THE
CRYING BLADES
ROLE PLAYING GAME

VOLUME ONE
CHARACTERS & BASICS

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Crying Blades is a set of rules, HouseRules, for role-playing games, and especially for OSRs such as Lamentations of the Flame Princess and Swords & Wizardry. It's a set of rules of medieval fantasy and sorcery, of nostalgia and innovation. You will be familiar with most of its rules, somehow; its framework is far from revolutionary, but at the same time, the various pieces that have been put together in this HouseRules document, bring to the table the flavor of a unique game.

As with any OSR game, you are free and actually encouraged to tear apart the various rules, mix them with others, deconstruct and assemble them once more in a different shape. The Crying Blades is your toy - your box of toys, now. Do as you wish with the various pieces. Twist them and turn them around, bend them, erase them, improve them, adjust them together with your friends so that they'll suit your style of play.

The game is composed of three manuals, currently in the writing. The first manual (the one you're holding) contains the character creation instructions and all the basic rules, including combat and magic, and Level one spells.

A second, separate book contains all the spells and blessings of sorcerers and clerics, and everything about magic.

The third and final book is indeed designed for the GM: monsters and adventure material, and will be released as the last manual of this series.

CREDITS

Besides the Original Fantasy Game, and perhaps even more than the Original, many other games have influenced me.

Such a list can never be fully exhaustive, so I only included those games that had a very significant, visible impact on my design:

• Lamentations of the Flame Princess by James Raggi
• Swords & Wizardry by By Matthew J. Finch
• WhiteHack by Christian Mehrstam
• BlackHack by David Black
• Apocalypse World by Vincent Baker
• Dungeon World by LaTorra and Koebel
• Freebooters of the Frontier by Jason Lutes
• Fate by Evil Hat
• Rosie Turner and Logan Knight of www.lastgaspgrimoire.com
• Necropraxis Productions Hazard System v0.2

Influence does not necessarily mean exact compatibility. I've done my best to retain the maximum compatibility but you will notice that a few numbers are different, here and there.

ILLUSTRATIONS

To the side is the complete list of artists whose artwork (public domain or not) is used in the book. Most of the artwork is in the public domain. If you notice that I have failed to identify the artist properly for some image, please notify me.

Art in public domain is always marked with a star (*) after the artist's name, like this: "Artist Name* xx".

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Comments like this one will indicate possible compatibility issues or warnings, or explanations about certain design choices, and sometimes will contain houseruling suggestions.

OSR RANDOMNESS

"Dice are wiser than players", some say. "Embrace randomness", say others.

There is quite a bit of randomness built into this game, starting from the characters' attribute scores and then continuing with talents, traits, spell/blessing choices, and even names if you want.

Whenever you face a random result, embrace it. You might be tempted to force a certain choice - and that's fine, I'm not the RPG-police, I'm not going to hunt you down for that. If for example you are going to pick characters' traits from the tables without rolling them, be my guest; if you decide to pick talents instead of rolling them, go ahead.

But as you play, if you stick to randomness you'll discover the pleasant feeling of growing attached to the undefined sense of wonder that only chance (in the right proportion) can give.

GAME MATERIAL

Every player should have a dice set that includes 1 die of each type: d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20, d100. The percentile die (the d100, numbered from 00 to 90, to use with the d10) is seldom necessary, but it comes in the regular dice sets anyway, and you might find it useful for random tables and for random percentile rolls for houserules.

While making characters, players will roll 3d6 together for Attributes' scores, but they can pass dice around, since every standard dice set has only one six-sided die.

Each class has a dedicated character sheet. Print multiple copies for each Class (a normal party usually will have enough with 3 fighters, 2 clerics, 2 rogues and 2 sorcerers, to accommodate various combinations).

Each player should receive the character sheet for the class they've chosen after rolling their character.

The Setting

This game is built along the lines of the classic OSR, and therefore can be adapted to various fantasy settings, without any problem.

There is, though, a suggested setting which is implied in the game illustrations, which is one you're all familiar with: it's Earth, in the early Middle Age, but filled with sorcery and monsters, with dungeons and with dragons, with demons and cults and abominations. Perhaps, the Earth is even a flat disk.

This setting gives all players the ability to jump right in and have all the necessary basic knowledge and information. They don't need to study the lore of some fantasy world, or question the GM about the common customs of an unknown culture. Everyone remembers at least a little bit about the medieval times from what they've read in school, or from other books or movies. Everyone is, by default, approximately on the same page. This setting doesn't take away the magic of discovery: it's going to be such a twisted, different medieval world that the pleasure of adventuring in it will be as with any fantasy setting.

Northern Europe

You will reasonably begin your adventures in continental Europe, and if you follow the standard classic fantasy tropes you should probably set-up the group in the northern part of the continent, or perhaps in England (call it Anglia or something like that).

If you want to push it further away from known territories, think of the crusades and the middle-east as an alternative. Think of human settlements in the form of Points-Of-Light: civiliza-tion is a modest force when compared to the wilderness. Cities and villages should be few, sparse and relatively weak compared to the strength of The Wild. It's a dark age of superstition and dark terrors, but also of magic and miracles; it's a hard life for many, but a life of gold and adventures for a few brave others.

The Wild

The Wilderness - also called The Wild - is like a dark mantle that covers the continent, even in the south where once the Empire was strongest and brought order and civilization. Those times are long gone, though.

The majority of the forces of The Wild are content with hunting humans for food or fun, but some of the most diabolical of them actively pursue the annihilation or enslavement of humankind. Depending who you ask - a noble, a merchant, a cleric - they will give you different responses about what moves the forces of The Wild. They'll tell you they're after power or money, that they're just brutal beasts or that they're moved by the evil plans of Lucifer. Regardless of its motivations, The Wild is the strongest force out there. Even when safe behind a village's palisade or a city's walls, the characters should always remember that The Wild is out there, ready to get them.

There are a few powers that may occasionally contest The Wild: the nobles and their armies, the sorcerers and their powers, the church and its miracles. But those powers are rarely united, and more often involved in a demented race for power within the small human establishments.

The Adventurers

So in the end common adventurers are those left to strive against The Wild. They are hired for their skills and courage, or they're simply trying to make a living or build a name for themselves, or they adventure with the hope to get rich. For The Wild is mortally dangerous but - often - rich: rich in treasures stolen from ancient cities and from dead adventurers, rich in dark secrets and obscure powers from the otherworlds of demons.

Dungeons will be monsters' lairs, caves infested with abominations, the ruins of the Empire, wicked wizards' towers, abandoned villages, cities and churches populated by monstrosities, or fortresses of undead soldiers waiting to march at the orders of another ancient centurion revived by a careless necromancer.

Your characters will begin as simple adventurers, with some basic skills and, if you're lucky, with a few good scores and a little better chance of surviving. Be wary, and be strong; life is hard and cheap when you're an adventurer. Be brave, but be smarter; or your dice will soon enough be rolling up a new character.

The Crying Blades

The Crying Blades are probably just a legend: they're named after their magic swords that cry after they've slain an enemy.

According to the rumors, the Crying Blades are a band of adventurers, acting as mercenaries on the pay-book of nobles and merchants, of priests and commoners. They are often greedy bastards, and their rich employers always have to pay more than they'd like for their services. On the other hand, it's common knowledge that commoners and regular folks usually enjoy better treatment. When they deal with the Crying Blades, customers pay according to their own wealth, not just for the service they require or the skills of the adventurers they hire.

If you ask around, you'll hear different opinions about the Crying Blades: some say they act for the greater good, for the glory of God; others say they protect regular people from monsters and abominations, from demons and demi-humans. Several priests accuse them of making use of sorcery and blasphemous rituals; others swear that there are Christian clerics among their ranks.

There are clear reports indicating that the Crying Blades, when not in service, have a tendency to go tomb-raiding and show no remorse in plundering recent Christian graves as well as ancient loot.

They've been involved in several recent intrigues for this or that crown: they do not hesitate to use poison or stealthy blades to get rid of their enemies, but rarely remain in charge if they seize any sort of political power. They tend to favor the life of adventuring: they seem restless and eager to get involved in the next trouble.

All reports about the Crying Blades are, in the end, inconclusive. It is impossible to determine clearly the size of this mercenary band, if it even exists. Its members appear to be sworn to secrecy sometimes, and other times show no concern about proclaiming themselves as Crying Blades.

Some scholars have suggested that the Crying Blades is a sort of common name adopted by different gangs, with no connection between one another, with no real initiation ritual, with no proper membership.

If this is true, it means that several different groups of lawless fighters, depraved sorcerers, sneaky rogues and blasphemous clerics would be traveling the land, slaying monsters and humans with the same lack of mercy, seeking gold and glory, obeying their murderous instincts as well as some sort of twisted, capricious, sense of righteousness… It's a broken, desperate land, the land that must depend upon such men to fight the Wild.

The weapon of choice of most of the mercenaries belonging to the Crying Blades is, of course, the sword. While it is not the most practical weapon against other armored or shielded men, it works well enough against monsters, and its cross-shape makes it a suitable object for enchantments and blessings.

The Crying Blades, by their name, are magic swords carried by some of the members of this mercenary group. All these swords have a quite visible skull on the hilt: either on the pommel or on the rain-guard. It is rumored that these are real human skulls, but they're quite small. The swords get their name, *crying blades,* from the fact that such blades cry tears of blood when they kill an innocent.

What's most peculiar is that apparently the definition of innocent, in the mind of the magic sword, changes depending on who wields it. In other words, and in game terms, a Crying Blade will cry tears of blood when the wielder kills someone of their own alignment. If the Crying Blade is used to kill someone of a different alignment, the Crying Blade will shed no tears.

There is no known procedure for getting your hands on such a blade, nor a known meeting place for mercenaries of the Crying Blades, therefore the characters will have to work hard to get their hands on one (or more) of these blades.

The Eternal City

One of my favorite settings is the so called "Eternal City" or "Infinite City" - I change the name depending on the mood. Often the two names refer to the same place; perhaps according to different cultures, or different legends.

The Eternal City might be Rome, or what is left of it after the Empire was destroyed by the merciless tides of history… and an invasion of monsters and demons without precedent.

The Eternal City is now surrounded by an immense wall, higher than a castle tower and with no gates.

The wall is huge, so long and so thick it must have been built by someone, *something*, with far better skills than the simple men now left to garrison it. It makes you wonder if stories about dwarves, elves and giants might be true.

Standing guard on the wall are countless soldiers of every kingdom, every duchy, and every city-state of the continent. It's literally an army, by size and complexity of operations, and everyone is involved in maintaining the wall's security.

Everyone is trying to make sure that what's in the city will remain *inside*. Of course, together with monsters, the city must contain so, so many treasures…

There are no gates on the wall, but there is a way to reach the Eternal City below. There are some crates that can be lowered with rope, and at some points on the wall, a few platforms have been built on the inside of the wall, to facilitate the process of lowering such crates or lifting them.

In some places, even though the practice is frowned upon by most nobles, the soldiers of this or that kingdom dispatch criminals down the wall. Some are allowed back in, after a while, if they carry enough treasure to buy their freedom back.

It is dangerous to enter the Eternal City like this: some have perished just in the process of descending, and not many have come back from their expeditions in the city.

And even if someone would make it back alive to the wall, who can guarantee that they'll be lifted back again into the kingdoms of humans?

This chapter is about generating your character. The GM is encouraged to study this part of the manual, so that he can support players who are not yet familiar with the game's rules.

Of course you can immediately start by changing the rules and using your preferred char-gen procedure. Go ahead and replace the 3d6 in order + swap once as the game suggests.

THE CHARACTERS

ATTRIBUTES

For each of the six attributes, in order (Charisma, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Strength, Wisdom), **roll 3d6**.

Just record the results; don't write on the character sheet, yet. Record the results as follows: the **totals** are assigned in order of the attributes' score, while the **lowest** of the three dice rolled for each attribute is registered as the **Gift value** for the related attribute.

For example, if you rolled 3, 4 and 6 for Charisma, the Charisma attribute score is 13, and Charisma Gift is 3. Gift will influence a few character's options, as described later.

You can decide to swap one attribute score with another, at character creation, but only once. If you do so, also swap the Gift value. After you have decided whether to swap scores or not, you can start writing on the character sheet.

Also write down the attributes' **modifiers**, as in Table 1, to the side (Attributes modifiers). When using these

Attribute Score	Modifier
3	-3
4-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-12	0
13-15	+1
16-17	+2
18	+3

Table 1: Attribute modifiers

modifiers (and similar others), if you need to roll higher than a given number, consider that the +X must give you **an advantage**, so it's added to your roll. If you need to roll below a number, consider the +X as added to the number itself. In other words, a +x must be to your advantage, as player, a -x to your disadvantage.

As a reference, consider that **average human NPCs** would have a score of 9 in half their attributes (modifier 0), and a score 6 (modifier -1) in the other half.

Only special NPCs will have significantly different attributes' scores.

Accept Your Character

If four or more attributes have a negative modifier, you can choose to raise the highest of them up to the score of 10 (with modifier 0), or to discard the character and make a new one. If you discard the character, you cannot discard the next one.

> *A deadly campaign means no re-rolls of your character. Embrace whatever Fate handed over to you: playing a subpar character will be quite an experience.*

Gift

This value, next to each of the attributes, is an expendable factor; it never increases, nor it's recovered.

Gift has a certain impact on various aspects of the game, as follows:
- Number of starting talents
- Maximum level for multiclassing
- Maximum increments to the attribute score
- Re-rolls for the attribute

Gift determines the number of your **starting talents**, according to your class' core attribute: strength for fighters, wisdom for clerics, intelligence for sorcerers, dexterity for rogues.

Gift determines the **maximum level** you can reach in a secondary class, if you **multiclass**. In your secondary class, you can reach a level equal to the Gift value for the core attribute of that class. There is no limit on the primary class.

For example, a Cleric that wants to multiclass as a Rogue, can reach, as a Rogue, a Level equal to, but not greater than, the Dexterity (Rogue's core attribute) Gift value.

Gift limits the amount of times you can **increase an attribute score** when you gain a new level.

Every time you select (among various options) to raise an attribute score by one at level-up, you **burn** (permanently lose) one Gift point of the same attribute. When you no longer have Gift points for a given attribute, you cannot increase its score.

> *The lowest score attributes are more likely to also have low Gift values: the profile of a given character is bound to evolve into a better version of what it was at level one, but without fundamentally changing, even with the increase of attributes' scores.*

Last but not least, Gift is a life-safer mechanism, extremely precious at lower levels. Whenever you fail a roll with a certain attribute (which includes Saving Throws) and you want to re-roll, you can **burn** a Gift point of that attribute and re-roll.

Explain how your character gets another chance and doesn't suffer the dire consequences of the first failed roll. If you fail the second roll, that sucks. You can still burn another Gift point, as long as you have them, to re-roll again.

When you burn Gift points (increasing an attribute score or re-rolling), it does not influence the maximum level for a multiclass you have **already** acquired, but it does limit any **future** multiclass option you want to take. Starting talents are not affected, if you have already selected them.

Gift points you burned will **never** be restored. Use them wisely: they are there to save your life. But don't hesitate: you cannot burn a Gift point after the GM has declared you dead.

> *Sometimes, it makes sense not to assign the highest score you rolled to the core attribute of your class. If you have another score almost as high but with a better Gift value, you might want to use that, instead.*

Attributes Explanation

Each attribute presents a few additional modifiers or scores: these will be registered on the character sheet. They will not change often (only if the attribute score changes).

Charisma (CHA) indicates aptitude for leadership and the ability to influence others. It is especially effective in gaining and retaining allies and obtaining favorable reactions, making a good first impression, and even getting a better price for stuff.

It also indicates – with a certain measure of accuracy – the appeal and even physical beauty of your character; if you want an advantage in most social interactions, this is not a dump stat.

Bonuses:
- **Max. Hirelings**: 3 ± CHA modifier
- **Discount**: if positive, CHA mod. x 10% discount on all prices
- **Reaction**: ± CHA mod for all reaction rolls

Constitution is an indication of good health and resistance, endurance and toughness. It has a direct influence on the character's Hit Points and ability to suffer damage, in combat and other situations.

It is an especially important attribute for characters often involved in combat or exposed to direct physical harm.

Bonuses:
- **Hit Points**: if positive, add CON mod. to all the Hit Dice rolls for HP

- **Save vs. Death**: final Saving Throw, used also when resurrected by a Cleric; its score (roll under to succeed) is 5 + Level ± CON modifier

Dexterity is a combination of agility and speed, reflex and manual coordination and skill.

It affects the character's Initiative (the possibility to act first in combat or other dangerous situations), Armor Class (a defensive score used in combat) and the ability with ranged weapons. It is probably the most important attribute for a rogue.

Bonuses:
- **Initiative**: always roll Initiative ± DEX modifier
- **Armor Class**: if DEX mod. is positive, add a simple +1 to the Armor Class
- **Ranged Attacks**: if DEX mod. is positive, add a simple +1 to all the rolls to hit and to all damage inflicted with ranged weapons

Intelligence is an approximate indication of the character's knowledge and ability to work with complex matters. Of course the player's wits must take precedence, but this score gives an indication of both innate talent and educated learning.

A low score does not indicate stupidly; it just represents lack of formal education, in an age where most people could barely write their own name. Intelligence affects the ability to speak languages and has a direct impact on sorcery.

> *Depending on how relevant languages and formal education will be in your campaign, the GM might rule out languages completely, in favor of role playing opportunities, and let everyone be able to read and write.*

Bonuses:
- **Languages**: if INT mod. is positive, add that many languages (see Languages on page 20)
- **Spells**: number of spells per day is INT mod. + Level

Strength is first of all raw power, but also proficiency in armed and unarmed melee combat. It also has an influence on the harm inflicted on opponents, on the probability to break doors, chains and bars, to lift heavy weights and carry weight for a long period of time. It is the most important attribute for a fighter.
Bonuses:
- **Melee Attacks**: apply the STR mod. if positive to all rolls to hit in melee
- **Damage Bonus**: apply the STR mod. if positive to all damage inflicted in melee
- **Weight**: indicates the weight (slots) that the character can carry (see page 21)

The "Melee Attacks bonus" and "Damage Bonus" modifiers are often reserved only to the fighter class. If you want a game where all characters can take part in melee fights actively and with better odds, let all characters enjoy this bonus, otherwise keep it restricted to fighters only.

Wisdom measures the character's perception and insight, and it indicates the connection with the spiritual world. Although the character's ability to gather clues or make decisions ultimately relies on the player's skills, Wisdom has an influence on what a character can perceive at first glance.

This attribute also affects clerics and their miracle working (spells), and saving throws against illusions, deceptions and similar.
Bonuses:
- **Notice**: if WIS mod. is positive, add +1 to your chance to notice something (2 in 6 instead of the default 1 in 6, on a d6 roll)
- **Blessings**: number of blessings per day is WIS mod. + Level

In some cases, you apply an attribute modifier both when positive and when negative (like for Max. Hirelings; a negative modifier reduces the number of available hirelings). In other cases, you apply the modifier only when positive (like CON mod. added to Hit Points). A third case (on page 15) for the Dexterity modifier, is when you add a fixed value (+1 for DEX) in case the modifier is positive, regardless of the value of the modifier itself.

When using the various attributes for rolls or saving throws, the habits and game mastering style of your GM and the traditions of your group will have a great influence on deciding whether to call for a roll, or to just role play the situation, or to have the GM make a ruling instead. In many OSR games, for example, Charisma is basically a "leadership" ability, rather than a measure of beauty or capability to seduce NPCs. Only in more recent games has Charisma become a "*roll to convince*" replacing the "*role play to convince*".

Not all groups work in the same way, but the fundamental idea behind the OSR is to test **the player's skills** as much as the character's attributes. If possible, using the player's input and ideas, and using role play rather than die rolls, is the best way to run a smooth game in pure OSR style.

If your table doesn't work too well with the old-style *more role-play* and *less roll-play*, try something in between, using one of the two approaches below.

Use die rolls to **setup the initial premises** of the action, then role play the rest, so you get to rely both on numbers and players' skills. Also, the GM might roll whenever he feels like he wants to leave the final decision about success or failure in the hands of fate. Sticking to Charisma, you can, for example, use a roll to determine the initial reaction of an NPC, and use that result (positive or negative) to begin to role play the scene.

Alternatively, a roll could be used to **determine a final response**, with role play as a pre-requisite for even attempting the roll (for example, if you don't sound convincing with your own negotiation skills, you don't get to roll Charisma to obtain any result).

CLASSES

These are the character classes available in the game: fighter, cleric, sorcerer and rogue.

Fighters are the straight-to-melee characters; they are the ones that can grow into very powerful warriors, and offer mostly fighting talents.

Clerics, in this world, are of the Christian church. They have special spells called miracles or blessings (which work even if the Cleric does not believe or lost their faith!), which feature, for example, healing powers.

Sorcerers are those who are devoted to the obscure path of the dark arts. They rely on their arcane knowledge and their collection of spells, and rarely excel in anything else.

Rogues rely on their various abilities: they are capable in multiple areas of expertise; they are specialists, sometimes thieves, always versatile.

A character's class cannot be changed later in the game.

Most human NPCs are considered to have **no class**; they are the equivalent of a level 0 characters. Special human NPCs would be the exception.

If your GM allows non-human characters in the game, they should be houseruled as a class, also known as race-as-class (see Volume 3).

The Primary Attributes

The primary attributes for the various classes are the following:
• Fighters: strength
• Clerics: wisdom
• Sorcerers: intelligence
• Rogues: dexterity

Saving Throws

There are different types of Saving Throws, which will be described in detail in the basic game rules.

While filling out your character sheet, consider the following: the **value (roll under)** of each Saving Throw is equal to **5 + Level ± Attribute modifier.**

Each class grants a different bonus to different Saving Throws.

The Saving Throw bonuses are listed under the class Talents, on pages 30, 33, 36 and 38.

Skills And Talents

Every character has access to a list of **specific skills** that often become useful during adventures. Each skill is represented by a probability, by default a 1-in-6. Rogues are much better than other characters with these skills, as you will see in the Classes chapter.

Talents are another unique feature of each class: they represent special abilities and unique bonuses or capabilities. They are determined randomly, according to the class.

Hit Points Die

Hit Points (HP) are not just a measure of the character's physical health, but also a general abstraction of stamina and will to fight and push forward.

When creating your character, roll the **Hit Points Die** indicated by your class (d8 for fighter, d6 for cleric or rogue, d4 for sorcerer), and add the Hit Points bonus of the Constitution modifier (if positive).

If you rolled a 1 or a 2 at character creation, re-roll by increasing the die size (fighters re-roll with a d10, clerics and rogues with a d8, sorcerers with a d6), but this second result will stand, no additional re-rolls.

This is the number of **Maximum** Hit Points (max HP) for your character at level one. HP cannot be healed above the Maximum Hit Points: that's the upper limit you character can reach.

Regular Level 0 human NPCs have a simple d6 HP (no re-rolls).

When the current HP **go to 0 or below**, the character is unconscious, and mortally wounded.

As with other scores, Hit Points can increase when the character gains Levels throughout the game (but **not** on every Level as in other games).

Remember that the Constitution modifier, if positive, is applied every time you increase the HP by rolling the Hit Dice.

You will find more details about Armor Class (see to the side) in the combat chapter. For now, just know that AC 0 here is approximately the same as Ascending Armor Class 10 or 12 in most OSR games.

Armor Class

Armor Class in the game starts at a very simple value of 0 (zero). Add the +1 from Dexterity, if applicable: this is your (raw) **Basic Armor Class**.

You use the Basic Armor Class if a character is fighting unarmored, or if some condition makes the armor (and shield) irrelevant for protection.

A negative Armor Class for a character (because of penalties etc.) is always considered to be zero.

The higher the score, the better, assuming your character can efficiently use that type of armor, and you are not overloading him with too much weight.

A character wearing armor increases their AC, adding the AC value of the strongest armor piece they wear (if they wear leather and plate, keep the plate AC value), plus the value for a shield, if used.

Combat Bonuses

There are different types of bonuses that apply to combat situations:
• Melee attack bonus: bonus to the to-hit roll in melee
• Melee damage bonus: bonus to the harm inflicted by melee attacks

- Ranged attacks bonus; also a roll to hit, but with ranged weapons
- Ranged damage bonus, this time for ranged attacks

The To Hit and Damage **bonuses in melee** are derived from the Strength attribute; as already explained, in most games these will be restricted to the fighter class only. The bonus is equal to the STR-mod value, if positive; for example, a +2 in strength equals a +2 bonus To Hit and damage in melee.

The **Ranged** attack bonus, instead, and the damage bonus for ranged weapons, is derived from the Dexterity attribute. This is available to all classes. If the Dexterity modifier is positive (+1 or more), add a +1 bonus to hit with ranged weapons and +1 to damage.

Languages

For the purpose of the classic games, languages are a crucial component when trying to negotiate with monsters or with other potentially hostile humans. But such rules can be ignored in favor of role playing: it's more interesting to see character negotiate than to prevent the negotiation because of a lack of a common language.

The **default rule**, therefore, is that every communication with humans should be possible. If the conditions are particularly exceptional (a meeting with foreigners that don't speak the local tongue), then a successful attribute check on Intelligence should be enough to allow a basic conversation.

There is always a little in common between different languages, or someone who knows a few words, with the possibility to mimic a concept with their hands, etc., can communicate despite not having the same language.

Communication **with monsters** can also be facilitated, usually by letting the monsters be able to speak the common human tongue. Again, a positive Intelligence check might allow a character to communicate with a monster in its own monstrous tongue. It could be done to make sure others cannot understand the conversation, or perhaps to gain the monster's favor.

Language Lists

If your group decides instead to use an explicit **language list**, each character begins the game with knowledge of their own native tongue. Moreover, every character will have enough

Whether using or not using specific language lists, consider that normal characters do not have the skills to read and write the language used for magic, with the exception of the sorcerer's class.

knowledge of a mix of Latin (or a similar "common" tongue) and traders' lingo to be able to communicate with all other characters and with the locals (wherever you set your adventure), even if the characters may come from afar.

Every character, besides their own native language and the common tongue, will speak a number of additional languages as indicated **by the Intelligence modifier**, if positive. A character with a +2 therefore will know an additional two languages.

Characters with a negative Intelligence modifier will be illiterate, **unable to read and write** even their own native tongue. Characters with a zero modifier or a positive modifier will be able to **read and write** in each of the languages they know.

To add new languages, the intelligence score must be raised (adding points when gaining Levels) so that the related modifier is increased.

Equipment

The standard rules for equipment, weight and related encumbrance are outlined in the dedicated chapter, after the Classes. The game provides a standard system for items and weight, plus two house-rules systems (dice-based and slot-based) for you to evaluate and build upon, if you wish.

Here is just a brief presentation for the character creation purpose.

Silver Pieces

The game economy is based on silver coins, or **silver pieces** (sp). When creating a new character, roll and start with 3d6 x 10 silver pieces, to buy your initial equipment.

When calculating your purchases, remember that a **high Charisma** score gives you a discount (page 15).

Gold coins, although quite rare, are nominally worth 10 silver pieces, but it's rare to be able to obtain their full value, when exchanged. Count them as 10 silver only for the purpose of banking them and gaining XP. For exchange and spending purposes, the GM will make a ruling, and give you a figure usually between 7 to 9.

Encumbrance

Every character can wear armor and carry weapons and various equipment up to a certain limit. Above that limit, the character is considered to be encumbered and thus hampered in certain tasks.

Before the first adventure, characters usually have the chance to spend their starting silver to buy their initial equipment. While doing so, they must keep in mind their **Maximum Load**, that is how much they can carry before incurring penalties.

Every object has a weight or load value (usually 1 or 2): the character can carry a number of such points **equal to their Strength score**. They can also carry a number of **small items** (weight or load of zero) again equal to their Strength score.

The suggestion is to **delete** on the character sheet the slots that cannot be used: for example with a Strength 14 character, delete the slots from 15 to 18.

For compatibility and to group items together, consider that **4 weights, 4 items, are equivalent to 1 Encumbrance point**. In general, consider that items are a combination of their pure weight and also technical encumbrace caused by having to carry around the object itself. A long but light item might have a higher load value than a smaller but heavier object; because the small object is easier to carry.

Items that you carry above your Strength score, will give you progressive penalties because of encumbrance.

IDENTITY

Select a name for your character. If you're undecided or need inspiration, a list of names is provided on page 24, and you can select one of those names. If you embrace randomness to

the very core, roll on the table instead of picking your name.

There is no Alignment section in here because by default the game does not require alignment. As an indication, placing characters or their actions or values among this or that alignment, depends greatly by the observer's beliefs. Clerics for example have the annoying tendency to consider non-lawful characters as chaotic even when they're neutral. If you need to determine a character's alignment, for example to determine the effects of a spell or enchantment of an OSR module, by default all characters are neutral. Only significant deeds reinforced by strong beliefs, and supported by a certain consistency of actions, might allow the GM to rule a character as chaotic or lawful. The Wild, of course, couldn't care less about your thoughts on alignment and philosophy.

Traits are provided only for the sake of roleplaying and better characterization in the game. This part is open to hacking and houseruling (such as adding mechanical effect rules for traits).

"Negative traits" are not really all that negative and of course they do not imply any sort of judgement by the author. They are negative in the common sense of the term, and only within the boundaries of the game. They are challenging, funny, and interesting to bring into the game, that's all there is to them.

For your character creation, proceed as follows:
• Roll on the table of positive and negative Traits on pages 25-26; if you rolled an **even** number, use the Positive Traits, if you rolled an **odd** number use the Negative Traits table
• Write the trait for your character on your sheet, selecting either the one indicated by your roll, or the one immediately before or after
• You should roll again, for a second trait, and decide which table to use for this second trait (for example if you roll a 34 on your d100, you can take the positive or negative Trait with number 34, depending on which inspires you the most)
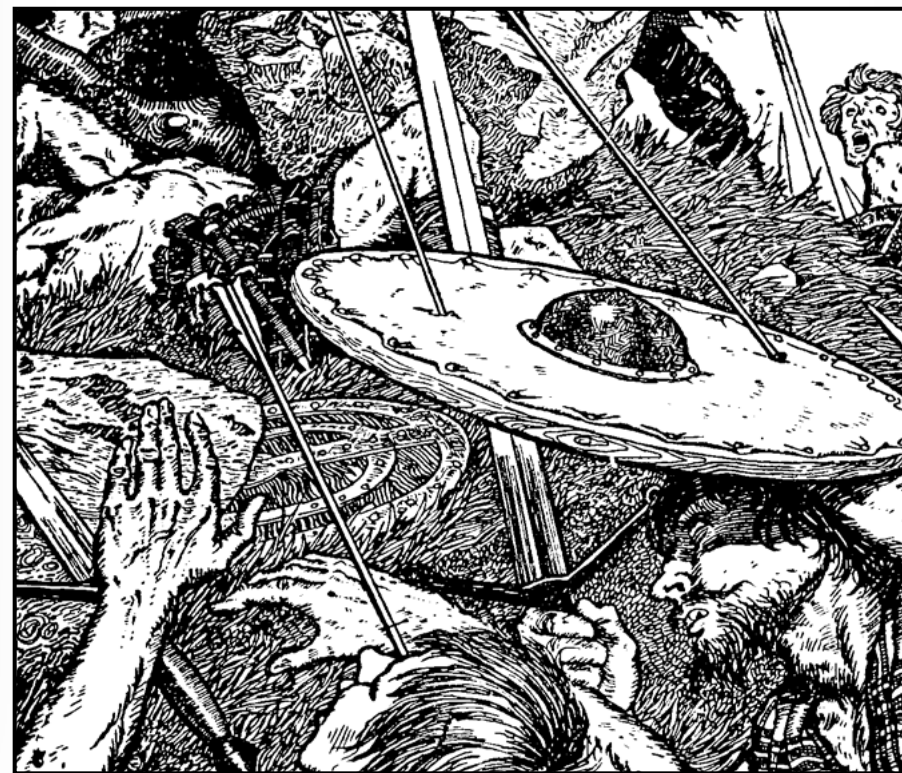
Character Names

Roll	Name (M)	Name (F)	Roll	Name (M)	Name (F)
1	Abelardus	Abigail	51	Kade	Iola
2	Acacius	Adelphia	52	Leofwin	Isebella
3	Achim	Agatha	53	Leon	Itala
4	Acteon	Agnes	54	Malvor	Jael
5	Adwhar	Agola	55	Maurice	Jivete
6	Aiken	Aldith	56	Michael	Joan
7	Ailwin	Amaris	57	Milio	Jocasta
8	Alair	Anabel	58	Milon	Junia
9	Albanus	Anika	59	Moheb	Juturnia
10	Alexis	Arelia	60	Nardil	Laelia
11	Alivan	Ariel	61	Nasam	Laetitia
12	Alrike	Athalia	62	Nava	Liecia
13	Antumar	Avice	63	Nicon	Lilith
14	Argan	Belia	64	Nuno	Lucia
15	Arighorn	Bethel	65	Oddo	Lyle
16	Aymer	Cahedia	66	Osbert	Memura
17	Bahal	Calista	67	Paeon	Miriam
18	Basilius	Cemathia	68	Paulus	Nance
19	Calix	Certhia	69	Pontus	Nediva
20	Chelbo	Chan	70	Rafael	Neir
21	Debrek	Chana	71	Ranulf	Orpah
22	Dorus	Clarice	72	Richard	Pax
23	Dwain	Claricia	73	Roger	Qualle
24	Eban	Claudia	74	Romanus	Rachel
25	Ebert	Clotild	75	Samer	Rama
26	Efrain	Clyvia	76	Saul	Reba
27	Elazar	Dana	77	Sechok	Regin
28	Eldon	Daria	78	Semuel	Richenda
29	Ennius	Decima	79	Silvester	Roesia
30	Ernestus	Dina	80	Simeon	Rohese
31	Fabius	Dirthora	81	Simon	Sarah
32	Fulvius	Donamira	82	Stipen	Saris
33	Fuskar	Eden	83	Stiren	Shari
34	Gaius	Edith	84	Sulam	Silva
35	Galahor	Electra	85	Tacitus	Sylaberth
36	Gavin	Elise	86	Tascar	Talia
37	Geoffrey	Emmot	87	Telian	Tasia
38	Geranat	Eowin	88	Thomas	Thaymet
39	Gilbert	Etullian	89	Timeus	Tiva
40	Gladwin	Euran	90	Tobias	Unaa
41	Glothor	Eustella	91	Touval	Undine
42	Gwak	Everien	92	Ulber	Urania
43	Hadrian	Firobena	93	Ulkhan	Verna
44	Henry	Flora	94	Ulsak	Vita
45	Herod	Gavina	95	Uri	Xandara
46	Horst	Gilah	96	Uriel	Xanthe
47	Hugh	Gilla	97	Wimarc	Xuna
48	Isaac	Gisela	98	Yakov	Yaffa
49	Isllay	Herleve	99	Yousef	Yeintil
50	Juda	Hilda	100	Zeno	Zhoire

Table 2: Characters' names

Positive Traits

Roll	Trait	Roll	Trait
1	Resolute	51	Assertive
2	Fair	52	Loyal
3	Reliable	53	Confident
4	Strong face	54	Austere
5	Refined	55	Determined
6	Charming smile	56	Tactful
7	Cautious	57	Blue eyes
8	Helpful	58	Handsome
9	Confident	59	Brave
10	Disciplined	60	Creative
11	Noble	61	Kind face
12	Piercing eyes	62	Impartial
13	Trustworthy smile	63	Courteous
14	Noble posture	64	Calm, cool posture
15	Loving	65	Sympathetic
16	Kind	66	Steady hands
17	Braided hair	67	Long hair
18	Careful	68	Patient
19	Precise	69	Jewelry and rings
20	Elegant gloves and boots	70	Dignified
21	Athletic	71	Solid body
22	Easygoing	72	Shaved head
23	Big mustache (or long hair)	73	Resourceful
24	Beautiful beard (or hair)	74	Organized
25	Kind	75	Young face
26	Cooperative	76	Honest
27	Curious	77	Measured
28	Gracious body	78	Curly hair
29	Knowledgeable	79	Practical
30	Comanding voice	80	Beautiful skin
31	Persistent	81	Dimplomatic
32	Stoic	82	Joyous
33	Noble nose	83	Quick eyes
34	Alluring	84	Classy
35	Logical	85	Passionate
36	Focused	86	Bright eyes
37	Romantic	87	Tolerant
38	Cape, furs, animal claws	88	Elegant clothes
39	Sweet	89	Pretty
40	Exotic eyes	90	Efficient
41	Ritual tattoos	91	Polite
42	Formal	92	Fiery eyes
43	Spontaneous	93	Experienced
44	Wise eyes	94	Dynamic
45	Vigorous	95	Forgiving
46	Friendly	96	Long, adorned hair
47	Wise	97	Vivacious
48	Generous	98	Tenacious
49	Fierce	99	Eloquent
50	Entertaining	100	Inspirational

Table 3: Characters' positive traits

Roll	Trait
1	Agoraphobic
2	Superstitious
3	Mysterious tattoos
4	Sleepyhead
5	Big feet
6	Disorganized
7	Vain
8	Long nose
9	Impatient
10	Tormented eyes
11	Lustful
12	Aggressive
13	Clumsy
14	Weak stomach
15	Broken nose
16	Reckless
17	Missing finger(s)
18	Irritable
19	Black teeth
20	Red eyes
21	Big mouth
22	Merciless
23	Pockmarked
24	Haunted eyes
25	Smelly
26	Cowardly
27	Light limp
28	Wild hair
29	Hostile
30	Pale
31	Big ears
32	Careless
33	Scrawny body
34	Large eyebrows
35	White hair
36	Hypochondriac
37	Shifty face
38	Absent minded
39	Missing eye
40	Snobbish
41	Burn scars
42	Pretentious
43	Hasty
44	Petulant
45	Weathered face
46	Glum
47	Anxious
48	Neglected clothing
49	Hesitant
50	Shameless

Roll	Trait
51	Rebellious
52	Cheater
53	Brutish
54	No hair (full body)
55	Disloyal
56	Small eyes
57	Moody
58	Awkward
59	Indiscrete
60	Arrogant
61	Broken teeth
62	Rude
63	Sloppy
64	Lazy
65	Raspy voice
66	Insecure
67	Acid scars
68	Scarred face
69	Hot headed
70	Balding
71	Hysterical
72	Shy face
73	Selfish
74	Boastful
75	Liar
76	Dirty clothes
77	Indiscrete
78	Cruel
79	Squeaky voice
80	Bitter face
81	Stubborn
82	Furious
83	Large head
84	Manipulative
85	Barbaric outlook
86	Obsessive
87	Missing ear
88	Greedy
89	Multiple scars
90	Primitive
91	Rough
92	Vengeful
93	Twisted face
94	Childish
95	Insolent
96	Sickly body
97	Zealous
98	Envious
99	Claustrophobic
100	Dishonest

Table 4: Characters' negative traits

Characters' Classes are presented in this chapter as a combination of various **talents and restrictions**.

Restrictions put a limit on what a certain character can or cannot do, if they belong to a certain class. Talents, on the other hand, are useful bits of rules to boost a character's performance on certain occasions, suitable to the class profile. Additional rules, presented in the Advanced Rules (page 83), offer the characters the ability to multiclass (page 83), gaining features from different classes, although the GM might rule this out for certain games.

After the various Classes and related talents, a brief section presents the rules for the **various skills** (especially relevant for Rogues).

CHAPTER III

CHARACTERS' CLASSES

TALENTS

In the game, talents are special features available only to a certain class or a certain character. Every class offers several talents, some active from the start and others that are optional.

Among those optional talents, a few are selected randomly at the beginning of the game. As the character progresses to higher levels, more Talents will become available.

When you **create your character**, you can roll on the Talents' list for your class a number of times equal to the Gift value of your core attribute. These will be your starting talents, together with the default talents of your class.

For example, if you select fighter as the class for your character, roll a number of times equal to the Gift value of Strength. Use Wisdom for clerics, Intelligence for sorcerers and Dexterity for rogues.

At character creation, if you roll the same Talent **twice**, it still counts as a spent roll; you just don't get an additional talent to add to your list.

Whenever you **gain a new level**, you are offered the choice of gaining a new Talent among those available to your class, if you choose to do so, by rolling again.

Note that this doesn't come from just gaining a level: you have a few different options upon gaining a level (increasing attributes score, increasing HP, or rolling for a new talent). If you choose to gain a new talent, you get to roll again on the talents table of your class.

If you roll a talent you already have, you are free to select the first one before or after, that you don't already have. If you choose to gain a new talent, the roll is never lost.

Sure, you want to pick talents rather than rolling. However, Talents are not what you decide your character has trained for; Talents are what your character had the opportunity to learn so far. If the GM allows it, you can select one, and only one Talent, but it should cost you forfeiting two rolls for random Talents, or burning a Gift point.

Innate Talents

Some **Innate Talents** are available to the characters at the moment of creation. Those have no class restriction, any character can have them. To select one or more innate talents, you need to roll on the list below. You cannot choose; it's innate and it's random.

You can get Innate Talents **only** at the moment of character creation, not later (they cannot be chosen as part of the level advancements).

So if you want a shot at getting one Innate Talent, you can spend one of your Talents' rolls on this list. In other words, you give up a roll for a talent of your class, and roll for an innate talent instead.

1) Healing fast: when regaining HP, the character always regains +1 more, or +2 more if you're a fighter.

2) Iron bones: you have 1d4 HP more to start with. Also: without weapons you still inflict 1d4 damage.

3) Vicious: all your damage rolls done with weapons have a +2 damage.

4) Underdog: when you fight an enemy whose Level or HD is higher than your own Level, your AC is increased by 1.

5) Me first: when you roll Initiative, take an additional +2.

6) Always prepared: regardless of your STR score, you can fill all 18 slots for small items in your inventory, with no penalty.

7) Read magic: can read magic (as the spell) naturally. This even makes the character able to cast from scrolls or books, regardless of the class. Requires one turn to concentrate for reading and one for casting from the scroll, not necessarily consecutive.

8) A strange feeling: once per session, the GM will interrupt you and tell you if you're missing something. In peculiar or dangerous situations, you can also decide to ask the GM if you get this feeling; then it's up to the GM how to phrase the truth about the situation.

9) A sense for magic: can detect magic as the Detect magic spell, but only if the character concentrates for one turn (Duration, same as the spell, page 123).

10) Fast learner: when XP is assigned, subtract 5% of the total and mark it for yourself; the rest is divided evenly among all party members.

11) Everything is food: you need half the number of rations of other characters (mark half when you eat one). All your saves vs. poison have a +2 bonus.

12) Compass: you always know where north is, and where up and down are. Any roll based on orientation will get a +2 bonus.

13) Trader: when you change gold for silver, you always get 10.

14) Lucky, sometimes: can change a 1 for a 20 or a 20 for a 1, but only once per dungeon/"adventure location."

15) Perfect memory: what you see is like it is written in stone in your mind. It still takes you normal time to read, but you can reproduce anything from memory. You can even rewrite spells you saw written (even if your class doesn't allow you to use them), and a sorcerer can use your reproduction to copy and learn the spell (but not use it as a scroll).

16) Blessed water: you can bless water with your blood. Spend 2 HP (up to a maximum of 10) to bless the water and all who drink it gain 1 HP. The water loses power in 1d10 turns.

17) Eagle-eye: when you use ranged weapons, you always "hit" your intended target, and do not roll randomly to determine who is "hit" (see page 110). You still need to roll to see if you hit your target to cause damage.

18) Deep pockets: unless they strip you naked, you can always declare you have a little item (maximum the size of a knife) hidden on you.

19) Resistant to magic: your Saving Throws vs. magic get a +2 bonus.

20) The Chosen: select the Innate Talent that you prefer.
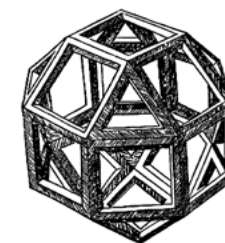
FIGHTER

Some Talents are more suited for a certain class than others, but you roll only after you rolled your attribute scores and have chosen your class. If the GM allows it, you can roll one (and only one) innate talent at the very start of your character creation. You cannot reject the talent, of course (you never do, even with normal rules), but you can now shape your character accordingly. Of course, you must now allocate attribute scores (and choose a class) in a way that you will have at least one Gift point for this innate talent you've already taken. This reduces the number of the talents you can choose from your class, as it normally would.

If your class is fighter, you get a number of Talents equal to your Strength Gift. Roll a d10 to determine each one of them. Besides those random talents, a fighter has the following talents and restrictions as well:

Hit Points Dice: d8.

Attack bonus: add your Level/3 (rounded down) to your melee attack rolls, plus the normal To-Hit modifier.
For ranged attack, use the normal bonus from the Dexterity score.

Damage: add the strength modifier for damage if positive (in some games only the fighter has access to this).

Armor/Shield permitted: any (no penalty for heavy armor).

Weapons permitted: any (no penalty to hit with a 2-handed weapon).

Magic items: can carry a number of magic, enchanted, blessed, charmed items equal to their Level, but never more than nine. Carrying magic items may expose them to danger, per the GM's judgement, including temporarily deactivating talents and other penalties.

Magic: cannot cast any type of spell (unless multiclassing).

Robust: Saving Throws with STR and CON are rolled with an additional bonus of +2 to determine the Save threshold (roll under 5 + Level + attribute modifier + 2).

Skills: select one of the following: Explorer, Guide, or Hunter.

FIGHTER'S TALENTS

Any of the following talents can be unlocked as a starting Talent (up to a max. number of Talents equal to the Gift value of the STR attribute) or when gaining a level (with no limitation on the number of talents).

1) Bastion: calculate the Basic Armor Class (before armor) adding +1 if the STR mod. or the CON mod. is positive. Do not apply the DEX modifier.

2) Blood drive: after killing an enemy or reducing them to 0 HP, the fighter regains a number of HP equal to their own (fighter's) Level divided by 2 (rounded down); this can happen only once per combat.

3) Push: after a successful attack landed by the fighter, the enemy is pushed back and the fighter can step into their place.

4) Steel trained: wearing any metal (chainmail or plate) and carrying any metal shield, counts only as 1 Encumbrance (4 weight) in total, not more.

5) Defend: giving up other actions like moving or attacking, a fighter can defend another character for a round. All the attacks against that character will use the fighter's AC, and even if they hit, they have a 50% chance to hit the fighter instead of the defended character (roll: even for fighter, odd for the defended character).

6) Merciless: all damage rolls done by the fighter are increased by the fighter's Level/2 (rounded down) plus the strength bonus, if any. Double it for 2-handed weapons.

7) Hard trained: no penalty (as all fighters) but a bonus of +2 To-Hit for using 2-handed or pole weapons and one of these can be carried for no encumbrance (list in weight 0 items).

8) Attacking stance: fighters can assume an attacking stance that offers them multiple attacks; one more per Level divided by 3 (rounded down). Each bonus attack comes at the price of a cumulative -1 to AC.

9) Multiple Attacks: against enemies with 1 HD or less, a fighter can make one attack per level each round. With the last attack of the round, any one enemy (with no HD limitation) can be attacked.

10) Lucky one: yeah, go ahead and pick any one talent of your choice.