

# LEGENDS & LAIRS™

d20  
system

# CITY WORKS™



A HANDBOOK FOR DESIGNING  
AND SURVIVING FANTASY CITIES

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CITYWORKS

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# WELCOME

Fantasy Flight Games is pleased to present *Cityworks*, the latest volume in our Legends & Lairs line of sourcebooks for the d20 System. *Cityworks* gives players and DMs everything they need to create and play exciting urban adventures and campaigns.

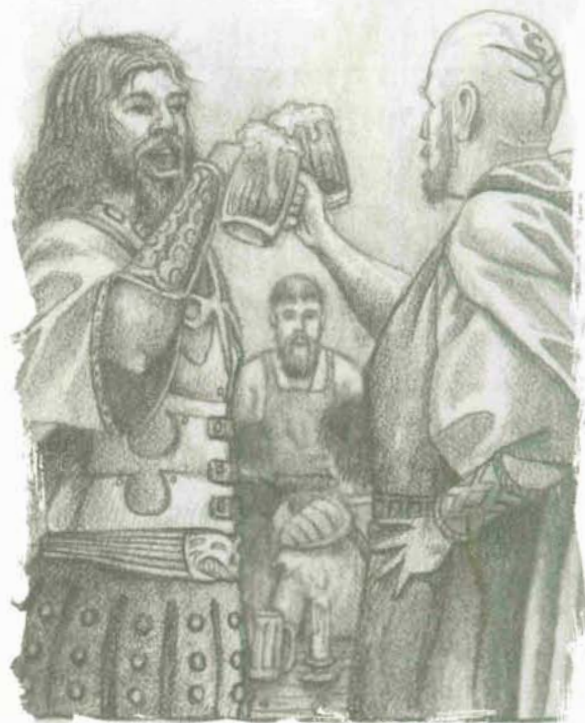
Chapter 1 presents new rules for player characters in cities, including variant core classes, new prestige classes, feats, and spells uniquely suited to dungeon environments. The chapter also provides tactics and advice for playing each of the core classes in dungeon adventures.

Chapter 2 describes the basics of designing cities, including their origins and histories.

Chapter 3 gives the DM everything he needs to construct a fantasy city, district-by-district and block-by-block. Included is a system for mapping cities and generating them randomly.

Chapter 4 presents comprehensive information on designing and running urban adventures. It includes guidelines for creating timelines and flowcharts to better organize your city adventures. This chapter presents rules for chases, rooftop combats, crowds, tavern brawls, and more. Finally, it features urban event templates that help the DM set adventures during fires, plagues, sieges, riots, and more.

Chapter 5 concludes the book with a many tables that aid the DM in quickly developing urban adventures, buildings, and NPCs. There are tables for randomly determining a building's structure and purpose and tables for randomly generating an NPC's name, class, appearance, occupation, alignment, secrets, and much more.



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# CHAPTER ONE

# CHARACTERS

CHAPTER ONE: CHARACTERS

## CHARACTERS IN THE CITY

Urban adventuring presents a unique range of challenges. If you are a beginner venturing out of the dungeon for the first time or an old hand looking to brush up on your skills, this section presents advice on how to adventure in a city and which skills and feats are best suited to an urban environment. The names and game statistics of classes, feats, and spells, and all game rules derived from the d20 SRD, are designated as **Open Game Content**.

If most of your gaming experience deals with dungeon and wilderness action, the next few paragraphs provide an overview of what to expect in urban adventures. Experienced players can skip ahead to the Running Characters section below.

The big difference between urban and wilderness or dungeon adventures is the presence of innocent civilians and a powerful, active government that is ready to harass or arrest you if you break the law. In a dungeon, you might

sneak into an orc lair, clobber one of the humanoids over the head, and drag it back to your camp for questioning to learn about the orc king's plans. In the city, you could try a similar plan to track down an infamous burglar, but you had best make sure that the person you target really is one of the thief's henchmen. Even worse, if someone happens to see you waylay your quarry, you could have a squad of the town guard on the scene in a matter of minutes. With so many people around you and the town guard ready to throw you in jail should you resort to unjustified violence, social skills and roleplaying are much more important in the city than in the dungeon. If you can convince a potential ally to trust you, calm an old woman's nerves and convince her there is no need to call the guard, or talk your way past the mercenaries hired to watch a warehouse, you will have a much easier time navigating the city. With its high population density and crowded streets, the city promises that social interactions will be a major part of any adventure there.

For similar reasons, stealth is the next best thing to a quick wit and a winning smile when you adventure in a city. If nobody sees or hears the quasi-legal or otherwise upsetting actions you must undertake to track down and defeat a villain, you need not worry

about outside interference. The city's many tight, winding streets, shadowy alleys, and dimly lit pubs and taverns give rogues and other subtle characters many chances to shine. Many times, you have to gather information or watch a suspicious NPC to find important clues to complete a quest. A stealthy character can easily handle such tasks in town, as he can blend in with the background, listen in on conversations, or quietly pocket any important documents or small items you may need.

When it is time to kick down the door and use swords and spells to overcome an opponent, fast, decisive strikes are the key to victory. It is much easier for your opponents to escape in the city, since they can always duck out a door or window and run into the nearest crowded street. Furthermore, the longer a fight lasts, the more likely that someone could yell for the guards. You might be fighting a terrible, evil cleric in the house he uses as a front for his cult, but the merchant who lives next door only hears yells, screams, and the sounds of battle. Afraid for his life, he could call for help, especially if the villain has managed to disguise his true nature and befriend the folk in his neighborhood.

Yet, despite these drawbacks and changes in tone, in some ways adventuring in a city is safer and easier. As long as you have a full money pouch, healing and other magical aid are as close as the nearest temple or wizard's tower. You only rarely have to worry about supplies, since food, water, and other resources are always at hand. Best of all, the same guards that might interfere with your plans can also provide much-needed help. If you play your cards right and make friends in high places, you can turn the government into a valuable, important ally. If you are willing to play by the city's rules, you may find yourself richly rewarded.

## RUNNING CHARACTERS

Given the unique elements of urban adventuring, you may want to tailor your character to better handle situations that require social skills or the ability to remain out of sight. This section addresses each of the classes and gives hints and tips on building and playing effective urban characters. Each class is also given an optional rule mechanic to give you the chance to build your character's city life

beyond adventuring. A bard may become a noted performer, while a wizard may open a scroll shop.

### BARBARIAN

While the rustic, primitive barbarian might seem like the class least adapted to urban adventuring, in many ways he is the best suited to the city environment of all the combat classes. His good speed, reliance on light armor, and high damage potential make him a good urban commando.

**Skills:** Even though Hide and Move Silently are not class skills, the barbarian's reliance on light and medium armor make them viable choices. Since your armor check penalty is not too bad to begin with, you can invest a few ranks in those skills and make yourself reasonably stealthy. Intimidate is a must-have skill for the urban barbarian. Even with a poor Charisma, its status as a class skill ensures that you can scowl your way past many social encounters. Illiteracy is perhaps your biggest drawback. If you expect to spend a lot of time in cities, buying off that disadvantage is a great move that will save you a lot of headaches.

**Bodyguard:** Barbarians have a well-earned reputation for ferocity and skill at arms. With their distinctive clothing, tattoos, hairstyles, and other cultural features, they stand out in a crowd and warn away troublemakers. For this reason, they are prized as bodyguards. You can find work as a bodyguard by making an employment check once per week. Roll a d20 and add your total character level +1 per consecutive week that you have searched for work. If your total is 20 or higher, you find work as the bodyguard of a merchant, noble, or gang lord. You receive pay equal to 20 times your character level in gp per week, and you must spend two hours per day in the city working with your client. There is a 5% chance per week that 1d3 attackers with 1d4+1 fewer levels than you attack your client. Your DM should develop the specific details of your client.

### BARD

The bard is the ultimate urban character class. His combination of social skills and stealth allow him to function as a spy and scout. With his performance ability as a cover story, the bard finds himself readily welcomed by



strangers and easily moving through the city's varied quarters.

**Skills:** Bards have an extensive list of class skills but only an average number of ranks to spend, making it important to spend them well. In the city, Bluff and Diplomacy allow you to handle most social situations. Gather Information is critical to sifting through rumors and uncovering clues important to tracking down hidden threats, such as evil cults or shadowy conspiracies. The Disguise skill is consistently underrated. Used judiciously, it allows you to establish a number of aliases around town that you can use to observe situations without drawing suspicion or to infiltrate a wide range of social circles.

**A Star is Born:** In a city, you can parlay your talent for music and storytelling into a viable career. With daily performances in taverns or even on busy street corners, you can slowly build up a reputation as a rising musical star. Once per week, you can hold a concert to help spread word of your talents. Make a Perform check (DC 25). If you succeed, you gain a point of fame. Each week, roll a d20 and add your

total fame points to the roll. If the total is 20 or higher, you gain the attention of a noble, performance troupe, or other group that wishes to sponsor your work or recruit you as a member. Your DM should come up with details of the proposed arrangement, but typically you receive room, board, and a stipend equal to 10 times your bard level in gp per week. In return, you put on two performances per week at your sponsor's direction. Furthermore, if your DM rules that an NPC knows of your musical reputation, you receive a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy checks against him.

## CLERIC

The cleric's healing skills and abilities against the undead make him an invaluable part of any adventuring party. In the city, he can serve as an important emissary to the temples and high priests who may have political power in town.

**Skills:** Diplomacy is a critical skill for you while in the city, as it allows you to diffuse social situations, establish friendly relations with your superiors at the temple, and serve as a spokesman for your party. A good Charisma not only allows you to

destroy undead creatures with your turning ability, but it can turn enemies into friends and overcome potentially sticky situations.

**Tending the Flock:** In a densely populated city, you can gather followers by preaching on street corners, establish a mission to provide food and succor to the poor in the slums, or raise money among the faithful to erect a beautiful temple to your god. Each week, you may spend 10 gp to fund a mission in a poor section of town. You must spend 10 total hours per week working with this mission. Each week, you may make a Diplomacy check (DC 25) with a +1 bonus per week that your program has continued. If you succeed, you find enough charitable donations to defray the 10 gp expense. Your good work improves your reputation, giving you a +2 bonus to Diplomacy checks with people in the neighborhood where you work and with clerics in your temple's hierarchy. Furthermore, when using Gather Information in an area of town that has gained the benefits of your charitable work, you gain a +6 circumstance bonus to the skill check.

## DRUID

While the druid's emphasis on nature may seem to put him at odds with city adventuring, in many ways his skills are even more useful in urban environments than in the wilds. A druid's *wildshape* allows him to spy on his enemies as a stray dog, while spells such as *charm person or animal*, *stone shape*, and *warp wood* are all useful in navigating cities.

One issue to consider is the status of your animal companions. Many city guardsmen may not allow bears, wolves, and similar creatures into town. You may be able to get by based on your religious faith, but otherwise it is best to leave the animals outside the walls. You could establish a camp or allow them to run wild for a few days. In the city, creatures such as rats, pigeons, dogs, and cats all make good companions. While not necessarily talented in a fight, they make good scouts and guards.

**Skills:** While the druid's skills focus on nature, there are a few that are ideally suited to the city. Diplomacy is a critical skill, given that almost every urban adventure involves some sort of social interaction. Animal Empathy can be surprisingly useful, as rats, bats, and other vermin are common in the city, as are horses, guard dogs, and other animals.

**Gardening:** Many of the richest folk in the city keep gardens, private parks, and other nature sanctuaries within the city's walls. In some quarters, social rivalries arise as folk compete to have the most verdant, beautiful collection of plants and topiary. You can find work as a gardener by making an employment check once per week. Roll a d20 and add your character level and a +1 bonus per consecutive week you spend seeking employment. On a successful check, you find work that pays you 10 gp per week per character level. You must spend 10 hours per week on this job. Your reputation as a skilled gardener and green thumb spreads among the upper classes, giving you a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks against them.

## FIGHTER

The fighter's reliance on heavy armor, martial weapons, and direct confrontation can get him into trouble in a city. While in a dungeon a sharp sword is enough to overcome many obstacles, it can cause more trouble in a city if it is drawn at the wrong time. A fighter cannot simply overcome his enemies with violence, especially in public places or against enemies who have social and political connections or status. The key to a fighter's success in a city lies in finding a good mix of subtle actions and direct violence. Wait until you enjoy the cover of privacy before readying your weapons, as otherwise you might draw unwanted attention. Remember that the threat of your armor and weapons can be enough to tilt an encounter in your favor. A thief is unlikely to strike at you and your friends if you wear your full plate and carry your greatsword around town, while a hardheaded merchant might be willing to surrender the information you need after you slowly and carefully sharpen your sword while speaking with him.

**Skills:** Since fighters have few class skills and ranks to spend, they do not normally rely on them. In the city, this is more apparent than usual. Skills such as Diplomacy and Intimidate are cross-class skills for fighters. It is better to focus on your core ability—combat—and spend your few ranks on Ride, Climb, and other abilities that can directly help you. Leave the subtle aspects of an adventure to the rogues and bards. When it comes time for a fight, the party needs you to be ready.



**The Officer:** Good soldiers are hard to find. The fighter is a cut above the average warrior, as his extra feats reflect his dedication and focus on combat training. You can find work in a city as an officer of the city guard, the commander of a noble's household soldiers, or a mercenary soldier. Once per week, roll a d20 and add your character level and a +1 bonus per consecutive week you have attempted to find work. If your result is 20 or higher, you find work as a guard officer that pays you 10 gp per week per character level. You must spend 20 hours per week working at this job. Your contacts in the town's security forces give you a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks made against town guards, their officers, judges, and other law enforcement officials. You may grant this bonus to a single ally of your choice once per encounter. In essence, your friend draws on your status to lend greater weight to his arguments.

## MONK

With his talent in the martial arts, varied skills, and unique special abilities, the monk is ideally suited to an urban environment. He can use stealth to evade his enemies and avoid attention, while he can move about in normal clothes and without weapons while still holding his own in a fight. Of all the character classes, the monk is perhaps the least affected by the unique restrictions cities can place on your tactics and actions. Next to the rogue and the bard, the monk is at his best in the city. Unlike in dungeons and other dangerous regions, the monk can serve as a primary fighter in a city campaign. While he deals less damage and hits less often than fighters and barbarians, he is far more flexible than those classes. The monk is equally adept at handling situations that require combat, stealth, or negotiation.

**Skills:** Diplomacy is a good choice if your group lacks anyone else who can take it as a class skill. Though few monks can afford to have a high Charisma (Dexterity and Wisdom are far more important), even with a poor or average score you can still quickly develop a solid bonus in Diplomacy. Hide, Move Silently, Balance, and Tumble all serve to improve a monk's stealth and mobility. In a city, these four skills can serve a critical role in an adventure.

**The Instructor:** As most monastic orders prefer to establish themselves far from civilization's corrupting influence, monks are relatively rare in the city. Thus, when one becomes active he can parlay his unique talents and outlook on life into a steady living as a martial arts instructor. Each week you look for work, roll a d20 and add your character level to it with a +1 bonus per consecutive week you have attempted to find work. If you score a 20 or higher, you find work as an unarmed combat instructor for a military academy, the town guard, or a private mercenary unit. You earn 10 gp per week per character level and receive a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks when dealing with low-ranking town guards or mercenaries as news of your prowess spreads. This job requires 10 hours of work per week.

## PALADIN

As a shining champion of justice, the paladin serves to rally the common folk and expose the usually secretive forces of evil. In the city, monsters, demons, and other evil creatures take care to hide themselves from the long arm of the law. With his *detect evil* ability, the paladin can quickly root out hidden menaces and put them to the sword. While the city offers fewer direct conflicts compared to a dungeon, the paladin's basic mission does not change. If anything, the city's emphasis on social dealings makes the paladin and his typically high Charisma score more useful than normal.

**Skills:** With your good Charisma score and Diplomacy as a class skill, you can serve as the party's spokesman. More importantly, the paladins' reputation for truth, honor, and justice makes people more apt to respect you. In the typical adventuring party, the paladin works best as the primary person responsible for dealing with negotiations and social situations in the city. Try to take command in such situations, placing yourself squarely at the front of the group and actively working to form friendships and contacts in the city. Otherwise, most of your class skills have little bearing on your success in a city adventure.

**The Justicar:** As paladins are respected for their honorable behavior and skill at arms, they can easily find work with the city's guards. If you wish to find work with the town guard, roll a d20 once each week and add your character level and a +1 bonus per consecutive week spent seeking work. If the



result is 20 or higher, you find work with the guard as a justicar. You use your special abilities to track down criminals and help uncover hidden threats to the town. The paladin's code normally forbids you from doing good deeds purely for monetary compensation, but you do receive room and board while employed. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks when dealing with town officials and a +2 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks against criminals. You must spend 10 hours per week working at this job.

## RANGER

Of all the character classes, the ranger is perhaps the one most affected by a shift to an urban setting. Many of his spells, abilities, and skills deal with the wilderness environment. However, in some ways he works well as an urban fighter. With Hide and Move Silently as class skills and many abilities working best in combination with light armor, he is an ideal stealthy warrior.

**Skills:** In some ways, it makes sense for you to ignore the demands of city adventuring and focus on keeping your ranger's wilderness focus. If you ignore skills like Wilderness

Lore and Animal Empathy, you leave your character unable to function best in his native, natural environment. Spend ranks on skills that work in both environments, such as Move Silently and Hide. Spot and Listen are great choices, as in the constrained, crowded urban environment there are plenty of places where your enemies could ambush you.

**The Officer:** With their skill at arms and abilities with tracking, rangers are equally at home in the town guard or among mercenaries and soldiers. You may pursue the fighter class's officer vocation.

## ROGUE

The ultimate urban class, the rogue blends stealth, skills useful in social situations, and the ability to defeat a foe with a single, devastating sneak attack. His many skill ranks allow him to specialize in a wide number of areas, while his reliance on light armor and smaller, easily hidden weapons makes him a difficult threat to detect. While the rogue is a supporting character in other environments, in the city he takes center stage.

**Skills:** With your many skill points, you can afford to work as both a spokesman and a stealthy infiltrator for the party. If you have a high Intelligence score, you can fulfill an ever-broader range of roles within the party. Hide and Move Silently are obvious choices for stealth, but Balance and Climb can allow you to sneak up on an opponent by scaling a wall or using a clothesline as a tight rope. Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive form a trio of skills you can use to navigate even the most treacherous social situation. Read Lips is an underrated skill that allows you to surreptitiously gather information from a distance. Combined with Hide or Disguise, you can use it to uncover critical hints and clues to your enemy's plans.

**The Guild Thief:** The thieves' guild is a classic trope of fantasy literature and gaming. In essence, the guild acts like an organized crime family. Its leaders coordinate jobs and take a cut of the loot. In exchange, guild thieves receive steady employment, protection from the law, and a secure place to live. To become a guild thief, you must contact a guild member and make a Diplomacy check (DC 25). If you succeed, you become a charter member. In exchange for a 5 gp per week membership fee

(which you must usually earn through petty theft or pick pocketing) you receive free room and board at the guild house. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks against town guards and residents of the city's lower class and slum areas due to the guild's reputation.

## SORCERER AND WIZARD

In a dungeon, an arcane spellcaster relies on *fireball*, *cone of cold*, and other flashy, devastating spells to pound the enemy into submission. In a city, however, such incantations can cause more problems than they solve. The town guard is liable to arrest a wizard who uses destructive spells within the city limits, while spellcasters *within* the guard force may be deployed to handle an errant magic-user. Stealth and subtlety are doubly important for an arcane spellcaster, as any overt displays of arcane might are liable to land a wizard or sorcerer in jail.

Your best bet for success lies in the judicious use of force combined with enchantments such as *charm person* that can prove useful in social encounters. *Invisibility* and *fly* are backbreaking weapons against your enemies, as they allow you to slip into buildings from unexpected directions or stroll past guards without much chance of detection. Spells that improve the party's ability to sneak past guards and handle negotiations, such as *cat's grace* or *hypnotism*, often see far more use in urban adventures than in dungeons.

**Spells:** Since both the wizard and sorcerer have few class skills, this section focuses on choosing good spells. Sorcerers face a particularly difficult choice in this matter, especially if you must jump from urban to dungeon or wilderness adventures with any regularity. It is difficult to find spells that work well in both situations. For combat spells, consider those that have quiet effects, target only one creature, or render a monster helpless without injuring it. *Resilient sphere*, *magic missile*, *acid arrow*, *charm monster*, and *sleep* all allow you to maintain a level of stealth while damaging or incapacitating your foes. Enchantments are critical, especially *charm person* and *suggestion*, since you must frequently deal with social encounters. *Hypnotic pattern* is a frequently underrated spell that does wonders against large crowds, mobs of weak enemy monsters, and other groups. In a city, the spell can avert a

riot. Illusions cannot only mislead your enemies, but they can also distract the town guard or overcome social situations. A *ghost sound* can distract a sentinel long enough to slip past his position, while the *silent image* of a fire may divert the squad of guards that threatens to uncover your attempt to break into a rival wizard's home.

**Guild Mage:** Many wizards and sorcerers never step foot in a dungeon. Instead, they support themselves by *creating* magic items and casting spells in return for payment. A wizard or sorcerer can cast spells and sell items at the standard rates listed in the core rules, though he must first join the local mage's guild or a similar institution. Otherwise, some of his revenue is eaten up in overhead and taxes. As a rule of thumb, an arcane spellcaster earns 20 times his class level in gp per week. This takes into account the different spell levels his customers require, overhead necessary to maintain a small stall or one-room shop in a business area, and any dues, fees, and taxes necessary to remain in business. Furthermore, the vast majority of a wizard's business is taken up with simple spells such as *mending*. A spellcaster must work at his profession for 10 hours a week to earn this income. For every 10 additional hours he works, to a maximum of 40 hours, he earns an additional 10 times his class level in gp.

## FEATS

Feats are a critical portion of your character's abilities. Whether they augment your class abilities or expand your core talents, feats can make the difference between a mediocre character and a great one. This section covers some advice on selecting feats for use in an urban environment.

Fighters and other combat-focused characters should stick to Weapon Focus and similar feats. Blind-Fight is a good feat choice if you do not have low-light or darkvision. In the city, you may have to adventure by night while scorning light sources to avoid detection. Otherwise go with Power Attack and the feats that use it as a prerequisite, as they can quickly disarm an opponent (Sunder), chop through many enemies (Cleave), and otherwise make an encounter end faster. Expertise is great for holding back an opponent and avoiding injury, while both Improved Trip and Improved Disarm are game breakers.

One application of either of those two feats can take an opponent out of the fight. Unfortunately, Expertise's Intelligence prerequisite may place it out of your reach.

Cities offer the perfect terrain for an ambush. Tight, winding streets, crowded markets, and shadowy alleys all provide thugs with plenty of chances to launch a surprise attack. Meanwhile, pickpockets and similar opportunists may seek to liberate the contents of your belt pouch. Feats such as Alertness and Improved Initiative help you foil those who would take you by surprise. Improved Initiative can also give you an important edge when you need to outrun a guard patrol or evade a sentry.

Quick Draw is a frequently overlooked feat that can prove invaluable in an urban environment. Since walking around with your weapons readied is bound to draw suspicion and disturb the town guard, this feat can help you get the drop on your enemies and deal with sudden attacks without missing a beat.

For spellcasters, Silent Spell and Still Spell bear some consideration. Both of these metamagic feats allow you to use your spells from hiding. The more you can cut down the chance that you will draw attention to yourself, the better chance you have to use a spell and slip away undetected. Given the importance of stealth in urban adventures, both of those feats can be useful. The social nature of many city encounters makes Spell Focus (Enchantment) worth consideration, especially since most enchantments fail to have any effect on a successful saving throw.

## GENERAL ADVICE

As this section has emphasized, urban adventures require a different mindset than dungeon or wilderness expeditions. In the midst of civilization, you must be ready to handle social encounters and proceed with enough stealth to avoid any unnecessary entanglements or complications.

Social encounters are perhaps the most difficult parts of an adventure to handle. You cannot rely on your weapons and armor to help you solve them, and many spells are useless during them. The spells that can overcome these situations, namely most spells from the Enchantment school, carry a high price should they fail to

work. You might face arrest or at the very least an angry, uncooperative NPC if you blatantly try to cast a spell and it fails to take effect. When speaking with an NPC, remember to make use of Sense Motive to determine if he is lying, Diplomacy to win over a friend, Bluff to distract anyone who serves as an obstacle, and Intimidate to send an NPC scurrying when all else fails. Try to keep a sheet of notebook paper where you can track all the pieces of information and clues that you learn. Many urban adventures require you to solve a mystery or gather information about a villain's plans. By keeping all the information you learn in one place, you can better organize your efforts.

When interacting with an NPC, keep in mind his motivations and goals. The powerful head of the woodworkers' guild may tell you that the elf wizard Macharal is a vile, sinister witch. A bit of digging may tell you that the guild has long struggled to levy taxes on imported elven goods, a move that Macharal has managed to block due to her influence with the mayor. Several times in the past Macharal's spells have thwarted evil plots, making her a trustworthy champion of good. Consider the source of information before acting on it.

One of the most important parts of interacting with an NPC is keeping a clear idea of what you need to learn and what questions are important to solving the current problems you face. Usually it is best to have one PC, perhaps the character with the best Charisma score or Diplomacy skill, serve as a party spokesman. Just as the ranger and barbarian fight monsters, the cleric destroys undead, and the rogue searches for traps, the character with the best social touch should serve as a point man in conversations. Furthermore, having a single spokesman keeps things focused and helps you avoid confusing or antagonizing an NPC.

Judicious use of Sense Motive and *detect evil* can prevent evil or untrustworthy NPCs from foiling your efforts. However, remember that not all evil characters are necessarily enemies. The owner of a sleazy pub might be neutral evil, but if you just cleared his bar of a few aggressive brutes he may be more than happy to give you the information you seek. By the same token, Sense Motive is far from foolproof. If an NPC honestly believes that the misinformation he possesses is correct, that skill can do little to help you.

**Living Quarters:** Finding a place to stay in the city poses an interesting problem. In a dungeon or the wilderness, you can make camp wherever you choose. Most city guardsmen frown on adventurers who erect tents on the town green or try to camp out on the streets. Most of the time you will rent a room at a tavern or inn, but if you have enough cash you can purchase a house to use as a base of operations. From a security standpoint, your own residence is ideal. Even if you do not plan on staying in a city for long, you can always rent or lease a house. Such an arrangement allows you greater control over who has access to your quarters and lets you put into place spells such as *alarm* and *guards and wards* without causing too many false alarms or angering an innkeeper who would rather not have spellcasters setting up magical wards in his business.

If you must stay at an inn, it might be worth the trouble to post a watch. In the city, your enemies may take active steps to eliminate you. Assassins, rogues, and other opponents can sneak up on you in the dead of night to launch a devastating attack. Do not assume that since you are in civilization you can let your guard down.

## URBAN CHARACTER CLASSES

Three new core classes are presented here for use in urban campaigns. The acrobat is a mobile, fast character who can maneuver around enemies and support the party's primary fighters. The assassin is a stealthy, deadly character who can defeat his enemies with a single, perfectly aimed strike. The pit fighter is an urban barbarian variant useful in city campaigns where uncouth, wild warriors from the edge of civilization might not fit into the campaign.

### ACROBAT

Bounding from rooftop to rooftop, spanning alleyways with a leap, scaling walls and buildings in a matter of seconds, the acrobat is the master of the urban terrain. In many cities, the

thieves' guild and other cartels train or recruit specialists who learn to run, jump, and tumble with phenomenal precision, skill, and strength. Relying on their supreme mobility, these experts can slip into strongholds and mansions by simply bounding over their defenses. While a rogue may rely on stealth, the acrobat is the master of speed and maneuverability. He skirts danger, evading his enemies and leaving them grasping at air as he slips by them. When the time is right, he leaps in to attack, springing from an unexpected direction to make a sudden attack before slipping away to plot another strike.

**Adventures:** Acrobats live on the edge. When they make their way across the urban landscape, they routinely attempt stunts that could leave them dead or crippled. Their casual recklessness and bravado lead many to become adventurers. With their phenomenal speed and agility, they can outflank enemies and support the party's fighters and barbarians. When faced with traps and other perils, they can activate them and slip away unharmed, using their razor-sharp reflexes to avoid danger. Some acrobats are merely performers who find the daily life of a carnival or circus dull. As the adrenaline rush of their stunts fades, they seek new, dangerous environments where they can ply their skills. Dungeons and other adventuring environments fill this need perfectly.

**Characteristics:** Speed is the acrobat's defining characteristic. He can slip around his enemies to flank them, aiding the party's fighters and barbarians. By the same token, when faced with an enemy spellcaster or commander, he can easily evade any bodyguards or defenders to attack him.

The acrobat also excels at avoiding dangers. With his finely honed reflexes, arrows, spells, and traps eventually pose little threat to him. He seems to always duck or dodge out of the way a split second before others can react, allowing him to dive to safety.

In combat, the acrobat's speed and agility leave his enemies confused and vulnerable. He darts in to strike his foes, attacking with blinding speed in the moment they leave their defenses open. He leaps from walls, bounces off an opponent's shield, and rolls between their legs to make attacks from unexpected directions.

**Alignment:** While the acrobat's devil-may-care, wild manner and willingness to take risks means many members of this class are chaotic, some approach this profession with the slow, careful consideration of a master artist. Thus, acrobats are drawn from a wide range of alignments. Evil ones use their talents to steal whatever treasures they want and waylay innocent travelers in lightning-quick ambushes. Good ones infiltrate evil places and use their speed and agility to gather information on their actions and defeat key commanders with rapid attacks.

**Religion:** As daredevil stuntmen, acrobats have a natural affinity for gods of luck, heroism, athletics, and strength. For those acrobats trained among thieves, gods of larceny and greed are popular. Lawful acrobats revere gods of concentration, martial arts, and focused precision, while chaotic ones surrender themselves to the whims of pure chaos.

**Background:** Acrobats hail from a wide range of backgrounds. Some operate as specialist thieves who infiltrate second-story residences from the outside. To many merchants, guards and traps are something meant for the front entrance and first floor, not the balcony outside the master bedroom. Other acrobats are members of bardic troupes. These characters learned their talents from masters who used them to entertain audiences. While the acrobat's art can inspire and amaze, it is a potent weapon when directed against evil creatures.

**Races:** Elves, half-elves, and halflings readily take to the acrobat's art. Halflings in particular excel at this class's abilities, as their natural athleticism, agility, and small size combine to make them ideal for the training necessary to become an acrobat. Elves and half-elves have an appreciation for the beauty and artistry in an acrobat's moves, while their chaotic side

finds appeal in the freedom and daring this class embodies. In human lands, acrobats commonly serve as entertainers and performers, while in some cities they become accomplished thieves. Dwarves, half-orcs, and gnomes rarely become acrobats, as they prefer more direct, forceful methods of handling obstacles.

**Using Acrobats:** In an urban campaign, acrobats serve as an alternative to the monk. The Western European flavor of many fantasy settings makes that class's background stand in odd contrast to paladins, wizards, and clerics. Furthermore, in an urban setting, a monastery capable of training martial artists may not make much sense. Monks are usually seen as quiet, serene individuals who find quiet contemplation in nature or cloistered isolation preferable to the city's frenetic hustle. The acrobat meets or surpasses the monk's capacity for speed and maneuverability, allowing him the fill that role nicely.

For your campaign, you need to find or create a group or tradition that supports the acrobat's talents. From the background given above, troupes of wandering performers and opportunistic thieves' guilds fit the criteria, though you may find an organization unique to your world that functions better in this role than those two.

### GAME RULE INFORMATION

Acrobats have all the following game statistics.

**Abilities:** Dexterity is critical to an acrobat's survival, since it governs his ability to use his unique attack and defensive maneuvers. A good Strength serves to improve the acrobat's attacks and some of his skills, most notably Jump.



**Alignment:** Any.  
**Hit Die:** d8.  
**Abbreviation:** Acr.  
**Starting Gold:** 4d4 x 10.

## CLASS SKILLS

The acrobat's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), and Use Rope (Dex).

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

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the acrobat.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Acrobats are proficient with all simple weapons and light armor. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble. Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor and equipment carried.

**AC Bonus:** With their excellent speed and agility, acrobats are able to slip away from sword blows, dodge arrows, and evade attacks. They gain a dodge bonus to their AC based on their level.

**Acrobatic Maneuvers:** Acrobats learn a wide range of special dodges, tumbles, and strikes that combine to make them effective fighters. In battle, they rely on speed and agility to overwhelm their enemies rather than raw strength. These special maneuvers are the heart of their fighting style. The maneuvers are listed below in the order in which they are gained.

*Agile Charge:* At 1st level, the acrobat can make twists and turns while running without ruining his momentum. He may turn as often as he wishes when using the charge action.

*Rapid Climb:* At 5th level, the acrobat can scale surfaces with such speed and agility that he appears to run up the side of a wall. When climbing, the acrobat moves at twice the normal speed. Furthermore, the acrobat may move

along a vertical surface as if it were a flat section of ground so long as he ends his move on a level surface. For example, an acrobat with a move of 40 feet could run 10 feet straight up a wall, 20 feet across the wall, and then 10 feet back down to the floor. If for any reason the acrobat is forced to end his move while on a wall, he immediately falls to the floor unless he is somehow secured in place.

*Superior Charge:* At 7th level, the acrobat's speed and agility allow him to charge without dropping his defenses. He no longer suffers the -2 penalty to AC normally incurred when using the charge action.

*Tumbling Strike:* At 9th level, the acrobat learns to dodge and leap around his opponent's attacks, allowing him to maneuver around an opponent to strike him from behind. If the acrobat begins his move in an opponent's threatened area, he may use a move action as normal to move anywhere else within that threatened area without drawing attacks of opportunity from that foe. If the acrobat attempts to leave the threatened area, he is subject to attacks of opportunity as normal. The acrobat may combine this ability with agile charge.

*Agile Landing:* At 13th level, the acrobat suffers only half the damage he would normally take from a fall. Take this reduction into account after using any skills or abilities to reduce falling damage.

*Death From Above:* At 17th level, the acrobat masters the ability to dive and tumble into his foes from above. The acrobat may leap down upon an opponent to attack. He takes falling damage as normal, but inflicts 1d6 points of bonus damage per 5 feet he falls if his attack hits. A death from above attack gains a +4 competence bonus to hit due to its unexpected nature and brutal force. An acrobat can combine this maneuver with his rapid climb ability by simply ending his move directly above an opponent. Whether the attack hits or misses, the acrobat ends his attack prone. This maneuver counts as a standard action. It cannot be combined with a full attack action.

*Supreme Agility:* At 20th level, the acrobat moves with such speed and agility that he never sustains attacks of opportunity due to movement. Furthermore, he may combine a full attack action with a standard move,

TABLE 1-1: THE ACROBAT

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Improved Speed	AC Bonus
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Acrobatic maneuver, quarterstaff affinity, whirling strike +1	30 ft./20 ft.	+1
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Uncanny dodge (flanking)	30 ft./20 ft.	+1
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	Whirling strike +2	40 ft./25 ft.	+1
4	+3	+1	+4	+1	Evasion	40 ft./25 ft.	+2
5	+3	+1	+4	+1	Acrobatic maneuver	40 ft./25 ft.	+2
6	+4	+2	+5	+2	Bonus feat	50 ft./35 ft.	+2
7	+5	+2	+5	+2	Acrobatic maneuver, whirling strike +3	50 ft./35 ft.	+3
8	+6/+1	+2	+6	+2	Power leap	50 ft./35 ft.	+3
9	+6/+1	+3	+6	+3	Acrobatic maneuver	60 ft./40 ft.	+3
10	+7/+2	+3	+7	+3	Uncanny dodge (dex bonus)	60 ft./40 ft.	+4
11	+8/+3	+3	+7	+3	Whirling strike +4	60 ft./40 ft.	+4
12	+9/+4	+4	+8	+4	Bonus feat	70 ft./45 ft.	+4
13	+9/+4	+4	+8	+4	Acrobatic maneuver	70 ft./45 ft.	+5
14	+10/+5	+4	+9	+4	Bonus feat	70 ft./45 ft.	+5
15	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+5	Whirling strike +5	80 ft./55 ft.	+5
16	+12/7/+2	+5	+10	+5	Uncanny dodge (trap evasion)	80 ft./55 ft.	+6
17	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5	Acrobatic maneuver	80 ft./55 ft.	+6
18	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+6	Bonus feat	90 ft./60 ft.	+6
19	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+6	Whirling strike +6	90 ft./60 ft.	+7
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+6	Acrobatic maneuver	90 ft./60 ft.	+7

allowing him to make his iterative attacks in any order he chooses at any point during his move. This ability counts as a full-round action.

**Improved Speed:** Acrobats train to move in quick bursts of speed, using the terrain and their athletic ability to the maximum. During combat and other tactical situations, the acrobat uses the improved speed listed for his level. Medium-size acrobats use the first speed listed, Small ones the second one given after the slash. Acrobats of other sizes move as a monk of the same size. This speed does not apply to overland movement or other extended, long-term trips. Instead, it only applies when the game moves into tactical, combat round movement. At such times, the acrobat can brace himself and expend the effort necessary to attain the listed speed. An acrobat may use this ability only when wearing light or no armor and carrying a shield no larger than a buckler.

**Quarterstaff Affinity:** The acrobat gains the use of Two-Weapon Fighting and Ambidexterity when fighting with a quarterstaff as a double weapon. Acrobats have a natural affinity for the quarterstaff, as they use it to help balance when traversing tightropes or give them an additional boost when attempting a high jump. When carrying a quarterstaff, the acrobat gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all Balance, Jump, and Tumble checks.

**Whirling Strike:** The acrobat's speed and agility allow him to make sudden, rapid attacks that confuse his opponent's defenses and allow him to make sundering, telling blows with his weapons. If the acrobat flanks an opponent, he gains a bonus to hit based on his level as shown on the class's advancement chart. Furthermore, the ally that combines with him to flank a target also gains this bonus to hit against the flanked target. This bonus applies even if the acrobat does not attack that round. Unlike the



rogue's sneak attack damage, this ability does not draw on the acrobat's knowledge of anatomy. Instead, it relies on his speed and agility to ruin his opponent's defenses. The acrobat and his allies do not gain this bonus against flat-footed opponents or those who have lost their Dexterity bonuses to AC. It functions only against flanked opponents.

**Uncanny Dodge:** At 2nd level and above, the acrobat can no longer be flanked. A character with the uncanny dodge ability at least four levels higher than the acrobat can still flank him. The acrobat's reflexes are so well-honed that he can evade multiple opponents at once.

At 10th level, the acrobat retains his Dexterity bonus to AC and dodge bonuses (if any) if caught flatfooted or struck by an invisible attacker. The acrobat's speed and agility allows him to quickly respond to attacks.

At 16th level, the acrobat's speed and senses are so refined that he can easily avoid mechanical and magical traps. When forced to make a Reflex save to avoid a trap's effects, he may replace his saving throw with a Tumble skill check. If the check succeeds against the save's DC, the acrobat makes his save. Otherwise, he fails.

**Evasion:** At 4th level, an acrobat gains evasion. If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the acrobat takes no damage with a successful saving throw. Evasion can only be used if the acrobat is wearing light armor or no armor. It is an extraordinary ability.

**Bonus Feats:** At 6th, 12th, 14th, and 18th levels, the acrobat gains a bonus feat. This feat may be taken from any of the following: Ambidexterity, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Whirlwind Attack, Improved Initiative, and Run.

**Power Leap:** At 8th level, the acrobat's strength and agility are so great that he can jump much farther than normal. His maximum speed no longer limits the distance he may jump.

## ACROBAT STARTING PACKAGE

**Armor:** Leather armor +2 AC, speed 30 ft., 15 lb.

**Weapons:** Quarterstaff (1d6, crit 20/x2, 4 lb., Large, Bludgeoning).

Note: When using both ends of a quarterstaff, the acrobat suffers a -2 penalty to his attacks. Small acrobats may use a Medium-size version of the staff that inflicts 1d4 damage.

Light crossbow (1d8, crit 19-20/x2, 80 ft., 6 lb., Small, Piercing).

**Skill Selection:** Balance, Escape Artist, Jump, and Tumble are four critical skills for acrobats.

**Feat:** Improved Initiative.

**Human Bonus Feat:** Dodge or Expertise.

## ASSASSIN

Just as a lion commands the plains or a shark prowls the ocean, the assassin is the city's most lethal predator. Striking from the shadows against his target, he fells his prey with a single, deadly slash from his dagger. The assassin is an expert killer. Once he closes with his target, it is only a matter of time before he unleashes the killing blow. Yet while he is an effective killer, the assassin must use stealth and cunning to draw close to his target. He lacks the stamina and training with heavy armor necessary to stand toe to toe with a mighty barbarian or a valiant knight. Still, in the shadows and back alleys of the urban landscape, he is a deadly foe and a valued ally.

**Adventures:** In some sense, all assassins are adventurers. The missions they undertake are fraught with peril, as they must evade guard patrols, talk their way past sentries, slip past guardian beasts, then deal the final blow to their target. Many assassins see adventuring as a viable, lucrative alternative to their profession. Some find that the life of a hired killer grows repellent over time, as their conscience slowly gnaws at their resolve.

**Characteristics:** Assassins rely on guile and stealth to complete their missions. Ideally, they seek to resort to weapons only when the time has come to slay their target. Violence can cause enough noise to raise an alarm and bring an assassin's mission to a crashing halt. Thus, they focus on the ability to sneak past their enemies and evade pursuit with stealth. When more direct methods of deception are necessary, assassins are skilled in disguise

and using careful lies to talk their way past guards.

When an assassin has the time to carefully study his opponent, he can launch a devastating attack that kills an opponent with one blow. Assassins are the masters of the silent, sudden kill. While a barbarian or fighter may hack an opponent down with a dozen chops of a battleaxe, the assassin needs only to make a single, carefully considered slash with his dagger to end a battle.

In combat, assassins rely on carefully placed strikes that sever arteries, cut tendons, and otherwise incapacitate their enemies in a single strike. Their mastery of anatomy and knowledge of how to quickly and efficiently kill their enemies gives them an expanded ability to inflict horrible, crippling wounds.

As assassins gain experience, they learn to inflict tremendous amounts of damage with small, normally impotent weapons. They prove the old adage that it is a warrior's skill, rather than the quality of his blade, that determines the victor in battle. An assassin's knife is feared not because of its sharp edge or expert balance, but because of the assassin's deadly skill in wielding it.

**Alignment:** Assassins cannot be good. This character class is based on the idea that killing for money or personal gain is a valuable, worthy goal. That said, assassins are evenly split between evil and neutrality. The most successful assassins are cold, calculating, and ruthless. They kill not because they enjoy it, but because they are able to push aside their personal feelings and get the job done.

Furthermore, in some societies, assassina-

tion is an accepted part of political and social conflicts. These assassins tend towards neutrality. Evil assassins enjoy the thrill of the hunt and derive a deep, personal satisfaction in gloating in the kill. While a neutral assassin plans out his attack and carries it out simply to get the job done, an evil one is likely to wallow in the power he holds over his victim. To this villainous scum, inflicting pain and misery is an enjoyable vocation. The payment is merely a bonus.

**Religion:** Assassins pray to gods of death, stealth, trickery, and destruction. Evil ones are drawn to deities of pain, suffering, and torture, as they seek to learn new methods to spread misery in the world. Neutral ones also favor gods of luck, as they know that a single mishap on a mission can represent the thin line between success and death.

**Background:** Assassins hail from a wide range of backgrounds. Some are raised to their vocation in isolated monasteries and fortresses. These assassin cults work in secret, kidnapping or claiming orphans who show promise in their arts and inducting them into their order. In some cities, the assassins' guild recruits young men and women and subjects them to a variety of tests.

Those who pass join the guild as full members, while those who fail must

take up a different vocation. A few assassins develop their skills independent of any formal organization. These freelance killers are thugs, serial killers, and others who enjoy murder or are willing to kill for money.



**Races:** Humans and half-orcs make up the vast majority of assassins. Both of these races' cultures sometimes see murder as a valid method for dealing with social and political rivals. In human lands, economics and politics sometimes trump mere moral considerations. The savage orcs are notorious for their blood feuds, as few leaders of any renown surrender to their successors without a fight. Of the other races, few of them regularly produce assassins or support their organizations within their societies. Elves, dwarves, and gnomes who become assassins usually ply their trade in human lands. Halflings rarely become killers, but those who do are renowned for their ability to use their weak appearance to infiltrate their target locations and kill their prey.

**Using Assassins:** The assassin is a product of the city. They are specialized warriors who thrive on stealth, subtlety, and quick, deadly strikes. For these reasons, they are ideal as a standard character class in city-based campaigns. In many novels and games that focus on fantasy cities, the assassin is a common, enduring archetype. In non-city campaigns, assassins present an interesting new character option. They are deadly in battle, but their few hit points and poor AC makes them vulnerable to counterattacks. Like rogues and bards, they work best as supporting characters.

The assassin prestige class, with its access to magic spells, can represent a specific order of killers in your campaign. Perhaps a sect does not allow members to join unless they have already proven their skill in stealth, combat, and magic. The assassin class could cover the typical killer, while the prestige class is an elite, specialized member of a secretive cabal.

## GAME RULE INFORMATION

Assassins have all the following game statistics.

**Abilities:** Dexterity is critical to an assassin, as it improves his ability to evade detection. Strength makes him a more capable combatant, allowing him to eliminate his target with fewer blows. Charisma is an undervalued but important ability for an assassin. With skills such as Bluff, Diplomacy, and Disguise, the assassin can evade guards and penetrate his target's defenses without drawing a blade.

**Alignment:** Any non-good.

**Hit Die:** d8.

**Abbreviation:** Asn.

**Starting Gold:** 5d4 x 10 gp.

## CLASS SKILLS

The assassin's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (Wis), and Spote (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st Level:  $(4 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$ .  
Skill Point at Each Additional Level:  $4 + \text{Int modifier}$ .

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the assassin.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** The assassin is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, light armor, and all shields. Assassins train with a wide variety of weapons in order to ensure that they are never left unarmed. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble. Swim checks suffer a  $-1$  penalty for every 5 pounds of armor and equipment carried.

**Assassination:** The assassin is an expert at studying a target and learning his weaknesses. After spending time analyzing an opponent, the assassin can use this knowledge to quickly overcome him. He reads his target's tendencies in a fight, learning to anticipate his maneuvers and use this knowledge to slay him with a single blow. In non-combat situations, he watches a target in his daily activities and plans the perfect moment to strike. Given enough time, an assassin can formulate a deadly plan against almost any target.

To assassinate an opponent, the assassin must fulfill several criteria. First, he must observe his target for at least three rounds while his target is unaware of his presence. After this time, the assassin may attack. If he uses a Tiny weapon (or one two size categories smaller than he is) and catches his opponent flatfooted, his target must make a Fortitude save with a DC equal to  $10 + \text{half the assassin's level} + \text{the assassin's Intelligence modifier}$ .

Furthermore, the assassin's victim gains a +2 bonus to this saving throw for each level above the assassin's level. Unclassed monsters use their CRs as their levels to determine their bonuses. If the saving throw fails, the target is reduced to -10 hit points and dies. If the saving throw succeeds, the target still takes damage as normal. In addition, apply sneak attack damage if applicable.

Assassination works only against humanoids, giants, and monstrous humanoids. The assassin's training does not extend to other creature types. It does not function against creatures that are immune to sneak attack damage or critical hits. If the assassin is not a member of any of those creature types that can be affected by an assassination, he may replace one of these three with his own type provided that his own creature type is vulnerable to assassination. Creatures using magic items or spells that counter critical hits may use them to cancel the effects of an assassination attempt. Items that improve the target's AC against critical threat confirmations gain that bonus to their Fortitude save. Those that offer a flat percentage chance to foil a critical hit check to see if they nullify the assassination attempt. In either case, the attack deals damage as normal.

**Sneak Attack:** Any time the assassin's target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the assassin flanks the target, the assassin's attack deals extra damage. The extra damage is +1d6 at 1st level and an additional 1d6 every two levels thereafter. Should the assassin score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied.

Ranged attacks can only count as sneak attacks if the target is within 30 feet. The assassin can't strike with deadly accuracy from beyond that range.

With a sap (blackjack) or an unarmed strike, the assassin can make a sneak attack that deals subdual damage instead of normal damage. The assassin cannot use a weapon that deals normal damage to deal subdual damage in a sneak attack, not even with the usual -4 penalty.

An assassin can only sneak attack a living creature with a discernible anatomy. Any

creature that is immune to critical hits is also not vulnerable to sneak attacks. The assassin must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach a vital spot. The assassin cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

**Weapon Mastery:** All assassins specialize in a single, small weapon that is easy to conceal and useful in carrying out their missions. Normally a dagger or a similar weapon, this armament is the assassin's chosen tool in slaying his opponents. In his hands, it becomes a deadly weapon.

At 2nd level, the assassin must choose one of the following weapons: dagger, kukri, or punching dagger. The assassin must be proficient with his chosen weapon. When fighting with this weapon, the assassin gains a +2 bonus to damage and a +1 bonus to each sneak attack die of damage he inflicts with it. Large or bigger creatures may choose the short sword, longsword, or any other bladed weapon that is two size categories smaller than they are for this ability. Medium-size and smaller assassins are restricted to the three weapons listed above.

At 6th level, the assassin wields his chosen weapon with incredible speed. If he makes a full attack action with that weapon, he gains a temporary +4 bonus to initiative. This bonus applies only to that round, and the assassin may do nothing but attack with his dagger, kukri, or punching dagger. At the end of the round, his initiative loses this modifier. The assassin should declare his action when a creature with his modified initiative would normally act. He cannot retroactively use it. For example, an assassin who has an initiative total of 14 would use his chosen weapon as if his initiative were 18. His opponent acts on 16. If his foe tries to cast a spell on his action, the assassin cannot declare that he wanted to attack with his chosen weapon and strike before the spell is complete. He would have to ready an action on initiative count 18 to foil the spell.

At 10th level, the assassin hones his skill with his chosen weapon to near perfection. He gains a +2 competence bonus to attacks with it and his damage bonus increases to +4. His bonus to sneak attack damage remains the same.

TABLE 1-2: THE ASSASSIN

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+2	+0	Assassination, sneak attack +1d6
2	+2	+0	+3	+0	Weapon mastery (bonus damage)
3	+3	+1	+3	+1	Sneak attack +2d6
4	+4	+1	+4	+1	
5	+5	+1	+4	+1	Sneak attack +3d6
6	+6/+1	+2	+5	+2	Weapon mastery (blinding strike)
7	+7/+2	+2	+5	+2	Sneak attack +4d6
8	+8/+3	+2	+6	+2	Poison mastery
9	+9/+4	+3	+6	+3	Sneak attack +5d6
10	+10/+5	+3	+7	+3	Death blow, weapon mastery (supreme master)
11	+11/+6/+1	+3	+7	+3	Sneak attack +6d6
12	+12/+7/+2	+4	+8	+4	
13	+13/+8/+3	+4	+8	+4	Sneak attack +7d6
14	+14/+9/+4	+4	+9	+4	Weapon mastery (deadly strike)
15	+15/+10/+5	+5	+9	+5	Sneak attack +8d6
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+5	+10	+5	
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5	Sneak attack +9d6
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+6	Weapon mastery (ultimate master)
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+6	Sneak attack +10d6
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+6	

At 14th level, the assassin learns to achieve deadlier critical hits with his chosen weapon. He increases the critical multiplier of his weapon by one.

At 18th level, the assassin becomes the absolute master of the weapons of his trade. He gains a +4 competence bonus to all attacks made with it and his damage bonus increases to +6. Furthermore, when using his chosen weapon he gains a +2 bonus to each die of sneak attack damage he inflicts with it.

**Poison Mastery:** Assassins train in a wide variety of poisons. At 8th level, they can employ poisoned weapons without any risk of accidental exposure to the venom.

**Death Blow:** At 10th level, the assassin's knowledge of anatomy and assassination allows him to use his assassination special ability against creatures of all types. However, it still does not function against opponents who are immune to sneak attack damage or critical hits.

### ASSASSIN STARTING PACKAGE

**Armor:** Leather armor +2 AC, speed 30 ft., 15 lb.

**Weapons:** Kukri (1d4, crit 18 – 20/x2, 3 lb., Tiny, Slashing).

Greatsword (2d6, crit 19 – 20/x2, 15 lb., Large, Slashing).

Note: Small characters can substitute a longsword for the greatsword.

Light crossbow (1d8, crit 19–20/x2, 80 ft., 6 lb., Small, Piercing).

**Skill Selection:** Assassins rely on Bluff, Disguise, Hide, and Move Silently.

**Feat:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (kukri).

**Human Bonus Feat:** Improved Initiative.

### Pit Fighter

In dingy, back alleys or forgotten chambers amidst the sewer channels, desperate men and women put their lives on the line for a handful of gold coins. Gladiatorial games have always proven popular with the bored, rich, and decadent. In many lands, such entertainment is banned or heavily restricted. Whenever people are willing to pay money for an item, there are always those willing to

fulfill their need if the price is right. Enter the pit fighter. Hired by criminal cartels and given little training before they are thrown into the ring, these vicious fighters quickly learn to adapt or die. Many of them are poor, desperate folk who seek to convert their ferocity and strength into a comfortable living. While many of these combatants die in gladiatorial matches against giant spiders, ogres, and other pit fighters, some survive to win great fame and fortune in the underground fighting circuits.

**Adventures:** Some pit fighters grow weary of the matches and seek to strike out on their own. With their skill at arms and ferocity, they easily find a place in expeditions to dungeons and other perilous areas. Pit fighters adventure for the same two reasons they entered the matches: gold and glory. A few pit fighters grow weary of answering to their managers and the bookmakers who take bets on the matches, preferring to find their own fates in the wide world.

**Characteristics:** Pit fighters rely on the dirty tricks and canny moves they learned in their matches to defeat their enemies. While fighters train for months to master basic combat moves, most pit fighters are thrown into the matches with little preparation. They learn on the fly, forced to either master their weapons or die in the pits. In battle, they are devious, thoughtful opponents, as they apply the tricks they master against their enemies.

By the same token, pit fighters learn to channel their anger and emotions into their fighting. Like barbarians, they can explode into a whirling storm of rage to batter their enemies and overwhelm them with brute force. Forced to cope with little formal combat training, pit fighters learn to use every muscle and emotion they can bring to bear against their enemies.

Pit fighters often engage in unarmed combat. Most non-lethal matches revolve around boxing and wrestling. While the pit fighter is no match for a monk, he can easily overwhelm most other characters in a fist fight.

The little weapons training pit fighters receive focuses on making them appealing warriors for the large audiences that gather to watch their matches. Strange, rare weapons such as the spiked chain or kukri are popular among the spectators. Thus, pit fighters are masters of exotic weapons. This leads to the strange situation of a pit fighter being unable to properly wield a longsword but easily handling a dire flail.

**Alignment:** Most pit fighters tend towards neutrality. They are willing to enter the pits and fight to the death for money, making few of them good, but the vast majority of these warriors see the matches as simply a risky but potentially lucrative way to make a living. Good pit fighters are champions of the people who spread their earnings to the poor or who are forced into the arena as slaves. Evil ones delight in cruelty and slaughter. Even during non-lethal matches they are liable to slay their opponents.

**Religion:** With the large role luck can play in the arena, pit fighters flock to religion. Many of them are superstitious, festooning themselves in charms, feathers, and tattoos designed to bring them luck in battle. Neutral pit fighters favor gods of battle, war, luck, and health. Good ones pray to similar gods and deities of freedom, justice, and vengeance. Evil pit fighters are perhaps the most ardent worshippers of the gods of death, slaughter, and murder. Some of these fiends engage in ritual battles against unarmed or weak opponents, cruelly slaying them as blood offerings to their dark gods.



**Background:** Pit fighters come from rough backgrounds. Many of them clawed their way out of the slums by engaging in back alley, bare-knuckle boxing matches, slowly earning a reputation before catching on with an illicit pit fighting circuit. Others hail from cultures where gladiatorial games are an accepted tradition. As freemen, they saw the matches as a way to quickly win fame and fortune in the public eye. Others are slaves who are forced to fight for their lives, sold into the pits because of their great strength and natural talent for combat.

**Races:** Humans and half-orcs make up the vast majority of pit fighters, as they hail from the two races that most commonly arrange and enjoy blood sports. In some regions, dwarf pit fighters are common, though these warriors usually hail from clan holds where unarmed combat and ritualized, non-lethal fighting are common entertainment. With their natural affinity for the fighting arts, dwarves sometimes foster gladiatorial games among themselves, though these matches are rarely to the death. The evil humanoid races produce many pit fighters, usually drawing from slaves captured in raids on civilization and enemy tribes. For this reason, nearly any race can produce pit fighters.

**Using Pit Fighters:** The pit fighter core class offers an alternative to the barbarian in city-based campaigns. For some DMs, the wild, berserker barbarian is simply a poor fit for an urban game. The pit fighter embodies many of the same basic tropes as the barbarian with its reliance on cunning tactics and rage rather than the fighter's heavy armor and careful training. With their emphasis on exotic weapons and unarmed combat, pit fighters tend to shine in situations where their specific talents are useful, but overall they lack the fighter's steady, reliable contributions to the party.

The pit fighter class assumes that your campaign world features gladiatorial matches in some capacity, from epic pageants held in coliseum-style venues to illegal matches hosted by the thieves' guild in shadowy warehouses or secret tunnels beneath the city. Even if your world features neither of these things, the evil humanoids may still take slaves and force them into the fighting pits for their entertainment. Pit fighter characters may have escaped from slavery or they could have studied under a weapon

master who was once a slave, escaped, and now teaches his unique methods of fighting to young students.

In a campaign set solely in an urban area, you might shift the half-orc's favored class from barbarian to pit fighter. In such areas, wild barbarians may make little sense among the spires of civilization. In that case, the pit fighter can replace the barbarian to avoid giving the half-orc a disadvantage compared to other races.

## GAME RULE INFORMATION

Pit fighters have all the following game statistics.

**Abilities:** Strength improves a pit fighter's abilities in close combat. Constitution and Dexterity are equally important. The pit fighter's rage ability is governed by his Constitution, while his reliance on light armor makes a high Dexterity useful.

**Alignment:** Any.

**Hit Die:** d10.

**Abbreviation:** Ptf.

**Starting Gold:** 4d4 x 10 gp.

## CLASS SKILLS

The pit fighter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), and Perform (Cha).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) x 4.  
Skill Point at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the pit fighter.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Pit fighters are proficient with all simple weapons, shields, and light armor. In addition, a pit fighter gains proficiency with two exotic weapons of his choice at 1st level. At every fourth level, the pit fighter gains proficiency with an additional exotic weapon. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble. Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor and equipment carried.

**Expert Pugilist:** The pit fighter is skilled in unarmed combat. While he lacks the monk's finesse and training, he has learned to use tooth and nail to overcome his foes. He gains the Improved Unarmed Strike feat at 1st level. In addition, the pit fighter inflicts more damage with his unarmed attacks as he gains level. When grappling, the pit fighter uses this improved unarmed damage.

Furthermore, the pit fighter is expert at using improvised, unarmed attacks in battle. Whether armed with a one or a two-handed weapon, he can shift his grip and deliver a quick punch or kick to his enemy. When using the full-attack action, the pit fighter can take a -2 penalty to all his attacks in return for an additional, unarmed strike at his best base attack bonus. The pit fighter may also use this option when fighting unarmed. The -2 penalty applies to the extra unarmed attack. The pit fighter may use a kick with this attack, allowing him to use this ability even while carrying weapons or shields in both hands.

Pit Fighter's Level	Unarmed Damage (Medium-size/Small)
1-3	1d4/1d3
4-7	1d6/1d4
8-11	1d8/1d6
12-16	1d10/1d8
17-20	1d12/1d10

**Rage:** Once per day starting at 2nd level, and with an additional daily use gained at 5th, 10th, 15th, and 20th levels, the pit fighter may enter a feral rage. The pit fighter channels his pent-up anger into physical power, temporarily gaining +4 to Strength, +4 to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but suffering a -2 penalty to AC.

The increase in Constitution increases the pit fighter's hit points by 2 points per level, but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when the Constitution score drops back to normal. While raging, a pit fighter cannot use skills or abilities that require patience and concentration. He can use any feat he might have except for Expertise, item creation feats, metamagic feats, and Skill Focus (if it's tied to a skill that requires patience or concentration).

A fit of rage lasts for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the character's (newly improved) Constitution modifier. The pit fighter may

prematurely end the rage voluntarily. At the end of the rage, the pit fighter is fatigued (-2 to Strength, -2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run) for the duration of that encounter. The pit fighter can only fly into a rage once per encounter and only a certain number of times per day (determined by level). Entering a rage takes no time itself, but the pit fighter can only do it during his action.

**Low Cunning:** Starting at 3rd level, the pit fighter gains the ability to draw on his unorthodox fighting style to use a set of unique stratagems to deceive his enemies and improve his fighting ability. At 3rd level, he gains the Expertise feat even if he lacks the Intelligence prerequisite for it. The pit fighter learns to handle his weapons intuitively.

At 6th level, the pit fighter gains a +1 dodge bonus to AC as long as he wears no armor, light armor, or medium armor. Drawing on his instinct and intuition, the pit fighter evades enemy blows. This bonus increases to +2 at 12th level and +3 at 18th level.

At 9th level, the pit fighter can no longer be flanked. Drawing on intuition and feral instincts, he can react to multiple opponents at once. However, characters with the uncanny dodge ability who are at least four levels higher than the pit fighter may still flank him.

At 15th level, the pit fighter gains the ability to take better advantage of the critical hits he inflicts upon his opponents. When he scores a critical hit, the pit fighter may opt to gain one of the effects listed here in place of dealing additional damage. This ability functions against creatures with solid, material bodies that are not normally subject to critical hits. Oozes, incorporeal creatures, and similar creatures are immune to it.

**Crippling Strike:** The target suffers the pit fighter's Strength modifier in temporary damage to the pit fighter's choice of Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

**Knockback:** The pit fighter slams his opponent backward 1d4 x 5 feet. The pit fighter chooses his opponent's final location, though he cannot force his enemy to make an illegal move.

**Power Blow:** The pit fighter's opponent is knocked prone.



TABLE 1-3: THE PIT FIGHTER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+2	+0	Exotic weapon proficiencies (2), expert pugilist
2	+2	+3	+3	+0	Rage 1/day
3	+3	+3	+3	+1	Low cunning (expertise)
4	+4	+4	+4	+1	Exotic weapon proficiency
5	+5	+4	+4	+1	Rage 2/day
6	+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	Low cunning (dodge +1)
7	+7/+2	+5	+5	+2	
8	+8/+3	+6	+6	+2	Exotic weapon proficiency
9	+9/+4	+6	+6	+3	Low cunning (can't be flanked)
10	+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	Rage 3/day
11	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+3	
12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	Exotic weapon proficiency, low cunning (Dodge +2)
13	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+4	
14	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+4	
15	+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+5	Low cunning (critical action), rage 3/day
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+10	+5	Exotic weapon proficiency
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+11	+6	Low cunning (dodge +3)
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+11	+6	
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+12	+6	Exotic weapon proficiency, rage 5/day

## PIT FIGHTER STARTING PACKAGE

**Armor:** Studded leather armor +3 AC, speed 30 ft., armor check penalty -1, 15 lb.

**Weapons:** Spiked chain (2d4, crit x2, 15 lb., Large, Piercing).

Note: The spiked chain is a reach weapon.

Net (Entangle, 10 ft., 10 lb., Large)

Note: See the d20 System core rules for information on the net's effect in combat.

Javelins (3) (1d6, crit x2, 30 ft., 2 lb., Medium-size, Piercing).

**Skill Selection:** Heal and Intimidate are both useful to a pit fighter in a wide range of circumstances.

**Exotic Weapon Proficiencies:** Net, spiked chain.

**Feat:** Combat Reflexes (if Dex greater than 12) or Weapon Focus (spiked chain).

**Human Bonus Feat:** Power Attack.

## URBAN PRESTIGE CLASSES

The city breeds many unique character types. The prestige classes presented here are meant to fill NPC and PC roles in any city. While the kingpin is best suited for an NPC villain, the other classes all offer new abilities to player characters.

### KINGPIN

While the mayor may rule the city's government and the generals command its armies, the kingpin is the master of the night. At his word, burglars descend upon the merchant quarter to steal a king's ransom in gold. With his blessing, his thugs murder rival gang lords and enforce a brutal order in the criminal underworld. The kingpin is a criminal mastermind who uses the force of his personality and

his brilliant strategic mind to overwhelm and destroy his rivals. In time, he grows to become as important and influential as the most powerful merchant princes and noblemen in the city. While his influence and power might not extend directly into legitimate corners, his legions of burglars and robbers along with his canny political acumen allow him to rise high in the city's hierarchy. With bold action and expert planning, he becomes an important cog in the town's internal affairs.

The kingpin prestige class represents a character who wants to become an important player in crime. Note that it does not require any special skill in picking locks, sneak attacks, or other rogue-exclusive talents. Instead, the kingpin's main weapon is his personality. He uses promises of wealth to his allies and threats of a painful death to his enemies in order to build a powerful criminal gang around him. In time, his influence grows in power and his followers swell in numbers. For campaigns based in a specific city, this is a good prestige class for any rogue who wants to establish his own thieves' guild.

As an NPC, the kingpin is the shadowy villain who turns the city against the characters. His spies, assassins, and thugs are everywhere, ready to make the characters miserable. He has the mayor's ear and can blunt any effort to use legitimate means to unseat him. The PCs could struggle for many adventures against the kingpin's followers without ever directly confronting him. Even when they do finally have a showdown against him, they may find it easier to negotiate with him than to simply kill him.

**Hit Die:** d6.

## REQUIREMENTS

To become a kingpin, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +7.

**Diplomacy:** 13 ranks.

**Intimidate:** 13 ranks.

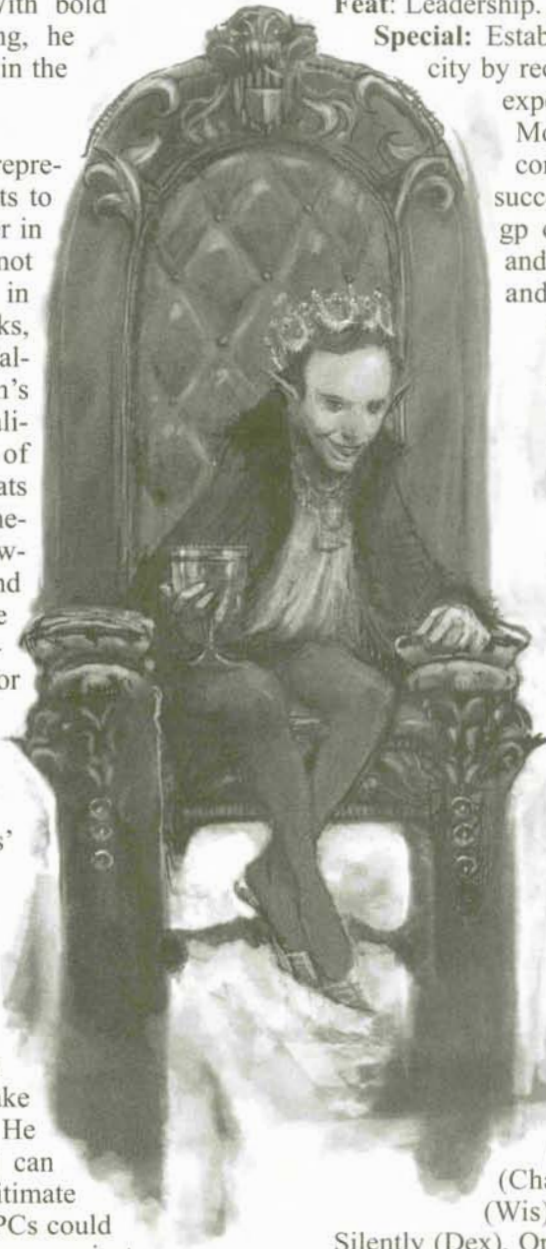
**Feat:** Leadership.

**Special:** Establish a criminal empire in a city by recruiting at least 10 rogues or experts with ranks in Hide and Move Silently who aid you in committing crimes. You must successfully steal at least 5,000 gp of goods in a single month and use that cash to buy contacts and pay for bribes of city authorities. Furthermore, you must defeat a rival gang leader and take his place in the hierarchy. As a rule of thumb, this rival is a rogue of 12th level who has followers as per the Leadership feat. The rival and all of his followers must be killed, driven from town, or paid off. Once you have completed these actions, you take his place in the criminal hierarchy.

## CLASS SKILLS

The kingpin's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Innuendo (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Pick Pocket (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read Lips (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Tumble (Dex), and Use Rope (Dex).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 8 + Int modifier.



## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the kingpin prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** The kingpin gains no additional proficiencies with weapons, armor, or shields. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble. Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor and equipment carried.

**Friends in Low Places:** As a budding crime lord, you are feared and respected throughout the seedier side of town. When you walk down the street, people step aside to let you through. When you walk into a crowded bar, the owner quickly clears a table for you and your friends. You receive a +4 bonus to all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks while in the lower-class areas of the city in which you operate. You receive food, lodging, and clothes for free in these areas, as merchants rush to curry your favor.

**Gang Boss:** You gain the services of a number of inexperienced thugs and burglars who want to link their fortunes to your rising star. You gain an additional number of 1st-level rogues and fighters equal to the number of 1st-level followers you gain from your Leadership feat at the time you gained this ability.

**Steal Anything:** With the help of your gang and your connections in the city, you can arrange a robbery to gain almost any common magical or mundane item. You need only pay half price for any items, including magical ones, that have a market price less than or equal to your level in this prestige class times 1,000 gp. The money you pay reflects bribes, kickbacks, and rewards given to your followers involved in the theft and must be paid out before the search begins. Once you decide to use this ability, it takes 1d6 days for your followers to find and secure the item. Your followers can only pursue one item at a time. Once they seek a particular item, you must wait until they find it before asking for another one. You may opt to break off the search before it is complete. In this case, you regain half the money you spend on the effort.

**Friends in High Places:** Through bribery and political efforts, your influence extends to the

upper levels of society. When dealing with any official members of the government, from common guards to ministers and judges, you gain a +4 bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks. If you successfully use Intimidate against a guard unit, you can force them to ignore a crime you commit as long as it does not endanger the city as a whole or the general population.

**Urban Predator:** Your fearsome reputation and growing influence mark you as a person best avoided. While in the city where your gang operates, thugs, rogues, and others with fewer Hit Dice than your class level refuse to attack you. Your reputation is such that they consider an assault on you to be suicide. Even those brave enough to attack you are unnerved by your presence. Creatures with fewer Hit Dice than you suffer a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls against you and a -2 morale penalty to all Will saves during the encounter.

**Thieves' House:** With your continued success as a crime lord, you gain possession of a secure mansion or hideaway within the city. You may design a three-story building with up to 2,500 square feet per floor. The building includes a basement with up to two secret passages to the sewer and six secret doors within its three floors. The DC to find these secret doors is 25. You may place this building within the slums or a lower-class area of town.

**City's Bounty:** As a rising star in the criminal underworld, many folks are eager to ply your favor. Each week, you receive 500 gp in goods as gifts and bribes from merchants and thieves in the city. These goods may be mundane or magical items or coins, gems, and jewels.

**Mob Boss:** As your reputation spreads, more recruits flock to your gang. You gain an additional number of 1st-level fighters and rogues equal to the 1st-level followers you gain with your Leadership feat at the time you gained this ability.

**Halls of Power:** Your influence grows and expands to the highest levels of power. You cannot be found guilty of any crime short of treason or conspiracy to seize power. Your case is thrown out or conveniently forgotten. The town guard now obeys your commands, though you cannot openly command them in public.

TABLE 1-4: THE KINGPIN

Class Level	Base				Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Friends in low places, gang boss
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Steal anything
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+3	Friends in high places
4th	+2	+1	+4	+4	Urban predator
5th	+2	+1	+4	+4	Thieves' house
6th	+3	+2	+5	+5	City's bounty
7th	+3	+2	+5	+5	Mob boss
8th	+4	+2	+6	+6	Halls of power
9th	+4	+3	+6	+6	Keeper of order
10th	+5	+3	+7	+7	Crime lord

**Keeper of Order:** Your reputation and power is now so great that you have the ear of the highest leaders in the city. The ruling body or leader is a personal friend of yours. Once per week, you can request a personal, private audience with the rulers of your city.

**Crime Lord:** You are among the most powerful, if not the strongest, criminal lords in the city. You gain three additional cohorts appropriate to your Leadership score, along with rogues and fighters in numbers and levels equal to the followers you currently gain with that ability.

**Note:** If your DM uses the core classes presented in this chapter, you may recruit acrobats, assassins, and pit fighters with this prestige class's abilities in addition to fighters and rogues.

## SPEAKER OF THE CITY

Most druids see cities as a troubling outgrowth of civilization. They consider them anathema, ghastly collections of rock, wood, smoke, and steel that trample nature and do little more than consume natural resources while belching forth noise and pollution. However, some druids take a view diametrically opposite to this belief. These holy men consider cities a vibrant, important node in the great web of life. Just as a bird builds a nest or a bear slumbers within a cave, so too do the civilized peoples erect great cities to serve as their lairs. While the terrain may seem alien compared to the trees, grass, and rivers of the forest, alleyways, towers, and cobblestone roads are just as capable of supporting a vast array of natural creatures.

These druids are known as the speakers of cities. They reach out with their magical talents to tap into the powerful, ambient natural magic that arises when large numbers of people gather to dwell in the same place. They become one with the city in a spiritual sense, mingling their emotions and senses with the city's and learning to read and understand the subtle fluctuations in its rhythms.

The speaker of the city provides an urban druid you can use in your games. As a PC, the speaker is a powerful force who can quickly uncover information within a city and forge ready friendships with the residents he meets. NPC speakers serve as mysterious, seemingly omniscient holy men who mingle with the city's folk and can provide a vast array of secrets and knowledge of the town. An NPC speaker can serve as an important advisor or seer who counsels the characters and helps them overcome threats to the city's peace and stability.

**Hit Die:** d8.

### REQUIREMENTS

To become a speaker of the city, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Hide:** 4 ranks.

**Scry:** 8 ranks.

**Spells:** Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells.

**Special:** Create and tend to a garden within a city for at least a month. During this time, you must spend 500 gp on special materials, including seed and soil, plus incense and other items needed to complete a ritual that binds you to the garden and the spirit of the city.

## CLASS SKILLS

The speaker of the city's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Animal Empathy (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (any) (Int), Pick Pocket (Dex), Scry (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the speaker of the city prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** The speaker of the city normally gains no additional proficiencies with armor, weapons, or shields. However, druids who follow this path gain access to a special set of urban weapons. As druids of the city, they may now wear any sort of armor and wield any simple weapon without violating their druidic oath. However, the speaker loses this ability if he later gains a level in the druid class unless he has reached 10th level in this prestige class. He regains this exception once he gains another level in this prestige class. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble. Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor and equipment carried.

**Prestige Spells:** The speaker of the city gains access to a set of divine spells that draw on the city's spirit. He may use these spells in any area, though they tend to be most effective in an urban environment. Details on the urban-mancy spells are given later in this chapter.

**Spellcasting:** For each level gained in this prestige class, the speaker of the city gains an additional level of divine spellcasting ability. This level can either be stacked with a class the speaker already possesses or may be applied to the druid class. The speaker gains more spells per day and an increased spellcaster level but gains no other benefits from the class, such as *wildshape* or bonus feats.

**Spirit of the City:** The speaker of the city learns to tap into the primal force of nature that grows and flourishes within cities, towns, and

other settlements. He allows that force to overtake him, mingling its senses with his own to grant him several supernatural abilities.

At 1st level, the speaker gains a +2 competence bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks while in a city, town, or village. The city's spirit whispers knowledge of its inhabitants, giving the speaker insight into how to deal with them in social matters.

At 3rd level, the speaker can tap into the ebb and flow of the city's energy. While in a city or town, he can sense the presence or absence of groups of five or more creatures within 100 ft. of his position along with their relative direction, speed, and heading. Using this ability is a full-round action. No amount or type of material, such as wood or stone, can foil this ability.

At 5th level, the speaker can blend effortlessly into the city's background. By walking into a crowd or moving into a shadowy area of an alley or park, he can hide with ease. The speaker gains a +5 competence bonus to all Hide checks in urban areas and can use that skill to duck into crowds, blend into an alley, and take cover in similar surroundings.

At 7th level, the speaker's sense of the city grows increasingly acute. He can cast his gaze into specific areas of the city. Once per day, he may cast *scrying* at his current divine caster level. He may use it as per the spell's description or he may choose to focus on a specific location within the city that he has previously visited.

At 9th level, the speaker becomes a virtual treasure house of knowledge regarding the city. When meeting with a person native to the city, he automatically knows her name, where she lives, and what she does for a living. The spirit of the city whispers this information to him.

At 10th level, the speaker becomes the personification of the city's spirit and history. He can never become lost within the city and always knows the geography of the area 100 ft. in all directions of his current position. This ability functions in the sewers and other confusing areas. The character is an avatar of cities, and the spirit protects him while he is in urban areas. He gains SR 20 and DR 5/+1 while in an urban setting.

TABLE 1-5: THE SPEAKER OF THE CITY

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Prestige spells, spellcasting, spirit of the city (social insight)
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Spirit of the city (city sense)
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Spirit of the city (cloak of the city)
6	+4	+5	+2	+5	
7	+5	+5	+2	+5	Spirit of the city (eye of the city)
8	+6	+6	+2	+6	
9	+6	+6	+3	+6	Spirit of the city (mind of the city)
10	+7	+7	+3	+7	Spirit of the city (avatar of the city)

## STREET STALKER

In the dingy, rundown city streets, thugs and other toughs rule with an iron fist. They eagerly shake down travelers for money, rob the weak, and bully the locals into accepting their rule. In some quarters, a club or dagger and the will to use it are all that a would-be tyrant needs to win his own tiny realm. Yet, these toughs are far from the deadliest force on the streets. While they are aggressive by day and in the face of those who have neither the will nor strength necessary to stand against them, by night they take care to travel in large groups. These thugs are ruled by the street stalkers: tough, almost feral street fighters who flourish in the alleys and ramshackle tenements of the city's poorer quarters. In their native environment, they outclass even the feared assassins in stealth and deadliness.

Street stalkers are the elite among the bravos and thugs of the city's toughest quarters. They are sometimes animal-like in nature, learning to scrounge food and water from the alleys and stalking and killing those who would dispute their hold on their territory. Stories speak of entire city blocks that have dwindled into ghost towns under the grim rule of a street stalker who eagerly slew all who violated the sanctity of his realm. Others speak of crusading heroes who swoop down in the night to drive away thieves and guard the innocents who live in their territory. In either case, the street stalker is a dangerous wild card who can make even the simplest trip to the slums a daunting challenge.

Player character street stalkers are heroes who seek to sweep the streets clean of thugs, murderers, and other predators. They are feared for the righteous zeal with which they pursue their goals, but the people they protect love them. Villainous street stalkers are killers who are experts in hunting within urban areas. They blend into the shadows, emerging from the darkness to strike down their enemies with a single blow. They make good hidden threats that harass the PCs and attempt to pick them off one by one while they travel through town.

**Hit Die:** d10

### REQUIREMENTS

To become a street stalker, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +5.

**Hide:** 4 ranks.

**Intimidate:** 8 ranks.

**Sense Motive:** 4 ranks.

**Feats:** Blind-Fight, Power Attack.

### CLASS SKILLS

The street stalker's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Read Lips (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier.

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the street stalker prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** The street stalker is proficient with simple and martial weapons, light armor, and shields. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble. Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor and equipment carried.

**Sneak Attack:** Any time the street stalker's target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the street stalker flanks the target, the street stalker's attack deals extra damage. The extra damage is +1d6 at 1st level and an additional 1d6 every two levels thereafter. Should the street stalker score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied.

Ranged attacks can only count as sneak attacks if the target is within 30 feet. The street stalker can't strike with deadly accuracy from beyond that range.

With a sap (blackjack) or an unarmed strike, the street stalker can make a sneak attack that deals subdual damage instead of normal damage. The street stalker cannot use a weapon that deals normal damage to deal subdual damage in a sneak attack, not even with the usual -4 penalty.

A street stalker can only sneak attack a living creature with a discernible anatomy. Any creature that is immune to critical hits is also not vulnerable to sneak attacks. The street stalker

must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach a vital spot. The street stalker cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

**Urban Predator:** The street stalker is an expert urban fighter. He blends in with the terrain and knows how to use the city to his best advantage. As he gains experience, he expands his capability to fight in an urban environment.

At 1st level, the street stalker learns to better blend into the environment around him. He gains a +2 competence bonus to *Hide* and *Move Silently* checks made in urban surroundings.

At 2nd level, the street stalker learns to let his strength and ferocity do his talking. When making *Bluff*, *Diplomacy*, *Gather Information*, and *Intimidate* checks, he may choose to use his *Strength* rather than his *Charisma* modifier.

At 4th level, the street stalker becomes skilled at using the urban terrain to aid his attacks. When fighting in a tight area, such as an alleyway or within a building, he may attempt to use a spectacular stunt to attack his opponent from an unexpected direction.

The stalker's player must describe a spectacular attack. For example, the stalker may leap into the area, kick out his legs to brace himself between two walls, and stab down with his weapon at an opponent. The stalker uses a full-round action to make a standard move and attack. Before resolving his attack, he makes a *Tumble* check opposed by his opponent's attack roll. If the check beats the attack's result, the stalker's target loses his Dexterity bonus to AC against the stalker's attack. Otherwise, resolve the attack as normal.

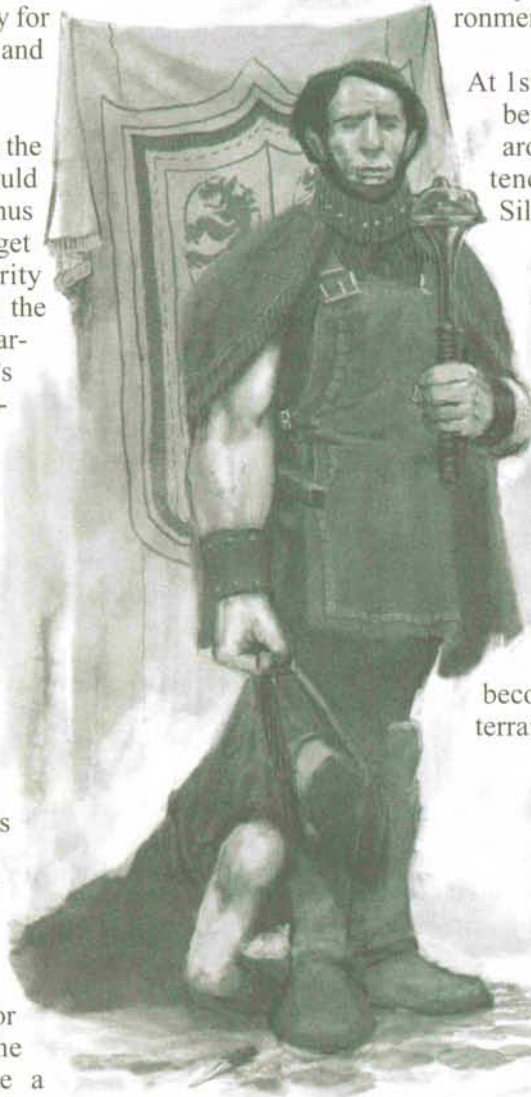


TABLE 1-6: THE STREET STALKER

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+2	+0	Sneak attack +1d6, urban predator (stealth)
2	+2	+3	+3	+0	Urban predator (show of strength)
3	+3	+3	+3	+1	Sneak attack +2d6
4	+4	+4	+4	+1	Urban predator (stunt attack)
5	+5	+4	+4	+1	Sneak attack +3d6
6	+6	+5	+5	+2	Urban predator (urban disguise)
7	+7	+5	+5	+2	Sneak attack +4d6
8	+8	+6	+6	+2	Urban predator (target assessment)
9	+9	+6	+6	+3	Sneak attack +5d6
10	+10	+7	+7	+3	Urban predator (sudden strike)

At 6th level, the stalker's experience in the city allows him to quickly don clothes and blend in with the scenery. The stalker gains a +2 competence bonus to Disguise checks in urban areas when he takes the guise of a homeless person or a commoner. Furthermore, he can conceal a weapon he can wield one-handed in his disguise so that he gains the benefits of the Quick Draw feat when readying it.

In the city, it is important to learn how to assess and categorize the many people one meets. At 8th level, the stalker learns to quickly size up a target. He may make a Sense Motive check with a DC equal to his target's Hit Dice + 10. On a successful check, he learns his target's level and classes, if any, his melee and ranged attack bonuses, and the two skills in which he has the highest total bonus.

At 10th level, the stalker masters the fine art of the sudden, unexpected strike in urban terrain. He rises up from the shadows to strike down his enemies in a single savage blow. If the street stalker has 10 minutes to prepare an area before a battle and take cover, he gains a +10 competence bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks in that area and a +5 bonus to attack rolls on the first round of combat if he surprises his opponents.

## URBAN FEATS

Just as the urban environment can produce unique roles that qualify as prestige classes, so too does it teach those who dwell within it specific tricks and talents that can be represented as feats. Many of the feats presented here are best suited to characters who excel in social situations, as urban survival is often based more on who you know rather than who you can fight.

### CRAFTY IMPROVISATION [FIGHTER, GENERAL]

You are a master at using random items as weapons. Barrels, rocks, rakes, and beer steins are all effective armaments in your hands.

**Prerequisite:** Base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** The first time you pick up and use an improvised weapon in a fight, you gain a +1 bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls as your opponents are caught off guard by your strange choice of armament. These bonuses apply to ranged weapons (such as a thrown rock), but you only receive the damage bonus against targets within a range of 30 ft. or less. After attacking once with a specific item, you lose these bonuses. However, if you then grab a different item you once again gain the benefits of this feat.

**Special:** As a rule of thumb, Tiny improvised



items deal 1d2 damage, Small ones 1d3, Medium-size ones 1d4, Large ones 1d6, and Huge ones 1d8.

## FACE IN THE CROWD [GENERAL]

You are an expert at blending in to the urban environment, quickly altering your appearance to allay any suspicions towards you. In a brief moment you can pull your winter blanket from your backpack, remove your helmet, and slump against an alley to disguise yourself as a derelict. You have a natural ability to fade into the background.

**Prerequisite:** Disguise skill, Charisma 13+.

**Benefit:** You can use the Disguise skill as a full-round action at a -5 circumstance penalty to your skill check.

**Normal:** It takes 1d3 x 10 minutes to complete a Disguise check.

## INNOCENT POSTURE [GENERAL]

You have a plain, non-threatening presence. Others tend to overlook you as a possible threat, a mistake some don't live to make again. You are just another face in the crowd, someone best ignored while your opponents take care of business with the real threat at hand.

**Benefit:** If you are wearing light or no armor and do not have a Medium-size or larger weapon drawn at the start of an encounter, you may lull your foes into a false sense of security. When you declare your first attack of the encounter but before resolving it, make a Bluff check opposed by your target's Sense Motive check. If you succeed, your opponent loses his Dexterity bonus to AC against you for the rest of your action. Using this feat counts as a free action.

**Normal:** You must make a Bluff check as a standard action to feint an opponent.

**Special:** If you wear medium armor or carry a Medium-size or larger weapon, you are an obvious threat and cannot use this feat. If you take any obviously threatening actions, such as insulting or taunting a foe, attacking, or otherwise taking an aggressive stance, you cannot use this feat in that encounter. In addition, old



enemies who know you are a dangerous person cannot be fooled by your appearance.

## INNOCENT SMILE [GENERAL]

You have an innocent, friendly aura about you that makes people willing to overlook obvious signs of your malicious intent. They are so transfixed by your gleaming smile that they fail to note the dagger in your hand or the belt pouch you just pocketed.

**Prerequisite:** Charisma 13+.

**Benefit:** You may make a Bluff check opposed by a target's Sense Motive check in order to cause him to overlook one detail about you that would otherwise be evident. The detail can include any standard action other than an attack that you just completed or any Tiny or smaller item you hold in your hand. If you succeed, your target acts as if you did not commit the action or you did not hold the item.

## MAN ABOUT TOWN [GENERAL]

People know you and they like you enough to render you small favors and



helpful assistance. Your gleaming personality and winning manner makes strangers think of you as a friend even though you have known them for no more than a few minutes.

**Prerequisite:** Charisma 15+.

**Benefit:** For each day you spend in a city or town, you slowly make more and more friends. After a week of contact with the general public, you know plenty of people from all walks of life. When in a public place, such as a market or tavern, you may make a Charisma check against DC 10. If you succeed, 1d3 of the ordinary commoners are friends of yours who help you if necessary. You may ask them for small favors that do not place them in danger or force them to break the law. You may ask each person to do one favor for you. These friends do not fight for you, though if you are in trouble they may run for the town guard, alert your allies, or take other proactive measures to save you as long as such actions are not dangerous.

## MARKET SENSE [GENERAL]

You know how to find the best prices for everything in town, from potions and

swords to a gourmet dinner. Your personal magnetism and social connections ensure that you never pay market price.

**Prerequisite:** Charisma 13+.

**Benefit:** You gain a 10% discount on all items you purchase. This discount only applies to physical items and services that you can purchase in shops, taverns, market places, and similar establishments.

## MUFFLED SPELL [METAMAGIC]

You can hide your spells' effects.

**Benefit:** A spell modified with this feat is much harder to hear. It has its normal effects, but the secondary sounds it creates are much harder to notice. For example, a *muffled fireball* produces only a low rumbling instead of a loud explosion. The spell appears as normal, but creatures that are more than 30 ft. away from the spell must make Listen checks (DC 20) to hear any noise it may make. Spells that deal sonic damage cannot be modified with this feat. A muffled spell uses up a spell slot one level higher than the spell's actual level.

## OPPORTUNISTIC SHOT [FIGHTER, GENERAL]

You are a patient archer. When faced with an enemy in cover or when holding a shot to fire, your aim is straight and true. You hold your shot until your target pops up in a window or leans around the corner of a building to shoot.

**Prerequisite:** Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

**Benefit:** If you hold an action to make a ranged attack at a target, you gain one of two benefits. If the target is in cover, you may ignore half the AC benefit he gains from it. You time your shot to hit him when he is most vulnerable. This ability does not function against targets in total cover. Otherwise, you brace your shot and take steady, careful aim. You gain a +2 bonus on your ranged attack roll.

## SOW RUMORS [GENERAL]

You have access to an extensive social network in town, allowing you to spread stories and rumors with ease. Whether truthful or false, your words are soon in everyone's ears.

**Prerequisite:** Man About Town, Charisma 15+.

**Benefit:** Once per week, you can cause a rumor of up to 50 words to become common knowledge in town. Almost every person, from the lowliest beggar to the lord mayor, catches wind of your story. Each individual decides for himself if the story is true. For example, a rumor that the duke is a three-headed chicken in disguise spreads as an example of a crackpot scheme or a weird joke. On the other hand, stories that the duke is paying a reward for anyone who can bring in the dreaded bandit Gillan the Quick may cause some hotheads to track down Gillan in an attempt to apprehend him. After a week, the rumor runs its course and is forgotten by the city as a whole.

**Special:** This feat requires DM adjudication to determine its effects. The easiest way to resolve it is to consider what the average person in town would do if they heard the story spread with this feat. In the vast majority of cases, the commoners would dismiss it, fret over it, or talk about it, but few would take direct action on it. A rumor that a plague is spreading in the slums might cause the temples to receive more business for magical cures, but the general population is not about to march into town and burn it to the ground to halt the alleged disease. A character with this feat can gain a +4 circumstance bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate checks if he relates his social actions to the rumors he spread. For example, Boris the bard spreads rumors that a deadly assassin known to carry a silver lute is in town. Not coincidentally, Boris carries a silver lute. Later, three thugs corner him in a tavern. While pointedly tuning his lute, Boris glowers at them and attempts to use his Intimidate skill. In this case, he receives a +4 bonus as the thugs recall the rumors of the lute-carrying assassin.

## QUICK STRIKE [FIGHTER, GENERAL]

You can draw a weapon and attack with startling speed, catching your foes off guard.

**Prerequisite:** Quick Draw.

**Benefit:** If you use Quick Draw to ready a weapon and attack on a surprise round, you gain +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls and a +2 bonus to your initiative.

## URBANMANCER [GENERAL]

You are skilled in a rare school of magic known as urbanmancy, the practice of city-based magic.

**Prerequisite:** Arcane caster level 3+, Charisma 13+.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus to all Diplomacy skill checks and increase the save DC of your spells by 2 while in an urban environment. In addition, you gain access to the urban prestige spells.

## SPELLS

Within the confines of the city, spellcasters must take care to conceal their actions. If they use spells that are too flashy or destructive, they risk arrest and imprisonment for reckless spellcasting. The spells here are tailored for urban adventuring, focusing on resolving social situations and producing small, subtle, but powerful effects.

### ERAD'S SILENT KILLER

Evocation

**Level:** Sor/Wiz 2

**Components:** V, S, F

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You create a small but powerful vortex within a creature, twisting its innards for 1d6 points of damage per caster level, with a Fortitude save halving this damage. A favored spell of wizards who operate in cities, this spell leaves no obvious evidence of its origin and operates in complete silence, though an observer may note your casting action.

*Focus:* A wood or metal corkscrew.



## FRIENDS

Transmutation  
**Level:** Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 1  
**Components:** V, S, M  
**Casting Time:** 1 action  
**Range:** Personal  
**Target:** You  
**Duration:** 1 minute/level

You assume a friendly, welcoming countenance that puts others at ease and allows you to quickly make friends. While under this spell's influence, you gain a +10 competence bonus to all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Disguise checks made outside of combat.

*Material Component:* A small bit of rouge applied to your cheeks while casting this spell.

## SILENT STEEL

Transmutation  
**Level:** Brd 1, Rgr 1, Sor/Wiz 1  
**Components:** F  
**Casting Time:** 1 action  
**Range:** Touch  
**Target:** Creature touched  
**Duration:** 1 minute/level  
**Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless)  
**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

You create a magical buffer around weapons, armor, and shields, eliminating the loud clangs they make as their bearer moves. A creature affected by this spell ignores the armor check penalties to Hide and Move Silently.

*Focus:* A cotton pad wrapped around a small, iron bar.

## URBANMANCY PRESTIGE SPELLS

While most spells are simply included on their appropriate class lists, some incantations are so difficult to master that the average wizard or cleric cannot use them without specialized training. These prestige spells have a prerequisite in addition to a caster's class and level, such as racial, feat, or skill requirements. The urbanmancy spells given here are available only to spellcasters with the urbanmancer feat or who have levels in the speaker of the city prestige class. A prestige spell has an entry in its listing labeled prestige requirements. If a character fulfills these listed minimums, he can gain and use the spell as normal if he belongs

to a class that can cast it and has a high enough caster level.

As an optional rule, you can allow any character to gain these spells, removing the prestige spell requirements. In this case, these spells become available to paladins and rangers. Those classes are given access to them to account for their members who gain the Urbanmancer feat or enter the speaker of the city prestige class. Bards should retain access to them, as their position as storytellers and masters of social situations makes these spells appropriate to their lists.

### CALL LOYAL SERVANT

Conjuration (Summoning)  
**Level:** Clr 7, Drd 7, Sor/Wiz 7  
**Requirements:** Speaker of the City or Urbanmancer feat  
**Components:** V, S, M  
**Casting Time:** 1 round  
**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)  
**Effect:** One summoned creature  
**Duration:** 1 round/level (D)  
**Saving Throw:** None  
**Spell Resistance:** No

By tapping into the city's collective consciousness, you summon a human with up to 5 total levels in classes of your choice. Your DM creates the character as normal, though you select any prepared spells, feats, skills, and other aspects of the character aside from his ability scores. In addition, the NPC arrives with 1,000 gp worth of equipment chosen by the DM. The character speaks a language you possess and obeys your commands to the best of his abilities, even suicidal ones. At the end of the spell's duration, the NPC and all of his equipment disappear. A person summoned with this spell is treated as a normal human with the appropriate class levels, though he is in truth the composite of the people and places the caster has visited.

*Material Component:* A single gold piece.

### CITY ELEMENTAL I

Conjuration (Summoning)  
**Level:** Brd 4, Clr 4, Drd 4, Pal 4, Rgr 4, Sor/Wiz 4  
**Requirements:** Speaker of the City or Urbanmancer feat  
**Components:** V, S, M  
**Casting Time:** 1 round  
**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)



**Effect:** One summoned creature  
**Duration:** 1 round/level (D)  
**Saving Throw:** None  
**Spell Resistance:** No

You summon a Small earth elemental as per *summon monster III*. In addition to its standard qualities, the earth elemental gains a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls and +3 hit points per Hit Die while it remains in an urban environment. The earth elemental is composed of bricks, wood, trash, and other detritus of the city.

*Material Component:* A brick or other part of a building.

### CITY ELEMENTAL II

Conjuration (Summoning)  
**Level:** Clr 6, Drd 6, Sor/Wiz 6  
**Effect:** One summoned creature

As *city elemental I*, except you call a Medium-size earth elemental with the same bonuses listed above.



### CITY ELEMENTAL III

Conjuration (Summoning)

**Level:** Clr 8, Drd 8, Sor/Wiz 8

**Effect:** One summoned creature

As *city elemental I*, except you call a Huge earth elemental with the same bonuses listed above.

### CITY'S WHISPERS

Divination

**Level:** Brd 1, Clr 1, Drd 1, Pal 1, Rgr 1, Sor/Wiz 1

**Requirements:** Speaker of the City or Urbanmancer feat

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Personal

**Target:** You

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You call the spirits of the city and bid them to bring you general rumors or news concerning a specific topic of your choice. You may make a Gather Information check as if you had a number of ranks in that skill equal to your caster level + 3. Use the standard rules for

that skill to resolve its effects, though you do not have to spend any money when using it.

### LORD OF THE CITY

Enchantment (Charm)

**Level:** Clr 9, Drd 9, Sor/Wiz 9

**Requirements:** Speaker of the City or Urbanmancer feat

**Components:** V, S, F

**Casting Time:** 1 hour

**Range:** Personal

**Target:** You

**Duration:** One week/level

You work a tremendous charm on an entire city, making yourself appear as an important lord or administrative official. You gain access to a townhouse or small keep you may use as your quarters, high quality clothes, and gourmet meals three times per day. You gain access to the city's rulers, if they deal with ambassadors and other public officials, though you do not gain any special power over them. Your domicile has space for up to five companions, and you may provide them with clothes and food at no additional cost. As far as anyone in town knows, you are an important

ambassador from a distant land whose name escapes their memory.

*Focus:* A jeweled crown worth 1,000 gp.

### OUTCAST'S CURSE

Transmutation

**Level:** Brd 3, Clr 3, Drd 3, Pal 3, Rgr 3, Sor/Wiz 3

**Requirements:** Speaker of the City or Urbanmancer feat

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** 1 round/level (D)

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You turn the city against a target, causing him to suffer bad luck and sudden setbacks. When he moves, he trips over a cobblestone. When he prepares to cast a spell, a washerwoman dumps a bucket of offal on him from a third story window. Each round, the victim of this spell suffers one effect of your choice. He endures a -4 competence bonus to his attack rolls or skill checks, must make a Balance check (DC 20) or trip and fall prone, or he must make a Concentration check (DC 25) to use a spell, spell-like ability, or supernatural ability. You may choose one of those effects at any point during the target's action, such as immediately after the DM announces his intentions.

This spell functions only within a village, town, or city.

### TALES OF STONE AND WOOD

Divination

**Level:** Brd 2, Clr 2, Drd 2, Pal 2, Rgr 2, Sor/Wiz 2

**Requirements:** Speaker of the City or Urbanmancer feat

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Personal

**Target:** You

**Duration:** Instantaneous

While casting this spell, you must touch a building. Upon completing the spell, you learn the following information about the building touched: the floor plan of the level you touched, the total number of creatures present within it, and the building's general use and purpose.

### VOICE OF AUTHORITY

Enchantment (Charm)

**Level:** Clr 5, Drd 5, Sor/Wiz 5

**Requirements:** Speaker of the City or Urbanmancer feat

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Personal

**Target:** You

**Duration:** 1 minute/level

You brim with confidence and social cunning, allowing you to convince others to do your bidding with well-reasoned arguments and sound advice. Once per round during the spell's duration, you may attempt a Diplomacy check opposed by a single target's Charisma check as a free action. If you succeed, treat the target as if it were under the effects of a *charm person* spell. Ignore the restriction the spell places on creature types, though you must share a language with a creature to use this spell's benefits on it. The target is assumed to have failed the opposed Charisma check required to resist obeying any reasonable orders you issue to it.

This spell only works while within the confines of a city ruled by a recognized governmental authority.

# CHAPTER TWO

# CITY BASICS

This chapter offers the DM an introduction to fantasy cities and how to create detailed and compelling backgrounds for them. The NPC stat blocks and rules for town guard training, integrity, and vigilance, as well as the rules for religious organization secrecy, are designated **Open Game Content**.

Building a city can be more involved than designing a dungeon or writing up a single adventure. If you plan on setting a series of adventures there, you need to make sure the city has enough depth and breadth of detail to keep the players interested. If your entire campaign is centered on or takes place within a city, then you must create enough material before play begins and as the campaign develops to keep the place a vibrant, interesting environment. In many ways, building a city is like designing a campaign in miniature. It must have friendly and rival NPCs that characters can meet and interact with, hidden monsters to provide a martial challenge, plots and conspiracies for them to uncover, and a variety of interesting places they can visit. Fortunately, urban areas combine the best parts of dungeons and wilderness areas while minimizing their drawbacks.

the players focused on events in a campaign or an adventure. If the PCs seek a murderer and know that he is somewhere in town, you can count on their staying within a small area. Since a city can be densely populated and its street labyrinthine, you have a lot of flexibility in adding new places, new people, or new threats. After all, the characters can't visit every street and memorize details of all the buildings they pass. This combination of a focused, limited environment with the flexibility to change details or invent new ones on the fly makes cities versatile environments.

This chapter approaches city creation with a basic model of design that is adaptable to a variety of needs. It covers a city's history, origin, inhabitants, important places, different quarters and neighborhoods, and of course maps and layouts. Not every DM uses cities in the same manner, and over the course of a campaign you might one evening need to quickly create a city to serve as a simple rest stop during a wilderness adventure and the next build an exhaustively detailed one that serves as the location for several months of adventure. This chapter is broken down into the following sections:

The best part of a city is that its walls or outer limits provide a handy barrier to keep



**The Origins of Cities** discusses why advanced civilizations build and use cities and covers different reasons why a city could be founded and maintained.

**A City's History** takes the next logical step and covers how cities develop from the simple outposts or villages they started as.

**Urban Archetypes** codifies some of the trends and examples given in the first two sections. The archetypes allow you to build a religious city, an economic powerhouse, or a war-torn, besieged outpost. The archetypes form the basis for the rest of the sections in this chapter, though they include general advice in case you choose not to use one.

**Government** covers how a city's politics and leadership are organized, from a mayor who wields absolute power to a council of merchants who rely on economic and political success to maintain power.

**Law Enforcement** talks about the guards, spellcasters, and other wardens who keep the peace. Cities are products of civilization, so it follows that the rule of law holds within them.

**Economics** discusses how trade and commerce can affect a city's development. A city caught in the grip of an economic depression looks a lot different than one experiencing a boom.

**Religion** looks at how the gods can affect a city, from those places that ban their worship in any form to others that exist under a theocracy's divinely inspired rule.

Depending on your needs, you may find yourself using a few different sections of this chapter when creating one city, then shifting to a few others when creating another. If you want a vaguely detailed town that serves more as a way station between adventures than a full-blown setting, then you should focus on creating a map and different precincts for your city. If you plan on running an adventure in a city but don't plan to use it again, focus on law enforcement and perhaps government. If you plan on using the city as the basis for a complete campaign, then you need to consider its history and may need to use all the sections presented here. Each section of this chapter is independent of the others. While they refer back and forth between each other and refer to

the archetype system for examples and advice, they focus on providing guidelines and rules for the specific topics they cover. If this is your first time reading this book, it would be best to read this chapter in its entirety, familiarize yourself with its contents, then decide which parts to focus on when creating your villages, towns, and cities.

The first step you need to take is to determine the city's population and other basic characteristics. Use the rules and advice given in the d20 System core rules (see *Generating Towns*, DMG) to get started. The material in this chapter provides the details and advice needed to transform the bare bones of a city's demographics and population into a vibrant, living community.

## THE ORIGIN OF CITIES

Most DMs use cities in their games without a second thought, tossing them on the map to give the characters a convenient place to rest, equip, and sell off their loot. If this level of detail is perfectly fine with you, then proceed ahead and start with the urban archetypes. If the background, history, and origin of a city hold little importance to you, you might as well dive in and handle the parts of city design that have a direct effect on a game session. On the other hand, if you are in the midst of designing a campaign or want to add depth to your game world then this section is for you.

As products of civilizations, cities are rich in history. Where they have been is just as important as where they are and where they are going, because in the vast majority of cases a city's history plays a major role in its present affairs. Since urban areas are products of a civilization, the events relating to them have probably been collected in that society's written accounts. The city's history is known, studied, and used on a daily basis by its inhabitants. If the northmen have invaded it in the past, they are likely to mistrust them in the future. If wererats once attacked it via the sewers, adventurers are liable to find those usually neglected tunnels patrolled by heavily armed guards. Past events, especially those in the immediate past, play a role in how the city's



inhabitants act and the direction its rulers take in administering it.

A city's origin can set the tone for the length of its history. In some cases, the city changes enough that the original motivations behind its genesis no longer matter, but even in those cases its earliest days can play an important role in its contemporary operations.

Cities exist for a variety of reasons, but the fact that they exist for explicit, concrete purposes sets them apart from mountains, hills, dungeons, and other parts of your campaign world. It takes a lot of work to establish and grow a city. Therefore, nobody does it without a reason. Consider why your city was established and think about how that purpose affected its history and its current state. To help inspire you, here are a few different motivations you can use to explain a city's origin. A few of them are drawn from studies of real world cities.

Trade is perhaps the most common reason why a city is born. It starts with a few isolated tribes and villages meeting at a convenient spot to swap crops, tools, and other trade goods. They may gather at a point along a trail or at a centrally located village. In either case, with time more and more people settle at this meeting ground to offer services to visiting farmers, merchants, and traders. With the goods, services, and money flowing into the area, a critical mass of talent, labor, and money develops. The prosperous merchants establish homes and spend the money needed to build a defensive wall to fend off bandits. Laborers gather in the area, increasing the proto-city's population and expanding the market of customers for goods and services. In turn, skilled craftsmen settle in the area to offer their products and services to the inhabitants. As the population climbs, more farmers filter in to the area to sell their crops, attracting more traders to the markets, and so forth. Once this city gets going, nothing short of a major attack or natural disaster can stop it. As these cities age, they remain important trade centers. They either continue to grow until they reach a maximum size based on the available resources of the area or a larger or more prosperous city begins to draw business away from them. Usually two competing cities establish an equilibrium, with the two of them settling into distinct roles. One city may grow at a faster rate, but so long as the other offers a useful service to its immediate area it can continue

to thrive. It may never rival its neighbor, but the two can both exist within their realms.

Resources are another draw that can establish a city. Think of the boomtowns of the western United States in the 19th century. The discovery of gold in that region drew tremendous numbers of fortune seekers, economic investments from businessmen eager to profit from the discovery, and an influx of businesses, entrepreneurs, and others who profited from the growth by offering services to miners, prospectors, and others involved in the gold rush. While many of the boomtowns came and went, some survived to become important parts of the region's post-gold rush development. In a fantasy game, the discovery of a mammoth dungeon filled with monsters and treasure could spark the creation of a small town where adventurers rest between expeditions, sell the gems and gold they discover, and spend their money on ale, fine goods, equipment, magic items, and other comforts. A tiny village could grow from a single inn and a few homes to a bustling town in less than a year. The resource that sparked the town's creation becomes its primary concern, as so many people rely on it for their continued prosperity. This origin is a great option if you want to present a place that has fallen on hard times, as once the resource is gone the town can no longer support the businesses that made it grow. Any valuable, rare commodity can serve to spark a city's birth. Veins of precious metals, hidden caches of rare magic items, even timber or animal furs work fine. A city based on a resource could be small or experience steady growth. The gold rush model is not the only one possible, though even in a less extreme case the town's health is directly tied to the prosperity of its founding industry.

Travel is related to trade but bears examination on its own terms. Some places are just natural spots for a city, from a fertile plain that sits at the midway point between two realms that engage in heavy trade to a deep, clear harbor that is ideal for trading ships. In both these cases, the city serves as a conduit to travel, trade, and communication. If many caravans travel between two points, a city has many potential visitors to whom its inns and taverns can cater. Its fortunes depend on continued movement along whatever trade route or area it is constructed on, and it can grow to a metropolis or dwindle to a ghost town due to war,

drought, natural disasters, or any other event that causes trade or travel to decline. Note that in addition to trade, religious pilgrimages, regular migrations (nomadic tribes may regularly stop at the city to trade), and other patterns of movement may spur this sort of city into development.

Religion can be an important factor in a fantasy world, especially one where the gods' existence is unquestionable and their followers openly practice divine magic. A prophecy or a direct commandment from a divine being can push a church to build a city. It might start with a single, large temple that draws businesses to service the priests, pilgrims who come to worship, taverns and inns for the visitors, and so on. A city could be established at the site of a miracle or important event in a faith's history, around an important temple, around a massive religious artifact, or at a site *prophesied* to play an important role in the future.

History is a powerful force not only in a city's development but also in its foundation. In a kingdom's ancient history, tribal custom held that the greatest chief in the land build his homestead on a specific plot of land. Over time, various warlords fought to control that land and claim control over all the tribes. As the barbarians modernized and developed farming, metal armor and tools, and other advancements, a city could slowly grow in that area. With the king holding his court there, diplomats, nobles, and others would naturally make their homes nearby. This development in turn would draw merchants, services, and so on.

Defense ties into travel and trade. The city occupies ground that is critical to maintaining the realm's security. The town probably lies on a mountain pass, strait, major river, deep-water harbor, or other geographic feature that makes it easy for an invading army to enter a region. The city grows around defensive fortifications, such as a castle or a great wall designed to repel barbarian hordes. The soldiers who man the fortification need food and supplies, while taverns and other entertainment venues would spring up to give them a place to spend their wages. Older soldiers may bring their wives and children to live in the area, giving merchants more customers and leading to the rise of a more varied selection of shops and services.

As you may have noticed from the examples given above, a given location needs a few basic factors to combine and spawn a city. First, the area must be accessible. This might seem obvious, but the easier a place is to get to the more likely it is that people go there. If you look at a map of the real world, most major cities are located on bodies of water. Rivers and oceans all facilitate travel. It is quicker and faster to ride a boat down a river than to walk the same distance. More importantly, trade typically relies on bodies of water. You can carry a lot more goods on a ship than on your back. Overland caravans pale in comparison to the safety and cargo capacity of even a single ship. The more routes that lead to an area, the better the chance that a city can grow there.

Not only does a city need accessible paths, but it must also offer something that attracts visitors and settlers. This can be anything from a convenient place to rest while traveling between two points to a valuable commodity. Many of the examples given above emphasize this point. While accessibility is important, it works hand in hand with this factor to yield a city. If people can get to a place and they want to go there, they will travel to it.

However, a city truly grows when people have a reason to stay in a place. The defensive city is a great example of this phenomenon. A kingdom sends soldiers to a place, builds a castle there, and pays them to simply occupy the area and deny it to the enemy. Once you have people permanently settled in an area, craftsmen naturally travel there to establish businesses and sell their wares to the inhabitants. At this point, a critical cycle that helps cities grow kicks in. As more businesses move into an area, merchants follow to sell their goods to the craftsmen. In turn, more people move into the city to take advantage of the economic opportunities it offers. Farmers arrive to sell their goods, trade companies add it to the list of markets they service, and so on.

In summary, a city grows because of three reasons: people can get to it, people want to go to it, and people want to stay there. Whatever factors bring about those three traits play a role in creating a city. Usually, one of those three traits plays the most important role in a city's birth. When designing your own cities' origins, be sure to account for these traits and consider how they affect the city's growth.

## A CITY'S HISTORY

Once you have established a city's origin, you next need to determine its history. The more time the characters spend in a city and the greater the emphasis your campaign places on roleplaying and politics, the more important this part of city design becomes. History determines who has the power, why they have it, and who wants to take it from them. It can also provide colorful details that make a city stand out during play. For example, a city that has been wracked by riots in the past may require all visitors to turn in their weapons with the town watch. The characters must adapt to this disadvantage or find a way around it. A town may have a yearly parade to commemorate the destruction of a dragon that attempted to burn the place to the ground, perhaps providing a convenient time for the dragon's children to attack it. A city's history gives you plenty of raw material to use for future adventures and campaign events.

Designing the background to fill in the time between the city's creation and the present day is a freeform process. In most cases, it is best to stick to major events that have an effect on the city's current state. You can easily become bogged down in tiny details that do nothing to further your campaign's readiness for play. On the other hand, as a pure writing and creative exercise such work can be fun. Still, this section focuses on how you can craft a history with an eye towards sculpting the city you want.

A city's history provides hooks and set pieces for your adventures. Hooks are any events, objects, or NPCs that draw the PCs into a scenario. They give them a reason to risk their lives and pursue the adventure's goals. The characters' friend may be kidnapped by bandits and need rescuing. In that case, the friend is the hook. He is in danger, and the characters must help him. A set piece is any bit of the background or setting that makes an encounter more interesting. A fight against orcs is fun, while a fight against orcs in the midst of a riot is fun and interesting. The characters have more factors to deal with than their opponents, increas-

ing the danger they face and the options they have to resolve the encounter. History is also a powerful force to provide motivations for your villains and other NPCs who struggle against the characters. People do not commit evil acts for no reason. Most of them are motivated by anger, vengeance, or greed that is connected to their past.

Listed below are a variety of different attitudes and factors that could be present in the city and the historical events that can spawn them.

## FACTIONS

The root of all conflict lies in the sides that line up to oppose each other. If your city has plenty of groups struggling for power, then you have lots of opportunity to involve the PCs in their plots, plans, and schemes. Most groups come into conflict for reasons buried in the mists of history. An ancient feud has its start in two merchants competing to corner the silk market. A noble house arranges to spread rumors of the mayor's drunken behavior because his great-grandfather was a pirate lord who seized power. The original causes may be forgotten or buried in the past, but they are far from irrelevant. By seeding your city's history with struggles and conflicts that affect the present era, you can create a variety of factions and groups that compete for economic, political, criminal, and military power.

**Internal Tensions:** The perfect tool for political campaigns or a handy device to justify using evil NPCs who have legitimate holds on power that prevent the PCs from simply killing them, internal tensions are any conflicts that occur within the city but stop short of open, military action. For example, two noble families could feud over trade, political appointments, or any number of things. The two clans compete for business partners, campaign for the support of other nobles in parliamentary elections, and so on. One family might employ the thieves' guild to use illegal acts to further their goals.

Internal tension can arise from a number of events:

- The city was originally founded by several different groups that to this day continue to compete for prestige and influence.

- In the past, the city was conquered by an invading kingdom. The old families still hold some power, but the newcomers maintain a strong grasp on the important positions.

- For many years, the city was ruled by a hereditary lord. His assassination left no clear successor. To this day, a variety of families and bloodlines still compete to put forth an heir. Until then, the noble families cast one vote each to elect a mayor to a four-year term.

- The thieves' guild was a powerful force for many years, but its involvement with a cult of demon worshippers led to its destruction. Several competing gangs now fight to claim the void the guild left behind.

- Several different guilds do business in the city, and many times their goals oppose each other. The teamsters push for more patrols on the roads west of town, while the mariners lobby for an expansion to the royal navy. With vast sums of money and trade involved, these disagreements sometimes spawn shadow wars of espionage and open political fighting.

Internal tensions require a few simple ingredients: a zero-sum goal, parties interested in achieving that goal, and the freedom required to pursue it. Remember that this category does not cover open warfare. That topic is covered later. Usually, the parties involved in these disputes employ legitimate means to get what they want. A zero-sum goal means that with each gain one competitor makes, someone loses. If two people want to eat a pie, each bite one person takes is one less that the other could enjoy. Zero-sum games spawn intense competition because of their very nature. If you want your city to feature internal tension, add situations like the ones listed above to its history. Such an arrangement gives the perfect explanation for guilds, noble houses, and others to engage in political backstabbing, backroom deals, and covert wars that can drag the PCs into a variety of adventures.

History alone is also enough to drive many conflicts. If one or both sides harbor a grudge, they may struggle against each other simply because that is what tradition demands. A noble house may plot against rivals because of events that took place decades ago. A conflict may have been resolved ages ago, but its emotional effects remain.

## TENSION VS. VIOLENCE

It may seem odd to break down tension and violence into two separate categories. After all, one logically leads to another. However, the two have radically different effects on a game world. Tension gives the characters the chance to step in and prevent a situation from escalating into violence. Stopping two groups from fighting is much harder than wading into their conflict with fists flailing. It leads to a campaign that focuses more on diplomacy, politics, and subtle, covert actions. Open violence, on the other hand, is great for campaigns where high adventure and combat are the norm. Depending on the tone and flavor of your game, either or both of them might be just what you need to build a city that fits into your campaign plans.

**External Tension:** While internal tension involves groups that are part of the same society, external tension exists between a city and a different realm, a neighboring city, a power group that runs the kingdom that claims domain over the city, a different race, or a single, powerful being such as a dragon. If you want most of the action in your campaign to take place outside of the city or if you want to cast the PCs as its defenders, this is a good option to work into its history.

- The city was built on land previously claimed by a different culture, such as a tribe of nomadic horsemen, elves who dwell in a nearby forest, orcs who roam the plains, or dwarves who mine the mountains. The city's founders may have conquered the area or the city grew slowly enough that only now is its presence becoming a source of conflict.
- A cult considers the city's location holy ground and cannot abide the presence of infidels. It might have a secret temple in the city from which it conducts terrorist actions, or it could openly use politics to force religious law on the city.
- The city stands on land conquered in a past war. The people of the defeated realm still harbor resentment over their loss and look upon the city as an emblem of its defeat.
- The city was unwittingly founded on the ruins of a much older, subterranean civiliza-

tion. Wererats, drow, troglodytes, or other creatures live below it. They find the presence of so many sacrificial victims or targets for theft beneficial, but some among them clamor for war. The creatures employ subtle attacks and deception against the city.

- The city was once ruled by a terrible despot who used torture, murder, and other foul means to maintain an iron grip over his subjects. A successful revolution cast him out of power, but he and/or his descendants still plot to regain control of the city.

External tension is simple to plant in a city's history. Conflicts arise for a number of reasons, from past slights or feuds that still linger to continuing struggles for resources or territory. They can grow over political power, material goods, economics, and a variety of other factors. Like internal conflicts, they are best cast as zero-sum games where one side or the other has a good reason to expend the energy necessary to maintain a feud. As with internal tensions, these conflicts can also be propelled by the weight of history. If two groups struggle for long enough, they may build up so many injustices and grudges that neither side might ever be happy with peace.

Compared to internal tension, external forces allow you to craft a campaign that focuses on threats from beyond. The characters may be the city's champions, allowing them to engage in high fantasy, heroic action against an outside menace. Yet, since a threat has not yet led to open fighting, diplomacy, stealth, and roleplaying are more important than combat. You can also use external tension as a precursor to war. The early parts of a campaign may feature strained relations between the city and its neighbors, with the later portions including mass battles and warfare once the PCs are important and powerful enough to play a critical role in the struggle.

**Warfare:** The ultimate expression of political tension, open warfare tends to reflect recent developments in a city's history. The new ruler may be an ambitious conqueror, the thieves' guild may conduct an underground war against a new cartel from the mysterious east, and so on. The fighting's root causes may be part of the city's history, but the spark that ignites the violence should be a recent event.



Alternatively, the war could be a long, enduring affair that eventually slides into the city's background as a daily event or it could have just recently ended. In the first case, the city continues on with its daily existence, with the changes and stresses the war brings incorporated into its routine. In the second, rivalries, anger, and reconstruction can all form the backdrop to a highly combustible scene. The victors relish their spoils and newfound power, while the defeated must learn to live under their conquerors or struggle to rebuild.

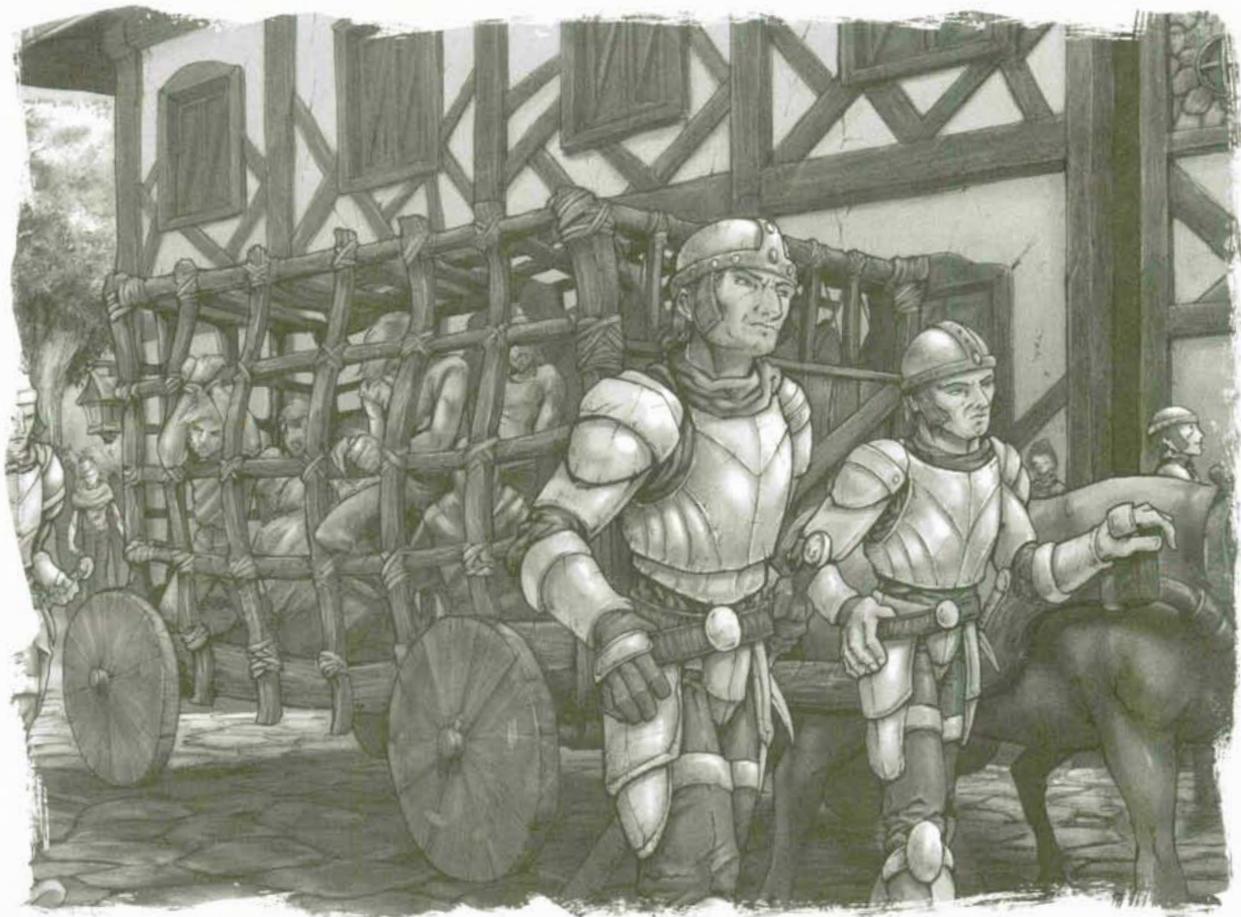
- A gang war within the thieves' guild rages in the aftermath of the guildmaster's assassination. Four claimants to his position arise, each with assassins, thugs, and mercenaries backing them up. Back-alley brawls turn into skirmishes, innocent civilians are caught in the cross-fire, and the PCs may face extortion or threats to draw them into alliances with one side or another.

- A horde of orcs approaches the city from the north. The barbarians have already sacked several towns and outposts and seem poised to besiege the city. Political factions within the

city are unable to set aside their differences, as petty bickering and old feuds now come to the forefront. Chaos reigns as refugees stream to the countryside and opportunistic mercenaries and the king's legions march into town. In the past, the city has used bribery and envoys to convince the raiders to bypass it, but can these methods work again? Perhaps the leader of this horde suffered defeat at the hands of adventurers from the city and seeks revenge.

- An ancient evil from the city's past awakens. Decades ago, a demon tried to manifest in town and devour the citizens as a sacrifice. It was defeated, but now its cultists have raised an army to besiege the place. An artifact that can restore the demon's soul is somewhere in the city. The characters must use history as their guide to track down the forgotten item and destroy it before the cult's army breaches the walls.

- Shadowy figures strike at innocent travelers and those who move about in small groups. They attack by night and leave few traces of their nature behind. Years ago, the city banished a group of rebels by lowering



them down the deepest pit in the sewers. Now, their descendants have returned with grimlock followers to exact their revenge. The devolved humans and their lackeys commit murders, sabotage, and other acts in an attempt to destabilize their city. For their final act, they plan to start a number of fires around town to destroy the city.

- Tensions have long run high between the city and a neighboring realm. They have fought several wars with inconclusive results. Now, gold has been discovered in the mountains between them. Both sides lay claim to the lodes, but neither has a clear legal claim. Since the expanded resources the mines offer could tip the balance of power in the region, both sides send mining expeditions and soldiers to the mountains. Spies infiltrate the city to determine the city's plans, while old political feuds erupt as different factions push for and against the brewing war.

Warfare offers many different hooks for adventures and ideas for expanding your campaign. In a political game, the characters could be spies, diplomats, or investigators. They

focus on gathering intelligence or uncovering moles within the city. In campaigns that focus on combat and heroism, the PCs could lead the attack against the city's enemies. They might stand at the forefront of an attack, walk the walls to repel invaders, or launch commando raids against the enemy's generals, wizards, and other resources.

## RESTRICTIONS AND LAWS

Some cities have laws and customs that restrict their citizens' lives in unexpected ways or in a manner that is particularly annoying for adventurers. Weapons larger than a dagger may be restricted, while clerics are not permitted to openly display their holy symbols. Such laws add color to the campaign and force the players to come up with creative solutions while adventuring in the city. Lawful clerics and paladins may refuse to go against the law, creating roleplaying opportunities between the characters. Here are some historical events that can cause a city to adopt such traditions:

- In one terrible night, a band of mercenaries, thugs, and murderers rose up to attack the city



from within. Posing as adventurers and arms merchants, they were able to smuggle spears, swords, and armor through the front gate. While the villains were defeated, the city fathers took steps to prevent such an attack from happening again. Only folk who earn an official permit to bear arms may carry weapons larger than a dagger or openly wear armor. All other visitors must deposit their weapons in the town armory and collect them when they leave. The armory is the frequent target of robberies, while some folk use it to dispose of murder weapons or temporarily hide magic items. Sometimes, thieves use it to transfer stolen goods. One crook deposits the item, while his customer uses a disguise to later claim it.

- A long-running feud between rival factions in the thieves' guild led to a sharp drop in legitimate business. The crime lords, eager for any advantage, burned down shops in their rivals' territories, extorted vast sums of money from visiting merchants, and fought skirmishes in the city's streets and squares. The town's fathers cracked down, driving the thieves from town, arresting them, and killing the few that resisted. To this day, all criminal cartels are relentlessly hunted down and destroyed before they can grow powerful. Petty crimes are treated mercilessly, with pickpockets sentenced to a month of hard labor and many other crimes punished with banishment.

- Arcane spells are banned from public use. In the past, a few wizards have defended themselves with magic that caused fires, killed bystanders, and disrupted the city. Any unregistered spellcasters are fined 500 gp for each spell they are caught using.

- The gods' worship is heavily restricted. Perhaps aside from a single, city-sponsored cult, no religions are allowed to openly practice their faiths. Holy symbols must be hidden from sight, while preaching is punished with 40 lashes and two months of hard labor. The city could be ruled by a theocracy, or perhaps conflicts between sects led to open violence and social instability. There are temples in the city, but from the exterior they look like simple businesses or dwellings.

- The magic item trade is heavily taxed and monitored. All enchanted items must be scribed with the makers' mark of a recognized guildsman from the city. Otherwise, the owner must

pay a tax equal to 5% of the item's value. Spellcasters caught creating items, even simple ones such as scrolls or potions, are fined 1,000 gp and must work in the city's item production shops for one month. In the past, the city's economy was robust, but an economic collapse almost pushed it into oblivion. Desperate to shore up its fortunes, the city passed laws that regulate the magic item trade and tax the revenues it generates.

Restrictions should present the characters with some additional obstacles to overcome while they adventure in a city. The temptation may be to use laws as a tool to inhibit the characters' abilities, but such methods can upset the players. Avoid casually overriding or restricting a character's abilities. The players choose a class, feats, and abilities with the expectation that they will prove useful. If they cannot use their abilities, they may grow bored with the game. Instead, use these ideas to give the city color and present the players with a unique roleplaying challenge.

## TRADITIONS AND FESTIVALS

With their clear sense of history, cities develop unique traditions and holidays that commemorate or recall events from the past. The day that an attacking orc army's siege was broken might be a civic holiday, with businesses closing and a parade through the streets with soldiers from the army, bands of musicians, and colorful banners and puppets depicting figures from the struggle. Holidays and other events serve to add color and detail to your world. They also provide interesting, engaging backdrops to adventures. The PCs may have to prevent the mayor's assassination during the festival of knives, an event commemorating a despot's murder in which everyone in town carries a ceremonial knife. Any reveler could be the murderer, and the characters cannot force celebrants to toss aside their knives due to the city's traditions. Holidays could arise for a number of reasons, including:

- For years, a tyrannical despot ruled the city. A band of heroes conspired with the city's down-trodden folk to overthrow him, and in a single night of riots his regime was toppled. To commemorate the day, the city's rulers trade places with laborers and workers. The palace is open to visitors, and the commoners are allowed to nominate a list of laws. The



mayor chooses one of those ordinances to enforce until the next holiday.

- While the city was still young, a small army of ogres and giants besieged it. On the verge of destruction, the nobles were desperate for any assistance. A necromancer appeared in town and offered a terrible bargain. He agreed to raise an army of skeletons and zombies to fight the invaders, but in return once per year he would be allowed to take bodies from the town cemetery, animate them, and take them as his followers. Once a year, the city closes down at dusk. Inns and taverns board their doors and windows shut, and until sunrise, ghosts, zombies, and ghouls caper about the streets in a grim pantomime of mortal life. Those who venture into the streets are never seen again.

- The city has a strong martial tradition, as it fought many wars against evil humanoids during its early years and afterward has been at the forefront of wars against neighboring kingdoms. To mark the sacrifices its citizens have made, once per year all the folk in the city wear black togas of mourning, offer flowers and other trinkets at memorials to the fallen scattered throughout the city, and attend religious services. Wearing weapons and armor is prohibited by law as a gesture towards peace and a small sacrifice of remembrance made to the fallen.

- Each year, a nearby river floods and helps bring soil and nutrients to the fields outside of town. The festival of rising water marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring. It features prayers to gods of fertility, invocations of luck for the coming year, and parades of large boats carried through the city to mark the rising water. Despite the celebrations, an ancient prophecy foretells that the river will one day rise and destroy the city on this day. Though few believe the stories, the festival has its origins in preparations made for such an event as the townsfolk readied boats and carried them into town. If a villain plans to use magic to cause such a catastrophe, the PCs may find that the citizens have trouble believing that an old wives' tale could come to pass.

- To appease the different religious factions in the city, the town elders set aside one day each week for a small procession dedicated to a different god or saint. Each divine figure is assigned a day according to a schedule that lays

down the event for a year in advance. Some cults attempt to disrupt their rivals' processions, while others use the small parades as a cover for clandestine actions. A gang of thieves might rob a shop while the procession is in full swing, using the packed street to disrupt efforts to pursue them. The events could be a continuing source of political tension, as smaller sects attempt to gain recognition for their gods and major ones compete to hold their events on or near important holidays. Evil cults leap at the chance to ruin a religious event and may see it as a convenient opportunity for an assassination.

As you can see from the examples, festivals and holidays work best as the setting for an adventure or the framework for an important event. You can introduce all sorts of complications to the characters' lives if they must complete a mission or deal with a villain while everyone in town is indulging in wine and food while wearing elaborate costumes. Look at real world festivals, such as Mardi Gras or Carnival, for examples of how cities can embrace and practice holidays.

## FILLING IN THE DETAILS

While designing a city's history with an eye towards creating useful material for your adventures is an efficient use of your time and provides you with plenty of ideas for your campaign, you should not completely ignore the more mundane parts of a city's history. Once you have decided the important events that have a bearing on your game, you may need to fill in details on the rest of the city's events. Sometimes, you can find inspiration by reversing the order, first outlining the city's mundane past then adding in details that have a direct bearing on your campaign. The choice comes down to personal preference, though the order in which the steps are presented here saves you some time. This section provides a broad overview of a city's history and the type of events that it can experience. Use it as an archetype on which you can base your city's history or as inspiration and ideas.

**The Early Years:** The first few years of a city's history are marked with rapid growth and emerging patterns that settle into traditions and the accepted way of doing things. It is during this era that the city acquires its basic character and its arrangement. The buildings raised can

become enduring monuments if they are crafted from stone or other durable materials and survive years of wear and tear, invasions, social upheaval, and other traumatic events. The families, guilds, and other groups that hold power during this time have the potential to form a powerful old guard, a network of established power brokers who control a vast number of the city's most important industries and offices of power. Portions of the city's history from this era may be forgotten, leading to the return of old threats whose methods and goals prove baffling.

**Middle Age:** At this point, the city's rapid growth slows down. The steady influx of settlers and businesses that allowed it to climb from a village or stretch of wilderness into a larger town or city slows to a steadier rate. Its population and markets are now strong enough to draw residents and traders regardless of the reason behind its origin. At this point, the city faces its first real test. It may settle into a comfortable, steady growth, continue on at a fast pace and become a new, major metropolis, or slowly dwindle as whatever force gave birth to it slowly fades away. Power groups that form at this point come into conflict with the old guard. These newcomers may compete in the same social, political, and economic arenas, or they may establish wholly new spheres of influence. For example, a port city founded because of its deep port and strategic location may be dominated by families with shipping and trading resources. In the city's middle age, the fishing and shipbuilding industries become more important as its population grows. Merchant houses and nobles involved in those industries may compete for power with the old guard.

**Maturity:** At this point, the city reaches the final stages of its development. One or more new waves of business could spawn successive generations of newcomers to the political scene, while changing fortunes could banish the old guard to history's dustbin or force them to adapt their businesses and holdings to deal with current events. The city comes into conflict with its neighbors, either seeking to draw the now limited businesses and trade routes in the area or even resorting to open warfare to maintain its dominance. Within a kingdom or nation, the city establishes itself as a regional power. Government offices may hold the provincial regime's officers or an important fortress may serve as the barracks for

the army. With the city's reputation cemented and its markets stabilized, its health is ensured unless it suffers a traumatic economic or environmental catastrophe. The weight of history and its steady population gives the city the resources it needs to maintain its position.

**Current Status:** This stage represents the city's position as your campaign opens. It does not necessarily translate into any of the states here, or could feature aspects from several of them. After reading through the ideas given here, try to get a sense of the city's age and pace of development. Not every city must be fully developed when the characters first visit it. The borderland town where their adventures begin could be in its infancy, while the capital city may be well into maturity. Do not lock yourself into thinking that the important events in a city's history must be confined to the past. The characters could play an important role in a town's earliest days and help define its structure and character for generations to come.

**Booms:** Once a city enters its mature phase, it can still manage to catch lightning in a bottle and experience another surge of rapid growth. Any of the different city origins could apply to an already established town, allowing it to undergo a round of rapid growth that temporarily or permanently changes it. A city established as a defensive bulwark against invading orcs could grow around a military fortress and reach a steady, moderate size. If prospectors discover gold in the hills near town, the place is suddenly swamped with explorers, miners, and investors eager to cash in on the find. The city may need to build a second wall to contain the growth, and the conflicts between the newcomers and the established powers in town could lead to political bickering and a sudden, traumatic change in how the place is run. The military might attempt to place strict controls over mining operations to avoid provoking the orc and ogre tribes of the region, while the newcomers are heedless of the danger. Booms cause tremendous amounts of turmoil in a city, as they bring new power groups into the equation and turn the established order upside down. Furthermore, few booms can sustain themselves. Sometimes, a city unearths enduring new resources that allow it to permanently grow, but most of the time the boom passes and fades from its early prosperity. The gold and silver mines may be exhausted, and though some miners remain to work iron and cop-

per veins they uncover, the city's rampant prosperity recedes to a level closer to its previous existence.

**Crashes:** Just as a city can experience a sudden upswing in its fortunes, the unforeseen demise of an important industry or a shift in geopolitics can push one into a rapid social and economic freefall. An overland trade route the city once relied on could be replaced by maritime travel, while the gold and silver mines that spurred a town's growth may run empty and cause the prospectors and mining companies to pull up stakes and seek the next boomtown. In both these cases, the city loses a critical resource in a short period of time. These crashes cause mass unemployment, skyrocketing crime, and the decay of the city's infrastructure as businesses move away to more promising towns. Laborers leave, causing the population to spiral downward, while the economic damage pushes farmers and other traders to seek better markets for their goods. A crash can take place in the space of months or years. A city might find that, over time, it slowly loses business and population to a neighboring town where more abundant resources and cheaper labor make business more profitable. The transformation may take years, causing a slow decline in the place's markets, population, and prospects. Crashes can be reversed by sudden upswings in the city's fortunes, or they could simply cause the town to dwindle until it reaches a more streamlined, sustainable size.

**War:** A long, sustained conflict can change a city's character forever, strengthen it, or destroy it. The closer the city stands to the frontlines, the greater the likelihood that it sees the construction of thick defensive walls, barracks, keeps, and other fortifications. The town may swell in size as soldiers and mercenaries march in to hold it against the enemy. If it comes under direct attack, parts of it are battered into ruin even if it resists a siege. Its citizens may flee before the coming assault, leaving only the soldiers and those unlucky enough to be pressed into service behind to watch over it. If the city falls to invaders it could either be mostly destroyed in fires and looting or mostly preserved, depending on the attackers' goals. If they seek loot and spoils, they likely leave much of the city a ruin. Many of the oldest buildings are burnt or battered into wreckage, while its notable monuments and treasure troves are picked dry or defaced. If the attack-

ers wish to conquer and hold the city, they may destroy monuments and temples that run counter to their beliefs and loyalties, but otherwise they may attempt to keep as much of the city intact as possible to ease the transition to a new government.

Cities that stand far from the fighting still feel the war's effects. If the military presses all able-bodied men into the infantry, the shrinking labor pool could hurt a city's economy. Even though armies need food, weapons, and other supplies, merchants rarely fare well during times of crisis. They may sell a lot of goods, but their profits are put towards maintaining war production rather than creating new jobs or expanding the economy with new business ventures. Wars usually cause cities to slip into stasis or develop new industries that cater to the fighting. A port may gain a shipyard and a naval base, while a city on the plains may become an important staging point for supply caravans and military forces. The influx of strangers causes the inns and taverns in a city to expand, and the free cash that the young soldiers carry could lead to a rapid rise in prostitution, gambling, narcotics trafficking, and other social ills. Since warfare allows the average commoner the chance to travel more than he has ever before in his life, populations can shift rapidly as youngsters from the countryside come to a city to train and remain there to work after the fighting stops.

**Disasters:** Natural disasters can destroy or damage cities in a single day. Earthquakes smash buildings and kill citizens, hurricanes swamp ships and flood lowland areas, volcanoes erupt and bury entire districts in molten rock and ash. A single, critical disaster can transform a city into a tumbled ruin. Obviously, this chokes off trade and drives away residents. In the absence of any government-funded relief effort, a city struck by a disaster could be set back decades in its development. If the damage is bad enough, it could cease to exist. Alternatively, a disaster could affect a single industry, causing the city to pursue different opportunities or sharply altering its character. A port city whose access to the sea dries up needs to find some new marketable trait or it faces oblivion. More information on disasters and their effect on a city's (and the characters') daily life is given later in this book.

**Death:** A city's death can take decades, or it may occur in minutes. From the slow decline of its primary industries to a flash flood or volcanic eruption, a variety of factors can combine to neutralize the characteristics that allow a city to grow and prosper in the first place. Resources run dry, trade routes shift, a new prophet exhorts the faithful to live near a different shrine—all of these events draw people away and give potential new settlers a reason to seek a home elsewhere. As a city dies, it faces a few different fates. It could become completely abandoned, leaving it an empty ruin that monsters may infest. Parts of the city may fall into disuse, leaving a few districts inhabited but much of the place a ghost town. In other cases, the city's size shifts downward until it finds a smaller but steady state. In this case, a small town may feature castles, palaces, and monuments whose splendor stands in sharp contrast to the tiny, rude village that surrounds them. Lacking funds to maintain such elaborate public works projects, the town slowly falls into disrepair. The town hall's walls crack and crumble, abandoned townhouses become a prime space for wanderers, refugees, and squatters, and the slums slowly grow. Faced with a lack of economic opportunities, most businesses pull up and leave. A city in its dying stages or after its death resembles a once-proud mansion, now left for the wind and rain to slowly sap away its vitality. These cities invariably become breeding grounds for crime and illicit trades, as the government lacks the resources to police its citizens and the outside world cares too little to lend any support.

## URBAN ARCHETYPES

Urban archetypes provide a starting point you can use in creating the current state of a city. Each of them presents a simple profile based on a set of typical cities, unique events that can radically alter how a city operates, and other factors that combine to make one city different from another. The rest of this chapter uses the archetypes as examples for discussions on government, politics, trade, and other topics. However, the archetypes serve primarily as a starting point. Even if you chose to ignore them, the rest of this chapter is just as useful to you. In some cases, you may

choose to mix and match factors from different archetypes, or you could opt to combine several archetypes into one unique city. For instance, in the aftermath of an earthquake, a city tumbles into ruin. The survivors gather in a few small areas that were undamaged or could be quickly rebuilt. Meanwhile, a small army of orcs drawn by the prospects of a wounded, easily overwhelmed target gathers to attack. The city would have features of both the besieged and the ruined city.

## THE COMMON CITY

The typical fantasy city stands at the crossroads of trade and travel. It usually has few important products it produces and exports. Rather, it is a place that travelers pass through on their way to somewhere else. This status makes it a cosmopolitan, exotic place. Weapons and armor are accepted as everyday accoutrements, though violence and casual spell use draws the town guard's attention. Humans from various cultures—and elves, dwarves, halflings, gnomes, half-orcs, and other civilized races—are common here, and most adventurers can find neighborhoods in town where they feel at home. The city's religious life is eclectic, with all the major religions featuring at least a small shrine and one or two resident clerics. Evil folk are only rarely allowed to openly worship demons, devils, or dark gods, and most organizations dedicated to fell ends remain hidden. Since the city is an important travel nexus, many foul conspiracies and groups do business with its inhabitants and use it as an important rallying point in their plans. The city itself could be a powerful force for good, making it a target of a wide variety of evil gods, horrible monsters, and other threats.

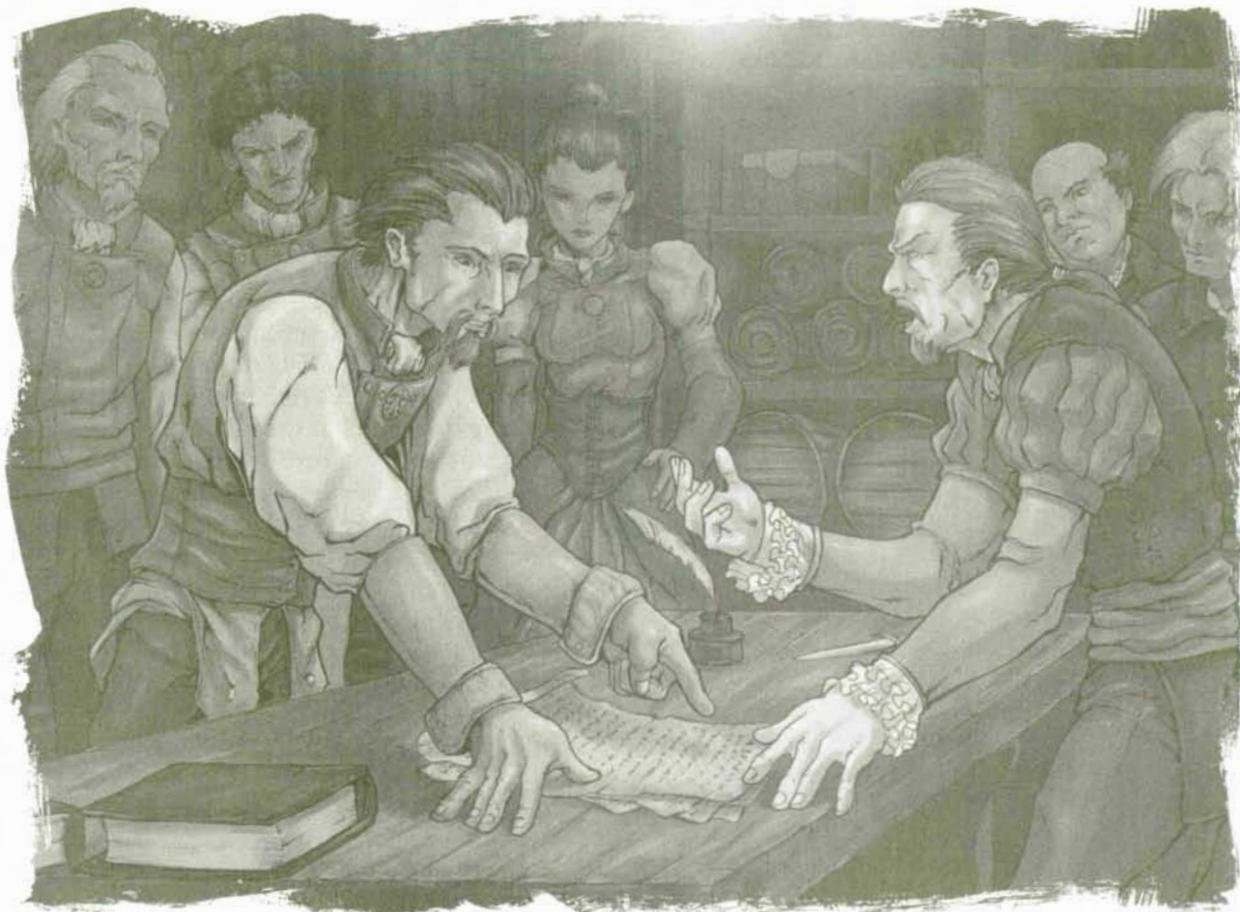
The city is normally old and prominent in the world's history. Many important, world-shaking events have taken place there, while its years of development allow for many hidden dungeons in its crypts, graveyards, and sewers. With the varied number of folk, easy access to travel across the world, numerous potential villains, and countless abandoned tunnels and mazes, the typical fantasy city holds plenty of adventure for the player characters. These attributes combine to make the typical city a great place to base a campaign. The characters can travel across the world from the city, meet a wide range of NPCs, and find plenty of opportunities to delve into dungeons and

track down shadowy, villainous groups. Some of these cities were founded by slightly mad wizards who had a penchant for tracking down and capturing strange monsters, building isolated treasure hoards protected by spells, traps, undead, and other creatures, and other sites that draw adventurers.

## THE CONTESTED CITY

The contested city is the site of fighting within its walls. Criminal gangs, factions in a civil war, or other power groups hold different districts and fight among themselves to gain power or protect their territory. The original government may hold on to power, but its grip is tenuous at best. Different factions may control various quarters, and fighting is heavy in the border zones. This scenario is most likely for a civil war, armed uprising by the populace, or some other attempt to dislodge and replace the current government. Alternatively, the fighting consists primarily of covert operations, assassinations, and other secretive actions. The conflict is between different criminal operations, cults, and other secretive groups that are willing to use violence to advance their causes. The government maintains control of the city and may work against some or all of the groups, but the fighting has been widespread enough to wear away at its authority. Criminals openly walk the streets with weapons and armor, while bribed guardsmen stand by and watch as thugs rob shops and brawl in public squares. The typical commoner is scared and intimidated by the various factions, caught trying to eke out a livable wage while fighting swirls around him. These cities are unstable, lawless places where the government holds little authority or confines its rule to a few, secure areas. Riots may be common, particularly if the populace is in open rebellion, but they may still occur in the chaos and uncertainty of a full-blown gang war.

These cities are great for adventures because they provide a dangerous, chaotic environment. The characters must watch their every step, find a friendly group in a city where no truly good or altruistic factions might exist, and struggle against factions that can target them with assassins and ambushes while they are within the relative safety of a city. The easiest way to drag the characters into a contested city's fighting is to set them up as the enemies or allies of one of the competing groups. The



PCs may need to help a baron root out the chaotic evil rebels who are sponsored by a band of demon worshippers. One of the various criminal cartels may have stolen an important item the characters must recover, forcing them to ally with a gang of thieves who know the city well enough to lead them to their quarry. In return, the characters must work with the gang, who might even be evil, to wear away their enemy's strength with hits, raids, and robberies. A contested city can also serve in a manner similar to a besieged one, with the characters forced to operate against a backdrop of a revolution, gang violence, or covert war between different noble houses or religious sects. Their daily lives become much more complicated if a simple trip to the swordsmith could be interrupted by a sudden duel between wizards supported by dozens of armed thugs.

## THE OUTPOST CITY

Perched at the edge of civilization, the outpost is heavily defended and ruled with an iron fist. Barbarian traders pitch their tents alongside brick and stone castles, while raids and monster incursions are a constant threat. The outpost

city exists in a state of siege. While the enemy does not mass directly outside its walls, the city faces the continual threat of dragons, giants, evil humanoids, and worse. Far from the comfort of civilization, the outpost must rely on itself and the steady stream of supplies to remain strong against continual opposition. Within the city, folk openly wear weapons and armor. While violence is common among the adventurers, prospectors, and explorers who gather in the city to organize expeditions, the city guard cracks down on any illegal activities with a fanatic's zeal. Any internal disturbance could provide an opening for an external threat to topple the city. Orc spies pose as half-orcs and seek to uncover the city's defenses. Underground networks of smugglers and criminals work to move narcotics and restricted magic items from the borderlands to the bigger, interior cities. Evil cults that maintain their temples in the wilderness send agents to find sacrificial victims and lure adventurers to their dooms. The presence of many adventurers in the outpost city exacerbates this problem, as armed and armored travelers are the norm. Sword fights and magic duels in the streets are not uncommon, even with the



harsh rule of the law. When tempers flare in this city, justice is as close as the swords most of the folk wear on their belts.

The outpost city is a great location for an adventure because it offers direct access to isolated, wilderness areas, dungeons, and other places the characters can explore. Living far from civilization, the PCs must rely on their own wits and cunning to survive. Furthermore, since the outpost city is most likely relatively small, the characters can play a major role in its development even at low levels. A band of adventurers that destroys an orc tribe could be feted as heroes. The characters could be tapped for service as special agents or scouts by the ruling government, giving them a chance to take part in events that shape the town and determine its fate. Since these cities are smaller than normal, the characters can quickly get to know the important people in town, allowing the outpost city to become a much more personalized, intimate setting than a major metropolis. These towns are the perfect place to kick off a campaign. With adventure waiting just outside the walls, the characters have plenty of chances to make a name for themselves while operating in an environment where they can quickly become notable heroes.

## THE PORT CITY

This city is an important gateway for trade goods from distant lands. It hosts a deepwater harbor and features a wide array of visitors from many realms. Cosmopolitan and bustling compared to most cities, the port is a center of economic and social power. Perched on a prime location on the world's trade routes, it draws upon its station to profit from trade and travel. Chances are this city lacks any useful resources aside from its location, making it possible that the land around it is used for little beyond farming. If the city is part of a larger realm such as a kingdom or empire, it is an important naval and military base. Of all the city archetypes, the port city is the most likely to be a free and independent city-state. If it exists at the crossroads of the world, it could lie beyond the military reach of any powerful nation. Thus, it managed to grow and prosper as an independent entity despite its strategic location. In such a case, the port features embassies and diplomatic missions from all the realms whose merchants and traders rely on it to sustain their economic health.

Port cities make great places for the characters to visit in the course of an epic journey. If the characters must travel extensively by ship, the port is a good place for them to meet their captain, recruit a crew, find a ship, and make other preparations for a journey. The port, with the many exotic ships that drop anchor in the harbor, is also a good place to introduce the characters to NPCs from distant lands or bring in a new threat to oppose them. In a free city, you can design covert actions, negotiations, and other adventures relating to diplomatic activity and intrigue. If the characters operate on behalf of a government or a patron noble, they could be sent to the port city to iron out a trade agreement or forge a military alliance against a rising evil. The characters could face assassins who seek to kill them or their contacts, attempts to frame them for a crime or discredit them, and other actions designed to foil their efforts.

## THE RELIGIOUS CITY

The city exists for religious reasons, having been founded on the site of a temple, sacred event, or other area with religious importance. Clerics may rule in this place, and religious edicts are law. Priests and adherents of heretical faiths may be lynched on sight, while those



of religions that do not run directly counter to the dominant god must keep their holy symbols hidden and are forbidden from openly practicing their rites. Religious cities can spring up almost anywhere, as the gods and their miracles rarely appear on a regular schedule or in particular places. Their contexts in the world depend on the type of realm around them. A religious city that is part of a larger theocracy could be an important stronghold or even the capital. Its religious importance naturally makes it a prestigious town in the view of the realm's nobility and other leaders.

A religious city is a fun setting for adventures because it has the potential to introduce a wide array of unexpected complications to the characters' lives. If ruled by a theocracy, this city may feature a bewildering array of rules and regulations derived from a religious code. Morning and evening prayers may be required from all citizens and visitors, regardless of their affiliation, while liquor is banned throughout the town. The general tendency of these laws depends on the alignment and ethos of the god whose faith reigns supreme in the city. The theocrats of a war deity may allow all citizens to carry weapons and armor. If the god is chaotic, all disputes are settled with ritualized duels. A lawful deity of battle may restrict the right to carry arms to the clerics and a warrior caste within the city. These strange rules and customs can force the characters to use more diplomacy and stealth than they are accustomed to, an easy way to introduce a change of pace into the campaign. With the civic authorities ready and willing to meddle in the PCs' affairs, they must pursue their goals with an eye towards blending into a confusing setting.

## THE RUINED CITY

The city existed long ago and is now mostly tumbled ruins. A few settlers have reclaimed areas of it, fending off monsters while seeking out ancient treasures hidden within the rubble. Alternatively, the city was the victim of a natural disaster that left portions of it a tumbled ruin. A great conflagration sweeps through the foreign quarter, leaving it a charred husk of its former glory. Perhaps salamanders and fire elementals infest the place, as the fire was caused by a sorcerer who accidentally opened a gate to an elemental plane. The ruins could be a source of fear, as monsters inhabit them and threaten to overwhelm the town's remaining quarters, or

they could be the origin behind its establishment. An ancient ruin recently uncovered by explorers could attract treasure seekers and other adventurers in droves. As these expeditions drive monsters out of the ruins and uncover valuable treasures, they can leave behind cleared out, safe areas for merchants to establish shops, religions to establish shrines to spread the faith and collect donations, and a nearby country to station troops to protect the settlement. This settlement would resemble an outpost in that it lies at the very edge of civilization. Monsters, bandits, and other threats may literally lurk on the other side of its outer wall. Spies from the untamed portions of the ruins may seek to slip into the settlement, while thieves' guilds may compete for the right to do business in the area. With the steady stream of gold and treasure flowing out of the ruins, the settlement is sure to become a powder keg of intrigue, crime, and violence.

The ruined city is the perfect choice for campaigns where combat, weird monsters, and fabulous treasure are the norm. The characters can rest in the settled area to regain spells, heal wounds, and sell their loot. Once they are ready, they can organize a new expedition to march into the ruins to fight monsters and find new treasures. You can organize the outer, wild ruins along the lines of a monster city. Kobolds and goblins inhabit the tumbled buildings near the settled region, while the more powerful monsters reside in the furthest precincts. The sewers, old crypts, and other tunnels provide convenient dungeons filled with purple worms, ghouls, and other threats.

## USING THE ARCHETYPES

The archetypes serve as simple examples you can use to guide the creative process. If you use them as presented, they give you the seeds for eight different cities, enough to last the duration of most RPG campaigns. By mixing and matching their traits or combining them to create new cities, you can produce a near infinite variety of towns. In the remaining sections of this book, the game rules and advice identify a variety of different models for governments, economies, and so on. These models are keyed to the archetypes, though they are not designed with them expressly in mind. Instead, you can use an archetype as a guide to pick the effects and rules to use with your city. Think of the following sections as raw

ingredients and the archetypes as recipes you can use to create specific dishes. When you first design a city, an archetype works like a recipe to guide you and help you achieve good results with a minimum of practice. As you gain experience as a DM, you can start swapping out pieces from different recipes. Finally, when you are comfortable in creating material from whole cloth or have plenty of time to work on your game world, you can abandon the recipes and proceed directly to the raw ingredients, slicing, dicing, and mixing them to your taste. Remember that the archetypes are guides to use in your design work. They are not the final word on what cities can look like.

## GOVERNMENT

As cities are a product of civilization, their governments have a major influence on how they operate and the daily life of those who live within them. Governments can be informal, such as a council of chieftains that meets to resolve disputes, to the complex and comprehensive, such as a large bureaucracy that collects a tax on all sales within town and sets forth a complex, rigidly enforced code of social conduct. This section addresses how to design a government and the concerns you need to consider while creating one.

The government's type determines who rules and how they use their power. This material is important in presenting the city as part of the campaign. The characters may have to deal with the government, making it important to know who they have to speak to and how they comport themselves. Before choosing a government type, consider how the government came into power. Typically, a city is part of a larger political unit such as a republic or a kingdom. The government of the realm must choose or decide upon a method by which the city is administered. The king may appoint a faithful servant as the city's mayor, giving him absolute power and allowing him to name a successor to his reign. In a republic, an elected official could select a council of advisors to help him administer the city. Every few years, the voting citizens in the city elect a new mayor.

Generally speaking, a city's government mirrors the methods and tendencies of the realm in which it stands. A tyrannical despot is

likely to appoint an equally savage, capricious underling to head a city within his domain. There are a few exceptions to this rule. As long as a city is able to pay adequate taxes and promise footmen and cavalry in times of war, a realm may be willing to allow a city a measure of freedom and self-governance not normally found in the area. A king might allow a city-state within his domain the ability to elect its own mayor, so long as tax payments are on time and in times of war the city can send him a regiment of pikemen. Factors present in fantasy settings, such as divine intervention and magical events, can allow a city to feature a government much different from the rest of a kingdom's. Within an empire, a cabal of wizards could win the right to rule a city that is responsible for the production of materials related to magic item creation. In return for a yearly tax in the form of enchanted weapons and the service of a regiment of apprentice wizards in time of war, the spellcasters may rule as they see fit. The city could feature low taxes and expanded rights for spellcasters to help encourage wizards and sorcerers to settle there.

After considering the city's position within the campaign world, you should have a good idea of what kind of government it may feature. The list given below describes a variety of governments, how they are organized, how they rule, and the unique factors they bring to a city. A government also has an effect on law enforcement, religion, and other factors in a city. For this reason, it makes the most sense to choose a government before deciding on those factors or to look for government types that support the traits you want to use. This section also includes a discussion on designing governments from scratch that provides useful advice even if you use the government types given here.

## ALIGNMENT AND GOVERNMENT

This section frequently refers to the alignment system in order to give the different governments a variety of forms. A lawful good dictator yields a much different government than a chaotic evil one. However, do not make the mistake of assuming that governments classified as "good" are inherently friendly or well intentioned towards the world. When terms like lawful and evil are used to describe governments, use the following definitions for them.

## CHAOTIC

A chaotic government relies on its officials' personal judgment, prestige, and personal magnetism to rule. Established leaders rely on something other than established laws or traditions to compel service in others. Popular rule, such as a true democracy where each citizen is allowed one vote on any issue, also falls under this definition. The populations' whims and the efforts of a few charismatic individuals can quickly turn both the government's goals and the methods by which it operates. Chaotic societies scorn established rules. Instead, they rely on the judgment and feelings of their leaders. Justice can be capricious, as citizens cannot simply rely on a rigid code of law for their conduct. Instead, personal judgments rendered by those who have managed to accumulate power determine how society operates. Chaotic societies are rarely stable, as their goals and priorities change over time to meet the rulers' needs. These governments tend to emphasize the good-evil portion of their alignments, as those tendencies dictate how and why they apply power. In the absence of the limits imposed by laws, the personal tendencies of those with power shine through in their decisions.

## EVIL

An evil government is bent towards one goal—improving itself by exploiting any resources in reach to the maximum extent possible. The average citizens have little meaning to these governments beyond the territory they can win in wars while serving as soldiers or the palaces and fortifications they can erect when pressed into labor. All decisions are made with an eye towards enriching and advancing the government and the concerns of the select few power groups that help keep it in place. The powerless languish under these regimes, as those who cannot threaten it are exploited and used. Those with power face two threats, either destruction or assimilation. The government ruthlessly crushes any opposition, usually taking proactive measures to root out enemies before they can grow into a worrisome power. Groups or individuals who could prove useful are added into the ruling elite. For example, a blackguard who seizes control in a port city may extend bribes and offer governmental positions to merchants and sea captains. In return for supporting the new dictator, these traders enjoy low taxes, cheap labor, and other incentives that increase their profits and tie their prosperity to

the government's health. Even good folk can be lured into supporting a brutal regime if its evils do not directly touch them.

## GOOD

These governments are most concerned with the health, well being, and prosperity of their subjects. Within society, these groups serve to maintain an acceptable quality of life and seek to maximize, or at least remove any barriers to, the potential of each person. For example, a good government might allow individuals to start businesses and hire workers without government approval, but those workers must be paid a livable wage and cannot be abused. Those with money and resources can invest them in businesses to profit and improve their wealth, but by the same token commoners can expect fair, humane treatment from their employers. These governments do not necessarily support free speech and other human rights. Speaking out against the government might be met with a fine or imprisonment if society judges such actions to run against its interests. However, such punishments are rarely severe.

## LAWFUL

Organization and regulation are paramount in lawful governments. They rely on established, codified traditions to determine their actions and judge situations. Individuals within the government have strictly defined responsibilities and powers. Those who violate these guidelines are usually punished as criminals, though the fine or levy is usually proportional to the transgression. The government has a clear hierarchy from the highest levels down to the lowliest bureaucrat, with everyone in between expected to know his place, obey his superiors, and manage his underlings. From a commoner's point of view, a lawful government can pose anything from an intrusive force that regulates almost every aspect of his life to a benevolent guide that protects and shelters him. Good realms tend to focus on laws that shield their inhabitants from harm, while evil ones seek to impose restrictions, controls, and shackles upon their people. Unlike chaotic governments, lawful ones tend to muffle the alignment of an individual ruler. The machineries of the state, rather than one person's agenda, determine how society operates. Change is possible, but aside from outright rebellion, a reformer must use the established,

sometimes intricate, processes necessary to adopt new laws or abolish old ones. Thus, lawful governments tend to remain static over time, though their rules may vary wildly in attitudes and alignment.

## NEUTRAL

Neutral societies are practical and withdrawn, usually concerning themselves only with stability and safety. They make no special effort to harm or hinder their citizens, unless their hold on power is at stake. Like animals that seek only food and shelter without putting any effort into more abstract concerns, they deign only to address issues that threaten their continued existence and health. A neutral government tends to concern itself only with trade and security, as its economic and military vitality allows it to survive. Law enforcement is limited to violent crimes and property disputes. In many ways, the government seeks to minimize its involvement in its inhabitants' lives. Only in areas of personal or institutional conflict does the government step into establish laws or procedures.

Generally speaking, the second aspect of a neutral government's alignment has a much greater effect on its actions. That aspect determines how the neutral government defines the areas in which it becomes involved. For example, a neutral good government may see its citizens' health and prosperity as its main area of focus, while a neutral evil one cares only for its own stability and the wealth and comfort of the ruling cabal. A lawful neutral one focuses on laws and general stability of the realm, while a chaotic neutral one could consist of a single, powerful warlord who does as he wishes and strikes down all opposition with the help of his followers. One day he may fight to defend the land, the next he departs for a three-month quest to track down a powerful magic item. In addition to the standard governments, many neutral organizations are treaties, pacts, and other binding compacts that unite multiple territories together. A trade review board set up to monitor tariffs and commerce within a region cares only about the issues it was formed to regulate and oversee. It does not care about nor does it have power over other areas.

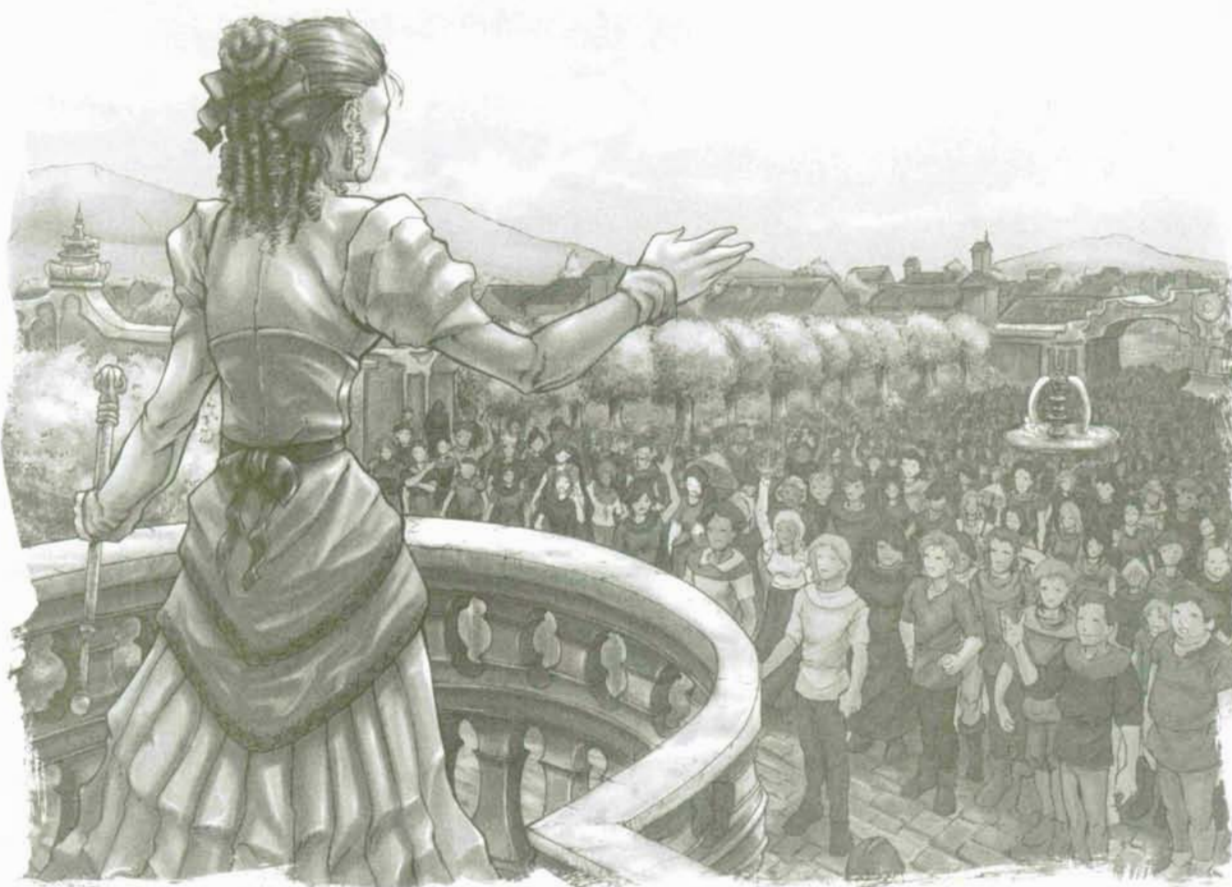
## TYPES OF GOVERNMENTS

### ANARCHY

In a city beset by anarchy, the characters must fend for themselves at every turn. Without a government in place, small power groups form based on a variety of factors, from military power to political acumen. In some areas of town, the thieves' guild rules supreme, while in others whoever can handle himself best in a fight can do as he wishes. There are no higher powers to appeal to, and each person is free to do as he wishes. The rule of law is replaced by an individual's ability to defend himself, make allies, and hold on to his possessions.

Aside from truly extraordinary circumstances, towns do not choose anarchy over other forms of government. Instead, this state comes to pass as a result of warfare, revolution, natural disasters, and other turmoil. Any event that can destroy the government or cripple its ability to administer the city can cause anarchy to descend upon a settlement. Anarchy is also possible when a settlement has not yet had a chance to organize an official government. A recently established settlement in the ruins may have an anarchic government, as the few inns and shops employ their own mercenaries to defend themselves while everyone who sleeps within the settled area is expected to pitch in with the communal effort to man the defensive walls. Anarchy does not always denote chaos and violence. Instead, there may simply be no formal rules for how a settlement operates. In a village or town populated by chaotic good folk, everyone's fundamentally good intentions may ensure that rules and regulations have no place in the city. The average person respects his neighbors' rights and bystanders quickly deal with any disruptive visitors who steal, commit violent acts, and so on.

In a city ruled by anarchy, individuals are free to do as they wish. The fundamental tendencies and character of its inhabitants comes to the fore. Lawful evil folk may form groups that ruthlessly compete to establish a government, while neutral good inhabitants may seek to aid each other and might take steps to form a government if such a choice seems to be in the settlement's best interests. The formation of the city's social and economic traditions and institutions is largely determined by the alignments



and goals of the individuals with the largest number of followers or the most personal power. For example, a powerful wizard could use summoned monsters and his spells to seize control of the buildings around his tower. Threats, intimidation, or rich offers net him mercenaries who act as his personal guards. Commoners may flock to the place in hopes of gaining the wizard's protection in return for service in his cause.

In general, lawful creatures have little love for anarchy. In such a situation, they organize themselves and attempt to seize control of all or part of the city to ensure their security. Neutral groups adapt to the situation as they see fit, keeping in mind that their personal security and prosperity are more important than others' needs. Chaotic individuals live as they wish. They find anarchy preferable to a suffocating government and are happy minding their own business and pursuing their personal goals as long as no one interferes with them. Good creatures try to help others and work to promote an environment that helps the most people. Such efforts could include hunting down dangerous monsters or forming a vigilante group to deal

with criminals. Evil ones pursue their own goals to the detriment of their neighbors, whom they see as disposable and exploitable resources.

Anarchy presents copious opportunities for adventure. The characters might enforce order in the city, fighting predatory gangs and robbers who attack the weak, defeating monsters that emerge from the sewers or wander into town, and otherwise protecting the weak from the strong. They could attempt to found a new government or help a group work towards that goal, rebuilding shattered structures, perhaps recovering long-lost emblems of office that could give a new ruler legitimacy, and fighting against those who would install an evil or cruel despot.

### DICTATORSHIP

A dictatorship tramples the rights and freedoms of its subjects to push the personal agendas and desires of its ruler. Normally, a single, powerful figure claims control in this form of government. With magic, military power, or some other tool, the dictator claims control of the city and uses his power to



exert as much control over the city as possible. The town guard is heavily armed and aggressively patrols the city streets. Crimes are punished with military service, hard labor, or execution. The dictator may enjoy popular support, particularly if he came to power after a period of social upheaval or instability that left the common folk exposed to bandits and other marauders. While the dictator's methods are brutal, he does impose order and relative peace. Adventurers, in particular, chafe under his rule, as do religions that do not expressly support his rule. Dictators are notorious for ruthlessly stamping out any opposition before it can form a threat to their rule, making any organization whose ethos and beliefs run counter to their violent, oppressive methods a target.

Daily life under a dictatorship is almost entirely determined by the ruler's alignment and goals. While most dictators are brutal and ruthless as described above, it is possible for a good person to rise to absolute power. A mighty paladin could overthrow the half-fiend lord of a conquered city. To prevent widespread destruction and chaos in the wake of his victory, the paladin could declare himself an absolute

ruler to organize relief efforts and band together a security force to protect the commoners. Under a good dictator, popular law works to ensure that safety, security, and happiness are possible for all folk. The legal system works to determine guilt or innocence based on testimony and other evidence, while punishments are humane and rarely include death sentences. However, at times, even a good dictator can overstep his bounds in his battle against evil. Those suspected of working with evil cults may be thrown into prison without trial and held indefinitely. The jail may be comfortable and the prisoners well fed, but that is little comfort to a person held there on flimsy evidence. Evil dictatorships exist solely to advance the ruler's personal agenda. His subjects are disposable resources meant to fight wars, erect public monuments, and toil under his rule. The laws are harsh, with capital punishment a common penalty for a wide variety of infractions. The common folk live in squalor, as any resources directed to them are meant largely to keep them alive long enough to remain useful.

Lawful dictatorships have established traditions, rules, and regulations. The ruling despot

may have absolute authority, but he prefers to exercise that power by establishing and following rules. These sorts of dictators tend to breed large numbers of bureaucrats and petty officials who have limited but unquestioned power in their assigned areas. So long as these officials obey the law and perform their jobs well, they can do as they wish. This system leads to a lot of petty tyranny, as local officials flex their authority and, like a dictator in miniature, abuse and exploit their subjects. Even under a good regime, these officials can be inflexible and driven solely to apply the rules regardless of the situation. Chaotic dictatorships have the potential to be even worse, as they lack any controls over the dictator's whims and desires.

Evil dictators provide a great backdrop for a campaign in which the characters must infiltrate a city, link up with a resistance movement, and help them topple the ruling thugs. Perhaps the city has been conquered by an invading army, and an uprising would help foil the attackers and sever their supply lines. The characters must rally the commoners while dodging the secret police, military patrols, turncoats, and other threats. Good dictatorships provide fewer opportunities for adventure, as unless they are misguided they should have the authority to protect and aid the citizens. The characters might work with such a ruler to defeat evil insurgents and rebels, serving as defenders of the crown and agents for good.

## MAGOCRACY

A magocracy is ruled by wizards, sorcerers, and other arcane spellcasters. Political rights are given to those who can demonstrate magical ability, and these restrictions may extend to property ownership, the right to run a business, and freedom of speech and expression. Magocracies tend to form in areas where spellcasters enjoy special social or political advantages, magical abilities are prized or encouraged by ingrained cultural forces, or spellcasters have managed to use their magic to seize power. The typical magocracy breaks society down into two classes, those who can master magic and those who cannot. Depending on the government's alignment, this divide can have a number of effects. Non-wizards may be given full rights to own property, conduct business, and do anything short of participate in government. They may even be granted a limited representation in the city's hierarchy, as many administrative positions could be held by non-

magicians and a small, advisory council given over to mundane affairs might advise the spellcasters on how to deal with their mundane citizens. More brutal, repressive regimes could treat non-spellcasters as slaves, severely restrict and limit the rights of divine spellcasters, and accord tremendous latitude in personal affairs to wizards and sorcerers. They might be able to murder non-spellcasters without penalty or could even be granted the service of a number of slaves based on their talent with magic. In other cases, only those with arcane talent are allowed to even enter the city or specific areas within it. All others must wait outside the walls. In any case, the city features special rights for arcane spellcasters and may inflict restrictions or limits on the rights of non-spellcasters.

Life in a magocracy is determined primarily by one's magical talent. Non-spellcasters are second class citizens who live with the constant reminder that they occupy a lesser position in society. Wizards and sorcerers enjoy personal freedom and expanded rights, and these privileges may create a positive feedback loop. Since arcane casters gain advantages in a magocracy, more of them migrate there to enjoy those benefits. The increase in the arcane population gives the magocracy more power, in turn attracting more spellcasters, and so on.

A magocracy makes great use of its magical resources in all areas. Ambassadors from foreign lands are watched with divination spells, while potential enemies are calmed with *charm person* and similar magic. Good regimes try to keep their use of destructive or subverting magic to a minimum, though in times of war they are ready and willing to employ their most potent spells. Evil ones see magic as another useful tool that should be used at every turn. They employ magic to intimidate and control their neighbors, rendering monarchs into mindless puppets and using summoned demons and devils to launch raids to destroy crops, rob caravans, and cause other disruptions. In either case, at every turn the magocracy relies on magic to take care of problems and sustain itself.

Within a magocracy, characters who use arcane magic have a chance to engage in politics, find and buy rare spells or components, and make use of the city's libraries and other magical resources. These cities provide a

unique environment where the non-spellcasters in the group must learn to endure a second-class existence for the good of the party. The inhabitants of the city provide many excuses for adventures, from quests to recover ancient magic items to an assignment to slip into an archmage's tower, overcome its arcane defenses, and slay the wizard before he is alerted and brings his spells to bear.

## MAYORSHIP

The most common ruler in a city is a mayor who is appointed by the realm's sovereign ruler, elected by a board of guildsmen and nobles, or selected by the current mayor to succeed him upon his death or retirement. Mayors rule in much the same manner as feudal lords, making this form of government common in realms ruled by landed nobles. The mayor is responsible for raising taxes and providing military support to the crown during times of war. In return for his faithful service, he enjoys near absolute power within the city. Typically, the mayor must work with the various guilds to ensure that business flourishes. After all, without a robust economy the mayor cannot raise taxes necessary to fulfill his obligations to the king. A council might offer him advice and insight into the city's working, with representatives from guilds, the nobility, and temples present to lobby for their causes and offer plans to improve the city.

Under a mayorship, economic concerns rule above all else. Property rights, such as the privilege to sell items and collect profits, far outweigh personal rights such as the freedom of speech or religion. Few social programs aside from charity exist to help the poor and downtrodden, and most trials concern business matters and civil disputes. Capital crimes such as murder and rape are heard by the mayor or his appointed magistrates, and punishments include execution and fines paid to the wronged party or his surviving family. Within the city, the guilds stand as the most important institutions, along with temples and other organizations that can generate revenue. The government may levy a tax on sales of goods from weapons, armor, and food to magical items and divine spells cast in return for a donation. Wherever money changes hands, the mayor and his tax collectors are ready to poke their noses in and demand a fair share. In return for this tax revenue, the mayor must provide a good environment for commerce and keep

good relations with the guilds. After all, if the merchants pull out of town and leave the mayor unable to pay his yearly quota to the crown he could lose power.

In an area where adventurers are common, the PCs may be required to join an adventurers' guild. In return for the right to wear armor and carry weapons in town, they must turn over a portion of the treasure they find or pay a yearly tax for the right to operate as adventurers in the area. Since the mayor relies on a steady tax income to hold on to power, he is undoubtedly interested in taking a share of the treasure that explorers and their kind uncover.

Cities with mayors tend to have a lot of internal friction and rivalries. Since the mayor relies on the guildmasters to maintain his tax base, these cities are run in such a manner as to attract lots of business. The characters could engage in industrial espionage, sabotage, caravan guard duty, and other missions that businessmen could offer them. A group of counterfeiters could pose a grave threat to the city's economy as confidence in the locally minted coins plummets, making such criminals just as much a threat as a rampaging dragon or a horde of kobolds.

## OLIGARCHY

An oligarchy is rule by a small group of people who typically receive an appointment for life. In a city, this ruling board may determine policy by vote amongst themselves. A single oligarch may serve as spokesman for the group, but no member holds more power over the council than his fellows. The most common oligarchies consist of representatives from noble families or trade guilds, or a combination of the two, who manage the city's business affairs and oversee the government. This government is typically most concerned with the oligarchs' businesses and holdings. For example, a port city run by an oligarchy may have extensive patrols by the docks to prevent theft while the slums remain essentially lawless. The committee nature of an oligarchy makes it likely that only proposals and measures that improve all the oligarchs' economic and social positions are passed into law. Since oligarchs are usually appointed for life and they exercise absolute power as a group, they tend to focus on matters that directly affect their personal fortunes and business matters that have a direct impact on the city's income. In some cases, the



oligarchs' power may begin and end with the government. Serving as a sort of nobility, they claim sovereignty over the city and rule it in a manner similar to a king's grip on his realm.

Oligarchies function much like dictatorships in that the rulers' alignment plays a major role in how the government operates. Good oligarchs may spend money on social programs to house and feed the poor. They could also appoint officials to oversee and enforce personal freedoms and rights. The very same city could turn into an oppressive, despotic realm if the successive generation of oligarchs is greedy, self-serving, and decadent. The one restraining factor on an oligarchy is that three or more rulers must agree on policy before it can be enacted. This control helps restrain an individual oligarch's more extreme beliefs and desires, though if the ruling council has a long reputation for evil, this factor means little.

Oligarchies offer the same opportunities to adventure as dictatorships, with one important distinction. Evil, neutral, or ambitious good oligarchs could plot and scheme against each other. If the oligarchs represent different guilds or noble families, conflicts between them could erupt into shadowy, covert wars. The characters could find plenty of work as mercenaries in such an environment, engaging in robberies, raids, and kidnapping plots for the oligarchs. They could also serve as retainers for a particular noble house, defending them against their rivals' plots and working to advance its cause.

## REPUBLIC

A republic allows its citizens to elect representatives who create and pass laws. Popular rule, rather than absolute power invested in one or a few rulers, holds sway. However, a republic does not directly translate into freedom. The right to vote could be limited to specific groups of people, social classes, or those who can afford to pay a voting tax. In most cases, the government concerns itself primarily with the matters that are important to the specific group that is allowed to vote. If only clerics can cast ballots, the city exists under a virtual theocracy. At the very least, merchants and nobles must work to establish alliances with different temples to gain access to political power. Thus, while modern society may hold that a republic or democracy is an ideal form of government, the manner in which such a system is instituted largely determines how fair and equitably it

treats its citizens. You can use a republic to model the rule of all sorts of specific groups, from wizards to landowning aristocrats.

A republic is a combination of long-standing traditions and spur-of-the-moment decisions. Since the opinions of a large body of people determine the government's direction, a lone, charismatic person can play a major role in running the government. A skilled orator can win people's votes for his position, and a sudden change of heart by an influential person can send the government off in an unexpected direction. Republics tend to be ruled by the general feelings of the moment, while internal politics are vicious, divisive, and highly personal. Usually, the government includes some sort of concession to personal rights to prevent the majority from simply stomping on the minority's privileges. Without these controls, the first majority can simply legislate the minority into irrelevance.

A republic offers an excellent way to directly involve the characters in politics. A bard, paladin, sorcerer, or other character with a high Charisma score can launch a political career if he qualifies to vote in the city. The characters might have to present evidence to the voting body, hoping to sway the city to stand against an evil warlord or spur them to action against a hidden evil whose threat is not yet obvious enough to rally the forces of good against it. The accessible nature of a republic makes it ideally suited to campaigns with an emphasis on roleplaying, negotiations, and interactions with NPCs.

## THEOCRACY

A theocracy is ruled by priests, usually drawn from a single religion, who use their spiritual training to guide their decisions and often impose laws that enforce the dictates of their god. Similar to a magocracy, only clerics or those who have proven their faith are allowed to hold positions of power, and the commoners may be forced to worship at the theocracy's temples. Other religions may be banned or restricted, with visiting clerics forced to hide their holy symbols and placed under strict watch. In the theocracy, daily life is ruled by the god's commandments. All citizens may be required to pray three times per day, communal temple attendance is mandatory, and public funds go directly into the church's coffers. The government may wage war



against unbelievers, while those of the faith stream to the city to take up residence. Theocracies can arise in cities for a number of reasons. The members of a persecuted religion may flee from a kingdom and found a settlement beyond the borderlands. A religious artifact may draw worshippers who build a great temple. In time, the steady stream of pilgrims and clerics to the site allows a city to grow there. The king may grant a sect the right to found or control a city in return for some great service they rendered him. A temple could even lead a revolt against an oppressive regime, using its victory to place its clerics in power to keep the peace and maintain a hold in the post-revolution city.

To the common folk, the theocracy can be a pervasive force in their daily lives. In extreme cases, the people may find religious observances and practices forced upon them by law. The town guard, led by fanatical cultists, eagerly arrests and imprisons all who are found to have broken religious laws or flouted the theocrats' decrees. Failing to attend daily prayers could earn a citizen 40 lashes or a week of hard labor. The religion's alignment and the tendencies of its god (or gods, in the

case of a faith that worships an entire pantheon) determine how the city interacts with its neighbors and how it manages its internal affairs. The clerics of a goddess of song and celebration may refuse to apply taxes to inns, taverns, and breweries, as these business promote activities the goddess finds pleasing. A city dedicated to a god of war may force all citizens to engage in military training, and its propensity to push for war with the realm's neighbors is well known. Despite its warmongering attitude, the excellent regiments the city supplies in times of war keep the crown content. A theocracy dedicated to a god of justice and peace could even take the form of a republic, with commoners allowed to elect representatives. In this case, the theocrats serve as administrators and judges. While they wield tremendous power, their faith compels them to share it with the common people. Yet, if a despot or incompetent manages to win an election, the clerics are ready and willing to toss him out of office using their power and influence.

A theocracy provides a good setting for adventures that promote roleplaying, stealth, and problem solving. This government can present a lot of restrictions and strange rules that the characters must handle in order to avoid running afoul of the law. A city dominated by an evil theocracy gives you plenty of villains to throw at the party while forcing them to maintain their cover in town to avoid detection. The characters might have to slip into a city to steal an artifact or kidnap a high priest. Friendly cities run by good or neutral clerics might have traditions and rules that force the PCs to alter their typical behaviors or watch their actions to avoid jail time or fines. A cleric character who is a member of the ruling faith has the opportunity to engage in politics and roleplaying within his religious hierarchy, enmeshing himself in the politics and internal struggles of his faith.

## PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT

When considering a government's structure, it may be useful to think of some of the important positions in government and who fills them. Aside from the ruler or ruling body, listed below are several key positions common to governments. Their titles may be different depending on the government's nature and the local culture, but their function is generally the same.

**Chief Magistrate:** In many cultures, the ruler may hear cases but in some places a tradition of full-time judges may arise. The chief magistrate hears the most important cases and is in charge of keeping the city's legal code.

**Minister of Defense:** A general or a civilian leader, this official allocates the town's military budget, oversees the army and navy's training and equipping, and organizes the construction of new fortifications.

**Minister of the Treasury:** This official is responsible for minting coins, collecting taxes, and allocating funds. He or his chief tax collector is likely reviled as the most hated and feared man in town.

## POLITICAL FACTIONS

While the government may hold power within a city, it is by no means the only organization or group that has influence on daily life. The thieves' guild controls smuggling while skimming profits from legitimate businesses through loans and extortion. The guild's bribes allow it to avoid any undue attention from the town guard, while it carefully applies threats and gifts to keep government out of its business. Even within the government, different factions strive for control. The House Culteri, with its near monopoly on shipping, generates so much tax revenue that the mayor is at its beck and call. Meanwhile, the teamsters' guild and House Galleri work together to topple the Culteris, funneling payments to buccaneers who raid ships and lavishing gifts and bribes on the mayor to win his ear. Every city, save for those ruled by the most brutal dictators, has a variety of groups that compete for power. This section addresses the different types of power groups that could exist in a city and how to create them for your campaign.

Political factions arise for a variety of reasons. Most of them arise from conflicts, with different groups in the city picking one side or another. Over time, as the same groups line up on the same sides time and again, factions begin to form. To create factions within your city, you need to complete two steps. First, you need to determine the power groups in the city. A

power group is any distinct business, family, guild, or other unit that can exert influence on the city with its economic, political, and social resources. If the mayor relies on the fishermen's guild to meet his tax quota, the guild can push for laws and privileges from the government. If the mayor fails to placate it, the guild can work to sabotage his revenue stream. Once you have a clear idea of who the players are in the city's politics, you need to determine their relationships. Some groups have bitter enemies and close allies, while most are neutral.

## POWER GROUPS

A family, guild, or other group can gain power through economics, social connections, or political influence. Many groups gain all three forms of power, usually because of their strength in one specific area. "Groups" is not always an accurate description for those with access to power. Sometimes, a single, ambitious individual can build a cult of personality that draws followers to him or is so skilled in business or politics that he becomes a force on his own. Finally, some groups are wildcards. They gain power in unexpected ways or exist outside the accepted social order. For example, a conspiracy of necromancers who want to raise an army of undead in the sewers and conquer the city is a wildcard. They want power, but they use means outside of the normal political structure to gain it.

### ECONOMICS

Economic power groups are the easiest to determine based on your city's history. Look at the event that spawned the city's creation and any events that led it into a boom or bust period. Guilds, merchants, and noble families with an interest in those businesses should logically rise to power. Below them would rank groups that deal in trades related to or dependent upon the few core economic areas in the city. Make a list of the core economic drivers in the city, businesses or industries that provide the most jobs, revenue, and other resources. As a rule of thumb, think of what would happen to the city if a particular trade dried up. If the city would slide into a bust period, then that business is one of the key engines that keeps the city running. For each of those core industries, list two or three related trades that rely on the core industry for their health. For example, a city that serves as an important way station for travel may rely on silk caravans

for much of its income. These caravans pay taxes to stay within the city, spend money in inns and taverns, and sell their wares in the markets. As a core economic engine, the silk industry also supports the hospitality industry (inns and taverns) and the mercenaries' guild (caravan guards).

For each core economic engine, create one or more groups that control and profit from it. Rank them in order of size and importance within that business. In addition, you can also note groups that control the secondary industries. Again, rank them in order of their importance within that industry. Most of these groups would be guilds, wealthy merchant houses, or powerful individuals who have built successful businesses. Sometimes, powerful individuals or merchant families gain power in multiple areas. Thus, you can use the same group in several categories, but keep in mind such groups would be quite powerful and wealthy to succeed in a wide range of industries.

Groups within an economic area typically compete with each other and form alliances with businesses related to their industry. Most trade activity is a zero-sum game. If two merchant houses want to sell weapons in a city, there are a finite number of customers with money to spend. Each sale one group makes denies a potential sale to their rivals. For this reason, most of the time the groups in a single market are direct competitors. The one exception to this is the relationship between a guild and its members. While individual businesses may compete, the guild serves to unify them. Most of their competitive impulses are resolved in drafting and approving guild policy. After all, the entire function of the guild is to leverage its members' numbers and economic power into a single, powerful force.

Power groups are normally neutral or hostile towards groups with power in unrelated areas. If an entire industry faces an outside threat, the groups that work within it may band together to survive or scramble to use it to destroy their rivals. Anything that can help the shipping industry may hurt merchants who rely on overland trade, causing the teamsters' guild to use its influence to work against the merchant princes who sponsor trade fleets. Sometimes, groups in unrelated economic arenas may have no reason to oppose each other, especially if they have no method to come into conflict.

In a dictatorship, the government may be completely immune to bribery, threats, and other forms of influence. In that case, the teamsters and the sea captains have no reason to quarrel. If a mayor rules the city, they could be at each other's throats as they jockey for lower tax rates and laws that help their respective industries. The more controlling and oppressive the government, the less likely that economic power groups have an effective means of influencing it.

Crime is a special category of economic influence that deserves its own commentary. Thieves' guilds and criminal cartels rarely hold direct influence. Instead, they rely on deception, intimidation, and other illegal methods to exert control. A complete discussion of the level of crime in a city and the level of influence held by the thieves' guild or cartels is presented later in this chapter in the law enforcement section.

## SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Social connections cover everything from friendships with those in power to personal favors and debts that allow a wily operator to influence the government's policies. If the mayor served as a general in the kingdom's military for much of his life, his old comrades in arms stand to gain positions of prominence in government as he appoints them as ministers and officials. Families that have been in the city since its foundation may not have a direct voice in economic matters, particularly if their fortunes are invested in a wide range of prospects, but tradition and respect give their voices strength. The key to plotting out the power groups that draw on social connections lies in a city's past. The descendants of any individuals who played a role in important events may still use that prestige to rally support to their causes. Most groups with social connections have at least some influence in economic matters or are wealthy enough to throw extravagant parties, fund important public works, or sponsor famous artists and actors.

As a rule of thumb, a person or group has political power if the government has a reason to listen to its advice or if the group's fame makes it useful in politics. Most social operators know many people in power and have the skills necessary to win support for causes. Talented orators, cunning political tacticians, and those famous for their skills or deeds are valuable

allies for politicians and others who desire power.

To determine who in a city has social influence, make a list of noted individuals, families with long histories in the city, and celebrities such as adventurers, artists, and wizards. These groups or individuals should have goals for using their power that may put them at odds or ally them with different economic and political factions. It is possible that a few of the people in these groups may have power, but they choose not to use it. For example, a powerful wizard may be too busy with his arcane research to bother with politics and social events. Of course, anyone who could manage to drag such a potent individual into the political mix could stand to gain a powerful ally. For the active groups, list them in order of their importance and note their political goals. You can then easily determine how these groups interact with power groups from other categories and each other.

### POLITICAL INFLUENCE

This category is generally limited to individuals, political parties, and other groups that have a direct role in government or want to carve out a political niche. These groups are distinguished from social and economic groups in that their only claim to power is their political stature. The mayor draws on the power of his office. As an individual, he may not be a great speaker, a famous writer, or the head of a trade group, but his office grants him tremendous power and makes him an important figure. Political influence translates almost directly into control of government. A minister's wife might be able to push him to make decisions, making her a more important ally than the minister himself. Think about the city's government and its structure. Then make a list of the important people in government, starting with the ruler or ruling group and working your way down. Do not worry about going too far down this list. Once you have mapped out the 10 most important people, you probably have more than enough on your list. Consider the people on the list and come up with a summary of people and factions for each of them that hold key advisory positions or who are close, trusted friends.

The figures on your list are not necessarily the city's most important politicians. Some of them may be, but others rule at the behest of other power groups or are for some reason beholden



to them. The officials below a dictator may be little more than sycophants who enforce his will. While they hold power in the city, they use it only in strict accordance with the tyrant's commands. A mayor could owe his appointment to the machinations of a noble family, forcing him to obey their directives and essentially serve as their retainer. When creating the list of political figures, some of them may be puppets who are controlled by the individuals and groups that hold influence over them. In that case, gaining an alliance with those secondary groups is the key to winning over the political figure they control.

## WILDCARDS

In addition to the standard methods of gaining power in society, some groups work outside of the established power structure to advance their cause. A group of clerics may use terrorist tactics to drive away infidels, while the dockworkers form a union and go on strike to gain fair wages. Neither group has power in the sense of economic, social, or political influence, but both can have a concrete effect on the city's development. Wildcards use methods to gain power that avoid the normal political methods of gaining and using influence. Generally, they manage to gain some sort of leverage over the city's political, economic, or social order. The union can go on strike, bringing an important economic engine to a screeching halt. Using violence and threats, a group can force others to obey its dictates. Many wildcards employ illegal methods or call upon broad-based support of commoners or others who do not normally enjoy any power. The individual union members have little impact on society, but they are a potent force when taken as a whole. Violence is the easiest method for gaining power, as it trumps the three forms of power described above. No matter how rich or connected you are, a dagger in the back hurts. No matter what their form, wildcards are usually controversial. Since they work outside of the established paths to power, the ruling order may see them as rogue threats that need to be dealt with on the harshest terms. Sometimes, though, these groups manage to gain power and apply it in a peaceful manner. In such a case, a new power group could suddenly emerge. If the union's strike succeeds, the commoners establish a useful tool they can use against the ruling class. With the precedent set, unions could rise to become an established part of the city's order.

Wildcards are a convenient place for cults, revolutionary groups, and others who have no real power in government but are willing to fight for it. For each group, outline its goals and the methods it wants to use. Focus on areas of society that the power groups you have already detailed ignore. If the commoners are oppressed and abused, they could form a rebellion. This could be economic (a union), political (protests), or social (a revolution). Evil cults work in secret to gain power, while a team of assassins could be a valued tool for those who think murder is a small price to pay for power. The city's history is also a good source of wildcards. Draw on old feuds, wars, and other conflicts to create them. The descendants of a noble family banished for trafficking with demons could return to exact their revenge on those who wronged their ancestors.

## FACTION HISTORIES

In addition to the history of the city as a whole, take some time to consider how specific, important factions, families, or even individuals have fared over the city's history. A group that has its origin near the time of the city's foundation could hold influence in many different industries, might have monuments built to its glory, and has fame because of the many notable heroes and leaders it has produced. On the other hand, a relatively new group might have little influence or could be reviled for its role in a disaster. Trace the background of each guild, family, or faction in light of the city's events. Alliances could rise and fall, spawning bitter rivalries that could evaporate in the face of an external threat. Generally speaking, problems or enemies that come from outside the city are a unifying force, while issues that arise due to internal factors splinter power groups. At times, the line between these two issues can blur. A dragon could move into the region, causing panic in the city at the prospect of an attack. The wyrm may settle into a long rest, causing an external issue to become an internal one as different factions argue for and against a preemptive strike. Generally, only immediate, obvious dangers can compel a wide variety of groups to form a unified front.

When fleshing out NPCs and factions in this manner, create a list of critical events in the city's history that focuses on those actions that you used to shape the town's current status. For each important faction or long-lived NPC, note

how they coped with the event and what effects it had on them. By tying your history into NPCs and groups, you can create long-running feuds and alliances that have a logical development behind them. In many ways this makes your job easier, since you can simply draw on the city's history to flesh out the background for the factions you create.

## PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

You have created your list of powerful groups and individuals, have a sense of their goals and any obvious conflicts that could erupt between them, and have ideas for wildcards that threaten to disrupt the social order. Now, you need to map out their relationships and decide on factions and alliances that could form.

Take your lists of power groups in all three areas and the wildcards. Look at their goals and see if any obvious alliances and rivalries form. To help keep track of them, draw a simple diagram that maps the different groups. Place allied groups next to each other on the map. Just write their names on a piece of paper, perhaps drawing boxes around each name to keep them separate and distinct. Next, you can mark alliances and rivalries with colored pencils or pens. Pencils are easier to use, since you can erase old notes and change them. Use red to indicate rivalries or hatred and green to mark alliances. Strong rivals or allies should be connected with solid lines, weaker ones with dotted lines. Neutral groups do not have lines between them. With this diagram, you can easily trace the different political connections and alliances within the city. If the characters anger the nobles of House Dermala, you can easily chart the political ramifications of their actions. The Dermala's allies in the armorers' guild may refuse to sell them equipment, while their enemies in House Tethra might approach the PCs with offers of work.

Once you have the relationships mapped out, you can set some political events into motion by adding a few key issues or actions to the city and plotting out how the power groups react. These issues can be anything from minor disputes over taxes to the first stirrings of a revolution. For each political issue, note the different alliances that would logically be involved in it and use that information to give the city a dynamic, living feel. For example, the dock workers' union wants to win better wages from

the powerful shipping family House Hethor. Hethor has the mayor and the silk merchants' guild on its side, giving it the political power to crack down on the union. If your relationship map shows that House Elthar and the teamsters' guild are Hethor's enemies, they may work with the union to help foil their rival's plans. By creating a few political issues in this manner, you can add a dynamic feel to the city by throwing some pressing news into the mix that drags the alliances and rivalries into play. The PCs might witness a union protest, see the town guard break up a strike, and receive offers of employment from both sides.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

The town guard patrols the city streets by night, watching for any suspicious activity. Soldiers man the walls, ready to repel any attackers. A council of wizards uses divination magics to seek out wrongdoers and bring them to justice. Government relies on the men and women it dedicates to law enforcement to keep the order and maintain peace in the city. Without a stable environment largely safe from thieves, merchants refuse to do business in a city. If thugs walk the streets and cause problems for the average person, commoners slowly move away from a city to seek safer havens. Law enforcement is key to maintaining a city's social and economic health. More importantly for adventurers, it can get in the way of an investigation or prove a useful ally in handling an emerging menace. This section addresses the role the town guard and other keepers of order play in a city. It also includes rules for reflecting the level of security in a town. If the guard is aggressive and alert, the characters may have a much harder time sneaking into a wizard's house to steal the evil artifact he keeps. Finally, it includes a discussion of crime, punishment, and the role of organized criminals in a city.

The town guard's training and vigilance ties into two factors: the government's commitment to internal security and the relative wealth of an area. The richest parts of town are heavily guarded, while the slums are left to their own devices. A dictator employs a large number of patrols to root out opposition, while a ruined city may devote its guards to

watching the walls and little else. You can define the town guard with several factors: their training, integrity, and vigilance.

## TRAINING

The best-trained guards are professional soldiers who are paid well for their efforts. At the lowest levels, the guards are no more than armed rabble given free reign to enforce the law. Given below are descriptions and stat blocks for five different levels of guard training, from rabble to elite. Note that the town guard does not employ monolithic training methods. In some parts of town, elite guards may watch over the streets, while the poorer sections have no more than two or three patrols of rabble keeping the peace.

**Rabble:** These guards receive little training. They may be militia pressed into duty during a time of war, or the city might see the areas they patrol as unworthy of the time and money necessary to properly train them. Rabble-quality guards are usually bullies with poor discipline and a strong streak of self-interest. They usually pocket fines they charge to lawbreakers and are easy to bribe.

**Rabble Guards, Male Human Com1:** CR 1/2; Medium-size Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 1d4+4; hp 6; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 padded armor); Atk +1 melee (1d6+1, club); AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Listen +3, Ride +4, Use Rope +4.

*Feats:* Armor Proficiency (light), Toughness.

*Equipment:* Club, padded armor.

**Poor:** A step up from rabble, these guards receive basic training in combat and are expected to at least make an effort to enforce the law. Normally deployed as auxiliaries to support superior quality guards at town gates and along the walls, they may also form the main guard force in the slums or high-traffic

areas where large numbers of guards, rather than high-quality ones, are necessary to keep the peace.

In a crowded town market during a yearly festival, poor quality guards can cover a wide area and call for help in the face of determined resistance.

### Poor Guards, Male Human War1:

CR 1/2; Medium-size Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 1d8+4; hp 8; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 13 (+3 studded leather armor); Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, long-spear) or +2 melee (1d6+1, club); AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Intimidate +4, Listen +4, Ride

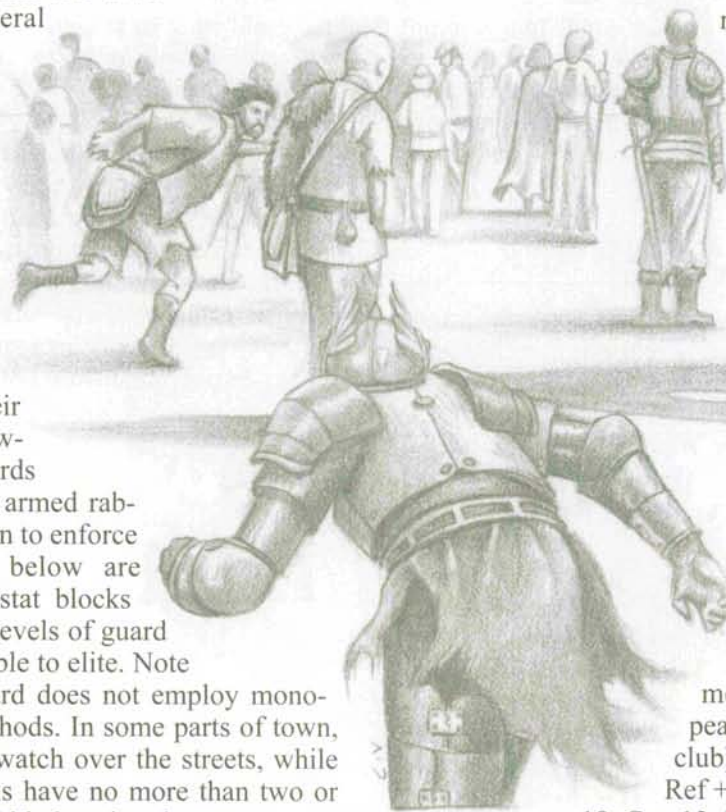
+4, Spot +2.

*Feats:* Alertness, Toughness.

*Equipment:* Longspear, club, studded leather armor.

**Average:** Forming the bulk of the city's full-time, professional army, these soldiers are responsible primarily for the defense and guarding of key areas in town. The main gates, docks, and marketplaces are patrolled by troops of this quality. Normally, these guards are stern and proof against minor bribes. The prestige of their job and their wages are enough that they prefer to remain honest in their dealings with criminals. Most of the time, a squad of average guards is supported by several squads of poor guards in an area. The poor-quality troops provide manpower, while the average ones are the primary enforcers. Guard units composed of these troops also patrol the richest, most prosperous parts of town.

**Average Guards, Male Human War1:** CR 1/2; Medium-size Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 1d8+4; hp 8; Init +0; Spd 20 ft; AC 16 (+4 scale armor, +2 large wooden shield); Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +1 ranged (1d8,





light crossbow); AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref. +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Intimidate +4, Listen +4, Ride +4, Spot +2.

*Feats:* Alertness, Toughness.

*Equipment:* Longsword, light crossbow, 10 bolts, scale armor, large wooden shield.

**Good:** The highest-quality troops in the main guard units, these soldiers are responsible for special assignments, guarding visiting dignitaries, patrolling the areas where the richest people in town live, and spearheading raids on criminal groups. These troops are deployed against specific objectives, such as a bid to catch a renowned thief or a boarding action against an unknown ship that drifts into the city's harbor. These soldiers rarely engage in daily patrols or the mundane tasks assigned to lesser quality troops. They are too expensive to equip and too well trained to waste their time with tasks that can be easily filled by other elements of the guard. Instead, they draw the most dangerous and sensitive assignments.

**Good Guards, Male Human War2:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +0; Spd 20 ft; AC: 17 (+5 chainmail armor, +2 large wooden shield); Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, silvered longsword) or +2 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Intimidate +5, Listen +4, Ride +4, Spot +3.

*Feats:* Alertness, Weapon Focus (longsword).

*Equipment:* Silvered longsword, light crossbow, 10 bolts, chainmail armor, large wooden shield.

**Elite:** The best of the best, these troops are organized into small teams that support the city's wizards, clerics, and other important personages. The ruler's personal guard consists of these soldiers, while other elite units are charged to help deal with rogue spellcasters, evil clerics, lycanthropes, undead, and other threats that lesser units cannot handle. In times of war, the elite units form the city's main strike force. They would draw the assignment to defend the town gate and would be deployed to stiffen poorly equipped or trained units. During the daily operation of the city, these guards only rarely play any role in patrols or law enforcement. Rather, they are used only to

meet specific objectives that other units are not suited to fulfill.

**Elite Guards, Male Human Ftr2:** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 2d10+2; hp 17; Init +0; Spd 20 ft; AC 16 (+6 banded armor); Atk +5 melee (1d10+3, silvered halberd) or +4 melee (1d6+2, light mace) or +2 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Intimidate +3, Listen +4, Ride +5, Spot +4.

*Feats:* Alertness, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (halberd).

*Equipment:* Silvered halberd, light mace, light crossbow, 10 bolts, banded armor.

## INTEGRITY

While training is enough to turn a soldier into a competent guardsman, sometimes a criminal only needs a few spare coins to escape danger. Integrity is a measure of a guard unit's susceptibility to bribery. The higher a unit's integrity, the more resistant it is to bribes and other favors. To successfully bribe a guard unit, you must make a Diplomacy check with a DC equal to the unit's integrity rating. Integrity is based on a unit's level of training and several factors determined by the political situation. A bribe must equal at least 1 sp per guard present. These rules should only be used against rank-and-file guard units. You should roleplay bribe negotiations between the characters and important NPCs and guard officers.

On a successful Diplomacy check to bribe a guard unit, the guards allow the crime to go unreported and make no effort to prevent the briber or his cohorts from escaping. On a failed check, the guards attempt to arrest the briber as normal. In addition, they report the bribery along with any other crimes if applicable. Note that a successful bribe only covers one crime. If the briber immediately commits an additional infraction, the guards may require a second bribe. Finally, common sense should override these rules. If the party attacks and kills half the men in a guard patrol, no amount of bribery can buy the survivors' silence.

## INTEGRITY

Unit Training	Base Integrity
Rabble	5
Poor	10
Average	15
Good	20
Elite	25

Factor	Integrity Modifier
Underpaid	-5
Overpaid	+5
Poor morale	-5
High morale	+5
Time of war	+5

**Diplomacy Check**

Bribery Factors	Modifiers
Per 10 gp goods/coins offered	+1
Briber is known criminal	-2
Briber engaged in harmless crime	+4
Briber engaged in violent crime	-10
Briber is a known, friendly figure	+2

## VIGILANCE

In the richest parts of town, a man who walks down the street in ragged clothes finds himself accosted, questioned, and taken into custody for vagrancy by a squad of heavily armored guards. Meanwhile in the slums, two thugs fight with clubs and knives in the middle of the street. A crowd gathers to bet on the victor. A few guardsmen in padded armor and carrying clubs show up, but they join with the crowd to make a few bets and cheer on their favorite brawler.

Training and integrity help make a guard force competent at their jobs, but the best guards are useless if they do not take their jobs seriously or are too spread out to react to most crimes. Vigilance rates the energy and enthusiasm with which the town guard pursues its task. In some cases, a single vigilance rating applies to all guard units across a city, but usually it varies by the guards' quality of training and integrity. Poorly trained guards would rather that their shifts go by without incident. They react only to obvious crimes or those that promise to present little trouble. Well-trained and alert guards actively seek out criminals, poking into dark alleys and sizing up people on the street for suspicious activity.

Vigilance is given a numerical rating much like integrity, with a higher number indicating that a guard unit is more active in its patrols and a low one marking a group as lazy, inept, or uncaring. When the characters commit a crime or a suspicious action in the city, there is a chance that a guard unit moves to investigate the situation or happens to pass by and notice that something odd is happening. Depending on the circumstances, the characters might have to make a Move Silently, Hide, or similar skill check with the area guards' vigilance rating as the DC. On a failure, the guards come to investigate the characters' actions or notice their presence.

The exact circumstances determine the skill check the characters must make. If the characters are making a lot of noise, they may have to make Move Silently checks to avoid detection. If they try to carry a large, stolen item through the streets, they may have to make a Hide check to avoid suspicion. When resolving group checks in this manner, the character with the worst total skill modifier makes a check. Everyone else in the party makes a skill check to aid the worst character's attempt, as per the rules for multiple characters working together on a task. On a successful check, the characters evade detection. On a failed one, a guard unit arrives in 2d4 rounds to investigate. The guards start 20 feet away per round they must travel in a random direction. They move 20 feet per round as they slowly move forward and scan the area for signs of the disturbance. If the PCs are wary they may spot the guards before they come close, allowing them to hide or cover up evidence of their actions. Otherwise, the guards react as appropriate to the situation.

If the characters commit a crime within plain sight of onlookers, have one player roll a d20 at the beginning of each round. If you beat the vigilance DC, the guards fail to show up that round. When the roll fails to beat the DC, the guards arrive in the area to deal with the crime or disturbance. For each round beyond the first, apply a -1 modifier to this roll. For example, on the first round this amounts to no penalty. The second round imposes a -1 penalty, the third -2, the fourth -3, and so on. If there are no people within site or earshot of the action, add a +10 circumstance bonus to the roll.

## VIGILANCE

Unit Training	Base Vigilance
Rabble	5
Poor	10
Average	15
Good	20
Elite	25

Factor	Vigilance Modifier
Underpaid	-5
Overpaid	+5
Poor morale	-5
High morale	+5
Time of war	+5
Heavily populated area	+2
Sparsely populated area	-2

Sample Action	Skill Check Against Vigilance DC
Move unobserved through an area	Hide
Watch an area without being detected	Hide
Mug a person	Move Silently
Cast a spell	Move Silently

## DESIGNING AND DEPLOYING GUARD UNITS

Determining how and why guard units are placed in a city ties into its layout and geography. You may want to skip ahead to the chapter on city construction before coming up with exact details of where units of different quality levels patrol. However, the guidelines here speak of general tendencies and typical situations. You do not need your city's map in order to consider them.

The most heavily guarded areas in town are the neighborhoods populated by rich families, areas of intense economic activity, and sections given over to official government buildings, monuments, and other civic uses. These areas are regularly patrolled by average guards. Poor-quality guards watch over most other sections of the city, with rabble confined to duty in the worst slums and relatively quiet areas during the daytime. Refer back to the different guard quality descriptions for more information on their typical deployment.

In addition to assigning different types of guards to sections of the city, consider how the



guards differ between night and day. By night, the docks may be patrolled by well-trained guards who look out for thieves and saboteurs. By day, lower-quality patrols seek to prevent brawls and support the tax collectors who assess tariffs on imported goods. In the slums, guards may only patrol during the day. By night, they clear the area.

Once you have the rank-and-file guards designed, you should note the integrity and vigilance ratings of typical guard units for the day and night shifts of different parts of town. With those notes handy, it is much easier to use those two attributes during a game. A simple table that lists neighborhoods and their guards' ratings is the easiest way to handle this bit of bookkeeping.

Finally, once the guards' basic structure is determined, you should consider the personalities and structure of their commanding officers. Is there a single commander who runs the entire guard, or is it broken down into separate regiments, each of which reports to the mayor independent of the rest? Are the officers active in politics, and if so what are their plans and goals? The military within the city could be an active, important power group that interacts with the factions you have already created. Perhaps the guard is notoriously corrupt, with merchants and guilds competing to bribe their way to superior protection. The thieves' guild may have a hand in guard politics, with their carefully shepherded, heavily bribed favorites moving to the top of the command hierarchy. The guild could be careful to never make its favored officers look bad, allowing them to quickly rise through the ranks. If the officers are ambitious or if they have vested interests in particular industries or businesses, they are likely to use their influence and resources to advance them.

## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The town guard is merely a tool to enforce the government's will. Without laws to support their actions, they are little more than semi-legitimate thugs. Once the guard has a criminal in custody, the perpetrator enters the city's judicial system. This system could be anything from a trial heard by a judge who renders a verdict to a test of endurance and will used to demonstrate the accused's strength of character that works under the assumption that a

person of pure heart could not possibly be guilty. This section addresses the different systems of criminal justice cities can use and offers a list of penalties to help you design the methods a city uses to punish criminals.

Before the government can levy a fine, it must first determine if the accused person is guilty of the charges brought against him. Usually, a city employs a system similar to the nation or realm to which it belongs. If the kingdom employs judges who hear cases and render verdicts based on their knowledge of law, then it stands to reason that the city uses the same method. If you already have a system of justice designed for the kingdom that includes the city, the king may require the city to participate in the existing system of justice. In some cases, this demand may not be politically expedient. If the city is a magocracy or theocracy, the king may have ceded authority in legal matters to the ruling spellcasters, especially if the rights and laws of the city differ significantly from the realm as a whole.

If you have not yet decided on a system of courts and judges, there are a few different, simple systems you can use. Typically, an appointed official serves as a judge who hears cases. Drawing on his knowledge of legal precedent, evidence, and testimony, he renders a judgment. Should a player character face charges, you can resolve these trials either through roleplaying, a Diplomacy check, or a combination of the two. Roleplaying simply requires you to act out the trial. For the Diplomacy check option, the table given here summarizes the skill check DC based on the evidence presented against the PC. Finally, if you combine the two, assign a modifier to the skill check based on the characters' actions. This modifier should range from +5 to -5 based on the player's handling of testimony and evidence.

The simplest way to roleplay a trial, and a method that should be familiar to the characters, is to draw on your knowledge of courts as depicted on television and in the movies. Lawyers for both sides call witnesses, present evidence, and cross-examine those placed on the stand. As an optional rule, you can allow a character to replace the Diplomacy check to escape punishment with a Profession (lawyer) check made by him or his lawyer. In this case, you could also have both sides' lawyers make

opposed Profession (lawyer) checks, with the winner convicting or acquitting the accused as appropriate. Make these checks in secret to help make the final announcement of the verdict more dramatic.

### TRIAL RESOLUTION TABLE

Quality of Evidence	DC
Negligible	5
Minor	10
Average	15
Daunting	20
Overwhelming	30

In place of a trial, cities may use a wide range of different options to resolve the guilt or innocence of an accused criminal. Listed below are a few different types of trials that may exist in a fantasy world.

**Trial by God:** Popular with theocracies, this method requires clerics or other divine spellcasters to use spells such as *speak with dead* or *scrying* to investigate a crime and determine who was responsible for it. High priests may serve as judges, with courts functioning under religious law.

**Trial by Magic:** In magocracies, the wizards and sorcerers may rely on arcane spells such as *contact other plane* and *detect thoughts* to assess evidence and solve crimes. Wizards specializing in divination magic may serve as judges or inspectors.

**Trial by Pain:** In some cultures, notably barbarian ones or those with recent barbaric pasts, the accused may be required to endure some sort of daunting task, such as grasping a red hot brand of iron. If the defendant survives this test, he demonstrates his strong character and proves that he could not have committed the crime. As a rule of thumb, to endure one of these tests without crying out in pain or fainting, sure signs of moral weakness, the accused must make a Fortitude or Will save (player's choice) with a DC equal to the Diplomacy check DC normally needed to escape punishment. The test deals 1d6 points of damage per character level.

**Trial by Quest:** In some realms, judges may use spells such as *geas* to compel service from the accused. The defendant receives a task appropriate to his skills and experience. If he succeeds in this task, he proves his character

and escapes punishment. The accused could die in the process of pursuing his goal, or he could face punishment if he returns without completing his task.

### PUNISHMENT

Once you have determined a character's guilt or innocence, you may need to decide on a fine or punishment appropriate to the crime. You can group all crimes into five basic categories detailed below. Depending on the city's government and its social leanings, different crimes could be slotted into different categories. For example, in a dictatorship, speaking out against the government is a major crime, while in a republic such actions are an accepted part of public life.

**Simple:** These crimes result in little harm to others. Instead, they may cause inconvenience. These infractions are generally used to raise money for the government via fines. Examples include blocking city streets with a cart or wagon, public drunkenness, littering, and disrespecting a public monument. Simple crimes carry fines between 10 cp and 1 gp.

**Minor:** Minor crimes present little physical threat to other people but do cause material damage. Examples include destruction of public property, petty theft (items up to 100 gp), and vandalism. The fines for these crimes either equal the gp value of the goods stolen or destroyed, or range from 5 sp to 10 gp. Tax evasion falls under this category, with a fine levied equal to twice the tax's value.

**Average:** These crimes represent everyday events of violence and minor threats to the city's security. Examples include unarmed assault, robbery, and similar crimes that involve non-lethal violence. Fines range from 20 to 100 gp, and punishments could include branding or a term of forced labor lasting from six months to two years. The penalty for theft is double the goods' value.

**Severe:** Any crime that involves serious physical assaults, such as murder, attempted murder, rape, and similar acts, falls into this category. Punishments range from a fine of 250 to 1,000 gp to execution. In some cities, the criminal may be sold into slavery.

**Capital:** These crimes threaten the health and welfare of the city or the govern-

ment as a whole. Treason, arson (a deadly threat in cities crafted from wood), assassination attempts on important officials, and similar acts fall into this category. The punishment for these crimes is invariably a death sentence. Note that if a character is unable to pay a fine, he may be sold into slavery to pay his debt or forced into servitude until he has earned enough to pay it off. Adventurers could be forced to undergo dangerous quests on behalf of the city to cover an imposed fine.

The nature and alignment of a government plays a role in how it assesses the severity of a crime. In a theocracy, violating church edicts on daily living, such as missing daily prayers or consuming forbidden food and drink, may be treated as an average crime. A dictator may execute anyone who criticizes his regime, while in a city dominated by trade, counterfeiting may be a severe crime.

Each city has a severity rating that determines how it punishes its citizens. The rating is expressed as a modifier, such as +1 or -2. When determining the penalty for a crime, place it within the categories given above. Then apply the severity rating by increasing the crime's level of punishment if the rating is positive or decreasing it if it is negative. Shift the crime by a number of categories equal to the modifier. You can apply severity rankings to different types of crime. For example, in a city dominated by merchants and trade all thefts may have a severity rating of +1. This means that a robbery that would normally fall into the minor category counts as an average crime in this city. A thief must pay double the value of the goods he steals as a fine. On the other hand, a city dominated by a thieves' guild may have a -1 severity modifier for all robberies. Petty theft counts as simple crime

with a fine of no more than 1 gp regardless of the stolen goods' value.

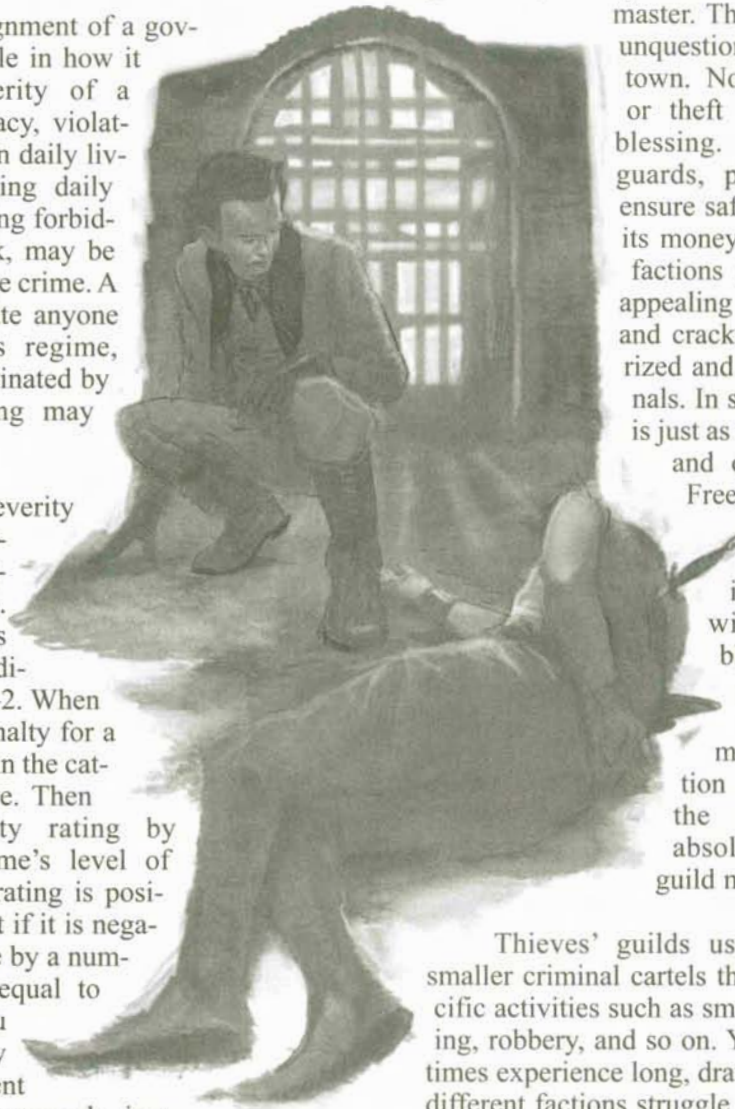
## ORGANIZED CRIME

Standing on the opposite side of the law from the town guard, the thieves' guild and similar criminal cartels work to transform illegal operations into profitable, stable industries. A thieves' guild organizes the actions of a wide number of rogues under the direction of a single leader, usually called a master thief or guild

master. The master thief is the unquestioned king of crime in town. No robbery, mugging, or theft occurs without his blessing. The guild bribes guards, plans operations to ensure safety and profits, uses its money to support political factions that offer the most appealing legal environment, and cracks down on unauthorized and overly brutal criminals. In some ways, the guild is just as much a force for law

and order as the guard. Freelance thieves usually face a stiff penalty for practicing their art in town without the guild's blessing. In return for the guild's protection and resources, members pay a portion of their treasures to the guild and swear absolute loyalty to the guild master.

Thieves' guilds usually grow out of smaller criminal cartels that specialize in specific activities such as smuggling, counterfeiting, robbery, and so on. Younger cities sometimes experience long, drawn-out gang wars as different factions struggle for control. You can use the steps outlined for creating power groups in a city to create a similar composite of gangs and crime bosses that operate in town. Any illegal or restricted business is most likely managed by a gang or thieves' guild, from prostitution to smuggling. Create a list of the most common illegal activities in town and link them to different power groups that want to control them, filling in rivalries and alliances as described above.



All too often, the criminal underworld crosses paths with those who work within legitimate circles. Ambitious or evil power groups may be all too willing to work with criminals, while good or neutral ones may be compelled by threats or bribes to take up a guild's concerns as their own. Using your notes and lists of power groups, go through and mark down those that are influenced or controlled by criminal groups. Generally speaking, gangs seek to exploit any group that can offer them economic or legal resources. The town guard is the perfect target for subversion, since the guild can use bribes and threats to keep guards clear of its safe houses and arrange for patrols to conveniently forget to stand watch over the targets of robberies and other crimes.

## ECONOMICS

The backbone of many cities is commerce, from the merchants who bring their goods to a town's markets to the ores, crops, and other resources that the city produces and exports across the world. Money is the engine that drives a city's growth. As long as the market can bear more businesses and new investment, people and wealth flow toward a city. As soon as opportunities dry up and profits turn into losses, those same businessmen and immigrants pull up their stakes and seek out more hospitable business climates.

The economic geography of the city has a major effect on its social, political, and historical development. If you have read this chapter's sections in sequential order and followed the steps as presented, you should already have a good idea of the goods and services that drive business in town. This section addresses how prices can rise and fall in a town and the types of goods that are critical to a city's health. In times of extreme shortages of key products such as food, the city's population dwindles and its fortunes suffer even if the rest of its economy is strong.

A city's imports and exports are defined by the nature of the economic activity that takes place within it. Look back at your notes and recall the important industries that drive economic power in town. All those industries should represent exports, imports, or services. An export is any trade good that the city produces and ships elsewhere for sale. Imports are goods that are

transported from elsewhere and sold to the city's inhabitants. Services include any actions or activities that offer value through their presence in the city. For example, a market is a valuable resource if it brings together buyers and sellers who would not otherwise be able to meet. Inns and taverns are also good examples of services.

Make a list of the items the city imports. Since these goods are not available locally, they tend to cost more than normal and are harder to find during months of bad weather and other periods of restricted travel. List the city's exported goods. These items are always relatively cheap and easy to find. Since the city produces enough to sell to other markets, they are always abundant save during emergencies, such as an invasion or natural disaster.

To reflect the varying levels of scarcity and abundance, you can assign levels of availability to different goods. Perhaps a war breaks out to the north, causing the price of weapons and armor to spike as the kingdom buys up the available supply. A band of adventurers comes into town with a backpack full of diamonds, causing the prices merchants pay for them to plummet due to the oversupply. You can apply these levels of availability to specific items, general types of goods, or even the entire economy to represent economic changes and developments in the campaign. A town located at the edge of civilization may use the scarce rating as the base price for all goods sold within it, with additional modifiers attached to that rating based on daily changes in the market. Apply the multiplier listed under an availability level to all goods available to model the general tendencies in a city. If a specific good's availability changes later on, you can then apply the rating of your choice to its modified price. For example, in the isolated town of Baerdred, all finished items count as scarce. A weapon that normally costs 10 gp sells for 15 gp there. A caravan of weapons and armor heading to Baerdred is ambushed and robbed, causing weapons to move from average availability to scarce in town until the next shipment arrives. Scarce items cost 1.5 times their standard price. Since a 10 gp normally sells for 15 gp in Baerdred, that multiplier applies to the 15 gp price. This modifier yields a final price of 22.5 gp for a weapon that costs 10 gp in the typical city.

As a rule of thumb, exported goods should have abundant or glut as their availability. For imports, use average if the city is located on one or more major trade routes. Otherwise use the scarce rating, with rare applying during periods when travel to and from the city is difficult.

**Rare:** An item with this rating is hard to find. Fruits and vegetables that are long out of season fall into this category, as do obscure or strange items. Goods in this category require 1d4 days of searching to find and they cost twice the standard amount to purchase.

**Scarce:** No more than a quarter of the merchants in town carry this item, usually due to an interruption in its production or a buying frenzy that causes the existing supply to dwindle. For example, if rumors spread that an evil cult plans to poison the city's wells, antitoxin could become scarce within a day or two. These items can be found as normal, but they cost 1.5 times their listed value.

**Average:** The item is available from the typical merchants and traders. Sales are steady, with demand and supply matching pace. Use standard prices for these goods.

**Abundant:** Usually applied to goods or items produced in the city and exported for sale elsewhere, this category of trade good is available for sale everywhere. Merchants typically come to the city to buy it in bulk to sell elsewhere. This item is worth three-quarters its listed value.

**Glut:** Due to an economic slowdown or poor planning, this item has been overproduced. Merchants cannot find enough buyers for it, causing them to slash their prices. Items in this category cost half their listed price. This modifier can also apply to an export produced in massive amounts to meet external demand.

Altering items' prices is a good way to reflect changes in the campaign world, a city's relative isolation, and the scarcity of key goods in a practical, material way that directly affects the characters. You can use these ratings to modify the price of food and drink at a city's inns during a time of war. If the characters uncover a massive cache of gold ingots, they would be wise to sell them slowly over the course of a few months to avoid flooding the market.

# RELIGION

In a fantasy world, religion plays a major role in daily life. After all, the gods are unquestionably real beings who directly use their clerics to enforce their will upon the world. As social gathering places and centers of political power, cities are a natural spot for religions to gather. This section discusses how religions fit into a city, their legal status, and their place in the political terrain.

The first step to placing religion in your city is to list the cults that publicly operate there. There are a few things to consider for these groups. Do they own and operate a temple in town? Are they welcomed and liked by the populace or hated and feared? What are their goals? Next, consider the religions that operate in secret. These groups could revere gods that oppose the government's plans or are hated and feared by the populace. These cults are underground organizations that rely on stealth and secrecy to survive. They may want to do nothing more than to worship their chosen gods in peace or they could plot to unleash a terrible evil upon the world.

## THE ROLE OF RELIGION

Before detailing the various religions active in the city, consider how the government, history, and traditions of the local culture regard them. Does a single religion dominate the region? Are the commoners eager to embrace a wide range of gods? Are there different sects that are hated and driven out of towns when they are discovered? Draw on the background of your campaign world to answer these questions. To help you think about this issue and inspire you, here are a few different situations that can arise in a city.

**Apathy:** The commoners and government care little for religion. The clerics of a specific god are just another power group, except that they have access to divine magic and a mandate from the gods. Temples are treated just like any other power group, such as a guild or merchant company. Some commoners are drawn to religion, but it is seen as a private choice that has little bearing on a person's character.



**Atheism:** The city cares nothing for religion. Those who ardently pursue a faith are scorned and ridiculed. The few temples that operate are either treated like any other business or are aggressively controlled and restrained. Divine magic is regulated and restricted. Perhaps in the past a religious uprising caused chaos in the area or the city is ruled by arcane spellcasters.

**Competition:** The city is a boiling pot of religious politics, recruitment, and evangelism. Different faiths aggressively seek to expand their power, and many of the current important issues in town run between different spiritual groups. Tension between the worshippers of different gods may spill over into brawls, oppression, and other social friction. Sects compete to erect the most impressive temples in town to win prestige and fame.

**Opportunism:** The commoners move from one religion to the next, praying to a god of the seas before an ocean voyage and attending services at the goddess of love's chapel when they seek to win someone's heart. A large number of temples exist in town, and many of them spend time, money, and energy to attract worshippers. These sects are active in politics and are an established part of the city's political landscape.

**Supremacy:** A single religion dominates the city. Other sects feature no more than small chapels and tiny flocks of worshippers. The dominant religion may play a major role in government, either directly through a theocratic rule or via influence it can exert on its worshippers among the ruling body. Clerics of foreign religions may face controls on their use of magic and actions that could be considered evangelism.

## DESCRIBING RELIGION

This section uses three descriptors to summarize the religions that are active in a city. A cult's level of secrecy determines whether or not it openly practices its faith in town. The higher a sect's secrecy, the more difficult it is to find. The quarters rating covers the religion's house of worship, from a soaring cathedral to a smoky room tucked away at the back of a tavern. The activity rating gauges how much time and energy the temple devotes to politics, recruitment, and evangelism. Some cults prefer to mind their own business, while others



actively take a role in the city and constantly seek to expand their numbers.

### Activity

Not all religions approach a particular city in the same way. A small town might be the birthplace of an important saint in the god of war's sect, driving them to maintain a temple there that draws worshippers during important holy days. The church of the god of archery might offer no more than two or three clerics and a simple, portable altar that can be set up beside a road. Eager to win converts among the non-believers, this church simply seeks to bring its message to the war god's faithful to win them over to the sect. In this case, both sects are active in the area, but one is much more active than the other is. Furthermore, they both adopt radically different plans to guide their actions. The war god's sect sees the town as an important stronghold, while the archery cult is on a recruitment mission. These goals cause them to behave much differently.

To help flesh out a religion's presence in a city, you can use the activity keywords to inspire you or describe them. More than one keyword can apply to a single cult, as they cover a variety of different missions and plans a religion may use in a city.

**Administrative:** The church maintains a presence in the city primarily to attend to its own needs, communication, and the maintenance of its regional structure. It may sponsor and aid caravans, provide healing and shelter to its clerics and allies, and gather information on the local activities of other cults and the government. Sects with this action as their only business tend to keep a low profile, attending to the spiritual needs of the local faithful and perhaps taking a minor role in politics, but they are generally too absorbed in their own affairs to become major players in the city.

**Destruction:** A popular goal for evil, hidden cults, this keyword indicates that the sect wants to use violence, subterfuge, and other methods to overthrow the government and destroy the city. The cult's leadership has no desire to rule or gain power. Rather, they see the city as a threat to their aims and treat it as an opponent whose strength must be drained away before it can be killed. These groups use terrorist actions, kidnappings, mass poisonings, legions of undead, and other threats to top-

ple the city. A cult with this goal is either hidden or it uses some other activity to conceal its true aims.

**Evangelism:** The cult is in town to find and recruit new worshippers, usually resorting to preaching in the streets, holding festivals, offering free food and drink, and other tactics to lure commoners into its flock. Some churches have purely selfish or well-meaning motives behind this plan. They simply want to expand their god's worshippers and welcome more folk into the fold. Others have more sinister purposes, as they hope to gather enough popular support before revealing their true natures and putting into motion their plans of conquest and domination. Evil cults are known to use front organizations to raise funds for their efforts and find innocent dupes that can become servants after sufficient amounts of brainwashing. Evangelism can cause conflicts within a city if several churches pursue it at once or an upstart sect starts to draw away worshippers from established religions.

**Political:** The cult's presence is driven by politics. Perhaps the church owns an interest in the trade that flows through town, and its hierarchy wants to ensure that a regime friendly to its needs is in power. If the church is popular among the commoners and nobles, it uses this weight of numbers to gain political power or uses direct appeals to the faith in order to gain support among politicians. If the mayor of a town is a faithful adherent of a particular god, he may be more willing to take into account the clerics' advice and demands. In extreme cases, he may face banishment from the faith if he goes too directly against the gods' desires.

**Recruitment:** Similar to evangelism but more focused, this activity involves finding and gaining the friendship of powerful or talented individuals who could prove useful to the sect. A cult may try to win the support of a few key politicians, while another might seek out assassins and rogues it can use in its clandestine activities. Recruitment is usually connected to practical rather than religious affairs. The group cares more about forging useful bonds with particular individuals rather than spreading the faith. For this reason, recruitment is usually a low key, quiet affair that focuses on specific individuals or groups.

**Spiritual:** The religion maintains a presence in town for purely spiritual or symbolic reasons. A miracle or event connected to the cult may have taken place there, or the group may keep a small monastery or library dedicated to the study of its faith. The temple might not even offer public space for prayer and worship, as the scholars and priests within it are engaged in research and philosophical work that has little interest or use to the average person.

**Subversion:** This category includes all attempts to seize control or power in the city, usually through illicit or deceptive means. The cult may try to use magic or a curse to gain control of key figures, while others might be bought off with bribes or threats. These cults want to gain political power, but they scorn legitimate means of gaining it. They could be an evil cult with foul plans in mind or might simply be a revolutionary council of a good deity that wants to overthrow an evil tyrant. In any case, cults with this goal are the enemies of the existing social and political order.

## RELIGIOUS SITES

Most religions erect temples to honor their gods and to inspire respect and awe in their members and outsiders. None can argue that a group capable of erecting a massive, intricately designed, and expensive temple is weak, ineffective, or powerless. Since cities are important cultural centers, a large, impressive temple is perhaps the best way to spread the word of a sect's strength and prosperity. The larger a sect's temple, the greater the chance that high-ranking and important priests will dwell in the city. To make it easier to summarize the various temples in a city, you can use the following scale of five generic temple classifications. They are ranked from smallest to largest.

**Altar:** Some places of worship consist of nothing more than a small, sacred idol equipped with the most basic tools and icons necessary for worship. An altar can be erected in a private home, placed within a hidden room deep in the sewers or within a safe house the cult uses, or even kept in a small box and moved from place to place depending on the cult's current plans. In any case, a cult that has nothing more than an altar in town is new on the scene, highly secretive, or too poor to afford anything more. In some cases, a cult may have an altar in a small temple it shares with several other small groups, each with an altar set up in a different

room or alcove. An active religion with only an altar may set it up on a street corner or in a town square to draw new converts to its cause. Most highly secretive cults prefer a mobile altar, as it allows them to stay one step ahead of the law or avoid snoopy investigators.

**Shrine:** A shrine consists of a permanent altar, usually erected in a small building or series of rooms dedicated solely to the worship of a deity. Shrines are most common among poor congregations or those that seek to maintain a foothold in a city without expending too much time and energy to maintain a temple. The shrine is usually maintained by a cleric of 3rd or 4th level, though in the case of a large or important city, a higher level cleric may be assigned to it. The high priest is aided by two 1st-level clerics.

**Church:** The typical place of worship for the average religion in a city, the church is a single structure given over to a particular god. It holds an altar, living quarters for the clerics, and a large, central area that can hold up to 200 worshippers at a time. The church acts as a community center and rallying point for the faith, and is usually erected if the city's population of the faithful is large enough to fill the central worship chamber for weekly services. A church is usually maintained by a cleric of 5th or 6th level, who is assisted by two 3rd-level clerics and five 1st-level clerics.

**Temple:** A temple is a large, stone or wooden structure built not only to serve as a place of worship but also as a monument to the deity and the faith. It might feature gardens, elaborate statues and sculptures, frescoes, paintings, and other art objects. These affectations serve to exalt the deity and demonstrate the talent, wealth, and faith of the temple's followers. The key difference between a church and a temple lies in this structure's role as a monument. A church is a practical place of worship. A temple is a work of art and praise dedicated to a god. Usually, only the few most powerful religions in town can afford to erect temples. They are usually run by a 10th-level cleric, with assistance from two 6th-level clerics, four 3rd-level clerics, and eight 1st-level acolytes.

**Cathedral:** The centerpiece of the faith's prestige and power, most religions erect no more than one, perhaps two, cathedrals in a particular kingdom or region. While a tem-

ple is an expertly crafted statement of a god's might and his followers' dedication, it generally only speaks to the faithful. The temple may be impressive, but it usually does not stand out when measured against other houses of worship or important monuments in the city. In contrast, the cathedral is among the most beautiful, famous, and noteworthy structures in the region. The faithful stream to the cathedral to bask in its glory, with large numbers of pilgrims streaming into the city during religious festivals and holy days. This place stands as an important landmark in the city, and the town as a whole is probably known as a stronghold or important place in the religion's hierarchy. The high priest of a cathedral is at least 15th level, and he has dozens of cleric subordinates beneath him.

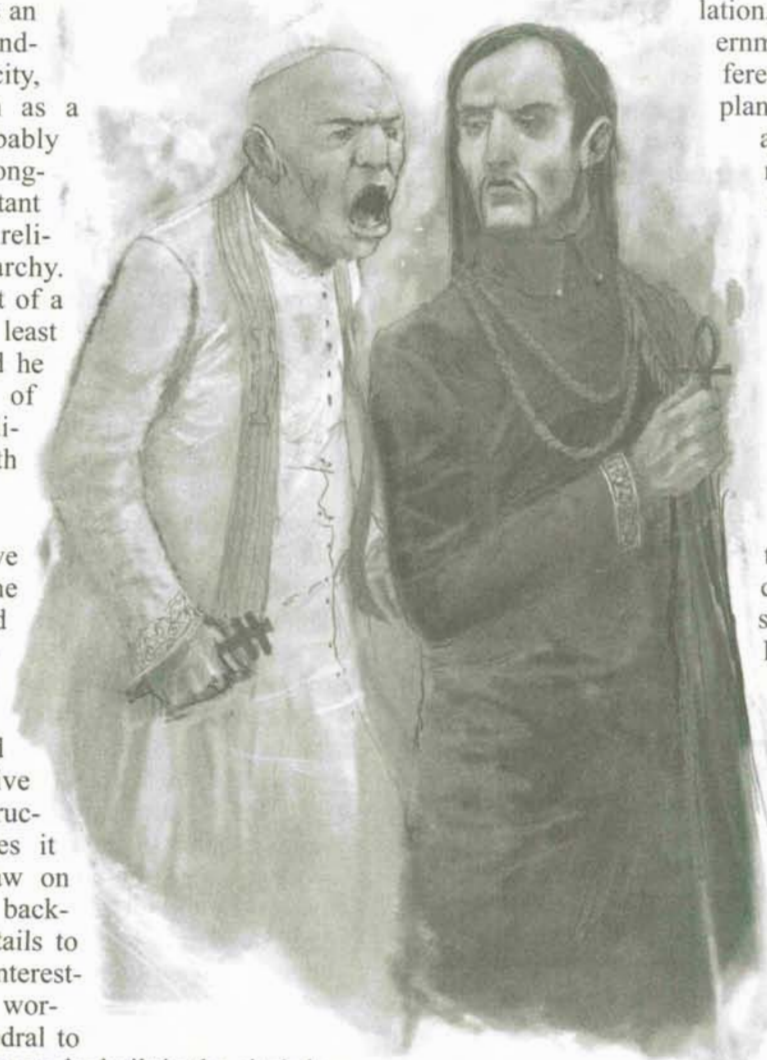
Once you have determined the general size and type of a religion's stronghold, you may want to add some descriptive detail to the structure that makes it stand out. Draw on the religion's background and details to create unique, interesting places of worship. The cathedral to a god of the sea may be built in the city's harbor, with several of its levels lying beneath the water line. The clerics of a god of nature may build a temple that is actually a large garden with a few small structures. These clerics commune with their god in a natural setting, leading them to plant trees, grass, and flowers as their temple.

## SECRECY

This attribute measures a cult's visibility. Some churches are content to remain in the background, pursuing their esoteric goals with as little interference as possible from the outside world. Others are active players in the city, recruiting new worshippers and using their followers to claim political power. A few cults operate in absolute secrecy. Perhaps they worship dark gods and seek to harvest human sacrifices in the city's vast population,

or they may see governmental or social interference as counter to their plans and goals. Secrecy is a numerical rating that measures how difficult it is to find information about the cult or locate it. The religion's secrecy rating is the Gather Information DC necessary to learn any information about it. The secrecy table summarizes what different ranges of this value mean in concrete terms. On a successful Gather Information check, you can learn the sect's alignment, its most recent activities, and a brief description of its leaders. You can add more information to the result depending on the sect's place in your campaign.

In the case of sects that use a front organization to hide their true motives, you can use two secrecy ratings. One applies to its public front, while the second is used for the operations it attempts to keep hidden.



## SECRECY RATINGS

1-5

The church operates in the open. Everyone in town has heard of it and knows the basics of its goals and operation. The faith could also be extremely popular with the commoners, making its signs and symbols widespread in town. After spending a day in the city, a person would see the church in action or overhear one or more conversations that mention it.

6-10

The church openly pursues its goals, but its methods usually keep it out of the public eye. The church is popular, but other faiths overshadow it or its followers are not given to public displays of their allegiance. After spending a day in the city, the average person would probably see one or more symbols or signs of the church's presence but might not learn anything of its goals or actions.

11-15

The church has few followers, pursues a quiet agenda, or makes some effort to keep a low profile. If asked, most people know that it has a presence in the city, but few people would mention it if asked to list the faiths operating in town. After spending a day in the city, the average person might notice its presence, but he could overlook it.

16-20

The church is small, inactive, or purposely tries to stay out of the public eye. The average person may have heard of it, but he knows little if anything about its actions and goals. Unless someone specifically asked about it, he would not find any news of it while wandering around town.

21-25

The church makes an active effort to remain out of sight or is completely inactive in local affairs. The average person has never heard of it. The people who live near it might suspect that the building houses a temple, but little evidence exists other than the coming and going of clerics who live there. The average person could not find out anything about this temple unless he was skilled in tracking down information.

26-30

The church keeps its presence a secret. Its members do not discuss their connections to the cult, and the location of its main place of worship is either hidden or it moves from place to place on a regular basis. Agents in the government probably know about this cult, though they may be ignorant of its goals, plans, and extent of its membership and influence.

31+

The church operates in absolute secrecy. Its members keep their allegiance a closely held secret and make an effort to dispel any suspicions of their connections to it. Agents at the highest level of government may know about the sect, but chances are its presence has not yet been discovered. Uncovering information about this group requires an observer either to get lucky and find a member to observe or to carefully collate information and observations about its indirect actions.

## RELIGIONS AND POWER

You can treat religious groups just like any other competing power group. In addition to the advice and ideas given for fleshing out groups, remember to draw upon the relationships between different gods and sects within your campaign world. Rivalries, alliances, and hatreds between religions should overcome temporal concerns in most situations. Otherwise, you can include the city's various temples in politics, economics, and other areas just like any other group.

## CHAPTER THREE

CITY  
CONSTRUCTION

This chapter provides the DM with everything he needs to build a fantasy city from the bricks up. Game rules and statistics in this chapter are designated **Open Game Content**. This chapter includes the following sections:

**City Precincts** covers how individual areas in a city evolve over time. Most DMs assume that one part of town serves as home to the rich and powerful, while the slums are packed with the poor, desperate, and downtrodden, but these and other distinct areas in a city develop for concrete reasons. This section describes methods to break a city down into different areas and what those places may look like.

**Maps** presents a system for designing and using city maps. Once you have determined what the characters can find in a city, you need to organize everything and place it in your metropolis. This section also includes a simple, abstract system for creating a quick and easy city diagram you can use for cities that do not require much detail or when you need to create a metropolis fast.

## CITY PRECINCTS

Within a city, different areas are given over to specific uses. The streets by the docks are crowded with workers, sailors, and heavily laden carts bringing goods to and from ships. Vast warehouses store trade goods before they are transported to markets in town and across the world. Meanwhile, the center of town is given over to a massive citadel where the mayor has his personal chambers, audience hall, and administrative offices. The neighborhood outside the castle is inhabited by the richest families in town, while heavily armed and alert guard patrols walk the streets. In contrast, the neighborhoods just outside the town wall are choked with rundown, battered tenements. The poorest workers and laborers live there with their families, while groups of thugs from the thieves' guild are more common sights than soldiers or guards from within town.

Cities develop distinct sections that are built around different industries, levels of wealth, and other factors. As a part of the city grows to host specific sorts of activity, the businesses that grow there develop from that specialization. In time, the city develops a variety of dis-

tricts and quarters that all have a unique character. This section discusses how and why cities develop in this manner and gives you a list of different quarters that could develop in a city. You can use these examples to guide the growth and design of your cities.

The first thing to consider in developing quarters and other unique districts in a city are the important industries, political powers, and other key aspects of the city's character. A town known for its many temples and vibrant religious life should have a section dedicated exclusively to temples and other houses of worship. In contrast, a city where religion is looked down on might have its few chapels tucked within neighborhoods. Since religion holds little importance, chances are the city does not develop a temple district. Think about the two or three most important businesses or parts of town and consider how they could develop into distinct portions of the city.

Districts grow and acquire a distinct character when a critical mass of related businesses or people from the same social class settles in a section of town. While the businesses that develop their own quarters in a city may change from place to place, invariably the various social classes sequester themselves into their own parts of town. The richest folk require security for their property, making them unlikely to be happy with transients and drifters wandering down their streets. The social lure of prestige by association drives the richest folk to live close to each other. It is a sign of status and prosperity for a merchant or noble to build his home near others who are recognized as the social elite. If your neighbors are rich, by association you too are wealthy and prosperous. The same social magnetism drives the middle-class traders and merchants to dwell near each other. In the case of society's lowest classes, they are often forced to dwell in the least desirable areas of town.

With these thoughts in mind, consider the districts that exist in your city. Listed below are a variety of different urban quarters, some drawn from social classes and others based on unique industries. Each description includes tips and ideas for where a quarter may arise within a city. Note that not every city has every one of these areas. Pick and choose those that fit with your city's character and create your own.

## COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

These districts are formed around a specific industry or function.

### DOCKS

A mainstay of any city that is built on an ocean, river, or lake, the docks are an important part of fishing, shipping, and travel industries. Necessity determines their position, as obviously you need access to water to build docks. Normally, the neighborhoods around them are dominated by shipbuilding, warehousing, and other industries related to the ships, docks, and the trades they support. The town's markets are usually set close to the docks. Any residential areas in this district are inhabited by the lower class, as the noises, smells, and heavy traffic make them less desirable to the rich.

### ENTERTAINMENT

This district includes theaters, concert halls, art galleries, and similar diversions. Restaurants and upscale inns and taverns are also common, drawing on the customers who visit the attractions. Normally, the entertainment offered is expensive and aimed at the middle and upper classes. Venues aimed at the lower class are usually embedded within their neighborhoods, as the poor cannot typically afford to travel far from home on a regular basis. Temples dedicated to the gods of the arts and performance might also be located in an entertainment district.

### GOVERNMENT

To facilitate communication between different ministries and offices, most governments cluster their administrative offices around a central location in town. It is much easier for the tax collector to consult with the king's ministers if they keep their offices close by. Some important exceptions to this rule include defense and security forces, which are usually given guard posts throughout the city. The city's ruler or ruling council should have some sort of central building, usually one richly appointed and constructed with an eye towards impressing visiting dignitaries. Most governments erect monuments to great victories, famous rulers, and other events in their histories in these areas, to impress their greatness upon visitors and citizens and to draw a connection between past achievements and the cur-

rent regime. If the government is old enough or has a rich history, the structures that house it can become monuments themselves and symbols of the government.

## INDUSTRIAL

These areas are given over to the production of finished goods, from weapons and armor to leather products and wagons. Usually, industrial areas are set away from residential ones or sections of the city used for entertainment. Slaughterhouses and tanneries are notorious for the terrible odors they give off, forcing only the poorest and most desperate citizens to live near them. Industrial areas usually have easy access to ports and other major routes out of town to facilitate the flow of raw materials into the industrial area and finished goods out of it.

## MARKETS

An important cog in most cities' economic machine, the market allows for the flow of goods into and out of the city and helps draw merchants and other businessmen to town. Markets are usually located near gates in the city walls, major roads, or the docks. They tend to draw a lot of traffic, both from out of town as merchants with wagon loads of goods come into town and from in town as commoners and merchants go to the market to shop. The city provides tight security for markets, as too much crime or violence can drive business elsewhere, and merchants find living close to their place of business convenient.

## MILITARY

A city is often the prime target for raiders or an invading army, so its military infrastructure is critical to its health. Furthermore,

internal security plays a critical role in turning a town into an attractive market for traders and other businessmen. Usually, the military maintains a presence at key defensive points. Gates at the town walls and the harbor are the two most likely defense points, and most cities construct fortifications manned by soldiers at those areas. Within the town, the military probably maintains a strong presence near the government's primary locations to defend them in case of attack and to make managing it easier for the ruling body.

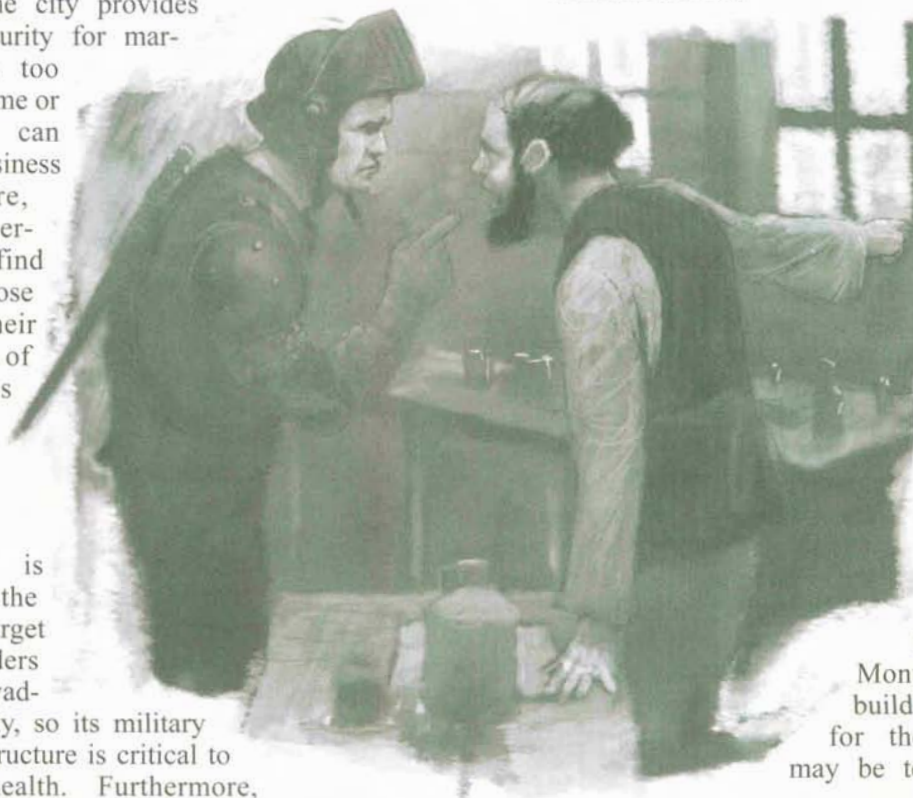
## PUBLIC PARKS

The concept of the city park as a common meeting ground and recreation area is a relatively modern concept but one that might work within the context of a fantasy game. A public park is set aside for grassy fields, gardens, and trees. A druid may tend to this island of nature in an urban environment, ensuring its health despite the encroachment of civilization. Temples dedicated to gods of plants and animals could be erected on the park's grounds, while public amphitheaters and other performance venues could be built to provide entertainment during warm weather. Parks are usually located near upper- and middle-class areas of town. Since they serve a recreational purpose, they could also be located near the entertainment district.

## TEMPLES

A city's temple district is largely determined by the role religion plays in daily life. If the government is a theocracy or it has an official religion, then the halls of government and religion blur together.

Monuments and buildings set aside for the government may be temples in this





case, or at the very least a cathedral stands among the offices of government. Otherwise, the most powerful churches in town may build large, elaborate temples to mark their prominence and success. These temples are probably scattered about the city in upper- or middle-class areas, with easy access to major roads to facilitate visiting pilgrims and to give these important structures high visibility. If religion is only of minor importance in town, the city's relatively small temples are probably clustered together in their own district, with residences and shops clustered around them. In this case, the temples may draw enough worshippers and other visitors to command a place near one of the town's major markets. Finally, if religion has little influence in the government and no one faith stands dominant above the rest, the churches and temples are probably scattered about town in residential areas appropriate to the economic status of their followers. A single faith might also have several churches in town to cater to different clientele. For instance, the sun god may have three temples in town. A chapel in the slums administers to the sick and distributes food to the hungry. A larger, more elaborate temple in a middle-class area caters to merchants and their families who gather there to worship. A large, elaborate cathedral set in the richest part of town serves as a landmark for the faithful and hosts services for nobles, important clerics, and other influential folk.

## TRAVEL

If the city sees many visitors from distant realms or if it stands upon an important trade route, it probably has several sections dedicated to inns, taverns, stables, warehouses, and other businesses useful to travelers. An entire foreign quarter could arise, with boarding houses renting rooms and landowners leasing entire houses to merchants, businessmen, and other visitors who stay within the city a few months each year. The travel district could experience seasonal upswings and downturns. During the spring and summer, it experiences a boom as merchants come to town, mercenaries pass through on their way to the frontier, and adventuring parties travel widely. With winter and the snow, travel drops to no more than a steady trickle of doughty explorers and the rare merchant caravan. The travel quarter is usually located near major thoroughfares heading into town and the docks.

## UNIVERSITY

In some fantasy campaigns, wizards, sages, and others who accumulate knowledge form colleges to train the next generation of specialists. A brotherhood of monks might have a small monastery in a city, a bardic college could draw performers from across the region, and a renowned swordsman might train fighters in his art. In any case, these establishments are roughly equivalent to a modern college or university. They need space for classrooms, dormitories for students, and possibly specialized shops that cater to their needs. The area around a university is usually filled with stores and a residential area that caters to the school's students and instructors. They are usually located in or near middle-class areas, though sometimes they can border the rough part of town if the school is old enough that the neighborhoods around it have fallen out of favor with the middle or upper classes.

## WAREHOUSING

With so many goods flowing into and out of a city, warehousing them all can become a major industry in town. Warehouses spring up in any area that holds markets, docks, and other areas where goods move through the city. Usually, they are heavily guarded by mercenaries hired by their owners. After all, a merchant is unlikely to do business with a warehouse that cannot keep his goods secure. The town guard may patrol the area in force, especially if the city is founded on trade. Normally, the neighborhoods around warehouse districts are poor and run down. The large, simple warehouses attract a lot of foot and cart traffic and they give the area a stark, bare look. Thus, the upper- and middle-class people in town usually prefer to live elsewhere.

## SOCIAL DISTRICTS

These areas are set aside primarily for residential purposes. From the sprawling estates of a city's nobility to the crowded, ramshackle tenements of its slums, neighborhoods quickly separate themselves according to their residents' income and social standing. Typically, a neighborhood's economic growth is tied to the industries that grow around it and the value given to the terrain it covers. Plots of land set atop a cliff overlooking the sea would be worth a fortune, as houses built there would have a commanding, beautiful

view of the water and the town below. On the other hand, the land near the riverbanks would be worth relatively little. The commotion of ships coming into the docks, the stench of raw sewage piped into the water, and the ugly, blocky warehouses filled with goods make it a poor choice for living quarters. With the land cheap and unappreciated, poorer residents are pushed to live there in cheap, rundown buildings.

### LOWER CLASS

Consisting of laborers, those employed in inns, taverns, and other service industries, and others who have regular jobs but make little money, the lower class makes up the vast bulk of a city's population. Their neighborhoods usually lie outside the city walls in small villages and residential towns along the major roads. Land is usually too expensive for these folk to afford their own houses in town, but they make enough money that they can avoid the slums. Those that live in town reside in clusters of boarding houses that rent out rooms. Some laborers spend a few months of each year in the city, making money to bring back to their villages and support their families and relatives. Lower-class areas also feature small shops and markets that deal in simple clothes, fresh produce, and meat. Each neighborhood has a few pubs that serve ale and simple food that caters to area residents. Restaurants and other entertainment venues are rare here, as these folk rarely have enough spare cash to afford such diversions.

### MIDDLE CLASS

The merchants, innkeepers, bankers, skilled craftsmen, and others who own or control businesses but are not equal to the nobility in political or economic power make up the middle class. These folk usually own homes within the city, simple, multistoried affairs with space set aside for servants' quarters. Middle-class neighborhoods are usually densely packed with houses but pleasantly appointed, with trees, small parks, and well-maintained buildings. Restaurants, taverns, and even small theaters provide entertainment outlets close to home, while many neighborhoods might even have small temples dedicated to gods commonly worshipped in the area. These neighborhoods are usually located between lower-class and upper-class areas. The lower-class neighborhoods act as a buffer against noisy traffic

and industries, making these areas quiet and pleasant to live in.

### SLUMS

The home of the city's poorest and most desperate residents, the slums are run down, poorly patrolled, and sometimes dangerous for the average citizen. Usually, the slums occupy the most desolate area in town, such as next to noxious industries, near a river or ocean front where the sewers are channeled out of the city, or in a ruined area devastated by a fire years ago. The slums are also commonly separated from the rest of the city by some sort of physical barrier. A major road, a defensive wall, or a river or water channel can all keep the slums and their residents isolated from more respectable sections of town. The thieves' guild and other criminal syndicates thrive in the slums, as the guard rarely if ever visits this quarter. Normally, only major crimes such as multiple murders or arson can draw law enforcement into the area. The folk who dwell in the slums are drug and alcohol addicts, prostitutes, and others who rely on illegal or disreputable means to survive, and those too sick or weak to work for a living. The government pays little attention to the slums, so long as they do not cause problems for the rest of the city. A few religions may establish chapels in the slums to care for the poor, but organized efforts to provide social support are rare at best.

### UPPER CLASS

The richest folk in town command the best of everything, from food and clothes to the choicest pieces of real estate. The upper-class neighborhoods usually develop in areas that offer the best views and are located far from the hustle and bustle of the city. Walls, bridges over channels, and other barriers might serve to separate these neighborhoods from the rest of town. Within an upper-class area, trees grow along the roads, the streets are kept clean, and traffic moves at a relaxed pace. Restrictions may be placed on travel and access to these places, with only servants and others who bear a pass granted by a noble family allowed to enter the neighborhood.



## CITY MAPS

While many DMs start with a map of a city first and then proceed to stock it with NPCs, describe its history, and work out the details of its government, this chapter takes the opposite approach. Once you have determined a city's politics, history, and inhabitants, you can use that information to help mold what the city's layout looks like. This section draws on the decisions and ideas covered in the previous section to help you generate the city's layout. You do not have to follow the process in these steps. You can always start with a map and work in reverse, or even start with the city's economics and proceed from there, but generally speaking the more you know about the city the easier it is to map it.

This chapter covers three main topics. The first portion presents a simple, random method of mapping a city. It creates a variety of city blocks, individual pieces of the city relating to its precincts, and joins them together to create a cohesive whole. This system works best if

you read over the section on precincts and decide what sorts of quarters exist within your city. Otherwise, you can randomly determine the city's various sections and go from there. This process yields a general, overview map of the city.

The second section introduces a variety of unique characteristics that can alter the city's layout and structure. From a town built with canals in place of streets to a subterranean dwarven refuge, this section gives you ideas and details on building fantasy cities.

The final section of this chapter outlines how to create detailed neighborhood maps. It utilizes the city-wide map creation system to focus in on a particular city block.

### THE OVERVIEW MAP

The first step to mapping a city is to note all the natural geographical features that exist in and around it. Hills, streams, rivers, and oceans all play a major role in how a city grows. In addition, you should note the roads and major highways that pass through the city. Refer to your campaign world notes to deter-

mine these features and sketch them on your map.

Next, you need to pick or determine the city's size. The more people that live in the city, of course, the larger it is. The mapping system works in an abstract unit called the block. Each block measures about 500 feet along each side, enough room for 40 to 50 residential homes. To account for variances in population density—wealthier areas have fewer homes in a block unit while poorer ones fit far more people into one—a city consists of 1 block for every 100 residents. Half of the blocks are used for living space and the rest are used for economic, military, and governmental purposes. It is also worth noting that many of those blocks also support residences clustered among them. A commercial block may have shops and a market along with residential homes and boarding houses.

After determining the city's size and the number of blocks you have available to build it, you need to determine the proportion of blocks that are given over to various uses. The table given here summarizes several different basic city types and their spread of block distributions. You can also simply assign proportions to different uses based on the city's character. When using Table 2, round up any decimals that are 0.5 or greater. Otherwise, round down. If a block type is not found in the city, it may be subsumed into other parts of town. For example, the temples might be set within the government or middle-class blocks.

TABLE 1: BLOCK PROPORTIONS

Percentage	Description
50%+	A major industry that forms the city's economy. Boomtowns and other places tightly linked to a specific economic activity may have a block type that forms this percentage of its city. The city exists to support this industry.
40–49%	A primary industry in this city, one that overshadows other activity but does not utterly dominate, or a major focus of the city's activity. A city usually supports only one activity of this importance.

30–39%	A key industry or activity in the city, one that forms the foundation of the city's economy. Some cities have one, perhaps two, activities that fall into this category, but most are more varied.
20–29%	An important industry or activity, perhaps one of several, that plays a major role in the city's growth and development. Most cities have one or perhaps two industries that fall into this category.
10–19%	A typical industry or activity within a city. These activities play a role in the city's growth, but over time they tend to wax and wane separate from the city's health as a whole. Usually, these industries' fates are tied to the city's health. Most cities have two or three industries or activities that fall into this category.
1–9%	A minor or relatively unimportant industry, one that has a minor effect on the city as a whole but is still a viable cog in the economy.

TABLE 2: SAMPLE DIVISIONS

d%	Result
1–20	<b>Common City:</b> With a strong, trade-based economy and plenty of adventurers, the typical city has a strong mix of trade, travel, market, and industrial centers. Industries: docks 5%, entertainment 10%, government 10%, industrial 20%, markets 15%, military 5%, parks 5%, temples 5%, travel 10%, university 5%, warehouses 10%. Residential: upper class 10%, middle class 20%, lower class 60%, slums 10%.
21–30	<b>Contested City:</b> Torn by fighting, much of the contested city lies in ruins. Industries have shrunk, especially those relating to travel into the city. A total of 2d3 factions share control of the city, each claiming mastery over a roughly equal-sized area. Industries: docks 5%, entertain-

- ment 5%, government 5%, industrial 10%, markets 5%, military 5%, temples 5%, travel 5%, university 5%, warehouses 10%, ruins 35%. Residential: upper class 5%, middle class 10%, lower class 60%, slums 25%.
- 31-40 **Outpost City:** Nestled at the edge of civilization, the outpost city has a much higher proportion of government offices and military fortifications than other cities. Industries: docks 5%, entertainment 5%, government 20%, industrial 10%, markets 15%, military 20%, temples 5%, travel 15%, warehouses 5%. Residential: upper class 5%, middle class 10%, lower class 75%, slums 10%.
- 41-50 **Port City:** The port city is an important staging point in many trade routes, as goods and people flow through it to points across the world. Industries: docks 10%, entertainment 10%, government 5%, industrial 10%, markets 20%, military 5%, temples 5%, travel 20%, warehouses 15%. Residential: upper class 5%, middle class 25%, lower class 60%, slums 10%.
- 51-60 **Religious City:** Dominated by a single sect or a group of religions, this city is an important center for the faithful. It has important shrines, academies devoted to religious training, and many inns for pilgrims. Industries: docks 5%, entertainment 5%, government 5%, industrial 5%, markets 10%, military 5%, parks 5%, temples 20%, travel 15%, university 10%, warehouses 10%. Residential: upper class 20%, middle class 20%, lower class 55%, slums 5%.
- 61-70 **Ruined City:** The ruined city is a large, ancient settlement now slowly being picked over by bands of adventurers and explorers. Based in a small area of the ruins reclaimed by settlers and turned into a small town, the ruined city is a small boom town as newly unearthed treasure flows into it. The ruined city is adjacent to ancient ruins 1d6 times its current size. Industries: docks 5%, entertainment 10%, government 10%, industrial 5%, markets 10%, military 25%, temples 5%, travel 20%, warehouses 10%. Residential: upper class 5%, middle class 20%, lower class 65%, slums 10%.
- 71-80 **Capital City:** An important administrative center, the capital city features many monuments and buildings set aside as courts, administrative centers, and seats of leadership. Industries: docks 5%, entertainment 10%, government 30%, industrial 5%, markets 5%, military 10%, parks 10%, temples 5%, travel 10%, university 5%, warehouses 5%. Residential: upper class 10%, middle class 20%, lower class 60%, slums 10%.
- 81-90 **Booming City:** In the grips of a sudden surge in its economic fortunes, this city's industries flourish and its citizens earn more income on average than other towns. Industries: docks 5%, entertainment 10%, government 10%, industrial 20%, markets 15%, military 5%, parks 5%, temples 5%, travel 10%, university 5%, warehouses 10%. Residential: upper class 15%, middle class 30%, lower class 50%, slums 5%.
- 91-100 **Fading City:** Business is poor for this city, as its reliable industries have hit a serious slump. Many laborers are unemployed, and those few families who can afford to have left for greener pastures. Industries: docks 5%, entertainment 10%, government 10%, industrial 20%, markets 15%, military 5%, parks 5%, temples 5%, travel 10%.



university 5%, warehouses 10%. Residential: upper class 5%, middle class 10%, lower class 65%, slums 20%.

## DRAWING THE CITY

Once you know the city's size and the type of blocks found within its limits, you need to create a skeleton of the city that shows the outline of its size and shape. Most cities grow around a central area, sprawling out to accommodate new growth. Others are molded by their geography, covering islands in a river delta, dotting a long series of rolling hills, or divided into smaller sections that are each centered on a specific industry. At this point, it is handy to have a sheet of graph paper that you can use to map out the city.

Pick out a general city shape or randomly select one from Table 3. The shape serves to define the city's general layout. Most of these shapes work best for larger cities, those with 100 or more blocks. Smaller cities should stick to the radial shape given below. Once you have the city's shape determined, sketch out its exte-

rior bounds, draw the roads leading into it, and add its wall to the map. Depending on the city's size, you can use one graph paper square to represent each square on your map. Usually, though, it is best to use a larger scale. A square made up of 2 or 3 graph paper squares per side is easier to work with and make notes on as you draw the town. You can use multiple pieces of graph paper to diagram the city. This option works best if you want to draw one map and use that to keep track of the entire city. Otherwise, if the map is too small to allow much detail, you may have to create many detailed maps of different sections and precincts.

Table 3 assumes that you want to create a relatively normal city. If you want to create something unique or strange, skip ahead to the Unique Traits, Features, and City Types below. Subterranean strongholds, tree cities, and other unique urban areas are described there.

Place roads and gates into the city by using Table 4, the placement tables, to determine the direction relative to the city's center in which the gates lie.

TABLE 3: CITY SHAPE AND LAYOUT

**d% Result**

1-80 **Radial:** The city has grown around an important, central area. It has 1d3 walls, one of which is an outer wall that provides defensive fortifications and one or two older defensive walls that the city slowly outgrew. The innermost, central section of the city holds 20% of its blocks. If the city has two or three walls, one of them surrounds this section. The next outlying section between this inner area and the outer wall contains 60% of the blocks, while the remaining 20% lie outside the wall. If the city has a third wall, it forms a ring within the zone between the inner sanctum's wall and the outer one. There is an 80% chance that the city is located on a river or similar waterway, and 2d4 major roads run into the city. Half of these major roads run directly from the outer wall through the inner walls to the center of town. The blocks lying outside the city are clustered around the water or the roads into town. The city is roughly circular in shape, though the terrain may cause it to grow further in some directions than others.

81-90 **Scattered:** This city is actually a densely populated stretch of countryside. It consists of a series of small towns that are located close enough together to be considered a single city. The city consists of 1d6 smaller towns that are within a 5-mile radius of a common point. Each has an equal number of blocks within them and has a 50% chance of having a town wall. 75% of their blocks are located within the walls, the rest are outside of them. Roads connect these towns, with one of them serving as an administrative center. Usually, each town specializes in one sort of industry. One might be the center for the markets, another on a body of water may hold the majority of warehouses and docks, and so on. When assigning blocks to these cities, treat each like a small, separate town with a radial layout with an equal proportion of the blocks found in the city as a whole.

91-100 **Split:** A major geographic feature splits the city into 1d2+1 separate parts. Half the city may be on an island in the midst of a bay, while the rest is on shore. Bridges and ferries connect the two halves. Another city may be located above and below ground. A dwarf settlement that serves as an important point in the trade network between the underworld and the surface world could have districts, mines, and markets beneath an otherwise mundane mountain outpost. You can use the section on exotic cities to create one of the city's halves, treating the other as a standard radial city. Otherwise, assume that parts of the city are on islands, are separated by chasms, are divided by a cliff, or occupy different heights along a mountain's slope. Each section of the city has a 75% chance to be surrounded by a wall, and 2d4 bridges, tunnels, and similar paths connect them. Each section has an equal proportion of the blocks. Treat any section located on the mainland or that otherwise has direct access to roads and other overland paths as a radial city save that it has only an outer wall.

## ASSIGNING BLOCKS

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Once you have the basic skeleton of your city drawn and the blocks assigned to various uses, you must now figure out where to place all the blocks on your map. If you have read the section on city precincts presented previously, you know that certain city areas have a tendency to clump together. To reflect this development, the assignment system starts with a few distinct areas of the city and places them on the map. Once they are ready, you can then add the remaining areas in relation to them.

The block allocation system follows regular, recognizable patterns. Cities are produced by artificial, planned processes and tend to follow the same general paths in development. The specifics may vary from place to place, but the overall patterns remain. Refer back to the discussion on city precincts for more information on how city areas develop in relation to each other.

## 0. THE GOLDEN RULE

The most important rule to keep in mind when randomly mapping a city is that a result you want is more important than a random result this system gives you. At any point, remember to use common sense and your own desires to override this system's results. Think of the city maps it creates as a starting point to fill in all the minor details of a city, leaving you to concentrate on the important stuff.

## 1. CALCULATE BLOCK TYPES

To start with, figure out how many blocks you have of each type. Use the percentages given earlier in this section to determine the raw number of each block type present in the city. A city has one block for every 100 residents. Half of those blocks are exclusively residential. The rest are given over to different economic and governmental uses. Write down the number of blocks that are set aside for each use and for the different social classes.

## 2. RUINS

If your city includes ruin blocks, you can place them in one of two ways. You can allocate an entire section of the city to the ruins, picking out an area that fits your vision of the city, or you can randomly assign them. To randomize the ruins' location, first roll 2d6 to determine how many separate, wrecked areas are in the city. Evenly divide the ruin blocks among them. Next, use Table 4 to randomly place them in town. Use the center of the city as your starting point when using that table.

## 3. GOVERNMENT AND UPPER CLASS BLOCKS

Place the government and half the upper-class blocks in the middle of the city. Place the government blocks by marking the middle of the city and using the placement table to determine their location. However, use a d20 rather than d% to determine distance from the city's center. Alternatively, you can simply place them at a logical location such as within the radial city's innermost wall. They should form a rough square or circle. The upper-class blocks should border the government areas in two directions. Use a d4 on the placement table to determine two directions and place half the upper-class blocks allocated to the city's center next to the government blocks in those directions. The remaining upper-class blocks should be put together at an attractive geographical point.

A large hill, a shallow isolated bay, or an isthmus separated from the mainland by the city's wall all offer secure, desirable real estate. Otherwise, you can roll on Table 4, the placement table, to place this upper-class enclave in relation to the city's absolute center.

## 4. THE DOCKS

Place the dock blocks next to any open sources of water in town. If there are none, convert them all into industrial blocks and add them to that category's total. To place the dock blocks, randomly pick a graph paper square adjacent to open water. Cluster all your dock blocks next to the water starting at that point. If the city has access to more than one body of water, such as a river and the sea, allocate the docks equally to each. If you have more dock blocks than water-accessible spaces on the map, convert the remainder to industrial blocks and add them to that category's total.

## 5. MARKETS

Markets are placed near easily accessible places where travelers can reach them. They are found next to major roads and near the docks. Divide the markets into several groups. You need one group for the docks (if any) and one group for the roads heading into town. If you are placing this city in an existing campaign world, pick out the major trade roads that head into the city. Each of them should connect to a market in the city. Otherwise, half the roads in town should have markets along them. Randomly determine which ones receive them.

The dock or waterfront market should be adjacent to the dock blocks. Use Table 4 to determine a direction from the docks, ignoring any nonsensical results such as one that would place a market in the water. Place all the dock market blocks in that direction relative to the docks, with half the dock blocks adjacent to a market.

For a market placed along a road, roll 1d6-1 and multiply the result by 10. This result is a percentage of the distance between the city's wall and its central point. At this point along the road, place the market. The market forms a square around this position. If the result is zero, half the market lies outside the city's walls.



## 6. TRAVEL AND ENTERTAINMENT

These areas rely on frequent traffic and visitors to sustain their businesses. Place them using the same rules as markets with one important exception. When positioning them near the docks, place them next to the dock's market rather than the docks themselves. Allocate half these blocks at the road and half at the docks. If there are not enough to place one at each road, place one first at the gates with markets near them.

## 7. WAREHOUSES

A city's warehouses serve the businesses and merchants that operate within them. Most of them should be near the docks, as a much higher volume of material enters a city via the sea than by overland routes. Half the warehouses should be placed next to the areas adjacent to the docks that are not occupied by the market. Spread them out so that no empty spaces are left adjacent to the docks. The rest should be evenly divided among the markets located within the city. Place the warehouses adjacent to the market blocks.

## 8. MIDDLE-CLASS AREAS

Place the middle-class blocks in the open squares adjacent to each upper-class block. Randomly determine a direction on Table 4. Start with an empty adjacent block in a random direction from the center of the upper-class block. Starting there, work around the upper-class blocks until you are out of middle-class blocks. If you surround the upper-class blocks and have any left over, continue circling the upper-class area, placing the remaining blocks next to the middle-class ones you already put on the map.

## 9. MILITARY AREAS

The military keeps watch over a few, key areas in town: the central areas of government, the port, and any important access points in town. Divide the military blocks into three equal groups. Use Table 4 with a d10 for distance to place one near the central governmental area, the docks, and a randomly selected city gate.

## 10. TEMPLE, UNIVERSITY, PUBLIC PARK

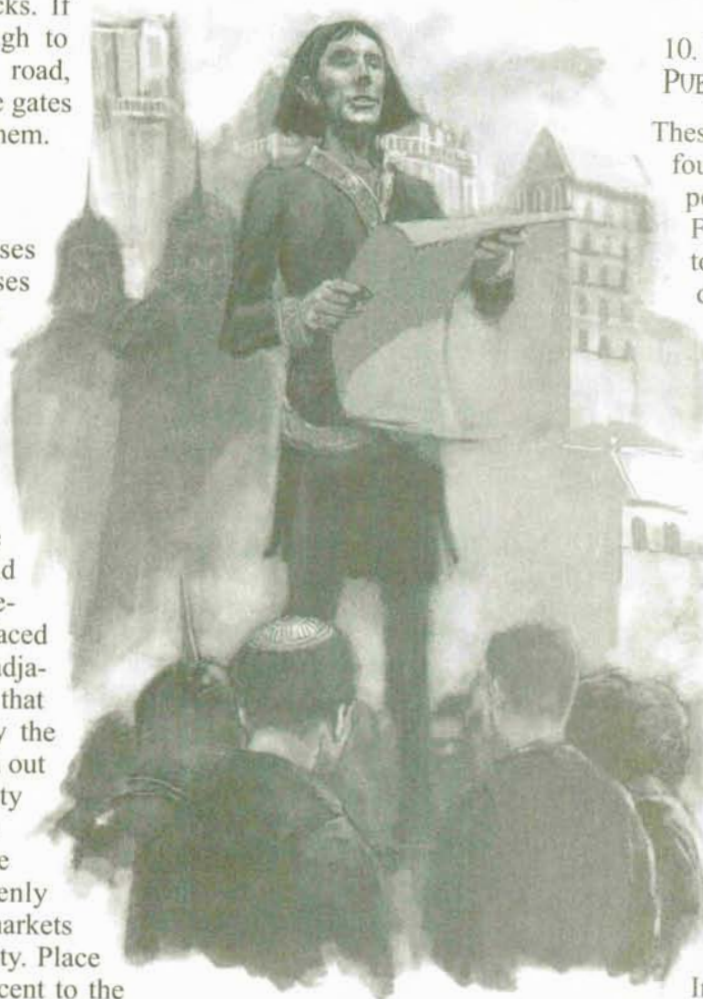
These three areas tend to be found close to the prosperous areas of town. For each block, roll 1d3 to determine how many distinct areas in town have these blocks. Break the available blocks of each type into equal-sized groups according to the number of areas found of each type. Pick out each area of town with upper-class blocks and randomly select one, then use Table 4 with a d20 for distance to place each of the separate groups of temples, universities, and public parks.

## 11. INDUSTRIAL

Industrial areas are typically kept as far from the prosperous, comfortable parts of town as possible. To model this, look at the remaining empty areas of your map and find the 1d3 areas that are farthest from an upper-class residential block. For each of those areas, place an equal number of industrial blocks.

## 12. THE SLUMS

The slums always receive the worst areas of town. First, surround industrial and ruined areas with slum blocks. If any slum blocks remain, find the farthest point from the upper-class blocks and place them there.



## 13. LOWER CLASS

Finally, fill in the remaining spaces in the city with your lower-class blocks. These areas form the bulk of the city's area.

TABLE 4: THE PLACEMENT TABLE

To use the placement table, roll 1d4 (or d% on the second table) to determine a direction and d% to determine the number of blocks between a point and the place you want to put a set of blocks. For a smaller city, use a d4, d10, or a similar smaller die to determine distances. The position indicated is the exact center of the blocks you need to place. If the result is nonsensical (it places the blocks outside the city), roll the distance again. If the position is already filled, move to the closest open area that can hold the entire set of blocks. If the position is clear but cannot hold all the blocks, place as many as possible and repeat the process starting from the center of the area where you just placed the blocks. Continue this process until all the blocks have been placed.

When placing buildings, use 1d20 to determine the number of map squares you should displace the building. Unless otherwise noted, start at the center of the map. Place a randomly selected corner of the building at the point you determine, though you must position the building so that it does not collide with any existing structures and roads. If random placement would cause overlap, shift the building to the nearest open space.

d4	Result
1	North
2	East
3	South
4	West

d%	Result
1-13	North
14-26	East
27-39	South
40-52	West
53-64	Northeast
65-76	Northwest
77-88	Southeast
89-100	Southwest

## STREETS

For purposes of the large-scale map, you only need worry about major roads through town. For the characters' travels to specific points, you can simply assume that they find paths and streets that lead to an area of town. Tracking every last avenue is an arduous, time-consuming task that may not pay off in additional, helpful detail in an adventure. Instead, use the block detail section presented at the end of this chapter to create streets through small-scale, specific parts of town.

The major roads through town start at the gates and run to the important areas. To map out the streets, start at each gate and use Table 5. If a result refers to a feature not found in the city, such as the docks, ignore that stretch of road or roll again. The city's center has an equal chance to be the physical center of town or the concentration of government blocks. Check for each reference to the center.

When creating detailed maps of the city, these roads count as major thoroughfares.

TABLE 5: MAJOR STREETS

d%	Street Overview
1-10	The street runs straight from the gate to the center of town.
11-20	The street runs forward d% of the way to the city's center before turning in a random direction and continuing for d% of the way to the wall, at which point it turns back to the city center.
21-30	The street runs towards the nearest market. From there, a second street runs to the nearest gate.
31-40	The street runs directly to the city's center. At a point d% of the way along its length, a major side street runs to the nearest (d8: 1-2 industrial, 3-4 park, 5-6 temple, 7-8 market) block.
41-50	The street runs to the city's center then continues through to the docks.
51-60	The street connects to the nearest dock area. A side street d% of the way along its length connects to the nearest market.
61-70	The street connects to the city's center then either connects to a random gate or the nearest street that leads to a random gate.
71-80	The street forms a circuit around the

city. It proceeds  $d\%$  of the distance to the center before forming a circle that surrounds the central portion of the city. There is a 50% chance for each gate that a street extends from this circle to a gate or to a street that connects directly to a gate.

- 81–90 The street runs  $d\%$  of the distance to the city's center before turning toward the nearest temple block. From there, it runs to the nearest gate and to the city's center.
- 91–100 The street runs all the way through town, from one gate to another.

## UNIQUE TRAITS, FEATURES, AND CITY TYPES

Thus far, this system has focused on cities that model how urban areas grow and develop in the real world. As this is a fantasy game, there are plenty of wondrous city types that can develop. Dwarves hew great caverns from stone, while the elves may live within the tree-tops of a great forest. This section addresses such unique cities and includes an array of unique or odd features that a city may develop.

### CITY TYPES

In a fantasy world, magic allows for a much wider range of city types. While the standard layouts given on Table 3 work fine for most human cities, dwarves, elves, orcs, and other races may build much different settlements. Listed below are a few unique city types with rules for randomly mapping them.

#### CLIFF

A cliff city is built along the steep, vertical slope of a mountain, gargantuan statue, or a similar place. The cliff city's defining characteristic is that it is broken up into successive layers with ramps, ladders, and elevators connecting the different sections. The city map represents the vertical cliff face rather than the horizontal, bird's eye view of the city from above. Start by sketching out the cliff's dimensions, marking out the city's height and width. The city's buildings are carved directly into the cliff, with terraces and ramps serving as streets in front of them. Allocate the blocks as normal, treating the middle of the cliff as the city's center. Generally, these cities should be on the

small side unless your campaign world includes mountains high enough and accessible enough to construct a mammoth cliff city.

Beyond the mundane considerations of a cliff city, there are several unique traits that make it stand out. Chances are that the civilization responsible for building it has access to flying mounts, machines, or aerial magic, as moving the rock carved from the cliff's upper levels would prove to be a difficult task at best. Large nets or a stone and wood *port* designed to service aerial travelers could provide landing spaces for fliers. The streets are wide ledges along the cliff's face, with buildings carved directly into the rock along them. Stairs lead to some isolated homes and temples, while wide ramps lead upward for horses, carts, and other major vehicles. Light is at a premium within the buildings, with most of them featuring many windows to let plenty of fresh air and light in. As a rule of thumb, all items within the city should be one category rarer than normal, as moving goods within the city is difficult unless it has ready access to flying creatures and vehicles. In that case, fliers may flit from level to level, delivering food, water, and other goods to the markets.

The interior of this city's buildings resemble worked chambers or caves, with markets and other open, public spaces consisting of broad, tall passages leading into large, hollowed out caverns and vaults. From these areas, side passages may lead to deeper realms within the cliff city or even back out to private residences and shops that are built into the cliff's face.

#### SUBTERRANEAN

The subterranean city is broken up across several large caverns. To start, you need to map out the available cave space. The total space available should equal double the city's total blocks, with the extra space given over to roads, agriculture, and other uses. Use Table 5 to draw the cavern system's basic shape and function. Place the largest cavern on your map and use the random direction portion of Table 4 to place the smaller (or equal sized) caverns relative to it. Once this is done, use Table 6 to determine the distance between the largest cavern and its neighbors and the number of connecting passages between them. Using the random distance you created, place them on the map. The distance between them is measured from cavern edge to cavern edge.



When allocating blocks, start with the largest cavern and place the government and upper-class blocks there. Place blocks as normal until that cavern is filled. Treat the cavern entrances as gates into the city. Then, divide the remaining blocks equally between the smaller satellite caverns. Allocate them by starting with the center of the smaller caverns and using Table 4 to place them. Otherwise, use the guidelines given above as normal, with one exception. If you must place something in a position that is as far as possible from a block type that does not appear in a cavern with free space, use Table 4 to randomly place it. When placing the lower-class blocks, place them so that all the blocks you have already placed touch at least one lower-class block. Try to connect the blocks so that they form one continuous mass in each cavern. The remaining empty spaces on the map are given over to fungus farms, mining, and other uses.

TABLE 6: SUBTERRANEAN CITIES

**d% Cavern Numbers and Size**

1–60	One large cavern.
61–65	Four caverns, each with 25% of the total blocks.
66–70	Three caverns, one with 50% of the blocks and two with 25%.
31–75	Two caverns, one with 60% of the blocks and the other with 40%
76–80	Five caverns, each with 20% of the blocks.
81–85	Three caverns, two with 30% and one with 40% of the blocks.
86–90	Four caverns, two with 20% and two with 30% of the blocks.
91–95	Two caverns, both with 50% of the blocks.
96–100	Two caverns, one with 25% and the other 75% of the blocks.

TABLE 7: DISTANCE AND CONNECTIONS

d%	Distance	Connections
1–10	2 blocks	1
11–20	5 blocks	1
21–30	8 block	1
31–40	10 blocks	1
41–50	12 blocks	2
51–60	15 blocks	2
61–70	20 blocks	2
71–80	25 blocks	3
81–90	30 blocks	3
91–100	40 blocks	4

### TREETOP

A treetop city stands among the highest branches of enormous trees found within a fantasy forest. A favorite city type of elves and fairies, this city consists of wooden buildings set atop wide platforms built from beams or formed by carefully sculpting a tree's growth over time. To design a treetop city, you can use Tables 6 and 7 to determine its basic geography. Rather than caverns, those tables generate large treetop platforms set with buildings and other structures. Do not double the city's total blocks as you would when creating an underground city, as the treetop town can farm, collect water, and gather other supplies from the ground below.

### KEY STRUCTURES

There are a few important spots that you can count on finding in most cities. Listed below are a variety of different businesses and sites that you may need to include in the city. Each one notes the block type that it can be found in. To randomly place a key structure, randomly select an appropriate block and use Table 4 to place it on its map or simply pick an appropriate building.

Alchemist (markets/university)  
 Black market (docks/lower class/slums)  
 Constable/jail (government)  
 Court (government)  
 Library (university)  
 Magic shop (market/university)  
 Supply shop (market/middle class)  
 Temple (government/temple/any residential)  
 Thieves' guild (slums)  
 Weapon shop (market)

### UNIQUE TRAITS

The following traits can be used to spice up any city. Some of them change or replace common landmarks and portions of a city, while others are ideas for unique sites that can set a city apart from others.

#### CANALS

The city is built on the shores of a bay or ocean. The original planners built a series of canals through the town, allowing small boats to maneuver through the city. Replace a few of the major roads with waterways. Small gondolas can ferry characters around town for a few silver pieces.

#### HILLS

If the city was built on or near hills, the military may have established fortifications there or they could be the site of the government's main buildings. Otherwise, the upper-class residential areas could occupy the slopes for the nice view. Generally, high ground is strategically valuable. In the early days of the city, a hill would be a prime position for critical functions.

#### NECROPOLIS

Even with open space at a premium, the city may still set aside an area for a burial ground. Important or rich folk are interred within elaborate tombs, while the poor folk may be buried in a sprawling, labyrinthine communal tomb built beneath the city and heavily expanded over time. A necropolis can fit into a city's park or temple areas.

#### OLD RUINS

Many cities are built on the ruins of older settlements created by long-forgotten civilizations. Crumbling ruins could serve as homes in the poor parts of town, while some of the greatest, most notable structures in town could be refurbished and modified ruins from an older society. Some of these crumbling ruins might have secret doors leading to ancient, forgotten dungeons filled with undead, constructs, and other monsters that could survive hundreds of years of isolation.

#### THE UNDERCITY

Between the sewers, the town's necropolis, secret basements built by the thieves'

guild, and ancient ruined dungeons, an entire secondary city could stand beneath a metropolis. While an entire dungeon-creation system is beyond this book's scope (*Dungeoncraft* covers the topic in depth), here are a few pointers to get you started. First and foremost, consider the city's history and background. Does either point to the presence of subterranean ruins? Look at the power groups in town and think about their access to the underground and the city's position in the trade networks. A seemingly mundane city could unwittingly serve as a major conduit in surface-underworld trade. In that case, the area beneath it is undoubtedly honeycombed with tunnels.

Create a map that overlays the city's upper areas with the realms below. This diagram is a useful reference to figure out where the characters can go from the sewers or a hidden basement in relation to the rest of the city. Chart out important underground areas, and then note the passages and tunnels between them. There's no need to map out the underways in detail. Remember, on the surface, the characters can walk around town without following detailed street maps. If they want to go from the town gate to city hall, you can simply use the overview map to chart the blocks they move through. By the same token, they can move between underground areas in the same way. Ask for a Wilderness Lore or Intuit Direction check (DC 20) to navigate the underground tunnels. On a successful check, the characters make it to their destination as per their normal movement rate. Otherwise, they waste half the time needed for the trip getting lost and must check again.

As for the sites found beneath the city, there is a wide range of possibilities. The thieves' guild may keep secret barracks and treasure vaults beneath its headquarters and safe houses. The government could maintain underground escape tunnels for its use during war. The city's sewers and crypts could form a veritable dungeon of their own, with undead creatures and underground vermin plaguing both. In addition, evil wizards, sorcerers, cults to black gods, and other foul villains could use the underground to hide their activities or as a secret base of operations.

## MAPPING INDIVIDUAL BLOCKS

Once you have the general map of a city prepared, you eventually need to create maps of individual city blocks and areas. This section presents a system for creating a street-level map based on a set of simple keywords you can use to describe an area. The keywords are based on the block types.

The first step to mapping a block is to look at the block type you need to map and the areas around it. Each block type includes a different system for mapping it, though the blocks generally refer back to the same set of building creation tables. In addition, Table 4 from the overview map creation system is used here to place features.

To start your map, remember that each block is 500 feet along each side. It is easiest to use a map scale where each square of graph paper equals 10 or 20 feet. This system refers to map squares rather than feet, allowing you to scale the map as you wish.

Before using the random map system, keep in mind any important buildings that are found in the area. Refer to the section on key locations above for guidance. If a key location is in the block you want to map, draw it first before any other buildings. First determine the location of the main roads on the block, and then add it. The key structure is always on the main road that runs through the block.

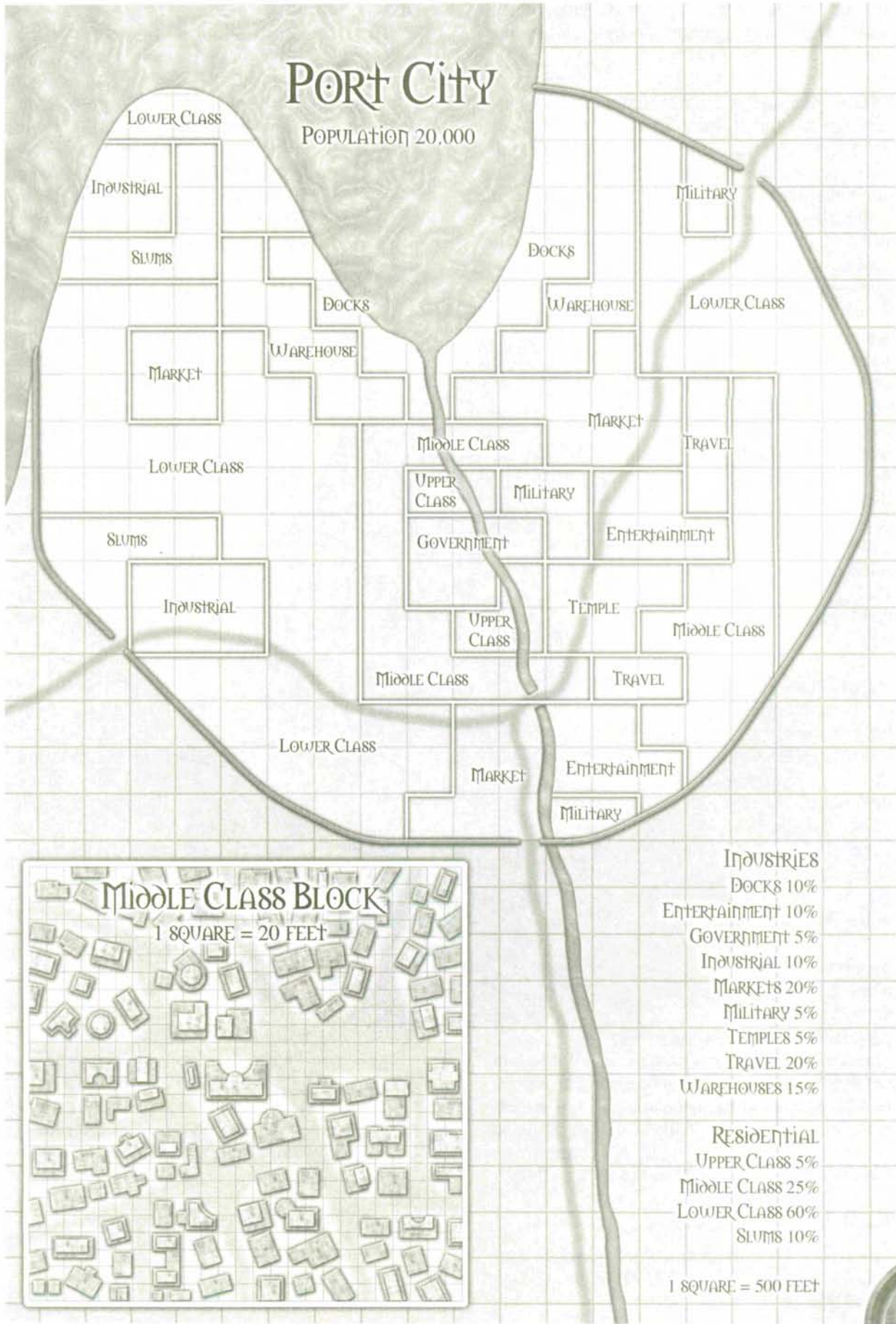
### TABLES 8-11

These tables are used to fill in the details of city blocks, as per the instructions given under the block types. Table 11 is optional. It provides some basic details on a building's use. More complete tables for fleshing out a location are given in Chapter 5.

#### TABLE 8: MAJOR STREETS

d%	Street Arrangement
1-25	Major avenue
26-40	Minor avenue
41-65	Paths
66-100	Square

**Major Avenue:** A single, wide street cuts through the block. Draw one street that runs left to right or top to bottom (equal chance of each). This street is 2d6 squares wide. Place it



in the middle of the appropriate side of the map. The street extends straight across the map.

**Minor Avenue:** A single, minor avenue cuts through the block. Pick a side of the map or randomly select one and roll a d10. The result is the percentage of the distance along the chosen edge where the street starts. For instance, if you rolled a 6 the street would start at the point 60% up from the edge's bottom. The street is 2d4 squares wide. It

proceeds forward 3d10 squares before turning in a random direction (1d4: 1 north, 2 east, 3, south, 4 west or use Table 4 to determine a direction), re-rolling any result that would cause the road to double back on itself. Continue this process until the road hits a map edge.

**Paths:** The block is honeycombed with a variety of lesser streets. Use the process described for the minor avenue but generate 1d6 streets that are 1d6+1 squares wide.

**Square:** The block has a small square, garden, or park within it. Randomly place an open area on the map. Use Table 4 to determine the position of its center. The square is 4d6 squares along each length. 2d4 streets run from the square. Follow the steps listed under the minor avenue result, but these streets run away from the square to the map's edges.

TABLE 9: BUILDING DENSITY

To use Table 9, divide the block map into four equally sized sectors and roll once for each of them.

**d20 Result**

1-10

**Packed:** Buildings cover 90% of the area, not counting any major roads that run through it. Generate enough small and medium buildings to cover that area and place them using Table 4. If necessary, place the last few buildings to fill any gaps, shrinking them to fit if necessary. The areas between the buildings represent streets and alleys.

1-15 **Crowded:** Buildings cover 75% of the area, not counting any major roads that run through it.

Generate enough small and medium buildings to cover that area and place them using Table 4. If necessary, place the last few buildings to fill any gaps, shrinking them to fit if necessary. The areas between the buildings represent streets and alleys.

16-18 **Open:** Buildings cover 50% of the area here, not counting any major roads that run through it. Generate enough small and medium buildings to cover the area and place them using Table 4. Draw streets that are 1 square wide to connect the

buildings to the major avenues. If you wish, use the process detailed under the minor avenue result of Table 8 to give these streets a random aspect. The non-street and building portions of the area are courtyards or park space.

19-20

**Spacious:** As per the open result above, but the buildings are all large or huge.

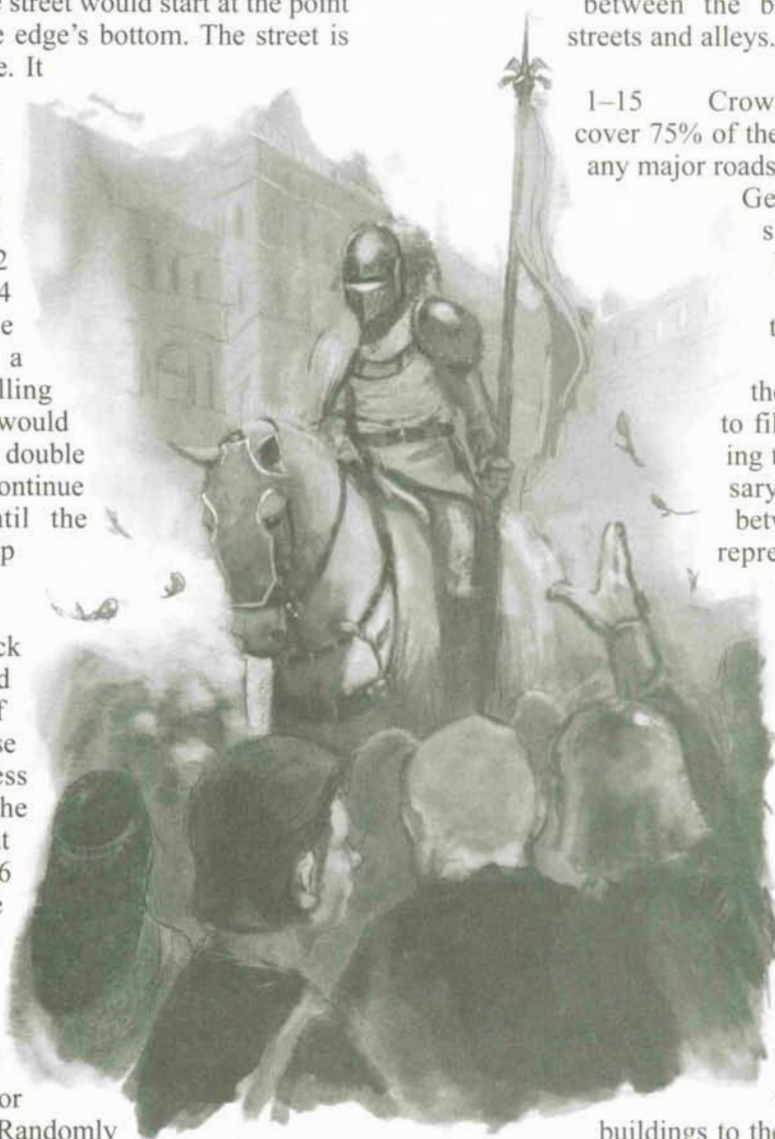




TABLE 10: BUILDING SIZE

d%	Result
1–50	Small: 1d2 floors, measuring 10+1d6 feet along each side
51–70	Medium-size: 1d2+1 floors, measuring 15+2d6 feet along each side
71–85	Large: 1d2+1 floors, measuring 20+3d6 feet along each side
86–95	Huge: 1d2+2 floors, measuring 30+3d6 feet along each side
96–99	Gargantuan: 1d2+2 floors, measuring 40+4d6 feet along each side
100	Colossal: 1d2+3 floors, measuring 50+5d6 feet along each side

TABLE 11: BUILDING DETAILS

d%	Result
1–15	1 door, 1 window per 20 feet of exterior wall
16–30	2 doors on opposite sides, 1 window per 20 feet of exterior wall
31–45	1 door, 1 window per 20 feet of exterior wall, overhanging balcony
46–60	1 door, no windows on first floor
61–70	1 door, 1 window per 20 feet of exterior wall, stairs up to door set in second floor
71–85	Interior is divided into 1d4 separate apartments
86–90	Shop: First floor is a store, upper areas are living quarters
91–95	Tavern: Entire building is a tavern
96–98	Workshop: Building is a smithy or similar business
99–100	Empty, burned-out shell

## DOCK

The first thing to determine when mapping the docks is if the block is adjacent to water and which direction it lies on the map. Fill the 1d10 squares along the edge of the block toward the river, ocean, or lake with water. Along this watery edge are 1d10 docks. Each dock is 1d10 squares long and 1d3 squares wide. Draw the docks so that the longest one reaches the water's edge. Line up the rest of them with the longest one's edge away from the water. The docks all connect to the ground where they line up. Fill in the areas between them with water.

1d3 squares beyond the water's edge runs a road that is 1d4 squares wide. This road allows access to the docks. Draw it so that it runs parallel to the water's edge.

At this point, determine the pattern of side streets within the area near the docks. Use Tables 9, 10, and 11 to fill the rest of the area.

## ENTERTAINMENT

This area is marked by theaters, taverns, inns, and other businesses that deal in entertainment. The first step is to use Table 8 to determine the major roads that lead into the block. Once those are drawn, place 1d6 large buildings and 2d4 medium-size ones on the map, using Table 11 to determine their dimensions. Each of these buildings is a theater, a tavern, a restaurant, a brothel, or a similar establishment. You can randomly determine their use or select them. Chapter 5 includes a number of tables useful in fleshing out specific locations. Place these buildings along the major street by rolling d% for each of them. The result is the percentage of the distance along the major road that they can be found. Roll a d6 to determine if the building is on the right (1–3) or left (4–6) side of the road. Start with the largest buildings and work to the smallest ones. For the rest of the map, use Tables 9, 10, and 11 to chart them out.

## GOVERNMENT

Each government block is built around a single, important site such as a courthouse, an ambassador's residence, and so on. Roll 1d6 to determine the size of this building. On a 1–2 it is large, on a 3–4 it is huge, on a 5 it is gargantuan, and on a 6 it is colossal. Place this building on the map using Table 4 with the center of the block as the starting point. Fill in the rest of the block using Tables 9, 10, and 11.

## INDUSTRIAL, MILITARY, TEMPLES, TRAVEL, UNIVERSITY, AND WAREHOUSE

All of these blocks can be mapped in a similar manner. Start by using Table 8 to determine if any major roads run through the block. Then, use Tables 12 and 13 to arrange the buildings found in the block that link to its use. The results of these tables override the result from Table 8. After adding the major buildings to the block, fill in the rest of the area using Tables 9, 10, and 11.

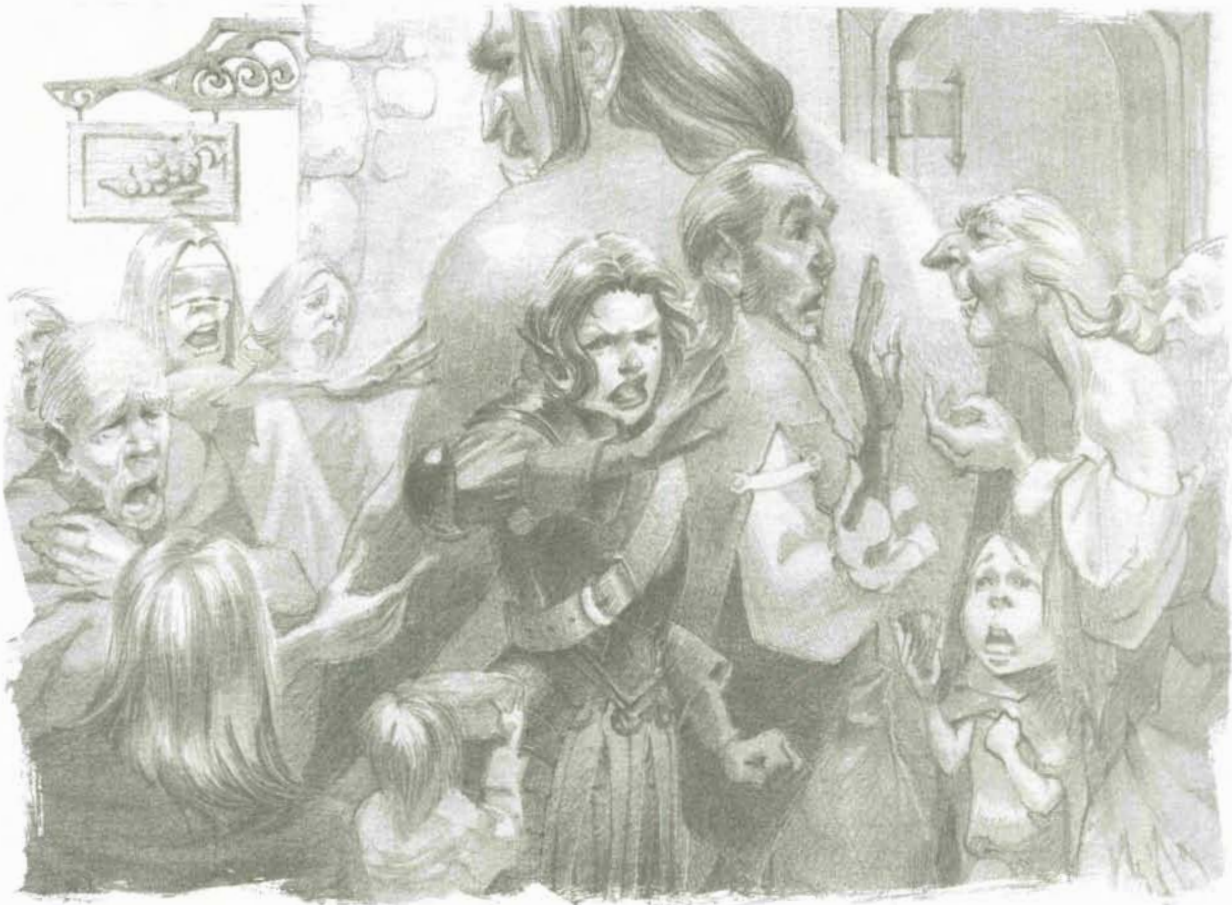


TABLE 12: BUILDING SIZE AND NUMBER

d%	Result
1-10	1 colossal building
11-20	2 colossal buildings
21-30	2 gargantuan buildings
31-40	3 gargantuan buildings
41-50	3 huge buildings
51-60	4 huge buildings
61-70	5 huge buildings
71-80	5 large buildings
81-90	6 large buildings
91-100	7 large buildings

TABLE 13: BUILDING ARRANGEMENT

d%	Result
1-10	Randomly place the buildings using Table 4
11-20	Randomly place one building using Table 4. Place the rest next door, across the street, or otherwise near it.
21-30	Randomly place each building use Table 4.
31-40	Randomly place half the buildings using Table 4. Place the other half next door to the random buildings.
41-80	Add an open space in the middle

of the block that measures  $6d6$  squares along its north-south height and east-west length. The buildings are all set on the edge of this square.

81-100 Roll d%. This is the percentage distance along a randomly chosen major road of the building's location. Repeat this process for each building. At the random point, place the midpoint of one of the building's walls.

**Markets and Public Parks:** These block types are marked by large, open areas. Both of them have a central space that measures  $2d20+20$  squares along each length. If multiple market and park blocks sit adjacent to each other, you can place this open space so that it runs off the edge of the current block to the one next door. Use Table 8 to add roads heading into the block, and then fill in the rest of the area using Tables 9, 10, and 11.

**Slums:** The slums are crowded, noisy, and mazelike. To create a slum block, place small and medium-size buildings on the map using Table 4 until you have covered  $80+1d10\%$  of

the squares with buildings. If the result of Table 4 places a building on top of an existing structure, move it so that it stands adjacent to the building. Once you have placed the structures, assume that the spaces between them are alleys and narrow roads. Unless your overview map shows otherwise, no major roads run through the slums.

**Lower Class:** Use Tables 9, 10, and 11 as normal, but apply a  $-5$  modifier to all results from Table 9 and a  $-20$  modifier to results from Table 10. Count any result of 0 or lower as a 1. There is a 20% chance that a major avenue runs through the block. In that case, use Table 8. Otherwise, distribute the buildings using Table 4 within each quadrant and draw in alleys and narrow boulevards as needed to connect them. In a lower-class neighborhood,  $70+1d10\%$  of the map should be covered by buildings.

**Middle Class:** Use Tables 9, 10, and 11 as normal, but apply a  $+2$  modifier to all results from Table 9 and a  $+10$  modifier to Table 10. There is a 40% chance that a major avenue runs through the block. In that case, use Table 8. Otherwise, distribute the buildings using Table 4 within each quadrant and draw in alleys and narrow boulevards as needed to connect them. In a middle-class neighborhood,  $60+1d10\%$  of the map should be covered by buildings.

**Upper Class:** Use Tables 9, 10, and 11 as normal, but apply a  $+5$  modifier to all results from Table 9 and a  $+30$  modifier to Table 10. There is a 60% chance that a major avenue runs through the block. In that case, use Table 8. Otherwise, distribute the buildings using Table 4 within each quadrant and draw in alleys and narrow boulevards as needed to connect them. In an upper-class neighborhood,  $50+1d10\%$  of the map should be covered by buildings. The rest of the area consists of streets, small parks, gardens, and other open areas.

**Modifying Residential Areas:** As you can see from their random generation system, the richer an area is the less crowded it is and the larger its buildings. You can alter these characteristics simply by making changes to the generation system. For more crowded areas, increase the percentage of area covered by buildings. You can add modifiers to Tables 9 and 10 to alter the size and density of buildings, giving block types different general characteristics.

**Gluing Blocks Together:** Sometimes, it makes sense to bleed over elements from one block to the next. If a major road runs through the middle of a block, you should be sure to account for it when drawing the block next door. By the same token, never let the random system override important sites that you want to include in the city or major roads that are already part of it.

**Placing Specific Locations:** You may need to determine the location of a specific home, business, or temple in town. The easiest way to do this is to pick a random block associated with the location's type and then start the block map by placing the location and building the map around it. You can also draw a block map as normal and assign the location to a building that fits its description or profile. Otherwise, you can use Table 4 to pick a random block and place the location there.

**Using Chapter Four:** Chapter 4 includes a wide variety of tables you can use to add further depth to the city blocks you create. It includes tables for random names, interior floor plans, the nature of a business, and the personality traits and names of NPCs. Use the tables and advice there to flesh out material on the fly.

## CHAPTER FOUR

CITY  
ADVENTURES

As DM, the responsibility for bringing a city to life and constructing exciting adventures within it falls to you. You can spend days and weeks laboring over a city's map, charting out its competing factions, and writing its epic history, but in the end all that means little if the players are bored during a game session. This chapter covers the ins and outs of designing urban adventures and includes advice on how to transform the city you created into a vibrant, living game setting. All text under "Urban Environments" and "Urban Events" is designated as **Open Game Content**.

MANAGING  
CITY  
ADVENTURES

Cities require a bit more work to manage than wilderness areas or dungeons. Urban areas are complex, intricate social systems. Little if anything takes place in a bubble. If the characters set fire to a seaside warehouse, news of the incident spreads throughout town. After the characters defeat a powerful dragon that

attacked the walls, commoners line up to hail their skills while the nobles shower them with medals, feasts, and honorary appointments. Running a city requires a bit more bookkeeping and maintenance work than most other fantasy settings. Furthermore, cities are busy places. If the characters walk down a street, they can expect to witness the symphony of life, the background of laborers heading to work, peddlers hawking their wares, and crowds of people going about their daily tasks. All of these factors demand that you spend a bit more time working on details and portions of the game that might normally remain in the background.

## SETTING THE SCENE

Cities are dynamic, active places. These traits make them liable to change on an almost daily basis. One day, the characters may see a street-corner preacher haranguing folk with prophecies of gloom and doom. The next, an overturned cart has spilled melons all over the street and brought traffic to a complete halt. These background details can help bring a city to life, making it a living, breathing setting that the players feel works just like the real world cities they have visited. With a few simple descriptive elements, you can create a city that draws and keeps the players' interest.

## ARCHITECTURE

The style and design of a city's buildings can play a major role in setting the scene. A city with gleaming, golden minarets brings to mind the tales of Ali Baba and the Arabian Nights. One with imposing, stone buildings and many heavily fortified castles conjures images of war and a militaristic, tightly controlled culture. The easiest way to incorporate architecture into your game is to feature it in the buildings and sites that the characters visit. You might be tempted to create a few noteworthy buildings around town and describe them as the characters walk the streets. This method can waste time and clutter the game. Instead, focus on making the places the PCs have to visit noteworthy or give them traits that epitomize the city's cultural and architectural character. Your best resources for architecture are magazines, books, the Internet, and encyclopedias. Photocopy or print noteworthy pictures and use them to illustrate the sites the characters see. This method allows you to quickly and easily establish a city's style and you can use it to flesh out sites that are unimportant to an adventure without slowing down the game.

## CITY FOLK

Think about how the people in town dress and act. In a brutal dictatorship, the streets may be quiet and sparsely crowded as most people are too afraid to spend much time away from their jobs or homes. In a democracy, street-corner debates are common as different factions attempt to gain support for their measures and plans. Meanwhile, a city where several merchant houses jockey for power might see brawls between each sides' servants. The more prosperous the city, the more colorful and elaborate its citizens' dress. In a borderland town frequently targeted by goblin raiders, many folk may wear leather armor or mail shirts while everyone carries a sword or axe. A place ravaged by famine and war may have citizens clad in simple, worn clothes. The attitudes and actions of the city's people can do a lot to communicate the mood and economic tidings that have befallen the city. As with architecture, work these details into the background of encounters in the city. While the characters are in a tavern to meet a contact, you can incorporate the dress and attitudes of the people around them into the place's description. While the characters travel about town, try to keep descriptive details short and informative to

keep the game moving. Only use detail when it is directly important to the action.

## LANDMARKS

A few important landmarks can say a lot about a city's history and character while making it distinct from other places the characters have visited. A single landmark can be so important and noteworthy that it is closely tied to the city's identity. When designing a landmark, try to make it visually noteworthy. It might be big enough to stand above the rest of town, or it might be so important that all the major roads in town lead to it. For example, a towering stone column dedicated to a god may draw hundreds of pilgrims each day. While walking along the city's main streets, the characters may constantly have mobs of worshippers heading toward the monument, snarling traffic during peak hours and serving as a constant reminder of the landmark's presence. A landmark can be an important government building, a purely ornamental monument or structure, or even a natural feature such as an ancient tree or a small lake. The key to a landmark is to avoid bogging down the game for gratuitous descriptions of it. Rather, work it into the background of an adventure's scenes. As the characters enter a shop, they can see the landmark looming over the city in the background. A friendly merchant gives them directions using the landmark as a reference point.

## TOPE

The city's tone is the feel or mood that you want to capture when presenting it to the players. Think of the architecture, monuments, and people of the city as the delivery method for the tone. There are a few common feels to fantasy cities.

For a mysterious city, focus on shadowy hints of activities just beyond the characters' vision, strange architecture, and varied, eclectic dress and customs of the people. The characters may hear the low chants of spells or prayers as they walk the streets, smell strange odors of roasting food or incense, and encounter oddly designed buildings that seem important but have no obvious function. This feel works perfectly for foreign, strange cities or in campaigns where the characters are barbarians or hail from a rustic, frontier area.



In an oppressed city, use an austere environment, suspicion, and fear to communicate a tyrant's iron grip. Secret police mingle with the population while the town guard wield deadly weapons and dress in brightly colored, intimidating uniforms. Criminals are left to hang from city gates, while the severed heads of the recently executed are placed on display in public areas. This feel is a great way to make the party fearful or paranoid when they must travel into a city dominated by an evil power.

For a friendly, vibrant city, commoners may frequently hail the characters and greet them. The average person is well fed and clad in new clothes, while public monuments and most buildings are built not only for utility but also to improve the city's physical splendor. Trees, flowers, and bushes are planted along the main roads to brighten the city. A prosperous trade town or a bastion of good is served well by this feel.

A decaying, rundown city might have thin, sickly inhabitants, crumbling buildings, and monuments that are falling into ruin. The

commoners are suspicious of travelers, while great crowds of beggars mob around anyone who looks well fed and healthy. Thugs openly walk about in armor while carrying clubs and daggers, and government officials rarely leave their isolated quarters in town.

In the end, these different tones may not fit exactly what you need. The key to developing and presenting your city's tone is to consider how you want the players to think of the city. Should they find it repulsive or wholesome? Corrupt or orderly? Once you have that down, you should then think of symbols and physical qualities that suggest the specific traits you want to communicate to the characters. Think of the people and buildings of the city as a delivery system and the tone as your message. With that in mind, you can build a cohesive tone that gives your city a distinct feel.

## THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY

As mentioned above, you can use the NPCs and other folk the characters meet to reinforce or introduce the basic feel and tone of a city.

More importantly, they are useful tools to help communicate the important news, current events, and major rumors that sweep through the city. During a war, everyone is ready to talk about the latest rumors of battles, new offensives, and other developments at the front. When preparing a city for use in play, try noting four or five important events that are common fodder for conversation. With these notes ready, you can work background information of the game world into the characters' conversations with the NPCs they meet and introduce important new leads for adventures. The best topics for conversation have several different angles you can use to introduce or color them. For example, the kingdom is at war with the united duchies of the west. Some of the NPCs the characters meet might wholeheartedly support the war, while others oppose it. The bartender at the tavern they visit has a son fighting on the front, while the wizard they hire to identify a magic sword they found may have been forced to relocate to the city by the fighting. In this case, you can feed the characters background info on an important event or portion of your campaign's history without turning the NPCs into automatons that parrot the same information. The NPCs' attitudes not only inform the characters but also help make them stand out as unique individuals.

To help organize this sort of interaction, use a sheet of paper to list a few important events or rumors that you would like to introduce to the characters. Then, consider how different individuals could react to each topic. Are they for it or against it? Do they have a personal stake in it? Is there anything about their job or political leanings that would predispose them one way or another? With these issues in mind, you can quickly create a series of small social encounters to help keep the game interesting while bringing the city to life.

NPCs can also set the tone and mood for a game in their attitude toward places and people in town. If a mysterious cult of wizards moves into town, the commoners may speak of the cult's tower in hushed, worried tones. They talk about rumors of demons stalking the city streets at night, or the strange screams that echo from the tower. NPCs are an easy, convenient, and plausible way to inform the characters of the game world and communicate to them the different, noteworthy factions and sites in town.

As was emphasized above, try to avoid allowing the game to grind to a halt to introduce an NPC who can talk about the game world or current events. Work these conversations into scenes that are already important or necessary to the adventure. For example, if the characters must go to an inn to meet a contact, the bartender or even their contact may make small talk involving the issues you have thought over. This method keeps the game moving while allowing you to increase the depth and scope of the game. Best of all, if you use this method with important NPCs or those that the characters frequently speak with, you can easily add more detail to their personalities and background while feeding the characters important news.

## SOCIAL CURRENTS AND RIPPLES

Tying into the idea of using NPCs to inform the characters about important events and news, over time new stories and events spread through the city. One week, a pitched battle between pirates and a small fleet of the navy's ships is the big story. The next, the sudden appearance of purple worms in the sewers dominates talk among the citizens. Over time, news becomes stale and a fresh batch of rumors spreads to take its place. In this manner, you can plausibly keep the characters updated about events around town, the development of your campaign world beyond the town's walls, and changes in the city's social, economic, and political order. Fresh news tends to stand out the most if it is more important or critical to the city's fate.

A town crier, an official paid to walk around town spreading news of important events or government policies, is a convenient method of inserting important announcements into the background of an encounter. While the characters are shadowing a suspected wererat at a pub, the crier may enter and proclaim an important piece of news or a new government initiative.

Pay attention to how the characters can affect the current events. If the PCs undertake an important mission on behalf of the city or rally the army to throw back an invading horde, they may become celebrities. Commoners cheer when they enter a tavern, while the nobility awards them with medals and throws

banquets in their honor. One of the best ways you can bring the campaign world to life is to show the players that their characters can make a real difference. Even if the characters do not seek out the spotlight, they may hear stories of how the slums are much safer after they defeat a necromancer and his undead minions who dwell there. If the characters' actions are noteworthy, work them into the current news and give them a chance to bask in their station as heroes.

## DESIGNING ADVENTURES

Urban adventures are much more difficult to design than dungeon expeditions because you do not have a map to chart out the locations of all the possible encounters and restrict the characters' choices. In a city, the PCs might go anywhere in town at any time. When pursuing a spy, they might make a colossal mistake and end up hustling to the end of town opposite from their quarry's hideout. In a dungeon, the characters have much less flexibility. If they come to an intersection, they must choose a corridor to go down. You can anticipate these choices and, with your map and list of encounters, are ready to deal with whatever path they choose. In a city, it is much harder to anticipate the players' moves. An old adage holds that no plan survives contact with the enemy. In much the same spirit, no adventure survives contact with the players' decisions. You might leave clues that seem to paint a clear path only to watch the PCs take a wholly unexpected direction. This section addresses how to design urban adventures and the most common pitfalls that can befall DMs when they use an urban environment.

### ADVENTURE BASICS

This section covers the basic steps you need to create urban adventures. Experienced DMs might want to skip ahead to the discussion of adventure flexibility below. For beginning DMs and those wishing for a refresher on adventure design, this section covers the fundamental elements of urban adventure design. As was discussed above, cities offer much different adventures than dungeons. If you are used to mapping and stocking caves and

crypts, creating an urban adventure may seem like a daunting task. This section breaks the design process down into a few simple steps.

### THE HOOK

A hook is any object, person, or event that draws the characters into an adventure. The best hooks induce the characters into an adventure by playing upon their personalities and motivations. If the dwarf fighter hates orcs, perhaps they are the main villains that must be defeated. The hook is usually introduced in the first encounter of an adventure. The characters might meet an NPC who tells them about the adventure hook or they may witness events that serve as a hook. Here are a few examples for urban adventuring:

- An assassin attempts to kill a PC but botches his attempt. When the characters question him or search his body, they discover that an old enemy plans to eliminate them before he can proceed with his plan to destroy the preeminent temple in town.
- A weeping young girl bolts from a house, pursued by a club-wielding thug. Seeing the strongest member in the party, the girl clings to him for protection. A quick investigation reveals that the thug works for a gang of slavers, and the girl is one of many victims they have recently captured. Someone must rescue the captives before they are sold to the drow.
- While attending an audience with the mayor, one of the courtiers is suddenly possessed by a ghost and leaps to attack him. After the characters deal with the situation, they must investigate the apparent conspiracy against the city.
- An evil illusionist uses his spells to frame the characters for a crime, adopting their guise while he and his minions rob a local gem merchant. The PCs have enough of a reputation to avoid an immediate arrest, but they must track down the villain to clear their names.

### THE VILLAIN

While the hook draws the characters into an adventure, the villain makes them want to follow it through to the end. The villain is the centerpiece of an adventure. He is the one that puts into motion the plans the characters must foil. He lurks behind the scenes, dispatching assassins to attack the PCs or working to turn their



friends against them. There are a few basic ingredients to making a good villain.

A villain should be effective. If the bad guys continually trip over their own cloaks and fall face-first into the mud, the players will have a hard time taking them seriously. The best villains are ruthless and efficient. They should have abilities and powers at least on par with the characters' capabilities. Create villains with a level at or above the characters' levels, and see to it that they never appear incompetent or stupid in front of the characters. The easiest way to do this is to build a dreaded reputation around the villain. His minions refuse to reveal the location of his lair, as they are too terrified of him to go against his orders. Commoners who learn the characters are against him keep their distance for fear of arousing his wrath by association. Speaking his name aloud in public is frowned upon and can bring a conversation to an abrupt halt. Be careful not to overdo it. At low levels, the characters may face villains who are feared in a particular neighborhood. Jonas the local bully may strike fear into the people at the local tavern, but the mayor is unlikely to have even heard of him.

The villain should have a good reason for committing his evil acts. The characters are powerful champions of good, and no one is liable to cross them without good reason. Only a madman steals, kills, and otherwise threatens a city without rhyme or reason. While it might be tempting to cast your villain as simply insane, such justifications quickly grow old. Give your villain a good motive for committing to the path of evil and he will be more believable and easier to develop during the course of a game. Consider the villain's goals and why he pursues them. Ask yourself why he does not use legiti-

mate, legal means to achieve the same ends. What is it about his personality, the game world background, or the current situation in your campaign that pushed him to villainy? The typical vices are a good place to start: greed, ambition, hatred, jealousy, and fear are all good motivations for a villain.

Greed and ambition are obvious ones: the villain wants more power, money, or magic. He wants it so badly that he is willing to ignore the traditional routes to power. He might simply not have access to them, such as if he grew up a poor peasant in a feudal society, or illegal or evil methods work faster. Hatred and jealousy can be rooted in the campaign world's past. If the villain is from a society, religion, or race with a long-standing hatred or rivalry, he could simply be following what he has been taught. Fear is a bit more complex. The villain may be compelled to commit evil because his family is held hostage by his superiors or he has been threatened with personal punishment. He might believe that his actions are the only way to cope with an important problem, or he could misinterpret the characters' or the government's actions and fight them out of ignorance. In any case, a villain should have good reasons for committing evil acts. They are most likely not proper or acceptable reasons, but a motivation can make a villain believable and memorable.

## PLANS

Once you have created a villain, his motivations, and his goals, you need to decide on the details of how he goes about fulfilling his aims. At this point, if you have not done so yet, you should create the villain's stat block and determine his abilities. With those in mind, determine the abilities of his main lieutenants and his low-level followers. An



evil wizard may have several apprentices working beneath him and a bodyguard to defend him in battle, while a criminal mastermind may hire assassins, rogues, and fighters to put his plans into motion. Chapter 5 includes new urban monsters and a list of creatures that are commonly encountered in urban areas. Use those lists to flesh out the ranks of the villain's followers.

For the villain's major followers, flesh out their motivations, plans, and abilities in the same way that you detailed the villain. Why do they follow the villain? What do they hope to gain? Next, think about how the villain uses his followers. A brutish ogre mercenary may serve as a bodyguard, while the wily rogue leads the villain's operatives in the field and coordinates his spies. Determine where the villain and his followers make their lairs within the city and think about how they conceal their presence from the authorities. A spellcaster may use illusions. Other villains might use disguises or they could simply blend in with the population by taking care to avoid drawing attention to themselves.

Finally, make a list of what the villain has to do to bring his plans to fruition. If a criminal mastermind wants to steal the crown jewels, he may have to insert a spy into the royal court to reconnoiter its defenses, bribe or intimidate servants into helping his men, and find an opportune moment when the castle's defenses are relaxed to make his strike. By walking through these steps, you develop a clear picture of what the villain wants to do and how he plans on doing it.

### Action

A good adventure should have plenty of chances for the characters to take action. Once you have determined a hook, a villain, and the villain's plans, you should consider what the characters can do to foil them. The best adventures allow the PCs to take center stage and become the stars of the action. Action does not necessarily mean combat. Tense negotiations, a daring effort to infiltrate and spy on a wizard, and gathering clues to solve a mystery all count as exciting challenges the PCs may face. Ask yourself what the characters can do to directly solve the adventure or foil the villains' schemes. If your answers seem to pivot on the characters' finding and alerting the authorities, bringing an important NPC into the action, or watching as others do the dirty work, revise the

adventure to draw the PCs directly into the action. The main villain and all the important obstacles should be directly defeated by the characters with their skills, spells, and combat abilities. If NPCs are along for the adventure, they should always have supporting roles. The actions they take should only set up the characters to take center stage. For example, in the final showdown with the villain, the characters should be the ones who are trading sword blows and magic spells with him. An NPC informant might tip the characters off to the bad guy's location or serve as bait to draw the villain into the open, but once the final battle is at hand, the NPCs should gracefully exit the stage and fade into the background.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Once you have a hook to bring the characters into the adventure, a foul villain with an evil plan for them to oppose, and opportunities for the characters to foil his plans, you need to consider some details to flesh out the adventure. There are a few shortcuts you can use to organize the adventure and some important questions to answer about the villain and his plans.

### TIMELINES

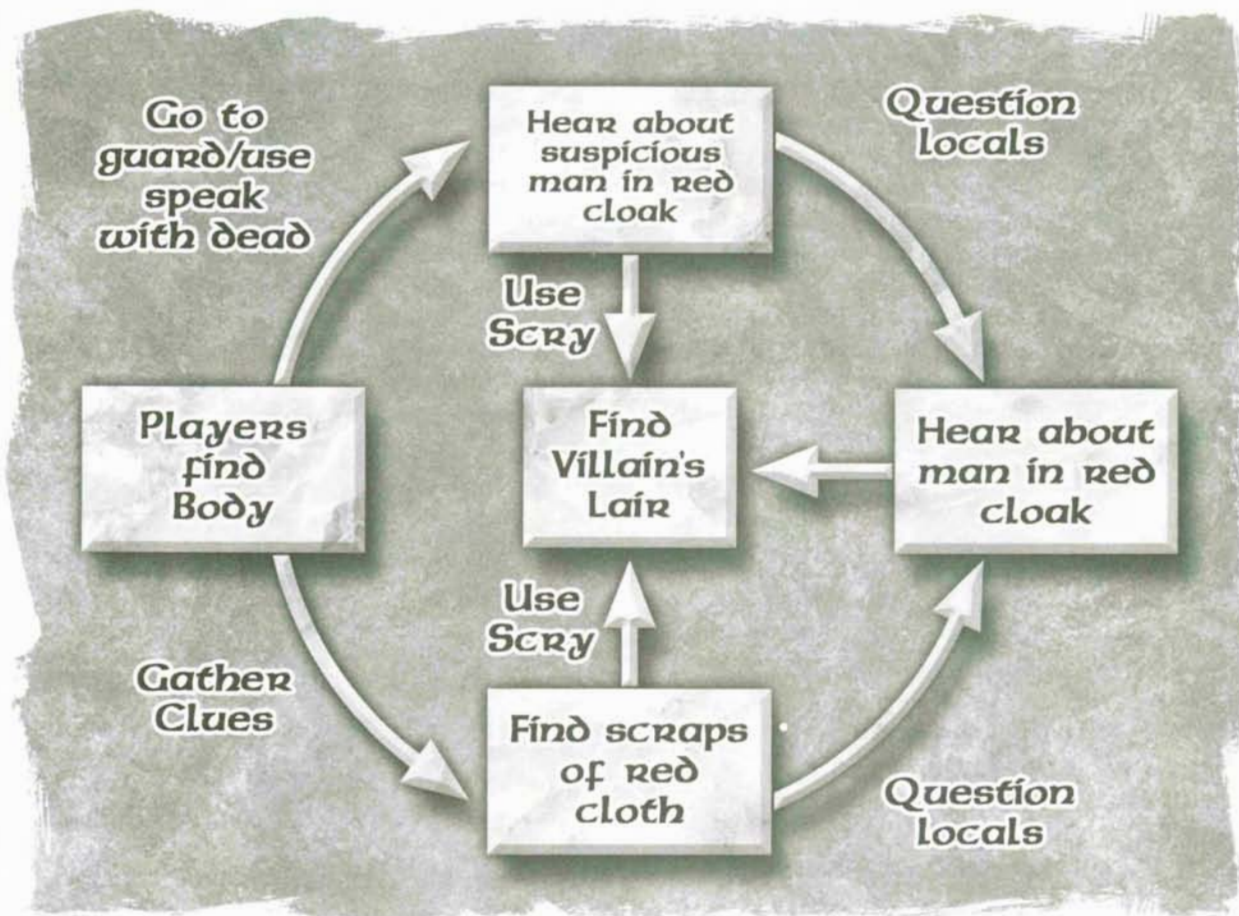
Sometimes it makes sense to schedule important events. If the evil priest plans on holding the ceremony to summon a demon at midnight, he does so no matter where the characters are in town. If they are in the dark temple or on the other side of the city having a beer, the priest goes ahead with his plans. A timeline allows you to schedule events that may happen in the course of an adventure. It is up to the characters to find clues and track down their enemies in order to prevent events from occurring. This arrangement allows you to create some specific, detailed encounters and gives you a nice foundation from which you can improvise your adventure. It works best with flexible, detailed NPCs as discussed below. The evil priest's plans may take place on a schedule, since he must complete the rituals needed to summon a demon at specific times and at specific sites. Meanwhile, his undead and human servants can attack the characters based on their plans, actions, and other developments. In this manner, you can keep the adventure entertaining and provide the characters with short-term goals that are flexible while working against the backdrop of a villain whose actions and plans you need not worry about improvising.

You can use two timelines, one to keep track of events that have a direct bearing on the NPCs and the characters and one to note important events that affect the city as a whole. The daily events that play a role in the campaign deal with the adventures and plots that affect the current adventure you are running, while the second timeline is a much larger-scale view of the campaign world and could include events such as floods, plagues, wars, and similar events.

### FLOWCHARTS

A flowchart works similar to a timeline and uses some of the more useful features of a dungeon map. In essence, a flowchart is a map of events, reactions, and choices the characters can make. This is perhaps the easiest method to use if you are new to city adventures but have experience in designing dungeons. Just like a dungeon map shows you all the choices the characters can make, the flow chart lists the encounters you planned and provides connections between them based on the clues and hooks you place in the adventure.

As a simple example, you could design an adventure in which the characters must track down the man responsible for killing an informant who has spied on an evil cult for them. You know that a red-cloaked assassin killed the victim, and that several people saw him run from the scene of the crime. In particular, a beggar who normally sleeps outside the inn saw the murderer slip into the city sewers through a grate on the street. The adventure begins with the characters' discovering their informant stabbed to death. The flow chart predicts several actions: the characters report the murder to the guard, they try to gather clues at the scene, or they use *speak with dead* to question their friend. Going to the guard and using the spell have essentially the same outcome. The characters gain a vague description of the killer, with his red cloak standing out as a notable trait. One of the strengths of a flowchart is that it allows you to account for a wide range of actions by realizing that they have essentially the same effect on the plot. If the characters gather clues at the crime scene, they find a shredded piece of the cloak. While the characters may have used much different methods in all three situations, in each case they achieve the same basic goal.



The next step of the flowchart shows that sometimes, different paths can lead to the same point. If the characters use a spell such as *scrying*, it leads them to the same point on the flowchart, as the spell shows them the killer in his lair. The same thing happens if the characters question the locals in the tavern, as from either path it gives them the same information about the man's escape into the sewer.

As you can see from the flowchart, it attempts to predict a wide variety of PC actions. To cut down on the work necessary to design a flowchart, it is critical to remember that many times different methods yield the same results. Do not focus on the specifics of the flowchart events. Instead, think of them as stops along the path to completing the adventure. For example, at any point the characters could go to see a sage or pursue other angles that have no bearing on the adventure. You do not need to add these to your flowchart, since they do not advance the characters' cause. If the PCs do something unexpected that could help their efforts, you can simply pick a spot on the flowchart that is a logical step from their actions and proceed from there.

Think of the flowchart as a dungeon map where the characters forge their own corridors between encounter areas. The squares and other critical spots on the chart should be important encounters, such as fights, roleplaying scenes, or clues that the characters must overcome to complete the adventure. Some of these encounters may be tied to specific locations, while others are linked to NPC and could take place anywhere. For example, the characters may need to go to the scene of a crime to find clues there. On the other hand when the PCs start asking questions at the tavern frequented by the villain, he may send an assassin to kill them. This attack might be an important part of the flowchart, but it can occur almost anywhere in town.

One of the flowchart's easily overlooked strengths is that it allows you to account for the use of powerful spells such as *teleport* and *scrying*. DMs who rely on scripted plots and roleplaying scenarios often find that those spells easily overwhelm their plans. The villain's elaborate defenses mean little if the party simply uses *teleport* to pop into his throne room and attack him. When creating your flow-

chart, look over the spells that the PCs have access to and consider how they can alter the course of events. As you can see in the example flowchart, using *scrying* is just as legitimate a way to find the villain as interacting with witnesses and gathering information. With these spells in mind, you can tailor the villain's plans to account for them. Most of the time, these spells simply allow the PCs to skip a few steps on the flowchart.

If you have played many video games, you might be familiar with the concept of a boss monster, a particularly powerful foe that must be defeated in order to proceed to the next level. You can use the villain's followers in your flowchart in a similar manner. For example, your chart could work so that in order to advance from one section of the chart to the next, the characters must defeat a specific NPC villain. This layered approach allows the characters to overcome successively more powerful opponents while uncovering new clues necessary to advance their quest. In this manner, you can link the flowcharts for multiple adventures together into a single, cohesive campaign without trying to map out everything that could happen over the course of an entire game. As the characters draw close to the end of your current adventure arc, you can build new material based on their actions that links directly into the flowchart you created.

## FLEXIBILITY

The most important thing to remember about urban adventures is that it is critical to stay flexible. Since you cannot possibly predict all of the players' choices and reactions, you need to be ready to change your plans on the fly. The easiest way to do this is to focus more on creating general, easily modified encounters and situations that you can easily alter to fit the characters' choices and actions.

When detailing villains and other NPCs, focus on their important attributes and personality traits that have little to do with their location and placement within an adventure. If you know how a gang of assassins operates, the tactics they favor, and their general goals and plans regarding the PCs, you can spring an attack using them in almost any area of the city. If the assassins prefer to approach their targets in disguise, they can adopt the clothes of commoners, nobles, or beggars depending on

where the characters are in town. Make the NPCs active players who seek out the PCs and make aggressive plans to deal with them. There are times when it makes sense to link an NPC to an area. A powerful lich may remain hidden in the town's graveyard, but he can still send undead servants out to spy on the characters and foil their plans. If the villains and NPCs are aggressive and active, you can easily alter their plans and actions to fit with the PCs' decisions. This tactic reflects that the bad guys change their actions in response to the characters' activity.

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Social encounters are a critical portion of most urban adventures, as the characters are continually surrounded by a vast mass of people. There are few places they can go where people about their daily business cannot be found. This section gives you some hints and tips on designing roleplaying encounters.

Social interactions can take on many different forms. The characters may need to find clues to advance an investigation, win someone over as an ally, or intimidate someone into giving them information. In any case, all social interactions take on the same basic form. The characters must convince someone to do something or present themselves in a way that wins the trust and support of an NPC. The key to social encounters is the design and use of the NPCs the characters meet. They should have personalities that stand out and draw the characters' interest. They should also have goals or desires that smart players can use to win them over.

Personality traits turn plain, bland NPCs into interesting characters. The best traits are obvious enough that they have a direct effect on how an NPC acts towards the characters. An honorable knight may mention his dedication to a chivalric code, while a shifty wizard may have darting eyes and a nervous tic. Pick one or two traits for an NPC and consider how they can be displayed to the characters. You can also decide on a third trait that is not as strong or important as the first two. While it might be overshadowed, it can play an important role in the characters' long-term interactions with the NPC. The Urban Events section of Chapter Five includes a series of tables you can use to randomly generate NPC attitudes and traits.

An NPC's goals, like his personality traits, are important parts of a social encounter that the players can use to win over, intimidate, or otherwise deal with a person they meet. These goals could range from the simple and obvious, such as a desire to avoid being punched in the face by the party's barbarian, to the subtle and more complex, such as an effort to mislead the characters so that the villain spares an innocent victim's life. A goal may run counter to the characters' aims, forcing them to use intimidation and other direct methods with the NPC, or they could be close enough that the characters must make concessions or promises to the NPC.

Keep in mind that within the context of the city, the characters could meet a powerful, evil villain but have no reason to attack him. If the PCs know that the minister of defense is actually an evil priest but have no proof of his true nature, they cannot simply attack him during a state dinner. If they assault him, the guards arrest them and throw them in the dungeon, possibly forever ruining their reputation in town. A social encounter with a powerful villain is a good opportunity for the PCs to discover his personality traits, study his methods, and attempt to trick him into revealing an important clue. They could go through an entire campaign with an important villain within easy striking distance but remain unable to simply attack him for fear of the legal and social consequences. With the players aware of the menace an NPC presents but forced to deal with him on a purely social level, you can create some tense, exciting roleplaying scenes.

## STEALTH

Stealth is another important part of an urban adventure. With the city so crowded by its population, the characters must take care to avoid drawing any undue suspicion to their actions. Chapter 2 includes a system on designing and using the town guard. In addition, there are other practical concerns that make stealth important. The characters may need to slip into an enemy stronghold and remain undetected, or they may have to assault a foe in a public area without drawing too much attention to their actions. In any case, introducing stealth into an adventure is relatively simple.

The first step you must take is to demonstrate to the characters the importance of remain-

ing quiet. A friendly NPC could warn them to avoid drawing attention, or a night spent locked in the dungeon should remind them that being loud and flashy is a bad idea in the city. If the players do not know that stealth is an important part of an adventure, they obviously will not take care to be quiet or even worry about it until it is too late.

Listen and Spot checks are the easiest way to determine whether or not the characters draw any unwanted attention. Brush up on the Listen skill's description, as it outlines modifiers to checks based on distance. Note on maps or in encounter notes the various modifiers that apply to creatures in the area. For example, you could mark down on your map that the guards have a -10 penalty to their Listen checks to hear anything in a specific corridor. This method makes it easy to resolve such skill checks in response to the characters' actions without slowing down the game.

The characters should also take care to conceal any physical evidence of their actions. After a short, quiet fight with a sentinel, they may leave their foe's body behind. Later, a patrol finds the corpse and raises the alarm. When designing locations, make notes on the movement of guards and how the place develops over time. You could make a simple chart that lists different times of day and where creatures and guards are located. The table below serves as an example. The table also shows how the guards can move from place to place. In some cases, the guards move from area to area over a given time. To determine exactly where a patrol is when the characters enter an area, roll 1d10 and look at the table's list of locations. These mobile units have a rotation time listed. This is the total time they take to visit all the areas they guard. Assume guardians spend an equal amount of time in each area.

In addition to the patrol table, you should also keep in mind the advice given above under flexibility. If intruders are detected, what do the guards do in response? Consider the villain's personality, motives, and desires. If his lair is hidden in a residential area, it is unlikely that his guards sound alarms and rush to surround the place in full armor. Rather, they may move to block the exits but try to keep quiet and work to contain any disturbance. In a more militarized setting, sleeping guards may be roused and sent to reinforce defensive positions.

## PATROL LOCATIONS

Creature	Daytime Location	Nighttime Location
Guard dogs	Gardens	Kennel
Guardian hydra	Creature pen	Gardens
Patrol #1	Front gate	Barracks (asleep)
Patrol #2	One-hour rotation Gardens (1–4) Rear gate (5–8) Inner courtyard (9–10)	Barracks (asleep)
Vampire spawn	Tower, 2nd floor (asleep)	Front gate
Ghouls	Cellar (asleep) Gardens (1–4) Rear gate (5–8) Inner courtyard (9–10)	Half-hour rotation
Vlad Monegro	Crypt (asleep)	Workshop

In any case, it might be easiest to keep monster and NPC stats on index cards. Write the creature's name in big easy-to-read letters on the back and note its stats on the lined side. This way, you can easily keep track of the defenders and their stats without having to constantly flip through your notes. You could even use sticky notes to mark their current locations, perhaps even color coding them to group them together by position.

## URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

Cities present a wide range of interesting environments in which encounters can take place. From a crowded market square at noon to a city's rooftops at midnight, there are a wide variety of interesting venues you can use for encounters. This section presents several different environments with rules for each. Use them to spice up encounters, particularly combats, and add a new dimension to your game. A sword fight against a villain is the highlight of an adventure. A sword fight against a villain in the midst of a burning building can be the highlight of a campaign.

### CHASES

If you have watched any cop shows or movies, you know that a massive chase involving dozens of cars and crowds of screaming pedestrians is sure to take place sooner or later. The

bad guys spot the heroes and decide to make a break for it, hopping into a car and barreling through crowded streets. Cities offer perhaps the most interesting terrain for a chase, with their tight, winding roads and teeming crowds of innocent bystanders. Sometimes, you can simply use the rules for movement to resolve a chase. In a city, though, there are enough random elements to the environment that luck and intelligence play a role in making a getaway or tracking down a suspect. Some basic rules are given here to resolve exciting and dramatic chases.

To begin with, you need to determine the characters' and NPCs' chase scores. A chase score equals a character's speed divided by 5 plus his Dexterity modifier. If a character is mounted, use his vehicle or riding beast's speed.

Next, you need to decide how dangerous and crowded the environment is. The more twisty and confusing the streets, the harder they are to navigate. By the same token, crowded streets are more difficult to move through. On the other hand, clear, straight boulevards allow a faster, more agile character to easily outdistance his slower counterparts.

**Condition**

Narrow, twisty streets	-2
Average streets	+0
Straight, wide streets	+2
Densely crowded	-4
Moderately crowded	-2
Sparsely crowded	+0
Empty	+2

**Chase Score Modifier**

Next, break the chase's participants down into two groups. The quarry is the person being chased. The pursuers are the ones doing the chasing. Determine how far apart the two groups are in feet once the chase begins.

The pursuers must make a chase check by rolling a d20, adding their chase scores, and comparing the result to the prey's chase defense. Chase defense equals 10 + the prey's chase score. If this check succeeds,

the pursuer moves a total distance equal to his speed closer to the quarry. If he catches or overtakes his target, you can then resolve their actions using the standard combat rules. You can roll for initiative at this point or have each participant in the chase roll once pursuit begins and use the results whenever you must use round-by-round actions. When the chase reaches this point, start at the top of the initiative order and move through it as normal. If the quarry manages to move more than 100 feet away from the pursuer, stop combat and return to the chase system. You can also use this option if one side or the other uses a barrier or other environmental effect to break off contact. For example, if one side uses *wall of ice* to block the road then you can return to the chase system once the pursuers have broken through the wall.



Each round, the participants in a chase use the double move action. If for some reason one or more parties stop while others continue, keep moving the characters involved in the chase as per a double move. For example, if the characters chase down a group of four drow and manage to use *web* to catch two of them, the free drow continue running at their double move speed each round.

Flying characters can easily evade escape, since they can soar over obstacles. They ignore all modifiers to their chase score due to road and crowd conditions unless they fly just above ground level. In either case, double a flying creature's speed for purposes of computing his chase score.

This process assumes that the quarry and the pursuer take no special actions to improve their chances of success. Listed below are a variety of tactics either side can use to escape or overtake the other. Each participant may opt to use an action and resolve its effects in initiative order. Characters may delay their actions to see the results of their friends' and enemies' moves as normal.

**Daring Maneuver:** The quarry or the pursuer tries an outrageous stunt to gain an advantage. He may leap onto a passing wagon and ride it for a short time, vault over a wall, or scramble up the side of a building and climb over the roof. In any case, one party attempts to increase his speed or gain an advantage by selecting a risky but potentially rewarding path. The character attempting this action must make a Balance, Tumble, or other appropriate check against DC 20. On a success, he gains a +4 bonus to his chase score for the next check. On a failure, he sustains a -4 penalty on the next check. The pursuer sustains the penalty to his check. The quarry's chase score is lowered for purposes of determining the pursuer's check DC.

**Obstacles:** This option allows the quarry to make the chase more difficult for the pursuers by throwing obstacles in their way. He may push over a pile of baskets for sale in a market, knock over people in a crowd to start a fight, or spook a horse and make it charge into a crowd. This option only works in areas that qualify for a negative chase modifier due to narrow streets or crowded conditions. The quarry must make a Strength check (DC 10) to create an obstacle.

If he succeeds, the pursuers suffer -2 penalties to their chase scores for the next check. Otherwise, they gain +2 bonuses as the quarry wastes time in an ineffectual attempt to delay them.

**Push a Mount:** Characters mounted on horses and other animals or riding carts or wagons pulled by beasts of burden can try to push them using Ride or Handle Animal. With a successful check with that skill (DC 15) they gain a +2 bonus or increase their chase DCs by 2 for their next chase checks. There is no penalty for failing this check, but each time you try to use a skill in this manner after the first attempt you suffer a cumulative -1 penalty to your check as your mount wears down. For example, after four tries (whether they succeeded or failed), you would suffer a -3 penalty to Ride checks to push your mount for the rest of the chase.

**Spells:** Spells can improve the pursuer's ability to move or hinder the quarry's foes. A character who casts a spell suffers a -4 penalty to his chase score for purposes of checks or determining the DC for the next check. Resolve the spell's effects as normal. When the pursuers or quarry reaches a spell or is hit by it, they may have to stop moving for several rounds to cope with it. Other spells, such as *invisibility*, can bring a chase to a halt because the pursuer has no realistic chance of finding the quarry without magical assistance.

**Tactical Options:** Once two groups draw near, there are several actions they are likely to take to stop one or the other. Any attempts to tackle a creature should be resolved with the rules for grappling. The tackler simply charges and then attempts the grapple his target.

For chases involving horses, wagons, and carts, there are a few more options that require special consideration. While complete vehicle rules are beyond the scope of this book, here are some basic guidelines you can use to run fights that take place on a moving vehicle.

Assume that a cart or wagon can move as the animals pulling it. The beasts of burden count as dragging the cart and its cargo for purposes of determining their speed and maximum load. Divide the total weight among each creature beyond the first pulling a cart, assuming they are relatively the same size and strength, to determine their total load and speed.

A driver must spend a move-equivalent action to direct the cart each round. If for some reason he does not spend an action to do this, such as if he was hit by a *hold person* spell, the cart continues ahead at its current speed. Determine the direction it goes upon coming to an intersection at random. So long as the animals can see where they are heading, they stop or move to avoid (equal chance of either) any obstacles. Any creature on a moving cart must make a Balance check (DC 10) before its actions for the round or suffer a -2 penalty to all skill checks and attacks as the cart bumps and shudders down the road. Leaping into a wagon requires a Jump check (DC determined by the type of jump and distance) and a Balance check (DC 15) to remain standing. On a failed Balance check, the character falls prone. Jumping on to the back of a horse, donkey, or other creature pulling a cart requires a Balance check (DC 20) to avoid falling off the animal. Falling from a moving wagon causes damage as if the character fell a distance equal to the cart's current speed.

## CROWDS

With the great number of people within a city and the teeming throngs that could show up to shop in a market or attend an important religious service or festival, the characters may find themselves battling a villain in the midst of a large group of innocent bystanders. These rules cover fights that occur in a crowd.

The crowd provides cover to those who stand within it depending on how dense it is. Furthermore, the crowd's density limits movement and line of sight. The listed cover applies to all targets that are in the crowd, even adjacent ones. The press and push of the crowd makes most attacks difficult. The speed modifier applies to all creatures within the crowd, though no character's speed can be reduced to less than 5 feet. The sight distance is the maximum range at which characters can see any targets. Beyond that, any creature of the same size or smaller than the members of the crowd is impossible to see. Larger creatures can be sighted as normal.

As an optional rule, the crowd's density automatically drops one level per round once a fight breaks out. The people in the crowd panic and try to move away from violence. If the crowd density is light, it drops to nothing.

Sometimes, panic can cause a crowd to run out of control. Increase the crowd's density by one category as the crowd becomes more active and frenetic. Each round, characters in a panicked mob must make either a Strength or Balance check (DC 10) to avoid being knocked prone. Prone characters suffer 1d6 points of subdual damage per round due to trampling. Standing up requires a Strength or Dexterity check (DC 10). Unconscious characters continue to suffer damage until they are killed. If the characters engage in a fight within a crowd, there is a 10% chance per round that the crowd panics. Any loud, spectacular spell effects increase this chance to 50% during the round in which they were used. Effects that have an obviously deadly effect on a crowd, such as *cloudkill*, automatically cause a crowd to panic.

Density	Cover	Speed	Sight
Light	1/4	-0 ft.	normal
Moderate	1/2	-5 ft.	60 ft.
Heavy	3/4	-10 ft.	30 ft.
Packed	9/10	-20 ft.	10 ft.

## FIRE

Fire is a major threat in most fantasy cities, as the wooden buildings within them can quickly go up in flames. Without magical support, fire fighting is a difficult task at best. In most cities, arson is a capital crime.

Characters at risk of catching fire are allowed a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to avoid this fate. If a character's clothes or hair catch fire, he takes 1d6 points of damage immediately. In each subsequent round, the burning character must make another Reflex saving throw. Failure means he takes another 1d6 points of damage that round. Success means that the fire has gone out. (That is, once he succeeds at his saving throw, he's no longer on fire.)

A character on fire may automatically extinguish the flames by jumping into enough water to douse himself. If no body of water is at hand, rolling on the ground or smothering the fire with cloaks or the like permits the character another save with a +4 bonus.

Those unlucky enough to have their clothes or equipment catch fire must make Reflex saving throws (DC 15) for each item. Flammable items that fail sustain the same amount of damage as the character.

Within a burning building, there is a 10% chance per round that a random character is struck by falling debris. The character must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or suffer 1d6 points of damage and make a Reflex save to avoid catching fire as described above.

Smoke presents a much greater danger than flames. Each round a character stands within a burning building, he must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or suffer 1d6 points of damage. In addition, with each failed save the character suffers a cumulative -1 penalty to all additional saves against smoke inhalation made during that encounter.

As floorboards burn, they weaken and may send a character plunging to his doom. There is a 5% chance each round that a randomly determined character falls through a wooden floor. He takes falling damage as normal and most likely falls into a roaring fire.

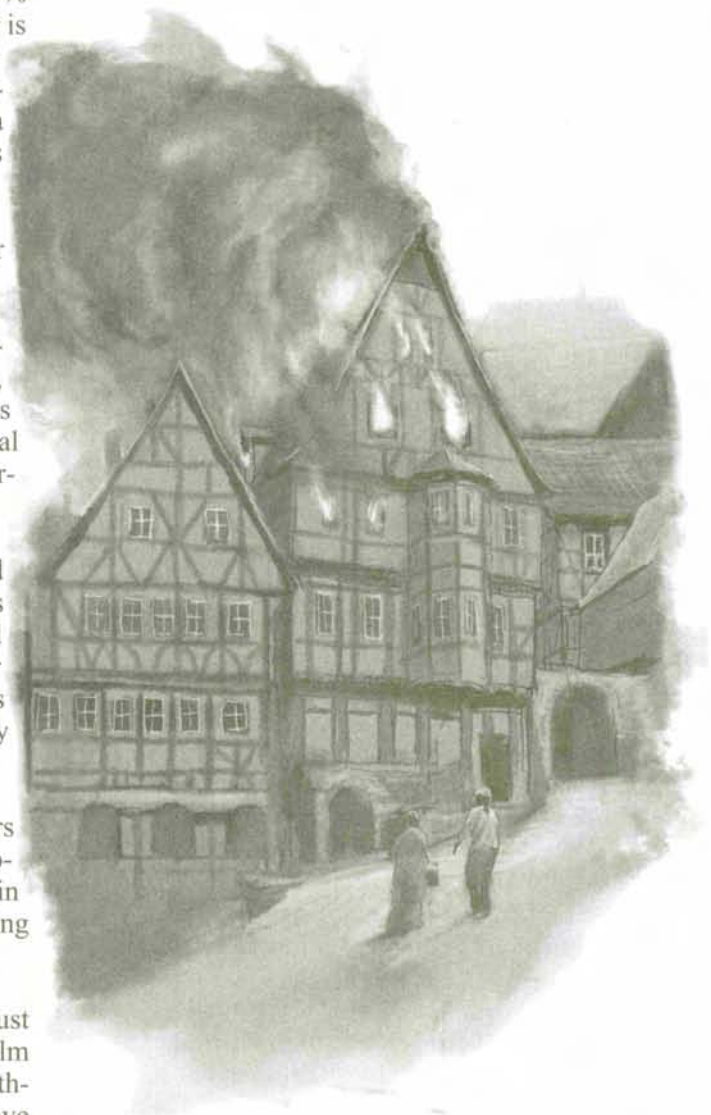
A character standing within flames suffers 1d6 points of damage per round and automatically catches fire. This damage is in addition to the damage suffered for catching fire.

As an optional rule, animals and NPCs must make Will saves (DC 15) to remain calm during a fire. On a failed save, they do nothing on their action but make a double move in a randomly determined direction to escape the flames. Panicked creatures move to avoid obstacles and flames. If they encounter either of them, randomly determine the direction they move to avoid them.

## ROOFTOPS

A rooftop duel is a classic trope of fantasy stories and comic books. Two skilled warriors face off with swords drawn, darting from building to building while trading deadly blows. Within a city, a rooftop scene can serve as an exciting climax to an adventure.

Moving from building to building requires a Jump check to leap across the span between buildings. Most alleys are 5 to 10 feet wide, while streets could be up to 30 feet across. Obviously, a failed Jump check results in a fall.



While fighting on a sloped roof, the character on the higher edge gains a +1 circumstance bonus to his melee attack rolls. All combatants must make Balance checks (DC 10) at the beginning of their actions or slide 2d6 feet down slope, possibly falling off the building's edge.

A bull rush attack can push an opponent off a building. If the attacker succeeds in this action, he simply forces an opponent to move off the building's edge. While grappling, a character can choose to move his opponent 5 feet in any direction with a successful grapple check. This option may be chosen in place of damaging an opponent, pinning him, escaping, or breaking a pin.

## SEWERS

Few adventurers can avoid entering the city's sewers during the course of an adventure. Hidden from the city above, the sewers offer the ideal hiding place for strange cults, evil wizards, undead monstrosities, and other threats. The sewers present a daunting, difficult environment that can turn the typical encounter into a deadly challenge.

Many areas of the sewers are half-flooded with water. Within these areas, characters can move at half their normal speed. Since the water there is invariably murky with dirt and filth, all characters suffer a -10 circumstance penalty to Spot and Search checks against creatures and objects beneath the water. Furthermore, aquatic monsters and others that can hide beneath the water's surface while attacking gain total concealment against attackers who cannot see into the murk.

Slime and muck coats the sewers' stone channels, making footing treacherous at best. Any time a character attempts to run, he must make a Balance check (DC 15) or fall prone. A character who falls down while in chest-deep water may begin to drown if he cannot stand up. See the d20 System core rules for information on drowning.

In some areas, the horrid stench of raw sewage can prove overpowering. In such an area, a character must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or suffer 1d4 points of temporary Strength damage due to queasiness and retching. This damage disappears as soon as affected characters can return to fresh air. Many sewer creatures, such as rats and giant spiders, are immune to this effect.

## TAVERN BRAWL

A tavern is a classic spot for a nice, rowdy brawl between the characters and local toughs. When a fight breaks out in a rough area of town, chances are that everyone on the premises joins in with gusto. Use the rules for crowds given above and assume that a tavern during a fight is a heavy or packed crowd. Each round, the characters run the risk of being struck by random punches, kicks, and thrown beer steins delivered by the bar's rowdy patrons. After a character takes an action, he is the target of 1d4 attacks with a base attack bonus of

+1d6 that deal 1d3 points of subdual damage each. A random thug takes a swing at a PC, the party wizard is hit on the head by a madman flinging mugs into the crowd, while the cleric is showered in chunks of wood when a barbarian slams a dwarf into a table. A character who takes cover behind the bar, hides in a private booth, or otherwise removes himself from the fight ignores these attacks. As a move-equivalent action, a character may make an Intimidate check using his Charisma or Strength modifier (DC 10) to cancel these attacks. On a successful check, the character manages to scare off anyone looking for a fight.

## STUNTS

The urban environment has plenty of opportunities for daring characters to commit rousing, exciting stunts. A swashbuckler grabs a chandelier to swoop across a room and snatch a lovely maiden away from the villain. A powerfully built dwarf barbarian hefts a cask of ale and rolls it down a hallway, sending a squad of thugs diving for cover. Many times, the environment offers characters a chance to pull off clever stunts that the game rules cannot cover. This section introduces a simple system of stunts that you can use to adjudicate almost any attempt by a character to utilize the environment to his advantage.

The first thing to keep in mind is the basic definition of a stunt. A stunt is any action that does not fall under the rules but seems a plausible course of action. Swinging from a chandelier is a smart way to move across a room in safety, while rolling a giant barrel down a hallway can clear it of enemies. In both cases, the stunts are difficult but not impossible. These rules should not be an excuse for characters to do impossible things or casually break the rules. Kicking a tower over with a single blow would make an amazing stunt in a movie, but it is not plausible in the game. As DM, you always have the option to veto a stunt if it could unbalance the game, is simply impossible, or is a blatant attempt to abuse these rules.

To commit a stunt, a player must describe what his character wants to do. This description should have two parts. First, the player should provide a vivid description of his character's action. Second, he should explain the effect he wants in either game mechanics or by describing it. The verbal description is meant to make



the game more entertaining and to challenge players to come up with entertaining stunts. It should also justify why the stunt can work. The second part is important for determining how the stunt works in terms of game rules.

To resolve the stunt, choose the skill or ability the character must use to successfully complete it. A character could also use his base attack bonus, melee attack bonus, or ranged attack bonus if the stunt involves his weapons or an attack. Next, determine the DC of this check. The base DC for a stunt is 10. This base DC is modified according to the effects listed below.

**Attack a Target:** A stunt can simply be a complex attack that involves improvised weapons. Most of these stunts involve turning items in the environment into weapons. Pushing a heavy couch down a staircase to slam into a group of guards counts as an attack stunt. The DC for this stunt is  $10 + 2$  per target. Keep in mind that a character cannot use a stunt to attack more targets than is physically possible with the maneuver he described. Usually, it makes the most sense for you as DM to deter-

mine how many targets he can hit with it. Strength is probably the most common ability to resolve these stunts. If the check succeeds, the targets may all make Reflex saves with a DC equal to the stunt check result or suffer 1d6 points of damage. If the object involved in the stunt is particularly large, you can opt to increase the damage by 1d6 for every increase of 5 to the DC.

For example, an archer wants to shoot the rope holding a chandelier so that it crashes to the ground and hits an ogre. The base DC for this stunt is 12, since it has one target. The DM rules that the chandelier is heavy enough to inflict 3d6 points of damage. For increasing the damage by 1d6 twice, the base DC increases by 10. Thus, the final DC is 22. The DM rules that since the archer wants to shoot the rope with an arrow, he must make a ranged attack against AC 22. If he hits, the ogre must make a Reflex save with a DC equal to the attack's total or suffer 3d6 points of damage.

**Hinder a Target:** Some stunts cause trouble for the characters' enemies by

hindering their movement, forcing them to duck under cover, or trapping them with an item in the environment. For example, an archer may attempt to shoot the rope holding up a tapestry so that it falls on and traps a kobold. The base DC for this stunt is 10 plus 2 per target that could be affected. Creatures targeted by this stunt must make Reflex saves (DC 10) to avoid its effects. A character can increase the DC to avoid the effect by 1 by increasing the stunt's DC by 2. The stunt can have several effects, summarized below. Pick one for the stunt.

- You can treat it like a successful net attack, using the Reflex save DC as the difficulty for any Strength checks or other attempts to escape the net. This method works best when using elements of the environment to trap a target.
- Creatures that fail the save suffer a -5 circumstance penalty to attacks, checks, and saves on their next action. This reflects stunts that confuse or dazzle a creature for a moment.
- The target must immediately move 5 feet in a direction chosen by the character. This movement cannot force a creature to take a suicidal action, such as jumping of a cliff or leaping into a fire.

**Movement:** Stunts can allow the characters to sweep through an area in safety or charge towards an opponent at breakneck speed. Swinging on ropes, sliding across a slick floor on a steel shield, or leaping into a barrel and rolling down a set of stairs all count as movement stunts. To attempt a movement stunt, a character must make a Tumble check against DC 15. A successful check allows the character to make a double move that round with one of the following effects.

- The character moves twice his double move speed, essentially taking a quadruple move. The character may not be targeted by attacks of opportunity.
- The character can clear a path as he moves, forcing creatures to move out of his way. When he enters an area occupied by a creature, it must move aside.

Other effects are allowable depending on the exact nature of the stunt. These three are the basis for most stunts the characters may

attempt. A stunt can include more than one effect. Increase the DC by 5 for each effect beyond the first.

On a failed Tumble check, the character moves as normal but does not gain the benefits of the stunt's effects. He may also suffer additional effects based on the stunt's nature. For example, a character who tried to swing across a room on a chandelier may fall and take damage.

**Using Stunts:** When using stunts, remember to keep tight control over their effects to prevent the players from abusing them. Remember, if a stunt is impossible, you should veto it. More importantly, you always have final say on how the stunt actually works. If a player wants to drop a 10-foot-by-10-foot rug on 20 orcs, you should step in to point out that only four orcs could be reasonably covered by it. Usually, it is best to create environments that encourage stunts while keeping them within reason. Add rugs, chandeliers, heavy furniture, and similar items to your encounter areas. If you trust your players to use the stunt system within reason, allow them to fill in minor details of the area. In a tavern, the party's fighter can reach over and grab a pitcher of beer off the bar even though you did not describe one there. The player adds that detail to the scene, allowing him to attempt an exciting stunt. As long as the players add details to the scene that make sense and do not abuse the spirit of these rules, these minor alterations of the environment encourage them to pay attention to the game and engage their creativity.

By the same token, if characters can use stunts then villains can also employ them. Generally speaking, it is best to restrict stunts to important villains or powerful creatures. If every random thug or kobold can pull off dangerous stunts, these rules lose a bit of their special feel. If you are a fan of action movies, you may have noticed that the nameless background characters rarely have a chance to do anything spectacular. Stunts are what set the heroes and villains above the typical characters. If you allow all NPCs access to these rules, your combats may quickly focus more on strange actions and stunts than normal attacks and spells. The entire point of stunts is that they represent atypical, special actions, not run of the mill options.

# URBAN EVENTS

Just as monster templates can be used to modify a creature, turning a typical orc into a demonic beast or an undead menace, urban event templates allow you to model the effects of widespread, catastrophic events on a city. A gleaming, civilized bastion of commerce can quickly turn into an anarchic mess if a terrible plague sweeps through town. Angered by repressive laws or unfair treatment, the commoners can take to the streets in riots that push a town into temporary barbarism. The urban templates work with the descriptors and systems given previously in this book. They alter a city's law enforcement, government, and economy to reflect the effects of a sudden change or special event that can shake a city to its core. Whenever possible, the templates include descriptions and ideas you can use even if you do not utilize all of the rules from previous sections.

Each event template includes an overview of its effects, uses, and nature along with information on how it alters different aspects of city life. All of the templates represent temporary conditions that cause a fundamental change in a city. In time, many of their effects fade, but they may leave behind permanent changes to a city's geography, laws, and government.

## FIRE

Large-scale fires are a terrible threat to most cities at the technology and magic level of the typical fantasy campaign. With many buildings constructed from wood and fire fighters forced to rely on hand-drawn buckets of water, even a small fire can quickly blaze out of control. Even with the help of spells such as *quench* or *control weather*, the flames could still engulf a large portion of a city precinct before they are overcome. During a fire, the city's character changes radically in areas close to the fire but remains the same in places far from it. Close to the fire, martial law is imposed and all able-bodied citizens are drafted to fight the fire. Even in a chaotic city, the government uses its resources to overcome the threat.

**Government:** The government tends to act much more lawful during a fire, as it must organize to deal with the threat. The closer to the

fire, the more pronounced this tendency. Commoners may be drafted or forced into fire-fighting duty. In cities wracked with anarchy, isolated bands may try to extinguish the flames, but the entire town could be destroyed as many folk choose to simply flee rather than stand and risk their lives.

**Law Enforcement:** The town guard tends to clamp down in the areas affected by the flames as they struggle to prevent looting and keep the populace under control. Increase the integrity and vigilance of guard units in areas near the flames by 5. The guard units assigned there are drawn from elite units to better handle the situation. Increase a guard's quality by one type. On the other hand, areas far from the flames suffer from lax security. Reduce the unit's quality by one category.

If the situation is dire, the government may impose strict enforcement of all laws. Impose a severity modifier of +1 for all crimes, as the guard vigorously pursues all criminals and levies strict punishment to enforce control.

**Economics:** As the fire rages, few merchants venture into town and many market activities screech to a halt. If the fire is far from major roads, docks, and markets, all items become one category rarer. For example, abundant items now count as average. Rare items become impossible to find. If the fire is at or near major sites and routes for trade, all items become two categories rarer. Rare and scarce items disappear from the market.

**Mapping the Fire:** When a fire breaks out, pick out an area in the city where it starts. You can either allow the fire to progress as you wish or you can use a random method to determine its spread. The fire begins in one city block. At each burning block of builds, there is a 50% chance each hour that the fire spreads to a random, adjacent block if the fire is left alone. A fire burns out after 2d6 hours, leaving charred wreckage in its wake. If workers are organized to fight the flames, there is only a 25% chance they spread and the fire lasts 1d6 hours, with a 50% chance that the fire is extinguished with the buildings only damaged, not destroyed. Note on your map where the flames are and where they spread. If the fire fighters have magical assistance, there is only a 10% chance that the flames spread and the fire is extinguished in 1d4 hours.



**Adventures:** A large-scale fire offers many opportunities for adventure. The characters may have to venture into burning buildings to rescue trapped people, fight elementals and other creatures that could be responsible for the blaze, work to keep the peace in town while the fire rages, or enter the charred, burning ruins to recover important relics or items caught within them. Use the rules given earlier in this chapter for burning buildings to run these adventures.

**Aftermath:** Once the fire is extinguished, new buildings may be erected in the stricken area. A homeless or refugee problem could plague the city, as those left without a place to live are forced to live in temporary shelters or out on streets. An inquisition could form to determine who caused the fire, and martial law could persist until the burnt areas are rebuilt. Shortages of key supplies could lead to a thriving black market and possibly starvation until the city's markets stabilize.

## FLOODS AND STORMS

Torrential rains soak the city for a week, causing a nearby river to swell over its banks and flood the streets. A typhoon rolls in off the ocean, swamping the ships in the harbor and causing waves to surge above the docks and crash into the city. The damage from a flood or a major storm is luckily confined to the course of a few days. Unlike a fire or a siege, a storm has a definite ending. Unfortunately, while it lasts it can deal tremendous damage and cause many deaths. During a storm, a city tends to slide into chaos. All but the most hardened guard units are forced to seek shelter, but even the most desperate criminal thinks twice before venturing out into a storm. Thus, this template has an isolating effect on a city. Traffic slows to a crawl and people remain indoors for the duration.

**Government:** In the days leading up to a storm, a lawful government may try to force ships to take precautionary measures and evacuate citizens from the places most likely to feel the effects of flooding and high tides. Otherwise, the government is unlikely to undergo any major changes unless its infrastructure is directly struck and incapacitated during the storm.

**Law Enforcement:** Before the storm, guard patrols step up their efforts to keep the peace. Robbery and looting may take hold as people become desperate. Increase all guard units' vigilance by 5. Once the storm rolls in or flooding begins, decrease their vigilance scores by 10 as many guard units stop patrolling and the few that are on the streets are busy preparing for or dealing with the floods. The city fathers may declare martial law or enforce stricter discipline. Apply a +1 severity modifier to all crimes in the week before and after the storm. Of course, if the storm and the floods it causes are unexpected, ignore all modifiers that take place before it begins.

**Economics:** If the storm is expected, all goods become one category rarer 2d6 days before the storm hits. In its aftermath, goods become even harder to find. Travel is difficult and uncertain in the extreme weather, and citizens begin to



hoard goods before the storm leaves few supplies on the market. Increase the rarity of all goods by two categories during the storm and for 2d6 days after it.

**Mapping the Flood:** When the floodwaters rise and waves crash into the dockside district, pick out the areas that are flooded. The floodwaters can rise 1d6 feet in most areas exposed to the water, reaching up to 2d6 feet in depth in those places hardest hit. The flooding extends d% times 10 feet into the city along the areas exposed to the river and the ocean. If the city is located on exceptionally flat ground, you can modify this distance to fit the topography. Water should flow from a river or waterfront area into the lowest areas of the city, possibly leading to flooding throughout town if its topography is a mix of high and low ground. Obviously, characters venturing into these areas must use boats unless they want to swim.

**Adventures:** During a flood, the characters can take part in rescue operations to help people escape the rising waters. They may have to use a boat or spells to ferry people to high ground. Worst of all, evil or predatory aquatic monsters may use the chance offered by the flood to swim into town to loot and pillage. The characters may have to swim into flooded buildings to battle sahuagin and other threats. A giant squid may swim into town to find an easy meal, while a daring fleet of pirates could swoop in on skiffs to pick off easy targets. The flood could even have a supernatural origin, as a god of storms or the sea exacts his vengeance on the city. Evil, aquatic outsiders or a fleet of religious fanatics could follow in the storm's wake, ready to finish the job their deity started.

**Aftermath:** Once the flood waters recede, the town may need time to rebuild its docks and restore its battered fleet of trade ships. The characters might have to go out to sea to rescue hostages kidnapped by marauding pirates and aquatic monsters, or perhaps a ship or a seaside tower has been dragged out to the deep ocean by the rising tide. The areas hit by the floods require heavy work, and looting may break out in the gap between the disaster's end and the government's resumption of authority.

## PLAGUE

A single, sickly traveler stumbles into town. After spending a night at an inn, he is found dead in his room the next day. A few days later, many of the people who came into contact with him develop symptoms of a strange disease. Soon, carts bearing the dead begin to appear on the streets as more and more people succumb to the illness. Rich and poor alike attempt to flee the city, causing massive crowds at the gates that only help spread the disease. A dreaded threat to any city, a plague can scythe through the population and leave entire neighborhoods abandoned. Yet while the illness itself poses a grave threat, the citizenry's reaction to it can be even worse. The richest folk in town barricade themselves within their estates with supplies, mercenaries, and clerics ready to aid them. The temples are overwhelmed with folk seeking healing. As they quickly run through their spells, riots break out among those who feel their needs are being ignored. Lawlessness threatens to engulf the town as many guards bolt for safer pastures and others are felled by the disease, leaving a tiny proportion to keep the peace.

**Government:** In the face of a plague, government can follow one of two basic paths. If the disease is caught soon enough, the ruling body may become much more severe and strict in an effort to contain the disease. Neighborhoods are quarantined and the priests of various temples drafted into service to use their spells to halt the outbreak. Travel to and from the city is strictly limited, as the guards force anyone entering the city to wait a few days to see if they display symptoms and forbidding all travel out of town. The army may deploy troops in the streets, increasing the number of available guards. However, most of these soldiers are tasked with manning checkpoints, controlling movement in town, and disposing of bodies.

Chaotic governments and evil ones may quickly devolve into anarchy as they seek to preserve themselves, rather than their citizens, from the disease. Even chaotic good leaders may believe that leaving each individual to ensure his own health is the easiest way to manage the crisis. In these realms, the standing army focuses more on protecting its own rather than enforcing order.

Evil governments quickly abandon their people to preserve their own lives. They turn their resources and power to recruiting spellcasters and healers to aid them and may see the plague as a convenient method to wipe out the dregs of society. Anarchy descends on the city in all areas but the richest, most prosperous areas, where the iron fist of the military invokes martial law. Commoners who approach these protected areas may be killed on sight, as the government believes that it is better to kill a few healthy people than allow even a single infected person near the safe areas in the city.

A good government attempts to enforce law and order even at the cost of its own power. It organizes the city's clerics and tries to dispense as much healing as possible to the widest number of people. The military is set to work erecting large hospitals within the city where the sick can be cared for. Even the most benevolent government has trouble holding on to control in the rougher areas of town, and panicked rioting may cause setback to relief efforts.

**Law Enforcement:** While more troops arrive in town and the government does what it can to protect itself or aid the citizenry based on its alignment, law enforcement tends to become much looser overall. Much of the city's law enforcement efforts goes to managing the plague. Petty theft, brawls, and other minor troubles go unreported or uninvestigated as the city's resources are spread thinner and thinner. Increase the vigilance of town guard units in upper class areas, major roads and gates, and sections of the city given over to governmental works by 5, but decrease the ratings by 5 everywhere else. Reduce the guards' integrity by 5 everywhere, as fears of the disease and shortages of goods make even the most steadfast soldiers more susceptible to bribery.

Arrested criminals face severe punishments, primarily as a warning to the populace in an effort to maintain order. Apply a +1 severity modifier to all crimes.

**Economics:** Trade screeches to a halt in town. Merchants refuse to visit a place struck by plague, and surrounding realms place an interdiction on all travel to and from the place. As each week of the plague goes by, increase the rarity of all goods by one category. If a product is currently rare, it becomes impossible to find in town. Food becomes critically

important, as does healing magic that can counter disease. Each week, double the price of those goods and services. Do not apply the standard modifiers for scarcity to them.

**Running the Plague:** Use the standard d20 System rules for diseases, with a few wrinkles. You may want to force characters to resist the disease if they merely come into contact with an infected person. After each encounter, there is a 10% chance each character is exposed to the disease. Increase this percentage to 50% if the characters spend a lot of time with an infected person or come into close contact with the sick. Alternatively, you can assess a flat d% roll to determine if someone has been exposed. Use the table below if you want to use this abstract method. Each day, check for each character in the party. An exposed character must save as normal for exposure to the illness. A character cured with magic or who survives the disease is immune to further exposure to it.

Character Actions	Chance of Exposure
Avoid all contact with others	0%
Slight contact with small numbers of people	5%
Frequent contact with small numbers of people	10%
Normal exposure/travel in a city	20%
Frequent travel throughout town	30%
Frequent exposure to a wide range of people	40%
Frequent, direct contact with sick individuals	50%

**Mapping the Plague:** You can track the plague's progress on your map of the city, marking the neighborhoods where the illness has broken out and keeping tabs of its spread as it develops. Over time, people exposed to the disease recover or die, cutting down the number of people who have not yet developed a resistance to the illness. A disease can run its course as you wish or you can use a random method to track its development. Each day, there is a 25% chance that the disease spreads from one section of the city to a random, adjacent location. Once the disease has taken hold, it persists for 1d6 weeks after which the situation finally stabilizes. Once an area has withstood an infection, it is immune to further exposure. The people living there have devel-

oped immunity, while those most susceptible to it have passed away.

Note that these rules are an abstract representation of how an illness can spread. Depending on the exact nature of the disease, it can spread faster, persist longer, and so on. You could make a saving throw for each area of town, treating it as a 1st-level commoner with an average Constitution. Each week, that area loses 5% of its population to the disease until it drops below half its starting population or the district throws off the infection. Grant a bonus to this save of up to +5 if the city devotes resources and magic to fight the outbreak or a penalty of up to -5 if the city is left on its own, food runs short, and fresh water becomes difficult to find.

#### Adventures:

The obvious adventures you can run during a plague are to set the characters against whatever is behind it. An evil cleric could erect a foul temple beneath the city, spreading a terrible sickness through the rats that gather there. The characters must venture into the place, dodging packs of infected zombies and mobs of commoners who, having been promised a cure by the evil cleric, fight to the death to protect him. Alternatively, the PCs may have to travel across the world to find a cure for the disease. Unless they can gather a wide variety of strange, exotic materi-

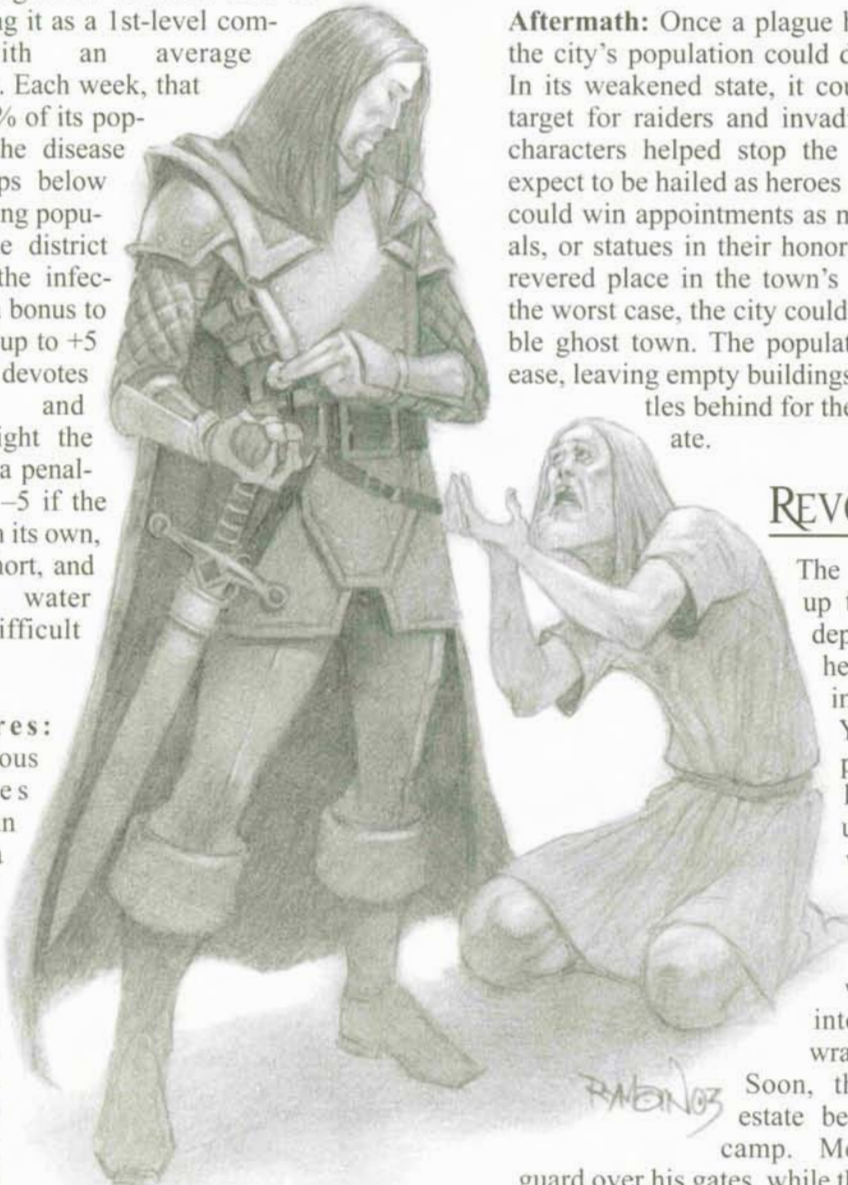
als, the sickness runs rampant until the city's population is eradicated. Otherwise, every adventure gains an added level of tension if the characters must worry about contracting a terrible disease at every turn. At low levels, the characters are unable to cure disease and must do what they can to avoid it.

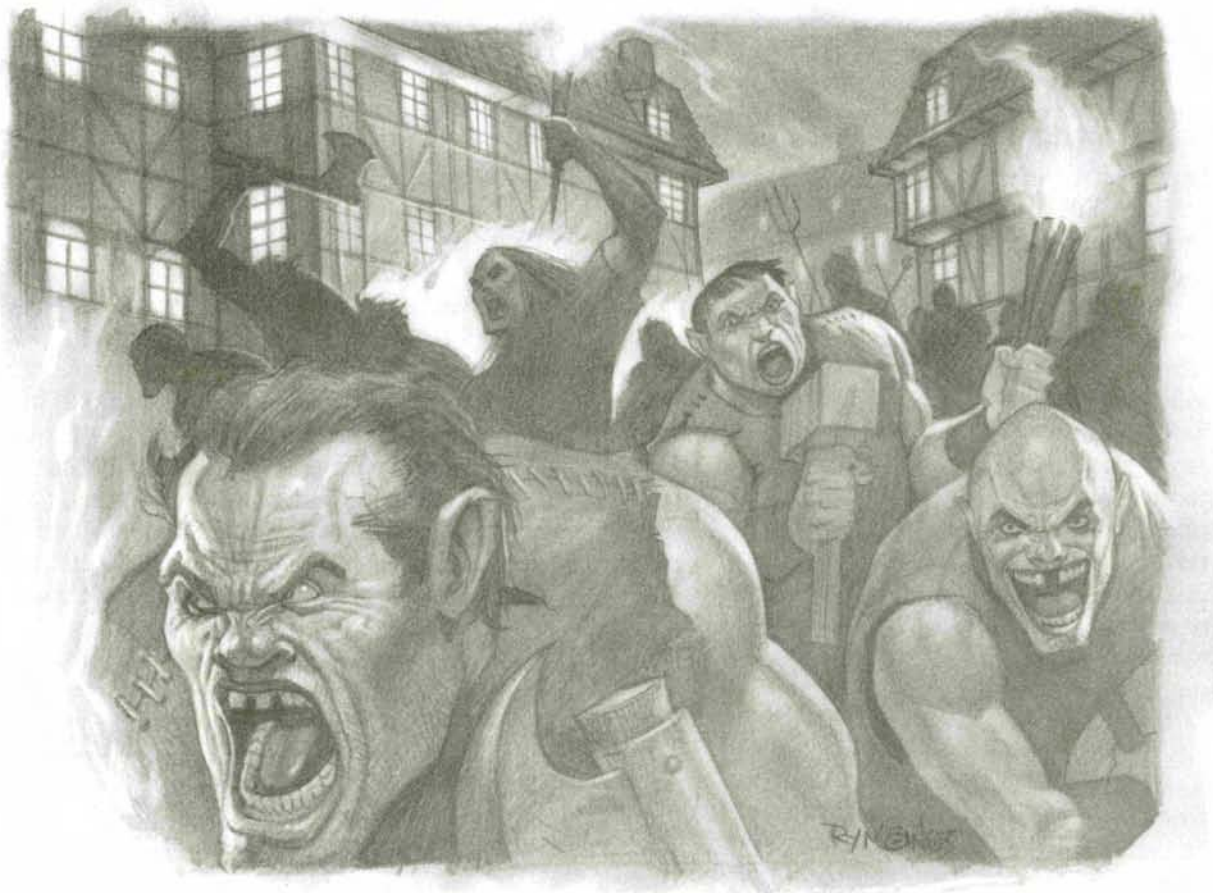
**Aftermath:** Once a plague has run its course, the city's population could drop precipitously. In its weakened state, it could be a tempting target for raiders and invading armies. If the characters helped stop the plague, they can expect to be hailed as heroes of the realm. They could win appointments as ministers or generals, or statues in their honor could be given a revered place in the town's central square. In the worst case, the city could turn into a veritable ghost town. The population flees the disease, leaving empty buildings and desolate castles behind for the poor and desperate.

## REVOLT/RIOTS

The city guard gears up to a war footing, deploying their most heavily armed units in the city's midst. Yet, even these preparations mean little when guard units turn their weapons against one another. Orators take to the street, whipping crowds into a frenzy of wrathful destruction.

Soon, the lord mayor's estate becomes an armed camp. Mercenaries stand guard over his gates, while the other important members of his government scramble to put down the growing level of violence and anger among the population. Whenever the government oversteps its bounds or pushes the commoners one time too many, a revolt or riots can erupt in the city's streets. A riot is essentially a small-scale revolt, with law and order falling to the wayside in town for a few days. Commoners loot businesses, set fires, and assault officers of the law. A revolt is open warfare between the ruled and their





rulers. It can range from a wide-scale, popular uprising to a small, precise strike by a single cabal of opportunistic, greedy, or even heroic revolutionaries. Whatever the case, a revolt promises to send the city into chaos and leave it permanently altered.

**Government:** Since a revolt is a direct threat to a government's existence, all of them react in much the same way: They fight to defeat this enemy that has appeared among their people. Lawful governments use their armies to swiftly put down a revolt or riot, as both are anathema to their reliance on orderly conduct. A chaotic government may let riots run their course, refusing to do anything so long as its direct interests do not come under attack. Good governments fight in a humane manner, seeking to isolate an uprising and defeat it without dragging loyal, innocent citizens into the fighting. Sometimes, a good regime may seek to mollify revolutionaries before they turn to violence. Since such a move invites more outright opposition by showing that it can work, a good government rarely employs it. Evil governments have no compunction against making

examples of hundreds of innocent civilians. They may strike at random into the city, hoping that the fear and terror they cause are enough to derail an uprising and convince rioters to return to their homes. Finding the ringleaders may be an important part of this action, but collateral damage and overeager military forces that attack innocents are no concerns of an evil regime.

**Law Enforcement:** During a riot, law enforcement is scattered across the city to deal with the threat. The guard becomes much easier to avoid, giving it a -5 penalty to vigilance in all areas as the bulk of the armed forces moves to contain a riot or defeat an uprising. At the same time, the guards' integrity also plummets. Some of the guards may sympathize with the rioters or they see the chaotic situation as an opportunity to pocket some extra cash without drawing any suspicion. In the chaos and confusion, a few bribes can easily escape notice. The integrity of all guard units suffers a -5 penalty.

**Economics:** Political instability is always bad for business. All goods become one category

rarer during a revolt or a riot, as merchants refuse to enter the contested area and the government and rebel forces intercept and seize supply shipments. The one notable exception to this trend is arms and armor dealers. Weapons and armor become more common by one category.

**Mapping the Riots:** Riots tend to strike the poorest areas of town. After all, the rich and prosperous have little reason to rise up against the government. Usually, a riot or a revolt can be traced back to a single important event that pushed the populace to rise up. The government might levy a new, punishing tax on the poor, the mayor could unjustly imprison a popular, much-loved cleric who aided the poor, or a greedy bureaucrat could depose the legitimate ruler and attempt to institute a brutal dictatorship. In any case, areas wracked with rioting or that rise up in revolt turn into war zones. The rule of law fades away, leaving everyone to fend for themselves. The characters could face rampant crowds of looters, guard squads who attack first and ask questions later, and even monsters and demons summoned by fearful spellcasters to protect their homes from invaders. The specifics of any encounters are left to the details of your campaign and the background behind the uprising, but the players should get the sense that the veneer of civilization that once covered life in the city has been torn away.

The easiest way to demonstrate a riot's effects is to show the destruction and violence that it heralds. Shops, taverns, and inns the characters once frequented are looted or burned to the ground. Innocent refugees plead with the PCs for protection or an escort to the nearest zone of safety. Characters who are skilled at arms or proficient with magic might be forced into military service until the crisis ends. In many ways, the city transforms into an armed camp. If the characters are caught in the midst of a riot, use the rules for city environments given earlier in this chapter to model the difficulty inherent in fighting in a large crowd.

**Adventures:** A riot can be an adventure on its own, as the characters must escape from the scene of violence, defend their homes, or help innocents caught in the melee escape unharmed. An evil force or a cabal of villains could be behind the violence, using honeyed words and a variety of deceptions to push the

population to embrace violence. On the other hand, the characters could help organize a revolt against an evil, despotic ruler. The PCs could recruit and train commoners, fight against the rulers' powerful lieutenants, and lead the final push against the main citadel. In the aftermath of a victory, they could help create a new, just government to run the city.

**Aftermath:** After a riot, the town guard may be more alert and brutal in their pursuit of criminals. Increase the integrity and vigilance of guard units in areas recently wracked by a riot by 5. Furthermore, for a time criminals may be harshly punished to reinforce the rule of law. Apply a +1 severity modifier to all crimes committed within unstable areas of town. After a revolt, the government could be fundamentally changed if the revolutionaries carried the day. A new ruler may reign over the city, and many of the old, established groups and individuals may be destroyed, banished, and replaced with new faces. If the government survived, a brutal backlash could take place. Political prisoners face stiff penalties, including execution, and the town guard goes to great efforts to track down and capture those suspected of aiding the rebels. Resentment and anger could remain, forming the smoldering coals of yet another revolt.

## SIEGE

An enemy army sits outside the city, worrying at its defenses like a dog gnawing on a leather strap. Slowly but surely, it seeks to wear down the city's defense thread by thread. Catapults fire flaming debris, heavy boulders, and perhaps even the diseased remains of the dead over the walls. Archers rain arrows upon the defenders, while engineers work to tunnel beneath fortifications and send them tumbling into ruin. In the city, food stores slowly run out. Disease creeps through the defenders' ranks, while daily assaults on the walls slowly deplete their numbers. A siege is a trying time for any city, even those with well-trained armies and heavily stocked granaries. The physical and emotional toll a siege exacts is enough to drive even the mightiest settlement into ruin.

**Government:** During a siege, the government becomes much more controlling, severe, and demanding. The military system of law and justice becomes prevalent, as every last citizen is expected to contribute to the

war effort. A good government may try to provide enough food and water to support the commoners, but even these charitable regimes force healthy men to take up arms and strictly control the availability of any goods and resources that may aid in the war effort. An evil government could send its commoners out in wave assaults against the attackers in an effort to break the siege or at least carve out an escape route for important government officials and leaders. In any case, the government becomes much more autocratic, centrally controlled, and dictatorial. Individual freedoms and rights are curtailed during a time of siege, as any outspoken critics of the war effort are seen as traitors. Property rights virtually evaporate, as buildings and resources are drawn into the war effort. Evil regimes take what they want and silence protests with murder, imprisonment, and forced recruitment, while good ones attempt to make amends after the conflict. A neutral government takes the most promising course of action in any case, and may seize or buy goods depending on the situation.

**Law Enforcement:** With invaders threatening the walls, law enforcement becomes much more thorough. Most men in town are forced to take up positions on the walls, and crude camps are erected to train commoners in the crossbow, spear, and other simple weapons. Patrols seek out spies, hoarders, and others who could damage the war effort. Increase the vigilance of all guard units by 5. In addition, the punishment for any crime short of treason is forced enlistment in the army. Those criminals accused of capital crimes may be assigned to suicidal missions, while most others face military service until the end of the war when their crimes are pardoned.

**Economics:** All materials become rare as the siege drags on, especially food. Each week of the siege, all items become one category rarer. Food does not follow this trend. Instead, it doubles in price each week. However, the government rations enough bread and flour to meet each citizen's basic needs, while those in the army receive regular meals. The food prices account for attempts to purchase outside of the government's rationing system. Merchants and traders cannot visit a city under siege.

**Mapping the Siege:** With the city under siege, you need to map the enemy's camp, their defenses, and the preparations they make for

their attacks. Any farms and outlying buildings are destroyed or put to use by the invaders. A ring of crude, defensive stockades allows their archers and artillery to fire from cover, while tents serve as barracks for their soldiers. Keep track of attacks on the city, noting where the intruders breach the defenses and set buildings on fire or smash city blocks to rubble with ballista and catapult fire. Over time, the defenders may cannibalize buildings within the city for lumber and bricks to build temporary fortifications. In essence, the city turns into one giant armed camp.

**Adventures:** A wide array of adventures can take place during a siege. The characters may have to find a spy who operates in town and passes along information on its defenses to the attackers outside. Perhaps a minister or military officer has turned traitor, requiring the characters to investigate the betrayal, sift through testimony, gather clues, and apprehend the turncoat. The PCs could lead raids on the besieging army, attacking its generals' camp and seeking to destroy catapults, slay enemy soldiers, and disrupt efforts to tunnel under the walls. During an attack, the characters may have to spearhead the defense of a section of the city's fortifications, fighting off soldiers, orcs, ogres, and even giants that the enemy commands. The characters might have to flee the city to spread word of the attack, dodging enemy patrols while desperately hoping to convince neighboring towns and realms to send aid. The PCs' diplomatic mission could be opposed by representatives from the invading army, as they hope to win allies and delay neighboring realms' entry into the war.

**Aftermath:** If the siege goes poorly for the defenders, the city could be destroyed. The attackers might overwhelm the walls and sweep into the city, burning and looting as they desire. They might take and hold the city, instituting a new government and purging the old one. In time, settlers from the conquering realm may move in to establish businesses and take advantage of the industries that powered the city's economy. If the defenders succeed, it may take years to rebuild the damage to the city's interior and walls. Memorials erected in honor of the defenders dot its parks and public squares. If the characters performed admirably during the siege, they could be hailed as heroes and given a place of great honor and responsibility within the government.

# THE URBAN CAMPAIGN

While city adventuring can offer a welcome respite from dungeon expeditions and long, arduous treks across the wilderness, it usually serves as a change of pace. However, basing an entire campaign in a single city can present an exciting, novel way to run a fantasy campaign. This section addresses the game mechanics and practical concerns relating to an all-urban campaign. By basing your adventures in a single city, you can create a distinctive campaign that offers a fresh, new challenge for veteran players. This game style is especially good for players who are tired of or bored with dungeon adventuring.

An urban campaign takes place within a single city. As the characters progress from 1st to 20th level, the vast majority of the action takes place inside the city's walls. Rather than emphasize travel, combat, and flashy action, the city campaign moves roleplaying, politics, and stealth to the forefront. In this campaign style, the characters become important movers and shakers in the city. They may be involved in epic adventures and sprawling, titanic battles, but these struggles usually take place with the city as a backdrop or in direct response to a specific threat to its continued existence.

The urban campaign can encompass only part of a party's adventuring career. Many DMs find it difficult to design appropriate challenges for higher-level characters. With its emphasis on politics, roleplaying, and other concerns beyond combat, the city campaign is a good solution to this problem. The characters cannot simply blast their enemies with their spells and weapons unless they want to call the resources of an entire kingdom against them. Furthermore, with its emphasis on social networking and prestige, this campaign is a handy way to show how powerful characters can rise to become important people in the campaign world. The party's fighter can become a general, the rogue a master of the thieves' guild, the cleric the high priest of a temple, and the wizard the court magician. The problems such luminaries face can rarely be resolved with the same methods they employed at lower levels.

## CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE

Since an urban campaign takes place in a limited geographic area, there are a few key differences to keep in mind when preparing to run one. This chapter presented the concept of a flowchart that functioned in a manner similar to a dungeon map. The characters progress along the chart, meeting NPCs, fighting monsters, and solving puzzles to uncover a villain's plans or track down a hidden threat. When they have completed the scenario's objectives, they make it to the end of the chart. An urban campaign can take this concept and use it to build levels of flowcharts similar to the levels of a dungeon. Once the characters complete one adventure, they proceed to the next one. Furthermore, some of their actions may cause them to move from one plot or adventure's flowchart to the next without completing their current adventure. Just as the PCs may take the stairs from level one to level two without defeating all the creatures on the first level, so too may they hop from adventure to adventure in an urban campaign.

As the characters complete adventures and become more powerful, they draw the notice of successively mightier NPCs. Both potential allies and new enemies enter the campaign to aid or oppose the PCs. The mayor may wish to ally with the band of heroes that has done so much good for his city, throwing the weight of the city's resources behind them. Meanwhile, the demonologist who plans to destroy the city as a great sacrifice to gain power over an archfiend may decide to send a deadly outsider to destroy them before they can threaten his plans. Just as clearing dungeon levels sets the stage for the characters to descend deeper into the depths, completing one adventure in a city puts them in contact with powerful NPCs and draws the notice of villains.

The best analogy for the urban campaign is to compare it to an onion. As you peel away layers of an onion, you reveal its inner layers until you finally reach its center. The outer layer hides the inner layers until they are removed. The urban campaign works in a similar way. As the characters overcome the initial adventures and villains, they peel away the first layers of the campaign and reveal the next adventure. The characters may have some hints and ideas of what lies ahead, but until they overcome their current obstacles they



lack the information necessary to proceed to the next layer. After working through enough adventures, they can remove the final layer and complete the campaign.

## CREATING THE CAMPAIGN

The first step to running an urban campaign is to create the city where it takes place. Use the information, rules, and advice given in Chapter 2 and 3 to build a city for your game or pick one that you have already created. Even if you have a pre-built city, it is a good idea to look at it in light of the guidelines provided in this book. You may find that certain aspects of it need more detail or there are areas of its background that you overlooked when designing it. For a successful urban campaign, the city needs a few key factors that support an entire campaign. A set of progressive networks of rivalries and conflicts allows you to map out different actions and events the characters can become involved with. A range of NPCs that covers a wide variety of character levels gives you plenty of rivals, enemies, and allies for the PCs as they gain levels. A pressing issue

or adventure hook that can immediately bring the characters into the city's events serves as the jumping off point for your campaign.

The rivalries and conflicts of the city serve as the meat of the campaign. What is there in the city for the characters to do that is exciting enough to qualify as an adventure? Shopping for weapons and roleplaying encounters with guards and citizens gives the players something to do, but fighting wererats hidden in the sewers or exposing a scheme to poison an important well are exciting adventures. Try to create several arcs of plots and conflicts that can take the characters from their current level to 20th or whatever experience rank they need to have before progressing to the next chapter of your campaign. Start with your villains, designing one that can menace the characters now and additional ones that can threaten them every two or three levels in their career. The more distant in the future a villain lies, the less detail you need about him. With a likely progression of villains planned out, you can work references to them into the campaign and use them to create background events that affect the city.



The characters might not be able to topple the necromancer until they reach 15th level, but if they hear about his actions at lower levels you can set the stage for their eventual showdown and make that final battle much more exciting. The players always have a greater interest in defeating a villain with a reputation or who has given them reasons to seek vengeance against him. As the characters defeat your villains, they encounter progressively better known and feared opponents, giving your campaign a nice, gradual increase in dramatic tension.

The range of your NPCs is important in keeping the campaign cohesive and to show the characters the progress they can make in the city's social order. These NPCs should be social and political rivals and allies the characters meet. At low levels, the characters may come into frequent contact with low-ranking guard officers, bureaucrats, and common innkeepers. As they gain levels and complete quests in the city, they may develop relationships with the city's rulers, working their way up the social ladder as their importance and fame increases. As with the villains and important conflicts in a city, creating a plan of the NPCs the characters can meet as they progress in levels allows you to add some depth to the campaign and give them the importance and respect they deserve. You need details only of the NPCs the characters meet in the early parts of the campaign, allowing you to sketch out only the major traits of NPCs met later in the game and filling them in only when they are set to become regular parts of the campaign.

The third ingredient is the event or adventure that catapults the PCs into the action. If the characters simply show up in the city without any pressing reason to become enmeshed in events there, the players can quickly grow bored. Give the characters a good reason to leap into the campaign by creating an adventure hook that appeals to their characters' goals, backgrounds, and personalities. The more personal the hook, the more likely it is to interest the players. Design encounters in the adventure where the characters can meet the NPCs that are important to the campaign, whether as enemies or allies. Have it end with a climax that sets them up for more conflicts with a villain or gives them a good reason to further aid an NPC. For example, the characters could arrive in town and uncover evidence of a slave ring. After tracking down the slavers and defeating

them, the PCs find evidence that their leader is an important person in town. Unfortunately, they do not have enough evidence to determine exactly who the mastermind is. If some of the slavers' victims have not yet been found, the characters have a good reason to continue their investigations. If the missing persons are friends or family of the characters, you have a compelling hook that can drag them into the action.

## DESIGNING FACTIONS

Whether they are allied with or opposed to the characters, factions represent an important aspect of a city campaign. They can provide complete, successive layers of adventure as the characters defeat a faction or group's low-ranking leaders before finding enough clues to track down and destroy its highest leadership. Likewise, the characters can find allies in a friendly group's rank-and-file members early in their careers and work their way up the ranks to forge alliances with a city's movers and shakers. This section discusses how to design factions and how you can use them in a city campaign.

A large, cohesive faction within a city is ideally suited to city adventuring. As the characters uncover more of a faction's plans, they can find new villains to defeat and adventures to embark upon. A criminal cartel may be involved with a scheme to kidnap and ransom wealthy merchants. In the process of rescuing the group's victims, the PCs uncover evidence of a sinister plan to use the funds raised from the ransom to buy a rare magical item needed to summon a powerful demon. After disrupting the ceremony, the characters discover that the faction needs the demon to spearhead their plans to seize the mayor and replace him with a doppelganger. With the conspiracy unmasked, the characters must defeat the doppelganger and the powerful criminals who sought to covertly seize control of the government. In dealing with one group of villains, the characters went through three separate adventures, with each one neatly dovetailing into a new plot as the PCs worked their way through the faction's ranks.

The first step in designing a faction is to determine its overarching goals. In the example given above, the criminals wanted to secretly control the city, most likely to

shield their illegal operations from investigation. With the mayor in their pocket, the thieves would never have to fear prosecution or even arrest. To meet that goal, they had to fulfill several other plans. They needed the aid of a demon to seize the mayor and insert the doppleganger without detection, but before they could bind the fiend they had to raise money to hire a powerful spellcaster and buy (or hire rogues to steal) the spell components necessary for the ceremony. Make a list of all the minor tasks the faction must complete before it can fulfill its main objective and think of how you can involve the PCs with them.

The second step for a faction is to design the key players in its hierarchy. Who is its leader? Who are the main lieutenants beneath him? What sorts of creatures and men fill its lower ranks? Create full stat blocks for the NPCs the characters are likely to encounter, but you need only come up with basic notes for those leaders that will play a role in future campaign events. The NPCs' personalities, abilities, and resources determine how they can pursue their goals.

Finally, determine the relationships within the faction and its ties to the city. Are there any rivalries within the faction that the PCs can take advantage of? Who in town seeks to help this group or harm it? Can the PCs ally with them, or will they fight against the characters? You can map out the relationships within a faction by creating a diagram of all the major NPCs within the group. Draw arrows between the NPCs that have relationships, and write down a few notes to describe the bonds between them.

The description of religion in Chapter 2 includes some advice that can prove useful for other factions and groups within the city. The secrecy mechanic can be easily adapted to the groups the PCs must fight against. Furthermore, the relationships and factions created as part of a city's background are an excellent source of villains and allies for the characters as they adventure in the city.

## THE CHARACTERS' PLACE IN THE CITY

The final piece of the city campaign puzzle is the PCs' place in the city. Are the characters new in town, or are they established there as

residents? Newcomers can make friends and alliances as they proceed through the campaign, while natives might have plenty of friends and allies to fall back on. Keep track of the NPCs the characters meet and remember those who feel slighted or welcomed by them. The easiest way to do this is to use index cards or a section of a notebook to list every named NPC the characters meet. With each interaction, you can note any new developments in the heroes' relationship with a particular person. If the characters heavily tip a bartender and help him deal with some thugs that try to start a fight in his tavern, he may later lie to the town guard to help cover for them. On the other hand, if they start fights, break furniture, and refuse to pay their tabs, he gladly passes information to the authorities concerning their actions.

If the characters are native to the city, they should start out with a few friends in town. Their families could live there, as could coworkers in their previous trades or teachers and mentors. You can give a character native to the city a number of dependable allies in town equal to two plus his Charisma modifier. These NPCs can provide him with advice, rumors, and simple aid during the campaign. They do not fight for him or engage in dangerous actions unless the situation is truly dire. These allies should have levels in NPC classes.

## BEYOND ADVENTURING

With their growing connections to the city and their involvement in possibly highly visible actions, the characters may seek out opportunities in the city that extend beyond the typical adventuring actions. As a character finds treasure and builds his wealth, he may decide to open a business, find a job, or purchase a home in the city. The d20 System core rulebooks cover the price of strongholds and other buildings. Use those rules if a character wants to purchase a home. This section covers some simple rules for characters who find jobs or open businesses.

Chapter 1 of this book covers some simple options for PCs who want to find regular jobs. If you look at those professions, they follow some general trends: They demand few hours of work per week, are difficult to find at low levels, and pay based on a character's level. Those jobs assume that the PC wants a job that still allows time for adventuring and pays

enough cash to be worth the bother. To design new professions with a similar bent, use those professions as a model. Finding a job requires a character to score a result of 20 or higher by rolling a d20 and adding his total character level. A job requires 10 hours of work per week. Failure to meet this requirement causes a character to lose the income for that week. After missing this requirement for three weeks, the PC loses his job and must start the process of finding one over again. The typical job pays 10 gp per week per level and offers a +2 competence bonus to two Charisma-based skills when working with social groups that the character could meet while working his job. Detailing every possible job available in a city is beyond the scope of this book, but between these guidelines and the sample professions, you should be able to model most professions.

Alternatively, a character can go into business by using the Craft or Profession skill. He must spend 200 gp to rent a place of business and buy the tools he needs to start working. Each week, make a Profession or Craft check (DC 10). If you succeed, you earn a profit in gp equal to your check.

Finally, you can use the standard rules for the Profession skill to model the jobs that characters can find in the city. In place of a Profession check, a barbarian, fighter, or ranger can roll 1d20 and add his base attack bonus (without modifiers) to the result and treat that as a Profession check made to earn money during the course of a week.



## CHAPTER FIVE

CITY  
ENCOUNTERS

A cart laden with wool blankets imported from the east makes its way through the market crowd, the shoppers parting before it like a swaying sea of tall grass. With each pothole it strikes the cart shudders precariously, its burden threatening to spill to the ground. The smell of spiced, roasted meat mingles with the sweat and stench of hundreds of tightly packed bodies. The languages of a dozen realms mingle into one continuous buzz as merchants barter and argue over their wares. The great market guard tower stands above the scene, a black, obsidian reminder of the baron's authority. All text under City Monsters is designated **Open Game Content**.

Life in the city is a symphony of noises, actions, and moods. While the characters are the center of the action, the city around them continues to live and breathe. This section addresses the background noise of the campaign. It introduces random tables you can use to create minor, random encounters that can take place during the course of the typical day. Additional random tables allow you to map out and stock a wide range of residences, shops, and other buildings.

## DAILY EVENTS

A pickpocket tries to make off with the fighter's prized dagger. A gang of thugs accosts a lone merchant, requiring the PCs to step in to help him. The merchant rewards them with free passes to a play, where the characters have a chance to meet and interact with an important politician. These small details allow you to work minor encounters into adventures. Sometimes, you could even run entire sessions where the players deal with the random NPCs, minor challenges, and daily demands of life in the city. These random tables allow you to create simple interactions within the city. You can roll on these tables when the mood strikes you, such as when the characters spend the day wandering around town, or to inspire ideas for daily encounters.

The tables are broken down by the areas they cover. Each table is given a brief description that allows you to match it with neighborhoods and districts within any city. Either roll to generate an encounter or assign a 10% chance per day that the characters face one of the situations outlined below.

## DOCKS/INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE

d%	Result
1-10	A band of drunken workers or sailors approaches the party, spoiling for a brawl.
11-20	A cart teetering with boxes, crates, and other goods tips over. The characters must make Reflex saves (DC 10) or take 1d6 points of subdual damage and be buried under the debris.
21-30	A sea captain approaches the characters and tries to hire them to serve aboard his ship.
31-40	A man in exotic dress bumps into a character, dropping the large satchel he carries. Scrolls and other items spill from it. Panicked and nervous, he tries to quickly gather his things and waves off any offers of assistance. In the confusion, he accidentally leaves behind a valuable item.
41-50	A press gang mistakes a PC for a sailor who jumped ship.
51-60	Two wagons laden with goods collide, spilling crates into the street. The men driving the wagons are badly injured, while traffic on the street is blocked.
61-70	A wagon rolls by carrying a tiger in a steel cage. The animal breaks loose and threatens to kill anyone who gets in its way as it attempts to flee in panic.
71-80	Two merchants argue over the price of a load of furniture from a distant port. They resort to shoving, and after a few moments both draw knives.
81-90	A gang of thieves leaps from an alley to overpower the men leading a wagon full of goods. They attempt to make a quick getaway. If the PCs stop them, the merchant who owns the goods may reward them.
91-100	A foreigner who does not speak the local tongue tries to ask the PCs for directions. If they aid him, he could become a valued friend.

## ENTERTAINMENT/TRAVEL

d%	Result
1-10	A half-orc walking down the street is accosted by a self-righteous cleric of a lawful neutral god. If the characters intercede, they could make a friend and/or an enemy.
11-20	A group of dwarves engages in a loud argument with a band of elves over some slight buried centuries in the past. The situation could descend into a brawl.
21-30	A troop of mercenaries decides to hold an impromptu archery competition, using the side of a building as their target. The characters could wager on the winner or stop the drunken warriors from riddling passersby with arrows.
31-40	A tavern brawl spills over into the street, catching the characters in its wake.
41-50	A madman stands on the corner, prophesying the end of the world. Perhaps in his ravings he offers the party an important clue for their current adventure.
51-60	A doppelganger disguised as an old woman or comely young lass tries to lure the characters to an alleyway to ambush them.
61-70	A gang of halflings threatens to burn down a tavern that refused to serve them or perhaps mistook their leader for a human child.
71-80	Two warriors fight a duel in the middle of the street, perhaps injuring bystanders in their anger.
81-90	A gang of thugs runs rampant through the street, smashing windows and assaulting commoners. The gang runs a protection scheme and the locals are behind on their payments.
91-100	A con artist tries to convince the characters that all visitors must pay a 1 sp tax for using the streets. Gullible visitors pay up, but characters native to the city can see through the ruse.



## MARKETS

d%

### Result

- 1-10 The character with the lowest Dexterity must check that ability (DC 10) or knock over a display of items, such as a neatly stacked bin of fruit, causing a merchant to yell at him and demand he clean up the mess.
- 11-20 A merchant calls out to the characters, offering them a very rare item at a good price. The item has been enchanted with a *magic aura* spell.
- 21-30 A merchant pesters and bugs the characters, trying to give them the hard sell on an item. He follows them around the market, disrupting their attempts to purchase other goods.
- 31-40 A squad of guardsmen stops the PCs and demands to search their pockets. One of the characters resembles a robber who just stole the cash box from a merchant's stall.
- 41-50 The market erupts into chaos as a pack of dogs, cats, birds, and

other pets storms through it. As a practical joke, a wizard used his spells to free an exotic pet dealer's wares. If the characters round up the animals, they may be rewarded.

51-60

The next time the characters approach a stall, the merchant working there refuses to serve them. An ardent racist, he bears a hatred for one of the characters.

61-70

A merchant pushes a cart selling roasted meat. He offers the characters a free sample to help drum up business. Unfortunately there is a 10% chance that the meat is tainted, exposing the character to a disease.

71-80

Two merchants engage in a fistfight over some minor slight between them. If the characters intervene, they might make both a friend and an enemy. The merchants might have connections to trading houses or noble families.

81-90

While the characters shop at a stall, a small crowd of customers gathers to pelt it with rotten vegetables. The attackers were all cheated by the merchant and seek revenge against him.

91-100

A merchant sells stolen goods at cheap prices (50% off). If the characters buy anything, they may be later accused of trafficking in stolen goods, as many of the items bear monograms and other identifying marks.

## PUBLIC PARKS

d%

### Result

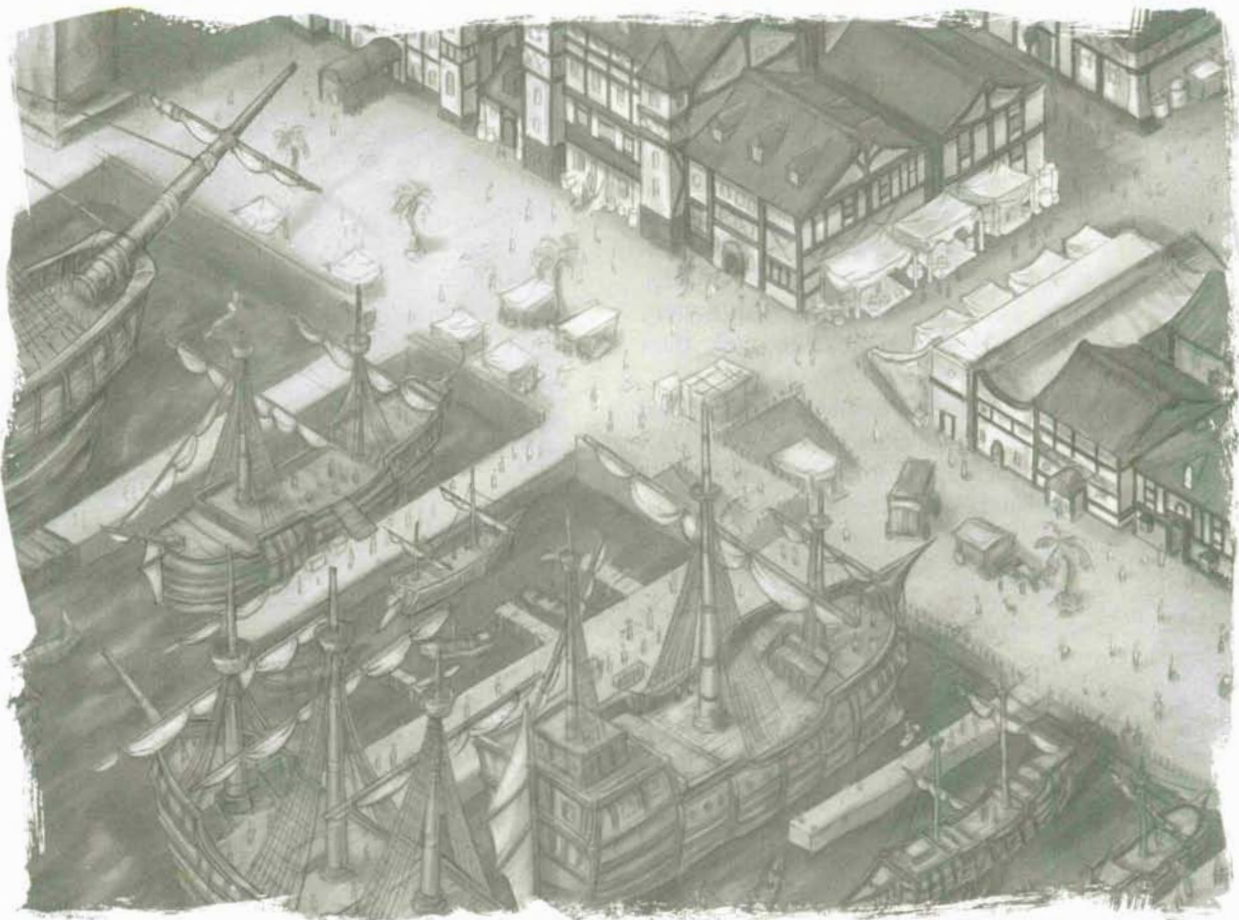
- 1-10 A bard sings for a small audience. If the characters stop to listen, they may overhear an important clue or useful bit of information in the obscure old folk song he performs.
- 11-20 The characters catch sight of a shadowy figure dragging something behind a bush. It could be something innocent, such as a beggar looking for a comfortable place to sleep, or something sinister, like a wererat making off with his latest victim.
- 21-30 A wizard has decided to test out

a magic item he discovered on an adventure in the park's relatively open space. Unfortunately, the item summons a random monster that goes on a rampage.

- 31-40 A few sprites who dwell in a park fountain play a joke on the characters, perhaps stealing an item or taunting them. If the characters take the joke in stride, the sprites may befriend them.
- 41-50 An old woman's cat is caught in a tree. If the characters save the animal, they discover that the woman is a member of a powerful noble family that could one day help them.
- 51-60 A team of burly dwarves dig a hole behind some bushes. They accidentally hit a random character with a clod of dirt as they work. The dwarves work on behalf of a nobleman who has heard rumors that a lost family treasure is buried in the park. If pressed about their work, they act evasive and threaten to call the guard.
- 61-70 A small sect new to the city holds a rally in the park, hoping to draw more members to its banner. The sect could be good or secretly evil. Its aggressive recruiters actively court the PCs.
- 71-80 A monk practices his technique in the park, performing acrobatics and fighting maneuvers that draw a small crowd. He could be the diversion for a criminal act, an arrogant bully who challenges a PC monk to a duel, or a young ascetic out in the world for the first time.
- 81-90 Two gnomes spread chalk dust and ashes in complex, mystic patterns around the park. The two are wizards who are conducting a grand experiment. Perhaps they cause a freak weather incident or some other strange magical effect.
- 91-100 A stray dog follows the characters, whining pitifully and gazing longingly at any food they carry.

## TEMPLES

- | d%     | Result   |
|--------|--|
| 1-10   | Priests from two rival sects engage in a shouting match as their argument over metaphysics and philosophy threatens to turn into a physical and magical duel. Soon, crowds gather to support both clerics.                               |
| 11-20  | A street-corner preacher harangues passersby about the evil of the gods and the selfish practices of their clerics.  |
| 21-30  | An elderly cleric seeks to collect money for the poor. She may use sympathetic, heart-rending arguments or guilt trips to liberate a few coins from the PCs.   |
| 31-40  | A gang of hotheaded fanatics seeks to deface a statue outside a temple, smearing it with black paint and painting slogans on the temple's outer walls.   |
| 41-50  | A procession of worshippers crowds the street, singing hymns and bearing ceremonial icons and banners. They march to a nearby temple where an important ceremony is set to begin.  |
| 51-60  | A prophet stands before a temple, speaking of the visions he has seen and cautioning listeners to mend their evil ways. He casts spells and heals the sick to prove his god's power.   |
| 61-70  | Followers of a god of chaos, love, and music dance in the streets. They offer wine and food to attractive people (Charisma 12+) they meet and invite them to attend a revel at their temple.   |
| 71-80  | A missionary offers the characters a chapbook describing the life and times of a saint or prophet. He latches on to them and attempts to convert them to his faith.  |
| 81-90  | A fanatic cleric wanders up and down the street, yelling insults at the infidel dogs that dwell within the city and predicting doom for the unbelievers. If a PC openly wears a holy symbol, he spits on it and tries to incite a brawl. |
| 91-100 | A loud, low rumbling   |



ask them questions, beg them for stories about their adventures, and plead for spare coins.

- 71–75 A drunken lout bumps into the smallest character in the party and tries to pick a fight with him.
- 76–80 A gang of local toughs ambushes the party, hoping to grab a few items before sprinting away.
- 81–85 A runner from one of the local criminal cartels approaches the toughest-looking character and tries to recruit him for an illegal bare-knuckle boxing fight or a match in the fighting pits.
- 86–90 A swarm of 2d4 dire rats emerges from a nearby sewer grate, sending the locals into a panic as they are bitten and clawed by the vermin.
- 91–95 A man sitting in a second-story window heckles the characters. If the PCs confront him, he grows belligerent unless they intimidate him.
- 96–100 A resident of the slums decides to tail the characters, hoping that if they get into a fight he can loot

any bodies left behind. If confronted, he tries to offer an excuse to escape from them. He tells the truth about his actions only if threatened.

#### GOVERNMENT/MILITARY/MIDDLE CLASS/UPPER CLASS

- 1–6 A bored guardsman accosts the PCs and demands that they explain their presence in the area. If they cannot offer a good explanation or appear suspicious (Diplomacy check DC 15 to diffuse the situation) he fines them 1 sp each for vagrancy.
- 7–13 An out-of-control carriage roars down the street, sending people scattering as it clatters over the cobblestones. Each character must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or suffer 1d4 points of subdual damage.
- 14–19 An arrogant rake jostles into a fighter in the party. He feigns outrage and demands to fight a duel to first blood, either in the



- street or at a future time and place.
- 20–26 A cat approaches the party, walking amidst them, meowing and cuddling up to their feet. The feline is a wizard's familiar. The spellcaster might be the head of a noble's security detail who wants to check out the characters or a spy for some villainous group.
- 27–32 A passing woman cries out in fear as a pick pocket grabs one of her personal effects. If the PCs give chase and overtake the thief, she rewards them with 10 gp or an invitation to dine at her husband's restaurant.
- 33–39 A group of jesters performing in the street accosts the characters. They make jokes at the PCs' expense and badger them with wretched puns and awful limericks. If the PCs play along, the jesters might prove to be valuable allies as they have keen eyes and watch over the street. Otherwise, they bombard the characters with eggs and call for the watch if the party turns violent.
- 40–45 A confidence artist dressed as a cleric beseeches the characters for a donation to help the poor, starving children of the slums. A Knowledge (religion) check (DC 10) reveals the crook's disguise.
- 46–52 An illusionist performs on a street corner, using his spells to weave magical scenes. If the characters stop to watch, the spellcaster's thief associates try to pick their pockets (+8 total bonus to their checks).
- 53–58 The characters must stand aside as a nobleman and his entourage move down the street, marching four abreast and forcing everyone off the road. If the PCs stand up to him, they may make a powerful enemy.
- 59–65 A bard performs on a street corner, signing ballads and telling stories. He holds a hat out to collect cash. He casts a 1st-level bard spell (caster level 3) for anyone who gives him 10 gp.
- 66–71 A barbarian from a distant land argues loudly with a squad of guardsmen. Lost and confused in the city, he blundered into this neighborhood and punched a nobleman who almost ran him over on his horse. If the characters intercede and prevent violence, he could become a trusted friend.
- 72–78 A messenger stops the party and hands them a note stamped with the seal of a noble house. If the characters read the message, they discover that it is addressed to someone else. The messenger accidentally delivered it to the wrong person. The note could be a simple invitation to dinner, a plea for aid against a powerful evil, or evidence of a treasonous conspiracy.
- 79–84 A pegasus hurtles around a corner and stops in the middle of the street. Gripped by panic and unable to fly because its wings are bound, the animal seeks to escape the city. Its owner may be an honest man who is training the animal or a cruel master who beats it and keeps it as a prized pet. In either case, druids or rangers in the party may have words for him.
- 85–91 A drunk nobleman staggers from a pub and falls into step with the PCs. He speaks at length of his military service, bragging about his skill in weapons and spells. While annoying, he means no harm. If the PCs are friendly towards him, they could win a useful friend. Otherwise, they risk insulting him and earning his anger.
- 92–97 The PCs see an elderly noble using a switch to beat one of her servants. If the PCs intervene, they could earn an enemy but the servant has an important secret to pass along to them.
- 98–100 A funeral procession moves down the street, forcing the characters to stand to the side as it passes.

# RANDOM NPC CREATION

These tables can be used in conjunction with the encounter tables listed above or on their own to quickly create detailed characters. These tables do not generate game statistics. Instead, they flesh out an NPC's personality and motivations.

## THE NAME TABLES

Nothing can bring a game to a screeching halt faster than an NPC name created off the cuff. Names like "Bill" and "Elric" leap to mind fast enough to send the players into fits of giggles, but strange names like "Orgwerflabs" are hard to remember and sound goofy enough to be distracting. To use these tables, roll d% twice to combine two syllables into a single name. Three tables are given here: female first names, male first names, and last names. If a name sounds awkward, shorten it to its first syllable or roll again. You can also generate two results on the first name tables and use them as the first and last name.

### FEMALE FIRST NAMES

d%	First Syllable	Second Syllable
1-8	Ar	a
9-16	Bel	la
17-23	Cyn	ena
24-30	De	ra
31-37	Flor	el
38-44	Gin	ra
45-51	Heth	er
52-58	Jen	ga
59-60	Kel	ree
61-72	Ler	na
73-79	Mel	sa
80-86	Nin	ha
87-93	Pol	thia
94-100	Ver	ly

### MALE FIRST NAMES

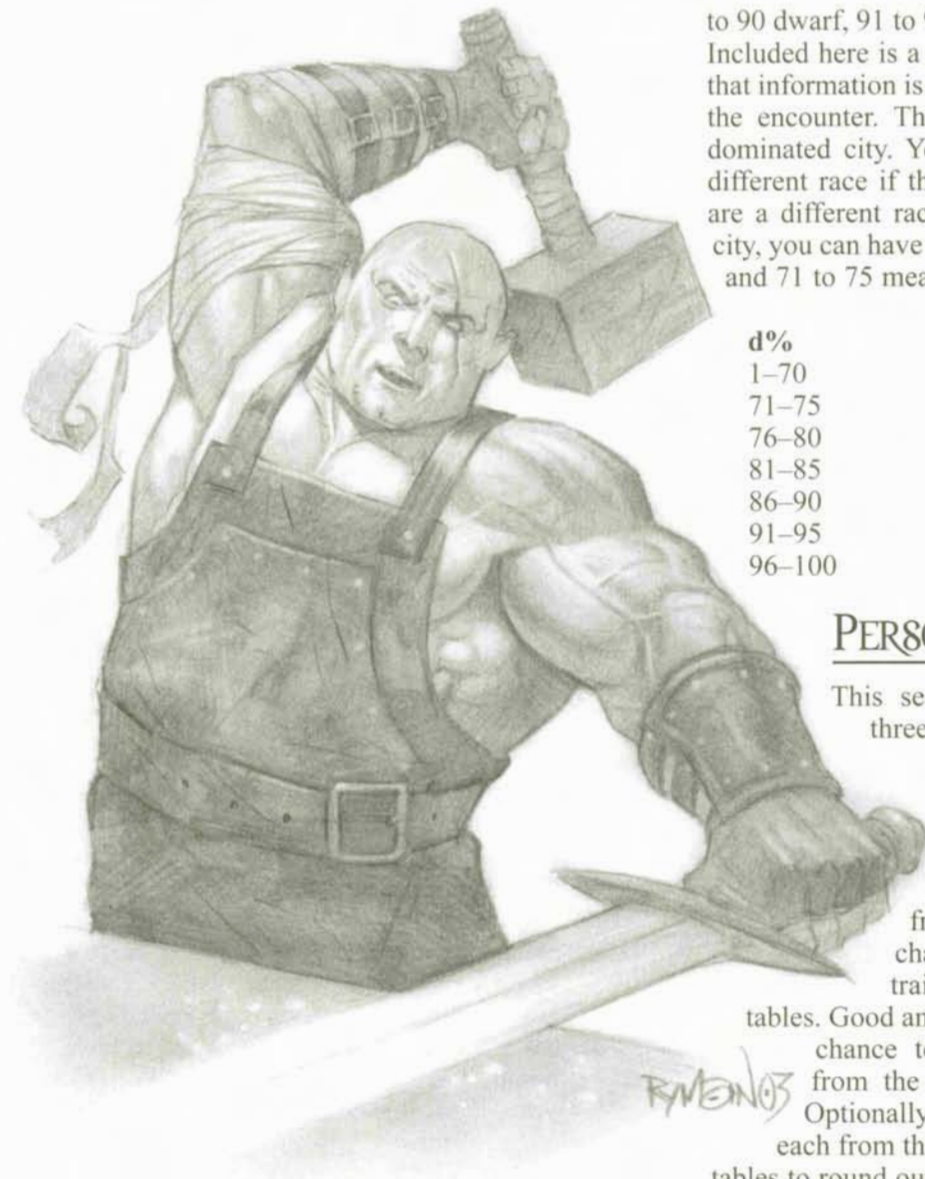
First d%	Second Syllable	Syllable
1-8	Ar	ad
9-16	Ben	el
17-23	Cor	ib
24-30	Dan	ar
31-37	Far	ry
38-44	Gar	ik
45-51	Har	ath
52-58	Jak	old
59-65	Ken	en
66-72	Lar	ren
73-79	Mor	ot
80-86	Nick	red
87-93	Pal	lok
94-100	Vit	eld

### LAST NAMES

First d%	Second Syllable	Syllable
1-6	Axe	man
7-12	Barrel	hill
13-18	Clear	star
19-24	Day	green
25-30	Ever	iron
31-36	Frost	view
37-42	Gate	wall
43-48	Helm	guard
49-54	Ill	ward
55-60	Lode	mont
61-66	Night	son
67-72	Over	wall
73-78	Rider	back
79-84	Shield	ville
85-90	True	point
91-96	Under	sky
97-100	Water	gold

## ALIGNMENT

Random alignments can add a layer of hidden menace to the campaign, as the players can never be sure that a seemingly helpful NPC is good. They can also serve to show that not all evil NPCs are destructive villains. Some are just greedy or self-centered. This table is slanted to produce mostly neutral results, with evil alignments the rarest result. You can roll with a +5 or +10 bonus in rough areas of town where evil commoners are more common or in evil cities, while a -5 or -10 penalty produces a much greater tendency toward good. You can



to 90 dwarf, 91 to 95 elf, and 96 to 100 gnome. Included here is a generic table you can use if that information is not available or irrelevant to the encounter. This table assumes a human-dominated city. You can swap human with a different race if the city's primary inhabitants are a different race. For example, in a dwarf city, you can have a 1 to 70 result yield a dwarf and 71 to 75 mean human.

d%	Race
1-70	Human
71-75	Dwarf
76-80	Elf
81-85	Gnome
86-90	Half-orc
91-95	Half-elf
96-100	Halfling

## PERSONALITY TRAITS

This section is broken down into three categories: good, neutral, and evil traits. Each character receives one primary trait from the table associated with his alignment and one secondary trait from the neutral table. Neutral characters receive one tertiary trait from the evil and good tables. Good and evil characters have a 50% chance to receive one tertiary trait from the opposite alignment's table. Optionally, you can generate one trait each from the mannerism and appearance tables to round out the NPC.

d%	Good	Neutral	Evil
1-10	Honest	Reserved	Deceitful
11-20	Loyal	Unreliable	Scheming
21-30	Charitable	Self-centered	Greedy
31-40	Friendly	Gruff	Violent
41-50	Valiant	Unsteady	Cowardly
51-60	Energetic	Dull	Lazy
61-70	Kind	Aloof	Cruel
71-80	Calm	Judgmental	Vengeful
81-90	Ascetic	Gourmand	Gluttonous
91-100	Confident	Proud	Egomaniacal

use the same modifiers to produce a tilt towards chaos and law, respectively. Treat any modified result of zero or lower as a 1 and anything over 20 as a 20.

d20	Good-Evil	Lawful-Chaotic
1-5	Good	Lawful
6-15	Neutral	Neutral
16-20	Evil	Chaotic

## RACE

Use the city's racial profile to determine an NPC's race. For example, if a city is 80% human, 10% dwarf, 5% elf, and 5% gnome, you can break the racial spread down into a table where a roll of 1 to 80 means human, 81

## MANNERISMS

d%	Mannerism
1-5	Stutters
6-10	Talks quickly
11-15	Slow and thoughtful
16-20	Excitable and energetic
21-25	Mumbles, speaks quietly
26-30	Uses flowery language
31-35	Foul-mouthed
36-40	Complainer
41-45	Quiet and withdrawn
46-50	Gregarious, outgoing
51-55	Arrogant, snobby
56-60	Depressed, pessimistic
61-65	Upbeat, optimistic
66-70	Hot-tempered
71-75	Joker, loves to laugh
76-80	Hard to please, critical
81-85	Flirtatious, seductive
86-90	Opinionated, stubborn
91-95	Religious fanatic
96-100	Stern, dour

## APPEARANCE

d%	Appearance
1-5	Scars, eyepatch
6-10	Bright, flashy clothes
11-15	Dirty, unkempt
16-20	Precise, perfectly maintained
21-25	Flabby, overweight
26-30	Scrawny, thin
31-35	Noticeably short
36-40	Noticeably tall
41-45	Stained, unwashed clothes
46-50	Pale complexion
51-55	Warts and acne
56-60	Exotic hair cut (mohawk, shaved bald)
61-65	Body piercings
66-70	Elaborate tattoos
71-75	Missing teeth
76-80	Ostentatious jewelry
81-85	Limps
86-90	Smells bad
91-95	Wears heavy perfume
96-100	Graying hair

## SECRETS

Some NPCs may carry secrets that add a layer of danger to an encounter. The local bartender may be a spy for an evil lord, while a fence sells the identities of successful robbers to the town guard. There is a 10% chance that a random NPC has a dark secret that could cause problems for the characters. A character

might work for a group or force that is normally opposed to his alignment due to blackmail or deceit. For example, the constable might allow a local vampire to abduct victims from the city jail for fear that the undead monster might strike at his own family.

d%	Result
1-10	Spies for a random faction in town
11-20	Helps an evil monster achieve its goals
21-30	Helps a good NPC or creature achieve its goals
31-40	Secretly a murderous psychopath
41-50	Informant for the thieves' guild or a local crime boss
51-60	Current job a cover for illegal activities
61-70	Member of a secretive, evil cult
71-80	Has powerful friends and contacts
81-90	Has secret (perhaps false) reason to seek vengeance against characters
91-100	Is a wanted criminal

## OCCUPATION

Most of the time, you may already have the NPC's occupation decided. If the characters enter a tavern, then you know that you need details for the barkeeper and one or two servants. In situations where an NPC's vocation is not immediately apparent, use this table to create a background for him. This table is d20 based, making it easy to modify the results to skew them in one direction or the other. The range of jobs is broken down into lower class (1-14), middle class (15-18), and upper class (19-20). By using a negative modifier, you can skew the results towards lower-class work, while a positive modifier pushes it towards the higher-class end. In a working/lower-class area, use a -5 modifier. In a middle- or upper-class neighborhood, apply a +5 modifier or roll 1d10+10 to determine a random NPC's occupation. Each profession also lists a class and a range of levels.

d20	Result
1	Laborer (Com 1d2)
2	Farmer (Com 1d2)
3	Teamster (Exp 1d3)
4	Smith (Exp 1d3)
5	Dock worker (Com 1d4)
6	Sailor (Exp 1d4)
7	Soldier (War 1d4)
8	Carpenter (Exp 1d4)

- 9 Mason (Exp 1d4)
- 10 Cook (Exp 1d6)
- 11 Servant (Exp 1d6)
- 12 Barkeep (Com 1d6)
- 13 Craftsman (Exp 1d6)
- 14 Mercenary (War 1d8)
- 15 Artisan (Exp 1d8)
- 16 Bureaucrat (Exp 1d6)
- 17 Merchant (Exp 1d10)
- 18 Sage (Exp 1d8)
- 19 High-ranking official (Exp 1d8)
- 20 Nobleman (Ari 1d8)

## BUILDING GENERATORS

Sometimes, the characters may take a sudden, unexpected turn into a tavern, home, or other location. If you lack a map and description of the place, your game can grind to a halt as you create one or you may build one. The following tables allow you to create a building's interior and describe it in basic details. Tables also allow you to quickly create scenes, determining various sites' uses and purposes based on the surrounding area.

### BUILDING USE TABLES

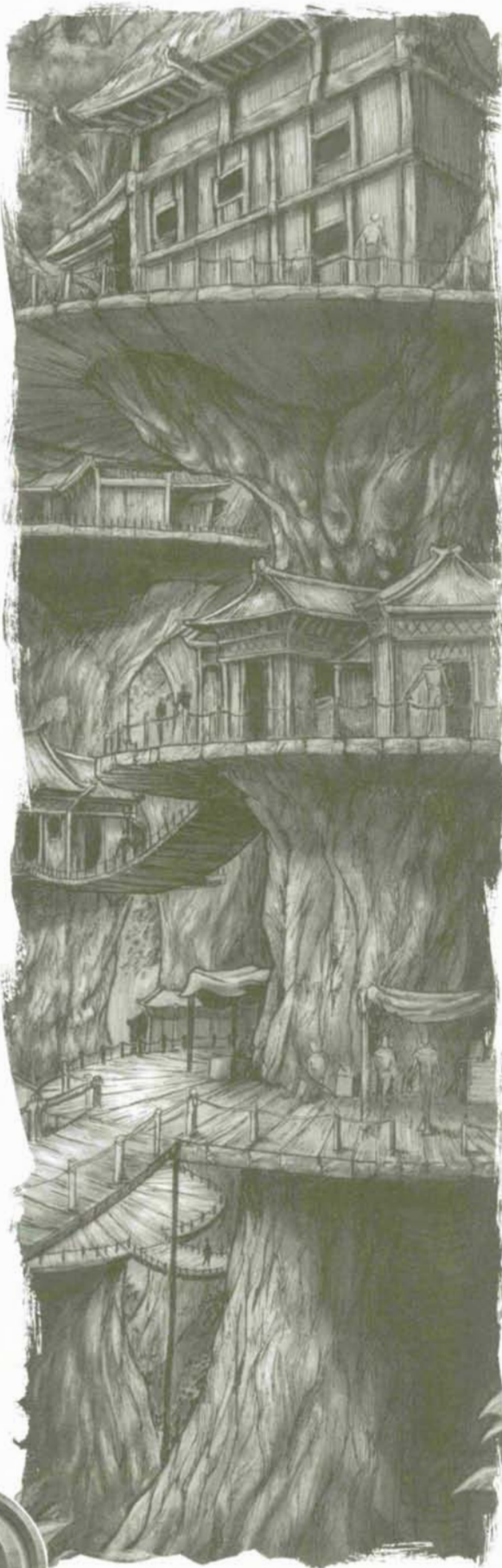
#### RESIDENTIAL

d%	Result
1–80	Private residence
81–90	Boarding house
91–98	Pub
99–100	Shop

#### DOCKS/INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE

1–40	Warehouse
41–50	Slaughterhouse
51–60	Brewery
61–70	Tannery
71–80	Foundry
81–85	Pub
86–90	General store
91–94	Wheelwright
95–97	Wagonmaker
98–100	Blacksmith





## ENTERTAINMENT/TRAVEL

1-20	Tavern
21-40	Restaurant
41-50	Private home
51-60	Boardinghouse
61-70	Inn (cheap)
71-80	Inn (average)
81-85	Inn (expensive)
86-90	General store
91-94	Stables
95-97	Shrine
98-100	Blacksmith

## GOVERNMENT/MILITARY

1-20	Government building
21-40	Warehouse
41-50	Barracks
51-60	Museum
61-70	Private residence
71-80	Temple
81-85	Inn (expensive)
86-90	Pub
91-94	Boardinghouse
95-97	Keep/fortified house
98-100	Palace

## TEMPLE

1-40	Temple
41-60	Shrine
61-80	Private home
81-90	Inn (cheap)
91-95	Inn (average)
96-100	Inn (expensive)

## UNIVERSITY

1-30	College/school
31-40	Dormitory
41-50	Pub
51-60	Restaurant
61-70	Inn (cheap)
71-80	Inn (average)
81-85	Private home
86-90	Sage's tower
91-94	Wizard's tower
95-97	Shrine
98-100	Spell component shop

## MARKET SQUARES AND PARKS

The tables for generating the contents of a market or a park work differently from the others given here. Generate 1d10+10 items from the tables for the market and 1d10+3 for the park then place them using Table 4 from Chapter 3.

## MARKET

The stalls listed on this table are all 2d6 feet by 3d6 feet.

1–20	Vegetable stall
21–40	Bread and baked goods stall
41–62	Fruit stall
63–65	Weapons and armor stall
66–68	Spell components stall
69–70	Paper and writing supplies
71–76	Live animals
77–78	A juggler and bard set up a 2d6 by 2d6 feet area to perform
79–80	A hawkler sells an alleged cure-all tonic
81–83	A traveling diviner offers glimpses of the future
84–86	A tinker repairs broken items
87–90	Clothes stall
91–93	Shoes and boots stall
94–95	Musical instruments and drums
96–98	Jewelry and gems
99–100	Bows and arrows

## PARK

1–10	A fountain (3d6 feet by 3d6 feet)
11–40	A stand of trees (4d10 by 6d10 feet)
41–60	A small pond (4d10 by 6d10 feet)
61–70	A statue
71–80	A monument (4d10 by 4d10 feet)
81–95	A flower bed (4d10 by 4d10 feet)
96–100	A small, public stage (4d10 by 6d10 feet)

## BLOCK DETAILS

In some cases, it may be handy to come up with a general description or feel for an area of the city. The following tables are useful in fleshing out a region of the city and adding small details to an area.

## STREET NAMES

To generate a street name, you have several options. You can use the tables for NPC names, or you can use this table. Use the table to pick a word. Combine it with street, boulevard, avenue, or road to create the name. You can also use other, more formal names. For the word dolphin, you could create such street names as the Dolphins' Way or similar constructions.



## STREET NAME TABLE

1–5	Axe
6–10	Autumn
11–15	Baker
16–19	Cream
20–23	Dolphin
24–28	Elephant
29–33	Frost
34–37	Gate
38–42	Gold
43–46	High
47–51	Iron
52–55	Jack
56–58	Light
59–62	Moon
63–65	Necromancer
63–66	Oliver
67–69	Paper
70–73	River
74–77	Silver
78–80	Smith
81–84	Sun
85–90	Tower
91–95	Wall
96–100	Young

## BLOCK CONDITIONS

Sometimes, you may want to randomly determine a street's condition. Is it crowded and messy, or quiet and clean? The following table uses a d20 roll, as its results can be modified. If the nearest residential block is upper class, apply a +10 modifier. If the closest residential block is a slum, apply a -10 modifier.

-9 to -5 The area is filthy. Garbage thrown from upper-story windows litters the streets, beggars sleep in the alleys, wild dogs run loose. Prostitutes openly seek customers, and many of the men wear weapons. Many of the buildings here are abandoned to the homeless or in terrible condition.

-4 to 0 This block is a rough and tumble area. Street gangs or thieves' guild members are more common than town guards. Trash is piled along the buildings and in alleys, but the streets are mostly clear.

1 to 5 The buildings here are older than normal and a bit run down. Trash has piled up in a few places, but in most areas it is kept under control. A few beggars move about, but none seem to be camping or living here.

6 to 10 This area's buildings are old and battered, but they are regularly maintained. Some of the alleyways are piled with garbage, but the streets and building facades are kept clean.

11 to 15 The street is well maintained, and the buildings show signs of maintenance, such as fresh paint or new construction.

16 to 20 The buildings here are all relatively new, having been erected in the past decade. The alleys are a bit dirty, but few of them are filled with garbage and other refuse. No street people are to be seen.

21 to 30 The nicest part of town, all the buildings here are given fresh paint or a thorough cleaning on a monthly basis. A guardsman stands on every corner, and not a speck of garbage is to be seen. Even the alleys are clean and comfortable.



## CROWDS

This table can be used to determine how many people are out and about. Apply a -10 modifier at night and a +10 for areas such as travel and entertainment blocks or markets that are known to attract crowds. The market may gain its bonus only during the day, while the entertainment blocks may gain it only during the evening hours.



- 5 or less The street is completely deserted.
- 6–10 1d6 people walk the street, alone or in 1d3 groups.
- 11–15 Moderate traffic fills the street. The characters can move without any problems, but they are never more than 10 feet away from anyone. A few wagons, carts, or carriages roll down the street.
- 16–20 Traffic is heavy, with large groups or simply lots of people out and about. Carriage and cart traffic may be snarled up in a traffic jam. The characters must frequently move around other pedestrians and carts to move at a fast pace.
- 20+ The street is packed with people. They may be here to shop, celebrate a holiday, or watch a parade. Vehicles can barely move due to the press of bodies.

## BUILDING INTERIORS

Use the following tables to create the interior layout of a building. Advice is given below for using the tables to produce specific types of buildings with logical results. For instance, a library should have plenty of large galleries to hold shelves of books while an inn would have many small rooms to rent.

The random generation system starts with the doors leading into a building and draws rooms into them as it goes. When you draw rooms, number them starting with one. You may have to randomly pick a room, plus it makes it easier to refer to the map if you have a key ready to go.

Start by creating rooms that connect to the doorways. Then, add a number of rooms as per the individual table types. Use the door tables for each room to connect them. Any area that is not a room is simply corridor space. Finally, randomly pick a room for a staircase, if necessary, and start the process over again for the basement and second, third, and other floors.

**Placing rooms:** To place a room, divide the building's outline into four sectors and number them from one to four. Roll 1d4 to determine which area of the building the room is found in. Then, use the descriptions of the room size below to draw it. For large buildings or a more



exact placement, you can roll 1d4 to determine which sub-quadrant the room occupies.

**Corridors:** Place rooms until you have filled at least 75% of the floor space with rooms. For more crowded buildings, this can reach up to 95%. Any space left unfilled by a room counts as a hallway.

**Room size:** When generating room size, there are two random measures you can use. The first judges a room's size in relation to the size of the building as a whole. The second offers an absolute measure of the room. Use the system that works best for your needs.

**Small room:** A small room either occupies 1d10% of the floor's space or measures 2d6+3 feet along each side.

**Medium-size room:** A medium-size room either occupies 1d10+10% of the floor's space or measures 2d6+13 feet along each side.

**Large room:** A large room either occupies 1d10+20% of the floor's space or measures 2d10+23 feet along each side.

**Huge room:** A huge room either occupies  $1d10+40\%$  of the floor's space or measures  $2d20+33$  feet along each side.

**Stairs:** To place stairs in a building, you have two options. For each staircase, you can place it in a room by numbering the rooms and randomly picking one. Otherwise, you can use the same method for placing rooms to find a stretch of corridor where the stairway runs.

**Doors:** Obviously, each room needs at least one door. Roll  $1d4-2$  to determine how many doors a room has, with a minimum of one, then place it by rolling  $1d4$  and picking a random wall or drawing the door to connect to the nearest corridor.

**Windows:** There is a 50% chance that any 10-foot stretch of a building's outer wall has a window installed in it.

#### Designing Buildings:

While a random method generates floor plans quickly and easily, there must still be a level of direction to the system. Producing random tables for every conceivable type of building would quickly fill this book. Instead, use the guidelines below for a variety of building types.

**Private Residence:** Private homes tend to have highly individualized layouts, making it possible to simply use the random system as given. The first floor should have a kitchen with a fireplace, dining room, and sitting room. The bedrooms are usually found on the second floor. Use a mix of medium and small rooms on the first floor, and medium ones on the second and third floors.

**Tavern, Pub, or Inn:** The first floor should be dominated by the main eating area, which could be large or even huge. A few private booths can be built using small rooms, while the kitchen with fireplace should be medi-

um-size or large. The second and other floors could hold a number of small rooms to rent, with an apartment for the owner consisting of two or three medium or small rooms. The basement is likely a single, large storage area.

**Shop:** A shop should, like a tavern, have a single, large or huge room. A small backroom could be an office, and another medium or large room acts as a storage area. The second and third floors likely hold apartments made up of small and medium-size rooms. In this case, the staircases to them could run outside of the building or in a stairwell accessible by an outer door.

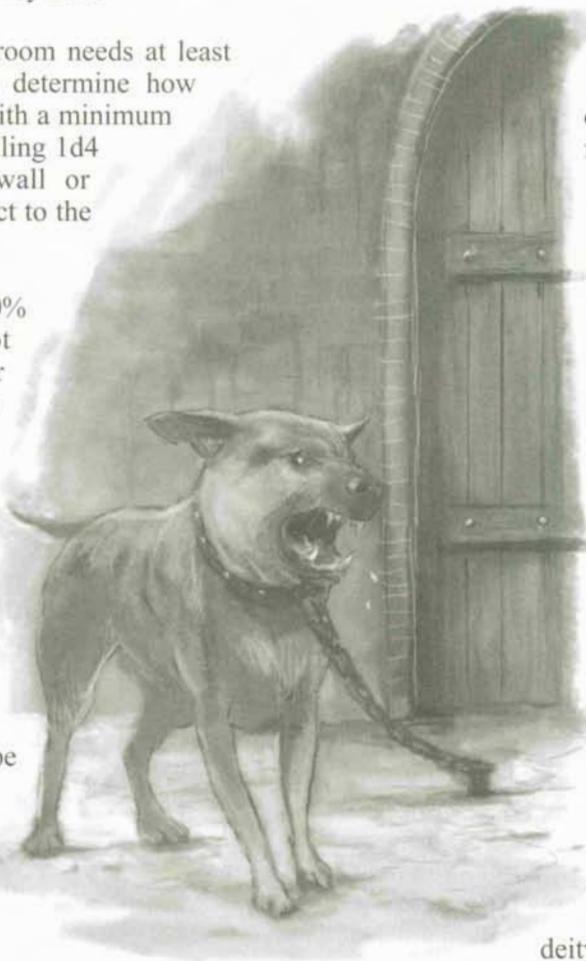
**Warehouse or Workshop:** Most of these buildings consist of a single, huge room where work is done or goods are stored. A few medium or small rooms could serve as an office or special storage area.

**Temple:** A temple should be dominated by a single, huge area that holds an altar and pews for worshippers. A smaller, side chamber might be a shrine dedicated to a related deity or a saint. The basement may hold a crypt for the priests and especially dedicated followers. Small rooms may be apartments for the clerics, cells for contemplation, and storage spaces.

**Unique Traits:** To spice up a building, here are a few ideas for unique or strange features found in buildings.

**Balcony:** A chamber on the upper floors, such as a master bedroom, may have a balcony that overlooks the street or a private residence's gardens.

**Gardens:** The private residences of the wealthy and powerful, along with many temples, are



surrounded by lush, green gardens filled with trees and beautiful flowers. By night, lions or guard dogs may stalk them in search of intruders.

*Pool/Spring:* A grotto filled with water is found in the basement or ground floor. It could be used as a shrine, to hold pet fish, or as an emergency source of water.

*Roofless:* Part of the building is open to the sky, such as an enclosed garden. A building could be built around an open courtyard, with the central area open to the air and filled with plants, a fountain, or a small plaza.

*Secret Doors/Passages:* Anyone who has a secret to keep, such as a criminal or the leader of an evil cult, might have a bolt hole built into his cellar. Hidden behind a secret door, the bolt hole consists of a long passage to the sewers or an exit outside the city. Doors hidden in the walls or secreted behind furniture can conceal storage rooms or meeting chambers.

*Skylight:* Some folk build skylights into their buildings, allowing the sun and stars to provide natural illumination through glass windows.

## CITY MONSTERS

While monsters are generally thought of as dungeon threats, there are some creatures that thrive in the city. Listed below are a variety of creatures that can hide within an urban area. Use this table to randomly select a villain or an urban threat. The monsters listed here can turn invisible, shift their form via *polymorph self* or a similar ability, or have the Disguise skill. Others are liable to be recruited and kept out of sight by evil spellcasters.

With enough thought and consideration, almost any monster can be added to an urban adventure. A sprite or dryad might dwell within a city park, while an elemental creature could enter town through a gate in the sewers. In some rough and tumble borderland towns, orc barbarians and hobgoblin mercenaries could rub shoulders with humans, dwarves, and halflings. A rich, powerful merchant could hire a trainer to teach a young hydra to guard his warehouses or personal estates.

Finally, some monsters can become powerful, though secret, components of a city's political scene. The mayor could be magically dominated by a monster, while a diabolical, genius creature from the underworld could use tunnels beneath town to subvert and control the thieves' guild. Doppelgangers and other creatures earn their livings working with humans and other civilized creatures, making the city their natural habitat.

d%	Monster	CR
1-4	Annis	6
5-8	Aranea	4
9-11	Dire rat	1/3
12-13	Doppelganger	3
14-15	Erinyes	7
16-19	Ethereal marauder	3
20-23	Gargoyle	4
24-26	Gelugon	13
27-30	Ghost	Varies
31-34	Ghoul	1
35-38	Imp	2
39-42	Invisible stalker	7
43-45	Maralith	17
46-49	Medusa	7
50-53	Mimic	4
54-57	Night hag	9
58-61	Otyugh	4
62-64	Pit fiend	16
65-68	Rat	1/8
69-72	Skeleton	Varies
73-76	Tiefling	1/2
77-81	Wererat	Varies
82-86	Weretiger	Varies
87-91	Werewolf	Varies
92-94	Vampire	Varies
95-98	Wraith	5
99-100	Zombie	Varies

FREE PREVIEW

# SORCERY & STEAM

## INTRODUCTION

The following section is a free preview of Fantasy Flight's upcoming Legends & Lairs book, *Sorcery & Steam*. This volume is a compendium of useful information that allows a DM to create a steampunk fantasy world or introduce steampunk elements into an existing campaign setting. Because of the more modern emphasis on urban centers in a steampunk campaign, *Sorcery & Steam* and *Cityworks* complement each other nicely. This introduction to *Sorcery & Steam* was written by Gareth Hanrahan. The text of this section is designated closed content.

*Sorcery and Steam* is not really about steam, or sorcery either for that matter. The book is about science, and fantasy, and what you can do when you put the two together. "Steam" is shorthand for industry and technology, a conceptual gateway to a brave new world of whirring clockworks, clanking gears, and marching brass wonders. The engine of this transformation is traditionally steam power, which worked so many changes in history during the Industrial Revolution, but the underlying technology is really irrelevant. It doesn't matter if the

machines are driven by steam, or oil, or elementals, or magically bound demons; it's the presence and concept of the machine that's important.

The machine is a symbol of greater change. Other great constructions, like castles or monuments, can exist in something of a vacuum: Their mere existence implies comparatively little about the society that built them. Machines, however, require a significant infrastructure. A gigantic steam-powered factory implies the existence of dozens of foundries and brassworks to make the parts, implies a caste of craftsmen and engineers to build and run the engines, a civilization whose vast demands can be sated only by mass production—such industry does not happen in isolation. Other technologies or artifacts can exist without completely changing their surroundings, but it's much harder to contain steam and all its implications. Once the steam genie is out of its cast-iron bottle, progress will keep racing ahead. To shamelessly quote Charles Fort, "it's steam-engines when it's steam-engine time." Fort was actually talking about the odd phenomenon where different inventors simultaneously invent the same complex machine, without any knowledge of the work of the other. When a technology is ready to be born, it seems to push itself out wherever there is a receptive mind...

Adding steam and all it implies to different times and settings is referred to as “steampunk.” The ill-fitting “punk” epithet is derived from the “cyberpunk” genre of science fiction. (One of the first steampunk books, *The Difference Engine* by William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, was authored by two leading lights of the cyberpunk movement, but the term “steampunk” was coined before the book was published.) Where cyberpunk put technology into fast-forward and then examined what that did to society, steampunk took the scientific dreams of the Industrial Revolution and ran with them. *The Difference Engine* puts clockwork supercomputers, complete with digital imaging and artificial intelligence, into a Victorian London greatly changed by the presence of such technology. This highlights one key trait of steampunk fiction: “Steam” doesn’t merely bring into existence real machines, like trains or cotton mills, but creates anachronistic or impossible technologies such as computers, television, cybernetics, or even mecha. Steam, then, is an agent that suspends disbelief and advances technology, a plot device for including plot devices. Instead of merely building on existing devices of the time, steam takes modern-day technology and recasts it with brass rivets and bubbling boilers in a new setting.

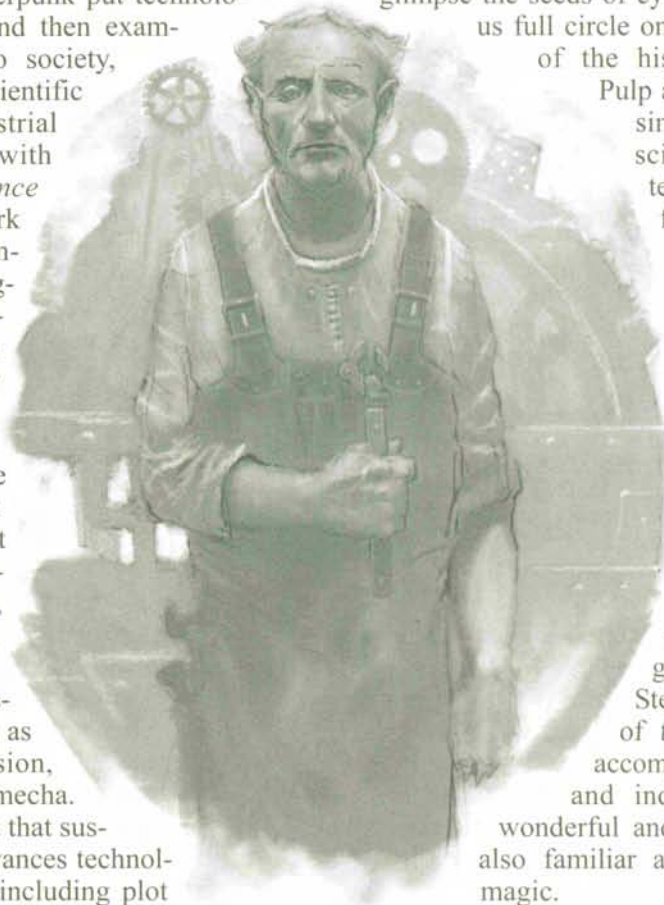
Victorian steampunk is the most common expression of the genre. The Victorian age was the time of the great factories, of great strides in industry and technology, of railways and science and workhouses. Titanic smokestacks belched the fumes of thousands of furnaces into the gray skies, and technology did transform the world. A little push, a little extrapolation, and there’s the steampunk computers or superweapons, like two sub-critical masses of uranium mounted on separate trains that are trundling headlong towards each other. The Victorian age was also the time of the scientific

romance, and most of Jules Verne’s books, especially *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* and *From the Earth to the Moon* can be gleefully subsumed within steampunk.

Once Wells enters the field, the genre runs into the border of the pulp series of the 1920s and 30s. (Beyond pulp and the ivory-tower science fiction of the 50s and 60s, we can dimly glimpse the seeds of cyberpunk, which brings us full circle on this whistle-stop tour of the history of steampunk.)

Pulp and steampunk share a similar attitude towards science. Science and technology have moved from the province of mystery and alchemy, and are becoming much more familiar, much more optimistic. Where pulp has a “gee whiz” attitude towards science, with rocket belts and radio watches and the like, steampunk takes a more elegiac approach, full of grandeur and pride. Steam is the new frontier of the Empire, the great accomplishment of science and industry. It’s new and wonderful and challenging, but it’s also familiar and acceptable, unlike magic.

Of course, all that relates to the common setting of steampunk fiction, which is an alternate-history version of Earth. Adding steam to fantasy, where magic isn’t a cryptic, ambiguous mystery but a relatively common force that can be manipulated, channeled, and used to throw *fireballs*, can go in two ways. Magic and its practitioners may be opposed to steam and see it as a terribly common and clumsy method for the masses to get what should be reserved for the learned masters of the arcane. Alternatively, both magic and steam can be yoked together by brute industry, where the spells and mysteries of magic are broken down, analyzed, and mass-produced. China Mieville’s excellent (and highly recommended) *Perdido Street Station* describes a sort of “industrial fan-





tasy,” where thaumaturges are craftsmen just like engineers, and conjured lightning elementals power magical engines to catch leviathans from other planes of existence.

Steampunk isn’t about steam. It’s about technological advancement down different paths or at a faster pace. It was steam power that triggered and drove the historical revolution, a change that swept away the old orders more efficiently and completely than any philosophy or Renaissance. Steam is change, movement towards the unfamiliar and the wonderful.

## THE STEAMPUNK AESTHETIC

Most depictions of steampunk have a common “look,” with motifs and images cropping up time and time again, and any steampunk game should mention at least some of these. Obviously, the trappings of mechanisms and steam power—cogs, pipes, boilers, lightning rods, valves and the like—are everywhere, but even things not improved by technology have traces of steam. A suit of plate armor might have brass rivets, or a shield might be shaped like a cog. The architecture of steampunk draws from the vast buildings of the

Victorian era, looming gothic structures decked with chimneys and gargoyles, baroque monstrosities of metal and stone rising into the sooty clouds. Things in steampunk tend to be either absolutely filthy thanks to all the smoke, soot, and trash produced by industry, or else scrubbed bright and shiny, every rivet and plate gleaming proudly. Similarly, steampunk characters tend to extremes of being either despicable, backstabbing guttersnipes written by Charles Dickens on absinthe, or else heroic, honorable scientist-heroes out of Jules Verne.

As many works in the genre are alternate-histories, steampunk is commonly associated with Victoriana. Society is more genteel, more concerned with manners and propriety, but possibly more complex and deceitful from the perspective of humble wandering adventurers. Titles—both noble titles and the names of products—are emphasized.

Steampunk can, however, be added to the classic medieval fantasy setting without adding any Victorian mannerisms. The Renaissance is close enough to work, and that time brought forth the steampunk imaginings of Leonardo da Vinci, who sketched steam tanks and heli-

copters and other devices in his famous notebooks. Fantasy steampunk can feature the technology of the 20th century built with the materials of the 19th by the scientists of the 16th.

## THE SCIENCE OF FANTASY

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In the steampunk setting, new technologies are taming all the natural phenomena that once seemed so frightful. Steam power makes machines seem to live. A key on a kite inspires the first glimmers of electricity as a tool. Formerly inaccessible regions, such as the widest oceans, ice-choked seas, or even the upper reaches of the firmament are conquered by steam-powered machines. In most fantasy settings, though, many of these wonders have already been accomplished. The widest ocean can be crossed in a moment with a teleportation spell, and white dragons or snow elves make their way across ice-choked seas. Rather than letting steam take second place and merely replicate what magic and fantastic creatures have already accomplished, steam should go further and open up new vistas to explore. If magical flying skyships already sail the clouds in your game, then a steam-powered airship is not going to add much. However, if steam technologies can be used to hugely increase the range of a skyship, and an iron hull used to hold in the air and ward off the cold of space, then steam can open up other worlds for adventuring.

There are always new wonders to be found.

## THE THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

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Magic is essentially arbitrary. Its underlying rules change from setting to setting and often from instance to instance. Most fantasy worlds take a thinly disguised version of Earth's middle ages and add a thin gloss of magic and wonder without ever considering how the existence of magic would affect the world. If the prayers of clerics can effectively cure diseases and wizards can teleport across the world in a heartbeat, how can plagues and unexplored regions still exist?

Even when an author attempts to reconcile magic and realism, the results are often unsatisfying. The abilities, limits, and amount of magic are poorly defined. Everyone has their own conception about how magic works, and creating a common framework that can be

agreed upon and handles all eventualities is difficult.

Technology, on the other hand, exists and is understood to some degree by everyone. Adding or changing technology to create an alternate history is much more workable, because common assumptions can easily be made about technology. No one is quite sure how the presence of magic would affect a period of history, but a much better guess can be made about the presence of technology. Steampunk alternate-history therefore can make huge changes to history, while alternate histories involving magic are much more cautious and keep magic hidden and mysterious. Steam encourages logical extrapolation towards big ideas.

## THE FAMILIAR IN THE FANTASTIC

The world of steampunk contains echoes of our modern world. Fragments of familiar things— aspects of technology, attitudes, ideas—are presented in strange new forms and in unlikely places, and are contrasted with the historical culture. Steampunk can give computers to the Victorians or telegraphs to the crusaders. In fantasy games, then, the players can be given familiar tools to work with, like telephones or mass transit systems. Players obviously are much more familiar with these things than with the intricacies of feudalism or medieval theology, and can interact with them much more easily. A scenario that hinges on some aspect of medieval life requires the DM to laboriously fill details in for the players, which can break the flow of the game. Using an element familiar to the players requires no such explication. However, because of the novelty of the context of the technology, the players may find a new sense of wonder. A player knows a train and how a train works; here is a train that rattles through dwarf-built tunnels and is powered by burning the spirits of the unworthy dead, and anyone who doesn't think that's interesting should be examined to make sure they're not a clockwork automaton.

# INTRODUCING STEAMPUNK

Adding steam technology to an existing campaign world takes more work than adding a new type of magic or a new race. New magic can be introduced by a handful of secretive practitioners, and there are always unknown monsters lurking in the forest. A new technology, however, requires an infrastructure. It cannot spring from nothing.

Once the concept of steam has been introduced into a world, the technology needs time to grow. Building factories and steam dreadnoughts takes time, so even if the characters bring back the Lost Book of the Clockwork Dragon one week, there won't be steam-powered trains in every city the following week. Assuming the DM wants more than one or two minor examples of steam technology in the game, but doesn't want to wait five or more years for the setting's industrial infrastructure to catch up naturally, one of the following plotlines should be used to introduce and develop steamcraft.

As each plotline assumes that steamcraft is being introduced into an existing campaign, suggestions are given for adventures that give the players a place in these momentous changes.

## STEAMPUNK AS NEW DEVELOPMENT

Assuming the setting has the late-medieval technology level common to most fantasy games, steam technology can develop naturally. Bell-forging towns start to produce boilers and cannons while goldsmiths turn from fine jewelry to clockwork. Ideally, the DM should mention the growing industries and new buildings many sessions in advance of the introduction of functional steamcraft. A new air of enthusiasm and industry washes over the land.

A sneaky way to add necessary infrastructure is to make whatever region or city the PCs never visit into the center of the burgeoning industrial revolution. If the PCs have never laid

eyes on the place, the DM can drop in a vast foundry and a college of engineers, necessary seeds from which steamcraft can grow. This sort of development can be glossed over in most situations—few games bother with details of agriculture or trade—but the steampunk genre virtually demands attention to its foundations. Furthermore, if steam technology is a new invention, the characters need to know where to go to get the newest and best devices.

New developments require money, and the nobles or organizations that fund the invention of steamcraft will become hugely influential and powerful as the technology grows. For every invention that changes the world, though, there are a thousand that end up as dead-end money pits. If the PCs have close connections to a rich patron, they may be asked to review the work of some eccentric sage, bringing the characters in at the very birth of steamcraft—and if they reject the inventor's work, a rival group can come in and reap the rewards of the new technology. Deciding who develops steamcraft will determine what sort of steampunk evolves in the campaign.

Steamcraft as a new development can happen in the background, without affecting the player characters directly, but adventures revolving around steam technology need not wait for the technology to mature. Characters may find themselves retrieving stolen prototypes or rescuing the absent-minded inventor who alone knows the secret of steam. Rumors of diabolical secret experiments and demon-summoning may in fact conceal hidden laboratories. If the players do not know what all the building and mysterious activity is leading towards, the final unveiling of steam will be both surprising and satisfying.

## STEAMPUNK AS ANCIENT SECRET

Another possible origin for steam is an ancient civilization. Perhaps thousands of years ago, the ancients conquered the world with mechanical warriors and advanced technologies. Now they are gone, but their legacies remain in a thousand underground vaults and dungeons.

In this method for introducing steam technology, there are (initially, anyway) no vast factories. All the wonders are ancient ones, dragged out of the earth to be rebuilt and repaired. The





vaults of the ancients are, of course, filled with lethal steam-powered traps and still-active mechanical guardians. Adventuring parties become heavily armed archaeologists, making their fortunes by retrieving ancient devices.

Eventually, the steam technology revolution will take hold. Engineers and sages pull the machines of the ancients apart, divining from the brass entrails how to copy or make new devices. Until then, steam devices are another form of magic; each device is unique and cannot be understood or repaired easily. One advantage of this approach is that the most advanced steam technology can be introduced as creations of the ancients instead of the product of “current” engineering. If the DM wants a single, campaign-shaking artifact, such as an intelligent analytical engine or an airship that can defeat whole armies, it can be introduced without all the previous generations of technology that would normally lead up to such a wonder.

Ancient steam technology need not be found only in dungeons. A fleet of ironclad ships, crewed by golems and constructs, might have been sent off to fight a war overseas in ages

past. On its return journey, the fleet became trapped in a magical whirlpool for centuries. Now, the fleet is returning to its home port—or the city that now stands on the ruins of the ancient home port. Alternatively, one of the deities of the setting might secretly be a living construct, tapping geothermal power from deep underground and converting it into granted divine spells. Uncovering the secret of this great and powerful being might force it to reveal the secrets of steam.

Salvaging technology may trigger a “steam rush,” as fortune hunters and prospectors rush to ancient ruins to search for treasure. Until the industrial base to produce new machines is developed, recovered steam technology will be extremely valuable. Soon, though, the steam technology of the ancients will arise again in new forms.

## STEAMPUNK AS HIDDEN SECRET

Steam might have been present in the campaign setting since the beginning. Any secretive organization can hold the secrets of steam. Dwarves or gnomes make excellent keepers of such technology. Deep under the

mountains, the halls of the dwarf kings are heated by vast boilers, their mines carved out by steam-powered machines. For decades, they have kept their technology a secret, using only the crude weapons of humans while above ground. Now, they are beginning to trade steam technology to outsiders.

Making steamcraft a hidden secret that is suddenly revealed allows steam technology to be quickly developed and distributed throughout the campaign setting. The dwarves (or whatever group has been using steam) become sought-after engineers and oversee the development of new foundries and steam worker's guilds. A flood of mechanical wonders and weapons pours out of the dwarven kingdoms, and the steampunk revolution quickly gets underway.

Instead of having a whole nation or large organization secretly develop steampunk, it might be the province of a few isolated scholars or a single guild. Perhaps a village, high up in the mountains, was once the home of a genius inventor whose legacy is a steam-powered mill and guardian constructs, or a small island nation protects itself with cannons and ironclads. This requires fewer behind-the-scenes changes to the campaign, but proportionately reduces the speed at which steam technology becomes commonplace.

The key questions in this option are, first, why has steam technology been kept secret, and second, why is it coming to light now? The answers, and the adventures they create, are linked. Perhaps the keepers of steam have philosophical or religious objections to sharing their lore, and the characters must either

steal the secrets or prove themselves worthy as champions of the outside world. Clerics who worship perfect order might have created complex clockworks as meditative aids; they know that their creations could be the seed of an age of mechanical wonders, but do not wish to corrupt such paragons of order with the chaos of the profane world. If the dwarf kings have been holding back the evils of the under-caverns for decades with steam weapons, what will they do when treachery shatters their defenses? Dwarven technology will be desperately traded for mercenaries and aid.

This option can be combined with the "steampunk as new development" concept. Have the basics of steamcraft be worked out in some obscure, hidden location (gnomish realms are an excellent choice), then spread to the rest of the setting. This avoids the need to slowly lay the foundations for the development of steam, but keeps other changes to a minimum.

A variant of this idea is to have the player characters as members of whatever hidden order controls steam. An order of paladins and religious warriors might have uncovered ancient steam technology on a crusade in a far-off land. Now, they secretly use their advanced weaponry and devices to avert disasters and battle evils. Whenever all seems lost, the Knights of the Thundercloud arrive to save the day with their thunderstaves and golem-warriors.

## STEAMPUNK AS SECRET WEAPON

In this variation on "steampunk as hidden secret," the development of steam technology takes place as part of a weapons program. This neatly explains why the characters have seen no signs of the technology and industry being built and ensures there is a large arsenal of equipment and weaponry ready when the technology is finally revealed.

## STEAMPUNK AS FIRST CONTACT

Steampunk as secret weapon still requires an origin for the actual technology—natural developments, genius inventors, or ancient lore—but as the characters will never deal with steam technology until the secret is revealed, the origin is not as important here as it is elsewhere. What is important is who is responsible for developing steamcraft as a secret weapon.

If steamcraft is created by a good kingdom in the setting, the technology will be used in wars with rival nations or to thwart invasions. The characters may be entrusted with the products of this advanced technology if they have proved themselves heroes in the past (just wipe out the original crew of the first war-zeppelin in a testing accident, and have the PCs hastily recruited as replacements). Having a good-aligned nation develop steampunk also gives the technology its second-best dramatic entrance, as the beleaguered PCs are rescued by a cannon barrage from the steam cavalry.

Another origin for steamcraft is the mad scientist. Deranged geniuses ranting about world domination are common in steampunk, and it is only a small leap to have everything spring from the misguided inventions of one scientist. This approach does not put much infrastructure in place, so it will take a few years of game time before steamcraft becomes common, but few adventures are more fun than defeating a mad scientist just before his etheric rocket launches on its clockwork-guided trajectory into the heart of the city. The tricky bit is ensuring that the PCs leave enough technology intact for someone to salvage.

A variant on this idea is to have steamcraft developed by an ambitious and rebellious noble. This has all the advantages of the mad scientist option, but a noble planning a full-scale steam-driven rebellion will also build foundries and smithies, which can be taken over and used as an initial industrial base for steamcraft. If the noble is a long-term villain, his defeat amid the billowing steam and sparking metal provides a natural transition to a second, steampunk-heavy phase of the campaign.

Steampunk as secret weapon hides the presence of steam in the campaign until it's almost ready to burst upon the scene. It provides fewer opportunities for player involvement, but the revelation of the secret weapon should be an exciting adventure.

Instead of dragging an essentially medieval country kicking and screaming into the age of steam, new technology can be introduced through trade with a newly discovered nation that has an established industrial base. Innovations such as the compass, accurate clocks, engine-driven vessels, and airships allow exploration beyond the previous limits of navigation. The glint of sunlight on brass may herald a brave new era of commerce. Characters may be sent to establish trade links or bring back technology from across the seas.

Rather than introducing a powerful and advanced nation into the setting, a few immigrants can bring the secrets of steam with them to a new realm. For example, in historical Japan, the samurai caste banned the use of gunpowder. Imagine a sage, denied the chance to practice his military craft at home, traveling to the barbarian lands with the secret of firearms. Such scientists will soon become sought-after engineers and specialists.

Alternatively, perhaps the advanced society is not interested in expansion and exploration. Instead of explorers searching for gold or spices, steam technology could be the treasure sought in the far corners of the globe.

Steamcraft can be brought to the campaign from even stranger shores. Gigantic flying machines, enclosed in airtight shells and heated against the interstellar void, might drop out of the sky bringing tales and treasures from worlds across the sea of stars. If the DM does not wish to open up the possibilities of planet-hopping steampunk-in-space adventures, then the mighty vessel that just crossed the heavens can unfortunately crash on the shores of the campaign world. Salvage can then spark the steam revolution.

The outer planes offer another source for steamcraft. The cosmopolitan cities of the planes may have a higher level of technology than the backwaters of reality, and the various elemental planes are crying out to be tapped as sources of power. Enterprising wizards might summon outsider engineers to construct the first steam engines, powered by elementals to drive magical experiments.

## STEAMPUNK INVASION

Of course, that glint of sunlight on brass may herald a terrible invasion by a steam-driven aggressor. The military advantages produced by steamcraft may prompt an era of war and conquest. Ironclads can conquer the ocean, cannons and flying machines can easily defeat archaic fortifications, and mechanized troops and gunners can cut a bloody swath through defending armies. When the steampunk industry goes to war, the campaign world enters a terrifying and bloody era of warfare far worse than anything that has gone before.

Introducing steam by having part of the setting invaded by a technologically advanced foe will obviously shake up the campaign considerably. An army fully equipped and armed with steam-age weaponry will handily defeat a much larger force. (Look at the American Civil War, when a single ironclad ship, the *Merrimac*, sank two wooden vessels and forced another aground without taking any significant damage itself.) If the DM doesn't want to have the campaign setting trampled beneath the steampunk boot, the initial invasion force can be repelled by chance or heroics (for example, the PCs might sabotage the analytical engine commanding or coordinating the invaders). Salvage from the defeated invaders provides the seeds for the development of steamcraft.

Salvage in general becomes extremely important in an invasion scenario. Just as in the "steam as ancient secret" option, retrieving steamcraft devices is more common than crafting them, but instead of recovering inactive machines from underground vaults, the only source for technology is the capture of enemy war machines. Even though the characters are hideously outgunned by the enemy, their own tactical responses are limited by the need to keep their foe's technology as intact as possible. Theft and deceit will be key tools for the resistance.

The steam-powered invasion is the most dramatic and shocking way to introduce steampunk into a game. Take the single largest and most impregnable fortification in the setting and wipe it out with cannon-fire to drive home the power of steam. Have the skies fill with an approaching zeppelin armada, thousands of construct troops rappelling down from the airships to swarm targets on the ground.

The DM should be careful not to stack the odds too much against the characters—overwhelming odds are fun, but no one enjoys a completely hopeless game. Some light should make it through the choking clouds of soot and steam.

## BUILDING A STEAMPUNK SETTING

While other setting changes—new races, new spells, new classes, and the like—tend to be overlays onto an essentially medieval setting, steampunk has the potential to completely rework the nature of a campaign. Alternate history steampunk makes a change to the technology that was actually present, then extrapolates from that change as far as it will go. Similarly, the presence of steampunk in a fantasy game will do more than replace crossbows with flintlocks and put the adjective "steam-powered" in front of everything. To get the full steampunk experience, the effects of new technology and new thinking on every aspect of the setting should be considered.

## THE NATURE OF THE MACHINE

While "steamcraft" is used as a short-hand for advanced alternate technology throughout the book, there are options other than boiling water and burning wood. The power sources used are irrelevant on one level; steampunk is not about plausible technology, and any effect can be accomplished by any set of technologies. A sentient computer can be built out of clockworks and mercury valves. In fantasy, the nature of the technology used has far more to do with aesthetics than what can be accomplished. Giant walking war machines can be powered by steam boilers, bound demons, electricity elementals, the divine will of the god of war, or anything else. The effectiveness of the machines will be roughly equal, but the look will vary. Steam-powered machines will belch forth clouds of vapor and have a raging furnace in their hearts; electrical walkers crackle with power and spit sparks; machines powered by divine energy shine with an inner light and look like mobile church organs.

Although the technology denoted by steamcraft does not determine what effects are impossible, it does affect how things are achieved. When characters are trying to restart a stalled engine, the nature of the repairs will vary; if the driving force is steam, then the characters' efforts will revolve around finding a new source of combustible fuel. If the driving force of technology in the game is electrical, then the characters will have to string together lengths of cable and gather lightning bolts to resurrect the machine. The products of steam technology do not have to be realistic, but as the genre demands technical solutions to problems, the underlying principles should be made clear to the characters. Unlike magic, which is essentially arbitrary in its effects, technology has to be structured and predictable on some level.

Steampunk is a state of mind more than anything else, a science-fantasy view of the world. It isn't simply adding science; it is channeling fantasy through the scientific mindset. Instead of sages learning about chemistry, have them build on the wilder aspects of alchemy, building vast alchemical reactors that conjure the philosopher's stone at a thousand atmospheres of pressure, or spin straw into gold at a hundred revolutions a second.

Beyond steam, there are several other options for powering machines. Any or all of them can be combined in a setting. Smaller items can be driven by clockwork or even primitive alchemical-electrical batteries. Using bound elementals as power sources is a common fantasy idea; steam engines could be fuelled by fire elementals channeled through watery undines, or devils forced to endlessly turn cranks deep underground. Steampunk is all about ambition and technical accomplishment, which results in terrifyingly huge, audacious schemes and projects. At the extreme end of steampunk...

- Siguard, a nation once in desperate need of fuel for fires. The steam boilers and furnaces of the nation needed wood and coal, but the druids of the surrounding wilderness forbade the engineers from taking what they needed. The folk of Siguard



turned to the hottest natural flames of all: dragonfire. Zeppelins armed with cannon-fired dragon-spikes captured a host of red dragons and put the chained wyrms to work heating boilers. Now, three centuries later, the dragon farms of Siguard hatch hundreds of eggs each year: reds for the furnaces, blues and blacks and greens for the alchemical factories, and whites to keep the meat stockpiles frozen until it is time for the dragons to feed.

- In the realm of Thykist, the blood of the aristocracy carries lycanthropy. Only those who change may rule. Alchemical potions control their animal rage, and brass clocks and orreries precisely track the position of the nurturing moon. Now, the nobles have conceived a glorious plan to cement their place atop society. Rocket vessels bearing mighty adamantine chains shall fly to the moon and drive pitons deep into its silver crust. In Thykist, engines of surpassing power shall then draw on the chain, dragging the moon back and holding it in place, eternally bright and full.

- Life is not so bad, working on the drilling rigs of the Outworlds Cartel. The huge rigs float in the astral sea, just beyond the elemental planes. Each rig drives enchanted drills deep into the neighboring realm, pumping out elemental energy. The water rig has the easiest job of all, draining pure icy water and piping it to the fire rig. Workers at the fire rig are always blackened and scorched by their work, but they know that without the steam power produced in their boilers, the other rigs would fail. The air rig's thundering fans suck elemental air from its plane and

send it to the largest of the four—the earth rig. There, miners sustained by the elemental air delve deep into the eternal stone of the plane of earth, searching for huge quantities of metals and gemstones. Some whisper that the analytical engines that guide the Cartel have greater plans for the future; that two new rigs are being built to create a vast circuit between the positive and negative planes...

The beginnings of steam may produce nothing but a few humble weapons and constructs, but very great things may grow from these beginnings.

## TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

The speed of technological innovation is far greater in the age of steam than in simpler eras. Society is far more open to inventions and progress. Still, for every workable invention, there are many that fail entirely or are buoyed up by trickery and overblown claims. When designing a steampunk setting, the DM should not include every device and technology from the outset. Some should be kept back and only introduced later in the campaign. Having new items become available later encourages the characters to keep up to date with progress, and makes the setting less static.

The development and unveiling of new inventions is a rich source of adventures. A new weapon can tip a balance that has endured for centuries. For example, a human kingdom has long lived in fear of the incorporeal wraiths that haunt a bordering land of the dead. Mundane weapons cannot harm these immaterial undead, so the human armies cannot put an end to the threat. The invention of an ethereal compressor that churns the ethereal plane and forces the wraiths to physically manifest would be the turning point and allow mortals to deal with the threat once and for all—so surely the dead would stop at nothing to ensure the com-



pressor was never completed. World-changing developments need not be so exotic: A cheaper method of spinning cloth could completely upset a nation's economy.

Once an invention is widely spread, it becomes part of the background of the campaign and not especially interesting for adventures. Examples of the technology may turn up in an adventure, but the concept itself will be unaffected by the events of the scenario. However, when an invention is brand new, it's within the scope of the average adventuring party. Only a few people—the inventors, their backers or masters, the agents of those opposed to the innovation, and the PCs—need be involved, and the actions of the characters can determine the invention's fate. Also, prototypes are notoriously dangerous, unreliable, and fun to play with.

## EFFECTS OF STEAMCRAFT

Steamcraft can alter every aspect of a campaign setting. Depending on how established the technology is, steamcraft may just provide a few new pieces of critical equipment and the glimmerings of change in obscure corners of the setting, or it may produce a world quite unlike that seen in traditional fantasy gaming. The following sections look at how steamcraft changes different aspects of the world. Not all of them need to be used to get full value out of the book, and incorporating all the ideas will produce a very strange game indeed.

### TRANSPORT

"Horseless carriages" are certainly possible using steam, but there's little difference between these and the horse-drawn variety except the prestige of owning them. On the battlefield, though, small steam-powered vehicles can be heavily armored and used as mobile fortifications. Even if the campaign does not include gunpowder or other explosive firearms, steam-powered siege catapults and ballistae could change warfare considerably. For adventuring, a steam wagon is useful for places where horses and other beasts of burden do not willingly go, such as underground caverns or other planes of existence.

Trains are an emblematic technology of the age of steam. They are the first democratic mode of land transport, moving commoners and nobles equally (more or less) in large numbers. Railways are a physical embodiment of trade

links and connections between cities and regions. They concentrate people, goods, wealth, and industry into the space between two iron lines—just add a nefarious plot and a few monsters. Trains are obviously great settings for adventure, especially murder mysteries and combat scenes. The construction of railways requires a path through the wilderness to be cut and guarded. If the path of the Western Express must go through the Dire Swamp, then someone has to go into the swamp, slay the lizardfolk, and guard the machines as they sink pillars in the mud and build an iron causeway through the fog.

The military aspects of trains deserve a mention. Transporting troops was one of the first uses for railways. Moving an army by steam rail is not that much faster than marching them, but many armies lost more men on the march than in battle. Keeping troops and supplies in one train simplifies logistics considerably.

As cities grow, urban transport becomes more important. Adding an underground railway to a steampunk city drives home how different it is from classic fantasy, reinforcing the themes of the game *and* putting a handy tunnel dungeon network under the city.

Zeppelins are another icon of the steam age, a form of transportation that once offered so much potential. These rigid airships are held aloft by bags of hydrogen, helium, or other lighter-than-air gases. Enchanted skyships that travel through the clouds using magic require a vast investment of power, while steam-powered airships are comparatively cheap. In a setting with magic and numerous flying creatures, the advent of aerial travel is not quite as astonishing as it was in real history, but airships can still affect warfare, trade, exploration, and construction. As zeppelins can stay aloft and hover for long periods of time, city defenses against flying attackers could include airship-mounted weapons platforms.

Airships have an elegance possessed by no other means of transport. They cruise majestically through the air, quiet and smooth. Any location requiring privacy or a measure of class benefits from being slung underneath a zeppelin. A wizard's laboratory is free from interruptions a thousand feet in the air; a noble's feast could be held amid the clouds, with jousting on the backs of pegasi or

griffins; the heads of a merchants' guild could tour from city to city in a golden zeppelin. Despite their undoubted style, airships also make good cargo carriers and war machines.

Finally, steamcraft improves sea travel immensely. Steam engines allow much greater speeds, larger vessels, and longer voyages. The importance of the weather is vastly diminished for shipping and sea travel. Steamcraft makes ships much more reliable. Submersibles also become possible with steam, opening up under-sea realms for adventure.

## INDUSTRY

The development of mass production and the industrial revolution has little direct effect on adventuring, but it is obviously a massive change to society. The move from individual crafters to factories full of workers triggers a massive growth in cities. The factories themselves are endlessly hungry beasts, devouring resources at a ferocious rate. The mere existence of such demand for raw materials and the massive supply of finished goods will accelerate commerce in the setting. When most common items are equally produced everywhere by crafters in villages and small towns, the various regions of the setting are only loosely linked. The only trade is in rare and luxury goods. With the rise of industry, however, specialization and centralization makes cities and regions more interdependent. If the huge shipyards of one city are the only place in the realm capable of producing ironclads, then the loss of that city is a crippling blow. In simpler times, wooden ships could be built almost anywhere, as they need less infrastructure, manufactured components, and expertise.

Mass production can serve as something of an equalizer. Mass-produced goods become more affordable, for example, improving the life of commoners. Magic items create a huge gap between those who have ensorcelled weapons, and those who do not—there is a vast, obvious, and rather lethal difference between a town guard with a longsword and a player character with a powerful magical longsword. With mass production of weaponry, the town guard is far more likely to have a firearm that's almost on par with that of a character. If machines can cast spells or make creating items easier, mass production of magic becomes possible, further raising the average power level in the game.

On the other hand, goods that are *not* mass-produced may become more expensive relative to those that are. Martial weapons, for example, may not be mass-produced outside of the government's armories. While the price of mass-produced clothing or wagon wheels may be incredibly low by the historical standards of a campaign world, the price of a well-made longsword may double or triple. In an era of mass production, individual artisans and craftsmen may be very rare, and the handcrafted goods that only they can produce are both scarce and expensive.

Factories, the cathedrals of the steampunk city, can spill pollution into the air, ground, and water. They are huge, complex structures filled with tunnels, hiding places, dangerous machines, and soaring towers decked with grim gargoyles. They conceal all types of nefarious and evil activity, pay huge sums to deal with problems, and explode very satisfyingly at the climax of an adventure.

Agriculture undergoes a similar if less dramatic revolution. New techniques such as crop rotation and the combining of small peasant farms into larger fields increase the yield of the land. If handled badly, as they often were, these new methods can create hardship and dissent among the peasantry. A steampunk Robin Hood, sniping with his musket and raiding steam trains as they rattle through the greenwood, might fight for justice against a corrupt lord who steals the land of the common folk in the name of "enclosure" and progress.

## SOCIETY

Trade links disparate regions together, as do enhanced communications. Telegraphs or other signaling devices (such as a variation on Thomas Edison's necrophone for speaking to the dead; perhaps communications could be passed along a chain of whispering ghosts from caller to caller using necromantic steampunk) make the passage of news much quicker, as well as putting the equivalent of the *message* spell within reach of everyone. Electric lights lengthen the time available for work or leisure and free society from complete dependence on sunlight. Printing presses spread knowledge, news, and gossip throughout society. In short, the more advanced steam-age technology gets, the closer the lifestyle of the average person in the setting gets to that of the average person in the modern day. If the DM wants to create a



setting that resembles an alternate-history Earth, then this trend can continue; otherwise, the technology available or the cultural reactions to it should be considered and adjusted.

The rise of steam brings with it a new middle class of factory owners, investors, engineering guild-masters, and *nouveau riche* social climbers. This new middle class upsets the long-established order of society as they are neither noble nor commoner. Increased ambition and dissent among the lower echelons of society further destabilize the social order. The added wealth also creates more opportunities for crime and corruption.

The quality of life for the peasant classes may improve with new opportunities and new wealth, although being jammed into overcrowded tenement buildings in a soot-choked, crime-ridden city is hardly better than scratching out a poor living from the unforgiving soil. If the setting takes a more romantic view of peasant life, then the under-classes in the cities can be fresh-scrubbed orphans and lovable rogues. However prosperous they are, their days are spent in the shadow of the machines. Steampunk cities should be designed by placing the big factories and machines first, and then filling in the gaps and crevices with places for people. Industry, not humanity, has its true home in the cities.

Improved communication and transport decreases the need for feudalism. A lord need no longer rule distant regions through a hierarchy of vassals; he can visit his holdings direct-

ly and receive news from them quickly by telegraph. Government can be centralized, leading to a growth in bureaucracies, ministries, and other appendages of rule. Espionage becomes more important: Steam quickens the pace of

events, and a technical advantage could lead to one nation becoming economically or militarily dominant over another. Ensuring that such an advantage is "shared" is a necessity. Many adventures can be based around the balance of steamcraft. Spying missions can use all sorts of gadgets and brass toys, sending mechanical spiders carrying cameras around corners and hiding clairaudient talismans in the strongholds of enemies.

## WARFARE

Cannon-fire thunders across the battlefield, smashing through whole formations of troops before denting the steel hulls of armored vehicles. Regiments of musketeers advance in the shadow of the gargantuan war machines that loom out of the smoke and hurl gouts of flame and poison gas. Legions of clockwork troops march in clattering unison, their actions guided by the cold mechanical logic of an engine. Above, zeppelins begin an aerial bombardment, and the sooty clouds are suddenly illuminated by the falling firebombs. It is far from the chivalric warfare of an earlier age.

Firearms completely alter the nature of battle. A small handful of troops armed with guns can defeat an enemy force many times larger. The armored cavalry charge becomes obsolete; duels between individual opponents in the midst of the general melee give way to firing at half-glimpsed targets from a distance. Characters are more likely to be ignominiously slain by a random shot. The steampunk battlefield resembles the wars of the 18th, 19th, or early 20th centuries.



On the battlefield, the best place for PCs is either at the controls of a war machine or else leading efforts to destroy enemy engines. So much of a battle is decided by sheer numbers of troops and effectiveness of weaponry, which leaves little scope for individual actions and heroism. Characters should have control over their fates, which they do not have if they are stuck in the third rank of a troop formation. PCs need freedom and autonomy—storming a war machine from the inside, or manning such a machine themselves, are better options.

Firearms make even untrained troops lethal. Learning to use a bow or spear takes time, but pointing a gun and pulling a trigger is relatively easy and more damaging to the enemy. The best knight, trained from birth to master all the arts of warfare and chivalry, can be felled by a single peasant armed with a musket. Cannons and steam siege weaponry, not to mention aerial bombardment, cut the time needed to besiege a fortress; instead of starving the defenders out, the castle can be broken and conquered quickly.

Of all the innovations, gunpowder is one of the most destructive—both in terms of effectiveness on the battlefield, but also in how it affects the fantasy atmosphere. Guns can change the mood of a game very easily, so making them widespread and efficient in the setting can be a mistake. It is much more difficult to remove a technology from the game than it is to introduce it, so the presence of gunpowder should be carefully considered.

## CONSTRUCTS

On one level, constructed creatures such as clockwork robots and sewn-together monsters animated by electricity are no different from golems. The two key differences are mass production and understanding.

Making a golem requires a powerful spellcaster and a great deal of effort. Only a few golems can be made in a year of constant effort. In contrast, steam constructs are made like any other product, assembled from parts in a factory. The vast production capacity of steam can be turned to churning out thinking things, tens of thousands every year. Any unpleasant or dangerous task can be given to uncaring (or, at any rate, unresisting) automatons. Of course, human labor tends to be cheaper than buying a machine, so automatons will only replace living beings where they can do a significantly more efficient job.

Constructs will be found in tasks requiring perfect endurance or concentration, or where weak flesh would quail or wither. Constructs might therefore be found on long patrols of the sewers or walls of a city, or sent to explore dangerous regions. Clockwork explorers might be sent through *gates* or lowered into the dark reaches of the world.

The other virtue of automatons is that they are utterly trustworthy. Servants and guards may gossip or take bribes; clockworks do as they are told. This makes them ideal as servants to the nobility and in places where privacy is especially treasured.

The creation of a golem is innately mysterious, as golems rely on magic—a force that can be manipulated and experienced by its practitioners, but not understood. How a golem works is no more understood than how a living body works; it can be probed and guessed at, but the magic works at a level beyond the tools of analysis available. Steam constructs, on the other hand, are designed and built using simple, comprehensible parts. Every part of a construct can be understood. This means that every part of an automaton, body and mind, can be built for a specific purpose. Automatons in every size and shape skitter and clank in the shadows of a steampunk world.



Golems that go wild may be destroyed; mechanical constructs that go wild are repaired, the tiny cogs and valves of their brains taken out and replaced. This means that steam-powered beings are far less likely to be considered intelligent and free than golems. One is created by magic, a common and acceptable origin for many races. The other is no more alive than a steam engine.

Construct PCs will likely suffer from such prejudice, so giving them some symbol of authority or having one of the other PCs be in charge of them is a good idea, to make sure that NPCs don't ignore the character or treat it as nothing more than an errant machine.

One variation on the concept of constructs is using the undead as servants. Using alchemical animation machines and electricity, whole graveyards could be raised up as zombies. Such undead horrors may be accepted as just another innovation by a society enchanted by the march of science. The higher population of industrial cities means that there are more corpses available for necromancy, legal or otherwise. For example, in a society where having clockwork servants is a mark of wealth, some people may purchase cheap zombies dipped in brass as a budget alternative.

## ANALYTICAL ENGINES

Information is power. In steampunk, analytical engines are something like the earliest industrial computers: mysterious, intelligent machines that give oracular judgments by clacking print-out. Engines excel at problems of mathematics, logistics, strategy, and prognostication. The sheer amount of information sorted by an engine defies mortal comprehension. The intelligence of engines can be an emergent phenomenon beyond the understanding of even the engine's inventor. Unlike thinking constructs that operate on a level similar to mortals, the thoughts of engines are so vast and deep that they are more akin to the intellects of the gods.

Engines give intelligence and purpose to the machinery of steampunk. They can run huge factories and guide armies of clockworks. They make the metal think.

Any game that includes investigation benefits from an engine. It cuts the time required to gather information while vastly increasing the amount that can be processed. Instead of the characters having to question everyone in a

neighborhood, the police engines can print out profiles of those most likely to have relevant knowledge. Images can be analyzed for clues, patterns extrapolated and connections made. Essentially, engines are machines you can use to communicate information to the PCs.

## MAGIC

Steam does not have to change magic in the campaign at all, but merging the two opens up a wealth of options. Industrial magic can reach everywhere that steam technology reaches, moving from the towers of wizards and blood of sorcerers to the factory and the street.

Magic can be used as a power source for technology, either indirectly (using spells or summoned entities as heat) or directly, by drawing on the elemental planes or channeling the primal force of magic into a machine instead of shaping it with a conscious will. Alternatively, machines powered by simple physics can be built to perform magic. An engine the size of a city block can cast a much more potent spell than a single wizard can. Magic can become a science instead of an art; spells can be engineered instead of woven.

Attitudes to magic can also change in steampunk. As technology becomes more accepted, so too is magic. Soldiers *polymorphed* into giants and armed with hand cannons, illusion spells as theater entertainment, telepathic communication as a matter of course—if it is more efficient and more modern, then why shy away from it? Steampunk wizards should embrace all the possibilities and implications of magic, using it as a tool instead of a gift or art.

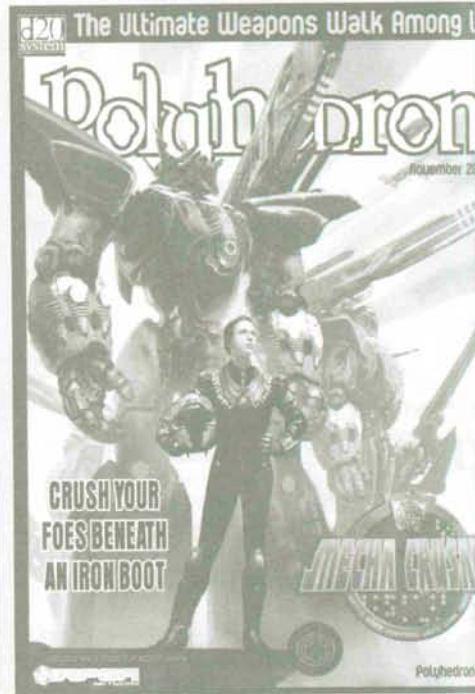
*Sorcery & Steam* is coming in July 2003 from Fantasy Flight Games.

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