

The NERO Rule Book 9th Edition is dedicated to Fran Moore and Joe Cali,

Fran Moore passed away in October of 2010. Fran was one of the most prominent writers of the Tyrran Campaign she and several others shaping the Tyran World as we know it today. Fran was and continues to be, an inspiration to us all.

~ Joseph Valenti

Joe Cali, a veteran player and long time supporter of NERO, passed away on June 18th, 2011 Joe was a man with a warm heart who always had a smile on his face. His home, hearth, and kitchen were always open to anyone in need. His presence in our world will be sourly missed

~ Matthew Taylor

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The NERO Game System is intended to allow players and staff hours of live-action fun without any amount of play stoppage. It is the responsibility of the players and staff to remember this when reading and interpreting the rules. We have done our best to clear up vagaries and make there rules sound, and we will continue to do so in the future. still, players and staff should avoid constantly trying to find loopholes or language that allows them to do things that are against the spirit of the rules. the NERO international office will determine the spirit of the rules in all cases where interpenetration is disputed.

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INTRODUCTION

I call upon chaos to create undead! Arise, my minions! Arise and slay them all!" The voice of the necromancer echoed like a funeral song through the cave, bouncing off the walls and ringing in our ears. We could not see her beyond the flickering light of our torch, and at first it seemed as though nothing had happened. I exchanged a few glances with my companions but found little confidence in their nervous expressions. Tightening my grip on my sword and drawing my shield closer to my chest, I strained my eyes to see into the pitch-black tunnel before me. Slowly, as though the noise was being dredged up from the heart of the cave, the soft sound of feet dragging along gravel and rocks being scratched sifted into our ears. I looked at my companions and saw looks of dismayed realization cross over their faces. The necromancer's spell had worked.

Too cowardly to handle us herself she had desecrated the bodies of the dead and reanimated them to serve her. If we had known any of these people in life, they were unrecognizable now. As they lurched slowly into the circle of light around us I heard a few of my comrades gasp in horror at their appearances, and I could hardly blame them. Decayed flesh hung off the bones of the undead, displaying their ivory white bones and the remains of their innards. Though their eyes had rotted away long ago they still seemed to see us through their empty sockets.

Gritting my teeth, I stepped forward, determined to get rid of these monsters. The undead nearest to me swung a stone mace at my chest, but I blocked it deftly with my shield and hacked him in two with a swipe of my sword. Undead were not difficult opponents, their brains are too rotted and maggot-ridden to direct their actions, but that was not what made them such terrifying opponents. While there were only a small handful of us in the cave, the undead could be as numerous as the necromancer desired. She only had to animate more of the corpses she had dredged up and send them in our direction.

It was unlikely a single undead would fell one of us in combat, but a horde of them could overwhelm our party in no time.

I tried to conserve my energy, for the darkness hid just how many she had sent to assault us. Beside me my friends were doing the same, but it was clear we could not fight forever. The undead moved with uneven steps toward us with the tireless energy of the afterlife. I suddenly froze as I heard someone cry out in pain. Peering around wildly, I saw that one of the undead had managed to latch its claws into the left arm of our rogue, Ivan. He managed to fight it off before it did him any more harm, but it was clear his arm was too mangled to be of any use now.

"Don't worry, I'll take care of him." Erin, our healer, said before she swept quickly over to Ivan, who was cradling his arm unhappily against his chest. I had no time to thank her, for without Ivan holding one end of the line the undead were beginning to push us back. I managed to cut several more to pieces before one with a significant amount of muscle left undecayed on its form shoved me to the ground. My weapon clattered loudly onto the stone floor beside me and as I looked from it to my opponent I could see there would be no time to recover it before the undead would be upon me.

"I call forth a flame bolt 20!" Shouted Kryssa, our celestial scholar, and I found myself sighing quietly with relief as the undead leering over me was incinerated by her spell. The stream of fire illuminated the cave briefly as it left her hands and I glimpsed a pale face glaring hatefully at me from across the room. As the room faded to darkness once more I was suddenly grasped with comprehension. It was the necromancer!

"She's here, only a few yards away!" I cried, grabbing my sword and leaping to my feet. The sound of footsteps announced the necromancer had heard my call and, alarmed, began to flee. Determined not to let her escape I attacked her small army with renewed vigor. Anything my blade did not manage to slice in two was swiftly turned to ash by Kryssa's magic. Soon the undead lay at our feet, at peace once more. I lunged forward to pursue the cause of this mess but felt a hand firmly grasping my upper arm. Irritated, I swung around and found Kryssa holding onto me.

"We can't leave those two behind," She said, nodding at the other end of the tunnel, where Erin was still tending carefully to Ivan's

wound. "We wiped out everything she tried to throw at us," the woman added reassuringly, "She won't be coming back to bother the people around here again, because she knows we'll be here waiting."

Still eager to chase down our foe, but seeing the sense in her words, I nodded and began to walk back to our other two comrades. The necromancer had escaped, but we were confident this was one village she would never torment again.

WHERE FANTASY BECOMES A REALITY

NERO, an acronym that stands for the New England Role-playing Organization, allows you to play a character in a live action fantasy adventure. Under NERO's unique rule system, people gather to populate an entire fantasy medieval town.

In the NERO game, you create a character concept for a fantasy story and actually play the character. It is much like improvisational theater in that you have a framework created by the props and supporting characters and must develop your part as you progress through the storyline. Your character's attitudes, ambitions, and history are yours to define.

If the adventurous life is your calling, you may play the part of a wanderer, meeting with some friends in the tavern. While swapping tales, your party could get hired by a poor farmer in desperate straits, and spend the afternoon slaying a foul necromancer and his undead abominations.

If the epic life is not your style, then you can play the part of a town merchant. You can make your money selling your wares and information for the right price. Or perhaps you wish to be one who investigates the magical arts, selling your scrolls and potions to earn the money you need to continue your studies. Or would you rather try to become the leader of the Mages' Guild? The choice is yours.

NERO is dedicated to the legendary days of high fantasy, while running a fun (and above all safe) game. We have fierce warriors, crafty scouts, powerful mages, loyal knights, and benevolent healers. There are smelly goblins, blood-chilling specters, evil necromancers, and villainous spies to fight, and your very own legends to create.

HOW NERO WORKS

In NERO, a cast of non-player characters (NPCs) are used to set the tone and provide background for the player characters (PCs). They may serve important town functions (such as Guild leaders or high plot and action. Much of what happens at an event, however, is completely decided by the players.

NERO uses padded weapons to simulate actual combat, and a magic system that uses packets made of fabric and bird seed to represent the hurling of spells. Mock (and sometimes real) armor and other costumes are used to enhance the atmosphere.

There are many types of NERO events. The most common are day events, weekend events, and long events. Each type of event runs non-stop from start to completion. Day events start and end on the same day and may last for 8 or more hours. A day event is usually composed of a single scenario (module) and may be very linear in nature. Weekend events run from Friday night to Sunday morning/afternoon. Long events are any event that runs longer than a weekend event. The most common long event lasts for 4 days (Friday to Monday), but it is not unheard of for a long event to last for 9 or more consecutive days. Weekend and long events are composed of collections of modules with multiple plot-lines and bring to life a medieval town with all its inhabitants and intrigues. There is nothing to compare with the feeling of playing for 24 hours a day along with possibly hundreds of other players, each with their own desires, fears, and aspirations.

It sounds simple, but when you are in the middle of a dungeon with shadowy shapes moving towards you in the darkness and strange sounds echoing down the halls, trying to remember what that fellow in the tavern said a half hour ago about how to get through this infernal door, your perspective on the difficulty of the situation may change.

As you play your character, you will gain abilities and influence, and may one day gain a noble title or great fame and wealth. Tales of your adventures may someday be sung by bards, or retold time and again by storytellers sitting by the fire with a cup of spiced cider.

What your character does is entirely up to you. You decide what you want and where you want to be. The future is yours to define and create.

THE 4 MOST IMPORTANT RULES

This book has many rules and requirements and for new players it can sometimes be overwhelming. There are some rules that are much more important than the others. The rules listed below are required for NERO to continue to be a safe game, and there are no exceptions to these rules, they apply to all players and NPCs. Breaking these rules may require your removal from the game.

BODY CONTACT

NERO prohibits all body contact during combat. All combat must take place with NERO approved safe weapons, and certain parts of the body (head, groin, hands) are not allowed to be hit, even with these NERO safe weapons. This rule does not apply to packet delivered attacks, which may hit any part of the body.

ALCOHOL

NERO absolutely forbids alcohol and illegal drugs at its events, and you are not permitted to use these off site and then come to the game drunk or high.

HOLD

If you hear someone yell "Hold!" stop everything you are doing and drop to one knee. Holds should only be called if there is a real need, and usually only for safety reasons. You cannot call a hold to check on a rule, or ask if someone knows that you hit them with a spell or ability, unless that rule or effect is so integral to the situation that it would affect every person involved in that situation.

SNEAKING

If you wish to sneak into a building or tent (regardless of whether you are sleeping in that building or tent for the event), you must have a marshal present. This rule helps ensure that out-of-game items (the personal property of other players) are not accidentally taken if your character chooses to steal items from another player's building or tent.

Please follow these rules completely and report anyone who does not to a marshal.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RULES

A lot of what you will read in the upcoming pages may be confusing; there seems to be a lot of rules, and some rules rely on other rules to a degree that understanding one is not possible until you understand the other, but how can you do both at the same time? Don't be discouraged. It's really a lot easier than it seems. There is also a quick character generation guide at the back of the book.

A BASIC OVERVIEW TO GET YOU STARTED:

You, the player, will portray a character for the duration of the event. Your character has certain skills. Some of these are usable whenever you'd like (such as your skill in a specific weapon) and some are usable a limited number of times per day (like the ability to cast a spell). In order to learn more skills, or to be able to cast a large number of spells per day, you will have to gain experience.

You gain experience by attending events. The amount of experience you earn is based on whether you PC or NPC. If you PC you will receive a base amount of experience that you can then double in a number of different ways. You may turn in game money at the end of the event, perform a number of hours of NPC duty (if the chapter allows this), or the chapter may grant all PCs double experience just for attending the event. If you NPC the entire event you will receive the maximum possible amount of experience as a reward for your service.

Awarded Experience Points (XP) are then transferred into Build Points (BP). Build Points are what you use to buy new skills. Every 10 BP you earn increases your level. The amount of XP needed to earn a new Build Point increase each time your level increases, so the higher level you become, the slower you gain new skills.

Your character must be one of the currently allowed races, such as Human, Elf, Dwarf, or Sarr. For a complete list of races and their advantages and disadvantages, see the Classes and Races section in this rule book.

Your character also has a specific class which determines the number of BP that a skill will cost, the total number of Armor Points you can wear to start, and the number of body points that you gain per level.

Sometimes you will get into battles. When swinging a weapon, you will call out the amount of damage your weapon will do.

A standard long sword does 2 points of damage. When you get hit, you will subtract from your Armor Points and your Body Points until you are at zero or below. Your opponent will do the same.

Spells may be cast during battles and they can affect the battle in many ways. You need to know the spells in order to get the most out of your NERO experience. Spells are represented by foam golf or tennis balls purchasable at most sporting good stores, or small cloth packets filled with birdseed that you can make yourself. You must say the specific words (incantation) associated with the spell (such as "With mystic force I web you!") and hit your target with the spell aura for the spell to work.

You may have tags or a character skill sheet which you use to keep track of your current Body Points, Armor Points, skills and spells. After each battle, you and your opponents must adjust the tags to keep track of your new status.

Now let's look at a typical NERO weekend and see how some of these rules are applied.

YOUR FIRST WEEKEND

Here's an example of a typical NERO weekend as experienced by a new player (You!):

Once you have your character established, you check in for a NERO event. You are given a small amount of starting money tags representing your starting equipment and a character card which lists your current skills and other pertinent information. You will get a new card for every event in order to keep this information accurate and up to date. This allows you, other characters, and the game marshals to keep track of your abilities should any disputes arise. You will also receive either tags for each of your abilities or a character skill sheet.

You also have to get your weapon checked. Even players who attend every event must get their weapons checked each time. If your weapon is approved, you are given a safety tag that is attached to your weapon. If you do not have one already, you are given a cabin assignment. Once you have finished checking in to the event, you put on a white headband (signifying that you are out-of-game) and carry your bedding and other equipment to your room. You are then ready to get into your costume.

One thing you notice is that everyone in the NERO game wears a costume. The type of clothes you wear can also help with your Armor Points. If your costume looks like it fits the IG atmosphere you will be able to wear more armor.

The time that game begins will vary based on the chapter and the length of the event, but all weekend and longer events typically start between 9 pm and 11 pm Friday night. Prior to the start of game will be opening ceremonies where the weekend coordinators go over the chapter's policies, camp rules, and any plot information that would be known by all characters.

It's Friday night and the town is buzzing. Guilds are having meetings, adventuring groups are planning strategy, the elves are having a ceremony, and the tavern is packed. Rumors of a zombie attack are floating about and the political situation doesn't look too secure. Life could be easier, but it could also be boring. You adjust your boots, make sure your dagger is handy, and start walking at a leisurely pace over to the tavern, but only get a few steps before something jumps out at you. It's a goblin! You can tell by the ugly

green face. Goblins and other monsters are some of the Non-Player Characters in NERO. Members who want to play monsters get special benefits for that event but must do what the chapter hosting the event tells them.

The goblin advances and swings his sword. You pull out your trusty dagger. Weapons in NERO are soft "boffer" weapons. They are basically PVC piping covered with foam rubber, with very soft ends. Injuries are very rare occurrences at NERO events, a game of little league baseball is more dangerous than a NERO combat. Players in NERO buy their equipment and weapons though we also provide instructions for making them. A dagger only does one point of damage while a long sword (which the goblin has) does two. The goblin knows this and smiles (or at least you think he does behind his goblin mask). What the goblin doesn't know is that one of the skills you bought with your Build Points is a Critical Attack which allows you to do an extra point of damage. The battle begins. Each of you calls out what damage you are doing so the other player can keep track. "Two Normal!" yells the goblin. "Two Normal!" you reply, using your Critical Attack in the hopes of finishing off the goblin before he finishes you!

The goblin lunges at your chest, but you jump aside just at the last moment! As he passes by, you jab at his back with your dagger. "Ow!" screams the goblin. "Dat hurt! Me no like you!" You grin and swing out again, just to tease and torment the creature.

He advances. "Me now teach you lesson!"

With a lightning quick thrust, he swings at your chest. You try to block with your dagger, but fail to bring your weapon up in time to block the attack... Your now ruined shirt tells you that it might be a good idea to be a bit more careful with this foe.

You make a mental note to find someone to teach you how to fight with a long sword as soon as possible.

You now have both taken two points of damage. Since you've never fought a goblin before, you don't know how many total points he has. Will the next hit bring him down?

"Give up, smelly human?"

"Never!" you reply, jumping in and taking the foul creature by surprise. His yelp of pain as your dagger slices his chest is very

"They were adventurers... a few performed useful services: research, cartography and the like. Most were nothing but tomb raiders. They were scum who died violent deaths, hanging on to a certain cachet among the impressionable through their undainable bravery and their occasionally impressive exploits."
—Perdido Street Station

satisfying.. .but he's still up!Perhaps running away might be a good option.

The goblin senses your apprehension and follows with a flurry of attacks. You are able to block most of them, but one lands its target, cutting through your torn shirt and releasing a spray of blood. The goblin laughs triumphantly.

That does it! This really sparks your anger and you lunge in like a mad man, hacking away at the green-skinned creature. This is more than he can take, and he falls to the ground. You stand there breathing heavily for a minute, and then you lean over him and search him.

"I search you," you say. He hands you three silver pieces and a strange locked box he had on him.

Now that the fight is over you must mark (by removing tags or marking your character skill sheet) that you've used a critical attack, and that you have taken four points of damage. You only have four Body Points left! Better find some healing before your next encounter.

If you die either in battle or by execution, your character can then be resurrected. See the section of the rule book dealing with Death for more information on what happens when your character dies.

You walk into the bustling tavern. Some local bards are playing quietly in a corner. As you look around the tavern you are surprised to see the local Baron himself, sitting with the Magistrate and the Sheriff! They seem to be arguing over something and it must be important given how many other people are sitting nearby trying to pretend they're not listening. You find a spot and sit. The gypsy tavern keeper dances over to you and brings you a drink for a silver piece. A woman sits nearby and pulls out a book and begins reading, by the glow of her hands, you can tell that she is a spell caster. You walk over. "Good evening," you say. "Might you be a healer?" "Yes I am," she replies. "I am Arcadia. Are you in need of help?"

You tell her about your encounter with the goblin and ask if she can spare a Cure Light Wounds spell. She states that such a spell would cost three silver pieces.

"I only have two," you reply, showing her your meager wealth. She glances at you and sighs. "Very well," she says. "I have to make a living, but I took an oath to help those in need. I will cure you, but you will owe me a favor in the future!"

"Agreed," you reply, handing her the coins. She calls up her power and touches your shoulder.

"I call upon the earth to cure light wounds 5" she says. A burst of warmth fills your body and you can feel the wound healing itself.

You then have to adjust tags or mark your character skill sheet to reflect the fact that you have been healed and your missing body points have been restored.

A warrior in chain mail then comes up to both of you. With her are a venerable mage and a rather shifty-looking individual. "Pardon me," she states, "but we were just wondering if you've heard anything about a goblin treasure map. We'd be willing to pay for information that proves to be true." You try not to show any reaction as she speaks about a rumor she had heard involving a map kept in a small box. Better find out more about these people before making any commitments. You introduce yourself and they do as well, and you all spend some time discussing your pasts and talking about other rumors and bits of decide information you have heard. You finally decide that they can be trusted and you suggest that you all go someplace where no one can overhear.

You travel to the mage's cabin where you show the box to the shifty-eyed person, who turns out to be a "locksmith." He smiles at the challenge and pulls out his tools.

In the world of NERO, real locks are used. Buying the required Pick Locks skill does not guarantee success; it only allows you to make the attempt at picking the lock. Likewise, boxes are really trapped with electronic buzzers or other noisemakers. To check for traps you must actually check the object for traps by carefully examining the object without accidentally setting off a trap you have not yet detected. Once you know a trap is present, you can then try to disarm or bypass the trap if you have the skill Disarm/Arm Trap. Depending on the state where a chapter is located, it may be against the law for you to possess any tools designed to pick a lock.

In this case, the local chapter will use the Alternate Pick Locks rule, as described in the entry for the Pick Locks skill. The rogue picks the lock. Inside the box he finds a strange amulet, some coins, and a map written in a strange language! Tomorrow you will go to the Merchants' Guild to have your amulet appraised for its value. You will also go to the Mages' Guild and have it checked to see if

it's magic! However, you and your new companions spend most of the night decoding the map. Outside, you can hear the sounds of battle as a lich has called forth his undead to destroy as much of the town as possible. You decide that the knights can handle it and wisely stay inside.

After you decode the map, you find the small note at the bottom which says "See a marshal when you're ready to go on this adventure." You decide to rest for the night and start in the morning and you head to bed with visions of treasure and future adventures in your head!

This is one way that a group may get into a weekend adventure module. Some modules are repeating in that more than one group can go through at different times, while others are one time only. The one time only modules may be major affairs, and can affect the whole storyline, or they may be modules that simply cannot be repeated (saving a coastal town from a ghost ship). You can see that a NERO adventure is like no other, the possibilities are endless for creative players. So welcome to NERO, where you can be all that you can't be!

MULTIPLE CHARACTERS

Unless you are NPC'ing, you cannot play more than one character during an event (unless your character dies permanently and you start a new one). It is too confusing to other players, they will think you are playing the same PC but wearing different clothes. When you create a second character, please have that character be as different from your original character as possible: your new character should have a different adventuring party, different costume, and hopefully be of a different race and class as well. Multiple characters belonging to the same player may never directly interact in any way.

PLAYTESTING RULES

Each NERO chapter abides by the rules listed in this book. Additionally, these rules can be modified and new rules added by official NERO play tests. The NERO International Office makes available an official list of rules that are being play tested on their website www.nerolarp.com. Each chapter must make available a list of the play tests that they are using, so that players attending events at a chapter can find out ahead of time which play tests will be in use.

BE A SUCCESSFUL NERO PLAYER

Creating a believable and fun character history is a significant key to enjoying a NERO event. Knowing your character's persona can give you wide reaching role-playing possibilities. Written character histories are not required to play NERO but they will provide you with background and us with opportunities to give you plot.

Once your history is finished, it should be submitted to your local Plot Committee for approval. They will use it to make your adventuring more interesting by tying your history into what you are doing now.

Understand, however, that the committee has the right to overrule your choices if they would violate game rules or give your character too much of an advantage in the game. After all, you can't just say that you're the son of a famous king with superhuman abilities and a million gold pieces and expect us to allow it.

Avoid the cliches common in so many fantasy films and literature. And that includes thinking of a name for your character. Although we have yet to see a Conan or a Bilbo Baggins, we have had our share of Vlad Taltos, Rand al'Thors, Belgarions, Elrics, and Skeeves. What, do you think you're the only person in the world to have read these books?

Be creative in your ideas and your presentation! Some players have written their character histories as letters to family, interviews or even once a confession after being caught stealing, explaining why the person was a thief! Use your imagination!

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF AN UNIMAGINATIVE (AND ALL TOO

COMMON) CHARACTER HISTORY. PLEASE DO NOT SEND US

SOMETHING THAT READS LIKE THIS:

My name is Deathbringer Bloodblade Darkshadow. My father was a Count and my mother was the heir to the throne of the Elven Kingdom. When I was but a baby, my parents were killed by a marauding group of bandits from Rotaria who left me and my twin brother to die. They captured my beautiful sister and sold her to Eastern barbarians where she now serves in the harem of their evil leader Konad. My brother was later kidnapped by gypsies and I had to fend for myself. I proved my worth and strength at an early age when I killed an armed troll with my bare hands.

I taught myself to be the best swordsman in the kingdom. However, I keep my abilities secret as I do not wish for my enemies to find me. I now travel mysteriously from town to town, dressed all in black. I appear without a sound and disappear as a mere shadow flicking through the night. When I enter the tavern, the crowd grows silent as I sit alone in the corner with my back to the wall. I do not have many friends but I do have the respect of all. Although I do not seek permanent female companionship, I secretly enjoy the lavish attention that the women give me. I search for my long-lost brother who I know can help me regain my birthright, rescue my sister and wreak my vengeance against any Rotarian I come across. I will be able to recognize him and my sister by our distinctive family birthmark, a scarlet rose on our left elbow.

Oh yeah, I am also searching for my father's sword Doomblade which will only work for members of my family. This sword was created by the finest dwarven craftsmen specifically for my father after he single-handedly saved the dwarven kingdom from the attacking hordes of mountain trolls and death elementals that once plagued the peaceful people. This sword allows me to double any proficiencies I may already have (Plot committee: Can I have this?).

Although I have often been asked to join with other adventuring groups, I keep to myself and to mine own self I am true. I do adventure from time to time when the cause is worthy.

There are lots of problems with this history - first of all, it contains every hackneyed cliché overused in bad literature of this type. One or two may have been acceptable, but this is ridiculous. (And who

names their kids Deathbringer Bloodblade Darkshadow, anyway?) Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, if this person has done all of these great heroic things, then why in the world is he entering game as a lowly second level character?

Most character histories that are rejected fail because of that reason. Players write histories naming themselves as great heroes who can cast amazing spells and have written great learned treatises or have killed great monsters, but as a starting player in our game, they can't afford to buy Read and Write or Weapon Proficiencies. What, did your character forget everything all of a sudden?

A well fleshed-out and detailed character history need not be filled with adventure and excitement. Its primary purpose should be to establish your character's personality - why does your character act and feel the way he or she does?

Think about your own life as a guideline. What is it in your past that has made you what you are today? What is your family like? Your schooling? Your friends? The types of places you have lived? Your jobs? After all, every experience you have shapes your personality.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A GOOD CHARACTER HISTORY:

My name is Trin Hallison. I am the eldest son of Lorin and Frinda Hallison. I have two younger brothers and two older sisters.

I was born in the mining city of Ironvale in the duchy of Ravenholt in the kingdom of Evendarr in 576. My father was the head cook of one of the mines in the area and my mother worked in the payroll department.

They held different shifts so that at different times I was raised by both my father and my mother.

My father had served in the army of Westmarch under Goodwyn Northridge as a short swordsman I have many fine memories of afternoons spent with my father practicing sparring - I never could beat him! (I could, however, beat my younger brothers and sisters, and I gained even more experience playing with them). My mother knew a few healing spells which came in handy when we kids hurt ourselves in our games. She tried to teach us to read and write, but only my sister Burra took an interest.

At the young age of ten, while on a picnic with my family, I found a cave and began exploring. I soon was lost in the darkness and I was certain that every sound was a goblin or a troll out to get me. I spent a few hours crying in the darkness before I was discovered and ever since I have had a great fear of caves and extreme darkness even though I know my fears are unfounded. When Vandal Northridge became Baron of Westmarch, things changed a bit in Ironvale - the town guards became surlier and some of the nobles he appointed cared more for fattening their pockets than for the commoners whom they were supposed to be helping. I believe that all nobles in their hearts are the same even if they pretend to be caring. I would never work for nobility. When I was old enough, I became apprenticed to a local cooper, making barrels for the town. It was boring work but it brought in the money my family needed. It was during this time that I became fascinated with magic, for next door to the coopers' was the local Healers' Guild.

The healers there noticed my interest in their activities, and one - a nice old lady named Hindy - often delighted me with her tales of adventures in Ashbury where she had fought many monsters in her younger days.

It was she who finally taught me how to perform first aid, and it was she who taught me my first spell.

My father died permanently when I was 14. It was a very traumatic experience for all of my family. He had died previously, a few times

while in the army and once when a large boulder fell on him, but he had been successfully resurrected each time. This time he had a terrible disease, and the Healers' Guild could do nothing for him. I cried myself to sleep every night as he lay in bed in pain as the disease took over his body.

Finally, I could take no more, and I placed a pillow over his head and held it down until he stopped breathing. I finally put him out of his misery. I have never told anyone of this and I feel very guilty about it. I made a vow to myself that I would never kill again, and that any enemy I would ever encounter would be captured if at all possible, and if dying would be first-aided.

When I turned 16, I felt that it was time to strike out on my own, and I decided to head to the area that Hindy had told me about. I decided to move to the big city where life is more exciting.

I have now arrived in the city of Ashbury, where I hope soon to obtain a job and maybe - just maybe - find some adventure!

Notice how this history establishes a few character traits with which the player can have lots of fun, a dislike and mistrust of nobility, a fear of enclosed spaces and darkness, and a desire never to kill. Imagine the complications in game when his views and desires run up against situations which require him to confront his fears.

This history also explains how he got the skills with which he will be entering the game: One Handed Edged, Healing Arts, First Aid, Read and Write, and a spell.

If your character is older, you may have to think of a reason why your character is only second level. For example, perhaps you have been a farmer or a trapper for many years and now you have been kicked out of the family / evicted from your farm / mistreated by an evil bad guy / stirred into action by some injustice and now after all those years have decided to become an adventurer.

So go to it! Write an interesting character history and see how much more fun NERO will become.

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CLASSES

Classes are used to describe your character's natural talents. This may or may not have anything to do with your character's profession. For example, not all rogues are thieves and not all scholars are spell casters.

Your own physical characteristics and abilities need not match those of your chosen character but it can help you in your adventuring career if your actual physical skills are congruent with your character's fantasy skills. The NERO system allows players to play characters that are very different from themselves and still be able to prosper.

You must pick one of these classes:

FIGHTER

Fighters take naturally to the physical combat arts and rely mainly on strength and stamina to accomplish their goals. They can wear more armor than any other class.

ROGUE

Rogues have a natural bent towards dexterity based skills, and the practice of alchemy. Rogues are limited in how much armor they can wear. Their lower Body Points, lighter armor and relatively high costs for combat skills does not make them well suited for front line combat roles.

SCHOLAR

Scholars are adept at many mental skills and readily learn the magical arts. Scholars are even more limited in how many Armor Points they can use than Rogues.

TEMPLAR

Templars are spell casters who are somewhat more adept than scholars at physical combat skills. They are not religious in any way; NERO specifically prohibits religion in the game. Their combat training leaves them better able to fight but takes away from their studies. They cannot use as many Armor Points as Fighters, but can use more than Scholars.

RACES

The human race is not the only race in the world of NERO. There are many mythical and unusual races, such as elves, dwarves, half-orcs, and other more exotic races. Some NERO chapters have sub-cultures of the listed races.

Only the races listed are available for play by PCs. Some NERO chapters have additional races or variations of the listed races but these additional races and variations are NPC only and are not available for use by Player Characters. In order to give the game a multiracial feel, each race has been developed individually to add to everyone's enjoyment. To keep the balance of each particular race, there are certain fundamental requirements that each player of that race must observe. We do this so that you will be placing yourself into a real culture that provides the most interaction with other players.

Racial abilities help you to understand a race's outlook on life. You must understand the necessities of role-playing your race based on the advantages and disadvantages of that race. You should purchase your particular racial abilities as soon as possible.

Playing your race means knowing and understanding your races' culture and society. Some races have their culture based on certain societies in our own world, some races are purely fantastic like the elves or hobblings and some are based on popular mythology or folklore. Other races such as the Biata have been created from scratch, creating a unique aspect to our game.

It is important to understand that this rule book only gives you a brief description of your race's society. More detailed information on your race's culture can be found on the NERO International website

www.nerolarp.com It is very important that you learn the culture and behavior of your race so that you seem like a part of that culture.

If you wish to play a non-human race, you must wear the appropriate makeup to distinguish yourself. All exposed skin must be covered with the appropriate makeup. Any props (such as elf ears) must be worn at all times.

You cannot wear makeup to disguise yourself to appear as a race you are not, nor can you act in such a way as to mislead others as to your race. If you are not playing a barbarian or a gypsy, you cannot dress, talk and act like one.

NERO expects you to play your character's race properly. Half-orcs should be slow witted, barbarians should act uncouth, and drae should shun the sunlight. Even though we strongly encourage everyone to avoid clichés and stereotypes when creating their character histories, you **MUST** abide by your racial characteristics. You cannot write your history to make you the "outsider" of your race and be the one barbarian who is a genius celestial caster, the one gypsy who is quiet and shy, or the one drae who likes to go sunbathing.

A player not acting as described for his or her character's race will not be allowed to continue playing that character as a member of that race and will be forced to choose another race for their character. There is no such thing as true half races for purpose of NERO rules. There is nothing wrong with having your parents be of different races, but you can only take the attributes of one of these races. In-game you can tell everyone you're "half-elf/half-gypsy" but out-of-game, you are one race or the other. You must then take all the advantages, disadvantages and physical characteristics of that single race and none of the unique characteristics of the other. No character may have the powers, physical characteristics, or mannerism of more than one race. It should always be very clear to everyone what race you are.

These role-playing rules are put in place to allow players to make assumptions about the races. When you see someone wearing pointed ears, you know that they may have certain abilities such as Resist sleep and that may change your strategy with dealing with them. You can conclude that every biata you see will dislike celestial magic and every dwarf will appreciate and study well-made weapons. Every race must act like and be identifiable as that race by all other players. By adhering to racial characteristics, this fantasy world of ours becomes much more real.

The following lists the basic NERO races (other than human). This is a very short overview. you play one of these races, you can find find a more thorough explanation for your particular race that will provide more background for your character on the NeroLarp.com website.

The skills mentioned in the descriptions ahead are explained in greater detail in the “Skill Descriptions” on page 33. When reference is made to “Scholarly Skills” or “Stealth Skills,” it means only those skills listed under those categories in the Skill cost tables. (“Scholarly Skills” for example includes Read and WRite and Read Magic.) Note that if you are playing a nonhuman, you should buy your racial skills as soon as possible. After all, how can you possibly role-play your race properly if you don’t have the basic skills and abilities that help to define that race? If you reach 5th level or so and still haven’t purchased your skills, other members of your race should treat you as inferior or look at you with pity because you cannot resist sleep or break a charm.

The next section of this book lists the various races other than human. If playing a human, you are free to devise any sort of personality you wish without any benefits or disadvantages

BARBARIAN

Barbarians come from nomadic tribes and are unused to “civilized” society. They are a very superstitious lot and may often perform unusual small ceremonies to rid themselves of their “curse.” (“Oh-oh! Seven hobblings just crossed path! Bad luck! Now I must tie string around finger and walk backwards for an hour!”) This is not to imply that barbarians have to be stupid—merely uncultured and somewhat primitive. In order to be identifiable as barbarians, you should talk poorly, dress in furs and leathers, and otherwise look primitive. Barbarian tribes (usually named after animals) are often very competitive and not too friendly.

Barbarian tribes are very earth friendly and in fact, celestial magic was unheard of by barbarians until the more “civilized” beings began moving into their area. As such, barbarians distrust celestial magic and consider it “not natural.” Barbarians fear and distrust celestial magic and will dislike having celestial protective spells cast upon them. This distrust only applies to Celestial Defensive spells, and does not apply to Celestial Magic Items. It should be noted that there are some characters that refuse to use Celestial Magic Items for role-play reasons of their own. This “Celestial Abstinence” is not required by the rules in any way. All players are encouraged to role-play their characters in any way that they consider fun.

When a barbarian reaches the age of 18, he or she will ask the tribe leader for a Task of Adulthood. This task must require an extreme amount of bravery and challenge and may take many years to accomplish. Only when the task is completed will the barbarian be considered a true member of the tribe. Barbarians who switch tribes are likewise required to perform such a task.

Barbarians are strong and thus start off with two extra body points. They have to pay double for all Scholarly skills. They can also buy the skills Barbarian Slay, and Detect Celestial Magic which, once a day, will allow the barbarian to determine whether an item has any celestial magic present upon

BIATA

According to legend, biata are descended from a barbarian tribe, but they do not act or look like barbarians. They have large upturned feathery eyebrows and often grow feathers in their hair and claws on their fingers as well. (The claws are decorative in nature and cannot be used as weapons.)

Biata tend to be very orderly in their philosophy of life—they always act with a purpose. They will not do things “on a whim” and are always working towards some goal. To other races, this tends to make them seem like extremists—either very good or very evil—but even the most evil biata will have his or her own code of ethics and will never act erratically or randomly. This also makes the biata seem very stubborn.

They are also very secretive about the origins of their race and will treat all other races as “outsiders” rarely worthy of complete trust. It is said that biata were formed through magical mating of a gryphon and a human (or perhaps a barbarian). The Gryphon barbarian tribe was made up entirely of biata and until the last Great Celestial Change in 590, all biata looked like humans. Having celestial protective spells cast upon biata causes great discomfort. Most will refuse to sleep behind Wards and will not use celestial magic items. All players are encouraged to role-play their characters in any way that they consider fun.

Mentalist: Biata, like stone elves, have spent years honing mental skills and as such can perform certain mental abilities. These abilities are all completely role-playing in nature. Generally speaking, a biata can remove role-playing insanity based on memories or otherwise “cure” mental damage on any willing subject. You cannot use this ability to tell if another player is telling the truth or to have that player remember events forgotten due to a Forget elixir or otherwise get around any NERO rule. A player always has the right to refuse to role-play any of these skills and can at any time decide to “break off” contact or be cured. In order to use this role-playing skill, you must touch the other person and concentrate completely by either staring into each other’s eyes or by both of you having your eyes closed. You cannot perform any other in game skill while role-playing this. Any biata who simply touches someone and says “There, you no longer have a fear of heights (or whatever)” is not playing the race properly.

For more information about these skills, see “Mind Abilities” in the chapter on Special Abilities.

Biata can buy the skills Break Charm , Resist Charm , and Resist Sleep. Biata cannot learn Read Magic.

DRAE

Drae are dark elves, a mysterious race that mostly lives underground, shunning sunlight. They have jet black skin, white or silver hair, and pointed ears. They rarely socialize with other races. They keep to themselves and generally feel themselves to be superior to all other races.

When playing a drae, the most important thing to remember is honor. The Drae culture emphasizes honor to such a degree that a Drae who has lost honor should commit suicide as punishment before honor can be regained. This does not mean that you cannot be an evil Drae; it merely means that you will keep your word once it is given. If you are disgraced in any way, you will publicly do what needs to be done for your honor to be restored.

Drae can have a sense of humor but must take their own actions very seriously. There are drae entertainers (though rare) but even these regard honor as the highest attribute.

Drae have -2 Body Points in the daytime (defined as 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.). At 6 a.m., the drae loses 2 points from their maximum Body Points (never below one Body Point), adjusting their current Body Points to match if necessary. This means that a drae will never fall unconscious due to this penalty. At 6 p.m., the drae's maximum Body Points go up by exactly the same number of points that they went down the night before. This rule cannot be used to circumvent other effects where Body Points are lost.

Drae can buy Resist Sleep and Resist Charm . They can also buy the Archery skill at half cost (round up), but they cannot use Two Handed Blunt weapons or Two Handed Swords.

ELF

Elves are long-lived people with pointed ears. That may be the only thing all the elven races have in common!

All elves can buy the skills Resist Sleep and Resist Charm . They have one less Body Point than a human character of the same class and level. They can buy the Archery skill at half cost (round up), but they cannot use Two Handed Blunt weapons or Two Handed Swords.

There are many varieties of elves. The most common are:

Amani elf

Amani elves are descendants of Quentari elves. Many years ago, a political rift developed in Quentari and many of the elves moved to the Ash Forest (or the "Amani" forest in their language) in the Duchy of Ashbury in Evendarr to start anew. Since then, they have spread all over the continent.

Amani elves are friendlier and more down-to-earth than their Quentari cousins. They get along much better with other races but still do not socialize a great deal with them. Even though they socialize with other races, they rarely marry any other than their fellow Amani elves. An Amani who falls in love with another race is not shunned from the society, but is obviously not treated with the same degree of respect by his or her fellow Amani elves.

Quentari elf

Quentari elves come from the elven kingdom of Quentari. They consider themselves to be the most civilized race; all others are barbaric in comparison. To some degree this is true—they have the oldest culture, the greatest cities, and the most learned scholars. It is this attitude however that makes their living with other races a problem, as no one likes being seen as inferior. Quentari elves tend to be scholars, and it is rare to encounter a Quentari elf who does not know how to read and write. When fighting, they tend to prefer bows and short swords, but fighting is seen as a last resort when peaceful negotiations are unsuccessful.

STONE ELF:

Stone elves have whitish skin, upturned eyebrows, and pointed ears. Stone elves do not show emotions and as such are viewed by other races as humorless and intense. This is part of their culture as well as being part of their race. This restriction makes the stone elves very hard to role-play—if you cannot keep a straight face when told a funny joke, you should not be playing a stone elf.

They have a natural affinity for celestial magic and make excellent celestial casters. Although there are of course healers in their society, most stone elf casters are celestial.

Mentalist: Stone elves, like biata, have spent years honing mental skills and as such can perform certain mental abilities. These abilities are all completely role-playing in nature. Generally speaking, a stone elf can remove role-playing insanity based on emotions or otherwise “cure” mental damage on any willing subject. You cannot use this ability to tell if another player is telling the truth or to have that player remember memories lost to Forget elixirs or otherwise get around any NERO rule. A player always has the right to refuse to role-play any of these skills and can at any time decide to “break off” contact or be cured.

In order to use this role-playing skill, you must touch the other person and concentrate completely. Any Stone elf that simply touches someone and says “There, you no longer have a fear of heights (or whatever)” is not playing the race properly. For more information about these skills, see “Mind Abilities” on page 93.

WILD ELF

Wild elves live in nomadic tribes like barbarians and share many barbarian traits. Wild elves are distinguished in-game by their furs and other barbarian clothing, even though they have pointed ears like all other elves.

Wild elves are not treated as “real elves” by most of the rest of the elven race. There is no outright warring going on, but the wild elves often feel as if they are second-class citizens even though they generally have all the rights as any other citizen.

The wild elf society places an emphasis on hunting and tracking skills.

DWARF

Dwarves are sturdy individuals who live in mountainous regions. Dwarves in NERO are not necessarily short (remember that all players and monsters are the same size as the person playing them), but taller players should think twice about playing a dwarf. In-game, the rumor is that dwarves are the small cousins of hill giants, and so to the giants, they were seen as short.

Dwarves tend to be friendly but secretive. They all have beards, although many females prefer a long goatee. Their race enjoys and appreciates good craftsmanship, especially in weapons, armor, and jewelry. Because they live so much longer than humans, they tend to dislike the humans' faster paced lifestyles (but they generally like the food).

Dwarves have an extreme hatred of trolls who often attack and take the dwarven caves for themselves. Their history is very lengthy but is mostly comprised of stories and legends of great dwarven heroes. Some of these stories can take many hours or even days to tell completely, and no self-respecting dwarf would consider telling an abridged version.

Dwarves are generally peaceful and have no problem with other races—although they think elves are pompous, humans are impatient, hobblings are troublemakers, and half-orcs and half ogres are incapable of understanding the finer things in life (like a well made weapon and a fine wine).

They start with one extra body point, can buy Resist Poison, and can buy the Sm ething skill for one point less. Dwarves cannot use Polearms, Staves, Two Handed Blunt weapons or Two Handed Swords. They must pay double for Read Magic.

GYPSY

Unlike other races that are distinguished by physical features, gypsies are defined by costume, behavior, and culture. To be a gypsy means to be boisterous, extroverted, and larger than life. Gypsies, a fiery and passionate race, love to dance and sing. The most important aspect of gypsy life is family. The gypsies have enormous loyalty to their people, treating each as a family member and referring to them as “brother” or “sister.”

Many gypsy tribes may coexist in the same area, each being ruled by its own Bandoleer or “Prince/Princess.” There is a Gypsy King but quite often this figure is far removed from normal gypsy life and has no great influence over the local tribes. Usually a gypsy tribe will have its own distinctive predominate color or marking, used to differentiate itself from other tribes in the area.

Gypsies can bestow or remove Gypsy Curse, the use of which is limited by the Gypsy Code of Honor. The Gypsy Code of Honor requires that a gypsy be always honest and trustworthy among members of his or her own tribe. The gypsy will support the other tribe members and will do whatever it takes to help (including lying to, stealing from, and cursing or killing non-tribe members).

The Gypsy Code of Honor means respecting the actions of fellow gypsies as well. If a gypsy places a Gypsy Curse on someone, it had better be for a good reason (sometimes, the recipient might take action against the entire tribe). If there was a good reason, then the entire tribe will support that gypsy.

HALF OGRE

Half ogres are not human/ogre hybrids, but rather are a race that closely resembles ogres in coloration and behavior and were dubbed half ogres by those that first encountered them. They have yellow skin and protruding lower fangs. Half ogres are tougher than average and are almost always fighters. They tend to be less intelligent and should role-play difficulty in understanding complicated subjects. Note also that half ogres have a very short life expectancy compared to other races, and they mature faster, so that your starting character may only be four years old!

Half ogres are very tough fighters and they know it. It is very rare for a half ogre to show any fear. They are usually first to run into battle and will almost never run away. However, they have an innate fear of undead and will have to summon up a ton of courage to fight any zombie, skeleton or vampire that comes their way.

Half ogres tend to see the world in simple ways. What good is writing if you can't fight with it? They think most of the other races are spoiled and live too fancily. Half ogres would rather spend their money on new weapons and armor than on fancy homes, fancy food, or fancy clothes. Half ogres think that the concept of nobility is the most ridiculous idea "civilized" society has to offer. In the half ogre tribes, the tribal leaders are the best fighters. In fact, half ogres are constantly fighting among themselves for dominance.

If a half ogre sees another, it is likely that they will fight to establish who is dominant. The fight is never to the death but only until one of the half ogres acknowledges the other's superiority. There is never any cheating nor are there sneak attacks in this sort of battle; there is great honor at stake in the half ogre community.

They start with two extra Body Points and must pay double for all Scholarly skills see Table 3-2 on page 30. Half Ogres may purchase the skill Strong-arm once.

HALF ORC

Half orcs may have at one time been human/orc hybrids but have now evolved into a race of their own. They have green skin and protruding lower fangs or teeth. They are a strong people, but tend to be less intelligent and should role-play difficulty in understanding complicated subjects. Because of this Orcish Society is primitive and brutal. Orcish culture is based on the concepts of might makes right. They would rather die in combat than of old age, and would never be seen running from a battle unless the situation was completely overwhelming. Scholars are very respected among the Half Orcs as wise-ones and healers, and the harming of one can carry dire consequences.

The half orc society is clan-based, where families and blood relations are regarded as most important. Individual half orcs may leave the family to adventure with other races in order to gain in strength and earn a name for themselves. Half Orcs reach maturity quickly, and most are capable of using a weapon at age 4.

Half orcs start with two extra Body Points. They must pay double for all Scholarly skills see Table 3-2 on page 30. Half Orcs may purchase the skill Strong-arm once.

HOBBLING

Hoblings are peaceful people and generally are smaller than average. They have furry feet and hands, as well as bushy sideburns and eyebrows.

Hoblings love working with their hands and as such are often craftsmen. They are friendly and cheerful and have a great sense of humor, and quite often use their charisma to their advantage. Hobblings do not generally like adventure even though they love the treasure that can come from adventuring. Their treasure will be spent on fine food, good clothes, and a high standard of living. Their love of living well means that most Hobblings are business people first. The thought of doing something for free is appalling to them, and although to some this appears to be mere laziness, Hobblings consider this common sense. They are completely honest in their business deals however and always keep to their promises once made—however, you'd better read any contract with a hobling very carefully, as they know all the loopholes. They make excellent spies as long as the money keeps coming in.

Hoblings begin with one less Body Point. Hobblings cannot be fighters and cannot use Bows, Crossbows, Polearms, Staves, Two Handed Blunt weapons or Two Handed Swords. They can buy Pick Locks and Disarm / Arm Trap at half price (round up) and can buy the racial ability Resist Poison. Hobblings may purchase the skill Hobling Dodge once.

MYSTIC WOOD ELF

Mystic Wood elves are an eccentric race originally from the Mystic Woods in Northern Evendarr. They are not really elves but were called that by the people who first encountered them. Mystic Wood elves have elven ears but also small horns on their foreheads. Popular theory holds that they are descended from elven-satyr/nymph hybrids, but this has never been proven. Mystic Wood elves hate (or at the very least find distasteful) all forms of enslavement, from slavery and kidnapping to magical charms and alchemical controls. For example, a Mystic Wood elf that finds a Charm elixir will probably destroy it. They may also attempt to break charms they find on others.

Mystic Wood elf society is organized into 3 major clans, and these clans are viewed as family by the Mystic Wood elf. Mystic Wood elves hold oaths to be extremely important. Mystic Wood elves have two names, their "road" name which they commonly use, and their "real" name which they usually only share with their most trusted friends outside the Mystic Wood elven community. Mystic Wood elves have a remarkably high tolerance for alcohol and love travel and adventure. For them, getting there is not half the fun, it's all the fun.

Mystic Wood elves are natural born artisans and can buy the Craftsman (other) skill for 2 build points instead of the 3 build that it costs other races. For each level attained, a Mystic Wood elf must buy at least one skill from "Magic Skills," Table 3-2 or "Trades and Crafts," Table 3-3 on page 30. Mystic Wood elves can also buy Resist Charm for 3 build and Break Charm for 2 build. As they are not elves, Mystic Wood elves do not lose 1 body and can use Two Handed weapons.

SARR

Sarr are a race of felinoids and many, but not all, come from a land known as Myrr. They live in a matriarchal society, with women outnumbering men several times over. There are multiple clans among the Sarr, each one representing a different type of large hunting cat. Each clan has different beliefs, leaders, history, and behaviors.

Sarr are curious, loyal, independent, and extremely proud. Tradition is highly valued among the Sarr. The Sarr race has an affinity for Earth Magic, but members of the Lion clan are known to be very proficient with Celestial Magic. This does not mean that you must play a Lion if you wish to use Celestial Magic, just that you may be looked down upon by the other clans if you break from tradition.

Sarr will form attachments with adventuring groups, but they will also strike out on their own in search of adventure when the urge hits them. Do not think that Sarr are cute little fluffy house cats; they are some of the fiercest warriors of all the races. They never forget an enemy and always seek revenge no matter how long it takes.

Sarr must wear makeup to appear as one of the large hunting cats. The bottom of the nose should be dark. Whiskers, stripes or spots may be added if appropriate. If you play a black panther Sarr, you must wear a prosthetic cat nose, cat ears, or other additions to make it clear to all that you are not a drae.

Scenting: Sarr have superior scenting abilities, and as such may detect an alchemical substance or disease on an item if they spend three seconds inspecting it. This racial skill does not allow them to tell what kind of alchemical substance or disease is present.

Sarr may buy the skill Resist Poison. Sarr cannot use Bows, Crossbows, One Handed Blunt weapons, Staves, Thrown Weapons, or Two Handed Blunt weapons. The only Small Weapon allowable is a dagger or hatchet. All weapons must be edged.

CULTURES

In addition to playing various races, it is fun to play a character from an unusual culture as well. The in-game guides to the various countries and duchies of the NERO world can give you some ideas. The more cultures we have in the game, the richer the role-playing experience. You might also wish to create your own culture. However, understand that you should be very careful about what you say in-game about your culture; because you may end up having to take it all back if the Plot Committee says no. You must make sure that nothing in your concept of this culture violates NERO policies, rules, or the in-game history!

You cannot be a traveler from another planet or from the future or from a modern democratic society; the basic concepts of medieval society should still exist. Use the current countries as described in your chapter's Player's Guide as a guideline. You should write up your concept of your culture and submit it to your local Plot Committee for approval along with your character history. If you want to show up to an event playing that character before the history is approved, you should refuse to speak about your culture too much in game. Also note that any culture suggestions, once accepted, become the property of NERO.

This is a delicate balance we are creating; we want to encourage players to create more than a strictly European medieval feel to the game while at the same time we want to prevent the game from becoming impossible to manage. We can't have six separate island nations at exactly the same spot on the globe. That is why it is imperative that if you want to talk about your culture in-game, you must get it approved by the Plot Committee. In addition, you should be careful if you wish to play a culture that is based on a real Earth culture. For example, if you wish to play a barbarian based on an American Indian culture, please make sure that you know something about that culture. If you walk around saying "ugh" and "how" and calling people "Kemosabe" you may be asked to stop. The best bet is to not play a character from a real culture with which you are not very familiar. We love having characters from societies based on medieval Japan or ancient Egypt or the Hawaiian Islands or Africa, but we definitely do not want players with no knowledge of those

cultures to play insulting stereotypes from those cultures— even if no insult was intended.

The most important thing is to prevent your character from being insulting to people whose heritage really is of that culture. At the risk of saying we want PCPCs (Politically Correct Player Characters), please be careful. Just think first.

MONSTERS AND NPC'S

NPCs (Non-Playing Characters) and Monsters are guided by a Monster Master who assigns them duties. The Monster Master, in turn, answers to the Plot Committee and their weekend director. If an NPC character dies or completes his or her assignment, the NPC player must return to the monster cabin (which is off-limits to everyone except NPCs and marshals). They can then be sent out again as another NPC.

Many NPCs are used in set encounters like guarding a capturing a character. Others simply wander around the woods looking for unsuspecting adventurers to fight. There may be specific monster areas in the woods where certain types of monsters appear from time to time and wait for the adventurers to find them. All NPCs aren't necessarily monsters nor are they placed out there just for PCs to fight. NPCs may be bards and entertainers, beggars, merchants, hired thugs, or anything else needed to advance the proper town atmosphere. NPCs that are not monsters should be indistinguishable from any player. There may also be some full-time town NPCs such as the major Guild leaders and some of the highest nobility. They are NPCs because they also serve a logistics function or because they are controlled by the Plot Committee. These NPCs, like all NPCs, have a limited number of lives and in all aspects must follow all game rules.

Players who wish to be NPCs get compensation for the work they do. In exchange, we expect our NPCs to do what they are told and follow the rules.

MONSTER SIZE

All monsters are the size of the NPC or physical representation playing the part. There are not any 9 foot tall trolls unless there is a 9 foot tall NPC playing the part or a 9 foot tall apparatus built for that purpose.

STATES OF EXISTENCE

There are three Standard States that someone at a NERO event can be in. These are:

- 1) OOG: Out Of Game
- 2) IG: In game and completely visible to those around you (Yes, you can try to hide in bushes, etc... but you actually have to hide.)
- 3) Spirit: In game and a spirit Alternate States (such as flying, burrowing, invisible, etc.) are not possible.

OUT OF GAME

Out-of-Game When someone takes themselves out of the action for their own convenience, they are out-of-game. In order to go out-of-game, you must wear a white headband. This signifies to others that your character is not there. Please do not abuse this, and note that your game items must stay in-game. Bathhouses or similar facilities are out-of-game. You may not however run into one if monsters are chasing you. Anyone travelling to and from the showers may be out-of-game if they so choose. If they are out-of-game, though, they should have no game items on them. As a courtesy you can sleep in a cabin out-of-game. However if someone has a real reason to pull you back into game, you may be disturbed. For Example, if you have an important game item that half the players are looking for, then a marshal may come by looking for it. If you have done something to anger another group, or even a bunch of monsters, then you may not run off and put your cabin out-of-game to avoid the consequences. A marshal will likely be involved and you will be presented with several options, such as; you are at the mercy of the injured parties or you may opt to fight, at which point combat could commence. In such cases, you will be given only as much preparatory time as you would have actual warning, again decided by the marshal. You cannot go out-of-game in the middle of a combat unless you have a medical reason.

HIT POINTS

Your character's health and the quality of his or her armor are represented by the use of Hit Points. There are two types of Hit Points: Armor Points and Body Points. Armor Points represent the additional protection that is gained from armor. These points are

usually lost first. Body Points represent how strong and healthy your body is at that moment. When in a battle, armor usually takes damage first and then Body Points. There are exceptions. Some spells and skills state that only body or armor is affected. Body Points do not regenerate from day to day but you will receive your full amount of Body Points at the start of each new NERO event. Please note that there is no mechanism to dismember bodies in NERO. You must update your Armor Points and Body Points at the end of a battle to reflect those lost during combat. This is done by adjusting your tags or updating your character skill sheet. Armor tags do not need to match the physical representation worn. If you are wearing a phys-rep for 6 points of armor you can use a 15 point tag, but you can only gain the benefit of 6 points of armor from that tag. In order to get full benefit from the 15 point armor tag, you must be wearing a phys-rep for armor that gives at least 15 points.

LIFE AND DEATH

Knowing the rules in this section can literally make the difference between life and death. Some of this will be confusing upon a first reading, as this section makes references to rules that have not yet been covered. If this is your first reading of the NERO® Rule Book, get the general idea of this section and then come back after you've read more.

UNCONSCIOUS

If you are reduced to exactly zero Body Points, then you are unconscious. You will regain consciousness at one Body Point only after one minute. You can make no sounds at all while unconscious or dying. If your party doesn't notice you lying there, you can't moan or say "Well, it looks like I'm unconscious."

CARRYING THE INCAPACITATED:

To carry another character or creature that is incapacitated, you must place a hand near the torso and tell the other player "I am carrying you". The recipient must get up and stand in front of you. Then you hold both hands over their shoulders to indicate you are carrying them. Both hands must be free. You must walk at a normal pace. You may walk forward or drag them by walking with them backwards. Whether walking or running you must wait for the person playing the body to get up and follow you. You cannot "tag" them and sprint, claiming that you have the body. The person must move with you. If a packet, weapon, or other game effect strikes you or the body being carried, you must drop the body. You may pick it up again once it stops moving. The effect is applied to whomever it hit, following all normal NERO rules. All of the same rules apply if you use a game effect upon yourself, including Imprison, healing spells, or gaseous form. If you cast Imprison upon yourself or go gaseous, the carried body must be dropped and hence cannot be included in the effect.

DYING

Any time you are reduced below zero Body Points, you drop to -1 and no further, even if the last blow to you did 48 points of damage. Once you are reduced to -1, then your character is dying. You will die unless given First aid or curing within one minute. This one minute is referred to as your “death countdown.” First aid takes a complete uninterrupted minute to be successful. Once First aid has begun; with the call “First Aid”, the one minute death countdown freezes. If you receive another hit while in this condition, then the aid is considered to be interrupted and you will continue the death countdown from where it was frozen by the First aid. If the First aid is completed, then you will be at zero Body Points (unconscious) and will wake in 1 minute with 1 Body Point. First aid is not required if you are at 0. Curing that brings you to at least 1 Body Point will immediately bring you to consciousness without the minute needed for First aid. If you are at -1, then for all healing it only takes 1 point to reach zero. So, for example, if you received 5 points of healing you would have 4 Body Points. Dead: If you are still at -1 Body Points after completing your Death Countdown, then you are dead. Death may also come from Killing Blows (see below) and certain effects. All of your active spells, alchemical substances, and other effects will immediately disappear. The only things that will remain are gypsy curse, Forget-it-Well, Forget-Me-not, and enslaveMent. Sometimes, a curse oF tRansFoRMation or an inFectiOn might disappear when a character dies. No other game effect is active after death, except for certain Formal Magic Spells (this will be stated on the tag). The only thing that can save you now is a liFe spell delivered within five minutes. Even if a liFe spell is given to you, all your active spells, alchemical substances and other effects (except those listed above) are lost. If the five minutes pass without a liFe spell then your body dissipates, all of your in game items drop to the ground, and you must immediately become a spirit and can only be brought back by a resurrection.

KILLING BLOWS

There are many ways in our game to render an opponent completely helpless. These include Web spells, Paralyze spells, tying them up physically (thus making them immobile from the neck down), or just hitting them until they drop unconscious. Once a person has been incapacitated, it is not too difficult to kill them. This is represented by a Killing Blow.

If the character is being actively guarded by companions, however, it is another matter entirely! When you have leisure to do so, it is easy to find a chink in the armor or slip a dagger under the helmet and deliver a Killing Blow. It is considerably more difficult to do so if someone is trying to prevent you from accomplishing that very feat. Therefore, there are a few restrictions as to its use. To administer a killing blow, you must place your weapon or touch a packet in your hand somewhere on the victim's torso and remain in that position while you recite “Killing Blow One; Killing Blow Two; Killing Blow Three (damage type).”

If anyone strikes you during the count or knocks your weapon away, then the Killing Blow is interrupted and fails to kill the person. Please note that even though there is a three- count for Killing Blows, the Killing Blow only counts as one strike.

A Killing Blow must be administered to the torso of the victim; an arm, leg, or shoulder is not sufficient. Likewise, the blow cannot be struck on a moving target. If you have Waylaid someone, you must wait for the body to come to rest before you can deliver the Killing Blow. A Killing Blow can be delivered by anyone, whether they have a weapon or not. Some creatures are immune to normal weapons. To be effective, the Killing Blow must be applied with a weapon that can damage the creature. No skill in the weapon is necessary.

For example, if a creature is affected by silvered or magical weapons but not normal weapons, the Killing Blow must be applied with a silvered or magical weapon. In such a case, using a hand to perform the Killing Blow would not work.

Once a Killing blow has been given to you, you are dead and should begin your death count.

SPIRITS

When your character dies and their body dissipates (after the point at which a life spell will no longer work) you must become a spirit. You must drop all in game items, put on a white headband and head immediately and directly to your chapter's resurrection point (usually the Healers' Guild) to register your death. The spirit is completely invisible to the world around it and may not interact in any manner with other characters (no noises, no charades . . . nothing!). Spirits travel only as fast as the player walks—no running to the Healers' Guild.

It is impossible to burn or otherwise completely destroy the body before the five minute life spell requirement is used up. There can be no effects that can accelerate the destruction of the body of a PC except for the specific exceptions outlined in the Formal Magic System. We know this doesn't make complete in-game sense but this rule is to prevent every single kill from turning into a "Let's burn the body!" situation.

RESURRECTIONS

Spirits are resurrected in Extended Earth Circles created through Formal Magic. Very often a local Healers Guild safeguards such a Circle in order to perform resurrections. Upon entering the extended Earth Circle, the spirit remains unable to interact with characters, but anyone inside the Circle and Invested in the Circle will "sense" a presence and will know the identity of that presence if it is someone they know. They may then resurrect that spirit, and after five minutes the body will be restored to the spirit. The identity of the spirit does not have to be known in order to be resurrected. You must be invested in the Circle to be able to start the resurrection, but once it is begun anyone with the skill of healing arts can complete it. If no one is available with healing arts, then the spirit can resurrect on its own once the Invested member has begun the resurrection. However, in-game this is very painful emotionally to the resurrecting character.

A spirit can reject a specific healer but stay in the Circle waiting for another person to perform the resurrection. The rejected healer will be aware that the spirit is refusing to resurrect under his or her guidance but will not be able to tell which healer the spirit is "requesting" or waiting for.

The spirit is not aware of any character plans to resurrect in specific circles based on the means of death. Thus you cannot say to your friends "If I resurrect in Bristol, that means that Enemy X killed me; and if I resurrect in Wildwood, that means Enemy Y." The spirit will normally go to the closest Extended Earth Circle of Power to resurrect. No in-game knowledge is necessary for your spirit to find the "closest" Earth Circle. This includes Circles that your character has never seen in game. A spirit can choose to go to a different Circle than the closest one if the closest Circle is hostile, but the character, once resurrected, will not be aware of this decision. The Player, not the character, determines "hostility". This is a fine point at best, but it means that out-of-game knowledge is used when deciding whether to resurrect at a given circle. For example, let's suppose your character dies and a Forge poison is used. When your body dissipates, you go to the Earth Circle. When you get there, you see your character's killer hiding behind the cabin where the Earth Circle is located. You decide to resurrect elsewhere because the circle is "hostile" to you. This is allowed and is well within the rules. As a matter of fact, no

one in the game, not even a marshal, can require another player to justify why they decided that a particular circle is “hostile”. It’s an out-of-game decision made by the player, and can be made for no reason at all. The decision to resurrect elsewhere can even be made after the resurrection has started. Of course, once the resurrection is finished it’s too late.

If your character decides to go to another Circle other than the designated in-game Circle during a weekend event, you must go to the resurrection point out of-game to record the death and let them know what you are planning. You may be required to stay out-of-game for a period of time to represent the amount of time it would take for your spirit to travel to the next closest extended eaRth ciRcle and for your body to then travel back. It is impossible to tell how someone died from looking at their spirit so at this point determining the method of death is not possible. Many resurrections are performed by a character who tells a story about the events of what occurs during the five minutes and the person receiving the resurrection may choose to have their character believe that story, or any other as they prefer. Each and every story should abide by NERO rules and any problems should be reported to a Marshal. At the end of the resurrection, the player must say “I reform one, I reform two, I reform three”. There is nothing that will successfully affect a resurrecting body during this three count. The last three seconds are considered part of the time in which the spirit “cannot interact with the world around it” and hence nothing will affect the character. You cannot begin any three count, including a killing blow, upon a resurrecting body until after the resurrection count is over. A newly resurrected character has his or her maximum Body Points and will awake from resurrection without any game possessions at all but clothed. All remaining spells and elixirs that were present on the character will be gone, including gypsy curse and enslaveMent. Anyone who resurrects at a full earth circle will have their skills renewed. This does not include craftsman skills or production skills, but does reset Formal Magic casting ability and Formal Cantrips. Most of the time, a curse of transformation or an infection will disappear when a character is resurrected. Note that the

lost memories from Forget poisons are not restored by resurrection. No other game effect is active after death, except for certain Formal Magic which will be stated on the magic item tag. Each time your character dies, he or she adds another Death to their Death Total.

Every character gets two guaranteed resurrections. After that, there is a chance of dying permanently and not coming back. When you show up at the earth Circle to resurrect, a Marshal will update your Death Total and then will ask you to choose from the Bag of Chance.

In the bag will be ten stones. There will be one Death Stone for each time you have died beyond the two free resurrections. In addition, there will be a number of Life Stones put into the bag so that the total number of stones is always ten. If you choose a Life Stone, then you can successfully be resurrected. If you pick a Death Stone, then your character has permanently died. At this point, your character’s body reforms exactly where it dissipated. The body will remain there until someone finds it and takes it. However, lying out in the middle of the woods all night hoping someone finds your body is not fun for most players. Therefore it is completely acceptable to leave a note saying “You see Raymond’s body here.” Any spirit-linked items will remain there and will be spirit-linked to the next appropriate person who touches them.

FIRST EVENT DEATHS

Any first-time NERO player will not have any of the deaths taken during his first event count toward his character. This policy is done as a service to new players so that they can get used to the game before being penalized for their deaths, not as a way to abuse the system and be immortal. This is out-of-game knowledge, so deaths taken by a new player should still be role-played appropriately. Any player that is deemed to be abusing this policy for intentional gain or detriment to the game or other players will be dealt with accordingly, at the discretion of the local chapter affected. This benefit is only given during a player’s first game, and experienced players that start a new character will not be allowed these unlimited deaths.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Experience Points (XP) are used in NERO for the advancement of a player's character. Whenever you attend a regular 2 day weekend event in NERO you receive a "blanket" of Experience Points equal to your current total Build Points. Some events are shorter or longer and therefore worth different amounts of XP. It is possible to, at maximum, double this experience through several means. At the end of the event, you may pay to the game staff one silver per additional experience point you wish to gain . This is known as "Maxing Out." You may also pay less than the maximum amount for correspondingly less gain.

Ex. Dave has 40 build points, he receives a Blanket of 40xp for attending a two day event and can pay 1-40 silver for an extra 1-40xp.

Some chapters will let you max out through helping NPC, or clean-up and setup duties and some will let you max out automatically. See your local chapter for their policies on max out.

BUILD POINTS

Experience Points are automatically converted to Build Points (BP), which you then use to buy skills for your character. The amount of Experience Points needed to buy a Build Point is based on your level. Your level is determined by how many Build Points your character has. It takes 10 Build Points to gain a level. All characters start with 65 XP which equals 30 Build Points therefore all characters start at second level. These 30 Build Points are used to buy the character's initial skills.

LEVELS

Your level determines how many Body Points you get and how many Experience Points you need to get a Build Point. Table 2-4 shows the character's level based on the total Build Points. It also shows the number of XP needed for the next BP, and the Body Point value per class (fighter, rogue, scholar, and templar) for the level attained.

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NERO characters advance by purchasing skills.

Each skill you learn allows you to perform a particular task or group of tasks. Many can only be used a limited number of times per day. Some skills allow you to improve your abilities when the skill is bought multiple times. Be sure to carefully read the skill descriptions.

STANDARD RESET

In any case where a skill can be used only a certain number of times per day (such as Critical Slays or spells), the used skills will not return to you until the next day at 6 PM. This is known as a reset. On adventure days the reset happens before each module or adventure.

LIMITED RESET

Some chapters offer an additional reset of times-per-day skills at 6 AM. These are called limited resets and do not refresh craft and production skills, formal magic skills, Cantrips, or magic items. Information on whether or not your local NERO Chapter is using the Limited Reset rule will be available on their web site, at the event, and often announced at the Opening Ceremonies of the event.

THE SKILL SYSTEM

NERO is a fantasy game. By that, we mean that it is a compilation of rules and customs by which we allow people to simulate doing things that they cannot really do. The most obvious of these things is magic.

You should not be fooled into thinking that your personal skill equates to the character skill it represents. For instance, we have Weapon skills. You must have the

One Handed Edged Weapon skill before you are allowed to use a long sword. Many people have asked if they can at least pick up a sword and block blows with it, after all, anyone could make the attempt, could they not? The answer is no, in our game they cannot.

The level of ability represented by the skill bought can be considerably different from that of your average player. It represents a skill that has required hours of practice a day for months to gain. When such an individual is faced with a person totally unskilled

in Weapon use, they would strike the person down with ease. The player's skill may be somewhat less than that of the character, however, so the restrictions are used to simulate the skills.

Similarly, the proficiency system represents a level of skill that the player might never obtain. We use it as a way to artificially give a player's character, no matter what his or her real world skill, an advantage over another whose character is not as skilled. It allows a player of indifferent skill to defeat or hold their own against a player of much greater skill.

This is, after all, a fantasy. A person should be able to acquire skills that allow their character to do things that they themselves could not do in real life.

SPELL SLOTS

There are special rules for spell acquisition that are unlike most other skills in the game. When you purchase a 1st level spell from the skill list, what you are actually buying is the ability to memorize and cast one 1st level spell. This is known as a Spell Slot.

You may memorize any 1st level spell and store it in this slot. Only one 1st level spell may be stored there at any time. Once that spell has been cast, the slot will become empty and will remain that way until the next limited, or standard reset, or until it is refilled by other means. If you have several spell slots of a given level, you can fill them with any combination of spells (of the appropriate level) that you know.

You must buy spell slots in a proportional pyramid fashion. If you wish to buy a spell slot of a particular level, then you must have two spell slots of the level below.

In other words, you must have a minimum of one spell slot difference between any adjoining levels and a maximum of two spell slots difference. If you wish to buy your first 2nd level spell slot, you must have at least two 1st level spell slots already, but you may not have three. Once you have purchased four spell slots of any particular level, then you need not buy any additional spell slots of that level to complete the pyramid. Imagine now the pyramid being an obelisk with a broad support and a pointed top (like the Washington Monument).

You may buy more than four spell slots per level but there must always be at least as many spell slots below that level in order to support the new amount. Further, the pyramid must be constantly building, which means that the level above must have only one less than the amount you are buying.

In other words, to buy a fifth 2nd level spell slot, you must have a fifth 1st level spell slot and a fourth 3rd level spell slot.

Example of Pyramid Rules: Enchanto the mage has a 3rd level spell slot, two 2nd level spell slots, and three 1st level spell slots. His pyramid is fine.

He wants to learn a 4th level slot eventually. He must build the foundation of the pyramid so it can support a 4th level spell.

First, he buys another 1st level slot and then another 2nd level slot. He must next purchase another 3rd level slot.

Now his pyramid is ready for the new spell level. Imagine the pyramid as needing the proper support for the 4th level spell has been made by making sure there are two 3rd level spell slots below. (The foundation for the two 3rd level slots was made when he had three 2nd level slots, and so on down the line.) He can buy his first 4th level spell slot. If Enchanto wants to buy a 5th level slot, he can do so without having to buy any more 1st level slots because four is the maximum required. He must support the 5th level slot by buying a 2nd, 3rd, and a 4th in that order to make the pyramid.

Enchanto now has a perfect pyramid again. If he wants, he can stop buying 2nd level spells now, as four is the maximum required. His pyramid will then progress with the purchase of a 3rd level spell slot, and then a 4th, 5th, and then his first 6th level spell slot.

If Enchanto has all the slots listed in the pattern above (figure 3-4) and then decides that he wants a fifth 2nd level spell slot, he must first buy another 1st level slot and a fourth 3rd level spell slot to support the 2nd level spell slot. After he buys the 1st and 3rd level spell slots, he can get the 2nd level spell slot he wanted.

The pyramid must continue to be built and it must be built from the ground up! Note that the pattern is very set as to which spell slots have to be next purchased unless you wish to buy more than four spell slots of any one level.

There is potentially no limit to the number of spells per level as long as this progression is maintained. If Enchanto wanted to keep

“bottoming out” his pyramid, he could end up with a pyramid that has nine 1st level spells, eight 2nd level spells, seven 3rd level spells, and so on up to one 9th level spell. Skill Costs O Below and on the following pages are the charts listing the Build Point costs of skills. Each skill has four cost columns associated with it: F (fighter), R (rogue), S (scholar) and T (templar). Note that all classes may buy any skill; they just might have to pay more Build Points. When buying skills, you should be aware of the prerequisites as well. For instance, to buy Weapon proficiency, you must first have a Weapon skill to be proficient in and four critical attack skills. To learn how to cast celestial spells, you must first know how to read and Write and read Magic. A good way to design your character is to imagine him or her at a higher level and work backwards. Figure out which skills you would like to have and how many Build Points you will have to spend for the skills. Try it with different classes to see which costs the least.

SKILL COSTS

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A good way to design your character is to imagine him or her at a higher level and work backwards. Figure out which skills you would like to have and how many Build Points you will have to spend for the skills. Try it with different classes to see which costs the least.

PRODUCTION SKILLS

To create game items such as Weapons, Armor, Potions, Scrolls, Traps, Alchemical Elixirs, Contact Poisons, and Gas Globes, you must first buy the appropriate skill with your Build Points.

The charts in *Adventuring Gear* on page 105 show what can be made with specific skills. To actually make an item on these lists, you will have to determine the item you wish to make and then make sure that you have the Production Levels.

Every item or special item property has an associated Production Level that is required to create it. Each Game Day, a character has one Production Level for each purchase of the associated Production Skill. This is referred to as the character's Base Production Level. There are three ways to augment your production output; Trade Mastery, Materials, and Workshops, they do not change the Base Production Level.

TRADE MASTERY

A character with ten or more levels of a single Production Skill is considered a Master of her trade, and generates one “Master” Production Level per level of overall skill.

WORKSHOPS

A workshop generates one “Workshop” Production Level per level of overall skill.

MATERIALS

A character may also buy more refined materials at Logistics in order to increase their output at the rate of one silver per Production Level, to a maximum of their Base Production Level. Local chapters may issue Production Components to represent these refined materials as in-game treasure or for sale by merchants in addition to or instead of using silver. One Production Component is equal to one silver for the purposes of increasing production output, but the combined increased output of silver and Production Components cannot exceed the Base Production Level. Example: “Talon has 20 levels of create scroll so his base production level for one day is 20. Since Talon has over 10 levels of create scroll he is a mastercraftsman and gets 1 for 20 bonus production levels. Talon spends 10 silver

and turns in 10 production components at check-in for another 20 bonus production levels. Finally Talon uses a scroll workshop which allows him to create 20 bonus production levels of scrolls. Talon then uses his 80 production levels to create scrolls, this is the maximum amount of production output Talon can get with his base production level. All production items have an expiration date. These items last 24 months after being created. The expiration date of a particular production item is known by anyone who looks at the item reads the associated item tag that goes with it. When an item expires, it is said to have broken, rusted, or otherwise lost potency. This damage can be repaired by using production skills to issue a new tag for the item. This explains how you can still own your father's sword even though it rusts and expires every two years.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

If a production skill has Special Abilities, only Base Production Levels can be used for them. If a Base Production Level is used for a Special Ability then it cannot be used to make a game item, but the use of workshops, silver, production components, or Master Levels is undiminished.

It is possible to become more productive in making Production items if you have access to a workshop that specializes in making them. A character with a workshop can make additional Levels of items to a maximum of their Base Production Level.

There are specialized workshops for making

- (a) alchemical elixirs, gases, and contact poisons,
- (b) making weapons and armor,
- (c) creating potions,
- (d) creating scrolls, and
- (e) making and arming traps.

Access to these workshops is found through in game means, often by way of a local guild or noble connection. Workshops are chapter specific.

GOBLIN PRODUCTION

Goblin stamps can be used to purchase production items. They can not be used to add special abilities to items. The scale and rules governing their use are available on the NERO National Website.

These rules have been known to change, so make sure you check the NERO National Website periodically

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SPELL AURA

There are two types of physical representations for spell aura; the manufactured spell orb and the traditional spell packets. Check with your local chapter so see which aura types you can use as some venues restrict one type or the other.

The spell orb is a manufactured product made of soft foam and can be no bigger than the size of a tennis ball. Soft foam balls can be purchased at most sporting good stores and toy stores. Foam balls are made by companies such as Wilson (called the Foam Flight Practice Ball) and Nerf makes a soft foam tennis ball.

Spell packets are constructed with bird seed and fabric. The bird seed should be the small variety, with no sunflower seeds or other heavy or sharp items that could hurt.

Do not use replacements! Rice can get wet and turn into a hardened ball. Rubber balls or tightly packed rubber bands will be too hard. If you are caught using something other than bird seed, you will have your packets and spell tags, if tags are used, confiscated and will lose your spells for the rest of the day.

To make a spell packet, the birdseed is placed in the center of the fabric, and the fabric is gathered around it and a small rubber band is used to bind the fabric or it can be sewn shut. Packets should be loosely packed, tight balls of birdseed can hurt!

The packet may be of any color except orange or yellow. Orange packets are used to represent alchemical gas globes, and yellow packets are used for arrows.

A good size for your fabric is 6" by 6", and a good amount of birdseed is 3/4 tbsps. You can use different amounts but, you should never use so much material that the resulting packet cannot fit into a 35mm film canister. Packets that are larger than that will be confiscated by a marshal. You may want to personalize your spell packets in some way by using a distinctive cloth or writing on the packets. This is a good way to make sure you can get your packets back after a battle without arguing with other spell casters about whose packets are whose.

Spell packets are visible as an opaque colored aura of energy only when held in the hand. In game they are visible but they do not produce any light. They are not in-game items and cannot be stolen, fumbled or removed.

You should not carry in your hand more spell packets than you can actually cast (although you can have plenty of extras in your pouches or pockets). If you only have 3 spells, you cannot have 42 spell packets between your fingers. You may also carry packets to represent scrolls or magic items that require a thrown packet to be thrown but those items must be readily available and not stashed away in a backpack.

CASTING SPELLS

To cast a spell, the caster must have a spell packet in hand. The hand and arm with the spell packet in it must be "free" (Hands that are holding something else, or are tied or bound either physically or with a binding spell are not "free"). The caster must then correctly recite the verbal for the spell in a voice loud enough to be heard by a person standing next to you even if there is no one standing next to you. Within three seconds after finishing the verbal, the caster must then throw the packet at the target. The short phrase or "incantation" of the spell is spoken in plain English so the victim will know what spell has been cast. In game, these words are understood by anyone, but have a "magical effect" associated with them that makes them different from normal speech. Even though you can speak the language, you cannot "fake" a spell incantation or otherwise bluff the casting of a spell. You also cannot bluff the start of a spell incantation. If you start the incantation, the spell is used. Spellcasters expend the power to cast a spell as soon as the incantation has begun. You cannot start the incantation for a spell, change your mind, and then still have that spell. You must wait until the next reset to restudy and to cast the spell again.

TOUCH-CASTING

Touch-casting is performed by holding a packet and placing it against the target you wish to affect. The obvious advantage to this is that there is no chance of missing and wasting the effect. In such a case, the effect recipient may choose to "accept" the effect, thus letting it past their Spell Defenses such as Shield Magic or Elemental Shield. The recipient must be conscious to "accept" an effect without triggering the Spell Defences. You may never "accept" a thrown effect. The decision to accept an effect through touch-casting is made immediately after the effect is cast. This is to prevent a caster from tricking an unsuspecting victim.

The recipient of a touch-cast effect can always refuse the effect by saying "refused." This will use up the effect, but have no effect whatsoever on the recipient. Whenever attempting to touch-cast, you must abide by all NERO safe conduct rules.

MEDITATION

Any character may Meditate to regain use of "times per day" or "expendable" skills that were blocked by the Return type monster ability. To Meditate, the player must role-play deep concentration for 60 seconds, during which time they may perform no other actions including speaking, moving, or the use of any in-game skills, items or abilities. At the end of the meditation the character regains any skills or abilities lost to the effect Return (type). Only character skills and abilities may be regained by Meditating. (not Magic Items, Scrolls, Alchemy, etc.) A spell-casting character may also Meditate to regain spells that missed a legal target. At the end of the meditation, the character regains the use of any thrown spells that failed to hit a valid target, as well as all spells, skills and abilities lost to the Return (type) effect. Spell casters should not use the Meditate ability to intentionally miss their targets in an attempt to cause confusion for the NPCs. "Decoy" spells that are intentionally thrown away from the target should not be regained by Meditate. In effect, you can only get your spells back from Meditate if you were actually attempting to hit your target and missed. Spells negated by defenses (ex. Dodge, Phase, and Resist) cannot be meditated back.

SCHOOLS OF MAGIC

Whenever your character begins learning magic, either celestial or earth, you must select which of the two is your primary school of magic. The other will be the secondary, costing more build to buy. There is nothing preventing you from learning both earth and celestial magic but a separate spell pyramid must be built for each school.

STACKED EFFECTS

Identical spells may not be stacked. No person may have a second copy of the same spell actively affecting him or her unless the spell description states otherwise. If

you are hit with a second effect that isn't stackable, the call is "got it". Calling "No effect" in this situation is incorrect. This definition is extended to include all identically named NERO game effects, not just spells. Identical effects are not stackable, unless noted in the effect's description.

The following spell types have special rules regarding spell stacking.

BLADE EFFECTS

These effects change the damage call of a weapon. You may have no more than three blade effects active on you at any time. The following spells are blade effects Endow, Delayed Endow, Elemental Blade, Enchanted Blade, and Silver Aura. While blade effects can affect the same target, they only work one at a time.

CHARM EFFECTS

You can only be affected by one charm effect at a time. If a creature is under a Charm effect and is hit with another, the most recent one will replace the previously administered effect as long as the new effect is of equal or higher value to the previous effect. See Table 5-6 on page 64.

Ex. Durk the adventurer is Charmed by a Siren his friend Sloan casts a charm spell at him, since Charm is of equal value to the Charm on Durk, the Siren's charm effect is negated and Durk is now only charmed to Sloan.

However, if the second effect is of lower value on the chart (1 being the lowest) the first charm effect remains.

Ex. Durk the Adventurer is Charmed by a Siren, the Siren's minion casts Shun on Durk. Since Shun is a lower value than Charm, Durk calls "Got it" and take no effect to the Shun. Durk would remain Charmed to the Siren.

TARGET SPECIFIC

Some effects like Wither Limb or Shatter have a sub-target as part of the call. This is required for spells and optional for other delivery methods such as carrier attacks or potions. If the sub-target is not specified then it is the target's choice as to which sub-target that is un-withered(Wither Limb) or unrendered (Shatter, Destroy) will be affected. If no target matching the description exists, the call is "Got it". Calling "No effect" in this situation is incorrect.

SPELL DEFENSES

Spell defenses carry over from adventure to adventure. A fighter who still has a Shield spell on him at the end of a NERO adventure weekend will still have that spell at the beginning of the next weekend or module. This rule applies only to spells that are "indefinite" in duration. There can be no Wards when the game starts.

In-game, Spell Defenses are visible when they go off. It is obvious to anyone looking at you that you were protected from an attacking spell and what defense was used to negate it. You must state what the defense is at the time by saying "Reflect Magic" or "Shield Magic" for example, thus informing all observers that the spell was unsuccessful. Saying "flash" or "no effect" is not allowed. If you do not call a spell defense within three seconds of being hit, you take the effect and the defense is lost.

A spellcaster is not immune to his or her own spells, nor can they automatically dispel or deactivate their own spells, unless specifically noted in a spell's description. Spells such as Bless and Shield which merely add hit points do not have to be so announced.

VISIBLE EFFECTS

Berserk, Bind, Confine, Disease, Feeblemind, Hallucinoid, Imprison, Nausea, Paralyze, Pin, Silence, Sleep, Taint Blood, Vertigo, and Web, are all visible to any viewer while they are in effect, so long as they take the time to observe them (they must ask the affected player). The spells Ward and Circle of Power are also visible, provided that the physical representation (rope, building or otherwise) can be seen and the viewer takes the time to observe them. You cannot call a Hold to determine whether any visible effects are present. The amount of time it takes to ask if your character sees the effect is the amount of time it took your character to notice the effect, and you should only ask for visible effects from a short distance away at a conversational volume.

ELDRITCH POWER

Many of the spells call upon an energy called eldritch power. This is a type of energy that only affects beings that are alive or animated. If you cast a Flame Bolt spell

at someone and miss and hit a tree, the tree will not catch on fire. Nor can you use an Ice Bolt spell to keep your ice cream cold. These spells can only affect creatures that are alive or animated.

REVERSIBLE SPELLS

Many earth magic spells are reversible (for example, Cure Disease and Cause Disease). These spells do not have to be learned or "memorized" separately. In fact, there is no way to separate the two spells. If you know the spell Cure Wounds, you automatically also know Cause Wounds. You cannot "forget" how to cast necromantic spells or otherwise claim to only know one side of a reversible spell. You can decide at the moment of casting which spell effect you will use (With proper incantation, of course). The reverse of many healing spells are necromantic, identifiable by the word "Chaos" in their incant. Beware however, that in many in game places laws exist against necromantic spells such as Create Undead, so you'd better be ready to face the in-game consequences.

SPELL DISRUPTION

If a person takes body damage while casting a spell, the spell is disrupted. It does not work and is lost from memory. A spell can be disrupted by anything that deals body damage, including weapons, traps, or other spells. This is known as Disruption or Spell Disruption and is sometimes applicable to other types of attacks as noted in their descriptions.

NECROMANCY

Is necromancy evil? Not every person on Tyrra thinks so, in fact, it is accepted and even promoted by some races and cultures. However, necromancy is illegal in most parts of the world because many people believe it draws upon the decaying and dying aspects of the earth and thus prevents the earth from acting "naturally." The most accepted in-game explanation is this: Imagine the planet going through its seasons normally from year to year. Healing spells "go with the flow" of this cycle and do not disrupt the orderly process of living and dying that are part of this orderly system. Necromancy "goes against the flow" of this cycle by tapping into the chaotic forces that are not part of this system. Creating undead, for example, requires that a spirit behave in ways that are contrary to the orderly flow of the cycle. This in-game "theory" has been used in the past to explain large numbers of undead randomly appearing ("The chaos in this area is so strong that the cycle is being completely disrupted!") as well as aberrant weather ("This cold wave this time of year can only be explained by too much necromancy being cast in the area!"). Of course, there are many scholars who believe that this theory is a load of goblin dung and that bad weather and undead rising are all part of the normal cycle. It is up to you to decide as your character how you feel about the issue. Assume for game purposes that there are many learned treatises on both sides and that people have been arguing the point for many hundreds of years.

ELEMENTAL PLANES

There are twelve main elemental planes which exist across powerful dimensional boundaries. The world of Tyrra is made up of the combination of these elements and their intersections. Please see the Tyrran Cosmology document at NeroLarp.com for more information, but it is important to note here that each of the twelve elemental planes has an associated damage type: a power it uses to harm opponents. These planes and their associated damage types are as follows:

Planes Life, Death, Order, Chaos, Dream, Reason, Light, Darkness, Earth, Air, Fire, and Water.

Damage Types, in order Essence, Destruction, Order, Chaos, Dream, Reason, Light, Darkness, Stone, Lightning, Fire, and Ice.

ILLEGAL SKILLS AND POWERS

No character can ever use a plot given power to gain information about a PC's actions after the fact. This includes approved spells and skills such as Dreamvision as well as other abilities such as clairvoyance, clairsaudience, tracking or scrying of any manner.

If a character wants to know what was said or done by a PC first hand, he must actually be present at the time of the action. Plot will never provide this information via one of the listed abilities, or through any similar means, and a PC can never claim to have known it due to ESP or other special abilities after the fact.

Every Spell listed here is available at every NERO Chapter.

The information after the spell's in game name includes the spell's level, whether it is Celestial or Earth, whether it can be made into a Potion or Scroll, whether it can be Manifolded, and its duration.

SPELL DEFENSES

There are a few spells and effects that will defend the recipient from incoming spells or attacks. Each can protect against one spell or effect only. They are cast upon the recipient in advance and stay with the recipient until "activated" by the effect they are meant to prevent. The Spell Defenses are Displacement, Elemental Shield, Guardian of the Four, Magic Armor, Poison Shield, Reflect Magic, and Shield Magic.

In-game, you are always aware of what Spell Defenses are active on you. Once a Spell Defense is active, then it will affect the next applicable incoming effect, regardless of whether or not you would have been affected. It will then be used up.

All Spell Defenses must be called correctly, for example "Reflect Magic" or "Phase", to be effective and must be called within three seconds or are lost or not used respectively.

SPELL DURATIONS

CONCENTRATION

This spell lasts as long as the caster maintains concentration. While concentrating, the caster cannot run or use any game skills.

CONTINUOUS

Continuous is a specific form of concentration which requires the caster to continually chant a litany, recite a verse, or sing a song with the limits listed under manifold page 39 except you do not need the Manifold skill or a Hearth. At the end of each repetition the caster may state the incant for the spell and deliver the effect as specified in the description of the spell. As long as the caster continues to repeat the verse they may continue to recast the spell using only one spell slot. Each spell with this duration may impose other limits upon the caster to continue the spell. The caster may not speak outside the words of the verse or incant and may not use other skills while continuing a spell and may not pause longer than 5 seconds. The limitations of Concentration also apply. If a continuous spell is used once the caster may simply state the incant.

TIMED

Some spells last for a specific amount of time, either 5 seconds, 1, 5, or 10 minutes, 1 hour, or 5 days.

INSTANT

The duration of this spell is instantaneous, but its effects may be permanent. (Thus, any damage taken from these spells is permanent until cured.)

INDEFINITE

The effects of this spell are permanent unless the victim receives the proper counter spell or the spell's effect is used up (or the victim dies). The counter spell will be listed in the spell description.

LINE OF SIGHT

This spell lasts as long as the caster could see the victim from wherever the caster is located. It also lasts if the victim could see the caster.

Basically, if you can draw a straight line between the caster and the victim without the line being obscured by any large, immovable obstacles, then the Line of Sight is still in effect. The caster closing their eyes or hiding behind someone else does not break Line of Sight.

If the caster breaks Line of Sight by imposing a very large object such as a building or large tree between the caster and the victim for longer than 10 seconds, the spell is broken. If view of the character is resumed before the 10 seconds is up, then the spell continues. These spells will cease immediately if the caster falls unconscious line of sight lasts for a maximum of 5 days.

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COMMON FORMAL MAGIC

SPELLS

Formal Magic Scrolls are magical scrolls of immense power in and of themselves and will always detect as magical. They are treated as Magic Items for purposes of stealing. A Formal Magic scroll can only be read or copied by one who has the skill Formal Magic in the appropriate school. To everyone else, the scroll will be unreadable.

Here is a description of some of the most common types of Formal Magic effects on Magic Items. This is not a complete list, but merely the ones which most players will encounter. Please see the Formal Magic Casting Rules and individual Formal Magic Spell descriptions for more details.

BANE

A magical defense that reflects the attack back upon the attacker. It works at will (even before a spell defense if desired), and protects against only one type of effect. For example, a Bane versus Sleep could be used against a Sleep spell or a Sleep gas poison.

CLOAK

A magical defense that works at will (even before a spell defense if desired) and protects against only one type of effect such as Fire or Binding Magic. For example, a Cloak versus Fire could be used against both a Flame Bolt spell or an Elemental flame packet attack.

OBLITERATION

A very powerful Formal Magic that causes the victim to suffer the same effect as dying and resurrecting three times, although only one trip to the Earth circle is necessary. However, only one "pick" is made from death's bag. After the Formal Magic is complete, the victim is still able to receive a Life spell for the next five minutes, and only one such spell is necessary to restore the creature to one body point. If a Life spell is received, the creature is not forced to resurrect at all.

SPIRIT LINK

Spirit Link magically attaches an item to a spirit, thus making it unstealable. The item must always remain in contact with the creature to which it is linked. (It does not have to touch the body directly; a glove or other piece of clothing can come between the item and the person.) When a creature with a Spirit Linked item dies, the Spirit Linked item becomes insubstantial with the spirit and travels to resurrect, reforming with the spirit. If the item is a container, it does not bring the contents with it. If the creature permanently dies, the body and item return to the point where the body dissipated. The item is then linked to the next creature with a spirit that takes picks it up, even through gloves or other articles of clothing or armor.

SPIRIT MARK

Used to mark a particular person's spirit. The mark is always present on the spirit's body, in the location and with a design as decided by the original Formal Magic caster. This mark can be covered by normal means.

VENGEANCE

Causes a retributive strike of pure magical damage to any being inflicting a killing blow upon the bearer of this formal magic. This damage occurs after the killing blow and is not avoidable in any manner. When a Vengeance is triggered, the call will be "(number) Arcane Vengeance"

FORMAL MAGIC COMPONENTS

In order to cast a spell from a Formal Magic scroll, one must also have the Formal Magic Components. These components are represented in-game by a tag with a description of the item and its level and type. Some chapters also provide the actual prop itself. If your chapter does not, it can only increase your role-playing fun if you were to provide your own props.

Formal Magic Components may be found as treasure in a module, on an NPC, or randomly in the woods.

Any character can tell if they are looking at a formal component automatically. To identify the level and type of components (i.e. P4 or C1) you must possess one level of the formal magic skill of either school.

Components come in various "flavors": Power (P), Creation (C), Elemental (E), Time (T), Void (V), Destruction (D), Spirit (S).

Each component has a value of 1, 2 or 4. Formal Magic costs are listed with the total value of each type of needed component. For example, P5 means any combination of Power components totaling a value of 5. One spell, Greater Extension, specifically requires a Power component of value 2 or 4 in addition to other components. Components expire no longer than 2 years after the issue date. If there is no printed expiration date then the expiration date is assumed to be one year.

EXTENDED CIRCLES OF POWER

In order to use the powers of an Extended Circle, you must be Invested in that Circle. Investiture is a Formal Magic Spell that must be cast upon you in that Circle.

In order to pass into or out of the Circle, you must be "recognized" by an invested member of the Circle. The invested member must clearly gesture, touch, or name the subject creature and must state "the Circle recognizes you." This is an out-of-game statement, so it can be made while Silenced. The effect is understood in-game by all who hear it.

Upon being recognized, a person must immediately enter or exit the Circle. If the recognized person does not immediately act upon the recognition, then the recognition will expire.

Invested members may walk freely into or out of the Circle, since it is assumed that they "recognize" themselves. Invested members who are unconscious (or conscious, yet unwilling) will not pass through the Circle unless recognized by someone else. When using combat skills or spells, you must be completely inside or outside of the Circle of Power. For example, you cannot begin a spell incant inside the Circle, and then step out to throw your packet.

If you want to raid a Circle of Power, the same rules as raiding a cabin will apply; you must have a marshal present. See "Searching a Cabin" on page 95

IDENTIFY

An Extended Celestial Circle is capable of performing an Identify on an item or person. The item or person to be Identified and the invested person performing the Identify must be within the circle completely. The invested person touches the target of the identify and says "Identify".

If the target is an object directly then the invested person reads the tag describing the item's properties and learns them in the time it takes to read the information.

If the target is a person then the target tells the invested person which active spells or Formal Magic spells are active on them as well as what magical items they have in their possession and what the properties of those items are and how to activate them as though the items had been directly identified by the invested person. Sometimes an Identify will reveal additional properties of magical creatures. It takes as long to perform an identification of a person as it does for the target to describe all of the results.

Everyone who hears or observes the Identify call/process is aware of an identification taking place though they should attempt not to overhear the results. If you are Out of Game able to tell who the person performing the identification is, then you know who it is in game as well. If a transform is active and Identified, the school of it and the name of it are revealed, but neither the presence nor any information about a dormant transformation is revealed. You can prevent an Identification unless you're helpless.

The time to Identify is In Game. If you're interrupted then you are interrupted (including if contact is broken by the subject).

While there is no set order to presenting the information and you decide where to start, you must give out all the information you have with the chance of 3rd party interruption

RESURRECTION

An Extended Earth Circle is capable of providing Resurrections.

The spirit to be Resurrected must be in the Circle. This will take 5 minutes to complete and will bring a body to full body points.

During the 5 minutes, it is apparent to all observers that a resurrection is occurring, although the exact identity is unrecognizable to all except the invested healer performing the resurrection. The

healer may choose to reveal the identity of the person they are resurrecting, if desired. For more on resurrections, see "Matters of Life and Death" on page 22.

MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items can be found or made through the NERO Formal Magic System. Most give the wearer the ability to utilize a spell and some items grant the wearer effects from the Formal Magic system.

Until you have an item Identified, you will not have the tag for the item and thus will not be able to use it, even if you are already aware of the item's power. You must proceed to the Mages' Guild or monster camp to receive the tag. If you are given the item and are told in-game what the item's powers are and how it is used, you may use the item but must go to the Mages Guild or monster camp immediately thereafter to get the tag. Make sure that any player that gives you a Magic Item phys-rep also gives you the Magic Item Tag.

ACTIVATING MAGIC ITEMS

Spells from a magic item act just like a regular spell. They provide the character, no matter what class or level, the ability to use that spell. The correct process to activate an item is to use the phrase "Activate" followed by the spell incant. For Example: "Activate With Mystic Force I Bind You".

In addition, all the normal rules for casting apply. You must have your hand free, have a packet, be conscious, etc. So you cannot activate an item when in a Web, unconscious, dead, or when tied up. Activating an item IS NOT a Game Ability, so you CAN use an item when you cannot otherwise use a Game Ability or Skill, such as when under the effects of a Taint Blood spell.

MAGIC ITEM SLOTS

Chapters may specify how many magic items a player may have active at any given time. This number is between one and five and is clearly posted at event check-in or on the chapter's website.

If a character has more items on them than the allowed limit they must have a clearly delineated method to separate the active and inactive magic items tags. In order to switch between an active and inactive item at least one minute must be spent while you physically switch your tags between active and inactive. You may only make one switch at a time. If you lose possession of a magic item tag that item becomes inactive for you. During this time you may use no game skills. Characters must be conscious with at least one hand free to switch items between active and inactive states.

The following Formal Magic Spells will not cease to work on a magic item when it goes from active to inactive: Render Indestructible, Extend Formal Magic, Greater Extension, Spirit Link, Spirit Lock, and Delimit.

Any item can still be used while inactive, but only with the benefit of the effects listed above.

This limitation on active magic items applies to both Unrestricted and Local Chapter Only Items only as a total (ex: 2 LCO and 3 Unrestricted "active" items in a 5 item slot campaign.)

SPIRIT AS MAGIC ITEM

For only the purposes of Magic Item Slots, a character's Spirit counts as a single magic item that can be made active as a whole.

Only the following formal magic spells count for the purposes of this "item:" Enchant, Cloak (Minor), Bane (Minor), Spell Store, Protection Aura, Cloak, Bane, Expanded Enchantment, Spirit Link, Spirit Lock. All other Spirit targeting formal magic spells fall outside of the Magic Item Slot rules. Please note that Spirit Link and Spirit Lock do not cease to work on an item that has been made inactive.

A PC is always aware of all formal magic spells on their spirit, including, school, specific type, and duration as applicable.

COMBAT

Safety is NERO's main concern. These rules are designed to give players the feel of medieval combat without the pain and suffering of the real thing.

THE HOLD RULE

This is the single most important rule in this entire book. Read it and take it to heart.

Anyone can call a hold in a fight if they see an unsafe situation happening or about to happen. "Hold!" should be yelled so that everyone in battle can hear it, otherwise, it may be followed by another flurry of swings. When a Hold is called,

1. Stay exactly where you are
2. Drop to one knee (unless you can't due to a medical reason)
3. Do Not Move.

Do not look around you or talk to people about anything not connected with the Hold. You can use this time to update your tags and remove any spells that you have cast. You can also pick up spell packets from the ground or from your pouch as long as you return to your original spot before the game is resumed.

This is not a time to study someone and see if they are an NPC or a PC, nor is it a chance to look behind you and see if anyone is sneaking up on you. Please play fair and try not to gather information while the Hold is being sorted out. When the reason the Hold was called is resolved, then the person calling the hold should call a Lay-on. First, insure that everyone is ready to resume play, then call "3. . . 2. . . 1. . . Lay-on!"

Hold can also be called for excessive zeal on the part of an opponent. The infraction should be reported to a marshal. Repeated complaints will get a player removed from combat.

A Hold can also be called if anyone's eyeglasses are knocked off.

You cannot call a Hold to collect spell packets even though they are out of-game. You may pick up packets during a Hold that has been called for another reason.

Collecting tags or treasure is not a legitimate reason for calling a Hold. Tag bookkeeping should be done after the battle is over, not during it.

Anyone who ignores a Hold called for any reason will face severe disciplinary action and possible expulsion. This is usually used for emergencies and not to be treated lightly. Stop what you are doing immediately and find out why a Hold was called, then do what you can to help. You must return to your original spot before the Lay-on is called. If you see a crowd of people kneeling down, then they are probably in a Hold. Do not approach the group until the Hold is over.

If you are in the middle of a battle and everyone starts dropping to one knee, then a Hold has probably been called and you did not hear it.

COUNTED ACTIONS

Some actions cannot actually be performed for reasons of safety or reality, but must be considered as taking some time to complete. Such actions will have a specific count, usually three, and a definite phrase to indicate what is happening.

For example, to simulate a zombie rising from the ground, the NPC playing the zombie could say "I climb out of the ground one, I climb out of the ground two, I climb out of the ground three. During the time in which the player is saying this, he or she is completely vulnerable to attack and cannot use any game abilities except Dodge.

Phase, Return and Resist. These abilities cause the counted action to be interrupted. The skill is used up, and the count is aborted and must be started again.

A counted action such as breaking a binding effect (using "Rip From ...", performing a Killing Blow, or going Gaseous requires the same number of seconds as the number of the count, or the duration of the count, whichever is the longest. This means that a Killing Blow requires at least 3 seconds to perform, no matter how fast the player says "Killing Blow 1, Killing Blow 2, Killing Blow 3"

In the case of simultaneous, identical length counts, who ever started the count first "wins" it does not matter how fast you say it. Spell defenses such as Shield Magic do not interrupt a counted action.

For example, Cerik the vampire is turning gaseous. During the three count, he is hit with a Cure Light Wounds spell. He takes the damage from the spell but it is not enough to destroy him, so he can continue his three count. Example two: Cerik gets hit with a Destroy Undead spell. This would destroy him, so he uses his Phase skill. The use of that skill has interrupted his three count, so the Gaseous Form skill has been used up, and unless he has that skill twice, he cannot attempt it again.

Before performing a counted action, NPCs will often take their places while wearing a white headband. Players who see this can have their characters experience an "erie feeling" that something is amiss. This is not an excuse to metagame as to exactly what will happen, but role-playing caution is acceptable.

This is not a way to invent your own abilities. All such actions are defined by NERO. Counted Actions are not appropriate for actions you can actually perform safely and within the rules.

BODY CONTACT

The only contact allowed during battle is by weapon. Any other type of fighting contact such as grabbing someone, hitting, or kicking is strictly forbidden. Violation of this rule is the shortest path to disciplinary action.

PINNING AND TRAPPING

WEAPONS

Although "pinning" weapons is a mainstay of many swashbuckling movies, many of the moves used to free yourself from a weapon pinning are dangerous and as such not allowed in NERO combat. As a result, the following restrictions have been placed on "Pinning" or "Trapping" weapons:

TRAPPING

Any weapon shaped in such a way as to trap weapons (whether accidentally, or by design) is expressly forbidden.

"trapping" occurs when one weapon is used to hold another weapon so that it becomes useless. A weapon with multiple tines for instance can be used to grab and twist the opponent's blade, thus "trapping" it.

Any weapon that is reported as trapping weapons will not be allowed in game. A marshal has the right to reject any weapon for this reason.

PINNING

"Pinning" occurs when one weapon is used to apply force on an opponent's weapon, capturing the weapon by holding it against a wall or a tree or other stationery object.

Pinning of weapons can only be done with another weapon, and only outdoors. Indoors, the limitations of the situation lead to an unnecessary chance of injury. If your weapon is pinned, you may pull the weapon straight back to free it. If the weapon is shaped in such a way that it is not possible to pull it out, then you're stuck - the weapon is pinned and there's nothing you can do about it. You can back up to try to free yourself and your weapon, but shoving your opponent or charging are not allowed.

CHARGING

During NERO combat you must never come into physical contact with your opponent. It is the responsibility of all parties involved in combat to ensure that there is always a safe distance between

combatants. If you are crowding your opponent so much that he or she must step back to avoid body contact with you, you are Charging. No combatant should be able to touch the torso of an opponent in combat. If you can reach out and touch the torso of an opponent, then you are too close. Any combatant who has moved too close must increase the distance to be greater than his or her arm length, though at no time may someone shove away an opponent or otherwise initiate physical contact. In the case of extreme differences in arm length, the combatant with the shorter arm length is allowed to approach close enough to strike their opponent so long as they cannot touch the opponent's torso with their own hand.

LEGAL TARGETS

Legal targets include the entire body except the head, neck, throat, hands from the wrist out, and the groin. A player observed to be hitting restricted areas repeatedly is subject to disciplinary action.

You may not intentionally block a hit with an illegal target.

Blocked and deflected shots do not count. This is admittedly a judgment call. If the block was good, then the weapon just grazed an arm or leg and the shot does not count. If the block was weak and the swing hit with about half or more normal force then the hit should count.

UNSKILLED WEAPON USE

If you do not have the skill to use a weapon you are carrying, or if you are presently unable to use a weapon in which you are skilled, such as wielding a two handed weapon with one hand you must either immediately drop the weapon or take any damage that hits your weapon as if you had been hit.

Swinging your weapon

The NERO combat system is an honor system. Each player trusts that the person whom he is hitting is correctly counting his or her hits. "But I'm an evil thief." You still have to count your hits. The NERO combat system relies on all players being honest in real life even if their character is a nefarious liar. Remember, even the NPCs are there to have fun, albeit by dying in a good clean fight.

NERO is a fantasy game with a fantasy combat style. The normal rules of armed combat don't apply as they are geared toward doing all

the things we strive to prevent, i.e. injure your opponent. So because of this some compromises must be made in realism.

BASEBALL SWING

One thing you must remember: you are only trying to make contact, not hit a home run. Do not reach back, wind up, and take a huge swing at your opponent. It is usually not necessary to hit hard at all. When fighting an unarmored and unarmed opponent, an easy tap will do. You only need to apply enough pressure to make sure your opponent is aware of the attack.

For example, hitting an armored opponent from behind by surprise might require more vigor than a standard tap. And if it seems that your opponent is not taking his or

her hits, it might be because the hits are not being felt under all that armor. You should mention to your opponent when you think you got a hit in, and all players should call hits whenever possible.

MACHINE GUNNING

If you are swinging so fast that you cannot announce the damage fast enough to keep up with the swings, then you are "Drum Rolling" or "Machine Gunning" and your opponent should count all of that as one or maybe two hits.

A good rule of thumb is to have your swing progress between 45 and 90 degrees. Most importantly swings must be controlled and must not hit too hard.

SHIELDS

Shields cannot be used as offensive weapons. Shields are strictly for defense.

Shields do not protect the owner from any kind of trap other than a weapon trap, which uses a weapon blade or missile weapon to deliver its damage.

SHIELD BASHING

Shield Bashing is the intentional use of a shield to gain physical out-of-game advantage over an opponent. Shield Bashing is a serious violation of NERO safety rules. It is similar to Charging. The

potential for injury is great. Excessive use of Shield Bashing will result in warnings and possible loss of the Shield skill.

Shields cannot be used with two handed weapons. You may not wield a weapon with the hand or arm holding the shield. Also your shield arm may not have any other items or weapons attached to it. Tucking a dagger behind your shield arm would negate your ability to use the shield.

SPELL GROUNDING

Any item you throw, toss, or let go of is still considered to be in your possession until it lands and comes to a complete rest. Any attack that hit such an item before it lands and comes to rest will affect its possessor.

If the attack targets the thrown/dropped item directly, such as Shatter or Destroy, the item is still affected.

BUCKLERS

A "Buckler" shield (a small shield that is strapped onto the arm) must still follow all shield rules. In other words, you cannot have a buckler on your left arm and still hold anything in your left hand.

TURTILING

"Turtling" or hiding behind an impenetrable shield (with little more than your head showing) is not allowed! Anyone using a shield in such a manner could be subject to warnings from the marshals and if necessary, loss of the shield skill. Shields in our game are not all that realistic, and as such you are artificially limited in what you can do with them.

In real life you could overbear someone who was hiding behind a shield, but such contact is not allowed in our game. If you are short and using a maximum sized shield that prevents any legal targets from showing then you are Turtling.

DELIVERY METHODS

There are a few different ways for damage or effects to be dealt in the game. The following are methods in the game to use effects or deal/cure damage: Packet, Weapon, Ingested, Contact, Touch, Area of Effect, and Vengeance.

CONTACT

Contacts are effects delivered instantly through touch. With contact effects you can call defenses.

INGESTED

These effects must be ingested to gain the effect. Ingested effects bypass protectives like Shield Magic and Poison Shield.

PACKET

All packet-delivered attacks are effective on contact with the target or any of the target's immediate possessions, such as a shield or cloak. Arrows are not considered packet attacks.

Packet attacks include spells, gas globes, and certain monster abilities. Note that unlike the weapon rules, a packet attack will count if it hits "Non-legal targets" such as the head or groin but that's not to say you should aim at these illegal targets.

TOUCH

An effect delivered through touch does not effect any defenses, instead the target of the touch, can choose to "accept" the effect or state "I do not accept" at the time the effect is delivered.

"Touch-Casting" on page XX for more information.

VENGEANCE

A vengeance is an effect that has a unique delivery method. It automatically targets whoever deals a killing blow to the owner of the Vengeance for more information on vengeance see the NERO Formal Magic Rules.

WEAPON BLOW

Weapon blows are dealt with nero safe hand held boffers, and thrown boffers. Arrows are also considered weapon blows even though they are phys-repped by yellow packets.

EFFECTS TYPES

In addition to delivery methods, there are also effect types which change what protects you from the damage or effect. Once you take the effect, it is the same no matter what the effect type.

Arcane: Effects delivered this way are created from raw magical energies. They are not blocked by regular spell defenses. The same casting rules apply as spells except you do not need the ability to speak.

Magic: Magic Deliverance is a non verbal way of casting spells. The same casting rules apply as spells except you do not need the ability to speak.

Elemental: Effects and damage delivered elementally are created from elemental energy rather than a spell, so must be blocked by an elemental shield. Elemental effects can be removed by dispel magic.

Physical: Physical attacks represent an actual physical force such as a glob of ooze to form a Physical Web, a big rock to form a Physical Stone Bolt, or a burst of wind to cause a Physical Repel.

Poison: Effects delivered as poison are stopped by Poison shields. They represent a monster with poisoned claws, fangs, or spittle.

Spell: Effects delivered as spell are blocked by a Shield Magic.

CALLING WEAPON DAMAGE

When you swing a weapon in NERO, you must call out a verbal that indicates the attributes of the attack. The verbal will have up to four parts, with the first two always present and the latter two only used in special circumstances. The parts are, in order,

(damage amount) (weapon type) (damage type) (effect).

When in combat with the same opponent, there is no need to continue calling your damage beyond the first or second swing. Weapon verbals are out of game and can thus be made while under the effects of a Silence or Gypsy Curse, however anyone who hears them will know what it is.

DAMAGE AMOUNT

The damage you are dealing with each swing as a numerical value.

WEAPON TYPE

A Weapon's Type determines the nature of the weapon. There are four weapon types: Normal, Silver, Magic, and Massive.

DAMAGE TYPE

Some creatures may take an increased or decreased amount of damage from certain damage types. The valid Damage Types are variable and up to the local plot team or as

granted by effects within these rules so long as the call does not duplicate a game effect.

The most common damage types are the thirteen core elements (fire, water, order, chaos, etc.) and the Effect Types listed above. The only Effect Types which may not be used as a Damage Type are "Magic" or "Spell". To Specify a Carrier Attack as a magical effect you must use the "Arcane" Effect Type.

CALLING HITS

Calling hits against yourself is strongly encouraged by role-playing being struck. Acknowledging which hits you are accepting and which ones you feel you blocked will help the flow of combat.

THROWING/TOSSING ITEMS

You cannot throw any weapon, shield, etc., that is not NERO approved for throwing. Basically, if a local safety marshal has approved the weapon to be thrown (thrown weapons, javelins, etc.), you can throw it, otherwise you cannot.

In addition, you cannot use the "Toss and grab" method on any item to avoid the effects of a spell. If you toss an item and grab it before it lands on the ground, the item is still under your control, and is still considered in your possession.

For the purposes of spells that target the item itself (such as Shatter), an item is still considered under a player's control until it comes to a complete rest on the ground out of the player's grasp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

There are many creatures in the NERO world that have special abilities or powers. The effects of these are described below.

Some monsters are represented by multiple NPCs. These are either organisms that can divide into many segments, or are larger than man sized. In some cases, these creatures will be affected differently by battle magic spells. The spell may only affect one of the creature's segments. A spell such as Pin may only affect the segment it hits, allowing the creature to pivot around the affected part. Once again, the monster should have documentation describing any special allowances it may have.

Occasionally, a monster's abilities may change from event to event or even during an event! This can be the result of many things, from mutation to strange magics to a new tribe moving into the area.

PACKET ATTACKS

Packet attacks follow the same basic rules as any other skill involving a packet, the user must say out loud in a clear voice the "Verbal" then they may throw the packet. All attacks that duplicate a spell or effect that contains a number must include that number at the end of the verbal (ex. A monster hurls a Physical Cause Wounds packet, the correct verbal before throwing is "Physical Cause Wounds 10").

These attacks represent monsters' abilities to generate ranged attacks such as poisonous spittle, breathing fire, or charming you with their will. There are only 5 different delivery types for packet attacks; Arcane, Elemental, Magic, Physical, and Poison. The delivery type determines what delivery type specific spell defense(s) can be used. The effect itself would be cured by whatever is listed in its description, by any other effect whose description allows it to cure the effect (ex. Awaken's description specifically allows it to cure Sleep), or from the list below. Limitations on curing in the description still also apply if the description says the effect can only be cured by specific effects or cannot be cured by specific effects. None of these attacks may use orange or yellow packets as orange packets as orange are used to physically represent gas globes and yellow packets are arrows. A creature must have use of its arms and may not be holding any other in-game object in its hand in order to use a packet attack, even if it is touch-casting the ability. This includes claws, which must be retracted in order to use any packet-based ability.

BASE CLAWS/BODY WEAPONRY

Monsters with this ability can strike with large claws or fists. The phys-reps will always be covered in red duct or kite tape; however, you cannot tell the difference between claws and real weapons unless you can actually see the red tape. The claws cannot be Fumbled, Shattered, or Destroyed. The NPC cannot call a Hold to pull out claws. Consider the claws retractable.

CONTROL UNDEAD

Some undead creatures can control other less powerful undead in the area, making them do whatever they want. This effect is stronger than Calm/Calm Animal Charm / Charm Animal, Shun/Shun Animal, or Fear. The most recent Control Undead, Vampire Charm or Enslavement effect will take precedent if there is a conflict See Table 5-6.

CURSE OF TRANSFORMATION

Some monsters (notably werewolves and vampires) have the ability to curse their victims so that they will turn into versions of themselves under appropriate circumstances. Werewolves can turn their victims into werewolves who will then change on the next full moon (and every full moon thereafter). Vampires can turn their victims into lesser vampires. These curses cannot be resisted as per spirit targeting formal rules. The character is usually not dead when they are afflicted with a Curse of Transformation. Once Cursed, when the appropriate circumstances are met, the character will transform into a lesser form of the master who Cursed the character. All life and death rules are still in effect - the player will enter her death count when she is reduced to -1 body points, she will have 5 minutes to receive a Life spell, the Life spell may or may not cure the "Curse". You will always receive a card that states the additional abilities of your curse that you will then carry with your character card at all times.

DRAIN

This attack causes the victim to be unable to use any in game skills and may not run. Drain will last for 5 minutes or it can be removed with a Life or Remove Drain spell. This effect is not affected by a Dispel Magic.

DRAIN LIFE

This attack is the same as Drain but lasts until a Life spell is given or the victim resurveys. It cannot be removed by a Dispel Magic or Remove Drain.

FEAR

Some creatures have the ability to invoke a magical fear. The racial ability Resist Charm can be used as a defense against this ability and an Awaken or Remove Fear spell will free someone who is Feared. The feared victim must attempt to break Line of Sight and cannot attack the creature they fear in any way. If breaking Line of Sight is impossible, the victim will stay as far from the attacker as possible. Even if Line of Sight is broken the effect lasts for five minutes or until the creature is dead.

For example, Drina gets Feared by a vampire. She runs screaming around a corner and ten seconds later (as per the "Line of Sight" rule), she feels calm again. If the vampire then appears around the corner, Drina must run screaming again, as the five minutes are not up. The victim cannot cast an Awaken spell on himself or herself until out of Line of Sight.

INFECTION

Some creatures have the ability to infect helpless victims with material that will turn the person into a version of the creature. Unlike a werewolf or vampire curse, this is only a physical transformation of the victim's body. Players will be told of specific triggers if necessary. Victims will lose all memory of their former lives, and the player must follow the commands they are given by the Monster Master until the character is slain.

The character may then be killed and then given a Life spell and be cured of the infection. If the player dies the spirit may then proceed to the Healers' Guild to be resurrected as normal. Infection is done just as a Killing Blow, with a count of "I infect you 1, I infect you 2, I infect you 3."

LESSER

Some NPCs will be able to deliver Lesser versions of attacks. The word Lesser is used as the first word in a verbal and indicates that the following effect will only last 10 seconds if it normally has a duration greater than instant. If the duration is instant then Lesser is meaningless. For example, a ghoul calls "Lesser Poison Paralyze" and throws a packet at Steve. Steve, lacking any defense to prevent it taking effect, is now Paralyzed for 10 seconds.

MASSIVE

Some creatures can use the Massive weapon type. Massive damage cannot be blocked by weapons or shields. If a blow delivering this type of damage strikes a weapon or shield, the bearer of the item struck takes the damage delivered, as well as any carrier effects (when appropriate, i.e. once Body Points are damaged). The skills Parry and Dodge will work as normal against this type of damage, as will all applicable protective spells such as Magic Armor or Displacement.

PHYSICAL STRIKE

This ability functions as Spell Strike but is stopped by a Magic Armor or Parry instead of a Shield Magic or Reflect Magic. The proper verbal is "Physical Strike (effect)"

SPELL STRIKE

A few powerful magical creatures have the ability to generate spell effects in their weapons. The spell effects are just as the spell, except that they are delivered with a weapon strike instead of a spell packet. As with any weapon strike, all weapon safety rules must be followed. The spells are still subject to spell defenses as a normal spell. This ability does not require Body contact. When this power is used, the player will call "Spell Strike (effect)" and will deliver a NERO-safe hit. The skill can still be used even when silenced, but the effect is recognizable to all who hear it.

The spell portion of a Spellstrike is only stopped by defenses that would stop the attack if it were delivered by packet. Therefore, Magic Arm or, although it stops "The next single strike by a NERO Safe weapon", does not stop a Spellstrike. Since a Spellstrike is weapon-delivered, the user must have the in-game skill to wield the weapon in order to use the Spellstrike.

For example, if the user is under a game effect that prohibits the use of in-game skills, then they cannot use a Spellstrike. Also, if the Spellstrike is delivered by a non-ranged weapon, then the attack will not affect creatures under the effects of a Sanctuary and Desecrate, as appropriate.

SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH

Any creature with superhuman strength can do more damage with any particular weapon than can a normal human. This bonus damage is split in half if the creature is fighting with any weapon other than a two handed one. Note, that creatures with Superhuman Strength can gain only limited advantage from either an Endow or a Delayed Endow. (See the spell descriptions for more details).

VAMPIRE CHARM

Vampires can charm a person if they can maintain eye contact for 10 seconds. More powerful Vampires can deliver packet attack Vampire Charms as well. This power does not require body contact. If you are charmed by a Vampire, then you must obey all commands the Vampire gives you. These commands are absolute and are much more powerful than a Charm spell; if a vampire tells you to commit suicide, you will do so unquestioningly. Spell defenses appropriate to the delivery type can be used to stop a packet-delivered Vampire Charm. The racial skill Resist Charm will protect the character from this effect. The effect lasts five minutes. This effect is stronger than Calm/ Calm Animal Charm /Charm Animal, Shun/ Shun Animal, or Fear. The most recent Control Undead, Vampire Charm or Enslavement effect will take precedent if there is a conflict. See Table 5-6 on page 64.

Special Defenses and Vulnerabilities

Some creatures have special defenses that protect the creature from attacks, or weaknesses that make it more vulnerable to certain effects.

DAMAGE CAP (X)

This ability allows the creature to limit the amount of damage taken from weapon attacks that would otherwise affect it. The call for a Damage Cap is "Cap X" where "X" is the amount of damage the creature is taking. Damage Cap never affects spells, slays or assassinations.

DOUBLE FROM (DAMAGE TYPE OR EFFECT)

Some creatures take double damage from certain effects or spells and it is always written on their character documentation. All damage of that type that would normally affect the creature is doubled by the recipient when they are hit.

(EFFECT) SHIELD

This monster ability acts just like Resist except that it must be used on the first applicable attack that would affect the creature. This means they can only be used after Spell Defenses like Shield Magic and Reflect Magic.

FOCUS

Creatures with this ability are not subject to Disruption for one or more of their attacks.

GASEOUS FORM

Creatures that are forced into gaseous form when they are killed drop their possessions. Creatures which voluntarily turn into gaseous form while still "live" can bring their possessions with them. Creatures that turn gaseous will drop any other creatures being carried at that time. While they are in this form they are immune to all attacks except Ar cane Solidify. They may only move at a normal walking rate. They cannot speak or move objects. Creatures in Gaseous Form still appear as they normally do. Voluntarily Turning gaseous or solidifying is a three counted action.

HARMED BY (DAMAGE TYPE OR EFFECT)

Some creatures take damage when struck by certain spells or effects.

HEAL BY (DAMAGE TYPE OR EFFECT)

Some creatures are healed by certain types of spells or effects (For example, air, earth, fire, water, or all of them). Creatures with this ability cannot be healed by weapon attacks (except Spellstrikes), but can be healed by packet attacks. Creatures healed by a damage type or effect are immune to weapon attacks (except Spellstrikes) using those types or effects.

IMMUNE TO (DAMAGE TYPE OR EFFECT)

Many creatures have immunities to some spells or effects. Creatures must call "No effect" when using this ability.

IMMUNE TO (TYPE) WEAPONS

Several types of creatures require special weapons (for example, silver or magic) to damage them. Normal weapons will do no damage, but the special weapon will do full damage. These creatures will tell you "No effect" if your damage is not affecting them.

MIND ABILITIES

Some creatures can perform mental abilities such as "Mind melds." These abilities are all completely role-playing in nature. Generally speaking, a creature with this ability can instill or remove roleplaying insanity or otherwise "Cure" mental damage. This ability can not be used to tell if another player is telling the truth or to counteract forget-it poisons or otherwise get around any NERO rule. A player always has the right to refuse to role-play any of these skills and can at any time decide to "Break off" the contact or be cured. In order to use this role-playing skill, the players must be touching each other and be concentrating completely by either staring in each other's eyes or having their eyes closed. You cannot perform any in-game skills while role-playing this.

NATURAL ARMOR

Some monsters have a skin that acts like armor. It can be refit in sixty seconds. It cannot be Shattered or Destroyed in any way nor can it be salvaged after the creature is killed.

NO METABOLISM

Some monsters lack a metabolism. The standard definition is as follows: Immune to Death, Disease, Drain, Drain Life, First Aid, Life, Nausea, Paralyze, Poisons, Sleep, Taint Blood, Waylay, Wither Limb.

NON-CORPOREAL FORM

Some monsters are non-corporeal, having no physical form but made mainly of magic or energy. While they are in this form they are immune to normal weapons, and are immune to Pin, Bind, Web, and Confine.

PHASE

Some creatures can become non-corporeal for an instant, avoiding an attack as the Dodge skill, and announcing "Phase." Unlike Dodge, Phase can be used even if the creature is completely immobilized, such as if in a Confine or Paralyze.

REDUCED DAMAGE

Some monsters take less than normal damage from certain attacks. The NPC must call "Reduced" when using this ability.

REGENERATION

Some creatures can regenerate Body Points by spending time to regenerate, much like refitting armor. The time it takes to regenerate is most often one minute but this may vary from creature to creature. If the regeneration time is interrupted by a weapon blow or a spell that affects the creature, the process must begin again. If the process is completed, then the creature regains all lost Body Points. Some creature can do this at zero body, in this case nothing interrupts the regeneration except a killing blow that affects the creature.

RENEW (OPTION)

This ability allows a creature to renew one or more abilities or skills that have limited uses by fulfilling some condition defined by that creature's abilities. The most common condition is to take a minute to reset the ability in a manner similar to resetting armor, where any interruption prevents the abilities from returning. Some creatures may also renew skills when entering an area or even if they use another power like Revive. The options for this ability are a "single skill" chosen by the target, a "specific skill" chosen by the creature using the Renew ability, or "all" skills and abilities.

RESIST (EFFECT)

This ability is similar to an Immunity except that it is for a limited number of times per day. Unlike an (effect) Shield, the creature with this skill can decide when to use it.

RETURN (TYPE)

A creature with the ability to Return (type) will cause a specific type of effect directed at it to be returned to its point of origin. It functions like the Resist skill in that the creature can choose when to use a Return. Returned effects are instantly restored to the character's skill set, although the character will not be able to use the skill again until they Meditate for 1 minute. Return can only be used on daily or times ever effects such as spells, Critical Slays, Assassinations, etc. Return can be used against stored spells/effects from formal magic items and/or production items, and in this case the Return acts like a Resist in that it prevents the effect and the charge is lost. The creature card will specify the types of Return available to that creature in a similar way to Resists.

REVIVE

A creature with this skill can rise back up after five minutes of semi-death. Instead of dissipating and going to resurrect, the creature rises with full Body Points. The creature will either have a limited number of uses of this ability or there will be some special method of preventing the creature from reviving; for example, some creatures can be prevented from using this skill by applying a Killing Blow with a silver blade.

RIFT OR GATE

Some creatures can open a rift to another plane to allow for entrance or exit or open a Gate to another place. This is a three counted action unless a fully represented gate prop is used. Some of these creatures also have the power to abduct others and force them to rift or gate out against their will. Rip from Pin/ Bind/Web/Confine

Some creatures can rip free from binding spells. This is a three-count action with the phrase "I rip free one, I rip free two, I rip free three." While the creature is doing the three-count, it is vulnerable to attack and a Killing Blow begun prior to the Ripping. While ripping free, the creature may not use any skill requiring movement, such as Dodge. A creature with the skill Rip from Pin/Bind/Web/Confine can only use this skill upon itself, never upon others.

SOLIDIFY

This skill forces a gaseous form to become immediately solid. It is packet delivered with the verbal delivery type Solidify."Note that the creature may still turn gaseous again."

SUICIDE ABILITY

Some creatures have the ability to destroy themselves if they are captured. This ability may be the equivalent of a Killing Blow or it may cause the creature to instantly dissipate and seek resurrection.

THRESHOLD

This allows the creature to take only a single point of damage from any blow equal to or below its Threshold. The creature must call "threshold" whenever a blow is landed. However, don't expect to hear the call for every blow. Once you've acknowledged the call, the creature is under no obligation to continuously call "threshold" unless new players join the fight. These fights sometimes last a long time, so common courtesy on both sides is highly recommended. If you can exceed the limit of the hide, then the creature will take full damage from your blow. A Killing Blow can always go through a Threshold. Spell Defenses and suits of armor are affected by all blows, even if the creature wouldn't normally be affected.

SO YOU WANT TO BE A THIEF?

STEALING AN ITEM

"Stealing an item" refers only to the in-game stealing of in-game items. You must be very careful when attempting to steal anything in-game. You are never allowed to harm or destroy real property (using in-game spells to Shatter or Destroy is fine because you aren't harming or damaging real property) in order to steal something. You may not pickpocket characters in NERO.

There are special rules for each type of in-game item and you are required to know them. If you are caught stealing something incorrectly, then you are cheating, and ignorance of the rules is no excuse!

GAME MONEY, MAGIC ITEMS, AND JEWELRY

You are always allowed to take whatever game money you can find in-game. When taking jewelry or an item, always check to make sure there is an item tag with the item phys-rep. If there is an item tag, then the item tag is now yours. You must temporarily take the item's phys-rep, which should be promptly given to a rules marshal as soon as you are in a safe area, (before the end of the event), so the phys-rep can be returned to its owner. If there is no tag, the item does not represent an in-game item and cannot be taken because it is merely a costume piece.

If you have a magic weapon or item phys-rep stolen, you must immediately find one of the Rules Marshals for that chapter and turn over the magic item tag. You can find a Rules Marshal out-of-game.

If you have a piece of jewelry or other game item that you wish to make into a stealable item, you must obtain an item tag for that item. You can do this at logistics at any NERO event. The item will be evaluated to figure out its monetary value. You will then be required to pay the in-game amount that the item is worth.

WEAPONS

You must actually take the weapon you are stealing.

Once you have stolen a weapon, you should then head immediately to the designated area for stolen weapons (usually the NPC camp or

an NPC Weaponsmith shop). You cannot actually keep that particular weapon phys-rep since it is the personal property of the player from whom you stole it, but the marshal in charge will give you the tag from that weapon which you can then attach to your own weapon phys-rep or attempt to sell in-game.

If your weapon is stolen, you should head to the designated area. That is why it is so important for you to write your name on your weapon! (In some chapters, you do not steal the weapon, but only the tag.)

Some monsters will have weapons that are stealable. However, for logistical reasons, these monsters will simply hand you a tag instead of the actual weapon.

OTHER IN-GAME ITEMS

NERO often provides props such as maps, notes, books, and other informational items. If you find these in a module or on an NPC, you should ask a Rules Marshal to see if you need to return the props to NPC camp or if you can keep them. If you steal them from another player, you should have a Rules Marshal contact the person you stole them from out-of-game and make sure that they were stealable.

SEARCHING A PERSON

If you waylay, kill, or control a person or monster through a spell, you may search that being. Simply say "I search you." All game items must be turned over at that point. Note that it is impossible to completely hide something on your body. If you are searched, you cannot claim that something was "Really, really hidden." If you are searched, you also have the option of saying, "Go ahead and describe your search and I will tell you the results step by step." This is not only to help you to hide items, but it also takes up the time that the search should take. You must really have the item hidden where you say it is. In other words, you can't say I'm pretending to have a secret compartment in my shoe, and he didn't search for secret compartments!

If someone steals your magic item, do not give them the tag that describes your magic item. Immediately go to a Rules Marshal and turn over the tag. It is up to the person who stole the item to

find out what the item is and how it works. This applies to magical weapons as well.

SEARCHING A CABIN

In order to search a cabin, you **MUST** have a marshal present. We cannot overemphasize this point! If you enter a cabin without a marshal, you are really breaking and entering and NERO may be forced to bring legal action against you!

The marshal does not have to actually be right next to you (after all, how can you sneak with someone else tagging along beside?), but the marshal must be within sight somewhere.

Once you have managed to successfully open the door, the marshal will then check the marshal's notes that will be affixed to the inside of the door. These notes will list any magic spells that may be active in, or on, the cabin, which character cast these spells upon the cabin, who is invested in any Circles of Power that are in the cabin, who is invested in the cabin's Ward (if one is present), and any other things that the local chapter requested be placed on the Marshal's Notes.

You must actually search the cabin yourself. The marshal will not simply look at the notes and go and retrieve items for you. Do not take any items marked "Personal" or any items stored under a bed. In-game items may not be put under a bed. When you leave the cabin, you must show all items you have taken to the marshal. Only game items can be stolen! The marshal will return non-stealable items. The marshal is also there to make sure that you properly disarm any traps that may be on the door or window. Destroying property such as window screens or door hinges is not allowed.

Remember you can search anywhere in a cabin except for bags marked personal or behind dividing curtains or under beds. However, not everything in gameplay is stealable, so always talk to a Rules Marshal if you have any questions or concerns.

SECURING YOUR CABIN

Tyrre can be an unsafe place, so it's always a wise idea to guard your valuables. There may be places in-game where you can buy or rent a lock for your cabin. Some of these places will also install it for you for a small fee. Of course, these locks can be picked by a good thief, but at least it will slow the rascal down. You can also buy or make traps for your cabin. Each trap must be accompanied by the trap's item tag see Traps and Locks below.

It is a smart idea to take your personal items and put them under your bed. Any items placed under the bed are considered to be out of play, so don't cheat and put game items there. If you like, put a dividing curtain up in your cabin, and place all the beds and your personal items behind it. Put any game items in front of the divider.

If you are sleeping in-game during the night, make sure that your bed is in front of any dividing curtain or barrier you have put up.

Any special security precautions you take must be entered on the marshal notes sheet in the holder on your cabin door. Make any appropriate entries there, with the spell labels and/or trap cards necessary. That way anyone marshaling a thief through your cabin can dole out any damage that the villain may take. If no precautions have been entered on the marshal notes, then there is nothing protecting the cabin in-game!

Anyone who does not reside in a particular cabin caught reading the marshal notes will be subject to disciplinary action. These notes are for marshals only, and only when marshaling a thief into the cabin.

TRAPS AND LOCKS

In order to make a trap, you must have the skill Create Traps. This skill works on the Production system as described in the chapter "Physical Representations" on page 105. All trap designs must be checked and approved by a Rules Marshal from the chapter where the trap will be used. The trap must be approved at every event, regardless of whether it has been approved in the past. All traps must make a noise or flash a light or otherwise be constructed so that it is obvious when the trap has been set off. A trigger must be physically attached or connected to a trap.

Traps are never considered "NERO-safe" weapons and cannot be thrown or used in battle as a weapon. Doors may only be secured through in-game means such as in-game locks or a Ward spell. The use of out-of-game locks, barricading a door closed with other objects or attempting to hold it closed against an intruder is not permitted.

TRAP TYPES

There are 7 different types of traps each with different building parameters.

Weapon Traps

A weapon trap is a trap which contains a weapon on a spring mounted mechanism. These traps cost 1 Production Level per 2 points of damage with a minimum damage of 2 and a maximum damage of 40. Weapon traps may be reset by anyone with the Disarm /Arm Traps skill without paying the cost to rebuild them. These traps must be mounted to a door, wall or inside a large chest to be effective. If not mounted to a heavy, stable object of this sort, they cannot be set with enough force to be effective. You cannot attach these traps to a body.

The mounted weapon must be any standard NERO-safe boffer weapon. This is the only trap that can be blocked, Parried, Dodged or stopped by the Magic Arm or spell.

Massive Mechanical Traps

Massive mechanical traps represent collapsing ceilings, rockfalls, giant scythes, and other such contraptions. They are completely immovable. They have a minimum size of 3" by 3" by 3". Anyone struck by any part of the trap when it goes off takes the full damage of the trap. Massive mechanical traps must be rebuilt after they are set off; they cannot be reset.

These cost 1 Production Level per 4 points of damage with a minimum damage of 16 and a maximum damage of 80. Massive mechanical traps are usually represented with pillows, plastic trash bags filled with newspapers, and other soft items. Whoever is touched by the phys-rep will take the complete damage from the trap.

FIRE / ACID TRAPS

A fire or acid trap represents a trap which sprays a burning or caustic liquid in a 5 foot radius measured from the center of the trap phys-rep. Anyone inside this radius when it detonates takes the full damage of the trap plus the additional effects listed below.

In addition to a trigger and detonating mechanism, there must also be a physical representation for the oil / acid "Container." The required size of this container is 216 cubic inches. The detonation mechanism must be attached to the container. The radius effect is measured out from this container.

The damage from fire traps can be negated by Cloak vs Fire or Guardian of the Four (Fire.)

These cost 1 Production Level per 3 points of damage with a minimum damage of 12 and a maximum damage of 60. This trap is destroyed when it detonates.

EXPLOSIVE TRAPS

Explosive traps are very similar to Fire and Acid Traps except that the container represents the explosive. These traps have a 5" radius. All destructible items in the area of effect are destroyed. Armor will provide its numerical protection against the damage caused by the blast and then be destroyed. Sealed containers will not protect items from explosions. All in-game items except un-shatterable items will be destroyed by an explosive trap. Items within an indestructible sealed container will not be affected if they are in the radius of an explosive trap, unless the trap is inside that container or the container is open. Defenses such as Cloak or Bane versus Shatter or Destroy have no effect against an explosive trap.

Explosive traps, like Fire/Acid traps and Gas traps, must have a "Container." This container is always 216 cubic inches, regardless of the trap's effects.

To make these traps costs 1 Production Level per 2 points of damage with a minimum damage of 30, and a maximum damage of 60. This trap is destroyed when it detonates.

GAS TRAPS

The Production Level cost for creating a gas trap is equal to the highest Production Level gas the trap is designed to hold. The trap builder must also include a dose of the gas poison in the trap itself.

A gas trap is rated at the Production Level used to make it. To make a gas trap with a Paralyze gas within will cost 9 Production Levels for the trap (and 9 production Levels for the gas, which must be supplied separately).

Remember that the trap must contain both a trap card and the gas poison tag. Gas which is contained in a Gas trap cannot be removed, reused, or "salvaged," under any circumstances.

Multiple Cause Damage gases can be placed into a single gas trap up to the limit of the level of the trap but no other gases can be "stacked" to increase their damage potential or mix their effects.

These traps have a 5" radius. Anyone inside this area when the trap goes off will be affected as if they had been struck by a gas poison of the same name. The effects of any gas trap, even traps with multiple gases, will be blocked by a Poison Shield or the skill Resist Poison. If two or more traps have the same trigger, then they are all set off together and one Poison Shield or Resist Poison will block them all.

Gas traps, like Fire/Acid traps and Explosive traps, must have a "Container." This container is always 216 cubic inches, regardless of the trap's effects. Gas trap mechanisms that go off are reusable though the gas inside will have to be replaced.

ALARMS AND NOISE MAKERS

These are traps that do no damage but set off loud alarms and other noises. They cost 1 Production Level each to make. Alarms and Noise Makers do not have a minimum container size. They are as large, or as small, as they must be to make a noise. When this type of trap is tripped, it must make its own noise. Although it takes a person with Disarm Traps to disarm an Alarm or Noise Maker trap, once it has been set off anyone can attempt to muffle the trap's sound by throwing blankets over the trap, or by using some other method.

TRAP MECHANICS

SETTING TRAPS

Setting a trap takes the real setting time of the trigger followed by 60 seconds of counting while both hands remain on the trapped item. Both weapon traps and massive mechanical traps must be mounted on large or heavy objects to be properly set.

BACKFIRE

If either hand is removed from the trap, or the person setting the trap is struck by a physical blow or packet attack, then the trap backfires on the setter. The backfire will hit only the person setting the trap; there is no radius effect.

Setting off a Trap

Traps can be set off in 3 ways: by being moved, being destroyed, or their trigger being sprung. The trap must be armed to be set off.

BEING MOVED

After a trap has been set, it cannot be moved more than five feet without automatically setting it off, even if the person moving it has a Disarm Traps skill. In the case of weapon traps, they will automatically hit the person carrying the trap.

DESTROYED

An armed trap will be set off (then destroyed) if affected by a Shatter or Destroy effect. This includes traps and other game effects that duplicate Shatter and Destroy. Traps that are not armed will not be set off in this manner (although they will still be destroyed).

TRAP TRIGGERS

All traps must have a real, physical trigger. Setting off the trap must produce a noise or light that is detectable by an impartial observer. It must always be possible to see how to disarm a trap, although it may require light and a small mirror. To be used, a trap must be approved by a Marshal.

A simple trap trigger can be made out of a clothespin (the kind with a spring in it), two tacks, some string or thread, two pieces of wire and a small piece of cardboard. Attach the wire to the tacks just below the heads of the tacks.

Now pull the clothespin apart and place the parts outside-down on a table. Push a tack through each half of the clothespin so that the two tack heads will contact each other when the clothespin closes. Reassemble the clothespin.

Punch a small hole in the piece of cardboard and tie one end of the piece of thread to the cardboard. The cardboard can now be placed between the jaws of the clothespin to keep the tacks from conducting electricity.

The other end of the string can be tied across a doorway or path so that when someone hits it with their leg it will pull out the cardboard and make a connection. This trigger can then be used to set off a buzzer or other device to indicate the trap has gone off. You can also deliberately set off a trap like a claymore mine if you use a pull cord.

DEALING DAMAGE

Traps that have an area effect have their effect area measured from the center of the trap phys-rep. If there is a large, trapped box with a 10 foot tripwire attached and a player sets the trap off at the end of that tripwire they are not affected by the trap since the phys-rep (the center of the trap radius) would be 10 feet away. It is not measured from the tripwire/snapper/etc, but from the rep for the trap itself. This will allow you to have a 50ft pull cord on a trap box in the field and use it like a claymore mine since the effect goes off from the box/rep/trigger and not from the cord.

DISARMING TRAPS

Traps may be disarmed by any method that does not permanently destroy the trap. For example, popping a battery clip off would represent disarming a spring.

Permanent damage is defined as any damage that cannot be fixed by the marshal within ten minutes with no tools.

If the trap was successfully disarmed, the gas trap may of course be reset, but in no case can the gas be taken from the trap.

CONTAINERS

Fire / Acid, Explosive and Gas traps must have a container representing their explosive or liquid contents. This container must be at least 216 cubic inches in size.

PICKING LOCKS

Anyone wishing to put a lock on a box, chest, or door must use one of the NERO approved locks (for sale by various characters). These locks are simple and can be fairly easily picked using thieves tools. Generally speaking, if you wish to place a lock on your door and you can pick the lock yourself in the presence of a Marshal, then you will be allowed to use that lock. Combination locks are not allowed to be used by players (although they may be found in modules).

MARSHALS

Marshals are the referees and guides of NERO. They will be with you in modules and available for you at other times. If you have a question about rules or if you need someone to witness an action in order to make it official, you must see the appropriate marshal.

If there is a dispute over a rules interpretation by one or more players, then a Marshal should be consulted. If you are on a module, then your Module Marshal will be the arbiter. If you are on a full NERO event, then you will need to find a Full Marshal or one of the marshals on duty for the event.

If you wish to appeal a Marshal's ruling, you can speak to an Adjudicator. When dealing with a NERO Marshal or other representative, you can help yourself and your case considerably by staying calm. Present your case and once the ruling is made, play along with it. Your marshal may be aware of something you have

missed, or may be making a decision based on what was intended by the rule. If you feel the marshal's judgment was incorrect, you can bring the ruling to adjudication later. Don't dwell on it in the meantime or it will spoil your enjoyment of the rest of the game. You should also try not to nitpick details of a situation. You should understand and follow the intent of the rules. Play fair and be considerate of everyone's enjoyment of the game. You will be taken more seriously and be respected by those who have to deal with you. Arguing the specific wording of a rule or taking advantage of a misprint can look like manipulation of the rules for your benefit and will not win you any friends in the long run.

Marshals are appointed positions only. Generally, marshals remain in game play as their characters but are able to step in and make judgments if needed. Anyone impersonating a marshal will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, as are marshals who attempt to marshal themselves or their friends in game play.

Marshals are never allowed to marshal themselves through an encounter, and a marshal should never marshal his or her adventuring group if at all possible. If a marshal appears biased, it ruins the credibility of the marshal to give fair judgments in future decisions.

CHEATING AND METAGAMING

Players who are caught cheating or metagaming raise the risk of being suspended or kicked out of NERO. Remember, you do not have a right to play our game.

If you know of someone cheating, you should immediately report this to a marshal.

Metagaming is harder to call. It is difficult to keep from bragging about your adventures to people out-of-game. And sometimes people do not remember if they got information in-game or out-of-game. If you do not want people to act of information they have discovered out-of-game, the best solution is to never tell any secrets!

Peer pressure counts for a lot here. Don't let your teammates cheat or metagame. Sooner or later, he or she will get caught and everyone will assume that you are guilty as well.

This leads to a tender subject: Gossip about cheaters and metagamers. It is common for players to gripe about other players and call them cheaters or metagamers but the fact is that NERO

is very proud of the fact that we have so few. Gossip can ruin our game. We all need to watch what we say about other players. Hearsay and innuendo have no place in NERO. If you think that someone is cheating or metagaming, don't whine and complain to your friends about it- report it to a marshal! And if a marshal comes to you and asks about a possible cheating situation, please cooperate and don't take it personally.

If someone makes an accusation against someone else ask, "How do you know that?" If they have firsthand knowledge, ask "Why haven't you reported that to a Marshal?" If they don't have firsthand knowledge, refuse to listen to them.

Only by working together and trusting each other enough to give the benefit of the doubt can we keep this game running fairly for everyone. Your cooperation is crucial to make sure we have a fair, fun game.

BUILD CHEATING

Any player that knowingly reports a false amount of build or levels, or abuses the award system will be suspended from all NERO Chapters for a minimum of six months. In addition, their character Example "Joseph is 10th level with 106 build. He goes to an event in another chapter, tells the check in staff he doesn't have his card, but is 12th level with 123 build. After he is caught, he will be suspended for a minimum of 6 months, and his new amount of build will be 53."

NERO SPORTSMANSHIP POLICY

All NERO Participants

Follow the spirit of the rules, as well as the letter of the rules.

Play fairly and honestly.

Be considerate of all other NERO participants.

Remember, everyone has the right to enjoy NERO as much as you do.

Contribute to the fun of all NERO participants.

Don't play in a style that detracts from the fun of the event, or anyone's chance to have fun at an event.

Staff, Marshals, etc...

Abide by the expectations that apply to all NERO participants.

It is your job to run the event. Remember, you are not playing against the players. Everyone's enjoyment of the event is your top priority.

All participants must be treated equally and equitably, by you and by other participants. Favoritism will not be tolerated.

Run events in a professional manner. Remember that you represent NERO to anyone present at an event, whether participating or observing.

Administration (National, Local, etc...)

Abide by the expectations that apply to all NERO participants, Staff, Marshals, etc....

Respond and communicate in a timely, respectful, and articulate manner.

Uphold the authority of your staff, and do not overrule them without careful investigation.

CODE OF CONDUCT

NERO expects its members to act responsibly as adults, to respect other players, and abide by the NERO rules and policies.

NERO will not tolerate dangerous non-game physical violence, damage or theft of non-game items or property, vandalism, display of pornographic materials, open and gross lewdness, or any actions by an individual or group which demonstrates a wanton lack of respect for the safety or security of the people, property or environment at any NERO site.

NERO does not condone any form of out-of-game bigotry or discrimination against any group or individuals because of their out of game afflictions, including race, gender, age, religion, ethnic background, ideology, sexual orientation, physical appearance, handicap or disability. Or any other part of a player's background.

All players in the NERO game are responsible for knowing the rules contained in the rule book and following them in the course of play. NERO reserves the right to remove you from play or otherwise limit your participation in NERO if it is found that you have disobeyed the NERO rules. NERO will make every reasonable effort to inform you of all rules changes, interpretations and corrections.

Remember that in all cases it is the spirit of the rule and not the literal meaning of the rule that should guide you. If you find a loophole in a rule that obviously goes against the rules intention, then you should bring this to your local rules committee. Knowingly trying to take advantage of this unintended loophole is cheesy at best and could be considered cheating at worst if your interpretation is gravely contrasted.

If there is a dispute over a rules interpretation between players, a Marshal should be called to act as an arbitrator. When dealing with a marshal or other NERO representative, you can help by presenting your case calmly and by answering all of the marshal's questions as directly as possible. Once a decision is made, play along with it and don't question the marshal's ruling- the Marshal may have been aware of facts unavailable to you or may be making a decision based on what was intended by the rule.

If you feel a Marshal's ruling was incorrect or unfair, you may bring this to the attention of an Adjudicator.

Do not nitpick on the details of the situation - understand and follow the intent of the rules. If you play fair and be considerate of everyone else's enjoyment of the game, your comments will be taken more seriously and will be better respected.

NERO will remove any member who NERO suspects is intoxicated or high.

CONTENT

References to explicit sexual behavior or concepts, particularly violent ones, are not allowed.

SAFETY

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is prohibited from NERO events no matter what your age. In all cases, all laws regarding Alcohol must be adhered to. Our adventures are not an excuse for getting drunk out in the woods with your friends. Anyone caught with any controlled substance will be subject to severe disciplinary action. Take this point very seriously and report anyone you see with alcohol or drugs.

MEDIC

If your character or another character is injured In-Game, you can shout for a "Healer". However, if you or someone else is injured in real life, shout for a Medic and call a Hold. Do not call for a Medic unless it is a Out of Game emergency. If you hear the call for a Medic, drop to one knee and remain still and silent. Only the persons who have been identified as a Medic by Chapter Staff should respond to the call of Medic.

REAL WEAPONS

If you bring a real weapon into a NERO game, you will be told to put it away. Real weapons can never be carried on your person. (Swiss army knives, small thieves' tool knives and other such devices are

acceptable.) Daggers may be carried for eating/utility purposes, but they must be "Peace bonded" (tied in a sheath) when not at the table.

PAGE STATUS

A Page is a person who, for one reason or another, cannot enter combat. Some chapters will allow children to play NERO under Page status, and adults with a medical condition can also choose to play NERO as a Page. If you are planning on bringing your children to an event, it is best to contact the Chapter first for details. In most chapters, any child under 14 years old must be a Page. A Page can be a member of any race and any class, but cannot use combat skills or throw packet delivered attacks.

A Page should never be struck with a weapon or claw. In order to attack a page, you can point your weapon or packet at the Page and state "I kill you, page!" or "down you." (bleeding out) or any number of other actions. If there is someone within 5 feet of the Page, they can choose to defend the page and block your attack. To do so, they must state "I defend you" and role-play accordingly. A person cannot defend a page if they do not have a weapon, shield, or other ability to do so. All pages must wear an Orange headband to signify they are under Page status.

SMOKING

Smoking is only permitted in designated smoking areas. Generally, you are discouraged from smoking in public areas because of consideration for the other players, for fire safety regulations, and because it takes away from the medieval feel of the games.

TORCHES AND FLAMES

The rules on torches and flames vary based on the campsite's rules.

Generally speaking, torches are not allowed. No open flames are allowed in cabins, including candles (although candle lanterns and oil lanterns are fine). In any event, flames are never to be left unattended.

In order to use a flashlight for in game purposes, you must have someone cast an Illumination spell. The flashlight must be diffused by either taping a cloth over the end or using a red filter and must be pointed towards the ground or up in the air. A flashlight can

never be pointed near a person's face. If at all possible, please avoid using flashlights as they distract from the medieval feel of the game.

A Liquid Light elixir can also be used but preferably the phys-reps for these should be chemical "Light sticks." The small battery operated glass "Candles" and other small battery operated lighting devices cannot be used while adventuring. These things tend to break very easily and can be dangerous. If you want to use your flashlight to represent a candle or a small torch, you must have in your possession somewhere a real candle or torch that the flashlight represents.

PHYSICAL REREPRESENTATION

If you acquire any potions, scrolls, poisons, or alchemical substances during your adventures, then they should have appropriate Tags attached. If you create your own through the Production system, then you must supply a physical representation for the item, and the tag must be attached. This physical representation can be stolen, at which point the thief will take the tag and the item.

A scroll or potion that does not have a tag attached cannot be used. If the tag is lost, stolen or destroyed, the item is not usable. The tag by itself is not the item. If someone hands you an out-of-game tag and says "Here, drink this!" you should reply "Drink what?" since nothing is being shown to your character in-game. This rule exists because after all, these things take up room and add weight. You can't carry around 100 potions as easily as you could 100 tags.

If your character finds or is given a magic weapon, you are sometimes given a physical representation for it (You should return it to the NERO Chapter you found it in when its magic expires). You cannot alter the weapon in any way except to repair it when needed. If the phys-rep wears out, then another must be built that looks just like the original. Magic items cannot ever be modified and must always look the same. This has the advantage of making it easy to spot your stolen sword if you should ever see it again. See "So you want to be a thief?" on page XX.

GAME ITEMS

All game items (such as jewelry and magic items) should be labeled with a number. This is for the marshals to be able to tell the worth of the item and the magic use (if any).

If you steal an item that does not have a number on it, then you should immediately return it as it is obviously personal property and not part of the game. See "So you want to be a thief?" on page XX.

ARMOR

Armor points

There are three ways a player may possess Armor Points: Physical Armor, Dexterity Armor, and Arcane Armor. The three types may be used together and add to your total of Armor Points. You can not use more armor points than your character can wear.

Wear Points

Your character's Wear Point total is the limit of armor points you can use or "Wear" at one time. Your base Wear Point total depends on your class, as shown in figure 7-1.

Wear Bonuses

You can add Wear Points to your base by purchasing the skill wear extra armor or by wearing good costuming.

Wear Extra Armor: The skill wear extra armor adds 5 wear points per purchase to your characters wear point total up to a maximum of 40 points.

Costume Bonus: Any player will be awarded five wear points simply for being fully in costume with their entire visible costume fully fitting with the in game atmosphere see "Costumes" on page 121. A marshal must be consulted to see if your costume warrants the bonus. You should do this at every chapter you go to as some chapters have different criteria to make this decision.

The maximum Wear total a player can have is 40 (45 with good costuming), no effect can augment this bonus higher by any means. Armor points granted by the spell "Shield" are considered Armor but do not count toward your Wear Point total.

Example, Mandrake the scholar has 10 base wear points, he purchases Wear extra armor and now has 15 wear points. His costume is reviewed by a marshal and is given the 5 wear points for costuming. So he can now wear up to 20 Armor points.

Physical Armor

The Physical Armor Types are Leather, Chain Mail, and Plate. Table 7-6 shows the value of each Armor Type for each Body Location. Each location is worth one point for leather, two points for chain, and three points for plate except the chest and back which are worth three times as much since they cover a larger area.

A suit of armor may be rejected at any point on grounds of safety for such things including, but not limited to; protrusions, sharp edges, and unsafe materials.

Characters may select the armor type to use at each separate body location, making it easier for players to create their own personalized armor. Each location is considered covered in armor if at least three quarters of the entire area is covered. Locations with overlapping armor types count as the higher type.

A Suit of Armor is evaluated by adding the armor point value for each body location covered.

Armor does not have to be real to count for armor points, so long as it looks real.

The tag for armor allows a character to gain protection from a phys-rep rated up to the value on the tag. To claim the entire value of an armor tag the player must wear a phys-rep which has been evaluated by a marshal to be worth at least the value of the tag, you cannot wear 20 points of coverage, have a 30 point tag and claim 30 points of armor in game.

Leather: Leather is any material, natural or synthetic, that looks like leather.

Chain Mail: Chain Mail is made of material of interlocking links whose holes are small enough not to easily catch a finger.

Plate: Is armor made of rigid material that does not easily deform, or of material that accurately recreates the look of plate, either medieval or fantasy. Plate is made up of large pieces of metal or metal looking material.

REFITTING PHYSICAL ARMOR

When a suit of armor takes damage it can be refitted to its full value. Refitting in this way can only be done by the armor's wearer, and requires that the person spend an uninterrupted minute during which he can use no other game skills, cannot walk around, or be struck in any way. You may choose to interrupt yourself at any time. During the refitting the character will adjust (i.e. tighten straps, reposition plates) his armor so that it offers the best protection possible. If the character is struck by any packet or weapon, the refit is interrupted for no effect and must be begun again.

The smithing special ability Rapid refit and the spell Refit Armor can also refit physical armor.

WEAPONS

WEAPON COMBAT

Safety is always the primary concern in weapon construction. Unfortunately, even the safest weapon could cause injury if improperly used. Therefore, in addition to safe weapon construction guidelines, practice in the use of the weapon is needed to ensure that all players enjoy the game as much as possible. Below are additional restrictions on specific weapons

Latex Weapons: may never be used for thrusting, stabbing or poking.

Blunt Weapons: If a blunt weapon does not have a "head" on it, it will inflict one less point of damage than normal. Blunt weapons may not be used for thrusting, and are required to have a padded thrusting tip for safety reasons.

Bows: You can use the bow in combat for blocking, but you may not attack with it. Once it blocks an attack, the bowstring is considered cut or unstrung by combat. The PC cannot fire arrows from it until he restrings the Bow (see below). For safety reasons, no taut bowstrings are allowed though a loose one may be used to sling the bow for carrying.

Restringing involves at least 3 seconds of role-play. No physical representations for extra bow strings are needed.

To Fire, the Bow must be held in front of the archer at arm's length and must be aimed at the target when the packet is thrown. The archer must take the packet out of the quiver, touch the packet to the hand holding the bow, then throw. The packet must be thrown in the normal flight path of an arrow fired from the bow. It cannot be thrown overhead or around corners. It cannot be "flicked." The damage call must be completed before throwing the packet.

The hand throwing the arrow (yellow packet) is the hand that concerns Proficiencies. Master Proficiencies carry over to archery.

All Vorpall Poisons, Enchanted Blade, Silver Aura and Elemental Blade spells work normally. Vorpall tags are to be taped to the bow, not the packet.

Damage Aura or Magic Aura upon a bow confers the ability for the archer to throw packets for the weapon type "Magic." All weapons that fall under the skill Archery will have the weapon type of each missile altered if the weapon itself is targeted by a magical aura of any type. This includes a Damage Aura, Elemental Aura, and/or Magic Aura, and means that each individual missile does not need to be targeted by the formal magic spell in order to create the desired effect.

Bows that are un-shatterable still need to be restrung after blocking.

Real bows and arrows are not permitted.

Spears: One handed spears can only be used to perform thrusting attacks and can never be thrown. A character hit by any part of a spear other than the 8 inch head takes no damage.

Two handed weapons: Two handed weapons must be used with both hands at all times. If you lose the use of one arm (as from a Wither Limb effect), then you cannot wield the weapon at all.

WEAPON SAFETY CHECKS

Before every NERO event, all weapons must be approved at check-in by the weapons marshal. Since the requirements the construction of weapons are fairly strict, it is not unusual for a weapon to be disqualified at check-in. Even a weapon which qualified at a previous event may be disqualified (Weapons do wear out). NERO reserves the right to fail any weapon that is deemed unsafe or hazardous.

Any experimental weapon using unusual materials can fail safety check at any time. Bring a couple of standard weapons with you as a backup in case yours fails inspection. Often the deficiency can be corrected with the addition of a little open cell foam or tape, so it is good to bring these extra supplies with you in case your weapon is not allowed so you can fix it.

If you are having trouble with weapon construction, then bring what you have so far to a NERO event, and you can show it to the marshals who will give you a hand when they can. The old saying "Practice makes perfect" is especially true with both weapon making and use.

WEAPON TAGS

Every weapon must have two tags. The first is the Weapon Safety Tag. This tag proves that your weapon has gone through safety check and is approved to be used for that event this tag will be affixed to the weapon.

The second tag is the Weapon Tag. This is the tag that shows that the weapon is in-game. When you purchase a weapon from a weaponsmith or from logistics, you will be buying this tag to keep on you.

A player may only carry as many tags as he/she has physical representations.

Some weapons can be strengthened to withstand two or more Destroy or Shatter spells. When you have this done to your weapon, you will be given a new tag to reflect the changes. Weapons can also be silvered which can be very useful when fighting certain monsters, as with strengthening, you will receive a new tag. See Smithing on page 42.

WEAPON CONSTRUCTION

Weapon combat is a large part of the NERO game. Because of NERO's reliance on weapons, proper weapon construction is necessary to insure safe yet semi-realistic combat.

The guidelines in this section cover making a boffer weapon and choosing a latex or other manufactured weapon for play in the NERO game.

PRE-MADE WEAPONS

There are a number of manufactured weapons that fall into the NERO guidelines for safety. If you purchase a pre-made weapon, it is your responsibility to determine the type of construction that was used. You must know what type of core the weapon has and what type of foam was used. Latex weapons are not required to have a thrusting tip, and may never be used for thrusting, stabbing or poking. Latex and boffer swords are available for sale and many can be used for NERO combat resolution. A current list of approved vendors and styles for latex weapons as well as latex weapon construction guidelines can be found online at www.nerolarp.com

Make Your own

You may also choose to make your own boffer or latex foam weapons. Making a weapon can range from very simple to very hard depending on the materials you choose and the design of your weapon. The following sections walk through the construction of a very simple weapon, but also provide information about some advanced materials you can try later on. It is highly recommended that you build a simple weapon for your first attempt.

There are a number of weapons that fit within a medieval fantasy setting that are not mentioned here. NERO allows creativity in developing new weapons but all must be approved before use. Experimental weapon types must conform to the basic standards of safety. You should check with the marshals before and during construction so that you do not end up wasting time and materials on a weapon that will not be allowed in the game, even so it still may not pass in all NERO chapters.

Weapon Parts

Below is a list of terms that will be useful to know when constructing a weapon. These terms detail sections of the weapon and what they are used for.

THRUSTING TIP

A thrusting tip consists of at least two inches of open cell foam padding beyond the end of the pipe insulation. If the foam tip is too small, opponents could get hurt with a stiff thrust. If the tip is too large, it could easily break off or fold over, making it useless. All thrusting tips do count towards the weapon's overall length. The tip must collapse about 50% of its length when pressure is applied. The tip should also be the width of the weapon, and should not easily fit in an eye socket. Weapons with two possible striking ends, such as a staff, should have thrusting tips on both ends. For weapons with heads, the thrusting tip may be incorporated into the head design.

BLADE/SHAFT

This is the section of the weapon that is above the grip of the weapon. Blade/Shaft lengths of weapons can be determined by measuring from the end of the grip to the end of the thrusting tip. The Blade/Shaft area must be continuous 5/8" closed cell foam.

Head

Some weapons, such as a polearm, hammer, or spear, have an additional element(s) added to the weapon. The head(s) extend outwards from the shaft, must be a minimum of 6 inches in length along the shaft, must be made of open cell foam, and must be at least 1 inch thick or thicker. Each head can be a maximum of 2 cubic feet. The head must be positioned near the top of the weapon.

CROSSGUARD

A crossguard is used in certain types of weapon and is a blocking surface that is perpendicular to the weapon. This blocking surface cannot have any kind of core inside of it, and can only be constructed of foam, and is a maximum length of 18" across.

GRIP

This section of the weapon is the location where the weapon is held. With the exception of the special cases listed above, this section of the weapon does not need to be padded. The length of

the grip is the length of the weapon from the bottom of the blade/ Shaft to the inside of the pommel see figure 7-1.

POMMEL

The pommel is used to protect the butt end of a weapon; it is located at the end of the grip. The pommel should have closed cell foam that extends an inch past the end of the core and is then capped by a piece of closed cell foam.

WEAPON SPECIFIC SPECS

Certain weapons types may have additional requirements, which can be found below.

BOW

The NERO Bow (referred to hereafter as Bow) must be curved and formed in the shape of a bow. Overall length in a straight line from tip to tip must be between 34 and 58 inches. Thrusting tips must be on both ends.

CROSSBOW

The NERO Crossbow (referred to hereafter as Bow) must be a T-shape, with a stock length of 12 to 24 inches. The cross piece must be at least half the stock length and may not exceed 24 inches. Thrusting tips must be on all ends.

ARROWS/BOLTS

These are represented by yellow packets. Yellow packets are considered in-game items until they are fired and cannot be held in the same hand as another game item while either item is in use.

Arrows are always stoppable by Shields and weapons.

Quiver: An archer needs a Quiver in which they must carry their shots. There are 30 shots (arrows, bolts, etc.) in each quiver. Each time the character shoots his missile weapon whether he hits or the character shoots his missile weapon whether he hits or misses his target, a single shot is lost from his quiver.

Arrows and other missiles (bolts, etc.) are not recoverable items. Thrown Weapons such as small thrown weapons and javelins are recoverable.

Each quiver physical representation must be able to hold at least 30 yellow packets and, look like a real quiver. Each quiver can hold no more than 30 yellow packets, and a character cannot have tags for more than 30 yellow packets per quiver rep on his person. The archer may carry as many quivers as he wants, as long as he has a physical representation for each.

DAGGERS/ONE HANDED SWORDS/TWO HANDED SWORDS

Daggers, one handed swords, and two handed swords all follow the same basic construction guidelines. Each sword-type weapon has a blade, crossguard and pommel, and a grip area. There may be no gaps in foam between the top of the grip and the thrusting tip at the end of the blade.

In the case of swords without a perpendicular-style crossguard, such as katana, the blade area may extend from the top of the grip to the thrusting tip.

MACES/AXES/HAMMERS (BLUDGEON/HATCHET/SAP)

There are five main parts to all maces, axes and hammers: the pommel, grip, shaft, head and thrusting tip. With the exception of the head that must be crafted of open cell foam, all styles are the same basic design. Weapons that do not have areas of 1" thick open cell foam, which have pointed edges, or areas that "catch" other weapons may be deemed unacceptable by any marshal. Axes may have a crossguard incorporated into the design. A Bludgeon is a small mace, a Hatchet is a small Axe, and a Sap is a small hammer.

POLEARMS/SPEARS

There are five main parts to all polearms and spears: the pommel, grip, shaft, head and thrusting tip. The thrusting tip is often incorporated into the head of polearms in order to reduce the tendency for it to shear off on a swing, and the thrusting tip for a spear should be incorporated into the head of the spear. Spears may only be used for thrusting. Spears and polearms may both have a crossguard incorporated into the design.

STAVES

A staff is very simple to make, with whole of the core covered by foam, or you may have two hand holds not covered by foam. A staff must have thrusting tips on both ends. The middle 6" of the staff must be padded with a minimum of 1/2" thick pipe insulation.

THROWN WEAPONS

Thrown rocks, throwing stars, thrown daggers, javelins and other thrown weapons may not contain a core of any sort. Rocks must be made of a 6" x 6" or larger piece of open cell foam, and can be covered with duct tape, kite tape or fabric. Throwing stars, daggers or axes may be made of closed cell foam with no core, and should be cut into the appropriate shape, with tips not less than 2" wide. All thrown weapons must be a minimum of 6" long and may be a maximum of 18" long.

A javelin must be made of 3 feet of closed cell pipe foam with thrusting tips at both ends. A javelin may not include a core of any sort.

Thrown weapons may not be used in melee combat, they must be thrown. Since there is a wide range of shapes and sizes that can be used, approval is based on a case by case basis by the weapons marshal.

WEAPON SAFETY GUIDELINES

Please see the NERO International Website www.nerolarp.com for the most updated information regarding weapon safety rules. There are several basic rules regarding weapon construction in NERO and they are as follows:

All weapons must all within the minimum and maximum length, grip and blade requirements for their weapon type.

All weapons must be approved by a NERO safety marshal before they can be used in play.

All home made weapons must have a thrusting tip.

All weapons must be padded from the tip of the blade to the hand grip. All weapons must be padded with at least 5/8 inch wall thickness closed cell foam regardless of blade size.

A weapon must have at least 0.5 inch but no more than 1.5 inches of closed cell foam extending beyond the end of the core before the thrusting tip is added.

All tips must be rendered safe with tape/cloth and padding. In a melee, it is possible to accidentally hit someone with the pommel or cross guard, so these parts must be protected as well.

All blade areas or areas of the weapon that may come in contact with another player must be protected with at least 5/8 inch weapons such as axes, hammers, maces, etc.

All weapons must be fairly rigid so as not to act as a whip when swung quickly. Under most circumstances, a weapon tip should not bend more than 6 inches from true when moderate force is applied to the tip and the grip is held level. Conversely, all weapons must also have some give to them when contact is made.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

CORE

The core is the interior portion of a weapon that gives it strength and rigidity. There are several materials that can be used for cores including various types of PVC piping, some types of spiral wound fiberglass tubing, and several other types of materials. Please note that you may never use wood or heavy metals as part of your core in weapon construction.

The core of the weapon can be made of different materials based on the size of the weapon to be constructed.

Below is an overview of suggested cores and the types of weapons that can be created with each material.

STANDARD

The standard core for weapons is PVC of which there are 2 types: white PVC used in plumbing and grey PVC or CPVC used for electrical work. The following list uses the inner diameter of the tubing. Please note that schedule 20 CPVC has a thin wall and is more flexible than schedule 40 CPVC. If you use schedule 20, use one size higher based on the weapon you are making.

1/2 inch: This core can be used to make small and short and long weapons. This type of core has more give and should not be used in weapons longer than 46 inches.

3/4 inch: This core can be used to make two handed weapons.

ULTRALIGHT

Ultralight cores include carbon fiber, kitespar tube, fiberglass tube, and wrapped graphite tube. Aluminum core may only be used for polearms and staves. These material can be used to make most weapons, however the diameter of the kite pole determines which type of weapon it is best suited for. The following list uses the outer dimension of the tubing.

0.414 inch: This core can be used to make small, short and long weapons. This type of core has more give and should not be used in weapons longer than 46 inches. Please note that depending on the style of weapon construction, this core may have too much give at the maximum length for long weapons.

0.505 inch: This core can be used to make short and long weapons and spears. This type of core has more give and should not be used in weapons longer than 54 inches.

0.610 inch: This core can be used to make staves, two handed weapons and spears. This type of core has more give and should not be used in weapons longer than 64 inches.

0.745 inch: This core can be used for all two handed weapons. This type of core should not be used in weapons shorter than 54 inches.

CLOSED CELL FOAM

This durable water resistant material is used in the construction of weapons in NERO. There are three types of closed cell foam that can be used for weapon construction: Pipe foam insulation, Pool Noodle, and Camp pad.

Pipe foam Insulation: The most common type of closed cell foam is pipe foam insulation. Closed cell pipe foam insulation is used to pad the blades of weapons, and must be at least 5/8 inch wall thickness. Please note that most foam found in home improvement stores does not possess the correct thickness.

Closed cell foam of the appropriate wall thickness can be difficult to locate. Currently the foam is available from a variety of places;

Merchantswares.com A LARP Gear supply house.

McMaster-Carr (a commercial tool company) and here is a list of part numbers:

Part #4530K161 is usable for .414" kite spar, .505" kite spar and 1/2" PVC.

Part #4530K162 is usable for .610" kite spar and 1/2" PVC.

Part #4530K163 is usable for .745" kite spar, 3/4" PVC.

Pool noodle: Pool noodle is thicker than pipe insulation, and not all pool noodles fit PVC. You should bring measuring tape or a piece of pipe with you when you buy it.

Camp Pad: This material is used to make more advanced, sculpted weapons. The average camp pad found in stores such as Walmart is 1/4" thick. To achieve the correct thickness you must laminate multiple pieces together with contact cement. Weapons made with this material are held up to more scrutiny. Visit www.nerolarp.com for specifications for sculpted weapons. You should not attempt to make your first weapon out of this material.

Open Cell Foam: This material is a less dense foam that is commonly used to stuff couches and pillows and is found in most fabric stores. This foam is used in the construction of thrusting tips, weapon heads and some thrown weapons. The foam should be easily squeezable and not too dense. Alternatively you can also use a car sponge found at hardware stores.

TAPES

There are several types of tape that are commonly used in weapon making:

Duct Tape: Duct tape is the standard type of tape used in weapon making. It can be used for blades, thrusting tips, crossguards, and pommels. Duct tape can be found in a variety of colors and various thicknesses. Certain types of duct tape are heavier and less suitable for weapon construction.

Kite Tape: Kite tape or Nylon rip stop repair tape is a type of tape that is used normally for fixing kites. It is an extremely light form of tape that can be used in weapon construction. It is available in a variety of colors and can be purchased from a number of kite supply stores.

Strapping Tape: Strapping tape is a tape that has strands that run vertically along the tape. It is used for securing portions of a weapon together. Strapping tape does not rip, break or tear and makes a great light-weight reinforcement for cross guards, anchor points, thrusting tips and seams. Strapping tape is not used to cover a weapon, but is used under the duct tape to hold things together.

Gaffer Tape: This incredibly durable tape is used in stagecraft. It is a very dense strong tape. This type of tape should not be used on any striking surface of a weapon due to its weight and lack of give. It is useful for making sturdy crossguards.

Weapon Sock: This is sewn piece of fabric (that should be water repellent) that can be used to cover the striking surface of a weapon. This is used sometimes instead of taping the blade of a weapon. Ripstop nylon is a good fabric to use for this.

HOW TO MAKE A WEAPON

Constructing a weapon requires time and patience, but it is not that hard once you have practiced a bit. The next section will describe the steps to create various weapons, but focused on a basic one handed edged weapon.

In each of the steps, there will be a description of the materials and techniques.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS:

Below is a list of tools and a list of materials you'll need to make most weapons.

MATERIALS

1. Core
2. Closed cell foam
3. Duct tape
4. 2" x 2" x weapon diameter Open Cell foam tip(s)

TOOLS

1. Marker
 2. Measuring tool
 3. Strapping/Duct tape
 4. Saw
 5. Scissors/Xacto/
 6. Carving knife
1. The core of the weapon

After gathering your materials, the next step in creating a weapon is selecting an appropriate core for the type of weapon that you wish to make. You will need to do several things to prepare the core for weapon construction. First you will need to determine the length of the weapon that you wish make. Then you will have to cut the core approximately 3 inches shorter than the overall length of the weapon, 5 for weapons that require thrusting tips on both ends. This allows for padding both ends and the thrusting tip(s).

Cut the core to the right length with a hacksaw. If you are using a fibrous material, like kitespar, wrap a piece of tape around the area you are cutting to keep the fibers from fraying. Take care not

to score areas that will be on your finished weapons. You will then need to clean up the edges of the cut so that there are no burrs or other protrusions. Lastly, you will need to cover both ends of the core with tape so there are no open ends.

2. Pad the striking area

The next step in creating a weapon is padding the striking area of the weapon. There are several things that you will need to do in this step. First, you should measure and cut the pipe foam to the desired blade/shaft length. Remember to measure the blade length to account for the thrusting tip and the 1/2" overhang from the core. Next, you should slide the pipe foam over the core so that a 1/2" of foam hangs over one end. Make sure that the foam is snug to the core; if it rattles then the closed cell foam is too large and you will need to build out the core so that foam does not rattle. Cut off 1" of pipe foam (not from the piece you are using for the blade) and cut it into two equal halves. Compress one of the halves and stuff it into the end of the blade foam. Using a piece of tape, cover the small piece of foam that has been put into the end of the blade.

3. Add a crossguard (optional)

The next step is an optional step when creating a weapon though it is strongly encouraged. Certain weapon types have cross guards, including most types of swords and occasionally other hafted weapons. First, you need to cut a section of closed cell pipe foam of the appropriate size. Then cut a hole in the middle of the cross guard foam and slide the crossguard down the core until it meets the blade. Secure the crossguard to the blade using two strips of duct tape, then stuff the ends of the crossguard with open cell foam to strengthen the crossguard. Close off the ends of the crossguard with tape. Secure the cross guard to the grip by taking strips of tape from the crossguard to the grip. This will secure the blade and crossguard to the grip.

4. Add a pommel

The next step is to add a pommel at the end of the weapon. Cut a piece of closed cell foam so that is about 3 inches long. Place the foam on the butt end of the weapon so that the foam hangs at least one inch over the weapon's core. As with the blade tip, place a half circle of compressed closed cell foam into the end of the foam and cover it with tape. Secure the pommel to the core with tape in such

a way that at least one inch of closed cell foam extends past the core. Make sure that the pommel is secure to the core and is not loose.

6. Add a thrusting tip

The tip of the striking surface must have a thrusting tip. This tip is 2" of open cell foam. Longer thrusting tips tend to bend. Cut the foam to cover the tip. Once the tip is in place, use tape to cover it. Take a length of tape and place it so it goes across the end of the tip and down both sides, attaching the tip to the weapon. If the tip is round, use a razor to cut the corners so the tape conforms to the tip. Now add another piece of tape so that it goes across the end and down the exposed sides of the foam tip. Use a razor to cut the corners so the tape overlaps slightly and conforms to the tip. Finally, poke many tiny holes all over the tip so the air can escape and the tip can contract and expand freely.

7. Cover the blade

The next step is to cover the exposed foam with tape or with a weapon sock. Any striking surface on a weapon should be covered with either a weapon sock or tape. If you choose to use tape, all of the tape on the striking surface of a weapon should run vertically from the thrusting tip to the pommel and should slightly overlap the piece next to it. Do not use overuse tape on striking surfaces and thrusting tips, one layer with slight overlap is enough. Excessive layering may make your weapon hard and un-passable. Tape should NEVER be spiral wrapped around the weapon.

8. Add a grip

The last step of the weapon making process is to cover the exposed grip with tape so that it is easy to wield. Use electrical tape or hockey grip tape spiral wrapped around the grip section of the weapon, so that it can be held easily. If the weapon is not thick enough to comfortably wield, you may use padding beneath the grip tape.

MAINTAINING YOUR NERO WEAPON

Any latex foam or boffer swords must be stored and maintained properly in order to remain safe. There are a few simple things you can do to increase the longevity of your weapon.

Do not store foam weapons in extreme heat or cold for any length of time. Storing it in your car in the sun may cause paints to stick, tape to wrinkle and general degradation of the weapon over time.

Avoid soaking weapons in water and do not use your weapons if they have become waterlogged.

Do not rest weapons on the tips, lean on the foam ends or otherwise mash the foam at the ends. The tip foam will break down leaving less padding on the core, which will lead to failure of weapons safety check.

You may want to consider a fabric bag for individual latex weapons to keep their finish protected while in storage.

SHIELDS

Safety is the prime consideration when constructing a shield. You may use almost any strong material such as wood, plastic or aluminum, but all edges must be covered with 5/8" pipe insulation. The face and edges of your shield may not have any sharp edges, bolts or other protuberances that would potentially cut or otherwise injure another person.

The longest dimension of a shield may not exceed 36 inches, including the pipe foam that covers the edges. The maximum area of a shield is 531 square inches (a 26" diameter circle). The area of a shield includes any cavities, recesses, voids or holes in the shield. A shield may be made in any shape, be it circular, oval, "Kite" or "Coffin" shaped, teardrop shaped or make to another design. The parts of a shield consist of the face, padded edging, and handle. Corrugated plastic, round sled blanks or wood are inexpensive and easy to cut to your preferred shape. You can obtain a handle from almost any hardware store, and then use a 1" to 1 1/2" strip of nylon strapping, or part of a belt to make the strap that will hold the shield to your forearm.

Take care to attach the handle and strap in a manner that does not leave sharp bolts or edges on the outside of your shield and trim any edges on the inside that may cut the shield user. While a shield may not be used offensively at NERO, and may not be used for "Shield bashing" it is possible that you could trip or fall on your shield, or someone else could fall into you. Safety is important, and any shield not considered safe by a weapons marshal will be failed at safety check.

POTIONS

The effects of potions and scrolls are the same as for a cast spell.

A scroll or potion physical representation is not valid unless it has an actual scroll or potion tag attached to the phys-rep. Likewise, a scroll or potion tag without a physical representation is also invalid. If you receive tags without physical representations (for example, after using your Production Points to create items), then it is your responsibility to provide the appropriate physical representation and make sure the tag is attached. All potion phys-reps must be large enough to hold, or appear to hold, at least a minimum of a quarter ounce of liquid. The phys-rep does not actually have to contain any liquid to be valid.

When the potion is used, the "used" potion tag must be given to the recipient or a Marshal as appropriate. To use a potion, you must role-play the proper drinking motions, and this must take at least three seconds. You do not have to count it out loud.

A potion may be "force fed" to an unconscious or sleeping person by someone else, but such a character cannot "accidentally" drink one. You cannot attach a potion or elixir to your collar or shield and "bite" into it to get its effects while bound or in battle. Potions cannot be mixed into food or drink or diluted or mixed together in any way. All potions affect the drinker only, and bypass any protective spells such as Shield Magic or Reflect Magic. Note that potions affect only the drinker and do not give the drinker the ability to cast the spell effect of the particular potion. For example, a person drinking a Dispel Magic potion does not gain the ability to cast a Dispel Magic instead, the potion will dispel all magic on the drinker.

SCROLLS

To use a scroll, you must pull out the scroll, hold it before you, have enough light to be able to read it, touch a spell packet to the scroll, actually read the scroll, and then throw the packet. If your scroll is attached to a weapon or shield, you may not be swinging it while reading the scroll.

After the scroll is used, the tag is removed but the paper remains. The magical writing is inert although anyone can tell what spell used to be on the scroll. You must have an actual scroll phys-rep for each scroll tag.

All scroll phys-reps must be at least 16 square inches (For example, a scroll that is 2 inches tall by 8 inches long would be fine).

ALCHEMY

Players with the skill of Alchemy can create certain contact substances, elixirs and gases. These substance do not detect as magical by Detect Magic. Alchemical effects are not affected by Dispel Magic.

Anyone can drink an elixir or feed one to someone else or apply Vorpel Coatings. To apply other poisons you need one level of Alchemy. To throw gas globes you must have the same number of alchemy levels as the gas's production level. In essence you must be able to make a gas to throw it.

CREATING ALCHEMICAL SUBSTANCES

Alchemy is a production skill and is governed by the Production system as described in The skill System chapter page 33. You may make any alchemical substance that you possess the skill to make that has a cost in the Production Levels chart.

DAMAGE FROM ALCHEMY

Characters can be affected by alchemical substances in many ways. The effects are instantaneous. "Cause" poisons do body damage only, since they bypass armor. This damage can not be reversed by an antidote, but can be healed as normal damage. Berserk, Feeblemind, Hallucinoid, Nausea, Paralyze, Sleep, and Vertigo are all visible to any viewer while they are in effect, so long as they take the time to observe them and ask the affected player "Visible Effects" and the affected player will respond "Visibly (effect)ed". Many substances can be reversed by a specific antidote if taken after exposure to the substance. The spell defensive Poison Shield will not stop ingested substances from taking effect, but will stop all other attacks with the word "Poison" in the verbal. The spell Purify Blood will cleanse the body of all active poison effects present except for Enslavement. Al chemical Solvents, Vorpall Coatings, Liquid Lights, Pastes of Stickiness, and Oils of Slipperiness are not affected by Purify Blood and will not set off a Poison Shield or a Resist Poison.

MIND EFFECT RESTRICTIONS

A chapter may, at their option, restrict the use of the following effects: Enslavement, Forget-It-Well, and Forget-Me-Not. The chapter may restrict these effects in one of two ways. They can choose these effects to be void and unusable in their chapter, or they may opt to allow their usage only against NPCs.

Information on whether your local chapter uses the Mind Effect Restrictions rule, and which Game Effects this rule applies to will be available on the chapter's Web site, and will also be announced at the Opening Ceremonies of all of their events.

TYPES OF ALCHEMICAL SUBSTANCES

ELIXIRS

Elixirs may be drunk like potions or they may be placed in food or drink. This is signified by either attaching the tag to the underside of the food vessel, placing a token in the food, or having a marshal witness you make pouring motions over the food or drink. Mixing two elixirs does not cancel the elixirs. If a food or drink has more than one elixir present, all elixirs will affect the victim and be used up after the first bite or drink. One use of the racial skill Resist Poison will block all elixirs present.

GASES

Gases are delivered by an orange packet. Unlike a spell packet, gas containers are in-game. They work on a single target, indoors or outdoors. Before throwing the packet, the user must announce (Type) gas poison, for example sleep gas poison. This phrase simulates preparing the gas. The "verbal" is not in-game so even a silenced or mute character may use one. If the "verbal" is not said properly then the attack is unsuccessful as the gas was not "prepared" properly (Imagine preparing a hand grenade). The packet must hit the target or the target's possessions and otherwise must follow all spell packet rules. Even though the "verbal" is not in-game, the effect is recognized by anyone who hears it. (In-game, assume each gas has a different color and texture associated with it to allow for identification.) If the poison does numerical damage, the number is added to the end of the "Verbal" and must be said before the packet is thrown. Thrown Alchemy is subject to Disruption.

Note that gas globes, since they are in-game, can be fumbled and stolen. To steal a globe, you must steal the actual globe physical representation itself and not the tag. You may then either go out-of-game to the person from whom you stole the globes in order to get the tags, or can get a Marshal to do it.

Gases can also be put into gas traps. See "Gas Traps" on page 97.

CONTACT POISONS

Contact poisons must be represented by a gel-like substance that can be smeared on the object to be trapped. (Petroleum jelly works fine). If the person applying the substance comes in contact with it, he or she will be affected as well (if applicable). poison shield and resist poison will protect the victim from being affected by contact poisons. Multiple contact poisons which would normally affect a victim simultaneously are protected by a single poison Shield or resist poison.

VORPAL COATINGS

Vorpal Coatings add 5 points to the base damage of the weapon, for a set number of hits per application. They take effect immediately, doing damage to Armor Points and then Body Points after all Armor Points have been removed.

Damage should be called by adding 5 points to the weapon damage (with any other magical or skill bonuses also added, of course).

A hit is used up only if the strike lands or it is negated by a defense, but cannot be saved up to use on later swings once applied; the damage increase is for the first 1, 3, or 5 hits depending on the coating used.

Applying a vorpal coating takes time to apply. It cannot be done with a quick touch in the middle of battle. The tag must be taped onto the weapon. The taping of the tag onto the weapon represents the time it takes, which may never be less than three seconds. If you do not have the tag taped to your weapon then the vorpal coating is not effective. A new tag must be put on the weapon each time a new vorpal coating is applied. Only one vorpal coating can be on a weapon at a time.

ROLE-PLAYING

Role-playing requires you to create a new persona.

You should try to think, feel, move and act like your character. (Keep in mind as you read this that you are the player; the persona you adopt is the character.)

It is up to you to decide what your character will say and how your character will act. Imagine yourself actually being the character you have created, and act as your character would. NERO is a fantasy role-playing game, based in a pseudo-medieval era. Your character is living in a world with swords, sorcery, monsters, and magic; act accordingly.

You may design a character that is like yourself or you can be someone totally unlike yourself, and develop a new perspective on the world. You can create a character that does things you would like to do, but can never work up the nerve to try. You can be a fierce warrior, a sneaky thief, or a crafty mage.

Many people are more comfortable creating a character that is more like themselves. Others prefer to play a persona completely opposite. You can do whatever you want (within the rules, of course).

Please remember to be considerate of the other players. Abusing other characters could be going too far, even if it makes sense for your character concept. Remember that even if an action is "in character" you, as the player, bear full responsibility for the effects it has on the other players. After all, you created your character in the first place. Be sure to read "Code of Conduct" on page 100 for more guidelines.

This concept also applies to such things as character insanity (temporary or otherwise) as an excuse for crimes. If you feel your character would snap for some reason, feel free to do so; however, you must be willing to have your character face the consequences or be able to fast-talk your way out of the situation.

The atmosphere of our game depends on the players staying in character. This means talking and thinking only as your character would. Avoid discussions of modern day events and topics. If your character cannot read, then do not read anything. If your character has never seen the local nobility, then you shouldn't recognize them. Do what your character would do. With everyone doing their best to support the atmosphere, you will be surprised at how easy it becomes to stay in your character persona with just a bit of initial effort.

DARKVISION AND LOW-LIGHT VISION

There is no such thing as Darkvision or Low-Light vision in the NERO world. Elves, Dwarves, Hobblings and the like do not get any special visual ability.

Whatever you the player can see is what your character can see.

LANGUAGES

If you wish to be able to speak another language in character, then you must actually learn it! When you wish to talk in the other language, then you must talk in the other language! This is to prevent someone from overhearing you talk in English pretending that it is another language only to have you say "You didn't understand that; it's in another language."

You do not have to spend any Build Points to learn another language, you just have to find someone who knows the language and then learn it. Keep in mind that in the NERO world, all PC races speak a common language (represented with English) and any other languages associated with those races are dead languages similar to Latin in the modern world.

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COSTUMES

A costume is an easy way to help you establish the personality of your character and to stay "in character." Once you look the part, it doesn't take much to become the part. You can create a simple costume for very little money, and can slowly add to it until you have a costume of which you can be proud.

Your costume need not be elaborate. A simple tabard or tunic with a pair of pants (even sweatpants) or a long skirt will be enough to help you play the role. A long shirt belted around the waist works fine. The selection of costume pieces also helps you to define your character's likes and dislikes.

Your costume should be practical as well as adding to the atmosphere. Make sure you can wear it for long periods in the outdoors. If you plan on doing a lot of fighting and running around in the woods, you probably shouldn't wear a silk shirt.

Washable fabrics are best as your costume will see some heavy use. Try to avoid any obvious anachronisms such as zippers, Velcro, jeans, baseball caps, printed t-shirts, watches, and sneakers. Eyeglasses are all right (and have in fact been around since the 13th century).

Minimum Costuming Requirements: You must make at least an attempt at a costume. If other players see you walking around dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, wearing a baseball cap and carrying a sword, they will probably assume you are not in-game and will ignore you. Marshals will warn you and tell you that you are not in-game. Quite often, there are merchants at NERO events who will sell pre-made costumes or custom-make costumes for you. Please do not use crosses, pentacles, and other similar religious symbols. NERO tries not to insult anyone's religious beliefs and we do not wish to do so accidentally. Personal religious symbols are acceptable, but should not be displayed.

DISGUISES

You are not allowed to disguise your character using any sort of makeup to change your appearance, since makeup is the only way that NERO players can represent another race or physical characteristics

that the players themselves do not have. If you wish to have your character travel incognito, you must use costume and mannerisms.

After all, if the world of Tyrra really existed and there really were Elves and Orcs and Hobblings, you would be able to easily distinguish between a real Dark Elf and someone disguised as a Dark Elf wearing fake ears and face paint.

Certain distinguishing characteristics of a race can never be changed. If you are a Barbarian, you must dress in furs and leathers and talk in a barbaric fashion. If you are a Biata, you can't shave off your eyebrows. If you are a Gypsy, you must speak with a Gypsy accent.

You are allowed to disguise yourself in limited ways, for example, an Elf can wear a hat to hide his ears or a Drae can wear a hood to cover her face. You can wear a mask over your face, provided it is a Zorro-type of mask and not a monster mask.

Even with these changes, if you are asked out-of-game if you look like your character, you must answer yes so that other players will not think that you are playing an NPC.

TAKING DAMAGE

When your character is involved in combat, you should role-play the damage you take! React to the axe cut in your thigh. Say "ouch!" when you take a hit. If someone does enough damage to kill you, then fall down and die. This adds greatly to the enjoyment of the game for all. Just standing there saying "Well, I guess I'm dead" is unimaginative and detracts from the feel everyone is trying to generate of life in another place. Don't overact the scene, just grunt and fall. Go ahead and stagger a little to avoid landing on a boulder.

MAGICAL EFFECTS

In fantasy games, magic exists, and can have devastating effects. You should treat the magic in NERO the same way your character should act accordingly. If you get hit with a Lightning Bolt spell, then act as if you have been hit with a bolt of lightning! This adds to the atmosphere of the game.

PLAYING FAIR

The NERO Game System relies on honesty, and as such, a dishonest player will find it a simple matter to cheat. NERO has set out to design a game that can work without constant supervision. This can be a great asset in terms of ease of play and flexibility, but it has a trade-off in potential abuse. If you cheat, other players will find out eventually, and then no one will want to interact with you. If you do not count hits against you, then soon those you face will stop counting your hits against them.

When word of a cheater's actions gets back to NERO, and it will, then we will remove the offending player from the game, pending investigation. If someone seems to have extraordinary powers, or you suspect they are confused about their skills or are cheating then you should calmly approach a marshal with your concerns at a later time.

MARSHALS

Marshals in our game are identified at the start of each event during Opening Ceremonies. They may also carry identification cards. If you have a rules question, need an official to witness an action, or have any other problem, you may ask one of the Marshals.

ANACHRONISMS

Some anachronisms cannot be avoided. However, NERO makes every attempt to avoid modern trappings whenever possible. Please, no Snoopy shields, smiley face banners or other silliness (and keep the Monty Python bits to a minimum). Do not use cell phones, and keep your soda cans and candy wrappers in your cabin!

GADGETS

You are not allowed to use modern electronic gadgetry such as infrared seeing devices, electronic listening devices, or any other technological anachronistic mechanism. In effect, by using these things, it's as if you have a powerful magical item and it would hardly be fair to the rest of the players.

Justifying Anachronisms

In order for the NERO world of Tyrra to function more smoothly, we have allowed certain anachronisms to exist in our medieval society.

EYEGLASSES

Although eyeglasses did exist in medieval times, they were not available to most people and were bulky and easily broken. On Tyrra, many people wear glasses. For safety reasons you are never allowed to remove a player's glasses in order to handicap that person.

MATCHES

Matches exist in the world of NERO so that you do not have to bring flint and tinder with you everywhere. (If you wish to bring flint and tinder with you to add to the atmosphere of the game, then we will be very happy.) Try to avoid using lighters, but if nothing else is available, they can be used to represent flint and steel.

BATHROOMS

The showers and toilets are out of game for safety and privacy purposes, but characters can make references to them as they actually exist, after all, the ancient Romans had indoor plumbing long before the middle ages began. In the world of NERO, only the very richest homes and inns have indoor plumbing. One nice thing about Tyrra as opposed to medieval Earth is that people on Tyrra bathe more often.

CLOCKS AND WATCHES

Clocks exist in our game but they are very expensive! Perhaps there is one clock per town, probably placed in a high tower. Clocks operate through a series of levers and springs, no electricity of course.

Timepieces include all clocks, watches and small winding pocket watches as well.

Timepieces, if brought by a player, can be used when on a timed module.

TIME

In the world of NERO, time passes in-game at the same rate as it does out-of-game. If a month has passed between NERO events, then a month has passed in the world of Tyrra.

To figure out the NERO year, simply remove the first two digits of the current mundane year and replace them with a "6" so that 2005 becomes 605. This in no way is meant to imply that our games take place in a world similar to Earth's seventh century.

DISCRIMINATION

What NERO is attempting to do is create the days of legend as we would have liked them to be, not as they really were. That means our culture is considerably more egalitarian than a real medieval society. No discrimination is allowed against players in a NERO game. You cannot be denied a position as a noble, a member of the army or any other NERO-sponsored group on the basis of race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, or country of origin. However, this does not mean that the world of NERO is an egalitarian paradise. There are countries and people who do discriminate in-game.

Although you the player are not allowed to discriminate, your character can discriminate on the in-game basis of matters of players' choice.

For example, Kildor the fighter hates all dwarves. He thinks they are the lowest form of life (no pun intended) and he kills them whenever he gets the chance. Players who have dwarven characters that are killed by him cannot claim that they are being discriminated against because they chose to play dwarf characters.

It is very important that all players try to distinguish between in-game prejudices and out-of-game prejudices. It is better to steer clear of the issue altogether if possible.

SCIENCE

How advanced is science in NERO? Well, scholars are aware that the planet Tyrra is not the center of the solar system and that the world is not flat. They are also aware of the existence of real elements (as opposed to the 'traditional' magical elements of Earth, Air, Water and Fire) and there is even a Periodic Table of the Elements which lists all twelve elements known. Lenses for glasses and telescopes are in existence but are generally of poor quality. There are compasses and navigational materials for traveling but PC's aren't allowed to bring and use them.

Scientific evolution on Tyrra has been stunted by the prevalence of magic. Tyrran science is right at the verge of the Renaissance, on the tail end of the Dark Ages, where astrology and magic are considered scientific facts.

Consider NERO's science to be right at the verge of the renaissance, on the tail end of the Dark Ages.

MAGIC

Although magicians, can perform all sorts of amazing feats, we have to limit them because of real world difficulties. For example, we do not have an invisibility spell because it is almost impossible to pretend you "don't see" someone. We also have no flying spells, growing spells, polymorph spells or any other unusual spells that cannot be performed or easily imagined out-of-game.

We once had a Scry spell (now available in very limited quantities as an Interplanar Conduit formal magic) which was removed for its unplayability, we could not answer questions that the spell would have been able to answer ("Where did I put my hat?" "Where will the Baron be tomorrow at 2 p.m.?" "Who in town is thinking about killing me?")

A Truth spell was also removed for much the same reason, how can we force players (not characters) to tell the truth? And (metaphysically speaking) what is truth, anyway? No effect can force a PC to tell the truth.

HEALING

Why need anyone ever suffer if there are healing spells? Well, the answer is that healing spells cannot do everything. If you are damaged (or dead) and you are then magically healed to your maximum (or resurrected), then you are returned to the state your body was in before the damage was taken. If you had a limp before you were healed, you still have a limp. If you were dying of old age, then you are still dying of old age. How do we explain limps, handicaps, and scars? One explanation is that it's all psychological.

If you were injured long ago and healed naturally, gaining a scar, then you are psychologically aware of the scar and when resurrected, it will still be there because your mind accepts you that way.

Another explanation is that the spells or resurrection heals you up to the state you were in last before you took any recent damage.

In other words, if your body healed normally after a battle and you ended up with scars, any future healing would not correct that old injury. You can decide which of these two in-game explanations works for you.

A Cure Disease spell will only cure magically caused diseases. It will not cure cancer, get rid of athlete's feet, or hide your bald spot.

This gives some players fun at role-playing frustrations of being sick: "You mean they can bring me back to life after dying but they can't cure the common cold?!!!"

RELIGION

Although religion played a very large part in medieval society, we do not allow it in-game because we do not wish to accidentally insult anyone's beliefs. Please do not prominently display any religious symbols or use them in your costume design nor use any religious title in your character's name. Always avoid references to gods or demons or religious rituals.

WORDS AND LANGUAGE

Although technically the characters in the world of NERO are speaking some unusual fantasy language, we have thoughtfully translated these words into English for you.

Although it would be fun to have fantasy names for the months, days of the week, planets and other common things, it would be very confusing to play the game that way, especially for players who only attend an event or two a year. Therefore, we stick with the traditional words used in modern English.

We do not use the old English "thee" or "thou" or other Shakespearian era vocabulary. In game, we state that we once used terminology like that but language has evolved. You may note that certain old documents such as the Code of Chivalry may still be written in that style. There may also be some countries or cultures where it is still used.

Foreign and racial in-game languages exist in NERO but you must actually learn them. See the section on "Languages" in the chapter on Miscellaneous Rules for more information.

THE SOCIETY OF NERO

NERO games take place on the planet known as "Tyrra" in most languages. Coincidentally, it is a planet not unlike Earth in climate and topography! NERO is trying to create and represent a fantasy world, based primarily on medieval Europe. This is not to say that your character should be limited by this; you may choose to play a character based on medieval China or ancient Egypt.

GOVERNMENT

Our present-day concept of democracy is a very foreign idea to Tyrrans. There may be some countries that have a very limited form of democracy, for example, all the nobles can vote on certain issues but that is the extent of it. Even peasants who revolt against unfair kings never think to replace the kingdom with democracy, but only with a fairer monarch or other ruling elite. Here's how it works:

The kingdom functions as a feudal society. This means that there is a strongly observed hierarchy. It is not a system of equality of all people. It is a system of duty to one's superior in return for protection and support.

The king owns all of the lands and properties within the kingdom. The king chooses people to administer the majority of these holdings in his name. These people are vassals of the king. Each of these people administer the land as if they were their own and in return they swear that they will support the king, provide troops in time of war, collect taxes, and meet any other duties the king expects of them. These vassals are called dukes. In turn each of these people appoints vassals of their own, called counts and barons. Again, Oaths of Fealty bind the duke with his vassals. Further, counts and barons may assign areas of land to vassals of their own, called knights and lords.

Every person in the preceding group is collectively known as a "noble." Any person who is not a noble is a commoner. They are the fiber of society, performing the day to day work. They are the farmers, craftsman, healers, soldiers, fisherman, and etcetera. Just because they are commoners does not mean that they are cattle to be controlled by nobles. Somewhere between the nobles and the commoners are the adventurers. Adventurers get respect because of their deeds and the fact that they usually have a bit of money. Since NERO is an epic fantasy game, most of our players are nobles or adventurers, not commoners. Although a real medieval society would have many commoners tending fields, cleaning stables, and doing the other day to day menial tasks that must be performed, no player wants to play such a role. For game purposes, assume they are out there somewhere. Every once in a while you might meet a few NPCs playing these parts who have information for you.

Each noble owes certain responsibilities to commoners upon their lands. In return for part of the profits of the commoners' labors, the noble who governs the land is expected to protect them from crime, invasion, and help them when they need it. The noble is expected to provide leadership, an example of proper behavior, and to improve the lot of his or her peasants over time.

The commoners' responsibility is to be willing to pay fair taxes, join the militia in time of need, help their lord administer justice by reporting crimes and providing testimony, defend their lord's name, and address and treat nobles with the respect they are due.

SOCIETAL CONVENTIONS

These "laws" form the basic customs of the people and are followed by all members of the society, from the highest noble to the lowest peasant. These laws are so ingrained in the society that they are rarely challenged. Anyone found to have violated these laws should be shunned by all as a villain and an untrustworthy social deviant.

Hospitality: Any person who is invited into your home or holdings and accepts your hospitality will be treated as a guest with the respect due a person of their class and station. This person will be protected from all harm by you and all members of your household. By accepting your hospitality, the guest also agrees to give respect where it is due and not take advantage of your goodwill.

Loyalty: Any person who swears fealty to you as their liege will obey you and be loyal to you and in turn you will support them give them your protection.

Kinship: Any member of your family must be loyal to you and you must be loyal to them. Because they are family they are worthy of your trust.

Honor: Each individual is considered to be able to defend their honor by the honorable use of arms or magic. This type of activity is governed by a set of rules that differs substantially between commoners and nobles.

The hierarchy of a medieval society is based upon title and rank within that society. The higher your rank, the more authority and respect you command.

In the NERO world, noble title is sometimes inherited and sometimes earned. Depending on circumstance, then, either the King or Queen could be the power. The husband or wife of the noble in power either has a decision making power equal to or just under that of the noble themselves (providing that person grants that power), or has little to do with governing at all, being just a figurehead.

TITLES AND RANKINGS

KING/QUEEN

Theirs is the final word on all matters and is literally the law. Once the Royal mind is made up, it goes without question. They would be addressed as Your Majesty or Your Royal Majesty.

CROWN PRINCE/CROWN PRINCESS

This is the eldest child of the monarch who will inherit the crown upon the death of the parent or whoever has been designated as heir apparent to the throne by the sovereign ruler. They are addressed as Your Royal Highness.

PRINCE/PRINCESS

These are the children of the King and Queen who are not designated heirs (usually all but the first born). They are addressed as Your Highness.

DUKE/DUCHESS

This is a title of nobility inherited or granted by the King that earns respect and sovereignty over a portion of the King's lands (which can then be divided among Counts and/or Barons). They are addressed as Your Grace.

COUNT/COUNTESS

This title is inherited or granted by a Duke or King and earns respect from Barons, Knights, guards, Lords and commoners. They have sovereignty over a portion of the King's lands which can then be divided among Barons. They are addressed as My Lord Count or My Lady Countess.

VISCOUNT/VISCOUNTESS

This title is usually a title of honor given to a nobleperson. It does not carry any lands. They are addressed as Your Excellency.

BARON/BARONESS

This title is inherited or granted by a Count, Duke, or King. It commands respect from commoners, guards, Knights, Lords, and has sovereignty over a portion of a Count's (or Duke's) lands. They are addressed as My Lord Baron or My Lady Baroness, or in some places as Good Sir Baron or Good Dame Baroness.

SENESCHAL

This is a title of someone who functions as the secretary to the holder of a noble title. He or she may perform justice or execute decisions in the name of their liege. In the absence of the liege, they have the power of the liege. They are granted estates, though often they reside on a portion of their liege's estate. They are addressed as My Lord Seneschal or My Lady Seneschal.

KNIGHT

A Knight is a person granted the right to bear arms and distribute justice in the name of a liege or to carry the standard of their liege, and to own an estate. A Knight commands respect from other Knights, Lords/Ladies, guards, and commoners. Some knights are Paladins. These are the knights whose dedication to the Code of Chivalry is so great that their liege has given them this honorary title. Paladins have no special powers except when conducting trials of nobility. They are addressed as Good Sir Knight or Good Dame Knight.

LORD/LADY

A Lord or Lady is usually the spouse or child of a noble. They deserve respect as a noble but cannot perform any noble duties nor own an estate. In some places, a Lord or Lady is equivalent to a knight and can hold all of the same powers as a knight. They are addressed as Your Lordship or Your Ladyship.

MAGISTRATE

Magistrates are granted the right to try commoners and dispense justice in the lands of their liege. They do not have the power to make laws nor do they have any power outside of their liege's lands. Their decisions can be overruled by any noble of their liege's land, but such an act is usually extreme in nature and is subject to review. Although probably not noble, they are treated with respect due a noble and are addressed as My Lord Magistrate or My Lady Magistrate.

GUILDMASTER/GUILDMISTRESS

Though not a noble title, the head of a chartered Healers' Guild or Mages' Guild is often accorded the same respect as a knight. They are addressed as Guildmaster or Guildmistress.

SQUIRE

A squire is a knight in training. Although they hold no power and are not considered nobility, they are treated with respect by guards and commoners. They are addressed as Squire.

SHERIFF

The Sheriff is appointed by the Magistrate and is responsible for appointing and maintaining the Town Guard. They are addressed as M'Lord M'Lady, or Sheriff.

GUARD

A guard is a person granted the right to uphold the laws and distribute settlements to minor disputes within the lands and laws of their immediate liege only. They would command respect from commoners. They are addressed as M'Lord, M'Lady, or Guard.

MERCHANT

A merchant is an upper class or wealthy commoner who may or may not be respected or paid attention to by the lower ranking nobles and Knights, but who would command the respect of the other commoners. Often they can be minor land owners if this is granted by their liege. They are addressed as Good Merchant, or M'Lord or M'Lady.

COMMON TOWNSFOLK

These are people who live within a town, anyone from a tradesman to a clerk. They do not own land. They are addressed as Goodman or Goodwife.

SPECIAL CASES

ADVENTURER

While not quite the same status as common townsfolk, adventurers are nonetheless also not of rank equal to nobility. They are rarely land owners. They owe respect to anyone with the rank of guard or higher.

MAGE

The mage is generally considered the same as a merchant (although his or her apprentice may not be), but unless they are appointed to or inherit a title, they are not nobility. If not in anyone's service, yet a member of a recognized guild, they should be accorded the same respect as a merchant. If acting on their own, they should be treated properly as any other commoner would be for the situation. For example, if this is reputed to be a powerful independent mage, "Begone wretch" may not be entirely appropriate.

HEALER

Healers are treated like mages with appropriate respect due a member of the healing profession (in case you ever expect to be injured).

THIEVES

Thieves are commoners unless someone has granted them a title of some sort. (We're sure the thieves out there will find plenty of ways to exact revenge for this obviously gross injustice. . .)

NOBLE POWERS

Nobility carries with it power and responsibility. Beside showing respect to those who are above you in the feudal hierarchy, you must also obey them. Commoners owe respect to nobles because nobles protect them from marauding monsters, ensure that there is a flowing economy, strengthen the land's ties with the throne, and generally maintain a status quo which keeps the citizenry a few steps away

from anarchy. Because of all this hard work, if a noble gives a commoner an order, that person is obligated to obey it. Although there is no Oath of Fealty, the relation is implied because of what the noble does for the commoner.

Does that mean that the nobles have free reign over the commoners? Of course not. A noble who orders commoners to perform manual labor or pushes them about for no reason places himself or herself at risk of losing his or her title. The noble's lieges are obligated to investigate any charges of wrongdoing by the nobility even if reported to them by a commoner.

In some ways, squires fit into the same category as commoners except that they have sworn an Oath of Fealty to a noble. That squire's oath is also sworn to any person the noble has an oath to as well. Therefore, if Squire Michael swears an oath to Dame Linda, he has implied oaths to Linda's liege, Baroness Jora, and to her liege, Duke Padsworth. And of course, all oaths are sworn to the King or Queen.

If someone higher than you on the chain of command gives you an order, you are required to obey it, provided that the order is not contradictory to orders already issued you by your liege. Suppose Michael becomes a knight in Baroness Jora's court.

If Baron Higgin comes along and gives Michael an order, does he have to obey it? Yes, but only if it is not contradictory to a previous order given by his liege Baroness Jora. This can be somewhat confusing and does present the same problems posed by nobles ordering commoners around, but it is also self-correcting in the same fashion.

If Baron Higgin orders Sir Michael to accompany him on a rescue mission, Michael must obey. If Baroness Jora had previously ordered him to await the arrival of a visiting dignitary then he could refuse to follow Baron Higgin's orders explaining, of course, that his liege

had already given him an important task. If Baroness Jora had given him no specific task, then he would have to obey.

If Baron Higgin had ordered Sir Michael to kill a commoner standing nearby, he would also have to obey. Although no explanation was given, and this seems like a heinous crime, the knight would be required to follow the command.

Suppose the commoner was really an evil doppelganger. Baron Higgin's quick thinking would have saved the day. Had the knight argued with the Baron, the villain might have been able to escape.

By ordering someone to do something, a noble takes a great risk. If a noble gives an order, then that noble takes full responsibility for the results of that order.

In the example above, if the commoner proved to be nothing more than an ordinary citizen, Baron Higgin would be guilty of murder even though he himself did not perform the action, and Sir Michael would be found innocent. Baron Higgin would certainly lose his title and be subjected to the laws of the region as well.

Nobles understand that the power to command others must be used very carefully. Much thought must be given before issuing an order. This is why most nobles will not issue orders to those outside of their immediate court.

A good example of this chain of command can be found in the modern day army of nearly any country in the world. A private who is a member of Company D must still obey orders given to him or her from a sergeant from Company B. It is assumed that this power will not be abused or misused. While it's true that noble courts are not military organizations, they operate using a chain of command structure upon which modern day conventions are based.

This also applies to dispensing justice. Not every nobleperson can act as judge and jury in every instance. Generally speaking, you may only dispense justice upon those who are under you in the chain of command. A knight can only decide cases that result from actions taken on his or her lands. Visiting nobles should always defer to the owner or administrator of the local lands. This overlaps a bit of course: a knight's lands are also the lands of all of the knight's lieges.

Any person of any rank giving orders or dispensing justice among the commoners must be certain beforehand that their superiors would agree with both their reasoning and the severity of the

punishment. If they indiscriminately or falsely submit a commoner to punishment then their superiors should see to it that they receive punishment equal to that enacted against the person in question.

There are consequences for every action.

To summarize, all commoners must obey nobles of any rank.

Nobles must obey the orders of nobles of a higher rank than themselves provided those orders are not contradictory to the ones given them by their liege lord. It is incumbent on nobles to watch those under them to make sure this is not abused. In addition, nobles may dispense justice for crimes committed on their lands only.

GENERAL COURTESY

For the most part, showing respect for someone of a higher rank than yourself is very similar to showing respect for persons of importance in modern society. The average person on the street would not be able to walk in and start chatting with the President any more than your character should be able to chat with the King. Just like in modern society, in order to speak with any important person, you have to run through a lot of red tape.

For example: Say Amilio the Stout wanted an audience with the King because he thought the monsters just outside of his town were killing more than their fair share of townsfolk every Saturday night.

He would, if following proper channels, take the case to a local Baronial guard or to the Baronial Seneschal if one was available. If neither of these were available to listen to the problem, he could even try approaching one of the Baronial knights who may be willing to

listen. Should our hero's pleas still go ignored or his request to speak to the King not considered important, he might consider taking his case to the local mage or healers' guild representative to plea his case for him. They might command more attention. That person would approach the Baron and request the Baron to listen to Amilio's problem. If the Baron listens, he may then elect to

- (1) solve the problem himself
- (2) offer to take the problem to the Duke himself
- (3) decide that the problem is better left alone for now and thank Amilio for his concern; or
- (4) petition for an audience with his liege (probably a Count or Duke) on behalf of Amilio.

If Amilio is the reasonable sort who speaks politely (and nicely), the Baron may recommend that Amilio present his case himself. At this point, Amilio may find himself talking to his Count (who may go through the same decision process) or may find himself with an audience with the Duke himself.

For the most part, no commoner will generally find themselves in an audience with the King unless the King is feeling generous. Adventurers and members of important guilds will be treated with slightly more respect than the average commoner in these situations.

As far as everyday courtesy goes, when a person of noble ranking passes you on the street and their rank is higher on the food chain than yours, you should bow slightly. If a contingent of guards or knights is coming down the road, you give them the right of way.

When addressing another person, and you are uncertain of their station or rank, you should address them as "M'Lord or M'Lady." This ensures that everyone receives at least common respect. More importantly, it adds to the atmosphere of the game as a whole.

NOBLE ETIQUETTE

Among the nobility, many ranks give your character the right to dispense justice in accordance to the laws of the kingdom. This functions much like modern society where people of powerful political or business ranking are entitled to a show of decorum and some preference from society (although it certainly has never demanded that everyone like or never poke fun at these figures).

Noble ranking also requires from the noble people a certain amount of responsibility and adherence to the kingdom's laws themselves from the noble. Each noble in turn is expected to answer to those to whom their station would require they pay deference.

A cruel and unjust baroness who consistently imposes petty and unfair disciplines upon the commoners may eventually be subject to punishment by the same laws she used to abuse her people.

Now back to our friend Amilio. Amilio has been trying to get an audience with the Duke. He has been going through the proper channels and has been getting nowhere, mainly because Baron Wasteland (on whose lands Amilio lives) is a real creep. Amilio, in a fit of frustration, finally decides to take his case directly to Count Chermoney, Baron Wasteland's liege. Amilio pleads his case to the

Count's seneschal or to one of the Count's guards. He will then get an audience with the Count and may tell him of the unreasonable attitude of Baron Wasteland. After dealing with Amilio's problem,

Count Chermoney will then be responsible for dealing with the negligent and abusive attitudes of Baron Wasteland.

Should the Baron be found to have repeatedly treated his people in this manner and should continue to disobey the wishes of his liege, then the Baron faces the very real threat of being stripped of his lands and title and finding himself broke and in jail.

BECOMING A NOBLE

Becoming a noble is a goal for many players in NERO. Nobility offers many in-game benefits: besides being in the middle of many important in-game events, you get real in-game power and in some chapters, an automatic income from your estates.

Because the position offers such benefits, it is not easy to obtain. To become a knight, you have to prove your worth through a series of tests and challenges. Take this point seriously! Simply showing up every event will not be enough; the position will not be granted for longevity.

Becoming a knight requires work. Put a lot of effort into your costume. Constantly be in character. Always be the "good guy" (at least in public). Earning a knighthood is a reward. It's a quest. It's not a right. NERO wants its players to respect you (the player) for all the hard work you have done to achieve that position even if they don't respect your character.

BLOODLINES

Many societies and cultures in the NERO world care a great deal about bloodlines and lineage. In particular, many of the races of the world are concerned about interbreeding. However, with a millennia of interaction among the races, no PC member of a race can absolutely verify, through magical means or otherwise, the complete "purity" of their bloodline.