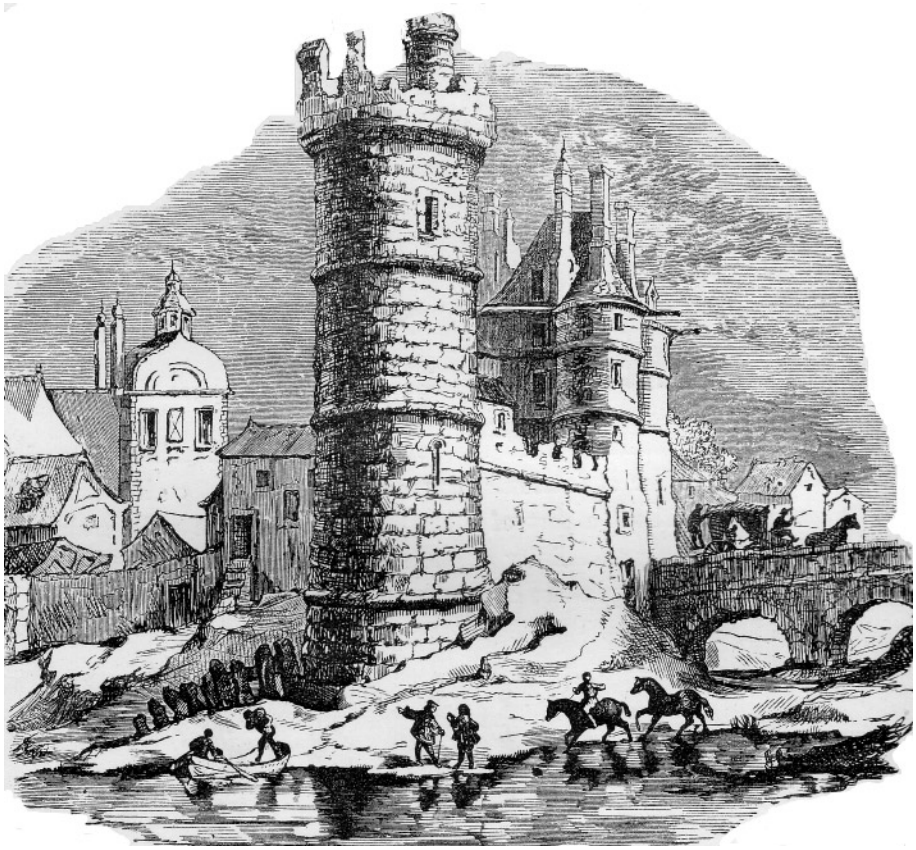
Follower: ***Social Class***: any except upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Repute (subservient recognition). ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Hinderer, Neutral

A follower is akin to a devotee, but is somewhat less ardent. Not necessarily patriotic or overtly pious, a follower might abandon a venerated personage or cause if things go badly. A follower is not a static character, and can become a trusted cohort, a true devotee or even evolve into a fanatic over time, given the right circumstances (for better or worse). A follower who also is a trusted friend is considered to be a henchman or cohort, and sometimes is controlled by the player to whose character the henchman has vowed his allegiance (see DMG for details).

The follower in the role of Ally basically is an admirer of one or more PCs, and is likely to be attracted through the use of the Leadership Feat (for PCs of 6th level or above as described in the DMG). The follower who becomes an Enemy probably is the most generic antagonist on the menu, being of any class, race, alignment or affiliation. The chief motivation, obviously, is loyalty. A follower might become a Hinderer if fearing for the safety of his master or the object of his affections. He will lie, misdirect, or entrap the PCs before they can intercept the NPC. If the PCs become hostile and retaliate against the follower, he or she quickly can morph into an enemy combatant. Otherwise, a follower, if he and his cause or patron remains unthreatened, shall stay thoroughly Neutral.

Forester: ***Social Class***: Upper Lower. ***Common Goal(s)***: Skill, Knowledge (Hunting, Weapons, Archery, and Rustic). ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Hinderer, Neutral

Foresters are woodsmen and huntsmen living in rustic, wooded locales. They're typically found on hunting preserves



of nobles or in villages located near or within the timberlands, often along with jongleurs, outlaws, and soldiers. Nobles often hire them to protect their hunting lands, seeking them out at trading establishments, taverns, and special lodges. A D20 ranger essentially belongs to the order of foresters but has limited access to druidical magic and possesses a single-mindedness about hacking through the ranks of his chosen nemeses.

The forester as Ally might have similar reason to aid the PCs as a druid, but is just as likely to be a huntsman in the employ of a nobleman, bound to protect royal woodland. If there is some monstrous threat to the timberlands, or an evil threatening the kingdom originating somewhere deep in the forest, a good forester will help any would-be heroes. Foresters are not competitive, in general; which, for the most part, is an urban trait. An Enemy forester working in association with outlaws, druids, bards (jongleurs), or defected soldiers will be one to set traps or try to run the PCs out of the forest. If not overtly hostile, the forester can find many ways to be the Hinderer, using his knowledge of archery and hunting to his advantage. Rangers might goad animals into assailing the heroes, or aid major adversaries in finding them, via expert tracking, woodland stride, evasion, camouflage, or "hiding in plain sight". Otherwise, a forester or ranger is inclined to remain Neutral, paying virtually no attention to a non-threatening traveler, forest explorer, or passersby.

Freak: ***Social Class***: typically underclass or criminal underclass, but can be of other social classes. ***Common Goal(s)***: Nobody can quite figure it out. ***Story-Role(s)***: Wild Card

The freak is another generalized type, like the fanatic or madman, which allows for a large range of possible characterizations. He or she could be a noticeably unusual or deformed person or, even a humanoid or weird animal. A freak might, or might not, be of sound mind. A "freak" NPC could, for instance, be a drug addict, a colorblind nonconformist (always an unfortunate blend), or an eccentric wizard who behaves in irrational and uncontrolled ways, or a character prone to sudden causeless turns of mind, and easily excited and motivated by a whim. He even could be a capricious prankster. In any guise, such people refuse to change, regardless of threats, or cajoling (much like younglings in humanoid cultures). A freak might even be proud of his deformity, and refuse divine healing. A freak can be of any race or class, but usually is cast within a story as a harmless distraction. Or, the GM can be innovative and cast the freak in a role similar to that of a babbling madman: Perchance, one who possesses an important clue, if the players are careful enough to listen.

Friar: see Ecclesiastic

Guard: see Fighter

Guardian: ***Social Class***: n/a. ***Common Goal(s)***: To guard, of course. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Inhibitor

Most guardians serve a static role, as an archetypal guardian above the order of common soldier or watchmen, who is akin to Cerberus, the three-headed hound that guards the entrance to Hades in Greek mythology. Other creatures used for guarding important places, treasures, or people are golems and allied magical constructs. Monsters trapped within a strategic place by their captors, and expected to kill any who would enter their prisons, also are commonplace guardians.

A guardian also might be the ghost of a family ancestor who stuck around on the prime plane to ensure the welfare of his family, rather than become a petitioner at the pearly (or black) gates of his deity. Such rare spirits attempt to guide and protect their loved ones throughout their lives. There are few such occurrences documented, but as a result, superstitious commoners believe that everybody has their own personal guardian spirit. Some truly ignorant knaves even make animal sacrifices to their "genius" on their birthdays, hoping that this will bestow upon them greater intellectual powers and success (this is one of the few things that can make a taciturn necrourge laugh aloud).

In another sense, many deities are considered the guardians of specific people, places, animals, or of whole communities. But this only is one aspect of their complex beings, and cannot justify placing them solely in this category; unless they're a deity of lesser status with an extremely limited range of influence in their portfolio. More appropriate to this function are guardian deital minions (see separate entry).

The guardian as Ally is assumed to be a willing protector or sentinel of a particular place. The guardian creature that is challenged often has no choice but to assume the role of Enemy. Heck, some guardians trapped in their dungeons or labyrinths for many years might well look forward to a confrontation out of sheer boredom! The guardian as Hinderer is an entity who merely acts in self-defense while steadfastly blocking whatever it is that the PCs seek. Spells, items, or monsters capable of casting spells like Antilife Shell, Antimagic Field, Antipathy, Dimensional Anchor, Discern Lies, Dominate Person, Fire Shield, Forbiddance, or Sequester are ideal for a guardian hinderer.

In the LA game various sorts of golems serve in the role of mindless guardians.

Gypsy: ***Social Class***: Criminal Underclass. ***Common Goal(s)***: Treasure, Skill. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Hinderer

Gypsies are migrant bands of ethnically related peoples traveling together in "house-wagons." When coming upon a new town or city, the gypsies will send their members out to seek work, peddle shabby wares, beg, and entice people to their encampment to be entertained. All concerned in these activities look for opportunities to steal, pick pockets, rob and cheat. When entertaining, for a fee, of course, they likewise seek to increase their profits through knavery. (See *The Canting Crew, Vol. II*, "Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds".)

A gypsy is an interesting Ally, because of his tight-knit band. Becoming the friend or associate of one usually entails a loose bond with the others. Gypsies are fierce Competitors and confidently might contend harshly with roguish PCs who also live by theft and fortune telling. A gypsy will become an Enemy if the PCs force him to protect his band's profitable racket. In the role of Hinderer, the gypsy NPC might be informing foes of the heroes plans and movements. Or he might be motivated to lead the PCs on a wild goose chase for some missing item or person which the gypsies secretly are holding, until his band is ready to leave town. Gypsies are not "neutral" because, as thieves, they always pose a threat to incautious PCs. And, when exposed they

quickly can resort to violence before fleeing town. Gypsies are patrons only to their own kin, and become wild cards only to ignorant folk unfamiliar with their racket.

Henchman: A companion, loyal and trusted follower, associate, or subordinate. Treat as a cohort, as per the rules in the DMG (otherwise, see follower, or devotee).

Heretic: ***Social Class***: any. ***Common Goal(s)***: Repute (for reformation), Wealth (to support reformation), Property (for home to heretical movement). ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy

Heresy is a spiritual crime, tried by an ecclesiastic court (see Appendix A: Courts of Law). Whichever god or goddess is adopted as supreme by the temporal and spiritual lords sets a precedent for the "correct" lifestyle within the state. With that known, individual cities and towns still might adopt their own patron deities within the same pantheon. The nobility and priesthood understand that one deity's heresy could be the correct doctrine of another. But they'll not allow the "natural order" to be superceded by provincial gods or their worshippers' selfish values. Therefore, a heretic challenges the natural order. Sometimes the heretic is a member of the Lords Spiritual or Lords Temporal, sparking a doctrinal quarrel concerning which god or pantheon best represents a city or nation. Because the monarch also is a high ranking lord spiritual, probably representing the established patron deity, a heretic must have powerful supporters or face accusations of treason or a level of impiety worthy of exile.

The heretic as an Ally is likely to be a dual-type, probably a fanatic, with whom the PCs happen to agree. A heretic has tunnel vision in his wish for reformation and is, therefore, an unlikely source of aid to those who don't support his efforts. While the heretic is a competitor of sorts, at least in the "free market" of religious ideas, he is not a likely candidate for that story-role in relation to the adventurers. However, if the PCs disagree with his proposed reformations, they might get a hostile response. And, if they push the issue, they will be gaining an Enemy. Heretics worthy of the title are prone to fanaticism, and never serve as mere hinderers. That is, they either help or hate. Nor are they neutral toward anybody, because they're constantly proselytizing and attempting to win converts. Because of their tunnel vision (no matter how progressive), a heretic is somewhat predicable (unless a heretic solely for the sake of causing strife) and makes a poor wild card.

Hierarch: A Lord Spiritual occupying a position of high authority (See Ecclesiastic).

Hireling: ***Social Class***: Lower-Lower to Lower-Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Wealth. ***Story-Role(s)***: Neutral (primary), Ally, Neutral

Hirelings are NPCs in the employ of the PCs. Some are given menial jobs, such as being appointed to carry equipment, or tend pack-animals. Other times, it is professionals and craftsmen who are hired; including scholars, artisans, tradesmen, craftsmen, mechanics, sword smiths, and professional soldiers.

Hirelings rarely operate out of goodwill, even if they're of good alignment. They are pragmatists, always expect to be paid, and fill the role of Ally only in the limited sense of providing a valuable service. Hirelings, as experts, may be competitive with each other in the guild or academy, but not often in relation to PCs. Few hirelings care to take on adventurers in a hostile fashion; especially, considering that most PCs are more powerful. Hirelings who develop an extreme dislike of PCs, can become an Enemy; and might hire outlaws or rogues to harass or waylay. All hirelings are Neutral first and foremost; that role overlapping with that of the ally, and indifferent to what the PCs are up to, as long as they are adequately paid.

Holy Warrior (Paladin): ***Social Class***: Middle-Middle to Upper-Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Power, Knowledge, Repute. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Neutral, Patron

A holy warrior is a heroic champion of the temple; a strong supporter or defender of a religious cause. However, the holy warrior cannot properly be a called paladin, unless he's also a paragon of chivalry.

Such a heroic, knightly champion makes a great Ally, since he's often motivated to help good PCs for reasons of altruism, compassion, benevolence, and duty. They don't bother with petty rivalries. If a holy warrior has a contention with the PCs, he will give them one warning; which if unheeded, prompts him to assume the role of Enemy. Only a terrible deed or a horrible misunderstanding would earn the animosity of a paladin. Usually, misunderstandings can be cleared up by subjecting oneself to a Zone of Truth. But woe to one whom an order of paladins has sworn to kill. Paladins are generally polarized in their attitudes. Never stooping to trickery or subterfuge, they are either a friend, foe, or consummately indifferent. When encountered as a Neutral, they are apt to be standing about in shiny armor, looking officious and important, protecting their ecclesiastic leader. Misery is sure to befall one who attacks any cleric surrounded by loyal paladins. The master of a palatine religious warriors' order is an effective Patron, and would send forth his subjects on quests important to deity, temple, and state.

Inquisitor: ***Social Class*****:** Lower to Upper Middle Society, Upper-Upper in societies plagued by witchery. ***Common Goal(s)***: Power (to fight evil), Knowledge (to understand the enemy). S***tory Roles***: Ally, Enemy, Patron

Inquisitors are those men and women so aghast at the depredations and iniquities practiced by witches and warlocks, not to mention nethercraefters and necrourges, that they dedicate their lives to tracking down and calling to justice all those that practice the black arts. In addition some Inquisitors actively seek out "heretics", those who, in the view of the inquisitor, are apostate, misbelievers or in some other way deny the "true faith" as espoused by the Inquisitor (definition by Jon Creffield).

The inquisitor as Ally is a willful hunter of evil, maybe even a little fanatical. If the PCs, or one within their party, practice the "black arts" of necrourgy, demonic sorcery, or is a known heretic, an inquisitor is a likely Enemy. Inquisitors are usually urban dwellings, using their abilities of Scrutiny, Arcana, and Evaluation to sniff out the enemy. D20 classes be a Inquisitor either as a label of station applied to a sorcerers, wizards, or cleric (focusing on skills like Sense Motive and Gather Information), or the GM might want to create prestige class befitting the campaign. Inquisitors tend to be single-minded and are not in

competition with each other. Inquisitors are usually indifferent to PCs who lack evil characters, but are never neutral in the full context of the milieu. These types attack rather than become mere hinderers, and usually have the backing of the state and temple. In a society plagued by witches, inquisitors hold high stations, and could make an excellent Patron to heroes who are likewise interested in smiting evil in the land, sometimes with the aid of wyccan covens.

Jongleur: see bard

Judge: ***Social Class***: Middle-Middle to Lower-Upper (or higher for justiciars). ***Common Goal(s)***: Repute (for dispensing justice, Power, Knowledge. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Hinderer

A judge dispenses justice and. in doing so serves to maintain public order. Judges, like ecclesiastics, are members of a distinct social hierarchy within a Gygaxian Fantasy World, with their ranks greatly impacting the nature of an encounter. Judges are counted among the lower-upper class, magistrates of the upper-middle class, and justices of the peace belong to the middle-middle socio-economic class. The powers of each are explicated in Appendix A: Courts of Law, along with a list of common crimes helpful to know when running adventures in civilized lands. It's always important to consider such things when constructing fantasy adventures, so that the gravity of certain actions is known within context of common laws. If the PCs deem to become outlaws, the GM (and players) had better know what they're getting themselves into!

A state justiciar, a royal office holder, or powerful judge might become an Ally to the PCs,, believing in their cause and using his clout to aid and/or legitimize actions on the part of the adventurers which might otherwise seem like vigilantism. But it's more likely, at lower-levels, that the PCs will find allies among the lesser functionaries of law; perhaps, befriending a magistrate or justice of the peace to help them escape minor entanglements with the authorities when chasing down the villains. Arbitrators of the law have no business competing with adventurers and swashbucklers, but make terribly unnerving Enemies, since they can summon special marshals and local constables to crack down on "wayward" PCs. As an enemy, it's implied that the judge is conspiring against the PCs; and even might fabricate evidence in cooperation with the watchmen. This is a potentially bleak scenario for most PCs. As such, the GM must be vigilant, and avoid channeling his players' characters into inescapable fates. Lesser arbitrators of the law can't do much more than accuse the PCs of misdemeanors, and serve as little more than Hinderers. In any case, it's helpful for the PCs to belong to an Order, association, or serve a patron who can help extricate them from legal entanglements..

> Never underestimate the value of an ally of high position in the law. Being convicted of assault can cost dearly. For instance, imagine adventurers—lacking any patron—vanquishing an evil nethercraefter on the streets of the capital city. If the demonurges have maintained a front of high status in society, the "heroes" could find themselves convicted of assault, facing stiff penalties and/or 1 to 6 months of gaol time.

Lunatic: ***Social Class***: any. ***Common Goal(s)***: Stopping the voices, Knowledge to counterbalance their 'terminal uniqueness' . ***Story-Role(s)***: Enemy, Wild Card

There are many types of mentally unbalanced persons, lunatics. In one type, the battle between material and spiritual, fact and fantasy, is merely illusory. A lunatic might be encountered sitting in the lotus position, chanting something like, "what's real is phenomenological," over and over (or, it could be that the party has encountered a Vedsudic monk of Laerth). In any event, it's clear that it can require a knowledgeable priest or philosopher to differentiate between a saint and a madman. The first clue usually has to do with the level of ego involved. And, nonetheless, any eccentric, wild and giddy NPC often is labeled as a lunatic. It's sufficient to say that lunatics are a varied bunch, marked primarily by caprice and more than a touch of weirdness.

A lunatic is too unpredictable to make a good ally, and makes for a lousy competitor. A fanatic might be mistaken for a lunatic, but any creature motivated to cause pandemonium around the PCs is an Enemy (and in that sense demons are akin to lunatics). But, sanity is a societal measure of functionality and has less to do with individual beliefs as it does societal norms. For example, delusional schizophrenics are definitely impaired in terms of their functionality in society. Thus, a person only should be labeled "insane" if overt aberration(s) from the norm have rendered him/her consummately dysfunctional. Normally, lunatics aren't sufficiently organized to hinder anybody, are never sure what the definition of "neutral" is, make for the worst patrons on earth, and are left with only one role. Lunatics are the quintessential Wild Cards. Is what they say nonsensical babble or a riddle leading to valuable information? Are they possessed, dangerous, or just a harmless, madcap knave? Those are the questions only the GM can answer.

Mage: ***Social Class***: Upper-Lower to Upper-Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Repute or Infamy, Treasure, Power, Knoweldge. ***Story-Role(s)***: any

The company of thaumaturgists—those wizards lacking elemental powers associated with geourgy—are known as Mages in their own circles. (D20 Wizards have access to both geourgy and thaumaturgy. See spellcasters, arcane for more detail). Mages are found in cities, towns, and even in more rustic locales. However, only larger communities have organized guilds. They are recognized by all, but especially by Elementalists, Nobles, Mariners, and Solders. Typical places for association are spell component shops, "seekers" organizations, guilds, and places of higher learning (LRFAP).

The usefulness of a thaumaturgist Ally is impossible to discount. The motives for alliance are innumerable, depending on alignment and circumstance. Mages often vie for power within their respective orders, and if the PCs have a mage among their ranks, it's not unlikely that some thaumaturgist will rise to the role of Competitor, either overtly or in more subtle, social ways. Mages are formidable Enemies, whether fighting the heroes due to some perceived challenge or slight or simply because they're evil individuals. Mages often act out of hubris, fear, malevo-

lence, or resentment. Naturally, arcane spellcasters have access to all sorts of magic with which to harass or track PCs, thus becoming a Hinderer. Acting as a hinderer, D20 mages in D20 would use spells such as: Ghost Sound, Silent Image, Ventriloquism, Detect Thoughts, Misdirection, Clairaudience/ Clairvoyance, Suggestion, Major Image, Hallucinatory Terrain, Illusory Wall, Dream, False Vision, etc. A mage is an excellent Patron in many cases, especially an archmage, and is likely to send forth his champions on missions related to arcane or cosmic mystery. Because mages are of all personality types and alignments, the GM can easily set up an encounter with a Wild Card, some master of illusion determined to misdirect or befuddle the heroes.

Mariner: ***Social Class***: Lower-Lower to Lower-Upper (if Naval) **Common Goal(s)**: Repute, Skill. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Competitor, Enemy, Hinderer, Neutral, Patron

Words synonymous with mariner are sailor, seafarer, or shipmate. Ranks of mariner, including military, include ordinary sailors, boatmen, the merchant mariner, ordinary to high-ranking naval officers, and admirals.

A mariner can, for example, be an Ally out of adventurousness, sense of duty, or friendship. If the mariner is a pirate among swashbuckling PCs, he might become a Competitor. One or more mariners, like any armed humanoids, can become the Enemy for countless reasons, including mutiny. A mariner serves as Hinderer when deliberately steering the vessel away from the destination expected by the PCs, or when marooning the heroes on a desert island (although marooned PCs without access to teleportation would be justified in calling that more than a hindrance). Most of the time, the mariner remains Neutral; a hireling who simply does his job. Mariners may become Patrons to the PCs in seafaring campaigns of naval conquest or swashbuckling piracy.

Merchant: ***Social Class***: Lower-Middle to Lower-Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Wealth, Repute, Treasure, Property, Knowledge. ***Story-Role(s)***: Competitor, Enemy, Hinderer, Neutral, Patron

Collectively, merchants are a powerful class, and sometimes are catalysts of momentous change within society, for better or worse (see Part One of this book: social strife). Their occupations range from the wholesale purchase and sale of goods to running a small retail business. Commercial trade and a merchant guilds often are the targets of outlaws, thieves, assassins (sometimes hired by the nobility), and other, rival merchant guilds. Wealthy merchants might own much property in communities, have extensive lands in rural areas, also be ship owners; and because of their financial wherewithal they might play a role in the affairs of the aristocrats as bankers and financeers.

Minion: see hireling, follower, or devotee

Monk, typical: see ecclesiastic

Monster. ***Social Class***: n/a. ***Common Goal(s)***: any. ***Story-Role(s)***: any

A monster is the generic D20 term for any creature deviating from the human norm, both hostile and benign. However, many intelligent "monsters" can be treated like other character types. Add a monster within the context of the background events chosen in Part 1, give it a story role as per Part 2, and assign motivations and goals in the current chapter (Part 3). A monster of only animal intellect or an insentient construct still can serve the role of enemy or inhibitor; although assigning it motivations would be silly. Remember, not all options must be applied to each character or monster in the story-latent. The GM can relegate any monster to the general category of "obstacle" (see Story functions, Part 5 of this work), making it a single encounter with no further complication.

Murderer: ***Social Class***: any. ***Common Goal(s)***: n/a ***Story-Role(s)***: Enemy

A murderer is defined herein as one who was in full possession of his reason, and yet unlawfully killed another humanoid (any race protected under the law) with premeditated malice. Murder is punished under the law by execution, usually beheading. Being an accessory to murder can earn one twenty years of penal servitude, and assault with a deadly weapon five years of bond or penal servitude. Certainly, it behooves the adventurers to avoid infamy or be convicted of murder! It helps to have a Patron who will vouch for the PCs "license to kill" known villains. Vigilante heroes had better cover their tracks, have good alibis or provide plenty of evidence of the necessity of killing their adversaries. A murderer, in relation to the PCs, always is one trying to murder them. Such a character cannot fit any role other than Enemy.

Noble: ***Social Class***: Any Upper. ***Common Goal(s)***: Repute, Treasure, Property, Power. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Competitor, Enemy, Hinderer, Patron

The nobility are the lords temporal, the most privileged and powerful men and woman apart from the priesthood, who fill the upper classes, from the sovereigns to the petty gentry, and are found within most civilized states of the world.

Using the European model as a basis, the ranks of nobility in the fantasy world are, as explicated in Living Fatasy: Great nobles include persons with the title of archduke/archduchess, grand duke/grand duchess, duke/duchess, prince/princess Nobles of median rank include a marquis/marquise, count or earl/ countess, viscount/viscountess, (great) baron/baroness; Petty nobles include a minor baron/baroness, lord/lady, baronet/madam (incidentally, a non-medieval title, but one that's logically encountered within a fantasy world). To add a bit of exotic flavor, one might include seizen (the possessor of a freehold estate) and/or vavasor (actually, the chief official of a noble, but a potentially noble title denoting some sort of land ownership) among petty nobles. A seizen or vavasor would be of lower rank than all other nobles, and addressed as sir/dame. Notably, a relatively low-ranked noble can improve his rank, by at least two grades, after being appointed to a royal office.

Oracle: see augur

An oracle is a respected diviner, like an augur, who's considered to be a source of wise counsel and prediction. Typically a priest or priestess, the oracle is thought to be speaking for his respective deity; which is why his answers are enigmatic or allegorical.

Outlaw: see criminal

In the criminal underclass, placement of this group on a "social scale" is nigh impossible. That is because the "Outlaw" classification is a very general one. Outlaws are apt to include most, if not all, of the underclass population. Specifically, though, the term commonly is applied to forest bandits, for instance, in a fantasy milieu. (See *Living Fantasy, Vol. III*, "Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds.)

Paladin: see holy warrior

Peddlers: ***Social Class***: Criminal Underclass to Lower-Lower. ***Common Goal(s)***: Basic Needs.***Story-Role(s)***: Hinderer, Neutral, Wild Card

Itinerant hawkers who travel around, afoot with pack, with a pack animal, or in a cart or wagon, selling and trading small wares for a living. They are often regarded as a hucksters and vagabonds. They may Hinder the PCs by means of dirty tricks or larcenous activity, but otherwise remain Neutral.. Peddlers who are members of gypsy bands or thieves guilds can double as Wild Card spies, or shadow the party as a hireling for one of their adversaries.

Pirate: ***Social Class***: Criminal Underclass. ***Common Goal(s)***: Infamy, Treasure. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Competitor, Hinderer, Patron, Wild Card

The pirate is a seafaring criminal who uses his ship or stolen fleet to rob and plunder from the land or sea without commission from any sovereign state. Since pirates do not own shipyards, they must resort to commandeering the ships of their quarry. Those ships not suited to pirate tasks are looted and then sunk. Pirate ships include schooners, square-riggers (as flagship), sloops (for smugglers), and brigantines (for combat).

Pirates can make tenuous Allies to swashbuckling heroes, as long as the PCs know to watch their backs. Most commonly, the pirate is encountered as an Enemy, who's motivated by avarice and malice to assail the PC's port city or sailing ship. If the PCs themselves are seafaring bravos, and stealing from the fleet of some despotic monarchy, they inevitably will encounter pirates as Competitors. Pirates don't always bother to slay everybody in their path of looting and destruction; especially, when on land. When kidnapped for possible ransom, or tied to a post in town, the pirate is a nasty sort of Hinderer, since this sort of activity really stalls ones quests. Pirates can become Patron to a group of PCs, if the players allow their characters to be commanded by a bunch of cutthroats. Occasionally working with the enemy has its benefits; especially, when contending with an evil empire. And, lastly, pirates often are Wild Cards, who're chaotic in nature and don't always adhere to some sort of "pirates code".

Ranger: see forester

Rebel: Social Class: Criminal Underclass Common Goal(s): Sedition, Subversion. ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Patron

Rebels are brave (and, perhaps, foolish) people who challenge the existing government; especially, despotisms. They can belong to any class or order, although many might go unrecognized by their former peers as members of their social class. Rebels risk being tried for treason; thereby possibly earning them the honor of hanging and/or drawing and quartering. If only an accessory, mercifully quick beheading might be their fate. For conviction of sedition, the penalty is tongue removal, branding, and exile (which sucks for spellcasters!). Being an accessory earns one branding plus a decade of penal servitude (see Appendix A, Courts of Law).

If the PCs find an Ally in a rebel, they had better be sure they're on the right side. And the GM should be fair, or give the errant players plenty of clues to know what the odds truly are when aiding such an NPC. Heroes working for the state or temple might find themselves in the line of fire, and caught up in a rebellion they are expected to help put down. Certainly, such Enemies, when in the wrong, can be fun to dispatch. Rebels do not deign merely to hinder their adversaries, nor do they care to compete. They care to win the fight, period. Thus, rebels are not well characterized as "neutral," on any level. A rebel normally makes a lousy Patron, unless the rebellion is extremely strong, and widely supported by wealthy, powerful individuals.

"They have exiled me now from their society and I am pleased, because humanity does not exile except the one whose noble spirit rebels against despotism and oppression. He who does not prefer exile to slavery is not free by any measure of freedom, truth and duty"

--Kahil Gibran, from "Spirits Rebellious"

Rogue: ***Social Class***: Criminal Underclass ***Common Goal(s)***: any ***Story-Role(s)***: any

Rogues are those who make their his living at the edges of society, and usually are solitary individuals or small groups of free-spirited, amoral persons. They include, but are not limited to: Confidence men;cat burglars; spies; blockade runners; agents and spies; mercenary assassins (see separate entry for assassins). Known for their skill and confidence, their pretense, stealing skills and fine-honed trickery come in handy within criminal guilds of all sorts. (description extrapolated, in part, from LRFAP).

Rogues are Allies when motivated by greed, bribery, kinship or, more rarely, friendship. They frequently are Competitors among their own ranks, and to virtually anyone who would challenge their criminal "jurisdiction.As Enemies, rogues might spring from the shadows at any moment for a sneak attack, infiltrate the ranks of the PCs as a mole, or threaten to murder relatives. Rogues are masters of deception, misdirection and subterfuge, who often act as a Hinderer. When simply doing retail business with them, as part of an ordinary transaction on the black-market, rogues remain Neutral in terms of story-roles. A Rogue Prince makes a great Patron to a party of PC rebels or bravo outlaws. As masters of illusion and disguise, rogues can fit the story-role of Wild Card perfectly.



TITLES OF ROYALTY AND NOBILITY, WESTERN EUROPEAN

(*World Builder, II*-GFW)

Titles are listed in descending order of rank.

Royalty
Emperor/Empress
King/Queen
Archduke (palatine)/Archduchess (palatine)
Duke (palatine)/Duchess (palatine)
Prince (palatine)/Princess (palatine)
Count (palatine)/Countess (palatine)
Crown Prince/Crown Princess
Prince Royal/Princess Royal

Nobility
Duke (German: Herzog)/Duchess
Marquis (German: Margrave)/Marquise (German: Margravine)
Count (English: Earl; German: Graf)/Countess (German: Graffine)
Landgraf (German)/Landgraffine
Waldgraf (German)/Waldgraffine
Viscount/Viscountess
Baron/Baroness
Lord (Don)/Lady
Baronet/Baronetess

NPC noblemen make useful Allies due to their prestige and resources. However, it is impossible to have a nobleman as a cohort if the PCs are of lower social status and viewed as anything less than champions of the state. If one or more of the PCs happen to be of noble blood, they will be all too familiar with the backstabbing and political intrigues typical to every place of association; whether it be castles, villas, manor houses, chateaux, or tourneys. So, there are many Competitors among the chivalrous, vying for favor from their superiors. A noble as Enemy might hold a personal grudge (see Plot Hooks, in Part 5 of this work), or view the PCs as political adversaries. The noble as Hinderer has the full force of bureaucracy, not to mention his own armed guards, to inhibit the heroes from gaining whatever it is that they want. Most nobles are, of course, neutral when their interests don't intersect with those of the PCs. But once encountered, they rarely fit that story-role. Nobles, whether king, queen, duke, or baronet, are obvious candidates for becoming a Patron to adventurers, sending them forth on missions of concern to the kingdom or the personal aims of the noble person.

Sage/Scholar: see expert

Scout: see forester or rogue

Seer: see augur

Shaman: see adept

Soldier: see fighter

Sorcerer: see spellcaster or demonurge

Spellcaster, arcane: see specific classes below

Magic-users of different types cause semantic knots when definitions cross game-system boundaries. In D20, sorcerers develop innate, arcane powers at puberty, and are recognized as being able to channel raw magical power. They shape it, according to their will, without resorting to complicated incantations. Wizards, unlike the maverick sorcerers, acknowledge each other as belonging to a primeval order of arcane knowledge and undergo extensive training. Both classes benefit from a mentor. But in the world of Learth, sorcerers are demonurges; those who traffic with demons. Wizards are also called "Mages" and practice thaumaturgy, which simply is the working of magic feats by incantation. The following excerpt should help to illustrate differences between the Lejendary Earth world and the basic D20 definitions.

Specific Magical Classifications (from *Living Fantasy, Vol III*, "Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds").

The D20 game system has a differently defined system of magic which doesn't exactly match the definitions in Living Fantasy (a comprehensive guide to pseudo-medieval to early Renaissance milieux); the latter being drawn mainly from the classic descriptions of the various sorts of magic considered.

Alchemy: In the D20 system, alchemy is considered a minor skill. The alchemist would be a wizard or sorcerer with the appropriate skills and item creation feats to create such objects;with, perhaps, a focus on potions and weapons/armor crafting in addition to more "practical magic" applications.

Divination: Naturally, those spells of the divination school are the core elements of this class.And, thus, wizards specializing in divination, along with Sorcerers whom choose divination-only spells, will be the core representatives of this type of magic.

Geourgy/Thaumaturgy: The D20 game system doesn't really distinguish the between georgury and thaumaturgy. The D20 wizard is a mix of both of these areas. If you really wish to distinguish between these areas, as a general rule of thumb, consider the following guidelines:

Spells that specifically manipulate the elemental forces are considered geourgy.

Higher-level spells tend to be the geourgy type, while lower-level spells are more thaumaturgic in nature.

Spells that have belong to the conjuration, transmutation, or evocation schools would most likely be classified as geourgy. And specialists of these schools would most likely be considered masters of geourgy.

Spells that fall under illusion, enchantment, or abjuration tend to be those categorized by thaumaturgy. And specialists of these schools typically would be considered thaumaturgists.

Wizards, because of their versatility, would most likely be considered masters of geourgy. In turn, sorcerers, due to their low versatility, usually would be consider thaumaturgists or "hedge-wizards".

Necromancer: Naturally, the necromancer would best be represented by either a wizard or sorcerer who specializes in the necromancy school. Depending on the culture, necromancers might be shunned or hunted.

Sorcerer: As stated elsewhere, to prevent confusion in terminology, it is suggested that you replace the term sorcerer in this book with nethercraefter. A nethercraefter is best represented in the game system by using a spell-casting class as the template (either cleric or sorcerer) and perhaps adding a prestige class from the various products available. There are two basic paths for sorcerers. The first path is for those who conjure up demons and force them into service, without making a pact with a particular entity. Such beings tend to be known as demonurgists. Others make pacts with a powerful entity in exchange for power.

For the former type, an evil wizard specializing in conjuration is your best way of representing this class. If you have access to the module Necropolis from Necromancer games/Sword and Sorcery Studios, there is a demonurgist prestige class that might add more specific "evil flavor." If you are representing those who make a pact with an evil entity, assuming you have access to the book, we actually recommend that the nethercraefter start with a few levels of sorcery, and then use the summoner class from the Relics and Rituals book from Sword and Sorcery Studios. This class exactly represents what a sorcerer would be; a being who makes a pact with evil.

Witchcrafter: The D20 core rules don't really take the evil witch into account; a stereotype that's based on actual history. Such a spellcaster would be represented best by a sorcerer or wizard; perhaps, enhanced with a customized prestige class and, in either case, using a specialized spell list that focuses on enchantment, illusion, transmutation, with a focus on the malign, disease, poison, curses, nasty pranks, evil servants, and general wickedness. The pact would add special powers; perhaps, with a few drawbacks.

Spellcaster, divine: see ecclesiastic, monk, or adapt (shaman)

Divine magic emanates either from a deity or sacred power. Clerics gain spells from their deities. Priests of Nature (Druids) and Rangers draw their power from the unfathomable Gaia. Paladins are empowered by a good deity, or by the eternal forces of Good and Law. Monks gain much of their chi power by being in identification with a life-force pervading the universe; a divine spark also recognized within. On Learth theurgists must be dedicated to a deity, or a pantheon of deities.

Spy: see rogue

Any roguish agent working to obtain secret information. The spy can be found working for criminal associations and guilds, the military, or in the employ of a single noble, mage, or cleric.

Troubadour: see bard

A type of jongleur who is a poet-musician of knightly rank.

Turncoat: see criminal or rebel

A turncoat is a traitor, and an unprincipled renegade and apostate. He's one who switches his allegiance and serves as a wild card, forsaking his party. Essentially, he's an outlaw

Tyrant: see noble, mage, judge, and ecclesiastic

A tyrant is a harsh, cruel ruler with consummate power. Usually gaining power through coup d'etat or treachery, he governs without restrictions, as a petty and capricious dictator. The tyrant might be a noble, mage, justiciar, or cleric appointed during time of emergency, such as the death of the king; and he might be the former king's only son, and the legitimate heir to the throne. Invested with unlimited power, a tyrant governs oppressively, and refuses to abdicate the throne.

Usurper: see criminal or rebel

The usurper is one who seizes and holds some important station, place, or powers of the state. This person could be a tyrant, a benevolent dictator, or claim to be the true heir. But, to the existing nobility and priesthood, he is seen as a rebel and traitor.. A usurper of power, or of the rights of a patron, can serve any story-role in relation to the goals of the PCs, but is best classified as an activity rather than a character type.

Vagabond (mountebank): see criminal

An itinerant who travels about the countryside in a wagon using entertainment to attract persons so as to sell nostrums, spurious magical charms, and other faux items. See criminal.

Vagabond (tinker): see beggar

Usually an itinerant who travels about the countryside in a cart or wagon doing knife and metal-edge sharpening, minor repairs, and selling used goods such as pots and pans.

Warrior: see fighter or barbarian

Warrior-Monk: see ecclesiastic

Monks gain much of their chi power by being in identification with a life-force pervading the universe; a divine spark also recognized within. Masters of the marital arts, the warrior monk uses inner strength and draws upon the divine energies provided by understanding ancient philosophies.

A warrior monk is an Ally most often out of a sense of duty or altruism. Always disciplined and lawful, monks of marital orders to not compete except in terms of honing their skills. As a Enemy the monk is both swift and deadly, with motivations ranging from duty to wrath, but never caprice. As Hinderer, a warrior monk will confuse his opponent, mislead, set non-lethal traps, or attempt to subdue the party. A monk serves a Neutral role when paying him for marital arts instruction or to learn of his philosophy. Such characters can become the patrons of monastic orders, which is a possible, but highly unlikely makeup for an adventuring party.

Watchman: see fighter

Wizard: see mage

Witch: see spellcaster, and Specific Magical Classifications

Wycce: ***Social Class***: Lower-Upper to Upper-Middle. ***Common Goal(s)***: Knowledge (arcane), Power (to smite evil). ***Story-Role(s)***: Ally, Enemy, Neutral

Found in many towns and some small cities, the Wycce are known by the general populace as "Crafters", and are recognized local healers, diviners, psychics and alchemists; though they represent one of the most sophisticated, eclectic and urban-based of the various priests and priestesses who worship nature. Most are relentless hunters of those who would be nature's despoilers, or of anyone who would traffic with evil spirits. And, often, they hunt Witches—whom they hate—in their own "Covens" of thirteen. Both male and female Wycce exist, and they must be initiated into a loosely knit Society of Crafters; each undergoing rites of passage, conducted by Wycces of higher rank, before progressing in knowledge. Wycces are recognized by Foresters, Elementalists, Mages and Rogues. Typical places for association are open fields or woodland glades near a rural or urban center of operation.

Wycces are likely to be Allies to PCs who serve nature gods, or who are witch hunters. They will aid an inquisitor in hunting down nethercraefters, necrourges, and evil witches, but they won't get involved with any fights against heretics. Wycces are not frequently encountered, are not competitive in society for the typical goals of wealth or social status, and don't bother with petty squabbles or with hindering anybody. If the PCs serve a force of evil, a Wyccan probably will be an Enemy. They might be encountered as Neutrals in an adventure, if engaged in selling herbs, potions, and brews to the PCs. The Wycce is not a likely patron, unless the heroes are a group of druids, rangers, or members of the Society of Crafters themselves.

D20 ARCHETYPES AND MULTI-CLASSING

Archetypical classes and orders aid in visualizing the nature and purpose of heroes and villains alike. Such a device grants an immediate frame of reference based on rich cultural, mythological, and literary traditions. In fact, such immediacy of recognition in class and type explains much of the popularity of the original "class-and-level" systems. But, the D20 game retains these distinctions only insofar as they contribute to plausibly organizing menus of favored skills, feats, and powers. With the latest multi-classing rules, D20 promotes a mixing of archetypes to the point where the distinctions can become completely blurred. Masterful GMs and players can compensate for this through logical explanations of multi-class choices. But with the proliferation of prestige classes, what a character "is" at its core can become a real conundrum.

Just as prestige classes have prerequisites—and occasionally even restrictions (gasp!)—the GM can use the following optional guidelines which propose to limit, or even restrict, access when leveling into certain classes. Generally, classes that assume innate powers or unique backgrounds from childhood cannot be multi-classed into: exceptions are noted parenthetically. Classes that offer limited access, rather than being totally restricted are listed with prerequisite skills. It is recommended that a one character-class be viewed as primary (not to be confused with the racial 'favored class'), the sake of remaining true to some sort of "core" character concept. This usually is the class assumed at 1st level. These variant rules are offered for the sake of a character's background, place in society, and consistency in concept. Note that these variant rules don't prohibit multi-classing out of a restricted class, only into one.

Variant Multi-Classing Rules

Restricted Access Classes
Barbarian (no exceptions)
Druid (except nature clerics or rangers)
Paladin (except lawful, good clerics or fighters chosen by the gods)
Ranger (except elves, druids, nature clerics or Fighters with Wilderness Lore of +4 or better)
Sorcerer (except, perhaps, with the introduction of some simple, new feat: For example, "Sorcerer's Blood," allowing a character to multi-class into the sorcerer class . . . and, prior to gaining a level of sorcerer, use magic items as if he had access to the sorcerer spell list).

Apprenticeship or Schooling Required for prerequisite skills
Bard: Perform +2; Spellcraft +2
Cleric: Knowledge of Religion and Arcana at +2 and must be accepted by the god
Monk: Concentration +2 and Knowledge of Arcana at +2
Wizard: Alchemy +2, Spellcraft +2

Non-Restricted
Fighter : Must be proficient with at least one martial weapon (feat required for those classes lacking access to martial weapons). Apprentice level is mandatory, if multi-classed into a fighter lacking any martial weapon ability.
Rogue: Must have 4 Rogue class skills at +1 or better to qualify.

BOOK FOUR

PLOT

Ay, now the plot thickens very upon us.
~ George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham

PLOTS

How is the plot of a role-playing adventure to be built? This book has presented in various chapters many elements that, cumulatively, can be used to build a nearly endless number of individual adventures. But looking at the pieces individually, the contents of this book might resemble a giant, conceptual jigsaw puzzle. This section of the book is designed to aid the reader in arranging the pieces to form whatever adventurous picture is desired.

DRAMA IN FICTION IN CONTRAST TO FRPGS

The structure of plot in a novel ought to be significantly different from how the events of Role-Playing Games typically unfold. In a novel, there often is emphasis placed on some internal, emotional conflict of character. Such conflict is followed immediately by a character's emotional and intellectual internalization of the event, leading naturally to some kind of response. The stimulus can be just about anything; contentious dialog, a dilemma, sudden danger, and so on. This internalization aspect is where the typical story differs markedly from a role-playing game, which instead focuses almost exclusively on external things such as action.

A fiction writer normally describes or otherwise reveals the inner thoughts and motivations of at least the main protagonist in a story, but a game master describes only the physical actions or actual speech of non-player characters and other creatures, unless affected by some telepathic spell or device. The GM should never dictate the emotional responses or demeanor of a player character, unless that PC is affected by a magical compulsion. To make explicit the emotional internalization of all NPCs, or to dictate such responses for the player's characters, serves only to threaten the fun and suspense of the role-playing.

A part of a modern novel usually consists of many scenes, each containing multiple conflicts adhering to a "stimulus-internalization-response" pattern, which is a structure normally only implied during the course of play in a RPG. After all, players are not required to reveal to the game master exactly what their characters are thinking, planning, or feeling at any given time, unless being probed by some sort of psychogenic power. And, while it's true that the game master has control over the personalities, motivations, habits, and personal histories of non-player characters and creatures in the game, these things possess significance only in relation to the existence of player characters. In fiction, the interactions of protagonists and antagonists are crafted carefully, but the relationships between the player characters and denizens of the fantasy game milieu are far less predictable. So, there is no predetermined story. The story of a role-playing game unfolds progressively through each game session, as the adventurers interact with the fantasy environment created and described by the one who created that backdrop, the game master. Outcomes are determined not by the actions of the GM or PCs alone, but by their mutual interaction.

CONFLICT & DISASTER

As stated above, the main characters in most fiction deal in each scene with many, small conflicts of a physical, emotional, intellectual or spiritual nature (stimulus-internalization-response). Story refers to the actual chronology of events in a narrative, beginning with an inciting incident. (In the Heroic Quest story this incident is known as the "Call to Adventure.") The incident causes an emotional response in the protagonist; who, after analyzing the pros and cons of certain reactions, formulates a plan, makes a decision and then acts, thus moving the story forward into the next scene. So, too, in RPGs, the heroes (or anti-heroes, whatever the case might be) are incited to action by some grim necessity, perceived insult, legend or rumored treasure, old enemy, or any number of other possible hooks. But the game master, unlike an author of fiction, has no control over the reactions of the "protagonists" of the evolving campaign, the player characters, and can presume only that the group assumes the roles of adventurers rather than farmers or scullions. Beyond that reasonable expectation, all bets are off.

Now, in many modern fiction stories, the chief characters jump into action and face those obstacles threatening their goals, until – at least in the structure herein assumed – inevitable disaster strikes. Such a disaster is followed by a transition of further emotional response, perhaps some logical thought, yet more decisions (for good or ill), and then some definitive action must lead yet again into the next scene, which in turn ends with yet another disaster, and so on until the climax and resolution.

But in the role-playing game inevitable disaster is a very bad idea. Role-playing games more closely resemble pulp stories or fairy tales, narrative forms which are generally upbeat, with the heroes triumphing over dangers and fears while experiencing only the occasional setback. While an aspiring author of fantasy fiction might be keen to follow the "goal-conflict-disaster" format for each scene, which does build suspense, such would be a terrible mistake for a GM.

Constantly and deliberately thwarting the heroes efforts serves only to frustrate players who have likely wish to assume the role of larger-than-life heroes whose fates should be indeterminable except when resultant of their own skill and puissance, as modified in the course of things by random chance. Heroic characters should face defeat only as a result of poor decisions made on the part of their players, or perhaps just by terrible luck (those infernal dice be damned!), but never because such failure was scripted in advance by a draconian game master.

GM VS. FICTION WRITER

It should be hammered home by now that the role of a game master differs significantly from that of a fiction author. The job of the game master does not involve revealing to the players the private thoughts or motivations of NPCs and monsters, nor will a good GM dictate what the players' characters feel or how they ought to act – because he doesn't know that. In general, a player should not be forced to explain his character's actions, or to justify his actions to another player even if asked, unless the character's normal demeanor has drastically changed, or the action threatens the entire party's success or survival. Likewise,

the denizens of a campaign world are known by their actions, their natures and private thoughts kept secret by the GM – unless learned by guile in play, ripped from them by magic or torture.

Also, no single antagonist or creature should become more important to the plot than the heroes. In other words, the game master should not make any NPC absolutely central to the unfolding story, because nothing controlled by the GM is more important than the development and advancement of the PCs through their interactive play. It is apparent, then, that the game master is far removed from being a "third person omniscient narrator". Sure, he might be omniscient in regard to the details of his chosen milieu, but because he cannot know the future actions or thoughts of the PCs, he cannot be called a "story-teller" in the fullest sense.

So inescapable defeat and/or disaster for the player characters are omitted from the basic structure of an RPG adventure in all true role-playing games including those constructed on the "Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds" model.

WHERE DOES THE STORY TAKE PLACE?

In most fantasy games, the campaign setting, or milieu, is rich in detail on all manner of facts of geography, history, culture, religion, creatures fantastic and supernatural, governmental structures and politics, level of technology, and so on. In fiction, writing this is the sort of material included in the exposition; a presentation of essential information regarding past events relevant to the story.

However, despite the incredible detail inherent in most campaign settings, most players do not wish to sit and listen to a long exposition at the start of an adventure. It is strongly recommended that such detail be presented in smaller installments, never read aloud like some sort of dramatic speech or history lesson to your assembled players. To cover this aspect one might well write up the most important details which pertain to the current region of adventuring, with key geographic features, a detailed map and a written history that the players might read at their convenience. As a matter of fact, this is a must for the person using this work as a guide to creating game adventure modules for use by others.

What makes one fantasy setting different from another? Although, admittedly, a generalization, the initial differences usually are negligible from a player's perspective, because adventures set in some mythic, Western European style region using the "standard" level of power, magic, and an unaltered set of familiar game rules be they D20, LA or another system, are bound to be similar in terms of culture, flora, fauna and feudal government. The names of people, places, and things might be unfamiliar, but the cultures presented inevitably will be contrasted with some real-world historical equivalent, if not immediately compared to popular fantasy literature.

What makes a fantasy setting unique is not simply a map of some imaginary realm, or endless statistics on trade, economics, common weather patterns, or a catalog of names, places, and things. No, what makes a setting unique and entertaining are the characters' interactions with the imaginary environment of world. Think of it as one might ponder the ancient Buddhist question, "Who is the Master who makes the grass green?" Both the perceiver (gamers) and the perceived (setting) are needed to bring vibrancy and life to the milieu. Even a published campaign setting must be made the sole province of the gaming group, incorporating the preferences of players, and establishing the GM's authority to dictate setting content, if they are to be accepted and enjoyed by the group.

Only through actual play will a popular, published game spring to life in the minds of the players in ways not associated with previous published material. Not surprisingly, if a player happens to be a fan of an established campaign setting, chances are he will have strong opinions on its principal characters and locales which might differ markedly from that of the GM. Any attempt to remain "officially" in synchronization with published media for an established fantasy world, whether it is movies or books, will probably make a game master feel like King Sisyphus. That is, if the GM allows his players to run rough-shod over him with their preferred interpretations of the setting, he will. Don't allow that happen. The "master" in game master should have meaning. The GM sets the stage and defines the environment, is the final authority in the adjudication of disputes. That said, it is the duty of the one designing the adventure material to create it so as to engender as few areas open for dispute as possible.

WHEN DOES THE STORY TAKE PLACE?

In some cases the campaign setting includes a timeline of the major events in the history of the world. The game master might keep track of major holidays, whether celebrating the birth of the kingdom, a religious observance, or rituals corresponding with the lunar cycle. It's easy to tie in the Background Events from Part 1 to the timeline. If, for example, your event is a class war, a foreign invasion or military occupation, just choose a date when the conflict or conquest began. Naturally, the longer a conflict has been existent, the more likely it will become a major theme of the campaign. And although the GM can cause the event to happen presently, or in the near future, it's a bad idea to pick an event which the adventurers themselves are expected to precipitate. Such expectation can lead quickly to railroading, which is forcing players down a single, unalterable plot track.

In some cases, the date chosen might signify a cyclic event, such as a volcanic eruption which occurs every few hundred years, or a cosmic signaling of doom to a kingdom in some prophecy. The background event chosen might set the stage for exploration of a long lost civilization, destroyed thousands of years ago by a retributive strike against sovereignty (see Deital Background events, Part 1); or, such a retributive strike could be imminent but preventable, able to be stopped only by some artifact. Otherwise some sort of background event could be unpreventable and happening presently in the timeline.

Some background events cannot happen overnight, such as an intellectual revolution, whether cultural or technological. Remember the old addage, Rome wasn't built in a day. Still, the opportunities for adventure in such a changing political climate are endless. For example, the "Old Guard," those charged with

protecting society against undue change, or those responsible for persecuting subversives, might hire the PCs to put down the upstarts or sabotage a technology that threatens to unbalance the whole of society. Conversely, the insurrectionists, counter-culturists, revolutionaries, and visionaries might be in league with the adventurers, aiding them in the overthrow of a despotic ruler. As we know all too well from our own planet, any holy war, crusade or jihad can go on for days, weeks, centuries, a millennium, or longer depending on the nature of the conflict. The player characters' involvement can begin at the inception of the story, in medias res (in the middle of things), or they might themselves decide to become the troublemakers, causing history-changing events.

Also keep in mind that the background event can remain a theme of the milieu without every single adventure being tied into its full ramifications for the kingdom or world. Often such events ought to remain in the background, or the players will get the impression they are expected to correct everything that is wrong with the world. That could be depressing! Despite it being a noble goal, there's nothing wrong with being motivated principally by the promise of wealth and power; especially, at lower levels of experience. After all, without eventually possessing some of those two elements, what can a hero really hope to accomplish? Overall, one or more events should be chosen to add flavor and color to a setting, tied into the timeline at any level of depth and complication desired. These events in time in turn provide motivations for all characters, whether a king, reclusive sorcerer, common thief, or ancient dragon, although such goals easily can extend well beyond the boundaries of present cultural upheavals, past catastrophes, or current social problems.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

As should be obvious by now, it is the theme of this book that story is latent in RPGs, entirely dependent on the actions of the cast, whether PC or NPC, and final outcomes should be largely unpredictable. This accounts for much of the fun of RPGs, because when events become too predictable, the danger of a bored game master looms. And bored GMs can become murderous, figuratively speaking. Seriously, it behooves the game master when designing adventures to thoroughly consider the personal goals and motivations of the PCs, as well as all creatures within his purview.

Part 3 of this book deals extensively, though by no means exhaustively, with the issue of NPC motivation and goals designed to match up with the non-player character roles and types introduced in Part 2. Once these motivations are known for the major and minor GM-controlled creatures of the setting, in conjunction with one or more of the chosen background events, it is even more important for the game master to thoroughly explore the goals of the player characters.

Who primarily decides the goals of the PCs? The players, of course! But before individual goals are determined, the GM strongly should suggest that each of the characters have something in common with at least one of the other personae. Choose one or more from the ideas below to set forth for the players the nature of choices of that common bond:

1. A common ideology spurs actions, providing a sense of purpose.
2. Common allegiance to some patron, noble or ecclesiastic.
3. Compatriots in a common network, organization, guild, or recognized adventuring party.
4. Related by blood, preferably friends as well.
5. All formerly lone adventurers seeking fame and fortune, met by chance but sharing that common bond.
6. Met at the tavern and now friends. Easy enough, if a trifle uninspired.

Once some common factor is decided for the adventuring party, each player can work out the personal motivations of his or her character. But, for most fantasy adventures, it is not necessary to have a motivation more complex than "acquire wealth, power, and fame." If that is all there is to it, so much the better. After all, most RPGs make the basic assumption that the PCs are not the sort to stay at home weaving baskets. A personal goal which prompts a character to brave danger is necessary, and (as it should seem obvious) not too much to ask of a player to consider.

However, a willingness to face danger and tribulation is not always enough to ensure a successful campaign. It's wise to dissuade players from creating characters who are antithetical to teamwork. Sociopaths and cowards might make for interesting non-player characters, but the game master had better think twice before allowing any PCs who would threaten to destroy the unity of the adventuring party. This is precisely why campaigns focusing on truly diabolic player characters do not often work well. Evil characters, malign and self-seeking, are quite treacherous, so unless the GM wishes to run a game of total paranoia (albeit even that can be fun sometimes), this option ought to be avoided.

With the simple prerequisite of "willingness to seek adventure", players should have a wide range of additional options to determine individualized character goals. The desire to gain money and power is nearly universal, except for ascetic monks. Other long-range goals might involve: clearing one's name of a crime; the desire to explore some legendary place; seeking vengeance upon some old villain; thwarting the machinations of some evil noble or cult. For many players, the principle excitement is in advancing a hero from lower-level into the pinnacle of personal power. But whatever the details, the GM should work with each player to determine history and motivations, ensuring that nothing is too much at odds with the rest of the group.

But, it might be asked, if the players get to choose their own motivations and the GM isn't supposed to dictate their actions, how does any adventure get started? How does the GM avoid railroading? Actually, it's easy to avoid that dilemma when character concepts remain true to the spirit of the game. Why would anybody create a character who refuses to face any danger, take any risk, or one who would turn down a quest given to him by a legitimate patron? Sure, it is up to the GM to offer options for adventure, but it's also expected that the players will willingly accept at least one, if not several, story hooks. If not, why play a fantasy adventure game?

It's true that some game masters paint themselves into a corner by designing adventures in a purely linear fashion, disallowing all paths but one. It's simply unwise to design too far ahead with

expectations of the PCs following a certain path. On the other hand, it's rather mean-spirited for players to habitually recoil from obvious story hooks. It is a two-way street in that regard, requiring a bit of trust on both sides of the screen.

Players expect game masters to allow them freedom of choice, while GMs expect players to create characters who are fit for the setting and true to the "spirit" of the game. Much of this problem can be settled at time of character creation, when the GM has the opportunity to explain the nature of his setting, the kind of adventures focused on, and what sort of PCs are needed and appropriate. A game master who allows the creation of xenophobic, forest-dwelling hobgoblins and then decides to set the campaign in a human city is just asking for trouble.

In summary, adventure plot-hooks should be tailored to the goals and motivations of the PCs, who were hopefully created to be appropriate to the milieu, and therefore will act accordingly by taking advantage of opportunities granted for adventure. If the adventure is being designed for publication as a module, the author must put himself into the role of the game master, anticipate the possibly diverse nature of player character groups, and design the material accordingly with no overly restrictive portions, giving options to the GMs using the module so they can fit it to their world and player group.

It can be a perfect fit, or in the case of "red herrings," it can be a disaster. Many GMs are notorious for their fondness of using the red herring, which is a metaphor for something that diverts attention from the primary goal or subject; a misdirection. For this reason, the game master is cautioned to use red herring plot devices sparingly, throw a few curve-balls into the story scheme now and then to keep the players on their toes, but otherwise stay with the central theme. The first hook used to get the characters involved should be anything other than some deceptive death-trap.

> Red Herring? It is sometimes believed that hunters used to train their hounds to follow a scent using the strong odor of a red herring. Hence, in the late 19th century, the expression "draw a red herring across the trail" became a popular phrase implying that the fish odor could also sabotage the hunt, leading the hound away from the fox. The "red" refers simply to a herring that has been smoked, turning reddish-brown in the process.

Such misdirection can be occasionally entertaining for all, especially for a bored game master who likes to befuddle, but when overused it can lead into habitual story-hook avoidance. This sort of player reaction is often misjudged as pure pigheadedness by the now beleaguered GM, who wonders why the characters are suddenly shy of intrigue. The answer is not to make plot-hooks invitations to disaster, or lead to some horrible betrayal by a trusted ally, and then have the audacity to chastise the players for becoming gun-shy (or sword-shy?). Avoid overuse of doppelgangers, or making the campaign setting one of "Ubiquitous Evil" – where enemies are always in the guise of allies no one can be trusted. This sort of bleak setting, wherein all clear goals are but illusions leading to yet another dead-end, tends to get depressing quickly and thus lead to player boredom.

So what is an appropriate story hook? Any event designed to be a catalyst to further embroilment with danger and, naturally, some sort of potential reward, whether that be prestige, power or riches. The idea is to get the player characters immediately involved with the potential unfolding of the "story-latent", by providing what is sometimes termed a "Macguffin;" the word commonly used to describe something that exists solely to move along the plot, bringing the characters together in conflict and drama. Its purpose is to inspire the chase, using any excuse or diversion. What is used to that end is ultimately unimportant, whether it be an intriguing person, place, or thing.

What makes a good Macguffin? A story hook can be one where the mission involved is explicit, or one which presents a mystery, hopefully piquing the interest of the PCs. See the section under, "Story-function: Hooks" for further information and examples.

> Macguffin is a term coined by director Alfred Hitchock's Scottish friend, screenwriter Angus MacPhail, who whimsically compared the Macguffin to a mythical, "apparatus for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands".

Once the adventurers' interest is gained in a mission, it is time for the GM to present the encounters associated with the chosen story goal(s). Solid goals are usually best, such as exterminating monsters, exploring dangerous locales, retrieving significant items, repairing important magical (or mundane) items, or rescuing people or creatures of importance. Note that such goals are not foisted upon our heroes, the assumption being that the associated story hook has already drawn them into the action. A single adventure might have a mission with but one major goal, many objectives along the way towards their goal, several smaller goals, or anything in between. Usually objectives are those things that allow the adventuress to be driven closer to completion (or failure) by encounters "dropped" into the unfolding story-latent by the GM as needed and desired.

STORY-LATENT ENCOUNTERS

Story-latent is a term used both as a noun and adjective throughout this book to connote a type of multi-thread narrative specific to the RPG, a chronological unfolding of events realized only through actual play. The story-latent is an amalgam of elements explored in this book: Back-Story (Book One), Antagonists, Neutrals, and Allies (Book Two), Motivations, Ambitions, and Goals (Book Three), Key Locales (Book Four), and Plot (present Book).

This part deals with overall plot. The GM creates harmony between all elements of story, arranging the disparate puzzle pieces into a coherent plot, facilitating smooth game play through careful planning and improvisational wizardry.

An event is any piece of plot planned or set in history by the GM. As discussed above under "when does the story take place?", events can be chronological, such as a national holiday,

a religious observance, a comet which comes around every hundred years, or annual flooding. On the other hand, events can be unpredictable, as with natural disasters and unexpected events. Events which occurred in the past are considered backstory (see Book One), but the same conditions can certainly impend, unbeknownst to any but the greatest of soothsayers.

And yet out of all types of events, it is mainly encounters that drive an RPG story forward; that is, any situation wherein the heroes face challenge of a mental or physical sort. The principal types and functions of encounters considered herein are considered most fundamental to an RPG.

Therefore, the following section focuses on encounter types, their story-functions, and associated plot elements. Note that a single story-function can either be assigned a single encounter, or made to effect several, interconnected events.

Plot-hooks can affect an entire adventure, its theme arcing over all subsequent encounters until its associated problems are solved or goals are achieved. Several plot-hooks might be introduced, creating a vast web of probability and options for the heroes to explore.

Obstacles can be either single encounters or cover many related incidents. An obstacle can be physical, such as an unexplored area to get through, an immediate threat such as a monster, guards, etc., or perhaps a recurring and elusive villain. Most insentient hazards require immediate circumvention (sometimes requiring little more than detection), and the heroes will often find themselves embroiled in a state of affairs that makes urgent demands, but predicaments can always be made more complex, requiring much diplomacy or information gathering.

Prospects can likewise be keyed to a single encounter, requiring quick decision-making in order to take advantage of the situation, or could involve many events, necessitating forward planning and careful negotiation.

Triggers are a type of story function that is implicit to adventure creation. Not to be determined randomly, triggers are simply contingencies requiring certain actions or conditions before actualized in play. Sometimes they are written out, bound to an encounter in a series of "if-then" statements, and other times they are unbound from an event, a random sort of encounter actualized only if stumbled upon the PCs.

A–ENCOUNTER TYPES

01-34	Combat
35-66	Role-playing
67-00	Problem solving

The types listed below, combat, role-playing, and problem-solving, aid in describing the primary focus of any encounter planned. Of course, treating each separately shouldn't perforce exclude any other story element from an encounter. For example, a combat encounter involves problem-solving in terms of strategy, and role-playing is required for all communication between friend and foe. Nevertheless, it is helpful to break RPG plots down into the most common types of conflict, and then choose which of those aspects will be the main focus and purpose of each encounter. That is what the following information is designed to aid the GM in doing, in order to facilitate the most flexible, open-ended, yet detailed "story-latent" possible. Note that an encounter is either bound or unbound. If bound the encounter becomes keyed to a particular location. If unbound it is free of specific location and is thus more modular, ready to be dropped into the plot anytime the GM deems fit. Adventures consisting mainly of bound encounters are site-based, while adventures revolving around encounters unbound from specific sites are event-based.

A1: COMBAT

Combat arguably is the most exciting aspect of fantasy role-playing encounters; the occasion for heroes to demonstrate their mettle and prowess against all odds. Some haughty game masters avoid combat, thinking it juvenile and counter to a "deep immersion" style of play. Such arrogance aside, combat has remained undeniably engaging so long as it's context-bound. Let us not overcomplicate; even published "dungeon crawls" provided some reason for the adventurers to risk their lives. Hack-and-slash adventures are great fun, still immersive if the players bother to role-play in accord with their character and its concept. And, while it's true that combat is less enjoyable when the reasons lack cohesiveness, the problem often is more quantitative than qualitative. Simply put, too much of a good thing is tedious. Indeed, battles that occur in reaction to the actions of the PCs are thereby made more significant. Random ambushes and conflicts peripheral to the interests of the PCs are exciting in moderation, but should be kept to a minimum. Any GM who avoids combat almost entirely is removing an essential aspect of the game, forcing players to become little more than amateur thespians. That is at least as tedious as an over-emphasis on fighting.

An encounter featuring combat serves as one of many dramatic obstacles preventing the completion of a mission or quest, whether planned by the GM, provoked by the PCs, or totally random.

A2: ROLE-PLAYING

Role-playing (including role assumption, theatrics, and 'staying in character') is as essential to the RPG as combat, leading characters into myriad confrontations and predicaments. Naturally, without role-playing there would be little context provided for exciting conflict. Each parley with a major or even minor NPC can represent another possible direction for the story, such interactions creating a web of probability often too complex to allow for adequate preparation. And note that a "full-fledged" role-playing encounter ought to be something more than a short, random conversation. No, for a role-playing encounter to be significant it must serve some story-function, being either an obstacle, or triggering some other series of events.

The game master should resist writing out NPC dialog in advance, save where he is actually writing a module for others to use. Reading from scripted dialog might be comfortable for the storyteller, but it threatens the suspension of disbelief for players who would rather parley than listen to canned speeches. Unless the GM holds a captive audience, the PCs are likely to interrupt dialog read aloud, even if short, making it unlikely the next line

of text will jive with the rest of the conversation. It's always better to improvise an NPC's dialog when player characters ask questions of that one.

An encounter featuring role-playing can be an obstacle, such an NPC withholding information or essential services, the prospect of recruiting new allies or securing future alliances, or a plot hook drawing the characters into some new drama.

A3: Problem-Solving

Problem-solving always is an important element of RPGs, creating tension, suspense and drama. Whether it is exploring and mapping so as to reach an objective or goal, solving riddles, sensing the motives of the enemy, negotiating with proper custom and etiquette, deciding the best strategy in combat, negotiating peace, solving a mystery, or circumventing a deadly trap, these are all instances of problem-solving. A encounter requiring problem-solving usually incorporates a hazard which cannot be easily circumvented, some predicament requiring careful thought to escape (a race against time to stop some catastrophe, escaping a labyrinthine dungeon, thwarting some vast conspiracy), or a dilemma leading either to further success or possible disaster. Some traps demand little more than preparedness and mindfulness. Or conversely, the GM might require serious sleuthing to solve problems. And such intrigue can easily can be made to span many adventures.

B–Story-Function

Each significant encounter should introduce one or more story-functions; story hooks, obstacles, or prospects. Triggers are a function often implied, or sometimes listed as an explicit set of contingencies. These story-functions are often resolved within one encounter, often utilized in combination, but can be made to span a number of related events.

01-33 Story Hook
34-67 Obstacle
68-00 Prospect

1. Story Hook
01-09 Anonymous Plea
10-18 Calamitous Threat
19-26 Dream Message
27-34 Enigmatic Stranger
35-42 Friend in Need
43-51 Legends and Rumors
52-59 Nuisance or Competitor
60-67 Mistaken Identity
68-75 NPC Grudge
76-84 Patronal Mandate
85-92 Sudden Attack
93-00 Vengeful Foe

2. Obstacle
01-25 Unknown area to be explored to reach objective or goal
26-50 Battle (Random or Planned)
51-75 Hazard (trap or natural danger)
76-00 Predicament (dilemma, exigency, or red herring)

3. Prospect
01-33 Supporter
34-67 Fellowship
68-00 Knowledge

B1: Story Hook (MacGuffin)

Story hooks or Macguffins, discussed briefly in the section above entitled "what are the goals?", are inciting incidents, motivating factors ideally providing many an occasion for derring-do. Without a hook, there is no impetus for action. A random encounter involving combat is not, in and of itself, a story hook. Consider, for example, that a band of thieves has attacked some heroes on a woodland path. Although the heroes might choose to pursue the thieves, such a "story" can begin and end if the crimi-



nals are immediately dispatched. In contrast, a larger network of outlaws that attacks only those caravans associated with a certain merchant could constitute a viable hook because it bring a number of questions to mind. For instance, why that particular merchant? Why is he being targeted? What makes his goods different? Are they after his riches or is it more personal?

A hook is a problem begging for some heroic intercession, or an enticement by promise of riches or glory. If the adventurers get involved for any reason other than gold or repute, it's usually due to alignment; or because the situation bespeaks a recurrent danger to themselves, or is an intimation of some nefarious plot threatening a city or perhaps all of civilization.

Combat-based hooks often tie directly into the background events as listed in Part one, and include assassination attempts, sieges, monstrous invasions, class wars, conflicts over natural resources, etc. In any case the heroes find themselves suddenly attacked, which is often provocation enough to get involved, that is assuming any background whatsoever.

Story-latent hooks often involve NPCs who would enjoin, plead with, or entice (never threaten) the heroes into performing any number of goals: Exterminate monsters, explore dangerous locales, retrieve important items, repair significant magical or mundane items, or rescue people or creatures of importance. Hooks do not perforce involve intrigue and/or mystery, though it is always an entertaining option to do so.

It is atypical to have more than one story-latent hook per encounter. But more than one such hook is workable if the GM wishes to provide multiple avenues of adventure from the outset.

COMMON STORY HOOKS

Anonymous Plea: An earnest entreaty for aid from a totally unknown source is found by the heroes, either the classic "note in the bottle", or as delivered by a certain Mr. or Mrs. X. Or the GM could set up an event wherein a mysterious person or creature dies at the feet of the PCs, perhaps clutching a sealed scroll (or papyrus, tablets, carvings, etc.) revealing the machinations of some evil group"it matters not whether human, supernatural, or humanoid"about to threaten the land.

Calamitous Threat: The heroes learn of some threat to their town, city, kingdom, or even greater region. If desired, the nature of the threat can be related to one of the background events chosen in Part 1, such as an imminent invasion by overwhelming forces, an army of evil or the undead, danger of a god's retribution, etc. Or the heroes learn of some terrible but natural threat to the land, like a vortex to the elemental plane of fire mysteriously opening in a nearby volcano, now threatening to erupt. If they don't act quickly to stop whatever event it is from occurring, then the region might be doomed.

Dream Message: A man, woman, or ghost appears in the dreams of one or more of the PCs, giving subtle clues, or explicit warnings concerning threats to the land or their own persons. Stopping the threat involves many obstacles, including battle, hazards and predicaments.

Enigmatic Stranger: A mysterious traveler arrives in town looking to recruit heroes to perform some dangerous task, usually involving some unspeakable menace. The message can be delivered by means of a herald, through rumor, or directly to the heroes. This strange traveler could be a man or woman who truly cares for the local populace, or could be an evil person or creature; a deceiver and harbinger of nastier things to come.

Friend in Need: An old friend of the adventuring party (or one of its members) arrives on the scene, a person who has aided the party greatly in the past, and has encountered great trouble and is now in dire need of assistance. This could create tension if his request would be at odds with local authorities or if he threatens relationships well established with other NPCs. This motivation works best in a well established, long-running campaign.

Legends and Rumors: This category is largely self explanatory, and is often the "bread and butter" of FRPG adventures. Legends or rumors of ancient relics, lost artifacts, forgotten ruins holding great treasure, or other fantastic places draw the PCs into action and exploration.

Nuisance or Competitor: Local circumstances or individuals are introduced into the story that potentially infringe on the PCs personal goals, perhaps spurring the heroes into retaliatory action. This could be a band of outlaws repeatedly attempting to thwart the efforts of the heroes, a local hotbed of annoying goblins, or an aggressive, competitive adventuring group bent on beating the PCs to the punch on any treasure desired. Some opposition which initially seems to be nothing more than annoying could, over time, become a major threat.

Mistaken Identity: One or more of the PCs suffer from mistaken identity and are charged with crimes they did not commit. It becomes clear that they must escape the authorities long enough to capture the real perpetrators and bring them to justice.

NPC Grudge: One of the local lords takes a dislike to the PCs, challenging them to a tournament or dual at his principle domicile to confirm their unworthiness as heroes. Or a patron deceives the PCs about his identity or motives and is on the verge of betraying them all.

Patronal Mandate: The patron of the adventuring party, or anyone representing an organization which champions the cause of the heroes, mandates a mission or quest. Typical tasks include protecting or escorting an ally or important political figure, stealing something of importance from a rival, investigating a crime or intrigue, a diplomatic or rescue mission, or the command to kill or capture an enemy. The patron can be a king, queen, nobleman, archmage, high priest, wealthy benefactor, or many other possibilities (see Prospects: support, or fellowship).

Sudden Attack: Attempted murder is usually a damn good motivator for PCs. But for battle to serve as an actual plot-hook, it might involve an enemy who has motive to attack a family member, friend, or ally of the heroes. If the PCs are attacked

directly, then the GM should have the principle villain send his or her minions to do the dirty work, otherwise that villain might be killed in the first encounter. After all, there is no story hook to be found in a single, dead or defeated foe!

Assassination attempts on political or ecclesiastic persons also serve as excellent plot-hooks if the PCs have some invested interest in the person whose life was threatened or taken. For assassination plot-hooks, a gang of minions are not required; one elusive foe can be used, forcing the PCs to gather information and identify the assassin. Or, some nefarious network can be behind the attacks, drawing the heroes deeper into intrigue and danger.

Vengeful Foe: An old enemy appears from "out of the woodwork", perhaps released from imprisonment, or returning from a long exile. Any punitive condition initially caused by the heroes will do. This enemy will attempt to enact revenge in any way imaginable.

B2: OBSTACLE

Obstacles encountered are of many sort, including tasks or missions necessary before victory, general predicaments and exigencies, natural or designed hazards, and armed confrontation. An encounter can include one or many of these sorts of obstacles, or an obstacle can span many encounters. Many Obstacles can be designed to divert attention away from the primary goal or subject, becoming a red-herring. But the GM is strongly cautioned to use trickery and misdirection sparingly, or the PCs might become reticent about plot-hooks, or even so paranoid they kill would-be allies out of unnecessary suspicion.

COMMON OBSTACLES

Unknown area to be explored to reach objective or goal: In order to go on or complete a mission, the party of adventurers is faced with the exploration of some unknown area. This might be a community, extensive ruins, a rambling building, an underground maze, or a wilderness tract. Such obstacles are the most frequently encountered in an adventure. The most appealing thing about this form of obstacle is that within it there are most likely a number of other obstacles, including battles and hazards of all sorts, as well as predicaments and tasks. It is axiomatic that the "mapper" in a PC party is generally indispensable. The kind of unknown terrain included in an adventure can be manifold, but it needs to fit logically with the plot determined by the game master.

Battle (Random or Planned): The second most common obstacle faced by adventurers, and often the best tool for the GM to create excitement. Most battles function as a potential obstacle to the adventurers' goals, whether planned or random, unless the melee turns out to be a bloody cakewalk. Combat can be planned as part of a climatic moment, a minor skirmish, or just be totally random. Enemies attack for a multitude of reasons; intimidation, attempts to kidnap or assassinate, or just the desire to loot the dead bodies of their fallen victims. Whatever the motivations, battle should not be used by the GM as a series of roadblocks with impossible combat odds intended to steer the PCs toward prepared adventure material. Conversely, wandering monsters can be quite useful as a subtle means to deter the heroes from taking disastrous courses in an adventure.

Planned and random battles run by the GM should be of a challenge level appropriate to the experience of the characters. Such balance is already built into the D20 system with the Challenge Rating system, and is implicit to the Lejendary Adventures game. A balance must exist between excitement and danger, for adventurers mustn't be stripped of their heroic nature, bogged down in the minutiae of battle, subjected to realistic consequences of a wounds from blade or bludgeon. Considerations such as those tend to end adventuring careers in grisly and ignoble ways; loosing an eyeball or hand, horrible wounds requiring weeks of bed rest from which to recover, etc. Normally, it just isn't fun to assume the role of a cripple in a heroic fantasy campaign! If game combat were quite so realistic, life for the PCs would be as Thomas Hobbes said, "nasty, brutish, and short".

On the other hand, if some PC stupidly and repeatedly attacks anything that moves without bothering to distinguish between friend and foe, then the GM is under no obligation to pull his ass out of the fire. Actions like indiscriminate murder, or flinging public insults at the king are more often than not plainly stupid. Rash impudence toward authorities should usually risk capture, imprisonment, torture, or even execution, depending on the type of government.

That's not to say bravado should always be punished. After all, some PCs are created quite stupid or unwise by nature, either by choice or by random determination. Granted, some of the more reckless characters risk disrepute or being short-lived, but the point here concerns the presumption of fair battle odds. Such odds depend on the players making intelligent decisions within the scope of their characters' concepts and capabilities, both according to spirit of the game and in reaction to the cues given by the GM.

Basically, battles dropped into the plot by the GM must be at least escapable, if not winnable. But when PCs instigate combat unprovoked, clueless as to whether the target actually poses a threat, then the odds might turn against them. Foolish actions on the part of the PCs always give the GM an excuse to invent a number of opportunities for disaster.

Hazard (trap or natural danger): A natural, mechanical or magical hazard can cause a wide range of conditions. Of course, many types of natural hazards, such as fire (also by explosion), avalanche, and falling objects, can be caused by accidents or by hostile creatures. Some of the more common hazards and traps are listed below, and may be determined randomly (D20 rules for handling natural hazards and traps are already detailed in the DMG).

Natural Hazards

01-04	Avalanche or Tsunami
05-08	Blizzard
09-12	Fire
13-16	Cold
17-21	Drowning
22-25	Duststorm

26-29 Falling Objects
30-34 Flash Flood
35-39 Fog
40-43 Hail
44-48 Heat (very hot, extreme, or abysmal)
49-52 Ice
53-56 Lack of Air/High Altitude
57-60 Lava
61-64 Rain
65-68 Sleet
69-72 Smoke
73-76 Snow
77-80 Snowstorm
81-84 Starvation and Thirst
85-88 Suffocation
89-92 Thunderstorm
93-96 Tornado
97-00 Windstorm

Mechanical or Magical Hazards

01-03 Area is cold or hot enough to cause debility
04-05 Area is filled with gas/stench sufficient to weaken
06-08 Rolling ball threatens to crush anything in its path
09-10 Blade scything from anywhere (ceiling, floor, etc.)
11-13 Bridge sways and/or portions break
14-15 Catwalk, ledge, etc. breaks underfoot and/or collapses
16-18 Ceiling collapses
19-20 Ceiling moves/presses down
21-23 Door (heavy) falling outwards
24-26 Fire of normal sort suddenly becomes a firestorm
27-29 Floor tilts, drops, or collapses toward a pit below*
30-31 Floor moves upward to cause death from crushing
32-33 Fountain/pool overflows to fill room and drown victims
34-35 Gravity reversal causes fall upwards, trapping victims
36-37 Heavy object swinging down from above
38-40 Ladder rungs break or pull free to cause fall
41-43 Magnetic object pins all ferrous metals to it
44-45 Net (heavily weighted) falls from above to trap
46-48 Object in space causes insanity if examined/touched
49-50 Object in space causes morphing to a creature
51-52 Object in space causes petrifaction if consumed/touched
53-54 Object*** slams shut with guillotine effect
55-56 Poison gas released from hole(s) anywhere
57-58 Pressure plate in floor forces victim upwards to ceiling
59-61 Projectile**** shooting from anywhere
62-63 Razor edges where hands grasp (handles, rungs, etc.)
64-65 Snare closes on lower limb hosting victim upwards
66-67 Snare closes on neck hoisting victim up and strangling it
68-69 Space covered with adhesive to cause sticking
70-71 Space suddenly is filled with webs to trap all within
72-73 Spear-like object thrusting out from anywhere
74-75 Spiked grillwork door drops down to kill or trap
76-77 Spiked grillwork falls from above to kill
78-80 Stair steps break to cause fall
81-83 Stairs flattening to cause slide down their length
84-85 Stone block drops or slides to trap victims in an area**
86-87 Stone block falls from above, death from crushing
88-89 Surface underfoot slippery, slows movement
90-92 Surface underfoot soft and viscous (quicksand-like)
93-94 Trapdoor opening to cause fall into pit below*
95-96 Traps concealed in floor, snap shut to injure and entrap
97-98 Wall(s) pressing in to cause death from crushing
99-00 Wind blows so as to cause victim to move

*Into or onto acid, creatures, fire, lava, spikes, water, etc.)
**Possibly to be attacked by various means, suffocated, be buried in sand, etc.
***Door (including those of furniture), lid, shutter, trapdoor, window, etc.
**** Arrow, bolt, bullet, dart, javelin, spear, stone, etc."also acid, burning coals, electricity, flame, molten metal, steam, etc.

Predicaments: A predicament is an unpleasant situation from which extrication is difficult, often some exigency requiring immediate resolution or else the PCs must face the consequences. For the sake of simplicity, we will omit from this category natural hazards, mechanical or magical (insentient) traps, battle, or required tasks. While each of those can rightly be considered predicaments, this obstacle type covers only dilemmas and role-playing challenges. A particularly annoying predicament involves misdirection, wherein the PCs do not immediately realize they have fallen for a Red Herring. Predicaments can be set into motion by NPCs who coerce by armed force or magic, such as with the spell geas, or those who deceive the heroes into performing some task. Just remember to allow the PCs some chance to escape coercion. Or, the NPC can itself serve as the obstacle, not necessarily due to battle prowess, but perhaps due to knowledge withheld. Or, maybe the heroes are forced to negotiate for political reasons, because brute force would create a severe backlash against their friends and families.

EXAMPLES OF ANNOYING PREDICAMENTS

Irrational Accuser: A judge, one famous for his good judgment, wrongly accuses one of the adventurers (or an ally) of a crime. Perhaps the judge failed his "sense motive roll" miserably, and feels the accused must be lying when he professes his innocence. Would anyone expect an innocent person not to deny guilt strongly? It's possible: Think of the words in Hamlet, "The lady doth protest too much, methinks". Such a situation can range from merely inconvenient to dire, depending on the judge. A Justiciar of a sovereign court might accuse one of a high crime and can sentence one to death, slavery, or bondage. Magistrates and justices of the peace might levy a nasty fine against the PCs, or attempt to have them temporarily imprisoned.

Mulish Superior: A commander, noble, or patron of great renown requires the completion of certain tasks, but insists that only one method be employed to achieve the desired goals. While the outcome could be disastrous, this fact isn't crystal clear to the heroes. In any case, the onus is on the PCs to use their own judgment. They might try to get their commander to see the light, or opt to disobey orders and resolve the problem before anyone has a chance to protest, or else be rendered totally ineffectual, therefore wasting all effort.

Onerous Command: An ally, one who has stood by the heroes through much travail, demands a service which is distasteful, perhaps even abhorrent. Whether the ally has gone completely mad (wishing the slaying an entire village of seeming innocents), or actually is justified in demanding the action (the 'innocents' are all doppelgangers), is of little importance. Any coerced acceptance makes the adventurers feel manipulated. But if they refuse, the useful ally feels betrayed.

Obstinate NPC: A person of great power and/or importance holds the proverbial key to the resolution of some danger or problem, but refuses to face reality and admit that the danger or problem even exists. This could be due to denial. Or, perhaps, the NPC is just clueless. But any strategy employed to garner aid seems doomed to fail.

Red Herring: Whether the product of an elaborate deceptions, or a simple lie or false clue, a Red Herring is a misdirection, any diversion which draws attention away from the successful completion of PC goals.

Unattainable Goal: The heroes are informed of some problem facing the land and its people, and then told by their king or patron to sally forth with all spontaneity and "fix" the problem. Unfortunately, too little or no information is given about the cause of the problem, leaving the heroes unable to comply; which, in turn, makes the patron confused and angry. The PCs must use diplomacy and role-playing to correct the situation, or else be accused of cowardice, or even treason, if refusing to comply.

Task: Tasks include defeating a powerful monster, retrieving some necessary item, repairing a critical magical (or mundane) item, rescuing a person or creature of great import, finding necessary clues to some mystery, or recruiting particular allies. This simple type of obstacle also forms the basis for the heroic quest; i.e., Task A must be accomplished before Task B or Task C even are considered. Such errands may need to be completed in quick succession during a single encounter, or spread out over several related missions. See Part 5, Adventure, wherein are listed dozens of detailed tasks, in addition to wide-ranging story-goals.

One might wonder if accepting the common A-B-C structure for a quest is not too linear, tempting the game master to railroad the players into a single path of action. The answer is "No."

What makes games too linear is dictating character response to such obstacles. There is nothing wrong with requiring tasks to be accomplished in some logical order. It is not unreasonable, for example, to require a magic word to open an invisible portal, or to making some bit of information a prerequisite to discovering dark secrets. However, it is a terrible GM who thwarts any creative, unexpected solution. The rules of the game should never prevent a reasonable idea from being attempted, even if the chances of success are slim to none. No player's creativity should be shut down by illogical decree.

For example, imagine a trap involving a magically held door preventing the heroes' escape from a deadly gas chamber, while their enemies watch and gloat through a glass window. Say the GM decided initially that the only exit is sealed by relatively low-level magic, forgetting that the party wizard had access to the knock spell.

Naively, the GM assumed that member of the party would beg for their lives rather than face certain death (committing the sin of coercion), and so is surprised when the wizard's player announces, "Well, duh, I cast knock". Of course, the GM panics and decides the wizard's spell fizzles, totally ineffectual. No need to say that this sort of heavy-handedness, even when covert, should earn any GM the proverbial boot!

It's the game master's responsibility to create challenges well suited to the strengths and experience of the player characters, not to serve in the role of adversary himself, shifting the odds against the PCs on whim.

B3: PROSPECTS

A prospect is a possibility for some gain related to the current adventure. The prospect can be in the possible support of a patron, joining a fellowship, the attainment of knowledge pertinent to the heroes' goals"there is more than one hero, right?"or meeting a potential ally.

The GM might decide that the prospect should not be obvious; that it first must be recognized and then grasped by the players (stet). Enforcing this requirement makes such opportunities a "dormant" type of event; potential rather than inevitable. As such, prospects might require good role-playing, shrewdness, or ingenuity to take advantage of, but do not always involve exploration, battles, predicaments, hazards or tasks.

Prospects often are mentally challenging, requiring strategic thinking and role-playing skill. Not surprisingly, overlap between story-functions is common. For example, obstacles often are opportunities for gaining treasure and experience. A risky mission to find a lost, religious artifact might involve the prospect of great reward, but properly is considered a story-hook.

Many prospects serve little or no function in the rising action of an adventure (see plot elements). For instance, economic ventures often are undertaken with wealth gained during adventuring, such as land acquisitions, fanciful business opportunities, and/or building fortifications. But the private endeavors of individual PCs usually are part of the falling action and, therefore, are not likely to be played out in realtime (the time in which all activity is experienced by the player character group. For more information on rising and falling action, see Story Elements, below).

COMMON PROSPECTS

Support: It's not unusual for heroes to encounter those who might be willing to help them in their quest; specifically, NPCs with similar goals and aspirations. In contrast, subservient cohorts and followers are found only among those PCs with a penchant for true leadership (as per the feat available at 6th level in D20). And hirelings simply are paid, and not always the most reliable. So none of those categories should qualify as a story-function.

Real allies are those completely outside the control of the PCs, usually aiding the PCs by joining the party, or by providing equipment, useful information, or shelter.

More often than not, the prospect of gaining an ally can be realized only through masterful role-playing. Even better is the possibility of a powerful, rich benefactor or patron providing whatever material things are required to complete quests. Such a patron or benefactor can be an ecclesiastic, nobleman, or infamous outlaw fighting for some long-term goal; like the overthrow of an evil temple, the funding of guerilla attacks on neighboring states, or a series of dangerous heists. However, a benefactor quickly might become the source of an ugly predicament if his patronage is refused, or if he demands missions that are beyond the pale (i.e., outside the bounds of behavior acceptable to the PCs).

Fellowship: Or, if there is no single benefactor, the prospect might involve joining, or being invited to join, an organization or guild which funds risky adventures. Such an organization likely would require a percentage of treasure gained in return for support and services; perhaps, in addition to a tithe (if religious) or annual dues. It could be a Chivalrous Order, a Mages' Guild, or a network of thieves run by members of the criminal underclass. Sometimes, the opportunity will arise to join a band or network of outlaws or mercenaries operating under a similar philosophy requiring little more than allegiance. An organization offering fellowship could even could be something as generalized as "Adventurers' Societies", and can garner many contacts and resources for the PCs. In some cases, it can be downright dangerous to refuse fellowship; as with a thieves' guild that might not want any competition in its domain.

Knowledge: Libraries containing chronicles of ancient or local history, dusty tomes revealing arcane lore, or personal diaries are common sources of information. PCs investigating a mystery, a rumor of lost treasure, or trying to understand the mind of an adversary often seek out sages, oracles, and diviners; all of whom might be consulted to discern the hidden past, present or future. Experts might be sought for technical, geographic, historical, or political information, with the price depending on the obscurity of the question. Such sources represent opportunities to gain an advantage in completing a quest or mission, although payment can become a hindrance if the price is exorbitant.

The prospect for knowledge often is hinted at by the GM while he describes the cities and locales visited. Or it occasionally can be left up to the PCs to figure out what resources exist in the places they frequent.

An opportunity for knowledge can overlap and become part of a potential story-hook, such as when payment for services requires a specific task rather than money.

Many chances to gain knowledge are better designated as obstacles: Information safeguarded by some mulish, tight-lipped NPC; records revealing the whereabouts of treasure guarded by ravenous monsters; or, a mystic grimoire sealed by deadly magic.

TRIGGERS

The GM might want to incorporate plot-driving contingencies, like a series of IF-THEN statements in programming, some goals requiring the overcoming of multiple obstacles before triggering final consequences, or a single action necessary before triggering another encounter. Triggers serve the function of activating other



story-functions - plot hooks, obstacles and prospects - when certain conditions are met or fulfilled, knowingly or unknowingly by the adventuring party. Triggers provide a loose framework upon which to hang anticipated encounters and events, but remain flexible enough to allow for improvisation. The contingency must match the encounter type but is not inherently good or bad, malign or benign. Any obstacle, hook, or prospect can incorporate a trigger; one that when activated by the PCs' actions sets other story-functions into motion. Note that triggers do not involve attempting to anticipate all future character actions, which would be an impossibility.

As all encounters are either bound or unbound, so too are the corresponding types of triggers. An unbound trigger describes conditions or actions required before the heroes face a particular encounter, for good or ill. It might trigger any type of encounter - combat, role-playing, problem solving - while incorporating one or more other story-functions, such as the plot-hook: "If the PCs visit the local apothecary, Then the proprietor will ask them for assistance in finding some rare, magical herb". Or a hazard: "If the PCs enters the poor district of the city more than once, a fire will break out". Random monster encounters are unbound triggers of the most general sort; the only action required being that the heroes enter a particular area. Note that actions which trigger or "activate" the role of a specific NPC or group may not initiate an immediate encounter. Sometimes, although a specific story-role has been activated, the NPC will nevertheless operate secretly, affecting subtle changes, or setting up traps and hazards from "behind the scenes".

Bound triggers are combined with other story-functions within an encounter (including other triggers) and exist as various possibilities dependant mainly on PC actions. This sort of trigger primarily is used to describe the defensive plans of combatants, the conditional requirements for setting off a trap, or detailing the long-term plans of a villain.

Combat Trigger: Combat based triggers can be as simple as, "when these guards are attacked, one will attempt to set off an alarm, bringing the next contingent of guards." Or, it can be as broad as killing a particular NPC becomes the catalyst to full-scale war. Unbound combat triggers typically are random monster encounters.

Role-Playing Trigger: Role-Playing triggers anticipate consequences to interactions with NPCs or intelligent monsters. This involves a spectrum of an NPC's reactions to the use of skills like sense motive, the use of diplomacy, attempts to bluff, or intimidation. Unbound role-playing triggers are likely to be prospects that must be realized by thoughtful player action.

Problem-Solving Trigger: Triggers which deal with circumstances requiring problem-solving usually describe the effects of solving a riddle or puzzle, escaping a hazard or predicament, or completing a difficult task. Unbound problem-solving triggers usually describe the conditions for encountering any sort of predicament or hazard. Note that magical transference to some unknown place is a problem solving trigger that will certainly include further triggers within it.

C-PLOT ELEMENTS

Introduction
Inciting Event
Rising Action
Endpoint
Turning-Point
Intermediary-Point
Falling Action
Resolution

Those story-functions then are attached to one of the several plot elements; inciting incident, rising action, endpoint or juncture, tangential action (random), and falling action. Despite the free-flowing, indeterminate nature role-playing stories, the most familiar structure to narrative does remain inherent to the game. The Plot Hook is the inciting incident, with subsequent combat, problem-solving, and the occasional red herring incidents constituting the rising action. The rising action can be a single adventure, or comprised of several connected scenarios, each featuring different objectives and dangers. Ultimately, the adventuring party completes the mission, reaching that turning point to which the rising action leads. Such pay-off or endpoint marks the climax of a single "Story-Arc". A story juncture indicates a significant bit of plot development, a turning point, one or more milestones (or objectives) on the road to completing the story-arc. All other encounters are intermediary. Then, the GM usually segues to the falling action, in which the heroes earn repute or disrepute, better their capacities, take stock of their current circumstances, rest, and reflect on the impact of their experiences. What's usually missing from the typical RPG story arc is any final resolution, or denouement. Usually, final resolution occurs only when the players retire their characters, or if all the heroes are tragically slain (for shame!).

A brief definition of each plot element with those story functions and PC activities most closely associated are listed below:

Introduction: Ordinarily, the introduction occurs before the game begins, the background information developed being read aloud to the players. Such exposition should be kept to a minimum, allowing the players to jump into the thick of action as soon as possible. Therefore, backstory events and the big picture of what is happening in the milieu should be revealed in accordance to their realtime relevance, its themes enveloping but not suffocating the adventure. Most exposition should take place after the plot is under way, as revealed through information gathering and conversations with NPCs. Of course, complex plots that assume the characters' familiarity with the details of the area, be they history or current affairs, require more than cursory preliminary information. Whatever the case, the game master is wise to limit the length of time spent introducing things so as to allow play to commence. Added information at intervals can then be given as if the PCs were recalling it from memory.

Inciting Incident: The inciting incident hopefully spurs the PCs into adventure, or can be an incident that is the direct result of PC decisions. After all, adventurers often demonstrate a good bit of initiative, pursuing their personal goals, instigating trials and

tribulations for themselves, all without any prompting from the GM. However, most of the time the story hooks are planned by the GM. As discussed previously, there can be a single plot hook presented as the gateway to adventure, or many such options. It is especially here that the motif of the reluctant hero is inappropriate for player-characters in a game of heroic fantasy, even if this motif is common to the cycle of "hero's journey" as related by mythologist Joseph Campbell.

Rising Action: The rising action of the story includes all questing, combat, exploration, role-playing, theatrics, problem-solving and strategy. Here is where all of the story functions and encounter types coalesce into a real story, with the heroes battling foes, and using their skills and powers to overcome travails. The rising action is story-latent in constant flux, with each adventure involving a number of obstacles and prospects for the protagonists; who are, of course, the PCs. The resolution (endpoint) of any principle plot hook marks the end of single "story-arc," marking a major endpoint in the ongoing campaign, and thereby ending that scenario. Foreshadowing sometimes is used before any one plot hook is introduced, although it might be so subtle as to be missed by all, including the most perceptive players. In literature, it is common for the rising action to include a bogus climax, wherein a seeming victory of the PCs goes disastrously wrong. But, in an RPG, the GM should not invent opportunities for disaster, unless the players are acting quite foolishly. Do not dismiss the concept of a false climax, however, as it can be an added hazard for the characters to overcome in the case of expert players used to being faced with typical challenges. If the seeming disaster also offers means of overcoming it, going on to actual triumph, the resulting satisfaction will be greater.

Endpoints, Turning-Points, and Intermediary-Points: An important juncture in the story is a turning point, while a endpoint marks the conclusion of a single story-arc. Intermediary encounters move the plot along but exist between turning-points and/or endpoints. Eventually, the player characters will reach the "point of no return", a moment of great dramatic intensity, in which it seems that only one ending is plausible. But "seems" is the operative word, because the adventure is not linear, forcing the party into circumstances with foregone conclusions. As always, the PCs should manage outcomes on their own, earning experience or merit points for correct decisions, and being penalized for wrong decisions. At these points, the player characters are either able to solve the conflict or are forced to accept failure. The stakes should be kept at high, offering appropriate reward for successful completion of a story endpoint or minor plot-juncture, with larger rewards for creative solutions.

Falling Action: In a fiction story, there might be several loose threads requiring resolution even when the outcome is inevitable. The conflict winds down, working itself out through a few remaining events. These events are categorized as falling action because the drama is no longer increasing in dramatic intensity, but is rather falling off, breaking up the tension, the anti-climax. The category isn't the same as an epilogue because"in fiction – falling action sometimes occurs before the final dramatic event. But any such lull in the action ought to be handled differently in an RPG (see resolution, below). Breaking up tension in a pulp-fantasy style action adventure is a bad idea. And, therefore, the falling action so common to classical dramas should be eliminated or glossed over in brief expository fashion by the GM. Besides, if the remaining unfinished business is so darned important, it can be handled as a subsequent adventure, with the action once again on the rise.

Resolution: In fiction, the resolution refers to the final solving of the conflict. But there usually is no true dénouement in an RPG, unless the GM decides to stop running the game, or forces the retirement of all PCs at once. Sure, there can be a lull in the action, where all current plot threads have been followed to their conclusions, with the final endpoint in place to signal the end of the principle "story-arc". There is always the promise of a sequel, right? And it's during these intermediary periods in the careers of adventuring that activities such as building, or any business aside from adventuring, is typically undertaken, using as funds whatever spoils were gained from previous exploits. Character development (detailing a game persona's history) in terms of advancement or merit-point awards typically is handled in those brief respites between adventures. In other words, the end of an adventure is not necessarily the end of the story. Far more likely it is merely the end of a chapter in a long epic filled with much derring-do and danger, a few tragedies and many triumphs.

TANGENT: AN INTERPRETATION OF COMBAT DESCRIPTION

Of all the aspects of role-playing games, I'd wager that it is the various combat systems that become the focus of the most debate. Often the battle lines are drawn between those game masters who claim to conduct realistic battles versus those who prefer an interpretative, abstract combat style. The Lejendary Adventure game's combat system is an interpretative, abstract combat system supporting fast and furious, cinematic-style battles, realistic insofar as it maintains consistency between the rules structure and the milieu that serves as its foundation.

A wargamer likely focuses on game mechanics to simulate the historical accuracy of many considerations; weapons versus armor types, the terrain, weather, weapon speeds, hit location considerations, etc. Very often such players have had training in sword play, martial arts, or are well read on theories of ancient modes of combat. To them the role-playing game is a vehicle for wargaming and combat simulation, usually the role-playing aspect secondary, and plot incidental in relation to such combat. Ideally, the wargamer will choose a system that is wonderfully complex, memorize the voluminous combat-rules and gather a group of likeminded enthusiasts. At worst, he will enter the game of a GM who uses the latter style of combat, that of the abstract, interpretive/descriptive method, and complain that such a style is "unrealistic".

The GM adhering to an interpretative/descriptive combat system conducts battles in a way that is potentially exciting and colorful, but without requiring numerous modifications to the base system. Complaints about gameplay failing to resonate with the subjective sense of how a player believes things "ought to

be" should be carefully evaluated by the GM in light of the game milieu.

First, characters should not be stripped of their heroic proportions due to minutiae of battle becoming paramount, or be subjected to the realistic consequences of a successful attack with a blade or bludgeon. Considerations such as those tend to end adventuring careers in grisly and ignoble ways; loosing an eyeball or hand, horrible wounds requiring weeks or months of bed rest from which to recover, etc. Normally, it isn't fun to assume the role of a cripple in a heroic fantasy campaign! It is by no mistake that there is no emphasis on "hit location" for called shots, detailing specific damage to body parts as a logical extension of a successful attack. If combat were quite so realistic, life would be as Thomas Hobbes said, "nasty, brutish, and short".

The second factor concerns the basic assumptions of the role playing game combat system, some obvious, some perhaps less so. First, and obvious, is that an character will necessarily succeed in inflicting damage upon his opponent, given sufficient ability and successful roll of the dice. If his score is high enough, then barring some situational adjustment, he cannot fail to hurt his opponent. Secondly, armor, magic, and some abilities can mitigate the combat, but these defenses are not directly "opposed" by any abilities of the attacker. So it is only the most common considerations that affect the attacker; motion, relational height, basic positioning (prone, flanked, attacked from behind), degrees of cover, etc. These are given as guidelines; other situational modifiers easily extrapolated by means of common sense from the game list on an as-needed basis. Situational modifiers requiring a more detailed breakdown of an Avatar's or creature's capabilities are unnecessary, though some still claim that the game system has been "intentionally stripped of certain aspects of reality."

The presumption begins with the notion that the defender's "right and ability to defend" is not already subsumed in the rules. For example, it is stated in the Lejendary Rules for All Players that the Health Base Rating is not only the measure of how capable an Avatar or creature is in sustaining the wounding of combat, but also the effort. It is an overarching statistic connecting mind and the body. This is a very important point to illustrate because it is absolutely at the heart of an abstract combat system. This concept can be applied to any role playing game. In LA, the human average for Health is a rating of 20 points, but characters typically begin with ratings of over twice that! Why? It can't be because each character would have the actual physical endurance of a dragon or several warhorses combined, as that would be absolutely ludicrous! It is rather because this Base Rating represents the ability to avoid or to mitigate Harm, not just to endure actual physical abuse. Health is the vinculum, locating Speed and Precision relationally. In other words, Speed and Precision are not derivative of, but are synergistically dependent upon Health. It is within this abstract definition that you have your built-in defensive adjustments, mental and physical, and that idea is your descriptive key to easy combat resolution.

So what does this mean? After all, the impact from a good sword swing, scoring maximum damage, should maim or kill any average mortal being. If the game system were so gritty it would be important to break down the character's defenses further, calculating modifiers based on statistics that could not then be so broadly based. Indeed, in games that are "combat simulators", we find a character's basic capacity to withstand actual physical damage without armor, supernatural aid or powers, or some other skill-based or extraordinary capacity to avoid such direct damage, is extremely limited. It becomes necessary to consider the particulars of hit location, armor on each part of the body, etc. And so the rules snowball, becoming increasingly complex.

Thus, layers of rules requiring modifications based on opponents Speed, Weapons Score, or other non-situational modifiers are rendered quite arbitrary for the purpose of a descriptive/interpretive combat system. This is apparent once it's realized that a successful percentage roll to inflict damage does not necessarily involve actual physical contact with the opponent!

This point is easy enough to imagine when, for example, a psychic power is being used to attack the mind of a character, threatening mental capacity. However, many players overlook the basic idea when engaged in melee, health represents a mind-body fulcrum, balancing a character's combined capabilities. So it may be asked, what is it exactly to be Harmed? Of course word meanings and connotations are not static, nor must they be; role-playing game authors have been historically fond of semantic manipulations for the sake of game play. A character who has been wounded certainly has had more than his feelings hurt, but such wounds can be described not only as physical damage, but as becoming fatigued, whittled down, drained of confidence or morale, slower reactions, less effective parries; i.e. the capacity to avoid Harm is diminished.

Typically, as health is lowered by inflicted damage of various sorts, the GM would describe resultant physical injury with greater frequency. Scratches and bruises become wounds, then critical injuries. Once a character is brought down in the range of low health, it's reasonable to describe things in terms of actual injury. The situation becomes dire and bloody for the defender in this range for those lacking armor protection!

During the course of a combat, a player might declare, "Rognath the Noble Fighter will swing his great sword to decapitate the orc shaman that challenges him! I shall take a penalty to choose the exact portion of my target…his neck!" The GM nods his approval and the player rolls the dice, scoring a critical success on the aimed attack, apparently resulting in a successful strike to the orc's neck, and achieving maximum damage. Let's say that, with all possible bonuses to added, the resultant damage is large. Imagine now that the defender wore no armor but his health remained robust even after such an attack. Is the LM going to look at the player with a straight face and inform him that the foe was struck fully in the neck, but is still standing and able to retaliate? Of course not, because outside of magic protection, that would be absurd!

It should be made clear that any harm, mental, magical or physical, aimed or not, that does penetrate the armor and/or magical defensives of the foe may not always be described in terms of the desired effect (maiming, decapitation, incineration, fatal electrocution, etc). Aiming an attack to decapitate the orc shaman should not mean that his head would fly from his shoulders upon a successful roll of the dice! This interpretive ruling does not reduce actual damage inflicted in terms of game

mechanics, of course, but does support plausibility, and aids in the "suspension of disbelief" necessary to enjoy an RPG. Conversely, if the target subject was at or below the damage points, then the successful attack could be described as the attacker was expecting, a gory decapitation!

That brings us to finer details. The mitigation or avoidance of damage varies descriptively and to a great degree from one creature to the next. Striking a dragon, a golem, an oaf or a fully armored knight can often be described in terms of actual contact because such creatures are very large and tough, natural and armor-based protection points absorbing deadly impact. A wylf enchanter wearing a robe or any quick, unarmored creature is likely dodging, weaving and rolling with most attacks, becoming progressively more fatigued, scratched and bruised, and his luck running out. Likewise, natural armor, or Harm reduction based on mundane armor, or abilities like minstrelsy or some creature's lightning-fast reactions is easy to interpret and describe. In the context of a sword fight, the opponent struck may appear to "parry" a powerful strike, his defensive capabilities becoming stretched to their limits in terms of Harm.

So, one might ask, if some successful hits can be theoretically described as a "miss" due to an opponent's evasive action, and an unsuccessful Weapons roll is also considered a "miss", how can the player tell the difference? Easily. If damage is rolled, the opponent is affected, reduced in potential, no matter how it is described. Those descriptive reactions involving apparent parries or dodges are not actual actions.

On this point, the GM must be absolutely clear! For example, an archer shoots a crossbow bolt at point-blank range and hits an able and experienced Trollkin Jonguler, wearing only a motley traveling cloak. It's possible the Trollkin may be relatively unscathed in terms of health, hit points etc, but the GM should never secretly roll damage and describe the attack as a clear miss. Instead he could say, "Okay your attack fatigues the Trollkin greatly (Harmed) as he dodges frantically aside to avoid the deadly bolt." Also, note that an unsuccessful Weapons roll needn't be invariably described as a clear miss. The GM may state that the opponent deflected the blow, or parried, the plate armor absorbed the blow, or whatever. Such things are entirely acceptable, adding flavor to combat.

After a short while and without need of extra game mechanics, combat conducted in this interpretive/descriptive style becomes an entertaining exchange of descriptive elements within the spectrum of Harm. It is where the GM can display excellence in role-playing as well as roll-playing.

This is, admittedly, a semantic war that I wage, the rules of any game being highly subject to interpretation and personal taste. No game system can accurately reflect the actuality of combat with weapons and armor for which no actual statistics exist. No system can logically encompass all of the factors that might effect the combat—including minor things such as palm sweat, wind-blown dust, a small rock underfoot, an angry hornet to name just a few of the less obvious factors that might come into play. What is important is that it is not just a matter of opinion; it's a matter of description.



BOOK FIVE
OBJECTIVE

I had seen a herd of elephant traveling through dense native forest . . . pacing along as if they had an appointment at the end of the world.

~ Isak Dinesen, Out of Africa

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

This chapter explains how to create either an overarching plot for a campaign or a single adventure of varying complexity, such as one aimed for publication as a module, using the information found throughout this book. A few assumptions must be made, at this point, in order to assure full utility from this section:

First, events of the past, present, and future have already been determined, or else a harmonious Golden Age is assumed. Second, at least one archetypal story-role has been selected, and will be featured in the adventure. Otherwise, selecting no story-roles characterizes a game of endless corridors and monstrous "sword-fodder," essentially what computer "RPGs" are. While there's nothing inherently wrong with that, it does "get old," right? Third, it's assumed that major and minor NPCs have been detailed, to better fulfill their assigned story-roles. The types selected are now assumed to be fleshed out, in terms of their class, race, motivations, and individual goals, the GM referring to the DMG the LRFAP, or the core rules book equivalent to these world for his system wherever needed. And, finally, per information provided in Book Four, the different types of encounters, various story functions, and plot elements are understood.

This constitutes most of the puzzle, although the jigsaw pieces remain strewn across the cutting room floor. Now, we only need to pick them up and arrange them in some logical sequence. The forms provided at the back of this book is designed for that purpose, and may be photocopied for personal use to facilitate your adventure building.

CREATING THE ADVENTURE

STEP 1: Theme

The reader might wish to give his adventure a name from the onset, if some theme is already held in mind. If not, it's of no consequence unless you are planning to publish the adventure as a module. The option is given on the forms for those GMs who enjoy keeping track of "episodes" within their ongoing campaigns. The theme is simply what types of encounters will be most featured in the adventure. Self explanatory themes include exploration (several or all other themes are combined herein in addition to the basic problem solving needed to get through the area), action (combat with some role-playing likely), mystery (problem -solving with role-playing likely), drama (role-playing with some problem solving likely), espionage (problem -solving with some role-playing and combat likely), and horror (role-playing with some problem solving and combat possible). In fact, many adventures will include each of those themes. But forget about comedy and romance. It's difficult enough preventing a game from becoming a comedy as it is, so why give it any more credence? And heck, if you want romance, just join a Live Action Role-Playing Game (LARP). But all jesting aside, good comedy is excruciatingly difficult to pull off. Just be careful not to mess it up, okay?

STEP 2: Choosing End, Intermediary, and Turning Points

So, now we have Story-Hooks (for PCs), Obstacle/Tasks, endpoints, and plot junctures. To simplify matters, all of these functions and elements of the plot can be considered either turning-points, intermediary points, or endpoints within the story-latent. Intermediary encounters move the plot along but exist between turning-points and/or endpoints. Turning-points and endpoints are types of climactic moments. The first type consists of scenes in ascending order of intensity, while the second type includes critical moments of plot resolution, victory, or defeat. Together, these types are within the broad category of "story goals".

Thus, an endpoint is a "capstone" in the story (see Story Elements, in Book Four), signaling the end of a single story arc; the final resolution of the original, inciting incident. Turning points can be major and minor, and might include the completion of a required tasks (obstacles: task), momentous background events (milieu events), or the resolution of lesser conflicts.

By this stage the GM probably knows what Story-Hooks will be used, ; but not necessarily how the plot ought to be resolved. So, the first thing to do is choose the primary endpoint of the story latent; and, then, match that to the first inciting incident of the adventure, which could be either a Story-Hook or an "unbound trigger" (see Book Four, Story Functions for definition of triggers). Simply put, a single plotline or story-arc occurs between inciting incident and its associated endpoint.

The GM must decide whether his adventure will consist of (A) a single, narrow plotline, (B) a "campaign plotline", or (C) several subplots within a broader plotline. A campaign adventure subsumes two or more "Acts," cumulatively a single story-arc, each act connected in theme to the inciting incident. A single plotline adventure can be simple or complicated, incorporating many turning-points, or none at all. Then again, an adventure can feature several minor subplots. But most adventures work just fine with a a single adventure hook and associated endpoint.

The GM should limit himself to a reasonable number of acts or subplots, for the sake of ease. At first, try considering only a primary, secondary, and tertiary adventure objective, adding another only when one of the original three is fulfilled. Use the list below, in Step 3. Incidentally, these endpoints mirror the list of short-term goals (objectives) for NPCs in Book Three. It's helpful for the NPCs to share one or more short-term goals with the PCs, thereby making encounters more probable. Ultimately, the Story-Hook is the main clue for players that there is adventure to be had. And, if the players have their characters run away (those rat bastards!), the GM can find ways to have the NPCs clash with them anyway.

STEP 3: Story Goals

Below are detailed the most common goals found in a plotline, listed with examples of compatible Story-Hooks (although any can be used with a little ingenuity), and most probable themes. Skills and abilities useful to the completion of each goal are suggested, where warranted. Lastly, every goal can be made prerequisite to the completion of another (thus making them into objectives), linked in a series of tasks until reaching the final achievement. Each goal has listed other objectives that might be used in connection with it. However, the word "pre-

requisite" does not imply inflexibility in the plot. As always, ingenuity should be rewardede. And if one objective is cleverly sidestepped, that's fine. Goals can be associated with background events past, present and future to whatever degree desired by the GM, just as with NPCs. In any case, goals linked with political and civil strife, disasters, social upheaval, war, and cataclysm should not be difficult to imagine.

Attain knowledge
Hooks: any
Theme: Mystery

This goal implies knowledge hard won. It relates to eruditeness, so much information gathering or study will be required. The knowledge must be obscure or esoteric, but might be lost information related to any profession or craft. Only the greatest of sages and experts (NPCs only) will have access to such knowledge. D20 or LA game skills related to the needed knowledge can aid in finding clues (+2 or +10% synergy bonus), leading the PCs in the right direction. This knowledge might be prerequisite to completing the following goals: Prevent cataclysm, Prevent disaster, Prevent event, Prevent revelation, Prevent Strife, Prevent war

Attain truth
Hooks: any
Theme: Mystery, Action

Attainment of truth can be a goal involving suspense or mystery. Implied here is "truth" apart from eruditeness; that is, the exposal of lies and misinformation. Related D20 skills are: Decipher Script (the truth sometimes is in old documents), Diplomacy (people who are liked are more apt to find the truth), Disguise (attain truth by infiltration), Forgery (to get into places where truth can be found), Gather Information (the universal failsafe skill), Intimidate, Sense Motive, Spot (for visible clues). Related LA game Abilities: Any Hhealth-based (mental). This knowledge might be prerequisite to completing the following goals: Avenge (event, person, or place), Discover identity, Discover problem (can't know the real problem without the truth, right?), Find (item, artifact, person, or place), Prevent truth.

Avenge person, place, or event
Hooks: Friend In Need, Sudden Attack
Theme: Action

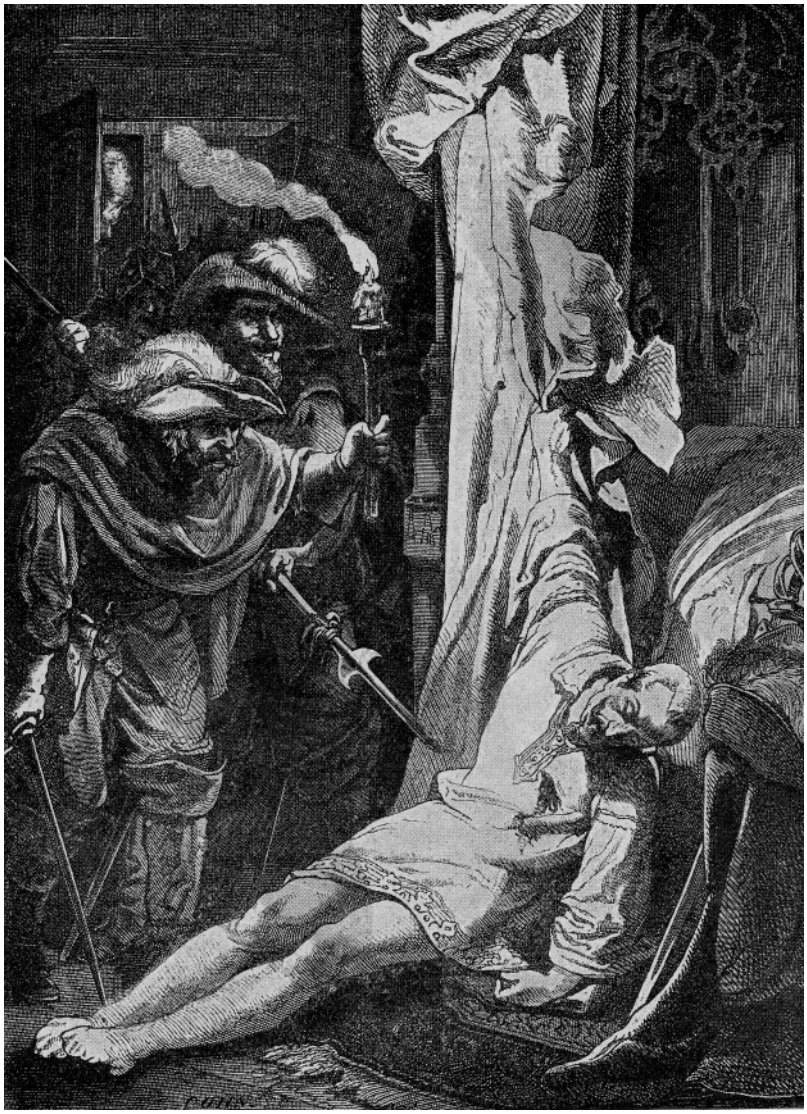
A friend or place dear to the hearts of an ally or one of the PCs has been attacked, desecrated or violated. Such an act must be avenged, most would agree. D20 skills useful to the task include Bluff (infiltration), Disguise (to infiltration), Escape Artist, Forgery (infiltration), Gather information, Intimidate, Sense Motivate. Potentially,any LA game Aability can be utilized for such a task. This vengeance might be prerequisite to completing the following goals: Conquer locale, Repair reputation, Rescue locale, Solve predicament.

Conceal identity
Hooks: Friend In Need, Mistaken Identity
Theme: Action, Mystery, Espionage

To go incognito is a must, at least temporarily, whether required of the adventurers or one of their allies. D20 skills useful to the task include Bluff (avoid detection), Disguise (avoid detection), Forgery (change identity), Sense Motivate. Related LA game Aabilities: Evaluation, Pretense, Scrutiny, Stealth, Ticks, Urbane. This concealment might be prerequisite to completing the following goals: Attain truth, Avenge (wrongdoing), Escape place, Learn facts, Prevent truth, Repair reputation, Solve problem.

Conquer locale
Hooks: Patronal Mandate, Calamitous Threat
Theme: Action

A place must be cleared of danger or opposition, down to the last man or beast. Then it must either be occupied, destroyed, or rebuilt. D20 skills useful to the task include anything related to combat and tactics. Related LA game Abilities: Any Pprecision-based (combat and evasion). Victory might be prerequisite to completing the following goals: Destroy item or artifact, Destroy Knowledge, Escape Place, Prevent event, Prevent truth.



Defeat creature(s)
Hooks: any
Theme: Action, Horror

A NPC or monster has risen as an enemy and must be subdued or killed. Skills and abilities related to combat obviously are helpful. The defeat of a target creature might be prerequisite to completing the following goals: Destroy (item, knowledge, identity), Retrieve item or artifact.

Destroy item or artifact
Hooks: Dream Message, Enigmatic Stranger, Legends and Rumors, Patronal Mandate
Theme: Action

Some magical, divine, or psionic item or artifact poses a danger to the heroes, their home, or their allies. Clearly, tThis threat must be eliminated. Useful D20 skills include: Appraise (to detect decoys), Craft (to create decoys), Decipher Script (to read ancient treasure maps), Disable Device (or else get blown up), Escape Artist (when the item itself can entrap), Knowledge (arcane or divine), Spellcraft (to identify magical hazards). Useful LA game Aabilities include: Alchemia, Arcana, Evaluation, Mechanics, Psychogenic (to deal with psionic devices), as well as other schools of Thaumaturgy (Enchantment), Geourgy, and Theurgy. Destroying the item may be prerequisite to completing the following goals: Escape Place, Rescue (creature or locale).

Destroy knowledge
Hooks: Dream Message, Enigmatic Stranger, Legends and Rumors, Patronal Mandate, NPC Grudge, Vengeful Foe
Theme: Action, Espionage

Some magical, divine, or psionic lore poses a danger to the heroes, their home, or their allies. The threat, typically consisting of someone who carries such knowledge and cannot be trusted, must be eliminated. Usually, such an entity is a sage of evil alignment who possesses knowledge that he threatens to employ, under the right conditions. Useful D20 skills include: Decipher Script, Forgery, Gather Info, Sense Motive (will the person possessing the knowledge use it?), Sleight of Hand (to steal and destroy material knowledge). Clearly, spells that discern the truth would be helpful. Useful LA game Aabilities include: Any Health-based (mental), or Precision-based (for tricks and stealth). Destroying the knowledge may be prerequisite to completing the following goals: Conceal identity, Defeat Creature, Prevent Truth, Repair Reputation (if knowledge is evidence), Solve predicament.

Discover identity
Hooks: Enigmatic Stranger, Friend in Need, Legends and Rumors, Mistaken Identify, Sudden Attack
Theme: Action, Mystery, Espionage

The identity of some creature must be discovered. Either terrible events have been associated with this mystery figure, or is a legendary figure, the key to treasure, etc. Useful D20 skills include: Gather Info, Sense Motivate. The best magic spells are those for ferreting out somebody who hides. Useful LA game Aabilities include: Arcana, Evaluation, Learning, Pretense, Scrutiny, Stealth, Tricks, Urbane. Discovering the identity of this creature is prerequisite to completing the following goals: Avenge (murdered ally or friend), Defeat Creature, Prevent Truth, Repair Reputation (if mystery person framed the PCs).

Escape Place
Hooks: None, or Calamitous Threat
Theme: Action, Drama

The PCs have been imprisoned, held hostage, or the locale is doomed by some looming disaster or cataclysmic event. But there are guardians at the gates of freedom, ; enemies who would see the PCs dead, or wish the populace to remain doomed. The escape might be required of the PCs alone, or the heroes could be expected to help the innocent evade harm. Useful D20 Skills: Balance (for escaping form precarious places), Disable Device (for bypassing traps), Disguise, Escape Artist, Handle Animal (for stealing mounts), Hide, Jump (to freedeom!), Listen (for guards), Move Silently, Open Lock, Ride, Search (for keys), Sense Motive (for bribes), Sleight of Hand (for palming keys or other objects), Survival, Swim, Tumble, Use Magic Device, Use Rope. Useful LA game Abilities: Creativity, Divination, Enchantment, Evaluation, Geourgy, Luck, Mechanics, Minstrelsy, Pantology, Planning, Pretense, Psychogenic, Sorcery, Scrutiny, Stealing, Stealth, Swashbuckling, Theurgy, Tricks, Unarmed Combat, Waylaying, Weapons. Escaping the locale could be prerequisite to doing just about anything, including sleeping.

Explore place
Hooks: Lejends and Rumors
Theme: Mystery

The PCs must explore, survey and map a place for themselves or their patron. Such exploration is necessary to prevent the party from going astray, and finding themselves lost in places where food and other resources are scarce. The place could consist of catacombs, caves, ruins, mines, islands, labyrinths, necropolises, trackless wilderness, or similar locations. The goal of the expedition might be determine whether a viable threat exists , and/or whether rumors and legends of the place are accurate. Useful D20 Skills: Balance, Climb, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Jump, Listen, Ride, Search, Spot, Survival, Swim. Use LA game Abilities: Hunt, Mechanics, Metallurgy, Nomadic, Panprobability, Pantology, Ranging, Rustic, Savagery, Urbane, Waterfaring. Exploring a place might be prerequisite to the following goals: Find (person, item), Attain knowledge, Learn facts, Solve Riddle, etc.

Find item or artifact
Hooks: Lejends and Rumors
Theme: Mystery

It's imperative that some item or artifact be found. It could be something used to avert disaster or cataclysm, or a symbolic item that has the power to calm social or political strife. Or, it could be one piece of a shattered item that must be restored. Useful D20 Skills include: Appraise, Knowledge (any sort relevant to the item), Search. Useful LA game Abilities include: Commerce, Creativity, Divination, Evaluation, Learning, Luck, Mechanics,

Metallurgy, Pantology, Planning, Scrutiny, Stealing, Tricks. Finding the item might be prerequisite to the following goals: Defeat creature, Destroy item, Conquer locale, Repair item, Retrieve item, Solve predicament.

Find person
Hooks: any
Theme: Mystery

A known and, as far as is known, living person is missing and must be located. He or she holds some important item, fact, or expertise that is required before the final goal can be attained. Useful D20 skills include: Diplomacy (to win friends of those who may be protecting their whereabouts), Disguise (to fool those who protect the persons whereabouts), Forgery (to seem official when inquiring), Gather Info, Intimidate (when the person knows the person's whereabouts but is stubborn), Sense Motive, Spot (if the person just happens to run by...). Useful LA game Abilities include: Evaluation, Scrutiny. Find the person might be prerequisite to the following goals: Attain truth or knowledge, Avenge (find and kill the person), Defeat creature (find person to subdue or kill), Learn facts (codes, passwords, or formulae), Retrieve item (in his possession), Solve riddle (to which he has the answer).

Find place
Hooks: any
Theme: Mystery

There is a place containing a person, thing, knowledge, or force which must be found and utilized. But, alas, it's location is unknown. This place could be anywhere: Hallowed and unhallowed ground, fountains of youth, the River Styx, hidden mage towards, lost caves, forgotten ruins, and unmapped places of yore. Useful D20 skills include: Knowledge (history, arcane, ancient history, etcetera), Gather Info, Travel, and related skills. Useful LA game Abilities include: Evaluation, Hunt, Luck, Ranging, Waterfaring. Finding the place might be prerequisite to the following goals: Attain Knowledge or truth, Conquer Locale, Destroy item, Explore Place, Prevent Event, Rescue Locale, Retrieve Item.

Hinder creature(s)
Hooks: any
Theme: Action, Espionage

A NPC or monster must be hindered, or delayed, before it reaches it's goal, whatever that might be. The measures required to hinder the antagonist are extremely variable. It's evident that one cannot thwart a dragon or mage in the same fashion as a knight or rogue. Methods include: roadblocks of might or magic; threats or blackmail; mind-controlling magicks; containment or imprisonment; implicating the creature in a crime; or diversionary tactics. Indeed, there exists a fine line between hindrance and aggression. Useful D20 Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate, Sense Motive. Useful LA game Abilities: Evaluation, Luck, Planning, Pretense, Scrutiny, Tricks, Urbane, Waylaying. This goal may be prerequisite to the goals of: Defeat creature (by preventing help from arriving), Escape place (by keeping the guards at bay), Prevent event (by hindering the probably catalyst), Prevent Truth (by silencing the NPC), etc.

Learn fact(s)
Hooks: any
Theme: Mystery, Espionage, Drama

A fact must be known before progress is possible. Here, "fact" is used in the singular, and refers to a piece of information, a code, a formula, specific incantation, password, or something of that ilk. Such a fact can serve as an answer, or a clue, depending on the complexity of the problem. This is different from attainment of general knowledge or truth: To inquire with reference to past events, or verify facts surrounding current events deals, rather with the attainment of truth or knowledge. D20 skills useful in discerning facts: Decipher Script, Forgery (to detect a forgery), Gather Info (for what is information but a collection of facts?), relevant Knowledge, Craft, or Profession (grants +2 on roll to find a clue), Sense Motive (to discern lies). Useful LA game Abilities: Evaluation, Learning, Pretense, Scrutiny, or any ability related to the circumstances. This goal may be prerequisite to the goals of: Attain Knowledge, Attain Truth, Avenge (to discern the culprit), Destroy item (to figure out command words or steps), Discover identity (who dunnit?), Escape Place (find weak points in defenses), Find something or someone (facts as clues or answers to location), Prevent event, Prevent truth (can't prevent the truth if you don't have the facts!), Repair item (facts of what's needed), Repair reputation (facts for an alibi), Retrieve item (passwords, codes, etc, to bypass defenses), Solve predicament (facts for debate or upon which to act), Solve riddle (always nice to have the answers in advance).

Prevent event
Hooks: Anonymous Plea, Calamitous Threat, Dream Message, Enigmatic Stranger, Friend in Need
Theme: any (Disaster, Strife & Upheaval, War, Cataclysm)

The heroes have been warned that something terrible is about to happen. Possible events include civil war, riots and uprisings, a meteor strike (that can be a tricky one to stop!), an invading army, or the End of the World (see Book One, Milieu events to choose). They learned of the threat via any number of means, including, perchance: An ally or patron telling them of some calamitous threat; a dream; a mysterious, black cloaked harbinger of doom. They must figure out what must be done to prevent the event. This goal probablye requires completing many difficult tasks. Useful D20 Skills: any. Useful LA game Abilities: any. The completion of this event might be prerequisite to: Repair reputation, Avenge (something or someone), Attain truth or knowledge.

Prevent truth
Hooks: Anonymous Plea, Dream Message, Enigmatic Stranger, Friend in Need, Patronal Mandate
Theme: Drama, Action

For whatever reason, the truth of a past event cannot be revealed, or the lives and repute of allies, loved ones, family members, or patrons would be placed into jeopardy. But there are those who know the truth and are determined to relate it to those who would bring about the ruination of the PCs. Opportunities for moral dilemmas abound with such a goal (see Book Four, Obstacles: predicaments). Useful D20 Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Forgery, Hide (if all else fails...), Intimidate, Sense Motive.

Useful LA game Abilities: Evaluation, Luck, Minstrelsy (bards are great at lying), Pretense, Scrutiny, Stealing (if the enemy has material evidence), Tricks (to help with stealing), Waylaying (lacking finesse maybe, but...). This goal might be prerequisite to: Conceal identity, Escape place, Hinder creature, Repair reputation, Solve predicament.

Repair item or artifact
Hooks: Calamitous Threat, Legends and Rumors, Patronal Mandate
Theme: any

An item or artifact of great significance is shattered, broken, or not working for some strange reason. Because adventurers typically don't fix people's wagons or repair windmills, the item must be something pertinent to their overall quest; if not, itself, the object of their mission. such a repair might be a simple goal, given the right skills or spells, and assuming no obstacles; as long as the PCs know where the item is, and how to fix it. Usually, however, some obscure fact, spell or another lost item is required before a repair can be affected. Useful D20 Skills: Craft (related to item), Disable Device (sometimes the item is 'broken' because it won't stop working), Knowledge (related to item), Open Lock (if the item has a lost key). Useful LA game Aabilities: Arcana, Divination (for clues), Evaluation, Mechanics, Metallurgy, Pantology, Scrutiny. This goal might be prerequisite to: Defeat creature (monster is vulnerable to item), Destroy item (item to be repair is only means of destroying another item), Escape place (repair the mechanism that allows for egress), Explore place (fix the mechanism that allows entrance), Rescue locale (item is a divine artifact that makes the grass grow), Solve riddle (broken magic item can decipher cryptograms).

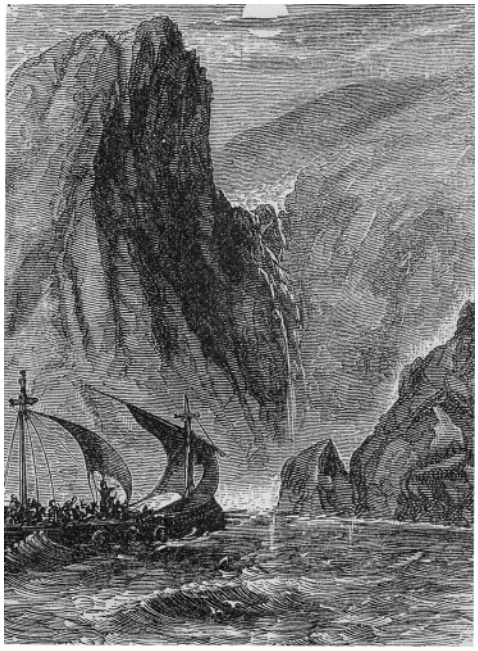
Repair reputation
Hooks: Friend in Need, Nuisance or Competitor, Mistaken Identity, NPC Grudge, Vengeful Foe
Theme: Action, Drama

The adventurers, or their allies, have been saddled with dark repute, or infamy, but are innocent of any allegations leveled against them. They have been slandered or libeled, either by a competitor or an enemy. The PCs must clear their own name, or the reputations of their allies; possibly, while avoiding arrest.

Useful D20 Skills: Bluff (ironically), Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather info (to find facts), Hide, Intimidate, Move Silently, Open Lock, Ride (quickly), Sense Motive. Useful LA game Abilities: Chivalry, Enchantment, Evaluation, Pretense, Psychogenic, Scrutiny, Stealth, Urbane.

Rescue creature
Hooks: Anonymous Plea, Dream Message, Friend In Need, Nuisance or Competitor (kidnapped an ally), NPC Grudge (abducted an ally), Patronal Mandate
Theme: Action, Drama

An ally (NPC or monster), friend, family member, influential individual, or prize animal has been abducted. Or this entity got trapped; for example, while exploring a cave or dungeon. Either way, the creature cannot escape, and might only have a limited



amount of time to live. The PCs must go to the rescue. Useful D20 Skills: any. Useful LA game Abilities: any. This goal may be prerequisite to: Attain knowledge or truth, Learn facts, Repair reputation, Retrieve item, Solve predicament.

Rescue locale
Hooks: Calamitous Threat, Vengeful Foe, Sudden Attack, Patronal Mandate
Theme: Action, Horror

Someplace valued by the PCs is threatened. Possible threats include: extreme and widespread instances of political and civil strife, "natural" disasters, social upheavals, wars, or possible cataclysm. The PCs must use whatever means they have at their disposal to eliminate the threat and rescue the populace. This is a very broad goal, and probably will subsume many tasks. Any D20 skill or LA game Aability could apply. This goal may be prerequisite to: Repair reputation, Solve predicament.

Retrieve item, artifact, or beast
Hooks: any
Theme: Action

Some precious thing is required by the PCs, their allies, or their patron. It's location is known, but it's presently held captive by the enemy. If an item, it could be one of the crown jewels, a powerful and usual weapon, a precious magic item, or an object of great sentimental value. If an artifact, the object might be a stolen gift of the gods, or a volatile relic containing deadly, arcane energies. If it was a beast that was stolen, it could be a creature with a body part prized by spellcasters, such as a unicorns, basilisks, or dragons. Depending on the tactics of the enemy, any D20 skill or LA game Aability could apply in retrieving an item. This large goal may be prerequisite to: Conquer locale, Defeat creature(s), Destroy item.

Solve predicament
Hooks: any
Theme: Drama

The PCs are faced with a predicament, such as: An unattainable goal; an onerous command demanded by their patron; an obstinate NPC who could help but refuses; a mulish superior who won't listen to reason, (and who, if contradicted, threatens to withdraw support); an irrational accuser (like a wrongheaded inquisitor) who constantly harasses the heroes, but has the support of powerful people within the government. Or two warring factions, each of which desires that the PCs for their side. The possibilities for such entanglements are endless, and often emerge during the course of play, even if unplanned. Useful D20 Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Sense Motive. Useful LA game Abilities: Chivalry, Commerce (if dealing with merchant guilds or other economic concerns), Evaluation, Learning, Luck, Minstrelsy (after all, everybody loves a bard, right?), Pretense, Psychogenic (to know what others are thinking), Scrutiny, Stealth, Tricks, Urbane. This goal might be prerequisite to the completion of: Escape place (if NPCs attempt to hold PCs hostage until conflict is resolved), Prevent event, Repair reputation.

Solve riddle
Hooks: any.
Theme: Mystery

The PCs are faced with a riddle or puzzle that must be solved. Failing to solve the riddle might prevent entrance to a place, trigger an encounter, or cause a hazard. Useful D20 Skills: General Intelligence and Wisdom checks might be used to gain clues. Useful LA game Abilities: Evaluation, Learning, Luck, Minstrelsy, Scrutiny, Tricks.

STEP 4: Adventure Locations and Maps

By now, the GM should have done the following: Chosen the major background conflicts, decided on which story-roles to feature, created NPCs to fill those roles, considered the various story-functions, chosen endpoints and turning points, and determined the various story goals. This step is to choose the encounter locations of the adventure. Chose or consider the terrain, places of encounter (dungeons, catacombs, etc), places of meeting (taverns, guild halls, etc.), and important rooms within those places. Roll randomly on the charts below, or choose as many places as are needed to "house" the key NPCs of all story-roles, major and minor. Chosen places can be plugged into any existing fantasy world, and locations can be named to match those which preexist, or named and positioned anew.

The climate and terrain helps to create the mood; thereby emphasizing the theme , or featured cultural characteristics, of the campaign and/or adventure. The "places of origination" table refers to the location of the PCs home base, or from whence the adventure is expected to launch. In the beginning of a campaign, this place often is dictated; and, subsequently, is determined by the player's' actions. The "Locales of Encounter & Destination" and meeting should be locations familiar to any seasoned GM who i's running fantasy RPGs; with each such place an ideal stage for scenes of battle, role-playing, and problem solving. The list entitled "Rooms of Encounter" features some of the most common rooms found within locales typical of fantasy adventures. Likewise, all of the listed "Places of Meeting" are all common to fantasy adventures; and, therefore, should be easy to integrate into the adventure design. Note that all such material is quite generic.

Note that these tables are for brainstorming locations for adventure. Whether determined randomly or chosen, these locales are to be dependant on the requirements of the story-goals, including the aspirations of the characters. To sufficiently detail essential places of encounter is a huge job; and, accordingly is left to another (planned) volume within this Series. (Additional description for places is extensively treated in *World Builder, Vol II*. of the Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds Series)

TANGENT: MUD-STYLE MAPS

Here is a recommendation for quick and simple maps, described as "MUD-style". MUD means "multi-user dungeon," and were the original, text-based, online, multi-player RPGs (although later incarnations did have some graphics). Further, they were the precursors of today's MMORPGs (massive, multiplayer, online, role-playing games). Because they were text-based, the maps had to be simple. And, like the 1980's, text-based, RPG video game "Zork", each square "room" could represent an area ranging from tiny to gigantic.

For GMs who tire of drawing to-scale maps, this mapping style translates very well to paper and pencil RPGs! Just draw several boxes on graph paper with lines connecting them at the cardinal points (or more directions, if needed). In other words, treat your maps as if you were planning a MUD (multi-user dungeon) for the computer. For indoor places, the boxes can represent rooms of any size; small, medium, large, or vast. The lines connecting the boxes represent travel directions, by whatever means desired; (including teleportation, underground rivers, regular passages or corridors), whether they constitute obvious exits or concealed passages. Distance traveled between the squares would not need to be "in scale". For example, the GM could draw a box on graph paper, entitle it "teleportation chamber," designate a southern door entrance/exit leading 20 feet to the next square (another 'room' of any size), and then draw a line traveling hundreds of miles to the north, labeling that line the "northern teleport exit". If preferred, note the width and length of corridors or passages beside each connecting line. And don't worry about the map being "to scale".

With this level of detail, players will have no trouble mapping, and the game will not be slowed down. Expansive areas can be so mapped in a "MUD-Style", which never removes the option of utilizing smaller, supplemental, more precise maps for specific encounters or miniature battle locations. Outdoor, city and town maps can be done similarly, (not to scale), with squares or hexes representing regions as large or small as desired. A single hex could represent a town, city or an entire kingdom. And an adjacent hex could represent a cave entrance, mountain range, or untracked wilderness within,or bordering, the main region. Lines connecting the hexes or squares can be designated as streets, paths, roads, or simply a line delineating the most direct route between places; with the number of days travel by foot, horse, boat (if a river is near), including adjustments for rough terrain, all written out in advance. This refreshingly easy method of



creating overland and indoor maps allows the GM to avoid precise measurements, or calculating overland travel time, thus freeing up more time for colorful storytelling. A numeric key might be used for different regions of a dungeon, town, city or an overland map.

PLACES OF ENCOUNTER

Terrain (just add water)

01-07	Canyon
08-13	Desert
14-20	Foothills
21-26	Forest
27-33	Glacier
34-40	Grasslands
41-47	Marsh
48-54	Mountains
55-61	Plains
62-67	Rolling Hills
68-74	Swamp
75-81	Tablelands
82-88	Valley
89-94	Wasteland
95-00	Wetland

Climate (match the chosen terrain)

01-15 Cold
16-30 Dry (desert)
31-35 Polar
36-80 Temperate
81-00 Tropical

Locales of Origination

01-10	Hamlet
11-20	Large city
21-30	Large town
31-40	Metropolis
41-50	Outpost
51-60	Small city
61-70	Small Town
71-80	Thorp
81-90	Village
91-00	Wilderness

Locales of Encounter & Destination

01-05	Catacombs
06-10	Caves/Cavern (limestone, volcanic)
11-15	City
16-19	Demi-Human Community
20-24	Donjon (keep tower)
25-28	Dungeon
29-32	Graveyard
33-37	Hamlet
38-42	Island
43-46	Labyrinth
47-50	Mine
51-55	Museum
56-59	Necropolis
60-63	Ruins, city
64-67	Ruins, stronghold
68-71	Ruins, temple
72-75	Stronghold
76-79	Temple
80-83	Thorp
84-87	Town
88-92	Village
93-96	Wasteland
97-00	Wilderness

Rooms of Encounter

01-04	Armory
05-09	Auditorium
10-13	Barbican
14-17	Barracks
18-21	Bath
22-26	Bedroom, resistance
27-31	Chapel
32-35	Coach House
36-39	Dining Hall
40-43	Gambling House, Main Room
44-47	Gatehouse
48-51	Guard Post
52-55	Guard Tower
56-59	Kitchen
60-64	Laboratory, magical
65-68	Library
69-72	Prison Cell
73-76	Smithy
77-80	Study
81-84	Throne Room
85-88	Torture Chamber
89-92	Training Room
93-96	Trophy Hall
97-00	Widow's Walk

Places of Meeting

(see below for brief definitions of buildings within each category)

Religious*

01-05	Abbey
06-10	Bishop's palace
11-15	Cathedral
16-20	Chantry
21-25	Chapel
26-30	Church
31-35	Convent
36-40	Fane
41-45	Friary
46-50	Hostel
51-55	Joss House
56-60	Manse
61-65	Monastery
66-70	Pagoda
71-75	Pantheon
76-80	Priory
81-85	Rectory
86-90	Shrine
91-95	Stupa
96-00	Temple

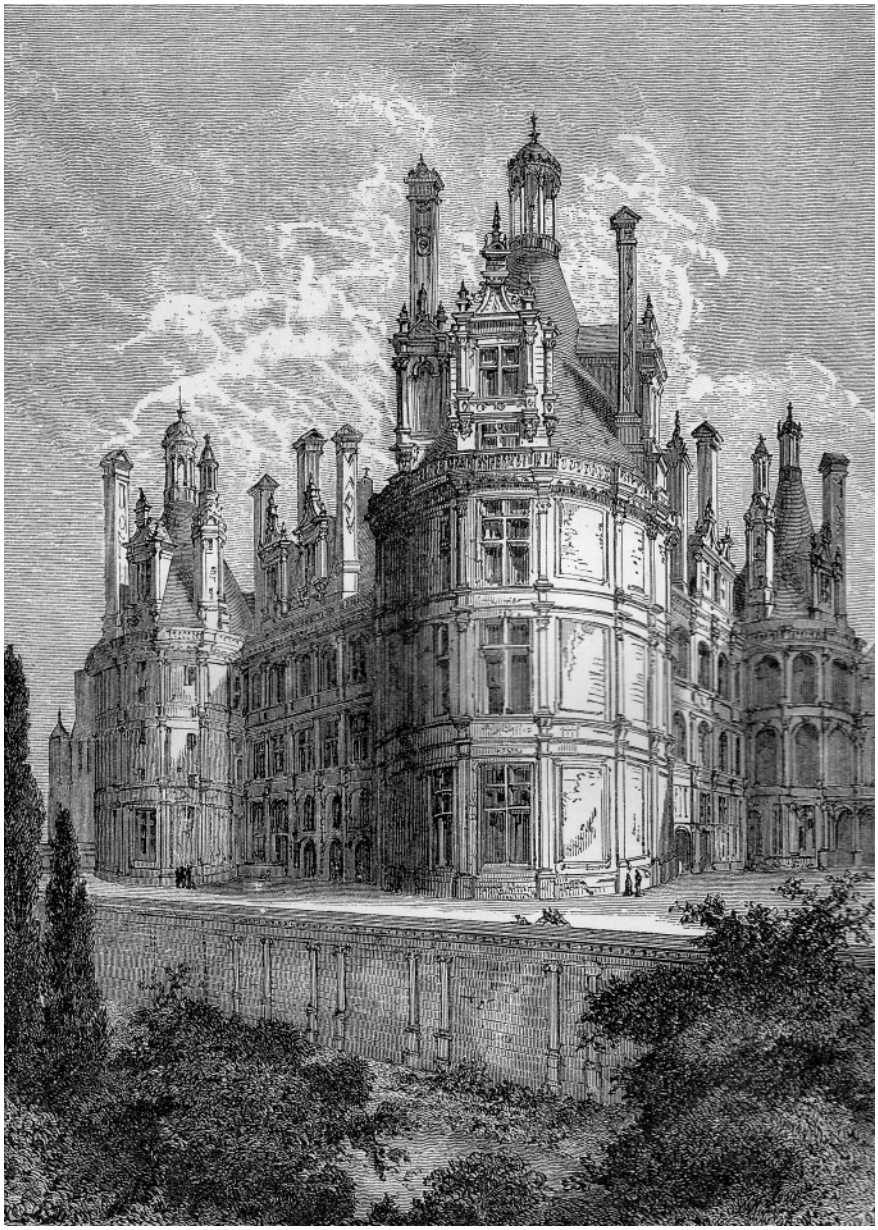
Commercial

01-03	Apothecary
04-06	Armory
07-09	Baiting pit
10-12	Bank
13-15	Bawdy House
16-18	Blacksmith
19-21	Boatwright
22-25	Book shop
26-28	Brewery
29-31	Coffee house
32-34	Exporter
35-37	Falconer
38-40	Fortune
41-43	Gambling house
44-46	Gemner
47-49	Goldsmith
50-52	Herbalist
53-55	Horse trader
56-58	Hostel
59-62	Importer
63-66	Inn
67-69	Kennel
70-72	Money Changer
73-75	Notary
76-78	Occultist
79-81	Stable & livery
82-84	Swordsmith
85-87	Tavern
88-90	Tea house
91-94	Trader
95-97	Weapon smith
98-00	Wine merchant

Governmental & Military*

01-05	Basilica
06-10	Castle
11-15	Chalet
16-20	Citadel
21-25	Cottage
26-30	Donjon
31-35	Fort
36-40	Fortress
41-45	Hold
46-50	Keep
51-55	Lodge
56-60	Manor
61-65	Mansion
66-70	Moat House
71-75	Outpost
76-80	Palace
81-85	Shack
86-90	Shanty
91-95	Stronghold
96-00	Villa

*Some selected definitions are given below, to aid in visualizing encounter locations. This material is abridged from World Builder, also published by Troll Lord Games. It is repeated here for the convenience of the reader not in possession of that work.



RELIGIOUS PLACES

Abbey: The buildings that comprise a monastery that's governed by an abbot.

Bishop's palace: A majestic abode, which is the official residence of a bishop or archbishop. In a fantasy milieu, this would be a high priest or archpriest.

Cathedral: The church of a bishop. In a fantasy milieu, this would be a grand temple.

Chantry: A small religious structure, usually larger than a chapel, that's endowed by some person or group for the continual recitation of prayer.

Chapel: A small, free-standing structure for worship services. Alternatively, it could be a room inside a larger structure, or a recess within a church or temple that's dedicated to a particular holy entity.

Convent: A monastery for females which is governed by an abbess.

Fane: A small temple.

Friary: The buildings which comprise a monastic association of preaching and teaching monks that lacks land to support its operation; and which, therefore, relies on donations.

Hostel: Housing for travelers that's typically maintained by a religious institution.

Joss House: A shrine or fane for worship.

Manse: The residence of an ecclesiastic.

Monastery: The buildings comprising a place of religious retirement, usually secluded from the world, for persons under religious vows.

Pantheon: All of the deities of a particular religion, or a great temple dedicated to all the gods of a particular religion.

Priory: The buildings that comprise a place of religious association, one not secluded from the world, for persons under religious vows to teach and preach. In general, a priory has no income and relies upon tithes and donations for its support. (In the Christian faith, a priory ranks immediately below an abbey.)
Rectory: An estate granted to an ecclesiastic (usually, rector) while active in that role, and held on the good pleasure of the donor.

Sanctuary: A consecrated place that is: devoted to the keeping of sacred things; the most sacred part of any religious building; the sanctum sanctorum.

Shrine: A small place of worship, either a separate structure or an area within a larger religious structure or private building, that serves as a place for the performance of religious services.

Stupa: A kind of shrine; often, a hemispherical or cylindrical mound or tower constructed of earth, brick, and/or stone that is surmounted by a spire or umbrella, and which contains a chamber in which is housed one or more relics.

Temple: An edifice dedicated to the worship of a deity or deities. In a fantasy world, such a place is similar to a large church. And, an especially a large temple would be akin to a cathedral.

GOVERNMENTAL & RESIDENTIAL PLACES

Castle: A large walled and fortified building or set of buildings.

Chalet: A cottage or house characterized by unconcealed structural members that are often emphasized by decorative carving. It's likely to have a roof with a wide overhang at the front and sides, plus balconies and an exterior staircase beneath the eaves.

Citadel: A fortress that commands a city or which lies within a castle.

Cottage: The dwelling of a rural laborer, small farmer, or miner. It also could be a small hut or shack, built as a temporary or occasional shelter; typically, for shepherds or hunters.

Donjon: A massive tower usually within a medieval castle; a keep, or citadel.
Fort: A fortified place occupied only by military personnel and surrounded with such works as a ditch, rampart, and parapet.

Fortress: A large and permanent fort, which might surround a town or city.

Hold: A place of temporary shelter or refuge..

Keep: The strongest and most secure part of a medieval castle. Typically, it's the place of residence of the lord of the castle.

Lodge: A rustic building used by aristocrats when hunting or fishing. It also could be a house on an estate for the use of a gamekeeper, caretaker, porter, or similar person; or a small and/or temporary dwelling (as a hut, cabin, tent) used mainly by uncivilized natives.

Manor: The house and attendant land of a gentleman, knight, lord. This is "a landed estate," whose owner enjoys a variety of rights over the land and tenants thereof; including the right to hold (low) court. Tenants might have varying degrees of freedom and servitude (freeman, cotter, vellein) and are marked by a large degree of economic self-sufficiency.

Mansion: The house (manor house) of the owner of a manor. Typically, it's a large, imposing residence.

Moat house: A fortified residence that's surrounded by a moat containing water.

Outpost: A position that's located away from civilization. Often, it's a security detachment's encampment whose remote location is designed to protect it from observation and/or surprise attack by an enemy.

Palace: The official residence of a sovereign, great noble, or high ecclesiastic.

Stronghold: A fortified place of refuge or survival, such as a castle or fortress, which might be occupied or dominated by a special group or faction.

Shack: A small, roughly built, and often crudely furnished, single-story edifice.

Shanty: A small, poorly built dwelling that's usually made of wood.

Villa: A detached, or semidetached, residence with a yard and garden space that's located in the suburbs or a rural area.

STEP 5: Design the Encounters

All the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle are now in hand. : Events, roles, types, encounters, endpoints, turning points, intermediary points, overall story goals, and places. Now the GM has only to arrange them to taste, creating whatever overall "picture" is desired. Design the encounters, both planned and random, using the following guidelines (mirrored on the perforated forms provided at the back of this book). Some randomized tables from previous chapters are reproduced below, to reduce annoying page-flipping during encounter design.

A) Determine encounter type: The principle purpose of the encounter is its type. Types include combat, role-playing, and problem-solving. Note that the type does not equate to necessity. The GM must allow for the intended outcome of an encounter to be sidestepped by great ideas put forth by clever players. A preponderance of one type of encounter can establish theme: Combat (action), role-playing (drama), problem solving (exploration, espionage, or mystery), and so on. (See Part 4, Encounter types)

01-30	Combat
31-60	Role-Playing
61-00	Problem-Solving

B) Choose encounter function: Each encounter will serve in one of three functions. One, as a story-hook leading to adventure; two, as an obstacle to the PC's goals; or three, as a prospect for some kind of gain. (See Part 4, Story Function.)

01-34	Hook
35-67	Obstacle
68-00	Prospect

1. Hook

01-09 Anonymous Plea
10-18 Calamitous Threat
19-26 Dream Message
27-34 Enigmatic Stranger
35-42 Friend in Need
43-51 Legends and Rumors
52-59 Nuisance or Competitor
60-67 Mistaken Identity
68-75 NPC Grudge
76-84 Patronal Mandate
85-92 Sudden Attack
93-00 Vengeful Foe

2. Obstacle

01-33 Battle (Random or Planned)
34-66 Hazard (trap or natural danger)
67-00 Predicament (dilemma or exigency)

3. Prospect

01-33 Supporter
34-67 Fellowship
68-00 Knowledge

C) Choose the goal: Each encounter may or may not have a goal associated with it. These are as detailed in the above section, and are germane to both PCs and NPCs.

Goals

01-04	Attain knowledge
05-07	Attain truth
08-11	Avenge event
12-14	Avenge person
15-18	Avenge place
19-21	Conceal identity
22-25	Conquer locale
26-29	Defeat creature(s)
30-33	Destroy item or artifact
34-37	Destroy knowledge
38-41	Discover identity
42-44	Escape Place
45-47	Explore place
48-51	Find item or artifact
52-54	Find person
55-58	Find place
59-61	Hinder creature(s)
62-65	Learn fact(s)
66-69	Prevent event
70-73	Prevent truth
74-77	Repair item or artifact
78-81	Repair reputation
82-84	Rescue creature
85-88	Rescue locale
89-92	Retrieve item, artifact, or beast
93-96	Solve predicament
97-00	Solve riddle

D) Choose plot element: Is this encounter an endpoint to a story-arc, a turning- point (minor climax) in the adventure, or an intermediary point of middling significance?

E) Chose NPCs: Chose which of your major and minor NPCs and/or monsters are to be involved with this encounter. Their attitudes (and, probably, their actions) are more or less dictated by a combination of encounter type; although, as mentioned elsewhere, combat can be avoid through use of charisma and diplomacy. Remember, if applicable, to note all treasures available on persons or in storage containers within the locale.

F) Choose a Location: Jot down the location where this encounter will take place. It can be vague, such as "somewhere in the forest" or as specific as "Lord Chamberlain's bedroom". Prepare maps to whatever degree of detail is desired. Describe the location of encounter with as much detail as desired; so long as it does not become voluminous, which always carries the potential of boring the hell out of your players.

G) Choose a Trigger: Decide on triggers bound to the location of the encounter, or on the reactions of the NPCs and/or monsters. Examples include, "if a torch is lit, the dark elf will cover his eyes, scream, and then cast a lightning bolt at the offender", or "anybody entering this room triggers a trap, and will be forced to save (vs. Reflexes) or be hit with a stinking cloud." Examples of unbound triggers for an encounter: "If the PCs search for a local sage, THEN they shall encounter none other than Mad Marty in his conical hat. He will be smoking some strange green substance, babbling about little blue people living in mushrooms sporting cute, white, puffy hats."

STEP 6: Run the Adventure.

Now, it's time to gather your players, read a short introduction, grab your notes on goals, places, and associated encounters, and begin the game.

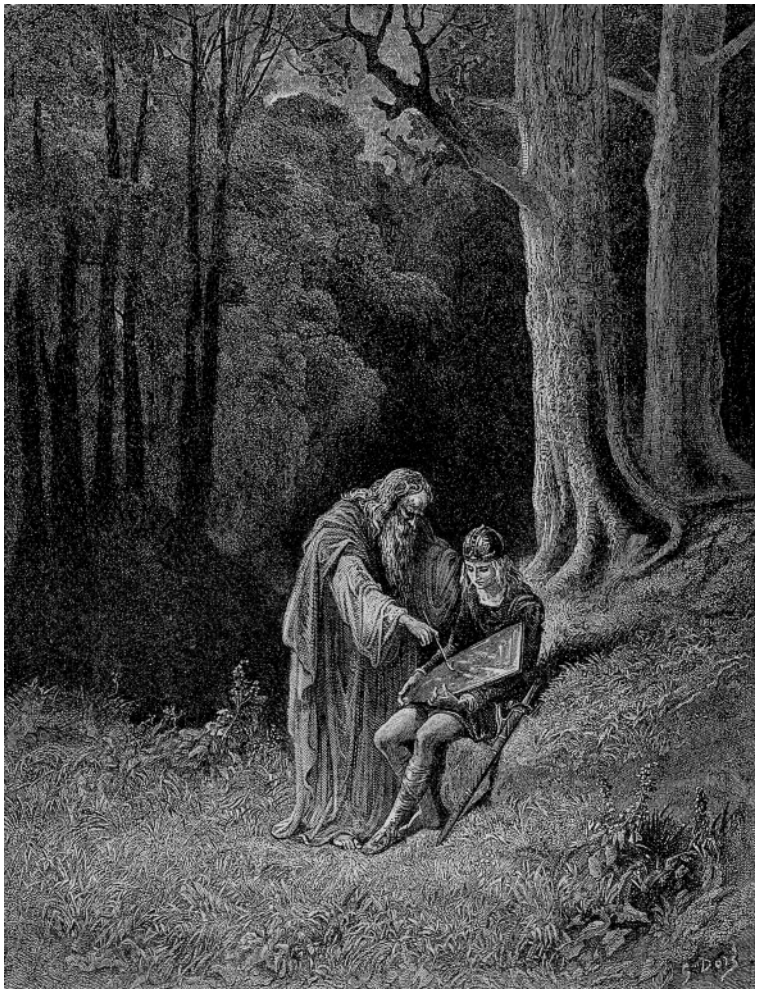
This book concerns plot construction rather than the vagaries of game mastering. But some brief, universal advice might be helpful; and, therefore, is provided.

Improvisation is an extremely useful skill to learn when running adventures; whether planned, or spun directly out of the mind "on the fly". Even if you have all of the possible events and encounters detailed, the GM can arrange these elements in dozens of ways, in reaction to the actions of PCs. But, when doing so, it's important to act naturally; making decisions smoothly, and without sweating too much. The players shouldn't know (or care) whether or not you are improvising, or what mechanisms are used to ensure that the story ultimately coalesces. Use the forms in this book as an aid, or a detailed notebook, in order to list all events, encounters, goals, plot hooks, and other details that can be thrown together in any order desired, (or, in reaction to the actions of the PCs). Endpoints and turning points also are useful guides, or milestones in the story, with intermediary encounters often interchangeable in execution and timing.

But, especially if unprepared, avoid spinning out numerous tangential plot-threads, because so many skeins might entangle the GM in inconsistencies and contradictions. It's okay to consider elements outside of the adventure's scope. But more complex plots ought to be worked out by the storyteller in advance, (using this volume to aid him, of course), unless the GM is a genius who's capable of remembering dozens of contingencies.

Don't disallow the possibility of switching locations of encounters. Think of it this way: in most cases, the locales are in the service of the encounters; especially, in the case of event-based adventures. It can be made the other way around a site-based adventure featuring a place whose rich history dictates the sort of encounters found there. But, in many cases, the locales and encounters are interchangeable. Remember, a fair GM doesn't change the details just because the PCs were more clever than he. Good thinking should be rewarded, not punished, by drastically altering reality at the last second!

For adventures not aimed at publication as a module, avoid writing verbose descriptions (of persons, places, or things) or using a great deal of "canned" dialog. Utilize description for emphasis of important places and rooms But don't overdo it and begin to write a veritable novel. Dialog, if written down, often is used to give the GM running the adventure a feel for an NPC's personality and speaking style. But it can hinder actual play! Be forewarned: Don't prescript lengthy dialog, because it begs for player-character interruption.



Following are some quick, basic ideas that should aid the game master in presenting a story while running the technical aspects of the game smoothly.

Before the game begins, the GM might want to consider using the following aids.

1. Dry-Erase Boards. These are ideal in situations where a quick sketch of the surrounding terrain, buildings, streets or the inside of a building or dungeon would be helpful. Using this tool allows the GM to quickly reproduce sections of a larger map. It saves a lot of paper as well.

2. Weekly information sheet containing.

a) NPC list. Each week, the storyteller can make a list of NPCs encountered during the previous session. Include the NPC's name, race, basic description, and whatever facts already are known about that individual. And, for goodness sake, don't write the NPCs' story-role down for the players to see!

For simplification, relatively unimportant NPCs might be left off the list. Occasionally, a somewhat significant NPC also might not be listed, in order to mislead others about that NPCs' true worth.

b) Player -Character Summary. Treat this in the same way as above, and include a basic physical description. Hopefully, this sheet will not require frequent alteration! Encourage the players to submit pictures of their PCs, to be handed out with the aforementioned descriptive list.

c) Terrain. Information about the immediate and surrounding territories. ; including local news, geographic locations, or sites of interest about which the PCs would, (or should) have knowledge. Player-specific maps should be included, with their detail in direct proportion to collective character knowledge (though I'm not suggesting that the maps reveal any information that a character has kept hidden).

AVOID STORY LAG

The Number One Threat to a game is story lag. If your players look bored, or are engrossed in reading a book about gardening, chances are good that the story is lagging. Some ways to avoid this are:

1. Have the PCs suddenly attacked. Do this too often, however, and your players will think they've made you angry, or that you never prepared. If you annihilate your player's characters merely for fun, don't expect them to ever play again.

2. Use theatrics, to retain everyone's attention. If a scene doesn't involve something inherently exciting, such as combat, give the impression that it's important by standing up, walking around, gesturing more, and perhaps raising your voice. . . .

3. When needed, declare the immediate passage of time. This ties into the story element of falling action. A common cause of story lag is quite simple: Nothing is happening! Move the story past these moments quickly.

4. If the players seem at a loss, in terms of deciding what their characters ought to do next,provide immediate story-hooks, clues providing some direction (or have them roll against Intelligence or Wisdom), or simply state a number of choices. A good GM doesn't amuse himself by stumping his players with problems that cause them to languish.

5. In combat, don't let "rules debates" slow the action. There's always time to fine-hone expertise in the rules later. List all NPCs and monsters stats on a sheet, to make them easily accessible. If one must laboriously hunt for small details, it's not good for the flow of the game.

6. Avoid and discourage split adventuring parties. If the characters must split up, which commonly happens in towns and cities, deal with their business perfunctorily; at least, most of the time. If some action must occur while the characters are split up, move the encounters along as quickly as possible; forgoing tactical battle mats, if necessary, lest some of your players sit there, bored stiff, for an extended amount of time. If fact, when forced to run encounters for split parties, it's best to switch back and forth quickly; thereby giving each group or character a bit of limelight, while keeping the action moving for all parties concerned.

7. The GM shouldn't be discouraged by the idea of an NPCs theoretically knowing more about a certain subject then himself, or realistically playing an "18" Intelligence or Wisdom score. If players complain that something isn't "realistic,", the GM should remind them, "Dude, it's a game! That's what the dice are for!" No GM should be expected to justify the capacities of an NPC by demonstrating such specialized knowledge himself. Such an expectation is ludicrous! If players aren't expected to know how to cast actual lightning bolts, or wield a bastard sword effectively, why would they force the GM to demonstrate special knowledge before accepting his arbitrations? Fairness with rules, entertaining stories, and consistency are all that should be required of him. An RPG should not be contest of personal knowledge, or a battle of wits between the GM and his players. It should be for fun and entertainment; which is a group effort, not a competition.

APPENDIXES

I and my pubic understand each other very well: it does not hear what I say, and I don't say what it wants to hear.

~ Karl Kraus

APPENDIX A: READY-MADE PLOTS

This section contains short, ready-made plotlines. The tables below contain nutshell plots, specifying only the endpoint goals and associated inciting incidents. Following the tables are adventure synopses derived from the nutshells. And, for the sake of illustrating the utility of this volume, each of the plotlines has been constructed using the guidelines covered in Book Five.

HOW TO USE THESE PLOTS

First, choose or roll randomly, by theme or milieu event (peacetime indicating no background events in particular). Then, beneath the chosen category, choose or roll dice to determine the plotline nutshell.

Once a plotline nutshell has been determined, refer to its synopsis. The full description is listed in the section following the random tables. For example, the GM might roll on the theme table and get the result "Action". Referring to the relevant subtable, he rolls and gets, "Defeat creature(s): Dream message". Next, he jumps below the tables and reads the "Defeat creatures" entry in the plotline descriptions. Note that multiple plotlines featuring the same endpoint goal are differentiated by number.

Sample plots by theme

01-20	Action
21-40	Mystery
41-60	Drama
61-80	Espionage
81-00	Horror

Sample plots by milieu event

01-17	Peacetime (no events)
18-33	Strife (social & political)
34-50	Disaster
51-67	Upheaval
68-84	War
85-00	Cataclysm

Plotlines by theme

Action plotlines (Endpoint–Inciting incident): 18

01-06	Attain truth–Anonymous plea
07-11	Avenge–Sudden attack
12-16	Conceal identity–Friend in need
17-22	Conquer locale–Patronal mandate
23-28	Defeat creature(s)–Dream message
29-33	Defeat creature(s)–Sudden attack
34-38	Destroy item or artifact–Legends & rumors
39-44	Destroy knowledge–Enigmatic stranger
45-50	Discover identity–Mistaken identity
51-55	Escape place–Calamitous threat
56-61	Hinder creature(s)–Competitor
62-66	Prevent event–Friend in need
67-72	Prevent truth–Patronal mandate
73-78	Repair item or artifact–Calamitous threat
79-84	Repair reputation–NPC Grudge(s)
85-90	Rescue creature–Nuisance
91-95	Rescue locale–Sudden attack
96-00	Retrieve item, artifact, or beast–Trigger

Mystery plotlines (Endpoint–Inciting incident)

01-09	Attain knowledge–Legends
10-19	Conceal identity–Mistaken identity
20-28	Discover identity–Enigmatic stranger
29-37	Explore place–Rumors
38-46	Find item or artifact–Legends
47-55	Find person–Vengeful foe
56-64	Find place–Anonymous plea
65-73	Learn fact(s)–Patronal mandate
74-82	Prevent event–Calamitous threat
83-91	Repair item or artifact–Legends
92-00	Solve riddle–Friend in need

Drama plotlines (Endpoint–Inciting incident)

01-12	Escape place–Calamitous threat
13-25	Learn fact(s)–Dream message
26-37	Prevent event–Calamitous threat
38-50	Prevent truth–Friend in need
51-63	Repair item or artifact–Legends
64-75	Repair reputation–Nuisance
76-87	Rescue creature(s)–Competitor
88-00	Solve predicament–Patronal mandate

Espionage plotlines (Endpoint–Inciting incident)

01-14	Conceal identity–Mistaken identity
15-28	Destroy knowledge–NPC grudge
29-43	Discover identity–Legends
44-57	Hinder creature(s)–NPC grudge
58-71	Learn fact(s)–Friend in need
72-86	Prevent event–Dream message
87-00	Repair item or artifact–Patronal mandate

Horror plotlines (Endpoint–Inciting incident)

01-25	Defeat creature–Calamitous threat
26-50	Prevent event–Enigmatic stranger
51-75	Repair item or artifact–Legends
76-00	Rescue locale–Competitor

Plotlines by milieu event

Peacetime (Endpoint–Inciting incident)

01-12	[action] Defeat creature(s)–Dream message
13-24	[action] Defeat creature(s)–Sudden attack
25-36	[espionage] Conceal identity–Mistaken identity
37-49	[mystery] Explore place–Rumors
50-62	[mystery] Find person–Vengeful foe
63-75	[mystery] Find place–Anonymous plea
76-87	[mystery] Learn fact(s)–Patronal mandate
88-00	[mystery] Repair item or artifact–Legends

Strife plotlines (Endpoint–Inciting incident)

01-13	[action] Avenge–Sudden attack
14-26	[action] Conceal identity–Friend in need

27-38 [action] Prevent event–Friend in need
39-51 [action] Rescue creature–Nuisance
52-64 [drama] Prevent truth–Friend in need
65-76 [drama] Repair reputation–Nuisance
77-88 [mystery] Discover identity–Enigmatic stranger
89-00 [mystery] Find item or artifact–Legends

Disaster plotlines (Endpoint–Inciting incident)
01-13 [action] Attain truth–Anonymous plea
14-26 [action] Destroy item or artifact–Legends & rumors
27-39 [action] Destroy knowledge–Enigmatic stranger
40-51 [action] Escape place–Calamitous threat
52-63 [drama] Rescue creature(s)–Competitor
64-75 [horror] Prevent event–Enigmatic stranger
76-88 [horror] Repair item or artifact–Legends
89-00 [mystery] Conceal identity–Mistaken identity

Upheaval plotlines (Endpoint–Inciting incident)
01-12 [action] Discover identity–Mistaken identity
13-25 [action] Hinder creature(s)–Competitor
26-37 [action] Prevent truth–Patronal mandate
38-50 [action] Repair reputation–NPC grudge(s)
51-63 [drama] Solve predicament–Patronal mandate
64-75 [espionage] Prevent event–Dream message
76-87 [espionage] Repair item or artifact–Patronal mandate
88-00 [mystery] Attain knowledge–Legends

War plotlines (Endpoint–Inciting incident)
01-12 [action] Conquer locale–Patronal mandate
13-25 [action] Rescue locale–Sudden attack
26-38 [action] Retrieve item, artifact, or beast–Trigger
39-51 [espionage] Discover identity–Legends
52-63 [espionage] Hinder creature(s)–NPC grudge
64-75 [espionage] Learn fact(s)–Friend in need
76-87 [horror] Defeat creature–Calamitous threat
88-00 [horror] Rescue locale–Competitor

Cataclysm plotlines (Endpoint–Inciting incident)

01-13 [action] Repair item or artifact–Calamitous threat
14-25 [drama] Escape place–Calamitous threat
26-37 [drama] Learn fact(s)–Dream message
38-49 [drama] Prevent event–Calamitous threat
50-62 [drama] Repair item or artifact–Legends
63-75 [espionage] Destroy knowledge–NPC grudge
76-87 [mystery] Prevent event–Calamitous threat
88-00 [mystery] Solve riddle–Friend in need

Example plotline synopses

The entries below use the following format: endpoint goal–associated plot hook; event; sub-event/theme, then description (each entry including inciting incident, synopsis, and subplot ideas).

Note that multiple plotlines featuring the same endpoint goal are differentiated by number. Some of the NPCs herein are generically categorized as warriors, spellcasters, or experts. Major story-roles are implicit to the adventure descriptions. But more specific character types, individual encounter details, and locations should be decided by the GM (or see Part 3 and 5 of this work), and made to fit whatever is appropriate to his current campaign. Possible turning-points and further subplots/incidents are listed, some featuring combined or prerequisite goals, a few more narrow in scope and having no precise goal (as indicated in the description by the words nix-goal). Not all goals require a specific hook because they are self-evident or triggered by simple actions. This is true whether or not the trigger is known to the PCs.

Attain knowledge–Legends
Upheaval
Technological revolution/mystery

Inciting incident: The PCs learn about a legendary library containing sophisticated, technical information, including advanced agricultural and industrial methods, plans for a nearly impregnable fortress, and brilliant designs for engines of war. Unfortunately, the library and its surrounding land has been annexed by a neighboring, despotic kingdom.

Synopsis: Over time, virtually all authors of information housed within the library have been murdered, to prevent them from sharing their knowledge with others. Further, the library's texts have been encrypted magically, making them unintelligible to everyone except a group of arcane spellcasters residing within the annexing kingdom. Deciphering the contents of the library would bring military strength, increased industry, and prosperity to the state where the PCs reside. The principle story-arc is completed when the library's information is released from encryption and made accessible to the PC's home state.

Turning point(s): **[Discover identity]** Discovering the identities of the spellcasters maintaining the encrypted library. [Defeat creatures] Defeating the spellcasters. **[Conquer locale]** Taking control of the library and its environs by military force.

Subplots: **[Find person–Rumors]** There is thought to be an engineer who survived the massacre and, perhaps, could aid the heroes in breaking the encryption spells. **[Retrieve/Destroy item–Trigger]** IF a successful Spellcraft (or LA game: Arcana Ability) check is made, THEN knowledge of an object that must be retrieved and/or destroyed is obtained. The library is surrounded by a force field sustained by a magical lightning-rod affixed to the building's roof. The force field can be deactivated by removing the rod, or a Dispel Magic spell.

Attain truth–Anonymous plea
Disaster
Famine/action

Inciting incident: The heroes stumble upon a message, an anonymous plea for heroic action, as delivered by a magic mouth, speaking from a statue, rock, tree, or even another creature. The message is, "By the next equinox, our land will be dying and our people starving. The gods are not angry, but the truth must soon be found." Which priests are being referenced should be made obvious to the PCs, as outlined below.

Synopsis: A curse and an impending blight has been placed upon the land by an evil and powerful enemy; a dispossessed priest or priestess, a coven of witches, or a clandestine group of evil warlocks. In any event, this person or group is the real source of the curse; a fact well concealed. The enemy has sent forth

minions to claim that the curse originated with a specific angry deity; one who demands blood sacrifices from the ranks of its own priesthood in order that famine be averted. An ally to the persecuted ecclesiastics has learned that the curse will take effect at the vernal equinox or the autumnal equinox (GM's choice; the sun crosses the celestial equator twice a year). Wishing anonymity (at least, initially), the ally casts a Magic Mouth spell near an adventurers' guild, or some similar place (see message of inciting incident). The principle story-arc is completed when the PCs identify and defeat those responsible for the curse.

Turning point(s): **[Learn facts]** Evaluating the culpability of the temple or clerics, the likelihood of the deity actually being angry, and finding clues as to the group responsible. **[Hinder creatures]** Stopping the minions of the enemy from spreading panic and disinformation. **[Solve predicament]** Demonstrating to the populace that the temple's involvement in the famine is impossible. **[Discover identity]** Finding out who the enemy is, and where they reside. **[Defeat creature(s)]** Defeating the enemy and its minions. **[Prevent event]** Stopping the curse of famine from continuing (details of which are up to the GM).

Subplots: **[Conquer locale & Defeat creatures–Patronal mandate]** If the PCs are in league with the temple, they might be sent on a quest to conquer the domain of the enemy. **[Find & destroy artifact"Dream message]** The anonymous, but allied, spellcaster sends a dream message to inform the PCs of an evil artifact used by the enemy to generate the famine. Its location must first be found.

Avenge–Sudden attack
Strife
Peasants vs. Priesthood/action

Inciting incident: The heroes dwell within, or travel to, a tyrannical state, or some isolated region. In either case, the place is controlled by a theocracy. The deities worshipped therein are cruel and the people are treated unjustly. The PCs might be visiting a family member, ally, or on a mission. In any event, they find themselves witness to a vicious and bloody attack on innocents who dared to criticize the brutal Lords Spiritual. During this attack, an ally, friend, or family member of the PCs is murdered, prompting the need for vengeance.

Synopsis: The territory is controlled by an oppressive priesthood of a malign deity. The PCs go to this place to meet with family, allies, or depart on a mission and find themselves embroiled in civil strife. Subsequently, they're kept from leaving the area, witness brutal attacks on the uprising peasantry, and learn that one or more of their special contacts and/or friends or family have been killed by the local temple clerics. The key story-arc is completed when the PCs crush the power of the theocracy; thereby avenging their allies and saving the populace.

Turning point(s): **[Rescue locale & Defeat creatures]** Freeing the populace by breaking the power of the evil temple clerics. **[Learn facts]** Discerning and exposing weaknesses of the reigning ecclesiastics. This includes determining who is the leader, or most powerful and dangerous enemy. **[Discover identity]** Learning the name and identity of the NPC responsible for the death of the PCs friends, family, or allies.

Subplots: **[Conceal identity–Trigger]** IF the PCs use Evaluation (LA Game) or Diplomacy (D20) in some circumstances, they might encounter the prospect of an ally within the priesthood; a turncoat willing to support infiltrators. [Rescue creature"Friend in need] Rescuing an ally from the clutches of the priesthood. **[Prevent event-Calamitous threat]** Stopping the power of the temple from growing; thereby, thwarting the deities efforts to instigate war against peaceful neighbors.

Conceal identity, Plot 1–Friend in need
Strife
Spellcasters vs. Nobility/action

Inciting incident: The PCs receive an urgent communication from an old friend or ally; in this case, a noble. The message might arrive via magic spell, through dream, or be delivered personally by courier, emissary, or envoy. The NPC requests immediate aid with extricating himself from dire circumstances, by getting out from under the watchful eye of his spellcasting superiors.

Synopsis: A cabal of arcane spellcasters plot to usurp the power of the Lords Temporal. One nobleman in particular, a friend or ally to the adventurers, learns of the machinations of the enemy but is too terrified of them to expose their plans. Paranoid, he wishes to affect change outside of the spellcasters probing minds and magicks. Once brought to a safe distance, the noble's plans are to expose the cabal and bring about their downfall. The PCs must aid their ally, with the goal of temporarily placing him (or her) out of sight. But the cabal possesses great powers of scrutiny and is readily suspicious of the PCs. The main story-arc is completed when the PCs are able to conceal the identity of the fearful noble long enough to extricate him from the scrutiny of the cabal; thereby bringing him to safety.

Turning point(s): **[Hinder creature(s)]** Preventing the arcane cabal of spellcasters from learning of the whereabouts, thoughts, and movements of the renegade noble. **[Attain truth]** Learning the machinations of the cabal, so that the information can be used against them by the noble when he or she is brought to safety. **[Defeat creature(s)]** Killing or subduing the monsters or individual spellcasters who learn of the nobles escape plans and try to stop him by force. Defeating them before they can report back to their masters is important. **[Escape place]** Escaping the locale where the cabal holds sway, without getting captured.

Subplots: **[Conquer locale–Friend in need]** Once the ally is taken to safety, the PCs might take it upon themselves to defeat the cabal on their own terms. **[Learn facts-Trigger]** Discovering bits and pieces of the machinations of the cabal, and the PCs countering those maneuvers, provide for an endless game of real-life chess, all triggered by numerous possibilities of action.

Conceal identity, Plot 2–Mistaken identity
Disaster
Fire/mystery

Inciting incident: A terrible fire breaks out in the city or town, killing hundreds. The fire manifests itself as a spiraling column of eldritch, green-hued flames from the sky, and spreads to ignite numerous buildings before dissipating. Even worse, flames initially erupt above the PC's own inn, or wherever they are quartered, implicating them in the cause of the fire.

Synopsis: The magic fire was caused by an expert of subterfuge and trickery, an arsonist seeking to frame the PCs for the

deed (his motives determinable by GM). Even worse, unlicensed magic is outlawed in the city! The enemy will employ several false "witnesses" to accuse the PCs of arson in connection with spellcasting. (The location of this adventure should not be where the PCs are well known.) The accusation will be believed by the paranoid authorities, and the PCs will be treated as guilty without trial. Therefore, the need to escape prison and "lay low" for a while will arise immediately. Unfortunately, the city has powerful magicks in place which suppress illusion and alteration magic, making the concealment of identity a true feat. The city exits are guarded by those who hold powers of psychogenic detection. The real mystery to the PCs should be the identity of NPC who is the actual arsonist. The first story-arc is completed when the PCs have concealed their identities effectively enough that they can hope to either escape the city or expose the true culprit. However, because of the potentially inconclusive endpoint, this plotline serves best as "Act One" of a continuing campaign scenario.

Turning point(s): **[Escape (constables) place]** The PCs are assumed guilty by the authorities. For arson, they are threatened with branding and 10 years of penal servitude. Even worse, for "endangering life and property by careless use of magic," they face an additional $100,000 penalty and an extra year in goal. The first turning-point involves escaping capture or breaking out of jail. The best route of escape will involve the prospect of fellowship in the local criminal underground. **[Learn facts]** Determining how the city suppresses illusion and alternation magic, as well as on the powers of law enforcement can aid the PCs in disguising themselves. Non-magical disguises might prove to be most effective.

Subplots: **[Attain truth–Trigger]** Knowledge triggered by the appropriate and timely use of certain skills, such as Gather Information (D20), or Evaluation and Scrutiny (LA game). The truth is that the criminal expert used the disaster as a distraction and a "cover" for a big heist in the richer part of town. **[Defeat creatures–NPC Grudge]** The PCs might discover that the expert criminal is an old adversary, who had them framed for arson due to a personal grudge. Once the truth is known, the PCs will have a chance to expose and defeat the enemy.

Conceal identity, Plot 3–Mistaken identity
Peacetime/espionage

Inciting incident: The PCs are mistaken for a group of outlaws who recently committed armed robbery. The PCs might find that they must conceal their identities from the authorities for the purpose of flight, and from the outlaws for the purpose of infiltration and espionage.

Synopsis: The outlaws actually were doppelgangers impersonating the PCs, or a similar adventuring party, including a twin brother or sister of one of the PCs. If the PCs are of high repute, the authorities might give them a chance to prove their innocence. If the group possesses dark repute or disrepute, they'll probably have to escape capture and/or jail before proving their innocence. Armed robbery brings death by hanging, or at least 20 years of penal servitude (if accessory to the crime). So the stakes are high. In this adventure, the GM should provide strong clues as to the identities of the outlaws, to make the theme not so much one of mystery as espionage; requiring spying, or the use of spies, to obtain secret information about their enemies' whereabouts and motives. The focal story-arc is complete when the PCs have concealed their identities effectively enough that they can hope to either escape the locale or expose the real culprits; and, thus, exonerate themselves. However, because of the potentially inconclusive endpoint, this plotline serves best as Act 1 of a continuing campaign scenario.

Turning point(s): **[Learn facts]** Gather information concerning the whereabouts and activities of the enemy. **[Explore place]** Use espionage to explore the hideouts and escape routes of the outlaws, slowly closing the noose while learning of their capabilities. **[Solve predicament and/or Escape place]** If of good repute, the PCs might have the chance to exonerate themselves by means of investigation. If not, the predicament might temporarily require flight. Turning points are in no particular order.

Subplots: **[Destroy knowledge, subset of Solve predicament turning point]** The outlaws possess a magical device which can affect the memory of all who witness its activated burst of light. The PCs might obtain this item and change the memories of the witnesses, or erase memory of the crime from key authorities. The item is powerful, but only can be used a finite number of times. **[Defeat creatures, subset of Explore place & Escape place]** The PCs kill or subdue the outlaws.

Conquer locale–Patronal mandate
War
Local–occupation/action

Inciting incident: There exists fighting between opposing nobles. The opposing sides number in the hundreds, and feature raids, ambuscades, and sieges of castles and fortifications. The PCs are ordered by their noble patron to conquer and occupy a stronghold of the enemy.

Synopsis: In this straightforward action plotline, the heroes are expected to do battle with an enemy noble. Their patron wishes them to overtake stronghold(s) and occupy them with armed forces, until the local conflict is won. The Lords Temporal might allow the nobles to battle it out among themselves, as long as it doesn't affect the security or power of the state. But the Lords Temporal probably will step in to settle the dispute if lasts too long. The focal story-arc is complete when the enemy stronghold is taken and occupied by the PCs (and any friendly forces). This scenario easily can be incorporated into a campaign sized plotline, and constitute a single act within a wide-ranging story-latent.

Turning point(s): **[Defeat creature(s)]** Many skirmishes and battles will need to be fought and won among fields and fortifications.

Subplots: **[Vengeance (in general)]** Allies will fall, betrayals will occur, and enemies also will wish for vengeance. This is a nearly continuous sort of subtext to war. **[Escape place–Sudden attack]** Capture, defeat of ones captors, and/or escape is another common theme in wartime. **[Hinder creature(s)–Patronal mandate]** Stopping spies, cutting off communication, thwarting magical protections or means of travel, destroying food supplies or destroying food sources are severe hindrances that might be ordered, by the patron or commander, during conflicts.

Defeat creature(s), Plot 1–Dream message
Peacetime/action

Inciting incident: One or more of the PCs receive a mysterious dream message, communicating the need for action against a monster; one capable of wreaking havoc in their current locale. The type and nature of the threat is revealed clearly; probably, a dragon, outsider, undead, or small group of humanoids, giants, or magical beasts. Although the threat does not forebode widespread war or cataclysm, the PCs home is nevertheless endangered.

Synopsis: A monster has arrived at the environs surrounding the place where the PCs reside. A sympathetic NPC or good-aligned monster has warned the PCs while retaining its anonymity (at least, initially). The main story-arc is complete when the monster has attacked but is defeated; or when the PCs die a horrible death. Most feasibly, the endpoint will be the first scenario barring excessive incompetence, bravado, or stupidity on the part of the adventurers.

Turning point(s): **[Learn facts]** Getting good information about the whereabouts, motives, and lair of the monster(s) will be the main turning point.

Subplots: **[Attain knowledge–Legends]** If the creature is extremely powerful, it might require specialized knowledge to defeat. Note that a monster posing a tremendous threat probably qualifies as a major "event," rendering the assumed background of "peacetime" a misnomer. **[Retrieve Item or Artifact]** Knowledge of the vulnerabilities of the creature might require the PCs to find a magic item or artifact to aid in its defeat.

Defeat creature(s), Plot 2–Sudden attack
Peacetime/action

Inciting incident: Peace is the norm in the kingdom or empire of PCs, but danger suddenly arrives at the threshold of the PCs home, in the form of a sudden and viscous assault.

Synopsis: The hamlet, town, city, or the adventurers themselves are attacked by monsters or a group of wicked humans. The focal story-arc is completed when the creature(s) are summarily defeated.

Turning point(s): **[Rescue locale]** The PCs must drive the attackers back, out of their home. **[Find Place]** Discovering the lair of the attackers may well lead to their defeat.

Subplots: **[Avenge event–Vengeful foe]** It's discovered that the attack on the PCs and/or their home was directed by a rancorous villain, one seeking recompense for his past defeats. The story-arc would be complete when the PCs avenge the destruction and/or pain caused by the ruthless adversary. **[Hinder creature(s)–Trigger]** IF the PCs learn that the attackers were after an important object in their hometown, THEN they must find ways to effectively prevent the creatures from retrieving it.

Defeat creature, Plot 3–Calamitous threat
War: Regional–destruction/horror

Inciting incident: The PCs' home state is swept into a desperate and bloody war, initiated by some ancient evil, monstrous agent of destruction, or a barbarian horde bent on pillaging, burning and raping the land.

Synopsis: Former allies and enemies are swept aside like wheat before a scythe, and the entire kingdom is awash in gore. Past alliances and bitter rivalries are made inconsequential in the face of a new catalyst to war that threatens to plunge the region into a protracted, horrifying conflict. The chief story-arc is completed when the PCs, via whatever means at their disposal, manage to rout this calamitous threat. This is appropriate for an extended, campaign plotline.

Turning point(s): **[Conquer locale(s)]** War is won by a series of triumphs over the strongholds, dens, lairs, and hideaways of the enemy. **[Learn facts]** Crucial to ultimately defeating the enemy is knowledge of their military capabilities, leadership, and overall strength.

Subplots: **[Vengeance (in general)]** Allies will fall, betrayals shall occur, and enemies will retaliate. This is a nearly continuous subtext to war. **[Escape place–Sudden attack]** Escaping from the clutches of the enemy after an unexpected ambush can lead to adventures in enemy territory. The theme of destruction and horror makes simple capture unlikely. Capture is likely to be synonymous with execution, except for the very lucky. **[Hinder creature(s)–Patronal mandate]** Stopping spies, cutting off communication, thwarting magical protections and/or means of travel, destroying food supplies or destroying crops are severe hindrances that might be ordered by the patron or commander during major conflicts.

Destroy item or artifact–Legends & rumors
Disaster
Storms/action

Inciting incident: The PCs find themselves contending with severe weather caused by the activation of an artifact whose powers are representative of deital wrath.

Synopsis: A group of fanatical worshippers of a storm deity discover a divine artifact that's intended to destroy heretics (in this case, those who believe that the deity is deceased). The artifact causes hurricane force winds, blinding rain, and spawns multiple tornados within a radius of several miles. The Lords Spiritual inform the PCs about the cult. Having knowledge of the cult's divine artifact, the priests send the PCs on a mission to break its power. The principle story-arc is complete when the heroes destroy the artifact; an act which stops the severe weather immediately.

Turning point(s): **[Attain knowledge]** Religious sages, experts and libraries must be consulted before the storm-artifact can be destroyed. Many obstacles might hinder the party in obtaining such knowledge. **[Find place]** The hideout of the cult must be located.

Subplots: **[Destroy knowledge–Patronal mandate]** Once the cult's hideout is found, and the artifact located, all knowledge pertaining to its future repair (or the whereabouts of similar objects) could require obliteration, as demanded by the patron of the PCs. **[Explore place"Self evident goal]** The cultists may dwell within a labyrinthine place, requiring mapping and exploration, that's probably protected by exotic monsters.

Destroy knowledge, Plot 1–Enigmatic stranger
Disaster
Earthquakes/action

Inciting incident: The heroes are brought into the thick of the action when their region is rocked by multiple, devastating earthquakes. Rumors abound of some enigmatic stranger entering each locale before a quake strikes, and provide a strong lead for investigation by the PCs.

Synopsis: The PCs face a mad spellcaster; possibly, an elementalist. The spellcaster recklessly summons earth elementals, trying to learn of new types of monsters, and researching the associated elemental plane. The locations where the earthquakes occur are near vortexes leading to the Elemental Plane of Earth. Hence, the summonings are increased in potency, with uncommon and powerful elementals being released into the environs. The spellcaster's study centers on burrowing creatures, for the sake of siegecraft. When finished, he plans to circulate knowledge of the dangerous incantations for the benefit of an enemy state. The main story-arc is complete when the PCs defeat the spellcaster; and, more importantly, destroy the spellcaster's knowledge base (or, at least, his access to said knowledge).

Turning point(s): **[Find person]** The enemy spellcaster must be located before his knowledge can be neutralized. **[Hinder & defeat creature(s)]** The spellcaster must not be permitted to continue with his research, which is causing deadly earthquakes in nearby towns and cities. He or she must be defeated.

Subplots: **[Prevent event–Competitor or nuisance]** A thief, hungry for payment, or a cruelly mischievous creature steals all of part of the knowledge, unbeknownst to the spellcaster, and replaces it with bogus information.

Destroy knowledge, Plot 2–NPC Grudge
Cataclysm
Impending Doom/espionage

Inciting Incident: A powerful NPC who once was thwarted by the PCs now is so enraged that he wishes to bring doom to their homeland. This enemy is at the top of a clandestine network of criminals, and normally cannot be found (nor his plans exposed) except through comprehensive espionage. Such an enemy is not always vengeful, in the classic sense, because his grudge might be engendered by pure hubris or murderous insanity.

Synopsis: The PCs receive a communication (either by missive or magic) of a known NPC's deep-seated resentment toward the PCs. In this message, he gloats over their imminent doom; and even gives them clues as to how the catastrophe might be averted, in the belief that such success would be impossible. The doom would come in the form of a massively destructive ritual, of which the NPC possesses knowledge. The featured story-arc is completed when the PCs infiltrate the enemies' ranks and destroy the information needed to complete the dooming ritual.

Turning point(s): **[Find person]** The PCs first must locate the enemy, in order that they can learn the nature of the knowledge required to affect doom upon the land. Infiltrating the criminal underclass is required. **[Prevent event]** The ritual is written upon the walls of an ancient, mysterious chamber that's the meeting place of an old warlock cult or something along those lines. Destroying the chamber, or somehow erasing the written ritual from the walls, will prevent the cataclysm. Destroying the knowledge is the endpoint, because it's prerequisite to preventing the event.

Subplot: **[Rescue creature(s)–Anonymous plea]** It could be that blood sacrifices are required, in connection with the ritual. The PCs might be expected, or compelled, to rescue the imprisoned creatures.

Discover identity, Plot 1–Enigmatic stranger
Strife
Peasants vs. nobility/mystery

Inciting incident: The nobility are fearful, because several persons among their ranks have been assassinated during a peasant uprising. One inscrutable NPC always is somewhere nearby when the killings take place. But only his name is known. The noble's estate, allies or enemies are unknown to anyone; to many, a suspicious fact. However, this stranger introduces himself to the reputable PCs as one who's hot on the trail of the assassin and wishes to enlist their aid with the promise of great reward.

Synopsis: The PCs encounter a strange NPC, a bounty-hunter, who's apparently a warrior noble from a foreign land, and a hunter of a particular assassin. He has arrived in the midst of a peasant uprising, and thinks he has spotted telltale signs of his quarry. The central story-arc is complete when the heroes actually identify the assassin. If the PCs don't simply point out the criminal to the authorities, leaving it at that, then this frequently is only the first act in an ongoing adventure.

Turning point(s): **[Prevent event]** The next likely victim is identified, leading the bounty-hunter and the PCs to intercept the assassin. **[Defeat creature(s)]** A killer arrives, as expected, is defeated by the PCs quickly, but turns out to be a mere lackey of the major villain. **[Learn facts]** An informer is found who exposes the assassin to attack and/or capture.

Subplots: **[Conquer locale–Self evident goal]** The PCs must break into the fort of the enemy, defeat his minions, and overtake the criminal stronghold. **[Attain truth–Rumors & identify creature (noble)–Self evident goal]** The assassin actually was hired by another noble who was trying to foment the peasant revolt (for whatever reason), and was not hired by the rebellion. In fact, it was retribution against the commoners, in response to the first assassin, which caused the rebellion in the first place!

Discover identity, Plot 2–Legends
War
Local–Insurrection/espionage

Inciting incident: The PCs herein are assumed to be members of, or closely associated with, the activities of some sort of counterinsurgency division; be it the military, a mage guild, or part of the criminal underworld. In this scenario, the PCs face and combat the insurgency of a legendary enemy, using espionage for counterinsurgency. The signs of insurrection are recognized through connection with an old legend or prophecy. But the identity of the enemy must be confirmed.

Synopsis: An underground war has started; an insurrection which probably is led by a preternatural, magical, or supernatural nature. Vampires, shapeshifters, doppelgangers, or extradimensional beings with exotic magicks and strange, psychogenic powers are invading the government. The PCs must utilize disguise, espionage, and magic to prevent the local war from

spreading further into the region, and to learn the nature of the enemy. The principle story-arc is finished when the enemy is positively identified; thus, paving the way to their defeat. However, this scenario often is the first act in an ongoing adventure. Note: The GM will have to work hard to keep the players guessing without causing undo frustration.

Turning point(s): **[Learn facts]** There are likely to be many obstacles to gaining true knowledge about the identity and plans of the enemy. Breaking through the veils of misdirection, illusion, and trickery can involve many sessions. Of course, divination, mind-probes and other magic can speed the process considerably. **[Find place]** The legend is said to be in written form, hidden away within a ruined tower in a haunted wood. **[Explore place]** The tower, once found, must be explored, and all obstacles successfully avoided. The key to the identity and means of defeating the enemy are found within.

Subplots: **[Defeat creature(s)–Legends or patronal mandate]** Once the enemy is identified, its likely that the PCs will be involved with securing their ultimate defeat. **[Hinder creature(s), subset of Learn facts turning point]** There might be many, vulnerable targets that the enemy would strike; including people, places, and various other things of importance. The PCs could be charged with protecting those sights and/or people.

Discover identity, Plot 3–Mistaken identity
Upheaval
Religious Revolution/action

Inciting incident: The PCs are mistaken by the local commoners for envoys of their local, but recently deposed, deities. But the mistaken identity is due to something more than naivety or ignorance. Rather, it's due to a local rebel who falsely identifies some unique item that the PCs carry as a symbol that they're religious saviors. This pretense causes joy among folk who're faithful to the old order, and an immediate and violent backlash from members of the new, local temple.

Synopsis: The PCs identified as heretics by members of the new, local order, are attacked by zombie-like inquisitors. The local populace which remains faithful to the old order looks to the PCs as saviors, and won't accept any other explanation. Perhaps, the followers of the old order don't care to know the truth; or they wish the PCs to confront the new rulers of the local temple, regardless of the facts. Either way, the PCs are in for a fight. The inciting rebel, who is the only free-willed priest left from the old religious order, soon approaches the PCs. He tells them that, if they are able to "identity his true foe" (the new high priest) he'll aid them with escaping their predicament. The new temple, he explains, is held by a creature with infernal powers. The rebel reveals that he's the old high priest; and, as such, was the only person powerful enough to escape death or enthrallment. He remembers his assailant only as a shadowy figure. The enemy remains inside the closed temple, at all times. The main story-arc is complete when the PCs correctly identity the new high priest to the cleric rebel. What they choose to do, from that point on, constitutes another, potential adventure.

Turning point(s): **[Attain truth]** Is the rebel cleric telling the truth, or is he completely insane? **[Conquer locale]** It will become apparent that the PCs must conquer the small, local temple by subduing its clerics. Otherwise, it will be impossible to identity the their new master. Killing all of the enthralled clerics only will force the enemy to conscript and brainwash a new circle of zombie followers.

Subplot: **[Hinder creature(s), subset of Conquer locale turning point]** It could be that the enemy's power lies not with his spells but with a magic item. Retrieving or destroying this item would hinder the enemy's ability to subjugate the old priesthood, or anybody else. **[Escape place, subset of Conquer locale turning point]** The PCs might think only of escaping the circumstances, or even of killing the rebel priest with pure impunity. If they do so, the rebel priest will be animated as an undead, murderous revenant, chasing down the PCs. If they run and do not help, the temple and brainwashed followers will only grow in power over time.

Escape place, Plot 1–Calamitous threat
Cataclysm
Deital Strike vs. Lords Temporal/drama

Inciting incident: The PCs are witness to the beginning of certain doom. The Lords Temporal have angered the patron deities. The highest ranking Lords Spiritual vanish overnight; whisked away, by the power of the gods, to safety. But the rest of the populace are left behind, and chaos ensues. Divine magic associated with travel and escape does not operate anywhere within the state. And, meanwhile, disasters of all kind devastate the land.

Synopsis: The land is plunged into darkness and chaos. However, the deities have allowed for escape routes, traversable only by the most brave and stalwart heroes. PCs who are clerics of the local pantheon are informed (by their deities) that they must prove their mettle and worthiness by saving the lives of their companions. And, if they remain faithful, their powers shall be retained. The story-arc is complete when the PCs escape the wrathful cataclysm.

Turning point(s): **[Find place(s)]** First, the heroes must find escape routes, using whatever information they can gather from divination or clues provided. **[Explore place]** The PCs will explore many dark, mysterious places; perhaps, traveling through other dimensions, planar mazes, or vast, floating dungeons on the ethereal plane, the entrances to which are found in the highest peaks of dangerous mountain ranges, or in the depths of a fetid swamp or haunted forest.

Subplot: **[Solve riddle–Legends]** Accessing escape routes could require the solving of riddles posed by sphinxes or other, monstrous guardians. **[Prevent event]** Although much devastation is unavoidable, the deities might allow for a single loophole, or sacrificial task, to be completed to stop their wrath. But escape from "ground zero" still would be necessary.

Escape place, Plot 2–Calamitous threat
Disaster
Tidal Waves/action

Inciting incident: The PCs are invited to a lecture, presented by a famous elementalist, which takes place within a seaside palace in a port city. The subject of the lecture is magic associated with the element of water. During the lecture, the mage promises a demonstration of the water breathing spell. The PCs

are shocked when, just as they are magically protected from drowning, a huge tidal wave smashes into the city. The palace is flooded, but remains standing.

Synopsis: The lecturer actually is a simulacrum of the real spellcaster who caused the sea to rise and engulf the city. His plan is to create an underwater empire and he wanted the PCs to witness his triumph. The palace is huge, and composed primarily of magically reinforced glass, so the drowning populace can be clearly seen. The palace prevents escape via dimensional travel, by means of a Dimensional Lock spell. The enemy spellcaster taunts the imprisoned PCs, and gleefully reminds them of how much time is left for their water breathing spells. Once they begin to explore the palace, they will encounter many hazards and aquatic monsters. The main story-arc is complete when they escape the palace and return to the safety of dry land.

Turning point(s): **[Explore place]** The palace will need to be searched for means of escape. **[Defeat creature(s)]** Aquatic monsters are attacking and must be dispatched. Also, the evil spellcaster would be rendered far more pleasant if he were deceased. If he were to be killed, the seawater would recede (although most of the city's populace already will have expired).

Subplot: [Rescue creature–Anonymous plea] A water elemental is imprisoned within a chamber, well beyond the duration of its summoning but trapped by the dimensional anchor. If released, it promises to help the PCs battle the monsters and find an escape from the palace.

Explore place, Plot 3–Rumors
Peacetime/mystery

Inciting Incident: The PCs hear rumors of a ruined city containing a vast treasure. But the city disappears, during sunlit hours, and no traveler has ever found treasure, or returned from the place, if they dared to stay past dawn.

Synopsis: The PCs explore the ruins, looking for treasure. The city is considered to be the property of a deity of night; a goddess who abhors the sun and transports the entire place into the plane of entropy once per day. Exploration and discovery serve as the main premise and are set against no major background events. But the dangers of the city are very real. The story-arc is complete when the ruins are explored thoroughly, obstacles overcome, all mystery solved and the treasure discovered.

Turning point(s): [Solve riddles] Such a place will feature many logic puzzles, riddles posed by strange creatures, and mind bending mazes. **[Defeat creatures]** The PCs must defeat the undead denizens of the city before it can be fully explored.

Subplots: [Escape place, as subset of Defeat Creatures turning point] The PCs might find themselves trapped within the city (actually, in the negative plane), fighting for their lives. Escaping, by living until the evening hours (when the city reappears in the material plane), or by some other means, becomes the chief goal. **[Destroy artifact, subset of Escape Place subplot, above]** The city's daily jaunt into the negative plane is caused by a divine artifact that's situated in the center of the city. Destroying this artifact prevents the city from vanishing during the day; and, probably, also annihilates the undead creatures.

Find item or artifact–Legends
Strife
Spellcasters vs. Nobility/mystery

Inciting incident: The PCs find themselves embroiled in political strife following the dissolution of a good and just mageocracy. The unjust nobility have usurped the government with the aid of power hungry ecclesiastics.

Synopsis: The pretense underlying the change in government was that there was no rightful heir to the throne. And the heraldic Mageking Staff (staff of the magi) symbolically was broken by the priesthood. The people, deeply affected by the breaking of the heraldic staff, are now cowed. The PCs, probably on the side of the mages, hear of a legend of the tomb of the First Mage-King, which has the power to mend the heraldic staff. But the crafty nobles and priests, knowledgeable of the legend, relocated and hid the tomb (no easy feat, since it was well protected). The first story-arc is complete when the tomb is found and the Mageking Staff has been restored. Of course, many adventures can continue beyond that one endpoint.

Turning point(s): **[Retrieve item]** The two pieces of the Mageking Staff must be obtained before the tomb is found. **[Learn facts]** Through the gathering of information, the PCs must penetrate the mystery of the tombs whereabouts and ascertain who holds it. **[Defeat creature(s)]** Once the place holding the tomb is determined, the PCs will need to defeat its guardians before finally locating the item in the inner sanctum.

Subplots: **[Discovery identity, as subset of Learn Facts]** The heir to the throne is alive, but has actually been kidnapped. The PCs must discover his identity; perhaps, by gaining the trust of the deposed officials of the mageocracy. **[Find & Rescue Creature, as subset of Discovery identity subplot, above]** The heir might be rescued if his location and identity is discovered. **[Prevent event]** The PCs might prevent outright war between the mages and nobility, if the tomb is found and the staff restored.

Find person–Vengeful foe
Peacetime/mystery

Inciting incident: A friend, family member, patron, or ally is attacked by a vengeful foe, but the attacker is killed during the skirmish. Unfortunately, the person attacked is now missing, without a trace.

Synopsis: An old enemy of the PCs attempts to kill a friend or ally, but fails. The terrified friend or foe runs away and is determined to remain in hiding; thinking himself/herself to be in danger, and having no clue that the assailant is dead. Due to the demands of family or the patron, the PCs must determine the whereabouts of this person.

Turning point(s): **[Attain truth]** Knowledge of what happened during the attack is critical, as well as any leads which would help to find the missing person. **[Defeat creatures]** The PCs must defeat, ironically enough, the hirelings of the person they seek. The missing person, hearing that people are looking for him, sets up multiple obstacles (thereby, causing mayhem for the PCs), in the belief that the enemy is dogging his every step. The person to be found has many resources to harass anyone who might attempt to follow. And he/she is too suspicious (at least at first) to believe reports that it is friends who are in pursuit.

Subplots: **[Attain truth, as subset of Attain truth turning point]** The missing person actually tried to stage his own death, by apparent murder, so that he could disappear and allow his family to collect inheritance. But, one of his allies or family members "saved" him from the false assailant, killed the hired attacker, and got knocked out in the process. Upon awaking, the deceiving person had fled.

Find place–Anonymous plea
Peacetime/mystery

Inciting incident: The PCs are offered a reward by a creature or NPC to find a fountain of youth. The entity stands before the PCs when offering the reward but does not identify himself by name or occupation. Synopsis: An aging alchemist is dying and wants to live longer. Unwilling to become a lich or some other horrendous abomination, he relies on his knowledge of legends, and finds an old map which supposedly leads to a fountain of youth. He had attempted the journey several times, but almost met with death; his companions being butchered by the primitive guardians of the place.

Turning point(s): **[Attain knowledge]** Learning the history of "fountains of youth", all of the local legends to determine whether this man's map is a hoax or a trap. **[Explore place]** The PCs must explore the lands surrounding the supposed fountain of youth, before coming close to what the map describes. **[Defeat creatures]** Cannibalistic giants guard the radiant pool. Young men and girls are kept in cages beside the glistening pool. The giants call the pool the "fountain of youth" for a nefarious reason. [Attain truth] The pool actually is a place of death. The giants make all men and women drink from the pool when they reach the age of thirty. And the spring which feeds the pool connects with a river within Hades. Consequently, one swallow of the pool's water causes instant death. Meanwhile, younger males and females are bred to provide new slaves for shepherding livestock. The giants call it a fountain of youth because it maintains a youthful population of slaves, by killing off the older ones.

Subplots: [Avenge people, as subset of Defeat Creatures turning point] The PCs might be enraged by the fate of the captive humans. Attacking the giants would be a courageous action. **[Prevent truth, as subset of Attain knowledge turning point]** If the PCs wish to keep the old alchemist from dying of a broken heart, they might find some other youth-restoring potion to bring to him; thereby, getting their reward based on a "white lie."

Hinder creature(s), Plot 1–Competitor
Upheaval
Intellectual Revolution/action

Inciting incident: A genius NPC views himself as a competitor to the great repute of the PCs. He fuels the flames of revolution through his philosophy; and, while so doing, claims friendship with the PCs.

Synopsis: The old deities are challenged (surely, a dangerous move), and the form of government is questioned. So begins a revolution of thought, which breeds hatred among the establishment. While not himself evil, the NPC clearly is motivated, principally, by his need for one-upmanship. In fact, the PCs know that he doesn't care about (or believe in) his own philosophies. The story-arc is completed when the competitor is hindered from causing further social upheaval.

Turning point(s): **[Defeat creatures]** The competitor preaches anarchy and causes riots that get the PCs into skirmishes all over the city, as they try to prevent their homes or businesses from getting looted. **[Prevent event]** The competitor wants to give speeches and rallies, all the while escaping arrest by using decoys, simulacrums or illusions. **[Repair reputation]** The PCs might find themselves repudiating involvement with their competitor.

Subplots: **[Escape place, as subset of Repair reputation turning point]** If the competitor becomes a public enemy, and the PCs are thought guilty by association, they might need to escape the place for a while to plan their next move. **[Attain truth, as subset of Prevent Event turning point]** Their competitor/enemy is possessed by a mischievous spirit who makes him utter a bunch of "mumbo jumbo;" which, nonetheless, is influential to the rabble.

Hinder creature(s), Plot 2–NPC Grudge
War
Local-Resources/espionage

Inciting incident: The PCs are involved in a local war over resources (water, food or mineral), but can't quite figure out why. Whichever town or village they visit gets attacked by a small "shock force" of the enemy, and their food and other valuables get seized. Soon, the PCs realize that the pattern involves their own movements.

Synopsis: One of the commanders of the enemy force in a local war hates the PCs or the patron of the PCs, due to some past incident. He frequently breaks the normal procedure by sending troops after the PCs. Dispatching the troops causes havoc wherever they go, because they've been instructed never to attack the PCs directly but only "innocents" they happen to be near. The story-arc is complete when the PCs hinder the commander, preventing him (by whatever means) from sending troops to follow them.

Turning point(s): **[Discover identity]** The PCs must use spies and military intelligence to figure out why this particular commander is sacrificing troops on errands unrelated to the tactics of war. **[Solve predicament]** Once the identity of the NPC with a grudge against the PCs is known, steps might be taken to inform his own commanders of his irresponsible use of soldiers. Obviously, this would be a challenge, since the message would be coming from their enemies.

Subplots: **[Escape place, as subset of Solve Predicament turning point]** While attempting to keep track of enemy troops, capture is always a threat. Escaping enemy encampments is a good subplot. **[Conquer locale, as subset of Escape Place subplot, as above]** Another option is to directly attack the outpost of the rogue commander, overtaking his entire garrison. Whether that NPC remained alive or not, he severely would be hindered from further harassment of the PCs.

Learn fact(s), Plot 1–Dream message
Cataclysm
Cosmic Imbalance/drama

Inciting incident: The PCs are warned, via dreams, of a cosmic imbalance which could cause a resource (agricultural) catastrophe. The dream is sent by a greater god to a high ranking priest of the local pantheon, giving clues to the solution of a certain problem. The ecclesiastic NPC relates the dream to the PCs and enlists their aid.

Synopsis: The imbalance is caused by a lesser deity who refuses to perform specific responsibilities; things like blessing the growth of crops, aiding childbirths, and maintaining good weather for the pious. Apparently bored and longing for greater responsibility, she stopped granting divine spells to the priesthood (thereby, getting them lynched) and descended in avatar form to pout in the chief temple of her pantheon. The prelate begs in vain for her to resume her deital duties. Soon, the people will starve, disease will become rampant (making deities of healing work overtime), and the cosmic balance between necessity and contingency will unravel, throwing nature into chaos. The story-arc will be completed when the PCs learn enough of the facts concerning the deity's apathy that they are prepared to snap the depressed deity out of her condition.

Turning point(s): **[Attain truth]** The trickster god of the pantheon made the deity of fertility and vegetation depressed through crafty words, and his priesthood is gloating about it. **[Defeat creature(s)]** Once the followers of the trickster god find that the PCs have overheard their bragging and gloating, they will try to silence them before they can bring news to the depressed goddess. The PCs will be forced to fight.

Subplot: **[Solve predicament, as subset of Attain truth turning point]** The ecclesiastics who've been loyal followers of the goddess are angry and have lost their faith, and consequently, their divine powers are not being restored. The PCs can help restore the morale of the despondent clerics, especially if armed with the truth concerning the trickster god. Evaluating the motives of the avatar would reveal that public worship would help to restore her pride, and that pleading will accomplish nothing.

Learn fact(s), Plot 2–Friend in need
War
Regional–Assimilation/espionage

Inciting incident: A friend and ally has been wounded in a regional war, but has escaped imprisonment at the hands of the enemy. The war is one of assimilation, where the enemy is brainwashing their opposition by means of magic and drugs. Succumbing slowly to the brainwashing, he the ally begs the PCs to find a cure.

Synopsis: The PCs are charged with finding the antidote to a dire condition afflicting a friend. They must explore all options, and leave no stone unturned, to prevent their friend from losing his mind to the brainwashing. The endpoint is reached when the PCs have found all the necessary facts to help their friend in need.

Turning point(s): **[Attain knowledge]** Many prospects and obstacles will be encountered on the path to attaining the sort of knowledge needed to combat the ally's dire condition. Once the proper knowledge is obtained, they'll know where to search for more specific facts. **[Find items]** There will be rare herbs, minerals, or organic substances which must be found in dangerous places. In both turning points, the knowledge or items will be guarded by those who do not wish to share information, necessitating espionage.

Subplot: **[Prevent event (death of friend)–Calamitous threat (albeit calamitous mainly for single person)]** The enemy might be able to use psychogenics or magic to see and/or hear what's going on around the severely afflicted ally. Spells and skills to combat poison and curses certainly would help.

Learn fact(s), Plot 3–Patronal mandate
Peacetime/mystery

Inciting incident: The patron of the PCs sends them on a quest, to learn the facts of the kingdom's history; events now veiled in the mists of time.

Synopsis: The adventurers are charged with discovering historical facts concerning their homeland. Their patron feels that his quest is patriotic, unaware that the facts unearthed would be damning to the proud heritage of the state. Legend speaks of a war hero (call him Nikomedes, if the pantheon is Olympic) who triumphantly returned from the dead, rallied his broken army for war, and set up the first capital of the kingdom on the site of their final victory. But, in fact, the "hero" had made a pact with evil deities; sacrificing the souls of his entire army to the gods in exchange for victory, as well as the preservation of his immediate family. Therefore, his royal decedents only have a heritage of treachery and incest (anathema in this enlightened age). The endpoint is reached when all of the facts (number determined by the GM) are discovered. Whatever problems the truth spawns probably would be cause for strife and drama.

Turning point(s): **[Explore (investigate) place(s)]** The PCs are given many leads by historians about where to find information pertaining to the beginnings of their kingdom. Historical records are allegedly contained in a building called the athenaeum (an old library, possibly an old temple of Athena-Minerva)which is located in the first capital. **[Attain truth]** Unbeknownst to the sages, an accurate account of the army's betrayal, written by a renegade scribe, are in that library.. But that olden city now is destroyed and abandoned, and the majority of it sunken into the earth, due to a terrible earthquake of ages past. **[Defeat creature(s)]** The specters and ghosts of the army betrayed by Nikomedes still roam those craggy wastes, murdering and terrifying travelers.

Subplots: **[Defeat creature(s)–Sudden attack]** The entrances and broken halls of the old city are inhabited by several tribes of aggressive goblinoids, existing there because their shamanistic adepts are able to keep the undead at bay. The PCs probably will have no forewarning of their existence. **[Avenge event–Legends]** The ancient warrior Nikomedes exists still, cursed long ago on his deathbed by an angry prelate, made undead, then forced to hide forever in the sunken ruins of the old city. Some of local ghosts might lead the PCs to this dangerous, hateful and brooding creature. Killing the undead warrior would release the souls from the accursed city.

Prevent event, Plot 1–Calamitous threat
Cataclysm
Deity as Instigator of War/drama

Inciting incident: A new, charismatic, Grand High Priest of the pantheon is elected to serve the state. But he is a youngling; naive and quite vocally opposed to war. The PCs, possessing a more realistic understanding of violence, immediately will recognize a calamitous threat when several powerful sub-prelates"each representing a warlike deity of the pantheon"rally with apparent impunity to annihilate the young upstart.

Synopsis: The young Grand High Priest proposes to remove from the calendar all holy observances of warlike deities. He is supported by an influential (but equally unwise) subprelate of a deity of uncompromising peace. Popular support quickly emerges for the young priest. Hence, the Lords Spiritual refuse to charge the Grand High Priest with heresy, fearing a civil backlash. However, the court recognizes and does nothing to prevent the threat from the vengeful ecclesiastics of war. The story-arc is completed when the PCs have prevented a bloody, regional conflict between the deities of war versus the surprisingly bellicose defenders of peace (despite the figureheads loud protests against violence).

Turning point(s): **[Defeat creature(s)]** All hell breaks loose when the Grand High Priest publicly is slapped in the face by the monarch during his official inauguration. The monarch calls the priest a "stupid boy," for causing dissension among the Lords Spiritual. As a result, a riot breaks out; much to the dismay of the shaken priest-boy. The PCs are, by mischance, forced to defeat the rioters to save their own necks. **[Solve predicament]** If the PCs attempt to convince the Grand High Priest to step down, he will be very defensive, declare them to be threats to the peace, and have them exiled from the capital city. Ironically, anybody but the Grand Temple guards would allow the PCs back. But the PCs must convince the majority of Lords Spiritual to charge the Grand High Priest with heresy, before the deities of war take retribution against the city and its spiritual court. To deepen the dilemma, the PCs might be forced to save the Grand High Priest from assassination attempts (possibly, attempted by the Lords Temporal) while simultaneously trying to force him to step down.

Subplots: **[Attain truth–Rumors]** The "peaceful" subprelate is an imposter; an evil man who, taking advantage of the Grand High Priest's naivety, hopes to plunge the city into war through his advocacy of absolute quietism.

Prevent event, Plot 2–Calamitous threat
Cataclysm
Pantheon Wars/mystery

Inciting incident: The PCs learn that the prelate of a foreign pantheon has been brutally murdered, and that the ecclesiastics of their own pantheon have been implicated in the crime. The plot assumes that the PCs are of very high status, and that the sovereign lords would confer with them about the political disaster and impending war.

Synopsis: The PCs quest is to find out who killed the prelate of the foreign pantheon, thereby preventing a, cataclysmic war between pantheons that might involve one or more continents. Eventually, the heroes will discover that the assassination was orchestrated by the pale clerics of an primeval deity of death and entropy who're not associated with the rival pantheons. The lone deity and unfathomably evil cult live in a barren wasteland, far from civilization. Its clerics travel throughout the world, trying to cause the dissolution of states. The story-arc is complete when the real culprit is revealed. When that happens, the two warring pantheons realize they've been duped and, together, the deities obliterate the cult (and environs).

Turning point(s): **[Attain truth]** The PCs are sent to see a powerful diviner or seer who informs them that the mysterious killers of the foreign prelate live in a distant wasteland. The lords of the realm decide that, if the PCs bring back proof (i.e. some token or artifact) of the named enemy, they will have new diplomatic avenues to proclaim their innocence; and, thereby, stop the mounting conflict. **[Explore Place]** Once the heroes have traveled to the distant land, they must investigate and explore the wasteland for signs of life. They'll encounter a small village, near a rare water source, where rumors are told of a sinister cult dwelling within a prehistoric temple, in the center of the wasteland. **[Retrieve item or artifact & Escape place]** The PCs must bring back a token or artifact (and whatever information they can gather) documenting the cult of entropy. Nobody aware of their intrusion would want them to return to civilization alive.

Subplots: **[Discover identity–Nuisance (an apparent fink)]** It was an agent of the entropy cult that pointed the finger at the states encompassing the lands of the rival pantheon. Ferreting out some sneaky, lying, conniving villain probably would be a satisfying mission; but wouldn't necessarily suffice as proof of a conspiracy. **[Solve predicament]** If the PCs are allowed to seek out such a conniving villain, they will need to gain permission from the enraged states of the rival pantheons. Obviously, gaining such authorization would require great diplomatic skill.

Prevent event, Plot 3–Dream message
Upheaval
Local Guilds vs. Merchants/espionage

Inciting incident: The local thieves' guild is attempting to bully the local merchant class into selling black-market goods; essentially, creating a town of fences, and forcing anyone else to pay stiff fines for the privilege of running a legitimate business. Enforcement is through fear and sabotage. A local merchant of rare, magic items uses his ample resources to send the PCs a dream or daytime hallucination, in which he identifies himself and pleads for help.

Synopsis: Contacted by a daring merchant hoping for heroic intervention, the PCs must find out who among the criminal underclass are involved with the coercive black-market operation and put those people out of business. The principle story-arc is completed when the heroes break the power of the criminal organization and restore the merchant class business to legitimacy.

Turning point(s): **[Learn facts (espionage)]** Ferreting out the masterminds who constitute the leadership of the enemy criminal organization is prerequisite to ending their reign of oppression and fear over the local merchants. **[Conquer place]** Once the den of iniquity is discovered, and positively identified, the PCs will need to wipe out their chief stronghold. Then, they will move on

to eliminate the extended criminal network; as far and wide as it stretches within the state.

Subplots: **[Conceal identity–Vengeful foe]** The merchant of magical items is knowledgeable in Arcana, but is not a powerful practitioner . Consequently, he cannot utilize many of the items he sells. His involvement with the PCs soon is discovered; perhaps, because they carry some of his items on loan. In any case, he quickly is targeted for death. The PCs must conceal his identity and otherwise keep him safe until the criminal network is sundered.

Prevent event, Plot 4–Enigmatic stranger
Disaster
Fire/horror

Inciting incident: A strange, humanoid creature has arrived in town; moving among the shadows, passing witnesses with only with a fleeting glimpse. Alarmingly, whoever gazes upon this figure bursts into unquenchable flames, and quickly is immolated. The PCs soon hear news of one of their poorer friends, allies, and/or family members immolated by this outlandish, terrifying passerby.

Synopsis: The PCs must investigate and hunt down a monster whose gaze causes its victims to burst into flames and die. It leaves a grisly trail of charcoaled bodies in its wake, and seems to have no pattern of killing. The story-arc is completed when the PCs find said monster and prevent it from claiming another victim.

Turning point(s): **[Attain truth]** The creature causing the deaths is in town, as the result of a botched summoning; that is, a monster summoned but, somehow, never returned to its home plane of fire. Perhaps, the creature is a quasi-elemental or salamander sorcerer who uses Change Self to appear more human. The monster stalks the dark streets, cloaked to avoid immediate detection, while suppressing its natural body-fire. He asks only one question of everybody he meets: "Can you banish me?" If the answer is "no", the person dies. **[Defeat creature]** Once the creature is hunted down, the PCs will need to fight it, or banish it to its home plane.

Subplot: **[Hinder creatures–Trigger (identifying the monster)]** Once the monster is identified, the original summoner appears on the scene , insisting that he can regain control over the outsider. If the PCs fall for that line, the summoner will have the fire creature attack them, while informing the PCs that they shall die for "unfairly impeding valuable research".

Prevent event, Plot 5–Friend in need
Strife
Merchants vs. Nobility/action

Inciting incident: A powerful merchant friend or ally of the PCs enlists their help to end unfair taxes levied against him by the local baron. The adventurers learn that their friend now preemptively calls himself seizen (the possessor of a freehold estate), and has demanded a charter allowing him to be free and to rule his own town.

Synopsis: Strife erupts between a powerful merchant, who happens to specialize in the manufacture of arms and armor, and whose craft guild wields great influence in the manorial estate of a local baron. The baron has demanded unfair taxation and personal gifts, including the merchant daughter's hand in marriage. His actions prompt outrage and a demand for emancipation. The story-arc is complete when the adventurers prevent"or fail to prevent"the marriage of their friend's daughter, as well as put a stop to the fierce conflict between the merchant and noble.

Turning point(s): **[Defeat creature(s)]** The noble sends out soldiers to terrorize friends and supporters of the merchant guild. The PCs will be forced to defend themselves, and resist arrest. **[Solve predicament]** The PCs must try to find a way to settle the dispute, by whatever means at their disposal, without endangering the town of their merchant ally. This could involve diplomacy, contacting higher courts of law, or direct intimidation. The endpoint is met when the danger of deadly civil strife between the merchant guilds and the nobles garrison is passed.

Subplot: **[Escape place (imprisonment)–NPC Grudge]** The noble, resenting the PCs involvement, sends out a retinue to capture them and bring them to gaol for being accessories to extortion. Assuming that the PCs do not make matters worse by hacking the constables to pieces, they must find a diplomatic solution to the crisis. If the PCs live in a just kingdom, proof of the unreasonable demands of the baron will set them free of conviction. **[Rescue creature (the daughter of the merchant)–Friend in need]** The baron, angry at his martial plans being foiled, abducts the daughter and holds her prisoner in his tower. Admittedly, this subplot is a clichéd scenario.

Prevent truth, Plot 1–Friend in need
Strife
Heresy/drama

Inciting incident: The PCs are contacted by a panicked, high ranking priestess who has stumbled upon a devastating secret. She has learned that the divine spells of their priesthood has been supplied by a surrogate deity for a hundred years! Their god or goddess actually is dead. While factual, unveiling this "heresy would cause bloodshed and a dissolution of the temple, thereby ruining lives. Accordingly, the priestess asks the PCs to prevent the truth from ever reaching her fellow Lords Spiritual or the nobility.

Synopsis: A notable fellow named Andre Gide once said, "Believe those who are seeking the truth. Doubt those who find it." But, in this case, the priestess is correct; her temple's god is long deceased. The source of power is another deity acting as a temporary surrogate, until the greater deities of the pantheon decide what to do next. The priestess found this out while visiting (for the first time) the home plane of her patron deity. Wishing only to forget this terrible discovery, the priestess requests that the PCs bring her a rare magic item capable of erasing or changing memory. However, this item must be brought to her promptly; before she gives her travel report, which always is presented before a superior within a Zone of Truth. Note that the D20 bard spell Modify Memory is not powerful enough to erase the memory of an encounter with a god; even one of lesser sort.

Turning point(s): **[Retrieve item]** The PCs must retrieve a magic item which possesses charges of a greater Modify Memory spell and is capable of altering a memory as strong as an encounter with a god. Such an item is kept in the office of the chief justiciar, protected by guards and magic. The priestess promises the PCs that she will pay any price, and go to any

lengths, to rescue them if they're captured. The alternative, she explains, is to break the faith of her temple and risk the charge of heresy. **[Solve predicament A]** While the PCs are on their mission, the priestess is questioned sooner than expected. The questioning ecclesiastic discovers the awful truth, and writes a letter of resignation to the subprelate of his temple. The subprelate, having known the truth, panics and arrests both clerics for heresy. **[Solve predicament B]** With the adventurers' friend and superior both imprisoned, they might decide to use the stolen magic item on the mind of the subprelate...probably, a bad decision. Or, they might break into the gaol and use the item on the two priests (one willingly and one by force); thereby making them impervious to further questioning before a final conviction. Of course, with so many divine spells available that're capable of discerning lies, the best protection is to modify memory permanently. In such a case, the subprelate would be forced to retract his charge of heresy, and the court would be unable to establish actual memory of the heresy in the minds of the accused.

Subplots: **[Solve predicament C–Trigger]** IF the PCs are discovered when stealing the magic item from the justiciar's office (any number of items of surveillance magic could account for this; clairvoyance, contingency spells, etc.), THEN they will be charged with Burglary; which can bring 3-5 years of bond or penal servitude. This can get awfully complicated, if they are arrested at the same time that their priestess friend is imprisoned for heresy, before they can alter her memories.

Prevent truth, Plot 2–Patronal mandate
Upheaval
Technological Revolution/action

Inciting incident: The spellcasting patron of the heroes commands them to suppress the truth concerning the events of a technological revolution. This technology is gunpowder, which happens to explode when contacting magic of any kind.

Synopsis: The advocates of gunpowder have accused spellcasters (arcane and divine alike) of impinging societal progress by being backward and repressive. The excited local populace-- given the power of the pistol and musket, as well as renaissance style explosive weapons (See DMG)-- move to keep the pesky spellcasters from interfering with their firepower. To their utter surprise, those wielding a firearms within 20 feet of a source of magic will find their weapons exploding in their faces. The story-arc is complete when the leaders of the technological revolution are eliminated, the uprising is put down, and all knowledge of gunpowder is destroyed.

Turning point(s): **[Defeat creatures]** The PCs must rout the leaders of the technological revolution; which, in reality, is more of a debacle than a revolution. Their weapons must be destroyed, and their allies and supporters must be scattered. **[Destroy knowledge]** All references and documentation concerning gunpowder and its manufacture must be eliminated. The revolution itself must be struck from memory, and key figures must be brought in for magical memory alteration.

Subplot: **[Retrieve item–Trigger]** IF one of the PCs gets curious, taking a firearm and a pinch of gunpowder for a souvenir, THEN his gunpowder will explode on contact with any magic source. A patron discovering this activity would be angry.

Repair item or artifact, Plot 1–Calamitous threat
Cataclysm
Deital Strike against Lords Spiritual/action

Inciting incident: A holy relic (a major artifact) of supreme importance to the state has been damaged by a consummate villain (who escaped), under the noses of the most powerful clerics of the land. When it was damaged, a supernatural proxy of the gods delivered a most disheartening message: If the relic is not repaired within a fortnight, the state will be plunged into a period of castigatory darkness and misfortune. The priesthood, too afraid to admit failure, did not relate this warning to the Lords Temporal. Nor did they repair the relic in time.

Synopsis: During this period of tribulation, it is prophesied, the current spiritual leadership shall be defrocked and replaced, and their divine powers shall be lost to them forever. The PCs are chosen as champions of the state by the Lords Temporal, and charged with finding a way to repair the holy relic. In fact, the gods promise that there is a way to repair the relic, but warn that it will require overcoming tough challenges.

Turning point(s): **[Solve riddles]** All sorts of puzzles, conundrums, and enigmas will be set forth by the gods to confound the PCs who carry the broken pieces of the holy relic. For example, the PCs might encounter a man who proclaims that everything he says is a lie. Is he telling you the truth, or is he lying? **[Learn facts & Find places]** The relic can be repaired if it's melted down in a forge in the plane of fire (or in one of the outer planes), and then recreated from a design kept in a vault in some equally inaccessible place. **[Defeat creature(s)]** Of course, nobody warns the PCs about the guardians of those places, which could include golems, constructs or mindless creatures set there to kill intruders.

Subplot: **[Find master of craft, as subset of Learn Facts turning point]** Once the PCs learn that they must recreate the relic, they might determine that they lack the required skills. So, a master at crafting such things will be sought; and, once found, must agree to (as an expert of high level) accompany the heroes on their quest. Many obstacles are apt to hinder the PCs on their journey to find such a craftsman.

Repair item or artifact, Plot 2–Legends
Cataclysm
Impending Doom/drama

Inciting incident: The adventurers are informed, by their patron or allies, that a flight of rampaging dragons is predicted to devastate their homeland. They are quickly reminded of a legend: Long ago, in a darker and terrible age, a war raged between humans and dragons. The reptilian terrors breathed death upon all who would dare oppose their reign, and humankind was driven to the brink of extinction. But, before the last human states fell into smoldering ruin, a great wizard created the Orbs of Dragonkind (as per the Open Game Content artifacts, see the DMG). These artifacts were used to control and repel the beasts, and were kept safe by royal lineages for an eon. Alas, the last king of the bloodline was slain by a cunning and powerful half-dragon, who managed to steal all but one of the dragonorbs.

Synopsis: The heroes are asked to restore the power of the last known dragonorb. They are told that a single breath from a pure-blood monarch, or a drop of dragon blood (or a half-dragon),

would empower the orb and make it functional again. But getting a dragon to donate its blood is no easy feat. And the last of the pure-blood kings has long since been slain, by means of a Disintegration spell. Oddly, after the king's death, The Lords Spiritual decreed that he must remain deceased; as penance for his failure to protect his kingdom. The story-arc is completed when the PCs defeat the half-dragon, retrieve the Dragonorbs, and restore the golden orb to full functionality.

Turning point(s): **[Attain truth]** The PCs must learn the full story behind the king's murder; perhaps, via a Speak with Dead spell. He was murdered by a half-dragon; but the creature was, and remains to this day, disguised as an ecclesiastic. Also, whether by divination, necromancy, or some other method, the PCs learn the truth that it was this same half-dragon (under the pretense of being a high-ranking cleric) who decreed that the king must remain dead; purportedly, as a form of penance. Now, the pretender gleefully is spreading panic through rumors of impending doom. [Solve predicament] Unfortunately, the PCs are hard pressed to convince the local temple that they harbor a half-dragon pretender. The pretender has built up a mystique of power and respectability over the years, and is known as a great scholar. **[Defeat creature(s)]** When the half-dragon learns of the PCs meddling, he will shed his disguise and reveal that he possesses the Dragonorbs (probably with a great villainous soliloquy), each of which has been hidden under the noses of the clergy for a century, in their own temple. This revelation probably will be accompanied by a strike upon the city, by several evil dragons.

Subplot: **[Rescue creature (from the terrible inconvenience of death)"Dream message]** The PCs learn, via dream, that a Resurrection spell would bring the monarch back to life; despite the fact that only century-old dust and accoutrements remain of him. This ritual/spell would require an experienced ecclesiastic to perform; specifically, he must be a cleric of at least 13th level, and/or possess a major magical artifact, in order to succeed. Upon awakening, the king begins his reign anew, drives the half-dragon from the temple, and offers to become their patron.

Repair item or artifact, Plot 3–Legends
Disaster
Famine/horror

Inciting incident: The heroes hear of the legend of a little, ugly, old woman who lives in a dilapidated hut in the hinterland. Her claim to fame is an animated plough which requires no horses or oxen. Alas, a bunch of local hooligans stole her special plough, assailed her husband in the process, and ran over her cat with the plough while fleeing. Her husband soon died from his injuries, and her pet, feline familiar was killed. Enraged, the old woman cursed the boys' town for a generation, so that nobody could break up soil effectively, or cut furrows, in preparation for sowing. For decades, all mundane ploughs are doomed to explode, into a shower of splinters and sharp metal, when utilized. Worse, the curse affects all farm implements used to break up soil. No matter how well they're built, the tools break with their first use. The story-arc is complete when the special plough is returned in good repair to the old witch, who lives still, angry and brooding about her losses. She must be convinced to accept it back graciously, and to lift the disastrous curse of famine.

Synopsis: The PCs are sent in to investigate the cause behind a town's inability to sustain itself. The townspeople are becoming famished; unable to plant anything to feed their livestock or themselves. And the Lord of the Manor has become nearly destitute from his generosity with imported grain, vegetables and other foodstuffs. Through the local lord, the PCs learn of the witch's curse, and are told that they must find and repair the original plough. The local clergy feel that the town is being punished by the gods and refuse to intercede; until they hear from their Grand High Priest, who has been too "busy" to address the issue. The families of the hooligans, who harbored them, have refused to admit guilt, and have kept the magic plough dismantled and hidden .

Turning point(s): **[Defeat creatures & Retrieve item]** The hooligans are now grown men, and their families have moved to a neighboring town. And, complicating matters, they are part of the local constabulary. **[Find item]** Then PCs discover, through divination or interrogation, that that the heavy blade of the magic plough has been buried nearby. It must be exhumed to repair the plough. **[Solve predicament]** Once encountered, the witch must be convinced to lift the curse, once her plough has been returned to her. She agrees to this only if her husband is also restored to her. What the PCs are not told is that, if they return to the plow to her plot of land, the curse automatically will be lifted; a stipulation that the Witch has forgotten.

Subplots: [Solve predicament, as subset of Defeat creatures turning point] The ghost of the husband never liked his wife, and does not wish to be resurrected or reincarnated. He will refuse, argue, or even fight with the PCs who try to restore his body. **[Prevent event, as subset of Find item turning point]** The hooligan constabulary intends to restore and sell the magic plough to the black market. The PCs must prevent this, if they intend to bring the item back to the witch and lift the curse from the starving town. **[Escape place, as subset of Solve predicament turning point]** If the PCs opt to attack the old witch, rather than try to locate and repair the plough, they'll discover the hard way that she's a Baba Yaga; a powerful, cannibalistic witch. Her hut looks ordinary except for the picket fence displaying the skulls of her victims. She will threaten to ingest the PCs, if they do not return the magic plough to her!

Repair item or artifact, Plot 4–Legends
Peacetime/mystery

Inciting incident: The adventurers learn of the legend of a powerful artifact or relic, possibly some sort of symbolic state jewelry; a belt, coronet, crown, dagger, girdle, mace, medal, medallion, neck chain, orb, scepter, or sword. The item might have powers affecting personal destinies, or prophecy. Or, perhaps, it's an emblematic and powerful magic item, such as a Staff of the Magi. But the fabled item has been vandalized by a mysterious enemy of the state, and its pieces have been hidden.

Synopsis: The PCs are asked ,or commanded, to gather the pieces of the artifact or relic, and then bring them back to the Lords in order to make it whole again. But the vandal and thief's identity has remained mysterious, evading all attempts at location and detection for many years. The story-arc is complete when the pieces of the object are found and restored for official use by the lords of the state.

Turning point(s): **[Find items]** The pieces are scattered across the realm, hidden in different dungeons/donjons. **[Explore places]** Each dungeon/donjon must be thoroughly investigated, so that the hidden pieces of the artifact can be reassembled. **[Attain truth]** The enemy turns out to be the kingdom's chief architect, head of the masons' guild and the head of a masonic conspiracy to control the coffers of the priesthood. In fact, he has designed all of the places where the pieces are hidden; places which also are used as vast prisons for dangerous beasts and criminals. In some unspecified manner, the artifact had the power to break or expose the conspiracy. So the enemy had ruined it and has hidden the pieces.

Subplot: **[Defeat creatures, as subset of Attain truth turning point]** Once the pieces of the artifact are assembled, the patron or allies might command or ask the PCs to apprehend (and take vengeance upon) the architect and his fellow conspirators.

Repair item or artifact, Plot 5–Patronal mandate
Upheaval
Peasants vs. Merchants/espionage

Inciting incident: A band of villeins (feudal serfs who hold the status of freemen) are engaged in a lucrative criminal enterprise. The local merchants are nonplussed; unable to understand how the villeins are able to afford expensive wares. The patron of the PCs becomes suspicious, and sends the PCs forth to investigate the villeins' sudden financial windfall.

Synopsis: The villeins have discovered a chest filled with Philosophers Stones (see the Open Game Content magic artifact, as presented in the DMG). It belonged to an alchemist who operated in the local galena mine (a major source of lead), while under the employ of the PCs' patron. The villeins assassinated the alchemist, stole the magic stones, and have transmuted 1000 pounds of lead into gold (at $500 per ounce). But, during the scuffle the villeins damaged the most precious thing of all: The Quicksilver Pottle, a minor artifact resembling an ordinary pot. This artifact, won by the alchemist through much adventuring, has a priceless spell inscribed upon it; one that causes the pot to fill with magic quicksilver (capacity of .5 gallon), as well as instructions on how to manufacture Philosophers Stones. The villeins have possession of two such stones, but ignorantly broke the magic vessel, throwing its pieces into a nearby pond. Otherwise, the villeins are shrewd, trading the pure goldbars, via a "fence," for copper and silver coins. Although they do not carry gold, it remains highly conspicuous that they have possession of the currency at all. The story-arc is complete when the PCs punish the thieving serfs for their vandalism, bringing them before a higher court for sentencing. Then, they proceed to retrieve, and restore, the broken pieces of the Quicksilver Pottle.

Turning point(s): **[Attain truth]** The conspiracy of the serfs needs to be exposed. Once the thieves are identified, the patron will fly into a panic, immediately asking what has become of the Quicksilver Pottle. **[Defeat creature(s)]** The villeins, angry at being questioned, will attempt to silence the PCs through violence, utilizing their connections with thieves and assassins guilds. The PCs must defeat their assailants, and strike back at the villein organizers.

Subplot: **[Hinder or defeat creature(s), as subset of Defeat creatures turning point]** The merchants are outraged when the Lord of the Manor demands that a token amount of the ill-gotten monies spent by the villains be transferred to his estate by all affected merchants. How the amount would be determined is not specified. But, collectively, the merchants are expected to come up with a fairly substantial amount of cash. Why, they ask, should they be punished merely for plying their trade? Such an action, from the Lord of the Manor, could readily be expected to spark another bout of civil strife with the PCs stuck squarely in the middle.

Repair reputation, Plot 1–NPC grudge(s)
Upheaval
Religious Revolution/action

Inciting incident: For many years, the state has been ruled by a theocrat who deemed only one tyrannical deity worthy of worship. Now, society is in massive upheaval; due to a religious revolution, spearheaded by reputable ecclesiastics of rival deities. The upheaval might not concern the PCs, at first. But the adventurers shall soon encounter great enmity from two key figures, as a consequence of past associations and acquaintances.

Synopsis: After learning of a religious revolution within a nearby, theocratic state, the PCs discover that they are hated by several persons. Among them is an old acquaintance of their patron, friends, or family; wan ambassador to the theocratic state. But he has converted to the monotheistic religion and has remained there, in a position of power. Now, the old ambassador is angered because the revolution is instigated by his old kingdom. And, therefore, he irrationally "scapegoats" the PCs, sending mercenaries to eliminate them. The second personage who harbors a dislike of the PCs is a crazed but high ranking inquisitor who knows of the adventurers' old acquaintance; and who, through guilt by association, publicly accuses them of spiritual treason. The story-arc is completed when the PCs have defused the situation through diplomacyor by beating the enemy cleric and inquisitors at their own games.

Turning point(s): **[Defeat creatures]** The first stage will involve a lot of action and street skirmishes. The PCs quickly will become aware of their enemies through guerilla ambushes and public accusations from the crazed inquisitor. They even might mistake the ambushes for attacks ordered by the inquisitor, thereby, confusing matters even more. It's possible that allies would stage counterattacks, causing bloodshed in the streets and getting the whole lot of them declared outlaws. **[Conceal identity]** The PCs probably will want to find avenues of escape from the barrage of accusations and hired killers. They're also likely to aspire to "lay low" for a while, to collect their thoughts and further their resources. **[Attain truth]** Once the dust settles from the initial attacks, the PCs must discover the people and reasons behind the attacks and accusations. **[Solve predicament]** In order to restore their reputation, they must tap all levels of ability and skill; such as charisma, diplomacy, powers of evaluation, chivalry, and urbane knowledge. Somehow, they publicly must prove that the inquisitor is wrong; as well as stop future attacks, as instigated by the former ambassador.

Subplot: **[Hinder creature(s)–Trigger]** IF the heat on the PCs becomes too great, THEN the GM might decide that a powerful patron or political ally shall rise to publicly defend the PCs; in effect, preventing his subjects from being declared outlaws from

the outset. He might harbor the PCs, aid them with self-defense, refuse to allow their public arrest, and raucously defend their innocence. **[Escape place]** Or, even if the previous subplot is used, it might only be a temporary "fix," since the patron is murdered in his sleep via magic spell or invisible stalker. The haven suddenly becomes a prison requiring escape from local authorities, lead by the inquisitor's unjust crusade.

Repair reputation, Plot 2–Nuisance
Strife
Priesthood vs. Nobility/drama

Inciting incident: The adventurers are cajoled into visiting a female family member, or friend to their patron, in a nearby city. They are warned that she is prone to getting herself in trouble; and, therefore, are asked to watch over her, to keep her out of trouble. This person is a beautiful and charming priestess, worshipping a lesser goddess of iconoclasm. Unfortunately, the priestess is dangerously "loopy."

Synopsis: The priestess reveals to the PCs that her temple is revolting against the laws of male primogeniture with respect to armorial bearings, title, and land. The all-female temple demands heraldic recognition, and pleads with the monarch to prepare for all female clergy new armorial bearings. But her temple receives only the curt reply, "Only males of noble birth, or elevated to such status, are entitled to armorial bearings. This includes the clergy." (Quote paraphrased from Living Fantasy, GFW-III). Angered, the priestess has officers of heraldry abducted. To the utter shock of the nobility, the young priestess ransoms the herald, king of arms, and pursuivant for the promise of armorial bearings. She also steals from the office and ransoms the physical register of all persons entitled to armorial bearings. Unfortunately, the PCs are her guests; and, consequently, are perceived as accessories to her crimes. The story-arc is completed when the PCs effectively have dealt with the priestess, and have absolved themselves of culpability. And, even if the heroes ultimately agree with the woman's principles, they should recognize her methods as crazy and immoral.

Turning point(s): **[Hinder creature]** The first turning point will come when the adventurers decide whether to support the actions of the priestess (thereby earning disrepute and possibly demerits on the part of the GM), or to thwart her plans; despite having a friend or ally in common. Either way, the priestess becomes a real nuisance by drawing the PCs into conflicts between the temporal and spiritual lords **[Rescue Creatures]** If the PCs escort the abductees to freedom, the priestess will do nothing. She only will stand idly by, with a quixotic smile upon her face. However, once her plans are foiled, she'll nonchalantly increase the severity of her actions (see possible subplots). **[Retrieve item]** The PCs might wish to seek out and return the heraldic registry to the office of armorial bearings; especially, once the abductees are returned to the authorities. In any event, the PCs never are arrested on the spot. This is because the constables are told, by their superiors, that the PCs involvement ought to be handled by a spiritual, rather than temporal, court. And the spiritual bureaucracy moves a bit slowly this year...

Subplots: **[Hinder creatures–Trigger]** IF the PCs free the abductees, and return the registry of armorial bearings to its office, THEN the priestess will launch her final machination. Suddenly, the office of heraldry is razed by a Flame Strike spell (or some similar divine activation); a blatant attack perpetrated either by herself or one of her fanatic devotees. Nobody is killed, because the strike occurs "after hours," but the complete register of all persons entitled to armorial bearings is immolated. Then, predictably, the fanatic priestess is nowhere to be found. Then, and if applicable, the adventurers are contacted and warned that they shall be stripped of their own armorial bearings (or the organization they belong to), if they fail to find the woman and bring her back to face justice for her extreme vandalism.

Rescue creature(s), Plot 1–Competitor
Disaster
Floods/drama

Inciting incident: A week of terrible weather has flooded several islands of an archipelago. The PCs are begged to jump into ships and save the common folk from drowning. Such a mission would earn them great repute. But there is another party of adventurers, who also are embarking on a "rescue mission," who're cruel opportunists; intending to save only those who promise to pay for their lives with everything they own (which, if the truth be known, isn't much). Even worse, whenever the PCs draw near to an island, the mercenaries try to sabotage their efforts, while blaming consequent deaths of innocents on PC "ineptitude".

Synopsis: The PCs probably use relatively small vessels for their rescue mission; such as cutters normally employed in trading from port to port along a coastline. In contrast, their competitors travel via schooner, accompanied by a mage who protects them from the elements and fills their sails with an arcane wind. The story-arc is complete when all possible rescues from the floods are enacted, and the nasty competitor "rescuers" are defeated by means of disgrace or bloodshed.

Turning point(s): **[Rescue locale]** The people of the archipelago must be saved from the dangerous flood waters, caused by the recent storms. The endpoint is reached when everybody has been rescued . But each island can be considered a turning point in the plotline. **[Defeat creatures]** Not only must the PCs contend with the villainous competitors, they are forced to deal with threats such as aboleths, dire sharks, kuo-toa, sea hags, and water naga. **[Prevent event]** Frequently, the PCs will find themselves stopping the attempted sabotage of their rescue operations by the competitors; whose companion mage always is summoning terrible weather just as the heroes are extracting people from floating wreckage.

Subplot: **[Avenge person (merfolk), as a subset of the Defeat creatures turning point]** The PCs are witness to the enemy competitors killing a merman or mermaid as she tries to bring a flood victim to safety; and, then, then telling the victim that they must pay to be saved. This generates the strong prospect of an alliance between the PCs and the merfolk, who certainly will want to exact vengeance upon the cruel mercenary sailors.

Rescue creature, Plot 2–Nuisance
Strife
Nobility vs. Nobility/action

Inciting incident: Every year, a troupe of jongleurs sets up a carnival, and snatches for their performance a provincial freak. The freak can be any noticeably unusual or deformed person or beast. But the troupe always steals the creature from a team of nobleman experimenters; one of whom is a Theurgist, and the other one a person who's competent with Alchemia, Enchantment, and Arcana (as per the LA game skill-bundles). These noble gentlemen study both healing and abjuration magicks, to deal with curses (including lycanthropy and vampirism), mongoloids, arcane deformities, and strange beasts born of alchemical mishaps. The two men work in partial secrecy, outside of the ecclesiastic order, and their experiments only are tolerated by the crown. Once again, the carnival is in town, and one of their freaks has been kidnapped. These creatures are never returned alive, so the experimenters hire the PCs to rescue their charge, find out who in the aristocracy allows for the abductions to continue, and get them to cease supporting the practice.

Synopsis: Every year, a troupe of troupe of carnival-like jongleurs comes to visit the hamlet, town, or city. As described in Living Fantasy (GFW-III), this always is a "celebration of several days length in which persons possibly exchange gifts, receive trinkets given to festival-goers by groups parading, dress in costume when celebrating, parade or watch paraders, dance and sing, generally revel and carouse." Without a doubt, although aristocrats are not likely to join the general throng, they will have their own private parties of carnival theme (LF). This particular troupe is well liked, and famous for catering to the aristocrats. The carnival has been an annual nuisance to the experimenters, but the aristocracy has prevented any retaliatory action. The heroes are hired to rescue a kidnapped freak, and to stop the troupe of jongleurs from continuing to abduct freaks. The story-arc will be completed when PCs end the illegal behavior of the jongleurs, since a one-time rescue merely would be a transitory solution.

Turning point(s): **[Solve predicament]** The PCs must find some way to diplomatically convince the aristocrats that the practice of abducting freaks is immoral. Since it's patently unlikely that such a request would be met with empathy, the use of diplomacy might come in handy. Or, failing that, a well timed Charm Person spell might be effective. Clearly, trying to appeal to the good sensibilities of the jongleurs won't work, since they enjoy abducting strange people and beasts for show. And intimidation alone is no guarantee of compliance a year hence. **[Defeat creatures]** Since the jongleurs are going to be unhappy with any attempt to remove a creature from their charge, combat is inevitable. Some of the aristocrats will side with the jongleurs, angering the noble experimenters. Ergo, the situation might threaten to spiral out of control into a full political crisis, noble vs. noble.

Subplot: **[Solve predicament–Trigger]** IF the PCs shrewdly use the Ability of Evaluation (LA game), or the skill of Sense Motive, THEN they will ascertain the prospect of a supporter. They will, thereby, gain an ally of either an aristocrat or jongleur, and/or knowledge leading to the key figures involved with the annual, illegally enacted freak show.

Rescue locale, Plot 1–Competitor
War
Sub-Continental-Invasion/horror

Inciting incident: An armed conflict between nations or states in a major subdivision of a continent, whether for reason of defense, conquest, revenge or unbridled ethnocentric hatred, is the backdrop of this plotline. The subcontinent is in chaos, with several states overrun by an invasion of evil outsiders. The PCs will need to rescue their environment from looming death and destruction. But they'll require soldiers and the support of the provincial lords. Yet, they face competitors also vying for favor, support and patronage, or fellowship, and could lose the resources needed to keep themselves alive, much less rescuing the locale.

Synopsis: A darkness has descended upon the land as an invading horde of horror advances on the home town of the adventurers. The invading army consists of demons, devils, hell hounds, howlers, night hag, nighmares, shadow matiffs, vargouilles, xills, and yeth hounds. The theme being horror, the GM will want to stage many a battle wherein NPCs die horrendous and gory deaths at the hands of the enemy. Fostering a sense of doom and gloom without promoting surrender is important, and the story-arc is deemed complete when the PCs have bested and shamed their competitors, and found a way to banish the evil army back to the netherworlds from whence they came.

Turning point(s): **[Find artifact & Retrieve item]** It is revealed that one of the monsters of high rank in the invading army holds an item that can close the rift from which they have been pouring out onto the prime material plane of existence. Such a feat requires the Codex of infinite planes (Epic Level artifact), held by the leader of the enemy hoard, a balrog. **[Defeat creature(s)]** The PCs must rout the invading army. The fights, though they might go well enough for the heroes (assuming intelligent play and good luck), do not turn out well for their families, friends, and allies. The adventuring competitors never help the PCs; instead, allowing their friends and associates to die in every circumstance that could have been prevented, all the while battling the evil on behalf of the warlords. The kingdoms are crumbling, human and Alfar alike. And, if victory is not attained soon, humanity might loose its foothold in the world. Powerful divination can reveal that killing the leader of the army instantly will cause the banishment of the remainder of the army. Why this is a mystery is bound to the codex.

Subplot: **[Attain truth, subset of Defeat creatures]** The PCs learn that the first invaders were summoned by a mad sorcerer operating out of a nearby swamp. The powers-that-be would be grateful if the PCs were to behead the traitor. Unfortunately, the swamp is overrun with undead monsters controlled by the sorcerer, who now is an angry specter floating above the deep, dark, placid waters.

Rescue locale, Plot 2–Sudden attack
War
Local–Integration/action

Inciting incident: The lord of the fiefdom worries about ways to defuse racial tensions, and has had limited success achieving local acceptance of half-orcs. But his local campaign of an "integrative pacifistic war" suddenly is threatened when he is slain,

taking his progressive morality with him to the grave. He dies as a result of a sudden attack on his stronghold by such entities as orcs, goblins, trolls, and hobgoblins. Synopsis: The PCs traveling through a fiefdom find themselves caught up in a local war between humans and goblinoid races. A military campaign of integration was underway. This program was advocated by a nature priest who experienced philosophical problems with the notions of absolute good and evil. The result of his idealism largely was disastrous. The integration attempts have resulted in the deaths of many a fine solider, killed by a goblinoid when ordered not to raise his weapon in self-defense. The story-arc is resolved when the PCs rout the humanoid monsters, driving them back to hide in the foothills of their origination.

Turning point(s): **[Conquer locale]** Before the fiefdom can be rescued, the stronghold where the lord lies in a pool of his own blood must be retaken. The PCs must rally the demoralized and frightened soldiers, prepare them for a final battle with the humanoid tribes in order to rout them back to the foothills, and drive them back into the dark holes. **[Solve predicament]** Certain NPCs will be insistent upon supporting the stupidly idealistic notion of "integration," in the context of the local war with humanoids. Reminding them of the death of their leader only fuels their fervor, because they think of him as a martyr. The PCS must convince the devotees that their late liege's notion of integration works best when the conquered creatures are less murderous and evil by nature. **[Defeat creatures]** Of course, many battles must be won, pockets of resistance eliminated and resources cut off, so that the humanoids will have no choice but to return to the damp discomfort of their former caves.

Subplots: **[nix goal–a single, role-playing encounter, subset of Defeat creatures]** The adventurers encounter a goblin of good alignment named Upkeer; a homely but friendly rogue, of a level comparable to that of the PCs. He offers his allegiance and aid to the heroes. The goblin possesses knowledge of the hideouts and abilities of his former leaders. He claims that the former lord of the fiefdom was instrumental in his change of heat.

Retrieve item, artifact, or beast–Trigger
War
Continental–Holy War/action

Inciting Incident: The heroes are swept into a titanic battle stretching over the entire continent. The conflict, said to be holy war, actually is racially motivated; even if instigated by the politics and personal conflicts of the gods. The bellicose deities of the humans declare war with the gods of the Alfar; which, accordingly, results in a bloody clash of civilizations. IF the PCs Gather Information or search for clues on how to resolve the problem, they will learn of an artifact or relic that must be retrieved in order to stop the bloodshed.

Synopsis: The PCs, in order to prevent the collapse of civilization, learn of a forged legend of an item of power; one supposedly symbolic of the unity possible between races. Upon retrieving it they will have reached the endpoint; whereupon, a new story begins, determining the fate of the human and alfar empires.

Turning Point(s): **[Find & Explore Place]** First, the PCs must discover the artifact's location. The item is hidden in a basaltic cavern near an active volcano, but the cavern's network of galleries and twisting passages is huge, unmapped, and must be explored. **[Find Artifact]** Clues will be scatted about the cavern leading the PCs to the location of the artifact. The redemptive artifact will be a small object; possibly, a scrying bowl, crystal ball, or rune stones.

Subplot: **[Attain Truth, subset of endpoint]** Once found, the item will have writ upon it an aphorism describing the need for unity against a common foe. So far so good, but the true effect of the object will be otherwise inscrutable. It turns out that the artifact's power is somewhat incongruous with the notion of redemption, and far more concrete than symbolic. The object summons a dangerous foe from across the sea, one who arrives at nearby shores by sailing ship within a lunar cycle. Once activated, all of the participating characters will dream of the summoned sea people; and they shall know who comes to pillage, burn, and rape the land. The sea people will overwhelm the free races of the continent, that is, if they fail to cooperate.

Solve predicament–Patronal mandate
Upheaval
Intellectual revolution/drama

Inciting incident: The PCs are commanded, by their patron, to stop a so-called intellectual revolution.

Synopsis: A subculture of intellectuals has arisen that has declared the deities to be supernaturally augmented mortals, rather than innately superior. They call themselves the Society of Paragons, and some are quite powerful within their established orders. Their movement is lead by a demigod, and“unbeknownst to his followers“a proxy of a god of strife and confusion. The demigod promotes the subcultures ideas and ideals, and encourages them to end their undignified servitude to the established religions. The patron, whether priest or noble, knows this to be heresy; notions quite dangerous to the social order. But he or she wishes to end the revolution peacefully, if possible, knowing the true nature of the demigod.

Turning point(s): **[Attain truth]** The PCs must find proof concerning the true nature and allegiance of the demigod who leads the Society of Paragons. [Prevent event] The next step, once the demigods nature is exposed, would be to stop the public renunciation by the Paragons of the local temple deities [Conquer locale] Finally, there will be some members of the Paragons who refuse to drop their blasphemy and arrogance, not caring that their leader acts out of pretense. The PCs, with whatever forces they can muster, must conquer anyone who stays within the headquarters of the Society of paragon.

Subplot: [Prevent event, subset to Attain truth turning point] The demigod, in truth, wants the Society of Paragons to get themselves killed due to religious defiance. And, subsequent to their death, he plans to capture their souls and bring their bottled essences to his deital master in the outer planes. Then, chortling sardonically, the demigod would sacrifice their souls for the sake of his master's nourishment.

Solve riddle–Friend in need
Cataclysm
Interplanetary Conflicts/mystery

Inciting incident: Magic has gone wild in the world, with all arcane spells rendered unreliable and generally "haywire." A friend of the PCs, a zany expert in Panprobability (LA game Ability), other dimensions, and all aspects of planar travel, admits that he was experimenting with a Gate spell that went terribly awry. Then, he blithely asks the heroes to save the planet.

Synopsis: Although the divine powers of the clergy remain, the weave of heka is unraveling, and the warp and woof of reality is taking a mysterious plunge into a strange land of illusion and nightmare. It seems that a panprobablist mage accidentally opened an invisible, magical conduit straight to a planetary object within the astral plane. And that's affecting both planets, by means of an immense gravitational pull. In short, the heroes' entire planet slowly is getting drawn into the astral plane, with the gravitational pull of the astral planet sucking them through both dimensions. The mystery involves how to close the conduit, since the foolish mage hasn't a clue. The endpoint is reached when the PCs help their friend to avert a cataclysm, or die in the effort.

Turning point(s): **[Attain knowledge]** The PCs must explore libraries, sages, and powerful spellcasters of all classes to learn how to shut down the conduit. **[Escape place]** Occupants of the first places they visit, in an attempt to get help, will treat them as harbingers of doom and seek to kill them. The PCs will have to do battle and flee several places before finding NPCs more willing to help. **[Learn facts]** Ultimately, the heroes learn that their friend's disastrous conduit can be shut down with a unique spell. But the NPC who knows the spell is a riddling lunatic, and a ghost. Solve his riddles and the answers will be found.

Subplot: **[Rescue creature, subset of Escape place turning point]** The panprobablist mage admits his culpability to the authorities, and immediately is sentenced to death for a category of crime hitherto unthinkable: Seeking to destroy the world. The PCs must convince the lords that the mage must be kept alive, to assist with averting planetary doom.

APPENDIX B: COURTS OF LAW

This material originally appeared in Living Fantasy or The Canting Crew, also published by Troll Lord Games. It is repeated here for the convenience of the reader not in possession of that work.

In a fantasy milieu, as in our actual historical model, there are various courts meting out justice.

Judges: The sovereign courts, royal and palatine noble ones deal in "high justice," that meaning these bodies can deliver sentences of death, slavery, bondage, for anyone coming before them, including aristocrats. In general, aristocrats and those accused of state crimes are the ones brought before such courts. Cases of both criminal and civil sort are tried by such court. Courts of powerful nobles can do likewise in regards to those persons who are vassals or otherwise subject to the ruling lord. The justicier usually manages the system, sees to the establishment of sovereign courts and their judges. The determination of cases might be by a panel of judges or by a jury of the peers of the accused. Such courts are not held often, meet as infrequently as four times a year and remain in session until all cases before the court are disposed of.

Judges are of the lower portion of the upper Socio-Economic Class, crown officials appointed by the state justicier, a high-ranking state official serving under the steward of the realm. Their lifestyle is similar to that of a minor noble, a lord.

Magistrates: There are middle-level courts that handle felony charges, or civil suits, against all folk not of the aristocratic (noble or knightly status) class. These courts are of sovereign oversight, or noble management in some cases, and their trials are directed by a magistrate. Sovereign magistrate courts will be held in special buildings. Those of noble direction will generally be held in the court of the noble or some building that noble owns and has directed court be held therein. The magistrate might determine the outcome of a trial, or judgment might be given by a jury of the peers of the accused. These courts meet monthly for as many days as are needed to resolve the cases before them.

Magistrates are of the upper portion of the middle Socio-Economic Class. As are judges, magistrates are appointed by and serve under the justicier. Their lifestyle is similar to that of a well-to-do merchant.

Justices of the Peace: Minor crimes and infractions, petty larceny, misdemeanors, and otherwise inconsequential civil suit matters will come before the court of a justice of the peace. These officials are appointed by the state, or by aristocrats in their domains. These courts meet weekly, again for as many days as are needed to resolve the cases before them.

Justices of the Peace are of the middle portion of the middle Socio-Economic Class. These minor local officials also are appointed by the state justiciar and are accountable to that office. Their lifestyle is similar to that of the wealthy craftsman.

CRIMES	USUAL PUNISHMENT
Misdemeanors, Tried by a Justice of the Peace	
Gaol-breaking	1 month of added time
Battery	$100 and/or 1 week gaol
Lewd Conduct	$100 and/or 1 week gaol
Disorderly Conduct	$100 and/or 1 week gaol
Drunk & Disorderly Conduct	$100 and/or 1 week gaol
Impersonation, Petty	$100 and/or 1 week gaol
Begging without License	$100 and/or 1 week gaol
Prostitution without License	$100 and/or 1 week gaol
Criminal Trespass	$100 and/or 1 week gaol
Soliciting for Prostitution w/o License	$100 and/or 1 week gaol time
Vagrancy	$100 and/or 1 week gaol time
Theft, Petty ($100 or less)	Restitution and $100 &/or 1 week gaol time, 4 week without restitution
Use of False Weights	$100 to $250 and/or up to 1 month of gaol time, plus possible pillorying
Passing Off of Shoddy Goods	$250 to $1,000 and/or 1-2 months of gaol time, plus possible pillorying
Resisting Arrest	$1,000 &/or 1 month in gaol
Gambling without License	$1,000 &/or 1 month in gaol
Disrespect to a Noble/Ecclesiastic	$500 to $2,500 and/or 1-4 months of gaol time, plus possible flogging
Shop Lifting	$500 - $2,500 &/or 1 to 3 months in gaol
Breaking & Entering	$1,000 - $5,000 &/or 1 to 3 months gaol
Assault	$1,000 - $10,000 &/or 1 to 6 months gaol
Adulterating food or drink	$2,000 - $25,000 &/or 1 to 6 months gaol
Coercion	$1,000 - $10,000 &/or 1 to 6 months gaol
Endangering property ditto	$5,000 - $50,000 &/or 6 months in gaol
Endangering life by careless use of magic	$5,000 - $50,000 &/or 12 months gaol
Mental control/domination by magic	$5,000 - $50,000 a&/or 12 months in gaol
Accessory, not otherwise shown	Half the punishment meted out to the offender
Accessory after the fact	Half the punishment meted out to the offender
3rd non-capital offense, felonious	Hanging if branded, branding otherwise
Third non-capital offense, petty	Flogging at the cart if branded, pillorying for 6-24 hours time otherwise

Gary Gygax's Insidiae

Felonies, Tried by a Magistrate

Riot	6 montsh - 2 years bond or penal servitude
Inciting a Riot	3 montsh - 1 year bond or penal servitude
Embezzlement	1-5 years of bond servitude
Impersonation	1-5 years of bond servitude
Destruction of Private Property	1-5 years of bond servitude
Purse Cutting/Snatching	1 year penal servitude
Theft	1-5 years of bond or penal servitude
Receiving Stolen Goods	2 years of bond servitude
Tax Evasion	3 years of bond servitude
Sale of Stolen Goods	3 years of bond servitude
Burglary	3-5 years of bond or penal servitude
Swindling/Confidence Games	3-5 years of bond or penal servitude
Assault with a Deadly Weapon	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Prison-breaking	5 years of added time
Gaol-breaking, accessory	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Grave Robbing	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Harboring a Felon	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Forgery	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Smuggling	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Coin Shaving	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Destruction/Theft of Government Property	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Racketeering/Protection	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Perjury	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Robbery	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Extortion	5 years of bond or penal servitude
Horse Theft, Accessory	5 years of penal servitude
Horse Theft	Branding & 10 years penal servitude
Arson	Branding & 10 years penal servitude
Arson, Accessory	5 years of penal servitude
Maiming of an Innocent	Branding & 10 years of penal servitude
Mutilation of an Innocent	Branding & 10 years of penal servitude
Torture of an Innocent	Branding & 10 yeasrs of penal servitude

High Crimes, Tried by a Judge

Flight from/to Avoid bond Servitude	Sentence converted to penal servitude, one year of time added to service
Leaving area of Villienage	Branding with owners mark and return to owner
Leaving area of Villienage,	Branded; Return to owner for punishment as fit, including death
Bribery of an Official	$5,000 to $25,000 and/or 1-5 years penal servitude
Counterfeiting	Branding & 10 of years penal servitude
Counterfeiting, Accessory	5 years of penal servitude
Desecration of Holy Place	Branding & 15 years penal
Manslaughter	10 years of bond or penal servitude
Rustling	10 years of penal servitude
Necromancy	15 years of penal servitude
Shipwrecking	Death by exposure in a cage
Shipwrecking, Accessory	20 years of penal servitude
Armed/Highway Robbery	Death by hanging
Armed/Highway Robbery, Accessory	20 years of penal servitude
Kidnapping	Branding & 15 years penal servitude
Kidnapping, Accessory	10 of years penal servitude
Lese Majesty	Branding & 10 of years penal servitude
Murder	Execution (usually beheading)
Murder, Accessory	20 years penal servitude
Rape	Branding & 15 of years penal servitude
Rape, Accessory	10 of years penal servitude
Sedition	Tongue removal, branding, & exile
Sedition, Accessory	Branding & 10 of years penal servitude
Sorcery	Execution (usually beheading)
Treason	Hanging, then drawing & quartering
Treason, Accessory	Beheading
Witchcraft	Execution (usually drowning)

APPENDIX C: SILVER, GOLD AND MONEY IN A FANTASY WORLD AND D20

Coins or any other varying types of mediums of exchange have been a part of the human experience for many thousands of years. Generally fashioned from small chips of various metals, shells, valuable stones, ceramic beads and even spices, coins and their counterparts took on a wide variety of shapes and sizes, not to mention weight. Earlier societies made coins from gold, silver, copper, bronze and other metals which they deemed valuable. The value of a particular coin and its metal varied wildly from region to region. As history progressed two types of coins rose to dominance, bronze in China and silver in Greece and Rome.* The overwhelming power and influence of these three societies in their regions left an imprint on the all the adjacent regions. These metals were chosen for a wide variety of reasons far too numerous to mention here, but frequently had, as their basis, some type of common medium of exchange. In Greece, for example the Ox served as the universally prized commodity upon which the money systems was based. Suffice it to say, that values ranged from area to area.

What then to do about money. Anyone creating or dealing with a fantasy world is met with the question of how to establish a money market system. Is one to use coins or some of other medium of exchange? What are coins? What metals are used in their making? How is value set? These are questions which, if realistically dealt with, are almost impossible to answer unless you concentrate on one society, one culture, one people and one time. It is doubtful if the Greek stater (silver or gold) would have meant as much to the Chinese merchant as to an Anatolian one. What then to do?

Mr. Gygax chose the simplest approach. By following the modern standard of the dollar, he establishes a clear value in dollar signs of any given metal. Gold for instance is worth $500. Silver, a less precious item is worth $10 and bronze, at even less, at just under $1. His values are roughly based on those that dominated the Renaissance when gold began to establish itself as the common metal with the greatest value and are set at a 1-10-500 standard.

As concerns the d20 game, there is no correct equation of the standard set by Mr. Gygax. This is largely due to the established rate of exchange in d20 where a gold coin is only 10 times more valuable than a silver one.° Seemingly gold in d20 is undervalued immensely or more plentiful than historically available on earth. However, the Core rule books no where state how much of any given metal is in any given coin only that each coin weighs a third of an ounce. In order to follow the clear and logical guidelines set down in the text we have developed a value of metals chart specifically for the d20 game. You will find that chart on page 103. Furthermore the equations listed below allow for greater cohesion between Mr. Gygax's text and the d20 system. They are developed off of a silver standard. Silver being the base.

$1 is roughly equivalent to 5copper coins
$10 is roughly equivalent to 5silver coins
$500 is roughly equivalent to 25gold coins

This assumes that one silver coin possesses .2 ounces of silver in it and that one gold coin possesses .04 ounces of gold in it. It can be assumed that gold coins are smaller than silver coins or are simply coated in gold.

* These notes reference the Sung Dynasty and it is recognized that the Chinese also produced iron coins. Greece used gold and electrum and Rome bronze as well.

APPENDIX D: HUMAN PHYSICAL TRAITS

Although the focus of this book is for careful selection based on logic and common sense, sometimes the beleaguered DM will find it useful to randomly determine material for an imminent game. Use the charts below to form a complete physical description for humans, elves, dwarfs etc.

NOTE: It is recommend that the DM use minimal rolls to reach maximum descriptive effect. Too much of a good thing is distracting to players.

Body Areas

01-10	Overall body type
11-20	Skin/Complexion
21-30	Head
31-40	Neck
41-50	Torso, upper back
51-60	Torso, upper front
61-70	Arms
71-80	Torso, lower back
81-90	Torso, lower front
91-00	Legs

Overall Body Type

Height

01-14	Average
15-28	Diminutive
29-42	Miniscule
43-57	Short
58-71	Short, very
72-85	Tall
86-00	Tall, very

Musculature

01-33	Ectomorph
34-67	Endomorph
68-00	Mesomorph

Ectomorph: Light body build; slight muscular development

01-11	Average
12-22	Frail
23-33	Gawky
34-44	Lanky
45-55	Scrawny
56-66	Slender
67-78	Slender, wiry
79-89	Thin
90-00	Willowy

Endomorph: Heavy rounded body

01-12	Average
13-25	Corpulent
26-37	Fat
38-50	Obese
51-62	Plump
63-75	Stocky
76-88	Stocky, muscular
89-00	Stocky, very muscular

Mesomorph: Husky, muscular body

01-10	Average
11-20	Buff
21-30	Built
31-40	Cut
41-50	Muscular
51-60	Muscular slender
61-70	Muscular, corded
71-80	Muscular, heavy
81-90	Ripped
91-00	Toned

Body Shape

01-08	Ape-like (no ectomorphs)
09-16	Average
17-24	Heavy-hipped
25-32	Heavy-legged
33-39	Pear-shaped
40-47	Rail-like (ectomorphs only)
48-55	Rotund (endomorphs only)
56-62	Slab-like (no ectomorphs)
63-69	Spare (ectomorphs only)
70-77	Stick-like
78-85	Squat (no ectomorphs)
86-92	Square (no ectomorphs)
93-00	V-shaped (mesomorphs)

Skin/Complexion

Skin

01-05	Chapped
06-10	Coarse
11-15	Creased
16-20	Fine
21-25	Firm
26-30	Flaky
31-35	Furry
36-40	Gnarled
41-45	Hairy
46-50	Leathery
51-55	Loose
56-60	Lumpy
61-65	Oily
66-70	Pocked
71-75	Scaly
76-80	Scarred
81-85	Smooth
86-90	Splotchy
91-95	Warty
96-00	Wrinkled

Complexion

01-12	Dark
13-23	Fair
24-34	Freckled
35-45	Ghostly
46-56	Grayish
57-67	Pallid
68-78	Porcelain
79-89	Rosy
90-00	Tanned

Complexion Color

01-03	Black, coal
04-06	Black, ebony
07-09	Brown, bronze
10-12	Brown, cinnamon
13-15	Brown, light
16-18	Brown, mahogany
19-21	Brown, muddy
22-24	Brown, olive
25-27	Brown, tawny
28-30	Red, blush
31-33	Red, brownish
34-36	Red, coppery
37-39	Red, crimson
40-41	Red, ruby
42-44	Red, sun kissed
45-47	Red, yellowish
48-50	Tan, dark
51-53	Tan, golden
54-56	Tan, light
57-59	Tan, olive
60-62	White, albino
63-65	White, florrid
66-68	White, olive cast
69-71	White, pale
72-73	White, pink cast
74-76	White, ruddy
77-79	White, tan
80-82	White, tanned dark
83-85	White, yellow cast (sallow)
86-88	Yellow, dark
89-91	Yellow, golden
92-94	Yellow, ivory
95-97	Yellow, muddy
98-00	Yellow, pale

Head

Head

01-14	Size
15-29	Shape
30-43	Head Hair
44-57	Face Shape
58-72	Facial Features
73-86	Facial Expression/Look
87-00	Ears

Size
01-34 Average
35-67 Small
68-00 Large

Shape
01-09 Bullet-shaped
10-18 Egg-shaped
19-27 Flat-skulled
28-36 Irregular
37-46 Long
47-55 Lumpy
56-64 Oval, long
65-73 Oval, wide
74-82 Pointed
83-91 Round
92-00 Square

Head Hair
01-34 Bald
35-67 Shaved
68-00 Ear-back fringe

Hair Color
01-02 Black, brown
03-05 Black, dull
06-07 Black, ebony
08-09 Black, raven
10-12 Blond, brassy
13-15 Blonde
16-17 Blonde, ash
18-19 Blonde, dull (dirty)
20-21 Blonde, flaxen
22-23 Blonde, golden
24-25 Blonde, honey-colored
26-27 Blonde, platinum
28-30 Blonde, straw
31-32 Blonde, titian (strawberry)
33-35 Blonde, towheaded
36-37 Blue-Black
38-39 Brown
40-42 Brown, chestnut
43-44 Brown, chocolate
45-46 Brown, dark
47-48 Brown, dun
49-50 Brown, golden
51-53 Brown, honey
54-56 Brown, light
57-59 Brown, mouse-colored
60-61 Brown, red
62-64 Brown, rusty
65-66 Brown, sandy
67-68 Brown, tan
69-71 Gray
72-74 Gray, iron
75-76 Red
77-79 Red, auburn
80-81 Red, brick
82-84 Red, carrot
85-86 Red, coppery
87-89 Red, rusty
90-91 Red-henna dyed
92-93 Salt & pepper
94-96 Silver
97-98 Streaked (find colors)
99-00 White

Texture/Growth
01-16 Average
17-33 Coarse
34-50 Fine
51-67 Thick
68-84 Thin
85-00 Wiry

Hair Types
01-08 Bushy
09-16 Cowlicked
17-24 Curly
25-33 Downy
34-41 Feathery
42-50 Kinky
51-58 Pepper-corned
59-66 Poker Straight
67-75 Ringleted
76-83 Spiky
84-91 Straight
92-00 Wavy

Length
01-12 Average
13-24 Bobbed
25-37 Clipped (burr cut)
38-50 Long
51-62 Medium
63-75 Short
76-87 Shoulder length
88-00 Waist-length

Hair Style
01-03 Bald, Shaven
04-06 Bangs
07-09 Bouffonted
10-12 Braided, multi
13-15 Braided, two
16-18 Braids, wrapping head
19-22 Corn-rowed
23-25 High and Tight (crue cut)
26-29 Mullet
30-32 Pageboy
33-35 Parted, left
36-38 Parted, middle
39-41 Parted, right
42-45 Parted, zig-zag
46-48 Piled
49-51 Pony tail
52-54 Pony tails each side
55-57 Que
58-60 Scalplock
61-63 Scalplock, Roached
64-66 Sides long, top short
67-69 Sides shaved
70-72 Spiked
73-76 Swept back
77-79 Tonsured
80-82 Top knot
83-85 Tousled
86-88 Twist/bun, back of head
89-91 Twist/bun, top of head
92-94 Uncombed/tangled
95-97 Unkempt
98-00 Windblown

Face Shape
Plane
01-20 Angular
21-40 Average
41-60 Dished
61-80 Flat
81-00 Sharp

Shape
01-14 Heart
15-28 Oval
29-42 Oval, reverse
43-56 Pointed (reverse triangle)
57-70 Round
71-85 Square
86-00 Wide

Facial Features
Facial Hair
01-10 Beardless
11-20 Beardless, in need of shave
21-30 Beardless, shaved
31-40 Beardless, long muttens
41-50 Beard
51-60 Full beard
61-70 Moustache
71-80 Moustache joined to beard
81-90 Moustache joined/sideburns
91-00 Sideburns (porkchops)

Beard
Growth
01-33 Average
34-66 Thick
67-00 Thin

Length
01-17 Long
18-34 Long, braided
35-51 Long, tangled
52-67 Medium
68-84 Short
85-00 Stubble

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Style
01-08 Braided
09-17 Bristling
18-25 Bushy
26-33 Curled
34-42 Forked
43-50 Fu Manchu
51-59 Goat-like
60-67 Joined to mustache
68-76 Joined to sideburns
77-84 Ringleted
85-92 Spaded
93-00 Van Dyke (lower lip only)

Full beard (mustaches and sideburns included)
01-09 Braided
10-18 Bristling
19-27 Bushy
28-36 Combed
37-45 Curled
46-54 Forked
55-63 Goat-like
64-72 Ringleted
73-82 Spaded
83-91 Tangled
92-00 Unkempt

Moustache
01-07 Bristling
08-14 Bushy
15-21 Curled
22-28 Drooping
29-35 Hairline
36-42 Handlebar
43-49 Joined to beard
50-56 Joined to sideburns
57-63 Parted
64-70 Pointed
71-77 Sides of upper lip
78-85 Thick
86-93 Thin
94-00 Under nose (sides shaved)

Sideburns
01-15 Boot-shaped
16-29 Curley
30-43 Fuzzy
44-57 Joined to beard
58-71 Joined to mustache
72-85 Narrow
86-00 Wide

Forehead
01-11 Broad
12-23 Bulging
24-34 Flat
35-45 High
46-56 Low
57-67 Lumpy
68-78 Narrow
79-89 Rough
90-00 Widow's-peaked

Eyebrows
01-14 Absent/shaved
15-28 Average
29-42 Bushy
43-57 Penciled
58-71 Plucked
72-86 Thick
87-00 Thin

Eyebrow Shape
01-07 Arched
08-14 Average (downward curve)
15-21 Boomerang-shaped
22-27 Cocked, left higher than right (find shape)
28-33 Cocked, right high, left low
34-39 Continuous, straight
40-46 Continuous, down curve at bridge of nose
47-52 Gull-wing
53-59 Lowering
60-66 Slanting upwards
67-73 Slanting upwards
74-80 Straight
81-86 Turning downwards
87-93 Turning upwards
94-00 Upward-curved

Eyes

Descriptors
01-12 Almond-shaped
13-25 Down-slanted
26-38 Hooded
39-50 Long
51-63 Round
64-76 Slanted
77-88 Slitted
89-00 Squarish

Optional Descriptors
01-07 Blind
08-15 Blind, one eye
16-22 Bug-eyed
23-29 Cross-eyed
30-37 Glaring
38-45 Goggling (pop-eyed)
46-53 Saucer-like
54-61 Squinting
62-69 Staring
70-76 Unblinking
77-84 Wall-eyed
85-92 Wandering eyed (left/right)
93-00 Wild-eyed

Eye Setting
01-14 Average
15-28 Bulging
29-42 Close
43-56 Deep
57-71 Sunken
72-86 Uneven
87-00 Wide

Eye Size
01-16 Average
17-33 Beady
34-50 Big
51-67 Large
68-84 Small
85-00 Uneven

Eye Color
01-02 Black
03-04 Blue
05-06 Blue to gray
07-08 Blue, bright
09-10 Blue, dark
11-12 Blue, ice
13-14 Blue, midnight
15-16 Blue, periwinkle
17-18 Blue, sky
19-20 Blue-green
21-22 Blue, watery
23-24 Blue-lilac
25-26 Blue-violet
27-28 Brown
29-31 Brown to hazel
32-33 Brown to yellow
34-35 Brown, bright
36-37 Brown, dark
38-39 Brown, golden
40-41 Brown, light
42-43 Brown, pale
44-45 Brown, reddish
46-47 Gray
48-49 Gray to blue
50-51 Gray, blue tint
52-53 Gray, green tint
54-55 Gray, ice
56-57 Gray, iron
58-59 Gray, pale
60-61 Green
62-63 Green to hazel
64-65 Green, bright
66-67 Green, Kelly
68-69 Green, pale
70-71 Green, pea
72-73 Green, Seafoam
74-75 Hazel
76-77 Hazel to brown
78-80 Hazel to green
81-82 Hazel, gold flecks

83-84 Irises different colors
85-86 Irises ringed w different color
87-88 Milky (blind)
89-90 One iris split (find colors)
91-92 Pink
93-94 White
95-96 Yellow
97-98 Yellow to brown
99-00 Yellow, golden

Eye Pupils
01-14 Average
15-29 Large
30-44 Lightless
45-58 Oval, high
59-72 Oval, long
73-86 Slit (cat-like or reptilian)
87-00 Small

Eyeball (White of the Eye)
01-20 Blood-shot
21-40 Bright
41-60 Nearly absent
61-80 Surrounds iris widely (staring effect)
81-00 Yellowish

Eye Lids
01-12 Average
13-23 Creased
24-34 Drooping
35-45 Drooping, one only
46-56 Folds at ends
57-67 Folds at inner sides
68-78 Heavy
79-89 Painted
90-00 Wide open

Eye Lashes
01-13 Average
14-25 Curly
26-38 False
39-50 Long
51-62 Mascara-coated
63-74 Short
75-87 Thick
88-00 Thin

Cheekbones
01-25 Average
26-50 High
51-75 Protruding
76-00 Wide

Cheeks
01-09 Average
10-18 Cherub
19-27 Chubby
28-36 Dimpled
37-45 Drooping
46-54 Fat
55-63 Flat
64-72 Hollow
73-82 Puffy
83-91 Round
92-00 Sunken

Nose

Nose Size
01-13 Average
14-26 Button
27-38 Cherry
39-50 Huge
51-63 Large
64-75 Nub
76-88 Small
89-00 Tiny

Nose Shape
01-07 Bridgeless
08-14 Broken
15-21 Bulbous
22-28 Down-turned
29-35 Flat
36-43 Hawk-like
44-50 High-bridged
51-58 Hooked
59-65 Long
66-72 Narrow
73-79 Pointed
80-86 Roman
87-93 Sharp
94-00 Upturned

Nostrils
01-11 Average
12-22 Elongated
23-33 Flared
34-44 Gaping
45-55 Hairy
56-66 Large
67-78 Pinched
79-89 Slitted
90-00 Small

Mouth
01-13 Average
14-26 Compressed
27-39 Full
40-51 Large
52-63 Puckered
64-75 Slack-jawed
76-88 Small
89-00 Wide

Shape
01-12 Average
13-25 Down-curved (frowning)
26-38 Drooping
39-50 Square
51-63 Cornes turned down
64-75 Turned up at the corners
76-87 Up-curved (smiling)
88-00 V-shaped

Lips
01-07 Average
08-13 Bee-stung
14-19 Blubbery
20-26 Cupid's bow
27-33 Down-pointing lower lip
34-40 Full
41-46 Long upper lip, thin
47-53 Out-thrust (find type)
54-60 Parted (find type)
61-66 Pouting
67-73 Pursed
74-79 Sunken
80-86 Thick
87-93 Thin
94-00 Thin, near lipless

Teeth
01-07 Average
08-14 Broken
15-21 Buck-toothed
22-28 Crooked
29-35 False
36-42 Gap-toothed (front)
43-49 Gap-toothed (general)
50-56 Large
57-63 Missing teeth
64-70 None (toothless)
71-77 Perfect
78-84 Small
85-92 Snaggled
93-00 Straight

Color
01-07 Blackish
08-14 Brownish
15-21 Gold
22-28 Grayish
29-35 Greenish
36-42 Ivory
43-49 Pearl
50-57 Stained
58-64 White, dull
65-71 White, sparkling
72-79 Wooden
80-86 Yellowish
87-93 Coated, gold
94-00 Coated, silver

Condition
01-25 Average
26-50 Fang-like canines
51-75 Filed
76-00 Rotting

Tongue

Size
01-33 Average
34-67 Long
68-00 Short

Descriptors
01-09 Blotchy
10-18 Coated
19-27 Forked
28-37 Lolling
38-46 Normal
47-55 Odd-colored
56-64 Pink
65-73 Pointed
74-82 Red
83-91 Speckled
92-00 Wide

Chin

Size
01-33 Average
34-67 Large
68-00 Medium

Shape
01-08 Average
09-15 Cleft (find shape)
16-23 Dimpled (find shape)
24-30 Double (find shape)
31-37 Lantern-jawed
38-44 Pointed
45-51 Prognathus
52-58 Receding
59-65 Receding, near-chinless
66-72 Rounded
73-79 Square
80-86 Strong
87-93 Wattled (find shape)
94-00 Weak

Facial Expression/Look

01-50 Table 1
51-00 Table 2

Table 1
01-03 Angelic
04-06 Angry
07-09 Authoritative
10-12 Avaricious
13-15 Benign
16-18 Bird-like
19-21 Bored
22-24 Bovine
25-27 Cat-like
28-30 Cheerful
31-33 Cherub-like
34-36 Child-like
37-39 Clouded
40-42 Compassionate
43-45 Confused
46-48 Craggy
49-51 Cruel
52-54 Cunning
55-57 Demonic
58-60 Devilish
61-64 Diabolic
65-67 Distant
68-70 Dog-like
71-73 Foxy
74-76 Friendly
77-79 Hard
80-82 Haughty
83-85 Haunted
86-88 Hawkish
89-91 Hostile
92-94 Inquisitive
95-97 Jovial
98-00 Lascivious

Table 2
01-03 Laughing
04-06 Leering
07-09 Mad (insane)
10-12 Malign
13-15 Maternal/Paternal
16-18 Mischievous
19-21 Mobile
22-24 Pained
25-27 Peaceful
28-30 Prudish
31-33 Reptilian
34-36 Retarded
37-39 Saintly
40-42 Sanguine
43-46 Savage
47-49 Sexy
50-52 Smiling
53-55 Smug
56-58 Sneering
59-61 Sour
62-64 Stern
65-67 Surprised
68-70 Suspicious
71-73 Tired
74-76 Unctuous
77-79 Vulpine
80-82 Wide-eye
83-85 Wild
86-88 Wise
89-91 Wizened
92-94 Wolfish
95-97 Worn
98-00 Young

Ears
01-33 Average location
34-67 High on head
68-00 Low on head

Ear Size
01-11 Average
12-22 Large
23-33 None
34-45 Oval, long
46-56 Pointed
57-67 Round
68-78 Shell-like
79-89 Small
90-00 Square

Ear Lobes
01-25 Attached
26-50 Average
51-75 None
76-00 Pendant

Ear Prominence
01-20 Average
21-40 Flat to head
41-60 None, lizard-like holes
61-80 Sticking out fully
81-00 Sticking out partially

Ear Condition
01-20 Average
21-40 Cauliflower
41-60 Distended by insertions
61-80 Notched
81-00 Pierced

Neck

Length
01-17 Abnormally Long
18-34 Average
35-51 Long
52-67 Long, swan-like
68-83 Short
84-00 Virtually none

Size
01-15 Average
16-29 Fat
30-43 Slender
44-57 Thick
58-72 Thick, corded
73-86 Thin
87-00 Thin (pencil-like)

Condition
01-14 Adam's apple prominent
15-28 Creased
29-42 Flabby
43-56 Leathery
57-71 Smooth
72-86 Wattled
87-00 Wrinkled

Torso, upper back

Length
01-34 Average
35-67 Long
68-00 Short

Shoulders
01-25 Average
26-50 Broad
51-75 Narrow
76-00 Sloping

Back
01-33 Average
34-67 Broad
68-00 Narrow

Unusual Features (optional)
01-15 Bent
16-30 Crooked
31-44 Curved
45-58 Hairy
59-72 Hump
73-86 Scarred
87-00 Shoulder blades prominent

Chest (Breast)
01-12 Average
13-24 Barrel-chested/buxom
25-36 Broad/full-bosomed
37-49 Flabby/drooping
50-62 Flat/small-breasted
63-75 Gaunt/skinny
76-87 Muscular/outstanding
88-00 Sunken/flat-breasted

Unusual Features (optional)
01-16 Concave area
17-33 Hairless
34-49 Hairy
50-66 Pigeon-breasted
67-83 Scarred
84-00 Superfluous nipple

Belly
01-10 Average
11-20 Fat
21-30 Flat
31-40 Gorilla-like
41-50 Gut/ Beer belly
51-60 Hard
61-70 Paunchy
71-80 Sunken
81-90 Tight
91-00 Washboard-muscled

Arms

Length
01-25 Ape-like
26-50 Average
51-75 Long
76-00 Short

Descriptor
01-09 Beefy
10-17 Bulging
18-26 Corded
27-34 Fat
35-42 Flabby
43-50 Muscular
51-58 Shapely
59-66 Smooth
67-74 Stick-like
75-83 Thin
84-92 Toned
93-00 Wiry

Hands

Size
01-33 Average
34-66 Large
67-00 Small

Descriptor
01-08 Ape-like
09-16 Big-knuckled
17-25 Bony
26-33 Calloused
34-41 Crooked
42-49 Delicate
50-57 Fat
58-66 Hairy
67-75 Ham-like
76-83 Hard
84-92 Slender
93-00 Soft

Palms
01-17 Broad
18-33 Calloused
34-50 Long
51-66 Hard
67-83 Moist
84-00 Soft

Fingers (Average, long, or short length)

Size
01-33 Average
34-67 Long
68-00 Short

Descriptor
01-08 Banana-like
09-16 Bony
17-25 Bulbous
26-33 Clawed
34-42 Delicate
43-50 Fat
51-59 Hard
60-67 Nimble
68-75 Sausage-like
76-83 Spatulate
84-92 Thick
93-00 Thin

Fingernails

Length
01-33 Average
34-66 Long
67-00 Short

Descriptor
01-12 Claw-like
13-23 Discolored
24-34 Horny
35-45 Manicured
46-56 Ragged
57-67 Sharp
68-78 Talon-like
79-89 Thick
90-00 Yellowed

Torso, lower back

Length
01-33 Average
34-67 Long
68-00 Short

Waist
01-11 Average
12-22 Broad
23-33 Fat
34-44 Lean
45-55 Narrow
56-66 Thick
67-77 Thickly muscled
78-88 Thin
89-00 Wasp-like

Hips
01-10 Average
11-20 Boyish
21-30 Broad
31-40 Fat
41-50 Hippo-like
51-60 Lean
61-70 Narrow
71-80 Rounded
81-90 Slender
91-00 Wide

Buttocks
01-05 Apple
06-09 Average
10-14 Bag-like
15-18 Drooping
19-22 Fat
23-26 Flabby
27-31 Flat
32-35 Gigantic
36-40 Ham-like
41-45 Heart-shaped (inverse)
46-49 Hot
50-54 Lean
55-59 Lumpy
60-64 Muscular
65-68 Onion
69-73 Peach-like
74-78 Plump
79-82 Rounded
83-87 Sexy
88-91 Skinny
92-95 Small
96-00 Steatopygic

Torso, lower front
Length
01-34 Average
35-67 Long
68-00 Short

Abdomen/Loins
01-14 Average
15-29 Fat-rolled
30-43 Muscular
44-58 Plump
59-72 Scrawny
73-86 Smooth
87-00 Thin

Legs /Optional Descriptors
01-20 Bandy legged
21-40 Bent-kneed
41-60 Bowlegged
61-80 Knock-kneed
81-00 Pigeon-toed

Thighs
Length
01-33 Average
34-66 Long
67-00 Short

Descriptor
01-10 Average
11-19 Bony
20-28 Bulging
29-37 Curvaceous
38-46 Fat
47-55 Muscular
56-64 Plump
65-73 Thick
74-82 Thin
83-91 Scrawny
92-00 Shapely

Legs
Length
01-33 Average
34-66 Long
67-00 Short

Descriptor
01-09 Average
10-18 Bony
19-26 Bulging
27-34 Curvaceous
35-42 Fat
43-50 Hairy
51-58 Muscular
59-67 Potato-like
68-75 Scrawny
76-83 Shapely
84-91 Thick
92-00 Thin

Feet

Size
01-33 Average
34-67 Large
68-00 Small

Descriptor
01-17 Broad
18-34 Delicate
35-50 Hairy
51-66 Hard
67-83 Slender
84-00 Thick-ankled

Feet, soles
01-20 Calloused
21-40 Delicate
41-60 Flat
61-80 Hard
81-00 Soft

Toes
Size
01-33 Average
34-66 Long
67-00 Short

Descriptor
01-09 Bony
10-18 Bulbous
19-27 Callused
28-36 Clawed
37-45 Delicate
46-54 Fat
55-64 Hammer-like
65-73 Hard
74-82 Spatulate
83-91 Thick
92-00 Thin

Toenails
01-12 Claw-like
13-24 Discolored
25-37 Horny
38-49 Manicured
50-62 Ragged
63-74 Sharp
75-87 Thick
88-00 Yellowed

Optional Adjustments
Missing Part
01-11 Arm
12-22 Ear
23-33 Eye
34-44 Finger
45-55 Foot
56-66 Forearm
67-77 Hand
78-88 Leg
89-00 Toe

Other
01-20 Birth-marked
21-40 Burn-marked
41-60 Mutilated
61-80 Scarred
81-00 Tattooed

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE ADVENTURE

AUTHORS NOTE: This adventure is adapted here as a larger example of plot construction. Also, note that the dialog provided is for flavor and characterization; recite it to your players verbatim at your own risk (PCs love to interrupt NPC soliloquies).

Adventure Title: Demonchild's Gambit
Adventure Theme: Action & Mystery
Origination Locale: City of Dama, in the kingdom of Damavand.

Milieu Events

1. Disaster. The tower of Lord Conrad Vas, lord of the mage college, is blown to smithereens during a celebration, in the city of Dama. The tower erupts in a great conflagration of flame and shattered stone, killing Lord Vas, all due to his loosing control over a summoned demon.

2. Cataclysm, Impending Doom. The demon freed into the city of Dama desperately seeks a magic item that can transport him to his own realm. It's a magic telescope capable of opening portals into extradimensional matrixes, but requires a special gem to operate. If the demon succeeds in opening the rift back into his own realm, he won't bother "closing the door" behind him, leaving the city vulnerable to attack from a demonic realm.

NPCS

Major

Anitra the Enchantress/Wild Card & Enemy: The Lady Instructor of the Mage College, and once a friend of Lord Conrad Vas, she has been seduced to evil by the demon her master summoned. The demon had possessed one of her young students, named Randolf. Anitra will lie and tell the PCs that it was the young apprentice Schuyler who summoned the demon, the monster who killed her master, then ran away with the magic item necessary to defeat it.

Demon/Enemy: The demon summoned by Conrad Vas was amused with his attempt to control him. So amused that he tortured the mage for several nights. But the demon was frustrated to discover that a mere boy stole an essential component of the demo's ticket back home. The component is a gem which is affixed to a magic telescope, the gem magnifying moonlight and channeling it into the scope, casting a solid beam of light that opens portals into his home plane when hitting a vertical surface. In a fit of rage, the demon will blow up Lord Vas's study in the tower, during a festival planned in the courtyard of the mage college (in Act 1). Acting quickly to get the magic gem back, he will possess the young boy Randolf and seduce the Lady Instructor to evil so that she will do his bidding. Picking her brain for information, he finds out that his precious gem was stolen way by the oldest apprentice, the boy Schuyler, taken to safety in an elven village overseen by a priestess of Jord, the Earth Goddess. Anitra wanted the demon banished rather than it having access to a powerful dimensional transportation device. Knowing he cannot defeat the elven Priestess alone, he conjures a false journal, supposedly written by Lord Vas, just for investigators to find, a book leading them to the elves. But the false journal accuses the elven encampment of being a den of sorcery, and implicates Schyuler in the summoning of the Demon himself.

Inspector Henrik/Ally: Inspector Henrik will be attending the festival when the mage college's tower blows up. He will aid the PCs in whatever they need in terms of equipment or (within reason) funds to find out what happened to Lord Vas.

Lady Ivania/Neutral (potential Enemy or Ally): This elven woman holds the title of Odylan, a word meaning "lore collector", studies magic and psychogenics, using her spells to protect her village from harm. She protects a magic item in her temple, a magic stone the demon in Dama misleadingly calls "The Wardstone". The stone is currently guarded by a deital minion (see Part Three of present Volume, types). Schuyler, terrified of the demon, is kept under her care.

Schuyler the thaumaturgist/Wild Card or Ally: A frightened boy, Schyler was commanded by Anitra to run like the wind to the forest home of the Lore Collector, Ivania, where the magic gem the demon sought could be kept safe. Anitra, once seduced to evil by the demon, will accuse the boy of stealing the gem, which she then falsely names "the wardstone", claming it's the only thing that can Damage and/or hinder the demon. The boy is confused, scared to speak to strangers, and might wonder if he is truly at fault because he did frequently peek at Lord Vas's spell books. In fact, nothing was due to his prying, but the PCs might be mislead by his innocent self-effacement.

Minor

Traugott Ironleg/Neutral: The dwarven groundskeeper. Somehow escaped the mind warping effects of the demons attempts to "seduce him to evil", and roams around the courtyard, confused by Anitra's ill behavior and unsettled by the screams he heard coming from the tower. Soon he will be doubly upset by the mage tower exploding. Traugott knows that the boy is innocent and witnessed him running from the college the day before the explosion will take place.

PLOT POINTS

Hooks, turning-points (junctures), and endpoints

Act or Plot 1: The Tower Explodes

Inciting Incident: [Hook: Sudden Attack] Lord Vas is murdered by a demon in an explosion.

Primary Endpoint: Defeat Creature (action)"the demon and other enemies are destroyed, subdued, or banished. Any surviving creatures under the demon's spell are released from bondage at

that point.

Turning-Point 1: Solve predicament (mystery)"The PCs realize that Schuler as enemy is a red herring, that he is not a foe. He did not steal the gem so much as bring it to safety. Or, they do not comprehend that they've been duped and attack the boy and the elven encampment.

Turning-Point 2: Find item (mystery)"the heroes find and retrieve the falsely named wardstone, whether by force or given to them freely by Ilvania. Or, they decide to leave it within the safety of the Earth Goddess temple. Either way, it is found.

Intermediary Goals: Attain Truth (mystery)"who really killed Lord Hagan Vas?

THE DEMONCHILD'S GAMBIT

In this adventure, the PCs unwittingly encounter a demon whose primary goal is to escape back into its own dimensional matrix. Unfortunately, the means the demon intends to use to escape from the Lejendary Earth would open a permanent dimensional rift with the potential to cause considerable havoc in the petty Kingdom of Damavand. Read the following (and all other bold italic type sections) aloud as the adventure opens:

The days have been long and your travels arduous, but at last you have arrived at the gates of the city of Dama, capital of a petty backwater kingdom called Damavand. The state flag flies atop the central building, the marble temple of Baldur, and is emblazoned on the breastplates of the royal guard; a full golden moon on a red background. The city with a population of about 15,000 is bustling with merchants and serfs, each street rich with color, pageantry, and custom. There is no difficulty finding places to restock your supplies, repair your armor, or invest plunder from recent missions.

Allow the PCs to explore the city streets, without too much concern for exact direction.

All manner of commerce may be found here, an ale house or tavern within minutes of any direction along the cobblestone streets. No gambling houses can be found in the city, but there are no shortages of inns, public houses, and wine merchants to make the average adventurer happy and at home.

Other places that may be visited are apothecaries, armories, swordsmiths, blacksmith, book shops (local history), bowyers/flechers, the royal bank of Dama, cartographers, coffee and/or tea houses (no Starbucks), dry goods store, the exporter, general store (2 in the city), goldsmith, herbalist, horse trader, etc.

After some time has elapsed, read aloud the following:

You all receive a herald's summons at your primary dwellings in the late afternoon, and upon each scroll is affixed the seal of the sub-prelate of the Nordic pantheon, one Jorn Lucifereous (surname meaning, "the shining") of the Temple of Baldur.

It is written that your arrival in the city was noted with glad hearts, and that a warm and noble welcome is due. Therefore your presence is requested among other local heroes to receive accolades for valor in recent efforts against the dark forces of Monyar forest in past years. The summons ends with the words, "Whether you fought in the name of Damavand or another cause matters not to the people of our city. Meet Sub-Prelate Jorn and King Bastian-Vand at the Celestial Tower Mage-School for a celebration at dusk."

What will capture the attention of the PCs most will occur whenever the GM deems appropriate as they approach the celebration of heroes in the center of the city near the Celestial Tower (as described below). Read the following at that time:

You are enjoying the festivities, food, and music of this cool summer evening when an odd pressure builds in your temples. The music dies, and a hush falls as the crowd slowly turns to look upon the granite and delicate glass-domed building of the mage school; the edges and contours of the building warp and shift as in a dream. Then, a painful sonic boom shakes the earth and a blinding light pulses from the narrow windows of the building's tallest spire. Before you can react, an earth-shattering explosion slams everyone to his or her feet, stone fragments of the tower showering down like meteorites. Luckily, a deflective dome of energy protects the courtyard, activated by some unknown mage. Chaos ensues: parents call out for their children, the king and sub-prelate vanish in flashes of eldritch energy, and knights move in to secure the area quickly

The PCs will see a billowing plume of black smoke and cinder rising from the shattered structure that once was the tall tower of Conrad Vas.

After a short time, the Royal guards invite the heroes to investigate the wreckage, or will not interfere if they do so of their own accord.

Read the following as they approach the broken premises

The Celestial Observatory of the Mage College is no more. The slender granite tower blown to smithereens, its cylindrical structure now reaches less than a story into the sky. You step across the rubble, winding your way through the people running about in frantic chaos. As you approach the solid steel door of the college, the royal inspector Henrik confronts you.

Encounter Type: Role-Playing
Encounter Function: Hook–sudden attack
Associated Goal: Attain Truth (who killed Conrad Vas?)
Plot Element: Intermediary
Location: Outside of Mage College
Description: The inspector enlists the aid of the PCs.
Triggers: No defined triggers.
Non-PC Characters/Monsters/Story-Roles: Inspector Henrik–Ally.

Inspector Henrik
Age: 48 Height 5'11 Weight 220lbs
General Attributes: Street wise, perceptive, excellent sleuth, chivalrous, proficient with standard martial weapons. Wears chain mail and carries a footman's mace and a sheathed short dagger.

The inspector wishes to aid the PCs, and presents them with a quick rundown of the situation. Note: The name of the Dwarf mentioned is pronounced, "TRAU-got". Read or paraphrase the following,

"I hope you can help us. It seems Conrad Vas, the lord of the mage school, was in the observatory tower when

it exploded. I've spoken briefly with the Lady Instructor Anitra, but she seems as damned confused as I am. You can find her with her student children in the library on the lower floor, but do let me know if you see the dwarven grounds keeper. His name is Traugott, but he's nowhere around that I've seen . . . ."

You walk into the Mage College, otherwise known as Vas Keep, and after passing through the foyer, enter into a large room with a clear, blue-stained glass domed ceiling. Huge bookshelves stand against every inch of wallspace, each measuring ten feet from the block-stone floor. Marble staircases led up from each side of the hall to a balustraded gallery on the second level. A fireplace is set in the far wall adjacent to a large upholstered armchair. Similar chairs are positioned around the room next to round ebonywood tables, all lit by candles. Children stare wide eyed as you enter, their pale faces like miniature moons in the flickering light of the candelabras that illuminate the room. An old gray-haired woman stands unsteadily by the fireplace, one gnarled hand supporting her weight against the armchair.

"My master is dead," she says, her voice a whisper across the hall. You notice a small child cowering behind her, clinging to her skirt.

Encounter Type: Problem-Solving
Encounter Function: Obstacle"Predicament (red herring)
Associated Goal: Solve Predicament & Find Item
Plot Element: Intermediary
Location: Inside Mage College
Description: The now evil enchantress tries to mislead the PCs.
Bound Triggers: If the PCs try to read her mind, she will attack.
NPCs/Monsters/Story-Roles: Anitra"Enemy. Randolf"Enemy. The kids"neutral or wild cards.

THE ILL-TEMPERED TEACHER

Anitra (AH-NEE-trah), Master Enchantress
Age: 68 Height 5'4 Weight 140lbs
General Attributes: An enchantress, quite learned in all areas of spellcraft and arcana, possessing modest skill with small weapons like knives. Wears padded armor at best and carries a magic short dagger. The old lady is a powerful enchantress, second only to Conrad Vas. Alas, she has fallen under the influence of a demon loosed by a disastrous summoning performed by Lord Vas, who was in secret practicing demonurgy. When questioned she says (or paraphrase),

"Things were fine until that horrible child came here."

If the party asks, "what child," she says, "Schuyler. He was expelled from the school only days ago, banished from the city by order of Lord Vas for studying dark sorcery. The master found Schuyler trying to seal a pact with a demon. Can you believe it? Conrad has been trying to create an item that that could prevent an intrusion by such an evil force, fearing that Schuyler had opened an invisible portal to the netherworld somewhere in the keep."

If the party asks about the item Conrad Vas was attempting to make, she will say,

"He was working on a special gem, what he called the Wardstone, to protect the city from the presence of a demonic force. We believe Schuyler stole this, probably hid it in the woods with the help of some weird elven cult in Monyar Forest. I saw the little monster skulking around outside just before your ceremony. I bet our groundskeeper let him in; I don't trust that Dwarf any farther than I can throw him."

If asked about the Dwarf she says, "Don't bother talkin' to that ol' coot! He's senile! Lost his mind in the wars ages ago. The only reason the good Master Vas kept him 'round was because they were old war buddies."

The child cowering behind Anitra is the demon, controlling the head enchantresses every thought and word.

THE STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOL

If asked about Schuyler, the kids will say, "Vas always scribed in his journal at night at the chair before the fireplace. Maybe he left a clue there?"

This is the aforementioned chair, a leather, high-backed number facing the fire. Scrutiny or Stealing checks will show a secret compartment with the fake book inside. Anitra will feign resistance to any investigation of the chair but with appear to acquiesce if pushed.

The book has some normal entries, all of mundane sort, until the PCs discover a fictitious encounter where Conrad supposedly finds the boy with Sorcery tome and talking to a demon through a looking glass. Tell the players that the latest entry is recent but a day old. Read:

"My heart broke, Schuyler! My best student involved with demons was nearly beyond my comprehension, but it was now fact. I had no choice but to expel him. Now fearing he had already allowed some evil presence to enter the keep, I have begun to create a warding stone. Last night, I received word from the boy, but am even more disheartened by his letter. In it he vowed to steal the Wardstone before I could finish, that he had found his "true master" with some old hag named Ivania leading a cult of evil elves in Monyar forest. I grow weary of this and shall retire for the night "

THE STUDENTS OF VASKEEP

The boys are all capable of casting simple cantrips, with the exception of Randolf, who is much more powerful due to being possessed by a demon. Choose a demonic creature of appropriate power to face the PCs, according to the guidnlines given in the chosen game system.

Jarn (10 years old)
Markus (9 years old)
Otto (13 years old, knows where to find the hidden, forged journal)
Randolf 12th Rank (12 years old and possessed by a demon"described fully at end of adventure)

The Dwarf
Encounter Type: Role-Playing
Encounter Function: Obstacle"predicament (red herring).
Associated Goals: Attain Truth (who killed Conrad Vas?), Find Item (magic gem)
Plot Element: Intermediary.
Location: Outside of the Mage College (inner courtyard).
Description: The old Dwarf is mistaken about the elves and knows little of what caused the explosion.
NPCs/Monsters/Story-Roles: Traugott the Dwarf/neutral

Traugott Ironleg is an old gray bearded Dwarf with a large round belly and one peg-leg from an old war injury. He wears a shabby slop and patched britches with a tool belt dangling around his waste. His voice is deep and raspy and unintelligible at times. The PCs will encounter Traugott whenever it is suitable to the GM, and it does not matter whether this is inside the keep or the courtyard. It will be quite apparent from any conversations with Traugott that he is one brick short of a full load.

Traugott (TRAU-got), Ironleg
Age: 200 Height 4'4 Weight 140lbs
General Attributes: A jack-of-all-trades, this eccentric dwarf is rather proficient with small bludgeoning weapons, and possess a raw strength unmatched by most humans. He is excellent in all manners of archetiture and mechanics.

If the party questions the Dwarf, reading or paraphrase the following:

"The explosion was no cooking accident, that's for damn sure! That tower was sound and warded too; must've been some powerful critter or failed alchemical potion to do that kind of damage. The Head Mistress hasn't shed a tear I'd say, that wrinkled old bitch, always mouthing off about Schuyler. I think she's a demon women anyway."

If asked about Schuyler, he says, "lively boy that one, and he loved Conrad Vas like a brother. Good Old Vas was never the same after his run-in with the boy. Methinks he blamed himself for not watching him close enough. He set about on a personal mission to forge that gemstone, anti-demon thing it was. Locked himself in that tower he did...toil and toil-and then the stone vanished! In the tower he stayed until the very thing came down...."

He will deny seeing Schuyler before the explosion of course (which is true).

If asked about the elven village Traugott will say, "Arr! cursed place that is! The woods are filled with evil cults and strange Hoodoo. Those that travel there call the place Dreadgove! If yer trails lead there, may good fortune fall to you!"

ELVEN VILLAGE

The Road to Falcongrove

The quaint farmsteads and meadows of Damavand slowly give way to scattered groves of ash, beech, and elm trees. You follow a narrow trail and before long, you find yourselves in a deep forest, walking under a thick canopy of ancient oaks. Storm clouds are gathering overhead.

The party will most likely head deeper into the woods.

Daylight wanes as the rainstorm unleashes its fury; sheets of water drench the green earth, soaking you to the bone. Crackling lightening-bolts rip through the dark sky, the trees briefly and starkly illuminated, casting wraith-like shadows. The darkening forest appears foreboding and unnatural.

The trail ends suddenly at a timber palisade, constructed of sharpened, black-locust pales strapped together with hemp. Fair-skinned elves, sentries in green livery, stand guard on the catwalk above a large, arched, double-door of oak and steel binding. Lamplight grant the elves enough light to peer through the murk at your travel-weary party.

Encounter Type: Role-Playing
Encounter Function: Obstacle"Predicament (Obstinate NPC).
Associated Goal: Find item
Plot Element: Intermediary
Location: At gates of elven village
Description: The PCs need to gain entrance into the village.
Triggers (bound): IF a PC mentions Ilvania, THEN the guards will let them in.
NPCs/Monsters/Story-Roles: elven guards/Neutrals

12 archers, 6 javelineers and 3 Rangers with 6 hunting dogs stand guard at the gate and will call out upon seeing the travelers.

"We do not welcome strangers at Falcongrove, thank you, so move along!" An alto voice calls out from atop the sentry wall.

If the Wardstone is mentioned as an object they seek, a wood ranger will say something in the order of:

"You can't come stomping into our woods, demanding this or that! Now go away."

If the party mentions Schuyler or Ivania, they shall be interrogated closely, and any hostile responses will bar them from entry. However, friendly, reasonable responses will grant them entry to the village, and the guards will lead them straight to the Lady Ivania's manor.

ELVEN GUARDS

3 Rangers: Each wearing studded leather armor, carrying a long bow 12 arrows, a short thrusting sword, lasso, belt ax, and a long dagger.

12 Archers: Each wearing leather armor, carrying a composite long bow and 12 arrows, belt ax, and a long dagger.

6 Javelineer: Each wears leather armor, holds a buckler and attacks using 3 Javelines, a short thrusting sword, and/or a long dagger.

6 Hunting dogs: These dogs can be commanded to attack, or hunt and track down fleeing PCs.

The Lady Ivania's Manor

In an ornate manor surrounded by beautiful gardens, the scapegoat Schuyler has found refuge, living under the care of the village sorceress. This elven woman, who holds

the title of Odylan, a word meaning "lorecollector", studies magic and Psychogentics, using her spells to protect the village from harm. If the party is allowed entrance by the elven troops, they will be escorted straight to the manor.

While walking through the streets, perceptive PCs might detect a beautiful marble temple in the village center, perhaps revealed suddenly in its splendor by a flash of lightning. At that point, or as the party approaches near, read the following:

You see that all paths wind around to a beautiful two-tiered temple in the center of the village. The structure is partly obscured by ivy and foliage, but illuminated by faire-fire globes suspended from the surrounding trees. Its green-white marble walls support a scintillating dome of azure glass beneath a flat, railed rooftop . There is an almost tangible charge in the air, as of eldritch power.

The guards will not allow the party to go near this sacred place without a fight. Town denizens eye the party suspiciously as they are led to the manor. Perceptive PCs will realize it would be nearly impossible to roam these streets undetected. If the guards lead the PCs to Ivania, then read the following:

You follow the guards through rain-soaked floral gardens, trekking along a trellised path that splits to form a circle around a large aviary, built of wooden latticework. The song of sparrows and cardinals greet along with the hoots of owls, and the occasional call of an eagle. Soon you arrive at a stone, timber-beamed manor home.

A servant opens the door and leads you into a parlor, wherein he motions for each of you to have a seat on one of many wicker chairs set against the plaster walls. Beautiful frescos adorn these walls, depicting scenes of natural beauty or woodland creatures, and wood carvings of mythical animals rest atop stone pedestals.

Moments later, a lady with eyes of emerald enters, her angular face framed by flowing silver hair, and she wears an elegant gown of celadon hue.

"I am Lady Ivania. Tell me what it is that you seek and why, so perhaps we can come to an understanding."

Encounter Type: Problem Solving
Encounter Function: Obstacle"Predicament (getting a scared boy to speak).
Associated Goal: Find item & Attain truth.
Plot Element: Turning Point(s)"Solve Predicament & Find Item (both #1 and #2).
Location: At gates of elven village
Description: The PCs need to gain entrance into the village.
Triggers (bound): IF the PCS intimidate the boy, Ilvania will become hostile.
NPCs/Monsters/Story-Roles: Schuyler (wild card) & Ilvania (neutral).

If the PCs say they seek the boy Schuyler, she will nod and

Ilvania motions to a servant and within a moment, a tall, lanky boy with a mop of reddish-blonde hair nervously enters. He sits with his hands in his lap and stares at the floor.

The party has two minutes to ask what they wish.

If asked about the stone the boy will answer something in the line of:

"Wardstone? I don't know of any such thing."

If asked about accusations of his dabbling in sorcery, he will say, "Now look here mister! I don't know who you think I am but you have the wrong idea. For all I know, you people are demons! I don't know what you're talking about."

If further interrogated, he will get frazzled and blurt out:

"You don't get it! The stone must be protected!"

If the PCs questioning becomes hostile, which would force the boy to tell the whole story, Ivania interjects. She will invoke the power of her magic item to scare off the party. Allow for initiative checks against her casting if they succeed against a check against Scrutiny.

As you continue to badger the boy, the elf begins to chant. Your attention turns to her as you see her gown flowing as if in a light breeze and an aura builds around her.

If the PCs are unable to react due to failed initiative or delay, read:

The once beautiful lady darkens as she gazes at you, eyes boding violence. Transmuting before you, her body grows larger, her hair turning to strands of wood like branches of a tree. She raises a branch-like arm and points toward the door, her finger a long, gnarled twig.

If the PCs have not yet run or attacked, read:

"You have troubled us enough! Now we refuse to grant what you seek, and my patience is exhausted! Now Go!"

If the party fails to heed her warning, the guards will attack. Ivania and Schuyler will aid by launching spells from a distance. If the PCs flee from the manor into the village, hunting dogs will be loosed to sniff out their trail.

Ivania Silver Staff, Odylan
Age: 50 Height 5'4 Weight 110lbs
General Attributes: Extremely adept in spellcraft and arcana, with extensive psychogenic powers, adroit, stealthy, and skilled with small arms. Fights with spells, quarterstaff, and/or short dagger.

Magic Item
Pendent of the Wood Warden

A small, silver pin in the shape of an elm leaf, this pendent allows the wearer to transmute into an hybrid of tree and man. This change takes a short while to complete, during which the wearer's torso thickens and becomes trunk-like. Arms grow into long branches and bark-like coloration spreads over the skin. Once in this form, the invoker gains natural armor, as well as bolstered strength. This effect lasts for 1 hour or until the spell is negated by the wearer. The command word is "Arbolius Transmutorium".

Schuyler, Thaumaturgist
Age: 17 Height 6'0 Weight 170lbs
General Attributes: Precociously adept with spellcraft, learned in arcana, and proficient with simple weapons. Wears no armor,

but possesses a small club and slingshot.

TEMPLE OF ANCESTRAL REMEMBRANCE

Encounter Type: Action
Encounter Function: Battle (and a dangerous one if not avoided).
Associated Goal: Retrieve item.
Plot Element: Turning Point(s)" Find Item (#2).
Location: Temple of Earth Goddess
Description: The PCs might fight their way into the central temple to steal the gem (shame on them!)
NPCs/Monsters/Roles: Door guards (neutral), Animated Statue Golems (neutral/guardians), Celestial Guardian (an enemy if encountered)

The true hiding place of the stone is in the center of the Temple of Ancestral Remembrance. This ornate vision of classical architecture stands in the town center. Rituals take place here at all times. A priestess and her acolytes consecrate oils on the roofed temple patio while inside the temple sits in lucid silent. Two guards are posted at every entrance.

Guards: Each guard is an elf wearing leather armor and a buckler shield, plus carrying a small pole arm, short thrusting sword, and a long dagger.

Once the party gains entrance to the temple, read the following:

Walking down a short hallway, you come to a balcony overlooking a beautiful room. Your eyes strain to gain focus as you enter a room bathed in a pure, white light. The source of this illumination is unclear and appears to radiate from the very walls, as if this room were a holy place.

The floor of the lower level is of obsidian, with hundreds of names inlayed with silver, perhaps a memorial for the elven dead. A dark, stone dais is built into the center of the room, on top of which stands an ornate pedestal. Atop the pedestal rests a black stone on a lavender satin pillow.

As the PCs glance around, read:

In each corner of the temple stands a silent, seven foot tall sentinel. They are humanoid shapes carved out of wood, each with the features of a beautiful male elf. They stand guard with their arms crossed, staring blankly into the distance.

Upon setting foot on the stone floor, without saying a sacred word known only by the elves of this secret order, the wood-carved golems will animate and move to attack the intruders. They fight with their arms, swinging two mighty club-like limbs per round. These creatures are animated by "artistic" mages, set to guard powerful items such as archaic relics or grimoires. They are programmed to animate once a person has entered a certain area without uttering command words ("forbears commemorated"). They fight until destroyed. The GM should choose golem statistics appropriate to the campaign and power level of the PCs.

The stone rests in an anti-magic force field. An invisible PC, such as a Kobold, entering the field will receive a damaging electric jolt. Then, if the stone is moved, a Celestial Guardian (see Part 3: Types of the present volume for more information) appears as described below.

As you grasp the black, volcanic stone, a sudden electric charge courses through your hand, and the white light emanating from the walls instantly winks out. The room is now darkened and uncomfortably silent.

Allow a dramatic pause, then read:

A portal appears on the far wall, blue fire tracing an opening where the stone evaporates. A being of intense light emerges from the portal, with platinum hair and a angelic face, radiating with a cold power, its narrow, slanted eyes locked on the holder of the stone. Its long slender arms terminate in perfect hands, right hand holding a fighting staff, and sling kept spinning in the left. It strides forward and attacks.

The guardian is charged to protect the stone and keep it out of enemy hands. It will fight until banished (health below 0), or unless commanded to stop by Ivania. The GM should here choose monster statistics appropriate to the campaign and power level of the PCs.

The temple also holds 2 priests and 10 acolytes. They are mainly non-combative and will only fight if pressed. They will instead call for guards and notify the central watch. One Priestess is out in front of the temple, holding a ritual under a pillared roof. There are 5 Acolytes with her, as well as four guards. Also, there are two guards posted as every entrance. Two Acolytes are in the library while the other three are in their quarters. The other priestess is in her quarters.

Once the stone is discovered stolen, a horn will be blown to alert all of the guards. The party will have to escape the village walls without being detected or a battle of enormous odds will ensue. The Rangers will bring reinforcements and try to subdue their foe for detainment and trial. PCs that escape the village will have to navigate through the woods with the dogs in pursuit.

THE RIFT

Encounter Type: Action
Encounter Function: Battle, and probably a bad idea.
Associated Goal: Defeat Creature (action)
Plot Element: Endpoint.
Location: The Mage College
Description: The PCs return with or without the Gem and face the possessed child, minion creatures, and those he has seduced to evil.
NPCs/Monsters/Roles: Anitra (enemy), Randolf/Demon (Enemy), Demonic Minion (Enemy), Children (neutral, and terrified).

Returning to town with the stone in their possession, they see the campus of Vaskeep still in shambles. The rubble from the fallen tower is scattered about and a faint plume still rises from the remains. All is dark save for the lights in the library. As they approach, those PCs attuned to things unhallowed will feel uncomfortable.

Anitra, the old women instructor, will anxiously greet the PCs once they return from the forest. The children of the school flee at the first sign of trouble, but are otherwise out of sight, all

except for the young boy who was seen hiding behind Anitra during the first encounter. That youngest boy will be seen again standing near Anitra, whom he controls via demonic power.

Returning to the Library of the Mage School, you find the room nearly empty, the fireplace smoldering. Old lady Anitra stands where you saw her last, as if she had never moved, her fragile frame silhouetted in the dim light, a young boy hovering near her.

Her face crinkles in relief upon your arrival. "I see you have succeeded. Please bring me the stone so we are able to ward our good city from evil."

Whether the PCs immediately give her the stone or not is of little consequence. Read the following to reveal the true present danger:

The young boy steps out to regard you with a twisted smile. He speaks softly, in a high-pitched but sinister voice, 'You survived my gambit.', he says, his pupils contracting to reptilian slits of malice. 'And thanks, but alas, you won't survive my minions "

The Demon: The boy is possessed by the spirit of a creature normally seven feet tall, with a hairless oval body covered with black thorns, with arachnidan head with multiple eyes, two arms, a tentacle for a tail, and mandibles protruding from the slit-like mouth. The GM should choose monster statistics appropriate to the campaign and power level of the PCs.

Anitra will interpose and attack the PCs, her elderly fingers transforming into long, curved claws dripping a black venom. She will attack with spells or talons if approached, or commanded to do so by the demon, but suddenly drops dead from a heart attack if the demon is destroyed.

If the party seems overconfident with their fight, read (or remove this creature if you fear the encounter would be overwhelming):

Your situation worsens as a deadly creature rises from the high-backed chair by the fireplace. It licks its thick lips with a slimy tongue, fixes its baleful gaze upon you, and sprouts dozens of organic spikes from its torso, resembling a moss-green iron maiden, skin stretched tautly over a stocky frame. Its apish arms jet out towards you like a squid striking at its prey, malefic eyes burning with unholy light.

Demonic Minion: This hybrid monster was summoned by the demon to grant him time to start the rite necessary to open the portal back to his home dimension. The goal of the demon is to escape, and would rather get home than fight to the death, relying instead on the minor demons and the woman to support its goals. The GM should herein choose monster statistics appropriate to the campaign and power level of the PCs.

The Endpoint: The "Wardstone" becomes activated when affixed to the end of a magical telescope kept in an adjacent room. The demon will grab the telescope and run outdoors to assemble the necessary parts. When pointed at the right star, a shaft of moonlight travels down the chamber of the telescope, striking the gem and activating the "heka" contained therein. Then, once energized, the demon need only point the stone at any vertical surface, speak the word "egress" in draconic, which will cause a beam of energy to strike the wall, creating a permanent dimensional rift.

The rift will look like a glimmering oval portal. If successful, the demon will walk through and disappear, leaving the PCs with the new problem of an open extra-dimensional rift in the center of the city of Dama. In order to close the gate, they need the stone, or a closure spell written by Conrad Vas. Schuyler has knowledge of the closure spell, it being written down in his grimoire (memory tablet). Naturally, the problem of the rift (and those creatures potentially emerging from it) could become an entire adventure unto itself, to be handled as deemed appropriate by the GM. Once the Rift is closed, the party will be well advised to do away with the stone so it can never be used again, or face the consequences of new and unsuspected enemies. When the rift is closed, the stone destroyed, and the demon gone and/or destroyed, then the party shall be heralded as heroes of the city, King Bastien-Vand king paying them a tribute of 50,000 gold crowns (or whatever currency determined by the GM) while requesting allegiance and help with future.

ADVENTURE OUTLINE

Adventure Title:_____ **Real world Date:**_____
GM:_____
Campaign Date:_____ **Campaign episode #:**_____ **Origination Locale:**_____
Adventure Theme:_____

MILIEU EVENTS

Past Milieu Events:_____
Present Milieu Events:_____
Future Milieu Events:_____

NPCS

(Use separate sheet for specific game statistics)

Major: (list for each: name, race, sex, class, social class, goals, story-role, primary motivation)
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____
5._____

Minor: (list for each: name, race, sex, class, social class, goals, story-role, primary motivation)
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____
5._____

Monsters, major and minor: (list for each: name/type, class (if any), goals, story-role, primary motivation)
1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____
5._____

PLOT POINTS

(hooks, turning-points (junctures), and endpoints:

Act or Plot 1:_____
Inciting Incident:_____
Primary Endpoint:_____
Turning-Point 1:_____
Turning-Point 2:_____
Turning-Point 3:_____
Turning-Point 4:_____
Turning-Point 5:_____
Act 2 or Subplot 1:_____
Secondary Incident:_____
Secondary Endpoint:_____
Turning-Point 1:_____
Turning-Point 2:_____
Turning-Point 3:_____
Turning-Point 4:_____
Turning-Point 5:_____
Act 3 or Subplot 2:_____
Tertiary Incident:_____
Tertiary Endpoint:_____
Turning-Point 1:_____
Turning-Point 2:_____
Turning-Point 3:_____
Turning-Point 4:_____
Turning-Point 5:_____
Intermediary Goals:_____
A:_____
B:_____
C:_____
D:_____
E:_____

ADVENTURE ENCOUNTERS

ENCOUNTERS

Encounter Type:

Encounter Function:

Associated Goal:
Plot Element:

Location:
Description:

Bound Triggers:
Unbound Triggers:

NPCS/MONSTERS/STORY-ROLES

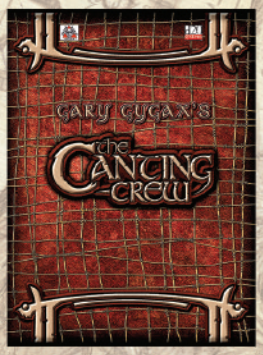
Encounter Type:

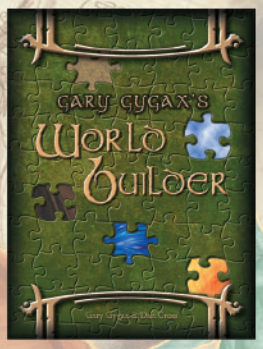
Encounter Function:

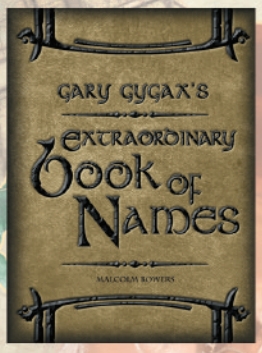
Associated Goal:
Plot Element:

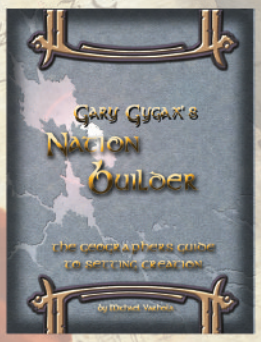
Location:
Description:

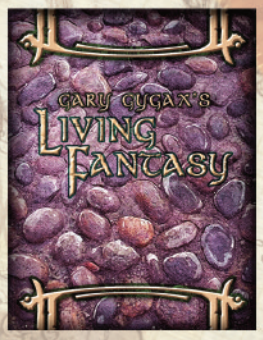
Bound Triggers:
Unbound Triggers:













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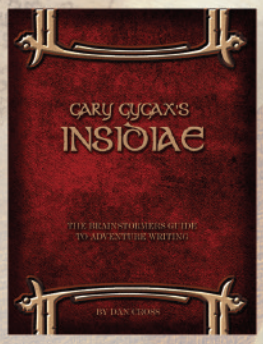



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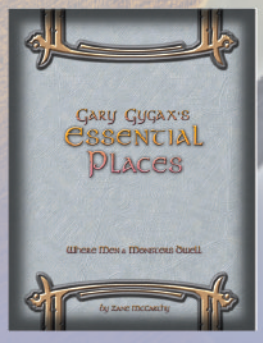



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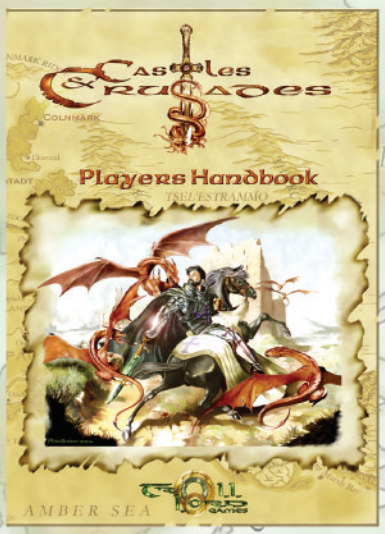

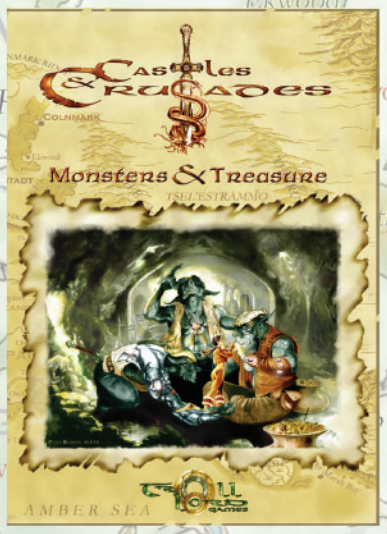

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