

DRAGON WARRIORS



Introductory Book

INTRODUCTION

Dragon Warriors is the classic fantasy RPG you've never heard of. Released in the UK as a series of mass-market paperbacks in 1986, it was a big hit and introduced many people to their first role-playing experience. But it was never released in the USA or Canada, where it remains a mystery. Until now, and this new edition.

Dragon Warriors combines an epic old-school style of play with a slick, fast and intuitive system of mechanics, and a background that combines historical realism with folklore, superstition, myth, and buckets of atmosphere.

The world of Legend works the way that people in the Middle Ages believed it did. Magic is real and those who use it are not to be trusted. The forests are home to monsters, and goblins will turn the milk and lame your horse if you annoy them. The fairy-folk will steal you or your children away to the Lands of Fae if you don't take precautions. Ancient kings sleep under the hills, waiting for the call to return and fight again; Hell is a real place; and in the mountains live giants and stranger things. And of course, there are dragons.

The full *Dragon Warriors* game presents seven character-classes, 192 spells in four different classes, over 110 monsters, and more than 80 magic items. There's complete rules covering everything from hiring henchmen to madness and disease. The world of Legend is fleshed out in full, and there are sections on medieval law and justice, tournaments and jousts, travel by land and sea, an adventure that leads into the campaign-book *Sleeping Gods*, and much more.

This Book

This sampler contains four chapters from the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook, creating a playable introduction to the game and its world.

We've presented you with the full character-generation rules, two character classes, complete combat rules, background on part of the Lands of Legend, and three monsters from the Bestiary, rounded out with art from Jon Hodgson, Scott Purdy, Erik Wilson and Andy Hepworth.

What you see here is, with the exception of the adventure in chapter 6, taken straight from the rulebook. It's not been re-edited, tidied up or mucked about. If you buy the game, this is really what you'll get.

Welcome to the world of *Dragon Warriors*.

CONTENTS

Introduction & Contents	1
1. Character generation	2
2. The Warriors	8
3. Combat	12
4. The Lands of Legend	16
5. Creatures of Legend	21
6. Scenario: Under the Rocks	23

For more information on *Dragon Warriors*, including downloadable sample adventures and character sheets, visit our website at <http://www.magnumopuspress.com>

Dragon Warriors books can be bought at all good games-stores, or downloaded in PDF format from DriveThruRPG.com



DRAGON WARRIORS INTRODUCTORY BOOK

Dragon Warriors designed by Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson.

Cover by Jon Hodgson.

Artwork by Jon Hodgson, Scott Purdy and Andy Hepworth. Maps and character sheet by Andy Law. Comic strip by Erik Wilson. Adventure by James Wallis.

All text is copyright © 1986, 2009 Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson/Magnum Opus Press. All art and maps are copyright © 2008 the individual creators. All other elements of design are copyright © 2008 Magnum Opus Press. All rights reserved. *Dragon Warriors* is a trademark of Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson, used under licence by Magnum Opus Press. Originally published in different format by Corgi Books, 1986-1987.

The authors have asserted their moral rights to be identified as the creators of this work.

Published by Magnum Opus Press in association with Flaming Cobra.

MAGNUM·OPUS·PRESS

CHAPTER I

CREATING A CHARACTER

BEFORE YOU CAN begin your first *Dragon Warriors* game, each player must create a character who will be his or her fantasy 'alter-ego' in the Lands of Legend, the world of the game. Only six-sided dice are needed for this.

ROLEPLAYING

Start by thinking a little about your character's past life. Maybe you've chosen to play an impoverished noblewoman, perhaps? She should demand some deference from the other player-characters, and moan bitterly if she has to borrow money from them to support her doubtless extravagant tastes. Or your character might be an ex-soldier, just back from the Crusades. Maybe he finds the unprofessional approach of his fellow adventurers to be annoyingly amateurish. His conversation could be a string of military clichés and anecdotes. A roving Barbarian could find civilization hard to understand, and might prefer to solve most problems using an axe. A scholarly Sorcerer might go off on an expedition just to collect ancient *objets d'art*. Gold and silver would mean nothing to him. He has no interest in the tactics of adventuring, so he would leave the warriors in the party to decide on any battle plans.

Consider also 'your' attitude to the rest of the party. Without a doubt you will eventually meet—or even play—the cowardly villain who covets treasure so much that he runs off with the loot while his comrades are battling the monster. Less familiar is the brave adventurer who will risk his own life to delay a foe while his friends retreat. Our own campaign includes the tale of Dagonelt the Harpist, who befriended an NPC (a 'non-player character' operated by the GM) and then experienced a conflict of loyalties when the other player-characters fought the NPC in question.

You may also want to create a background and a life story for your character: where they're

from, what their family is like, why they chose their profession, and any important experiences they may have had before the game started.

There are three ways that you can work out this information. First of all, you can simply choose for yourself: read the rest of this book or the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook to get a clear idea of the world in which the *Dragon Warriors* game takes place, and decide how you want your character to fit into it. (Subject to the GM's approval. You cannot simply decide that your character is heir to a kingdom!)

Alternatively, you can create it randomly. There are tables to generate more detail about your character's region of origin and other background information in chapter 6 of the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook. For GamesMasters, these are also useful for creating non-player characters (NPCs) in a hurry.

If you want to get stuck into playing the game straight away, then feel free to skip that chapter for the moment. There is no need to develop an entire life history at the start of your first game. You can always come back to it later. Often a character will take on a persona of his own after you have played him a few times, and you and the GM can add events or details to his background later on.

Step One THE CHARACTERISTICS

Each character is initially defined by his scores in five characteristics. These are Strength, Reflexes, Intelligence, Psychic Talent and Looks. The value of each characteristic is found by rolling three six-sided dice (3d6), and therefore ranges from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 18.

Strength is a measure of the character's fitness and physical toughness.

His **Reflexes** score indicates his dexterity, agility and speed of reactions.

Intelligence shows how clever the character is (so a player who rolls low for this ought to role-play as though he really is dim-witted).

Psychic Talent represents the character's basic ability to resist (and in some cases use) magic.

The character's **Looks** score reflects his appearance and personal charm; this has no bearing on his adventuring skills, but you should certainly take it into account when deciding how non-player characters (NPCs) would react to him.

The player rolls 3d6 for each of these five characteristics, then, and records the scores in the appropriate boxes on his character sheet. These scores will never change—except in rare cases, through illness or sorcery.

Each player will require a blank Character Sheet, to keep track of their character's scores. A full-size character sheet will be found at the back of the book, and you may make as many photocopies of it as you need.

Special note: The luck of the dice means that sometimes a player will create a character with hopelessly bad scores, quite unsuited to life as an adventurer. The player may discard the character and roll up another. It is for you, as GamesMaster, to decide whether a character is 'hopeless' or not. As a guideline, we suggest

you allow a player to discard any character with more than two characteristics below the average (9 to 12) range.

Step Two CHOOSING A PROFESSION

In the *Dragon Warriors* game there are seven Professions to which an adventurer may belong: Assassin, Knight, Barbarian, Elementalist, Sorcerer, Mystic and Warlock. Players who have never played an RPG before may find it easiest to play either a Knight or a Barbarian. These two classes don't need to concern themselves with magic or stealth, just cold steel, mighty thews and valour.

In any case, Knights and Barbarians will be by far the most common classes in most *Dragon Warriors* games. Indeed, there is no particular need to include the other classes at all for many adventures, and some campaigns will play out in their entirety with only these two. Most parties, though, will have a balance, with perhaps a majority of Knights and Barbarians and the occasional Mystic, Sorcerer, Elementalist or Warlock. Assassins are scarce and are often better fitted to use in solo adventures (with only



DRAGON WARRIORS

one player character and the GM) or campaigns in which everyone plays an Assassin!

Knights are the best all-around fighters in *Dragon Warriors*. Though physically less robust than Barbarians, they are able to wear heavy armour without losing any of their combat skills. Play a Knight if you want a character who strives to be like King Arthur, or Lancelot, or Gawain.

Barbarians are better in attack, but defensively less skilful than Knights. Their fighting style is fast and mobile, and heavy armour hampers them. They are able to go berserk in combat, making their attacks still more ferocious. Play a Barbarian if you want a character who could be a Viking warrior, or a skilled brawler from the pages of fantasy novels, like Conan or Fafhrd.

Assassins are average in combat but excel in sneak attacks, when they can target an unwary opponent. They are by far the most stealthy character class in the game, and gain a variety of other abilities that might seem magical to the unwary. Play an Assassin if you want a character who could have come straight out of a martial-arts fantasy movie like *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* or *Hero*, or who emulates one of the great rogues of fantasy literature like the Gray Mouser.

Sorcerers are the most common and general magic-wielding character profession—if any of these rare individuals can be called ‘common’. They are relatively ineffective in mundane combat but can blast their foes with magic. They have a more varied repertoire of spells than Elementalists and a little more raw magical power than Mystics. Play a Sorcerer if you want a character resembling Merlin, or Gandalf, or Harry Potter.

Mystics use magic of a sort, but this is a personal magic that comes from the Mystic’s mastery of his own mind rather than some external source. A Mystic is a good all-rounder, not quite so magically strong as a Sorcerer or Elementalist, but reasonably capable in combat and with a few other useful special abilities. Play a Mystic if you want to dazzle your foes with the power of your character’s mind alone.

Elementalists are specialist magicians, using the power of the natural elements to achieve their aims. Each Elementalists’ magic is focused around a particular element, chosen from among Fire, Air, Earth, Water and Darkness. Like Sorcerers, they tend not to be very skilled with conventional weapons such as swords and bows. Play an Elementalist if your

favourite characters are the shamans, witches and druids of legend and fantasy literature.

Finally, **Warlocks** combine magic with swordplay. They can wear armour and use their spells to boost their combat abilities. They aren’t quite so versatile in combat as Knights or Barbarians, but can be devastating when armed with their preferred weapons. Play a Warlock if your favourite fantasy hero is Elric, or just if you want the best of both worlds!

The player decides now to which of these Professions she wants her character to belong, and notes this at the top of her character sheet.

Step Three HEALTH POINTS

Having chosen his Profession, the player can roll his character’s Health Points score. A character’s Health Points (or HP) show how robust he is. Whenever the character takes a wound in combat, the wound is expressed as a number which comes off his HP score.

The character falls unconscious when his Health Point score reaches 0, and will die if it is ever reduced to -3 or less. Lost Health Points can be recuperated by resting after the adventure—as long as the character survives (see pages 68).

A Knight starts with $1d6 + 7$ Health Points (roll $1d6$ and add 7).

A Barbarian starts with $1d6 + 9$ Health Points.

An Elementalist or Sorcerer starts with $1d6 + 4$ Health Points.

For an Assassin, Mystic or Warlock, initial Health Points are found by rolling $1d6 + 5$

A character’s initial Health Points score increases as he advances in rank (of which, more later).

Step Four THE COMBAT FACTORS

The player is now ready to determine her character’s ATTACK and DEFENCE scores. No further dice rolling is required—you have already made the necessary rolls and choices. The basic scores are:

for Assassins:	ATTACK 13, DEFENCE 5
for Barbarians:	ATTACK 14, DEFENCE 6
for Elementalist:	ATTACK 11, DEFENCE 5
for Knights:	ATTACK 13, DEFENCE 7
for Mystics:	ATTACK 12, DEFENCE 6
for Sorcerers:	ATTACK 11, DEFENCE 5
for Warlocks:	ATTACK 12, DEFENCE 6

These are, in fact, the scores for an average character at the start of his career. If the player rolled above or below the average range (9–12) on certain of his characteristics at Step One, she may have to modify her ATTACK and DEFENCE scores slightly as a result—see the table below.

After making any adjustments, the player should enter these ATTACK and DEFENCE scores on their character sheet. (In subsequent adventures, as the character rises in rank, these scores will increase.)

The way in which ATTACK and DEFENCE are used in the game is explained in chapter 3: of this book, The Rules of Combat.

Step Five MAGICAL COMBAT FACTORS

ATTACK and DEFENCE, as we shall see, represent the character's fighting prowess. In the *Dragon Warriors* world, where magic is a reality, it fol-

lows that these Combat Factors must have a magical analogue: MAGICAL ATTACK and MAGICAL DEFENCE.

The basic MAGICAL DEFENCE score is 3 for Assassins, Knights, and Barbarians; 4 for Mystics and Warlocks; and 5 for Elementalist and Sorcerers. This base score is modified if the character's Intelligence and/or Psychic Talent fall outside the average range—see the Effects table below.

Elementalist, Sorcerers, Mystics and Warlocks have a MAGICAL ATTACK score. (Assassins, Barbarians, and Knights do not need a MAGICAL ATTACK score as they cannot cast spells.) The basic MAGICAL ATTACK score is 15 in the case of Elementalist and Sorcerers, 14 in the case of Mystics, and 13 in the case of Warlocks. This basic score is modified if the character's Intelligence and/or Psychic Talent are outside the average range. As above, see below.

The rules for using magical defence and magical attack are in Chapter 9: The Use of Magic.

Step Six DODGING

Some attacks are not covered by the normal combat rules of chapter 3. A character who tries to parry a dragon's fiery breath with only

EFFECTS OF HIGH AND LOW CHARACTERISTIC SCORES ON ATTACK, DEFENCE, ETC.

Characteristic	Characteristic score					
	3 4 5	6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15	16 17 18	
Strength	-2 ATTACK	-1 ATTACK	No Effect	+1 ATTACK	+2 ATTACK	
	-1 DEFENCE	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	+1 DEFENCE	
Reflexes	-1 ATTACK	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	+1 ATTACK	
	-2 DEFENCE	-1 DEFENCE	No Effect	+1 DEFENCE	+2 DEFENCE	
	-2 EVASION	-1 EVASION	No Effect	+1 EVASION	+2 EVASION	
	-1 STEALTH	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	+1 STEALTH	
Intelligence	-1 ATTACK	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	+1 ATTACK	
	-1 DEFENCE	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	+1 DEFENCE	
	-1 MAGICAL ATTACK	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	+1 MAGICAL ATTACK	
	-1 MAGICAL DEFENCE	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	+1 MAGICAL DEFENCE	
Psychic Talent	-2 MAGICAL DEFENCE	-1 MAGICAL DEFENCE	No Effect	+1 MAGICAL DEFENCE	+2 MAGICAL DEFENCE	
	-1 PERCEPTION	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	+1 PERCEPTION	
	Not applicable*	Not applicable*	No Effect	+1 MAGICAL ATTACK	+2 MAGICAL ATTACK	

*Characters with Psychic Talent of 8 or less cannot use magic.

DRAGON WARRIORS

a sword is going to be fried! In such cases, the best thing is to dodge out of the way. The score that shows how good the character is at dodging is **EVASION**.

The basic **EVASION** score at 1st rank is 3 for an Elementalist, Mystic, Sorcerer, or Warlock, 4 for a Knight, and 5 for an Assassin or Barbarian. This is modified if the character's **Reflexes** score is beyond average—see the **Effects** table above.

Step Seven STEALTH AND PERCEPTION

Any character (and monster, for that matter) may attempt to move around unnoticed, though assassins are the masters of this kind of task. The two character scores that allow the GM to determine the results of such activity are **STEALTH** and **PERCEPTION**. These scores vary according to a character's **Profession**:

For Knights, Barbarians, Elementalists, Sorcerers, and Warlocks: **STEALTH** score is 13, **PERCEPTION** score is 5

For Mystics, their enhanced psychic awareness grants them higher scores: **STEALTH** score is 14, **PERCEPTION** score is 6

For Assassins, their special training grants them excellent scores: **STEALTH** score is 18, **PERCEPTION** score is 8

These scores assume a character with average characteristic scores. A very high or low score in **Reflexes** affects **STEALTH** slightly, and **Psychic Talent** affects **PERCEPTION**. See the **Effects** table on the previous page.

Step Eight INITIAL EQUIPMENT

Each newly rolled character represents a young adventurer who has yet to acquire much practical experience. However, the character does not just leap into existence at the instant the **Character Sheet** is filled in. He or she has, even at lowly 1st rank, rather more skill in their chosen field than the average man or woman—the result, we can assume, of gruelling training throughout the character's youth.

Certain basic items of equipment have been acquired by the character in the years leading up to their first adventure. The starting equipment is listed separately for each character class.

Other equipment, including missile weapons such as a bow and arrows, may be purchased if the character has enough money. The equipment lists on page 134 of the rulebook shows the availability and cost of most common items.

Step Nine RANK

All characters begin the game at 1st rank. The players should not imagine that this makes their characters total novices, however. A 1st-rank Knight or Barbarian is a respectably skilled fighter. While not yet mighty heroes, they have been in a few battles and know how to use their weapons. Likewise a 1st-rank Elementalist, Mystic, Sorcerer, or Warlock has learned more about the arcane arts than most people will ever know, and will be respected (or feared) by ordinary folk. A 1st-rank Assassin is probably a full member of one of the secretive brotherhoods of Assassins, qualified to kill for hire.

Each successful adventure gains experience points for the character. When sufficient have been accumulated, the character goes up to the next rank. This is explained on pp129-130 of chapter 12 of the main rulebook.

Step Ten BACKGROUND

Now you know what this character can do, it's time to find out more about who they are and where they come from. This optional process is described in chapter 6 of the rulebook.

CHARACTER SHEET

This summary shows how a **Character Sheet** should be filled out for a 1st-rank Knight, with appropriate modifications for **Strength**, **Intelligence**, etc.

Example

Bob is creating a Dragon Warriors character for himself. He begins by rolling 3d6 for each characteristic, and comes up with:

DRAGON WARRIORS

Strength 7

—a below-average score, but not exactly puny.

Reflexes 13

—he will be able to react quicker than many of his opponents.

Intelligence 18

—extremely astute and sharp-witted.

Psychic Talent 8

—less than average occult awareness.

Looks 14

—handsome!

Bob decides to make the character a Knight, and calls himself 'Sir Balin the Bloodthirsty'. Rolling 1d6 +7 for his Health Points, he scores 13—the maximum for a Knight at 1st rank.

After making the appropriate adjustments from his Strength, Reflexes and Intelligence, Bob/Sir Balin finds that he has an ATTACK of 13 (the Strength and Intelligence modifiers cancel out) and a DEFENCE of 9 (helped here by his high Reflexes and even higher Intelligence).

Sir Balin's keen Intelligence stands him in good stead when he comes to calculate his MAGICAL DEFENCE; the bonus due to Intelligence cancels out the penalty due to low Psychic Talent, leaving him with the basic MAGICAL DEFENCE of 3. Because of his Reflexes, he has an EVASION score of 5. His STEALTH is 13 and his PERCEPTION is 5.

After taking the initial equipment due to him as a Knight, Sir Balin spends some of his cash to

acquire a bow and six arrows. He would happily leave it at that, but his GamesMaster points out that he must have something to keep the arrows in! Grumbling, Sir Balin parts with 4 more florins for a quiver.

DRAGON WARRIORS CHARACTER SHEET												
NAME	PROFESSION	RANK										
STRENGTH <input type="checkbox"/>	ATTACK _____	WEAPONS										
REFLEXES <input type="checkbox"/>	DEFENCE _____											
INTELLIGENCE <input type="checkbox"/>	EVASION _____											
PSYCHIC TALENT <input type="checkbox"/>	STEALTH _____											
LOOKS <input type="checkbox"/>	PERCEPTION _____	OTHER EQUIPMENT										
HEALTH POINTS <input type="checkbox"/>	ARMOUR FACTOR <input type="checkbox"/>											
CURRENT SCORE	ARMOUR TYPE _____											
<table border="1"><tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr></table>												SHIELD? YES/NO
SILLS/MAGIC	MAGICAL ATTACK _____	CASH										
<table border="1"><tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr></table>												MAGICAL DEFENCE _____
	MAGIC POINTS <input type="checkbox"/>											
	CURRENT SCORE											
EXPERIENCE POINTS _____	AMULETS/POTIONS											
REGULAR OUTGOINGS												



CHAPTER 2

The WARRIORS

To Live By The Sword

IN THE LANDS of Legend, the world where the *Dragon Warriors* game is set, there are two main classes of people who earn their living by use of weapons: Knights and Barbarians.

Knights come from more advanced cultures, the ones that have learned how to craft sophisticated armour and weapons from refined metals. Depending on where they originate they may be bound by a chivalric code that prescribes to whom they owe loyalty and service, when and how they can honourably kill an opponent, and so on. Some cultures have no such code for their elite warriors, and some knights choose to abandon the code and live outside it, masterless and without loyalty or honour.

Barbarians by contrast are from less sophisticated cultures, though their ferocity and their skill are no less fearsome for all that.

Though culturally different, Barbarians and Knights are quite similar in game terms. Both are primarily combatants and have been trained in the arts of warfare and fighting. However, the Knight will take a skilled and tactical approach to battle, while the Barbarian relies on instincts and the innate savagery of his attack to carry the day. A mounted knight is an unstoppable opponent in an open field, but in a woodland ambush or a dockside tavern brawl a barbarian would have the advantage. A well-formed adventuring party will need the skills of both.

There are other professions who are trained in the use of combat: Assassins and Warlocks, for example, who are described in the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook; gladiators; pirates and bandits; warriors of primitive tribes; specialists who use dogs, hawks and stranger creatures as their weapons; those who let themselves be possessed by their violent gods in battle; and more. But these are all subjects for another time.

KNIGHTS

Knights represent the civilised warrior aristocracy of countries like Albion, Ereworn, Chabrette, Algandy and Kurland. Most player-character Knights will be landless, lordless wanderers, perhaps nominally of noble birth, but gaining respect through their deeds rather than their family name. Some may be younger sons of more important, established houses, who know that they are never likely to inherit the family lands and so must instead seek adventure through errantry or crusading.

A few so-called 'knights' are in fact well-equipped men-at-arms, perhaps veterans of mercenary campaigns around the world, their armour no heirloom or custom-fitted extravagance but a harness pieced together from the loot of a dozen battlefields. Though many Knights wish to live up to a chivalric ideal, the reality of a short, harsh, war-torn life often makes cynics and realists of the best of them.

Special Abilities of a Knight

Like all the Professions, Knights have been trained in some special abilities that raise them above common soldiers and militia-members. Some of these abilities are unique to Knights, while a few are common to other Professions.

What's more, there are a number of advanced combat techniques that can only be practised by a Knight of 8th rank or higher. The character may select any one of these skills each time he attains a new rank, beginning when he reaches the 8th rank.

Knights' special abilities are as follows:

- ♣ *Track*
- ♣ *Armour Expert*
- ♣ *Ride Warhorse*
- ♣ *Disarm Technique (rank 8 onwards)*
- ♣ *Expert Parry (rank 8 onwards)*
- ♣ *Main Gauche (rank 8 onwards)*
- ♣ *Master Bowman (rank 8 onwards)*
- ♣ *Quick Draw (rank 8 onwards)*
- ♣ *Swordmaster (rank 8 onwards)*
- ♣ *Weaponskill (rank 8 onwards)*

Track

Knights may attempt to track their opponents or prey animals across country. This is explained in more detail on p. 63 of the rulebook.

Armour Expert

The Knight is the only character who can wear a suit of plate armour without any penalties to ATTACK or DEFENCE. He never suffers any ATTACK or DEFENCE penalties for wearing armour.

Ride Warhorse

All characters can ride, but only Knights, Barbarians and some Warlocks have had the long years of special training required to ride a warhorse (rulebook, p. 245). Warhorses are larger, stronger and far more spirited than ordinary horses, making them impossible to handle if one is not 'born to the saddle'.

Disarm Technique

The Knight is able to twist an opponent's sword out of his hand by catching the blade in the specially shaped guard of his own weapon. The skill comes into effect when a sword-blow is aimed at the Knight and the attacker scores a 20 for his Hit Roll (always a miss). The Knight then rolls 3d6, and if he scores higher than his enemy's rank (or rank-equivalent) then the sword is wrenched from the latter's hand and flung 1m to 6m away.

Expert Parry

Knowledge of this skill gives the Knight greater proficiency in the use of a shield. For any blow that would otherwise hit him, he rolls d10. On a roll of 1 or 2 he catches the blow on his shield, negating it.

Main Gauche

This skill enables the character to fight with two weapons simultaneously—a one-handed weapon such as a sword or axe in his right hand, and a dagger or a shortsword in his left. Obvi-

ously this precludes him from using a shield. The secondary weapon may be used in either of two ways, and the character must decide at the start of every Combat Round which of these options he is using that Round:

1. The secondary weapon may be used as a guard, giving +2 to the character's DEFENCE. (If the dagger/shortsword is magical, its bonus is also added.)
2. The character can strike with both weapons at once, making a separate Hit Roll for each weapon. His DEFENCE is zero for that Round. Both blows must be at the same opponent. The opponent's DEFENCE counts fully against both blows, as DEFENCE only needs to be split against multiple attackers, not against multiple blows by one attacker.

Master Bowman

The Master Bowman adds +1 to Armour Bypass Rolls for arrows (not quarrels—the crossbow is not covered by this skill). He is also able to loose off his arrows more quickly than an untrained archer; as well as shooting an arrow at his usual time to act in the Combat Round, he has a 50% chance of being able to shoot a second at the end of that round.

Quick Draw

This skill applies to daggers, shortswords and swords. Normally the drawing of a weapon is an action requiring one complete Combat Round, but a character with this skill can take his weapon from its scabbard and strike with it immediately. (This is equivalent to the samurai skill of *iai jutsu*.)

Swordmaster

This skill is only effective when the Knight is using a sword (either one-handed or two-handed). He makes a critical hit (i.e. a blow that requires no Armour Bypass Roll) on a Hit Roll score of 1 or 2. This is twice the regular chance of a critical hit.

Weaponskill

A separate Weaponskill governs the use of each *mêlée* weapon, so this skill must be selected more than once if the character desires special mastery of several weapon types. When fighting with the weapon specific to his Weaponskill, the character adds 1 to Armour Bypass Rolls.

BARBARIANS

Barbarians may come from Thuland, the Eastern Steppes, or one of a variety of other distant and inhospitable lands. They might be raiders sailing out of the north in their longboats, or hard-eyed desert nomads seeking vengeance, or savage hunters from the unexplored lands far to the south. They will be regarded with some wariness if they wander in more civilised realms, where they may be thought of as little better than animals. In truth, the Barbarian may have a code of honour as complex as that of any Knight, though he might never explain its subtleties to an outsider, or even articulate them into words for his own benefit.

Special Abilities of a Barbarian

Like Knights, Barbarians have a number of special abilities. These are:

- ♣ *Track*
- ♣ *Berserk*
- ♣ *Ride Warhorse*
- ♣ *Bloodrage (rank 8 onwards)*

Track

Barbarians may attempt to track their opponents or prey animals, across country. This is explained on p. 63 of the rulebook.

Berserk

Barbarians have the special ability of going *berserk* in combat. The character is able to make more powerful attacks at the cost of neglecting his defence. He may temporarily add 1 point to **ATTACK** for each 3 points he subtracts from **DEFENCE** for that Round.

Ride Warhorse

All player-characters can ride but only Knights and Barbarians, along with a few Warlocks, have had the long years of special training required to ride a warhorse. Warhorses are larger, stronger, and far more spirited than ordinary horses, making them impossible to handle if one is not raised to ride them.

Bloodrage

A Bloodrage is an even more effective way than going *berserk* (see above) of calling upon the

reserves of stamina and ferocity that reside in the depths of the human soul.

A Barbarian of 8th rank or higher may go into a Bloodrage during any combat in which he has taken a wound. He begins to bellow and roar terrible war-oaths, foam drools from his mouth, and his eyes glaze with insensate fury. Any normal mortal (that is, an unranked character not belonging to an adventuring Profession) whom he attacks is 80% likely to flee in terror, and even hardy adventurers of the 1st and 2nd ranks have a 25% chance of immediate retreat.

Under Bloodrage, the Barbarian may not use missile weapons. He will always seek close combat with his foes, attacking with an enhanced **ATTACK** score equal to his normal **ATTACK** plus his **DEFENCE** score. He loses all interest in parrying, however, and his **DEFENCE** goes temporarily to zero. (Thus Borak, who has **ATTACK** 22 and **DEFENCE** 14 under normal circumstances, becomes a 'killing machine' with **ATTACK** 36 and **DEFENCE** 0 when in the throes of a Bloodrage.) Armour Bypass Rolls are not affected, but any blow that gets past the opponent's armour scores an extra 1 HP damage (a morning star inflicts 6 points, etc.).

A Barbarian in Bloodrage feels no pain. Whereas a character normally falls unconscious when wounds reduce his current Health Points score to 0, the Barbarian continues to fight on until victorious or dead (i.e. at -3 HP). Also, his battle-craziness cannot be abated by mind-controlling spells. A spell such as *Enslave* has no effect on him while he is in the Bloodrage.

The snag with Bloodrage comes when all enemies have either fallen or fled the field of battle. The Barbarian will then turn on any other available target of his fury—and this may include his own companions! To shrug off the Bloodrage and return to normal, the character must roll under his Intelligence score on 1d20. He attempts this roll at the start of every Combat Round, and if he fails then he must spend the round pursuing or fighting the nearest possible opponent. Once the Intelligence roll is made, the Barbarian calms down and returns to normal.

Barbarians and Armour

Barbarians can wear any armour up to full mail armour without suffering any combat penalties for doing so. They are unused to fighting in plate armour, however.

EXPLORING A HILL-FORT WITH HIS COMRADES, SIR BALIN MOVES TOWARD AN ANCIENT STATUE...



HE GRABS DESPERATELY FOR THE EDGE OF THE PIT. THE GM DECIDES THIS NEEDS ABOVE-AVERAGE **REFLEXES**; DIFFICULTY FACTOR 13, THE SAME AS HIS SCORE.



NOT A PROBLEM.



BALIN TRIES TO PULL HIMSELF UP - DIFFICULTY FACTOR 11, OR AVERAGE. BUT BALIN'S **STRENGTH** IS ONLY 7. HE HAS TO ROLL 6 OR LESS ON D20



HE FAILS.

BALIN'S FALL IS BROKEN BY ICY WATER. CAN HE DRAW BREATH BEFORE HIS ARMOUR DRAGS HIM TO THE BOTTOM?



DIFFICULTY FACTOR 13, AND HIS FAST REFLEXES SAVE HIM AGAIN.



THE GM RULES THAT HE CAN HOLD HIS BREATH FOR AS MANY COMBAT ROUNDS AS HE HAS STRENGTH POINTS.

LUCKILY BALIN'S FRIENDS ARE CLOSE. A WEIGHTED ROPE DROPS BESIDE HIM, AND HE IS HAILED UP TO SAFETY.



CHAPTER 3

THE RULES OF COMBAT

THE RULES OF combat are the most fundamental element in any FRP game. A large proportion of any adventure is likely to be taken up with battles against monsters and hostile non-player characters. Make sure your players understand the basic combat procedure before starting the first adventure—it will give them a framework on which to build their knowledge of the rules as a whole, and save you from taking time out for explanation during the adventure.

In its simplest form combat consists of two characters fighting one another. For game purposes every fight is divided up into Combat Rounds; each Combat Round represents six seconds of game-time. The procedure of each Round is the same for both characters involved in the fight, the one with the higher Reflexes getting the first blow:

1. The attacker rolls 1d20 to determine whether he hits (the Hit Roll). If he fails then his go is over for the round and his opponent gets to strike back.
2. If an attacker scores a hit, he rolls to see whether the blow gets past his opponent's armour (if any). This is the Armour Bypass Roll. If it fails then the opponent's armour does its job and he is not hurt by the blow.
3. A blow which gets through armour inflicts a wound. The opponent's Health Points are reduced by the damage rating of the weapon used (4 Health Points in the case of a sword, 5 HP for a battleaxe, etc.)

If the Combat Round ends with both combatants still able to fight (i.e. their current Health Points have not yet been reduced to 0), the next Round begins and the procedure is followed through again.

The Hit Roll

To see if he hits an opponent, a character simply subtracts the opponent's defence score from his own attack score. This gives the number that

he must roll equal to or less than on 1d20 in order to score a hit. A roll of '20' is always a miss, regardless of the combatants' relative Combat Factors. Conversely, a roll of '1' is always a hit—and, in fact, always gets past armour. (Such a roll is called a 'critical hit'.)

The Armour Bypass Roll

Having scored a hit, a character rolls to see if his blow can penetrate his opponent's armour. Each type of protection has a given Armour Factor (usually abbreviated to AF).

<i>Armour type</i>	<i>Armour Factor</i>
None	0
Gambeson	1
Padded Armour	2
Mail Hauberk	3
Mail Armour	4
Plate Armour	5

The attacker must roll higher than his opponent's Armour Factor in order to penetrate the armour. The type of die used for this Armour Bypass Roll depends on the weapon with which the blow was struck.

Weapons

Weapons vary in effectiveness in two ways: their ability to penetrate armour, and the damage they inflict for a successful hit. For convenience, the following notation is used:

♣ *Sword (d8, 4 points)*

This means that a character attacking with a sword uses an eight-sided die when making an Armour Bypass Roll. If his blow gets past armour, his opponent will lose 4 Health Points.

Moving into Combat

Before hitting an opponent, it is (obviously) necessary to be adjacent to them. A character may,

when it is his turn to act, move up to one-quarter of his normal movement and strike in the same Round. Normal movement for a human is 10 metres per Combat Round, so a character who is no more than 2½ metres from an enemy is able to close and strike as one action.

There is an exception to this rule. When a character has surprised his foe (see p. 61 of the rulebook) he may move half his normal movement and attack in the same Combat Round.

Example

Angus and Fergus, uncompromising Barbarians, arrive at a door in a dungeon and kick it open to discover two Orcs about to go on guard duty. One Orc is only 2m from the doorway. Angus closes and strikes at him. The other Orc is standing by the weapon rack some 4m from the door, and although Fergus charges in he cannot strike him this round.

(If our Barbarians had surprised the Orcs—they rolling a 1 on 1d6; see p. 61 of the rulebook—they could both have closed and attacked.)

It is very important to have some way of keeping track of where everyone is standing during a fight. Figurines or labelled counters will be useful.

Strength

A character with a Strength score of 16, 17 or 18 adds +1 to his Armour Bypass Rolls and to the damage he inflicts for a successful hit.

Occasionally, as a result of magic, a character may attain a Strength above 18. His Armour Bypass Rolls and weapon damage get a +2 bonus.

Shields

A character using a shield rolls 1d6 for any blow that is struck against him. On a roll of 1, he catches the blow on his shield—the blow is negated, even if it was a critical hit.

Fighting more than one opponent

We said earlier that a one-on-one fight was the simplest form that combat could take. It is unlikely that a group of adventurers will encounter an exactly equal number of monsters; most combats will actually involve someone (either character or monster) fighting more than one opponent at the same time.

A character (or monster) can divide his defence between up to three attacks made against him in a Combat Round. He must announce how much of his defence he is putting against each blow before the attacker makes his Hit Roll.

Wounds and Recovery

As stated above, when a character is wounded he loses Health Points. When the character's current Health Points reach 0 he falls unconscious. If they are reduced to -3 he is dead (see p.121 of the main rulebook).

A character who falls unconscious rolls 1d6 at the end of every minute (every 10 Combat Rounds) of game-time. When he manages to roll a 1, he wakes up. (His Health Point score is restored to 1, the minimum necessary for consciousness.)

There are two ways to recover lost Health Points: by magic or by recuperation. Magic is faster, but not widely available. The healing spells are detailed in chapter 10 of the rulebook and we will concern ourselves only with natural recuperation here. The character must wait four days before the natural healing process begins. He will then regain a number of Health Points equal to his rank each day, until he is back to his normal (unwounded) Health Points score.

Neither magical nor recuperative healing will ever take a character above his normal Health Points score. The only way to increase this score is by advancing in rank.

Example

In his first adventure Sir Balin the Bloodthirsty has several fierce battles. Eventually he is felled by a Zombie. He wakes up a short time later (with 1 Health Point) to find that his companions have defeated the Zombie. Since they are all heavily wounded by now, they head back to the nearest village to rest. After four days, and every day from then on, Sir Balin regains 1 Health Point. He is fully recovered when his Health Points score is back to 13; it will not increase beyond that until he advances to 2nd rank.

Missile Combat

Missile weapons such as bows differ somewhat from handheld weaponry. For one thing, most characters cannot parry an arrow that is shot at them! In order to score a hit on his opponent, an archer must simply roll equal to or less than

DRAGON WARRIORS

his ATTACK score on 1d20. It is like the Hit Roll in normal combat, except that the target character's DEFENCE score makes no difference.

Circumstances will modify the d20 Hit Roll, making the chance of hitting less likely.

Target is...	Adjustment to die roll
at short range	no adjustment
at medium range	+3
at long range	+7
small or crouching	+2
moving slowly	+2
moving quickly	+4
in poor light	+3 or more (GM's discretion)

Example

Fully recovered after his last adventure, Sir Balin sets off with his comrades-at-arms to explore a ruined hill fort. As they approach the ruins, a Goblin is spotted some distance off. Doubtless it is slinking away to report their presence to others of its kind.

Balin quickly readies his bow. The Goblin is a small target, moving slowly at medium range and in poor light (it is dusk). The total modifier is thus +10. Balin rolls the d20 and scores a 4, adjusted by the modifier to a 14. Balin has an ATTACK score of 13, so the arrow just misses. Sniggering evilly, the Goblin disappears among the trees.

Combat Penalties for Wearing Armour

Knights are trained to fight in any armour. The fighting style of other Professions is different, however, and may incur penalties to the character's Combat Factors:

- Barbarians or Warlocks: -2 from ATTACK and DEFENCE if wearing plate armour
- Assassins or Mystics: -2 from ATTACK and DEFENCE for wearing mail armour; -4 for plate armour
- Elementalists or Sorcerers: -1 from ATTACK and DEFENCE for wearing a mail hauberk; -3 for mail armour; -4 for plate armour

The Combat Round

All the important rules governing combat itself have now been covered. However, the six-second Combat Round is not just the time taken to strike a blow or shoot an arrow, but also covers the time needed to perform a number of other actions as well.

Within a Combat Round, characters act in descending order of Reflexes. When a charac-

ter's (or monster's) turn comes, he performs his action. In detail, the possible actions a character may take include:

- attack with a m el e weapon (after moving up to 2½m if desired—see above, Moving into Combat)
- prepare and shoot an arrow
- discharge a loaded crossbow
- partially load a crossbow (the character must spend 3 rounds doing this before he can shoot)
- draw a weapon
- cast a spell
- take out a scroll and unroll it
- take out a potion and unstopper it
- read a scroll
- drink a potion
- activate a magical device (amulet, etc.)
- make a normal move (10m for a human, 12m for an elf, etc.)
- run (20m for a human, 25m for an elf, etc.) (a character who runs must either run, move normally or do nothing in the following round)

Characters who have the same Reflexes act simultaneously. When a character's turn comes he may, if he chooses, defer his action until later in the round. This gives him the chance to see what other characters are doing first.

Example

Sir Hugo, accompanied by his employer Ulric, a Sorcerer, are in the town of Clyster shopping for some items. After a busy morning in the market, they seek refreshment in a small dockside tavern. Without realizing it they have strayed into one of the town's most notorious haunts for ruffians and rogues. Three wiry cutthroats begin to insult them, and in moments swords are drawn.

Hugo could act before any of them, but he decides to wait and see what Ulric (with a lower Reflexes score) has planned. The Sorcerer casts a Transfix spell which only one of the cutthroats manages to resist. If Hugo had struck sooner he might have wasted his blow in wounding one of the men who now stands transfixed. As it is, he makes short work of dispatching the last cutthroat.

Evading an attack

GM: "You're advancing down a musty corridor. Your torch gives off a smoky light, revealing large spiders that scuttle away as you pass. Strange carvings mark the walls. Suddenly you hear an ominous grating noise—a gigantic stone slab is descending to block the corridor behind you."

Player: "I whirl and throw myself through the gap before it can close."

GM: "You can try. The slab's descent has a speed of 10. What's your *EVASION*?"

Certain fast-moving attacks or other threats cannot be prevented by using *DEFENCE*, but might just be dodged by the use of *EVASION*.

EVASION is used in a wide variety of situations—to leap through a closing gap, to sidestep a Dragon's breath of fire, to dodge a falling chandelier... in any situation where the character's survival depends on getting out of the way.

The attack that the character is trying to dodge is given a *SPEED* rating. This might be anything from 5 for a slowly toppling statue, up to 20 for the lancing energy-beam of a magic Ring of Red Ruin. The character's *EVASION* is subtracted from the attack's *SPEED*. If a roll of 2d10 comes up less than or equal to the result, the attack has hit. If greater, the character dodged.

Note that this is very like the Hit Roll in combat, except that the roll is made on 2d10 instead of 1d20. A roll of 2 always means that the character has failed to dodge, while a 20 always means the attack has missed. In the example above, the character had an *EVASION* score of 4. The GamesMaster rolled two tensided dice. On a roll of 6 or less, the slab would descend too quickly, crushing him before he had scrambled beneath it. On a roll of 7 or more, the slab would miss.

TYPICAL ATTACK SPEEDS

Description	SPEED score	Example
Easily evaded	5	Toppling statue
	6	
Very slow	7	Drifting gas-cloud
	8	
Slow	9	Hurled chair
	10	
Average	11	Rolling boulder
	12	Falling masonry
Fast	13	Trapdoor
	14	
Very fast	15	
	16	A Dragon's flame
Extremely fast	17	
	18	Javelin ¹
Dazzling	19	
	20	Energy-beam

It is very important to visualize the situation when a character has to evade an attack. Do not

¹ It is thus difficult but not impossible to evade a javelin—if one sees it coming. Other missile weapons move far too quickly for a character to stand any chance of dodging them.

simply make the roll without considering what it represents. A character dangling on the end of a rope is treated as having *EVASION* of zero when a magic ring is fired at him, unless he says that he is prepared to let go of the rope. A character trapped at the bottom of a deep well will certainly be hit by the fireball that his enemy lofts down at him. *EVASION* scores only apply when it is physically possible to evade.

Getting out of Combat

The wise adventurer knows when to escape from a fight. There are two ways of doing this; the first is recommended, except for characters in very good armour.

Retreat: When his turn comes to act, the retreating character, still defending normally, backs up one-quarter of his normal movement (i.e. 2½m in the case of a human). The next Round, if his opponent does not follow up, the character can turn and run.

Rout: This is a more desperate method. The character simply turns his back on his opponent. The opponent gets one free strike at his back (zero *DEFENCE*) before he can run off.

Sensible players will always be prepared to escape when things are going badly. No one can expect to win every battle—particularly not in the early days of inexperience.

Monsters may decide to give chase. It is the GamesMaster's task to role-play the monsters and make this decision. You will probably take a number of factors into account, such as:

- ♣ How powerful are the monsters?
- ♣ How powerful are the fleeing PCs?
- ♣ How powerful do the monsters think the fleeing player-characters are?
- ♣ What do the monsters have to gain from chasing them?

The characters may discourage pursuit by throwing down food (to distract unintelligent creatures) or treasure (in the case of more discerning pursuers). Very intelligent and powerful monsters will not be fooled by such tactics—why should they stop and pick up baubles when they can catch the characters and get all their treasure?

Lastly, remember that the monsters also have the option of running away. Some (Orcs are a case in point) virtually make a habit of it.

CHAPTER 4

THE LANDS OF LEGEND

'A myth is a pure and absolute imagination; a legend has a basis of fact, but amplifies, abridges or modifies that basis at pleasure.'—Rawlinson

The Lie of the Land

THE WORLD OF *Dragon Warriors* has a name: Legend. It is a place of warring nobles and mysterious wizards—a place for adventures. But there is a 'real life' behind the adventuring scenes. The country of Ellesland is described here in more detail than the rest of the world, and is the focus of many of the published adventures for the game. But you should not feel constrained by that!

The GamesMaster should remember one thing in particular. Players may read these chapters about the game-world, but their *characters* will not know very much about the world unless you, as GM, tell them. A character who knew everything about Legend would have a very high level of general education. If players make use of information that they (as characters) do not have access to, then the GM should change a few key details here and there so as to give them a surprise. A *nasty* surprise....

It is the prerogative of each individual GamesMaster to give his/her campaign its 'fine tuning'—the distinct flavour that makes it unique. Different groups have different styles. Some may choose to role-play dauntless Crusaders marching south with the banner of the 'True' Faith, charging into battle against the pagan horde. Others will prefer to take the part of Ta'ashim warriors, defending civilization against the crude infidels from the north.

Some will choose to focus on the broad canvas of Legend—trading and politicking their way to power in the courts of kings, getting involved in assassination and skulduggery in Ferromaine, or siding with various factions in the power struggles of the Tamorian Senate. Those with a taste for low-key adventures can

take a small section of Legend and develop it with meticulous care.

For others with more exotic tastes there are always the areas we have included off-map: the theocracy of Batubatan, with its gold temple-towers scraping the very floor of Heaven; the majestic land of Minj, awirl with coloured silks and the clash of cymbals; Khitai, the empire that has endured throughout Time, where a ponderous bureaucracy involves itself in ever-greater refinements of etiquette and philosophy; or war-torn Yamato, where the *haiken* swordmasters follow their ethic of honour even if it leads them to ritual suicide.

Or, if you prefer, take a different time period. Set your campaign in the days of the Selentine Empire, or in the heyday of Ancient Kaikuhuru—or move forward to the Age of Discovery, when ships open up a new world beyond the western ocean. In this future time the old class divisions are crumbling as merchants buy noble titles, and old aristocrats sink into the peasantry. Musket and rapier have taken the place of bow and broadsword. Possibly sorcerers will not be the rare and solitary folk that they are in medieval legend. There may even be a 'Magician's Guild'!

What I am saying is that GamesMasters can make their own campaign. You do not need to be constrained by what is set out in this book (change any bits you dislike, in fact) but there is plenty of detail here if you do not have the time to make up your own. However, players should respect their GamesMaster's decision; the campaign is *his*, and he must have the final say. If you disagree with what he says, you can always quit the campaign—or start your own!

Cornumbria

Ellesland (pronounced 'EL-ess-land') comprises five nations: Albion, Cornumbria, Thuland, Glissom and Ereworn. It is in Cornumbria and

DRAGON WARRIORS

in Ereworn that the original natives of Ellesland still predominate. At one time they ruled from shore to shore, but their fierce armies were broken by the legions of Selentium in ancient times, and the people became citizens of the Empire. Later, when the legions departed to protect the core of the Selentine Empire (by then under threat from constant barbarian incursions out of the western plains), the Elleslanders were prey to attacks from the mainland. Finally they were driven back to Cornumbria by the invaders.

Authority in Cornumbria is centred on the lofty hill-forts where the chieftains and their grim thanes overlook the moors and valleys of their land. The High King is elected at the meeting of all the chieftains, and it is also not impossible for such an assembly to strip the High King of his rank (though this has happened only rarely).

Cornumbria was brought into the True Faith in the latter days of Selentium and has remained so since then. Perhaps harking back to their ancestral tradition of a wild, solitary priesthood, Cornumbrian priests have opted for a monastic Church with no central authority. The monks live in the most inaccessible and uncomfortable places—not just abbeys on chilly, windswept sea cliffs, but even in caves and on barren islands. They are famous for their learning and their works of art. (The illuminated manuscript known as *The Book of Dathnan*, of which there are five copies, is widely considered the grand masterwork of limnery.) However, the monastic Church of Cornumbria is effectively autonomous from the Selentine Church, and for that reason is regarded with suspicion by priests of the neighbouring countries.²

Albion

The ancestors of the current inhabitants of Albion were reavers from the mainland—mainly from the region now called Chaubrette. They were originally heathens with the same grizzled warrior-gods as the Thulanders, but the True Faith now predominates. Trade routes extend far to the south and west, providing the lords of southern Albion with a rich source of taxes. With their coffers full, they are free to indulge their incessant squabbles.

This is a feudal society. Land is held by lords from the king. Originally this meant that there was a 'pyramidal' pecking order: the king ruling over his vassals, the dukes and earls, many of

whom have vassal lords of their own. Most lords have castles where their retinue of knights and men-at-arms reside with them. Some knights have lands of their own and they, as well as some of the minor nobles, oversee their estates from manor houses. The peasants are the foundation of the feudal society. They work the land of the manor, which may be only one of many in the lord's fief.

That is the system in theory. In practice, like most feudal societies, it is somewhat upset by the rise of the merchant class. Merchants become wealthy without themselves producing wealth, but just by buying, transporting and selling the goods and produce of others. Specialized crafts also develop so that, whereas in a small village a family must build their own house, make their own clothes, etc., in a town it is possible to pay someone else to do this. Eventually the craftsmen organize into guilds and *insist* that you use guild members to build your house, and so on. The towns achieve autonomy from the local lord, receiving their charter direct from the king. The citizens of Port Clyster, for example, are freemen—not the vassals of Baron Aldred, nor of any other lord. Technically, a serf can obtain his freedom by escaping to a town such as Clyster and remaining there for a year and a day.

Tradition and mutual obligation are strong forces in Albionic society. The peasants work hard for their lord, but they are also under his protection. The knights who fight and even die in the lord's name also thrive by his beneficence. The king bestows the land, but in return he can call on his lords in time of war.

Albion's king, Hadric, has his court in the city of Ongus. Hadric is a weak king and a poor judge of character. This mix means that he has surrounded himself with ruthlessly self-serving advisers. Untold damage has been wrought in the last ten years of Hadric's misrule: the lands of loyal vassals have been stripped away, unworthy men have been ennobled, and peasants have suffered under a yoke of hard taxation. In the north, old foes like Aldred, Baron of Gorburn, and Earl Montombre care little for the king's law. They have their own grudges to pursue.

The towns of Albion tend to be quite small. Apart from the larger ports and market towns, most have grown up around a lord's castle—a place where the citizens can be sure of protection in times of trouble! Others may co-exist with a strongly fortified abbey. Confined within secure walls, a town's population is unlikely to number more than a thousand. In all the coun-

² *Though the occasional accusations of black magic or even devil worship are surely unfounded.*

try, only about a dozen cities have populations in the tens of thousands. The overwhelming majority of the people live in manors consisting of perhaps twenty cottages.

Thuland

The country north of Albion is a high, craggy place split by deep river valleys and cold blue lakes. The people—settlers from across the Mergeld Sea, both from the Mercanian Coast and from the outer Thulan islands to the north—are barbaric and fierce, often at war with their neighbours. Lords sit out the winter in smoky mead-halls, surrounded by their housecarls, waiting for the summer months of reaving. Wandering priests brave hostility and harsh weather in order to bring the True Faith to the people. In this they are hampered by the same rugged geography that prevents any real centralization of power.³ Some of the lords have been converted, but even they show no inclination to completely reject the old gods of their ancestors—Wotan, Tor, Loge and the others. The merchants here are also minstrels, welcome to barter their wares if they can regale the hall-heroes with stirring tales. The serfs who till the land have no rights. To their lords they are of little more importance than animals.

Ereworn

In the far north, the influence of law is scarcely felt at all. Brigands and masterless knights roam unchecked about the foothills of the Pagan Mountains. The racial stock is mostly native Elleslander, with an admixture of Mercanian and Algandian blood.⁴ The gods worshipped here are the strange primeval deities that the Druids called upon—Lahmfada, Kernanu, Morkaan; shadowy entities of the forest and mountains.⁵

³ *The court of the King of Thuland is located at Katorheim. His rule is strong enough on the island itself, but the Thulan lords across the sea in Ellesland may really be considered to rule over semi-autonomous duchies.*

⁴ *Mercenaries from the continent were employed by both sides in the 'Black War' fought between Cornumbria and Ereworn some three hundred years ago. After hostilities dwindled down into the customary skirmishing, the mercenaries stayed on and gradually became absorbed into the native population.*

⁵ *Most of these gods were 'discredited' in the conversion of Cornumbria by the time-honoured proselytizing technique of equating the gods of the old religion with the devils of the new. As far as the average Cornumbrian is concerned, therefore, his northern neighbours are devil-worshippers. Generally this is a bit of a slur—the old gods*

The True Faith is not recognized at all.

The lords of Ereworn are either mad or irredeemably steeped in evil. Some are both. Vendettas among themselves and wars against Thuland, Cornumbria and Albion form the yearly round. The throne lies empty while numerous claims to the succession are made. Assassination is the accepted means to advance one's cause, and an entire subculture—the Clan of Harbingers, who live in solitary mountain villages and are roughly equivalent to Japan's *ninja*—has developed to cater to this need. At present Duke Darian holds the old king's fortress, Castle Ereworn, but he is too canny to put his life at risk by claiming the crown.

Merchant-adventurers seldom brave the ports of Ereworn, for villains lurk as thick as shadows and one's life may be lost as easily as one's merchandise. Outside the towns, the countryside is bleak and scattered with crude forts and peasant hovels. Many villages are deserted because of the Black Death that has claimed many of the people in recent years. At night the peasants shutter their windows and cower by the fireside while goblins dance on the rooftops and the Devil, they say, stalks the land with his two hounds—Pestilence and Plague.

Deep within the Pagan Mountains, beyond the bandits' foothills, a number of proud Dwarves dwell. Rarely seen by people, these Dwarves are vaguely aware of the problems of Ereworn, and long ago withdrew from all diplomatic and mercantile contact with the humans of the kingdom.

Glissom

The social structure, customs and religion of this small country resemble those of Ereworn. You will find a description of it in the adventure-book *The Prince of Darkness*.

The Stranded Isles

A few words will suffice for these forlorn islands which are located dead west of Ellesland in the Hadran Sea. They are permanently covered by a pall of mist, for they lie at a point where the winds are still. We must rely on mariners' tales for our knowledge of the isles—as, for example,

are elemental and uncivilized, but not intrinsically a force for evil. However, some of the crazier lords (e.g. Duke Darian—see the adventure-book The Elven Crystals) revere still stranger gods. Balor and Rinfax were demons even in the Druids' pantheon, and there can be no doubt that they appeal to all that is vile in the human heart.



in the logbook of Olo of Cornumbria, whose ship was becalmed there for ten days. Olo wrote that “the sea was like a pane of blue glass, the mist like drifting strands of silk”. Some of his crew claimed to see wild naked figures leaping among the cliffs by the shore, but there is evidence that they had by this time resorted to drinking salt water. Only adventurers would have any reason to journey to this forsaken corner of the world.

The North-west Mainland

The people of Chaubrette, Algandy and Kurland—the three great kingdoms of the north-west peninsula—incline to the view that the Elleslanders are simple ruffians, with coarse ways that set them little above their barbaric neighbours. Occasional wars across the Glaive⁶ over the years have caused much ill-feeling and doubtless fuelled this prejudice.

The royal families and nobilities of these countries are strongly linked by blood—and, in fact, there are also ties with some of the lords of Albion.⁷ The last twenty years or so have been relatively peaceful. The land is fertile, trade profitable. Life is comfortable even for the peasantry. The robber knights, who had been marauding and trouble-making through the length and breadth of the land for centuries,

have been given an acceptable outlet for their rapaciousness in the form of the Crusades.⁸ The Age of Chivalry is thus flowering, and warlike energies are channelled into such sport as tourneys, jousts and steeplechases. The perfect gentle knight of an elegant castle in, say, Chaubrette cuts a very different figure from his rough Elleslandic cousin, sitting in a draughty keep, clutching a wench in one hand and a brimming mead-horn in the other.

From a geographic point of view, these lands are generally higher and more mountainous than Ellesland. Climate is similar, warmed by south-westerly ocean currents from the tropics.⁹ These lands are more densely populated, and large tracts of forest have been cleared for farming.

⁸ *The idea of the Crusade was formed jointly by the Pontiff and King Vergang of Algandy. Nominally a Holy War, it was more truthfully a way of getting these troublesome knights out of ‘civilized’ regions and putting them somewhere that they could grab land to their hearts’ content.*

⁹ *Krarth and the Mercanian Coast do not receive the benefit of these warm currents and are correspondingly colder than Ellesland even though at much the same latitude. Krarth in particular is a flat country subject to winds off the polar ice. Temperatures drop to -30° Celsius or lower in winter and rarely attain $+15^{\circ}$ in midsummer. Contrast this with the mean annual range of -6° to $+28^{\circ}$ Celsius for Albion.*

⁶ *The channel separating Ellesland from the mainland.*

⁷ *As an example, Montombre’s wife Talia is a niece of the King of Algandy.*

CHAPTER 5

CREATURES OF LEGEND

CAITShee

The Caitshee, or Faerie Cat, lurks in cemeteries, woods and ruined abbeys. It moves with great stealth, and in darkness it will not be seen by any character below 4th rank. The Caitshee's usual habit is to attach itself to a party of adventurers and follow them unseen. The effect of its presence is to jinx any spells cast by members of the party. There is a 50% chance that a Sorcerer will miscast any spell he attempts, while for a Mystic the chance of bungling a spell is 35%.

If detected, the Caitshee can be fought. In darkness or poor light, characters of 3rd rank and below must deduct 4 from ATTACK and 8 from DEFENCE while fighting it. For higher-ranking characters, the penalty is -2 ATTACK and -4 DEFENCE.

Only enchanted or solid silver weapons

can strike a Caitshee; others will always miss. With much hissing, spitting and howling, it can leap up to 5m and attack in the same Combat Round. Its claws pass through normal armour as though it were not there, and only when attacking a character in magical armour does it need to make an Armour Bypass Roll. The touch of its claws conveys a *Weaken* spell with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 17. The creature's spell-jinxing ability continues to apply throughout the battle; additionally, any damage-inflicting spell that is successfully cast on it will do the minimum damage possible (e.g. *Firestorm* would inflict only one 8 HP wound).

The character who deals the fatal wound to a Caitshee takes a curse for his action. The effect of this curse may be delayed for 1-6 months. The GM rolls d10 and refers to the table below:

d10 Curse Effect

- 1 Any item of iron or steel the character tries to use (including weapons and armour, unless magical) will rust to uselessness within a day.
- 2 The character suffers a run of bad luck in combat from time to time. There is a 20% chance this will apply in any given fight. His enemy's first blow against him will be a critical hit, while his own first blow will go wide.
- 3 The character is particularly susceptible to magic at night-time. From sunset to sunrise, his magical defence is reduced by 3 points.
- 4 Any party the character is travelling with has twice the usual chance of an encounter (see pp11-12) each day. Animals and monsters encountered in this way will concentrate their attacks on the character if possible.
- 5 The character accidentally sprains an arm or leg. If an arm, he temporarily loses 2 points from both attack and defence. If a leg, he loses 1 from attack and defence, halves his evasion score and movement rate, and is unable to run. The torn ligaments and muscles can be reknitted by Miracle Cure, but if the curse is not lifted then the injury will recur within a month. Natural recovery from the sprain requires the character to roll d12 at the end of each week; on a roll of 12, he recovers normal use of the limb.



DRAGON WARRIORS

- 6 There is a 35% chance on every adventure that the character will lose his most useful weapon or magic item.
- 7 No steed (except for a Destrier) will allow the character to ride it.
- 8 The character's eyes become sensitive to light. He cannot go about during the day.
- 9 Whenever he sees a black cat, the character is subject to a 1d8 intensity Fright Attack (see DW rulebook, p. 122). If this takes effect, he dies of heart failure.
- 10 Any treasure the character touches becomes debased. Gold is changed to silver, silver becomes copper, copper becomes bronze (which is worth one-tenth as much) and gems turn to wood or glass.

The death-curse of a Caitshee can be lifted by the application of a 20-Magic Point spell of *Dispel Magic*, or by touching a sacred relic.

The Caitshee's stats are:

ATTACK 14, Claws (d8, 3 and <i>Weaken</i> spell)	Armour Factor 0 (but see above)
DEFENCE 21	Movement: 12m (25m)
MAGICAL DEFENCE 16	EVASION 10
Health Points 1d10 ¹	STEALTH 26
Rank-equivalent: 4th	PERCEPTION 18

GHOST

Ghosts are spirits of the dead that have chosen to linger on the earthly plane for some reason. Often the reason is to give guidance to the living or to exact revenge on an enemy—often the Ghost's murderer. Ghosts exude an aura of terror, and when they encounter living beings there is an automatic Fright Attack (see the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook, p. 122) of 1d12 intensity.

Having survived a Fright Attack by a Ghost, a character becomes inured to that Ghost and is in no danger from it in future (though he may still be scared to death by other Ghosts). For this reason, a Ghost will usually depart after encountering a party of adventurers, unless it has some message for them. Sometimes (20% chance) a Ghost will decide to haunt a party; its presence will swamp out the danger sense of any Mystics, cause a clammy unease that will double the chance of the party being surprised, and bring bad luck in the form of a temporary 1-point penalty to ATTACK and DEFENCE for each character. Apart from Exorcism, there is no way to harm or drive off a Ghost.

1 *The Cat shows no sign of how badly wounded it is until the mortal blow lands, whereupon it fades away like a shadow in sunlight.*



GOBLIN

Goblins are malicious sprites renowned for their evil ways. They relish cruelty, and their magical mischief is blamed for many mishaps experienced by travellers along desolate country lanes. Their favourite time to attack is at dusk, and they will customarily begin with a sorcerous prank such as causing a horse to go lame, or making a bat fly in a character's face so that he falls from the saddle. Once the party is in disarray, the Goblins will leap from the bushes to attack—hurling sharp flints from their slings or closing to stab with swords made of icicles.

Goblins are small, never more than a metre tall, with disproportionately large heads. Their faces are warty, sallow and hollow-cheeked, with large hooked noses and sunken eyes. They go about in hooded jerkins which help them to blend into the shadowy corners where they prefer to lurk. Although nimble and crafty in battle, they are essentially of a craven nature.

A Goblin, captured and threatened, abandoned when its fellows have fled, will resort to all manner of whingeing promises in return for its freedom. A promise wrung from a Goblin will be followed to the letter once the creature is free, but it will always seek to twist the wording of such a bond for its own foul purposes.

ATTACK 13, Shortsword (d8, 3) or Sling (d6, 3)	Armour Factor 1
DEFENCE 7	Movement: 12m (25m)
MAGICAL DEFENCE 5	EVASION 5
Health Points 1d6 + 4	STEALTH 21
Rank-equivalent: 1st	PERCEPTION 13

CHAPTER 6

UNDER THE ROCKS

This is a short introductory adventure for *Dragon Warriors*, for novice characters of rank 1-2. It can be set anywhere in the Lands of Legend, but works best in a rural, mountainous part of the world. Most of Ellesland is ideal.

Introduction

The player-characters are travelling together—they may have met on the road. Night is falling as they reach a village at a crossroads. There is no inn here, but for a few copper pennies they can find lodgings in a villager's hut. At dawn they are visited by Ifan, the bailiff of the local lord's lands, who lives in the largest house.

He explains that the village has been expecting a visit from the abbot of a small monastery in the nearby hills, to bless the fields for the festival of Saint Felicia, granting good weather for the coming season. The festival is today but the abbot has not arrived. Would the adventurers travel along the road to the monastery to make sure all is well, and escort the abbot if they meet him? Ifan can offer only 30 florins, but is sure the abbot will be generous for their help.

The Road

If asked, Ifan will tell the PCs that the monastery is home to a small order of Cenobitic monks, around twenty men, around a day's travel from the village.

The route to the monastery is along the least travelled of the crossroad's branches, an old road paved with stone slabs that must date back to the first Selentine Empire, built for their conquering armies to march along a thousand years ago. It winds through farmland, then woodland, and finally enters the foothills of the nearby mountains. By mid-afternoon the player-characters are travelling through rugged countryside with steep valleys. They pass an occasional crofter's stone cottage, their herds of scraggy

sheep dotted across the rocky hillsides like tufts of wool caught in a hedge. Occasionally they see one of the hill-folk, far off in the distance.

If the PCs approach one of these shepherds he will initially be wary of them, but an offering of food or money, or any display of kindness, will change his opinion. He will tell them, in speech so heavily accented it takes an Int roll to understand (-5 on the dice if the character was born locally), that he's seen no traffic on the road for the last week, and something bad lies ahead—he can tell by the way the crows circle in the evenings. He will warn them to go back.

Not long after seeing the crofter, as the road leads upwards, the clouds begin to descend, covering the tops of the mountains. As the adventurers continue they find themselves in a thin cold mist, the sun a pale disc sinking in the sky to the south-west.

The Bridge

An hour or so further on, the party will come around a stand of pine trees and see a arched stone bridge across a steep-sided ravine. It is solidly built, and its shape betrays the hand of the same makers as the road. Ifan mentioned the bridge; he said that the monastery is another two hours travel from that point.

About twenty metres beyond it a strange black shape lies at the side of the road. Its details are obscured by the mist, but it is larger than a man, and moves strangely.

If the PCs look down into the ravine, allow them a Perception check to spot scattered bones in the stream that flows through it. An Int check will reveal that these are only sheep carcasses. They could have fallen onto the jagged rocks, or been swept down by a sudden flood. Or—not.

The bridge, or more specifically its central arch, is home to an ogre. The creature is old, and was recently chased from its lair deep in the mountains by a group of adventurers, who

DRAGON WARRIORS

blinded it with a *Dragonbreath* spell. Now it has found a new home in the space under the bridge. Here it spends its days listening for sheep or wild goats that have strayed into the ravine, or occasional travellers on the road above. When something passes over the bridge, the ogre can hear them and sense the vibration of their steps through the ancient stonework.

The only way to cross the bridge safely is to go one at a time, moving stealthily (Stealth check—rulebook, p. 63), without speaking. Horses or other beasts of burden will not be able to cross safely. Do not ask your players if their characters are taking special precautions; and if they do not suggest it then assume they are not. After all, it's just a bridge.

Establish in what order the adventurers are crossing the bridge. The moment the first character who is not taking any precautions reaches the midpoint of the span, two things happen. Firstly the black shape by the road explodes as a mass of crows take flight, revealing the dismembered carcass of a horse that they were feeding on. Secondly, a huge hand appears over the parapet of the bridge and grabs for the leader!

The Ogre

The ogre may be old, but that does not mean it is stupid, and it has fought humans before. It will stay below the bridge, using the stonework as a shield, and making occasional grabs for members of the party from alternate sides of the bridge. When it is completely under the bridge, it cannot be seen or targeted by anyone on the bridge or the road. If it comes under repeated missile or spell-fire and can't work out where its attacker is, it will run away, down the ravine and out of sight.

Its arm has an **ATTACK** of 12. If it hits, it ignores armour but its victim can make an **EVASION** roll to evade its grasp, against a speed of 12. (If it gets surprise by rolling 1-2 on 1d6 then its first attack has a speed of 16). If it grabs a character successfully, it pulls them over the parapet. In the next round it whacks them against the stonework for (d8, 4) damage—they can attack this turn—and drops them in the stream (additional 1d4 damage for the fall).

If the arm takes 6 or more points of damage in one round, it will drop anyone it is holding. This may be a bad thing, as they'll take 1d4 falling damage as they drop into the ravine.

After it has failed to grab twice, the ogre will switch tactics. Instead of grabbing for characters on the bridge, it will try to bash them

into the stonework. If all the PCs retreat off the bridge, it will concentrate on attacking anyone who is in the ravine with it.

If any PC wants to scramble down into the ravine at any point, they will need to make a **Reflexes** roll. Failure means they have stumbled and fallen. It's only a six-metre fall (1d6 damage) and the water is shallow enough to stand and move about easily, but once down they are stuck. The ravine walls have a climbing difficulty of 13—anyone with a **Reflexes** of 13 or more can scale them, but if a PC's **Reflexes** are lower they must roll under their ability on 1d20 to succeed. If they go upstream fifty metres the walls are easier to scale (difficulty 8).

OLD OGRE

ATTACK 16 (12 for arm), Bash (d8 +2, 4)	Armour Factor: +1 for tough skin
DEFENCE 10	Movement: 10m (15m)
MAGICAL DEFENCE 8	EVASION 2
Health Points 17	STEALTH 6
Rank-equivalent: 5th	PERCEPTION 5

The Abbot

Once the ogre has either fled or been killed, the PCs can investigate the site. Under the ogre's arch lies its larder and treasure-hoard. Unfortunately it only has 16 florins and a tattered leather satchel—empty. However, also down here, half in the water, is the unconscious body of the abbot: the ogre had learned that food usually doesn't start rotting until it's killed, and has kept him alive.

The abbot is badly battered and one of his legs is broken. Healing spells may bring him back to the waking world (he's on -2 HP) but he is too weak to move or even ride a horse, and the pain from his limb will cause him to lapse in and out of consciousness.

The PCs should remember that the monastery is closer than the village, and should be able to work out that the abbot is likely to get better care there. Ask them how they are going to transport a badly wounded man several miles uphill, and give extra experience points for inventive solutions.

Once at the abbey, they will be invited to stay the night. In the morning the abbot will thank them personally, and will gift them three things: a +1 mace given to the monastery by a pilgrim; a Potion of Occult Acuity, and a letter of introduction bearing his seal. In a world where the church is powerful, this may be more valuable and useful than the mace!

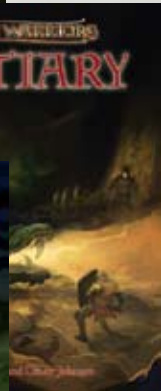
DRAGON WARRIORS

Dragon Warriors is epic fantasy with a uniquely British flavour.

It's rich, earthy, mysterious, ancient and dark. You never know what might rise up to the surface.

A bit like the beer in the local taverns.

Dragon Warriors is a complete FRPG with an old-school style, easy-to-play mechanics, and a unique style and tone. It's now on sale in the US and Canada for the first time. Dragon Warriors titles can be bought from all good games stores. See our website for more information.



MAGNUM·OPUS·PRESS

WWW.MAGNUMOPUSPRESS.COM



WWW.MONGOOSEPUBLISHING.COM