

FAMOUS
ADVENTURER'S
CORRESPONDENCE
SCHOOL



So You Want To Be A Hero . . .

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How to Be a Hero

So you want to be a Hero...

Take this simple one minute test to see if you have the 'right stuff' to become a student of the Famous Adventurers' Correspondence School for Heroes:

You are having dinner with a powerful and influential Wizard and he starts to make rude remarks about 'Muscle-brained adventurers'. Do you:

A. Kill the Wizard and upset the magical balance of the entire universe by breaking his spell preventing the eruption of the volcano that then spews lava over the peaceful nearby town.

B. Ignore his remarks and pass the salt.

You'd be surprised how many would be Heroes choose option A. But here at the Famous Adventurers' Correspondence School for Heroes, we know that the correct response, is of course, C. You, too, can become a useful and productive member of the Hero community by taking this simple course in 'How to be a Hero'.



THE HERO

What is a Hero?

Hero is the title for which all adventurers strive. A hero must be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. Be he (or she) fighter or wizard, thief or man (or woman) about town; he (or she) is the desire of all women and the envy of all men (or perhaps the other way around).

How do I become a Hero?

To become a Hero, you must first become an adventurer. Adventurers are most often Fighters, Magic Users, and Thieves.

The Adventurer's Guild

Meeting Hall and employment agency for all would-be heroes, the Adventurer's Guild will become your home away from home. This is where you go to have your exploits recorded in the log and to boast with your peers. You can obtain information about who's who in the local area.

The bulletin board is a good place to find out about jobs available and what rewards are posted. Be sure to check out the bulletin board in the Guild hall nearest you for announcements that could further your career.

There is an Adventurer's Guild in nearly every major town just waiting for you to sign in and be counted among the ranks as a 'real' adventurer.

THE FIGHTER

What is a Fighter?

The fighter is the most popular of the adventurer vocations. Simple and straightforward, he views the world as an opportunity to test his strength and courage against the universe. A fighter is one who, when faced with a foe, takes arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing, ends them. He is the artist whose body is his palette. Exercise is his daily bread. The fighter relishes every battle with any foe, for though he is beaten and blackened and bruised and blemished beyond all recognition, he knows that he is the better for it all.



How do I become a Fighter?

To become a fighter, you must begin by developing your strength and skill with weapons. Your sword will become your right hand (assuming, of course, you are right-handed). Your shield is your lifeguard that plunges before you to interpose itself between you and the wave of horrible, slaving monsters. Physical labor becomes a pleasure, for every ache and pain will remind you of those hard-earned muscles. Encounter each enemy with exuberance, for the experience will be exhilarating as long as it doesn't exterminate you.

How do I fight?

If one wishes to become a fighter, it is wise to obtain a sword and shield at the earliest opportunity. We do not recommend unarmed combat against a monster, as you can be 'dis'-armed rapidly.

Basic sword work consists of the thrust and swing. The thrust is the deft skewer of the opponent's mid-section, quick and to the point with a minimum of mess. The swing, on the other hand, is a slicing motion designed to release as much of the opponent's interior components as possible. While the swing inflicts more damage, the thrust is quicker. Preference is a matter of personal taste and whether or not you have a strong stomach.

Defense largely depends upon the use of the dodge, block, and parry. While there are those who believe that 'real' fighters do not need such wimpy defensive techniques, most surviving Heroes attest to their effectiveness. Trying to defeat a monster while ignoring the basic defenses usually results in ex-heroes.

Dodge, in theory, is moving out of range of the opponent's weapon. Your agility is a major factor in how well you manage this.

Block is placing the shield between you and the attack designed to lead you to an untimely demise.

Parry is using your sword to prevent the foe's weapon from similarly cleaving your skull. Quick reflexes and practice make block and parry into true lifesavers.

THE MAGIC USER

What is a Magic User?

Master of mystery, propounder of power, intimate of intuition, the Magic User is the intellectual among adventurers. The Magic User must master his mind to mold the mysteries of the ages. Through the use and control of the magical spell, the Magic User can selectively alter the fabric of the universe and create things out of whole cloth.

Spells are usually learned by reading specially created scrolls that brand the spells upon the brain. They can be purchased at specialty shops, gained from kindly old wizards, and frequently found in the oddest places. Scrolls are of no use to those without Magic skill or to those who already know the spell, so the neophyte is encouraged to inquire about scrolls frequently.

Spells are cast by using the magical energy the Magic User stores in his body. This Power pervades the world, but only one trained in the mystical arts can actually absorb it. The amount of energy a spell takes depends upon the potency and duration of the particular spell.



How do I become a Magic User?

To become a Magic User, you must first find a teacher of the craft. Many towns and villages have Magic Users who, for a modest fee, are willing to impart the spark that will ignite the mental light and illuminate the ultimate abilities of the student. Once the mind has been opened to magic, it can be filled with arcane lore, spells, curses, cures and trivia about obscure creatures that never fails to impress the locals.

Magic Users have a reputation for being mysterious, and much of their time is taken up maintaining this illusion. To this end, mirrors are useful for practicing facial expressions, and a repertoire of moods ranging from 'Haughty disdain for fools who ask stupid questions' (ideal for when you don't know the correct answer) to 'Complete and Utter Concentration So Don't You Dare Disturb Me' (perfect for catching forty winks, particularly if you can master sleep with your eyes open), will come in handy.

To enhance your Magic User reputation, develop your eccentricities. Talking to thin air does wonders for having those around you treat you with respect -- after all, they can't be sure you aren't talking to someone they can't see.

Get in the habit of using expressions like: 'I Know the Answer', in deep mysterious tones. Then smile and say nothing. You'll soon have people whispering 'He (or she) must be a Magic User!'

Common, Everyday Magic Spells

For the uninitiated, only a few minor spells are available. These, however, can become quite powerful as the Magic User becomes skilled in their usage. As with all skills, it takes practice to improve a spell, and as with all magic, it takes intelligence to know when a spell is useful.

Zap

Leyden's Latent Lectrical Discharge spell, or as it is more commonly known, the 'Zap', is used chiefly for offensive purposes. The spell is generally placed upon a weapon such as a dagger. When the weapon strikes an opponent, magical energy is released. Thus the spell is used to increase the amount of damage a weapon can do. It can be cast upon the weapon before it is needed, but only one spell can be cast on a weapon at a time. It is also unfortunate, but this must be used in close combat.

Open

This useful little spell is particularly suited for absentminded spellcasters who tend to misplace their keys. Unless an item is designed to be used with the spell, the 'Open' is limited to unlocking simple locks when first learned. With experience, however, the spell can be used to open a variety of closed objects such as doors.

Fetch

Lowenhard's Lariat of Legerdemain or as it is better known, 'Fetch', is a spell to manipulate objects at a distance. Upon casting, this spell creates an energy field around a visible object and brings it to the caster. With a good deal of skill, it can be used to move objects from one place to another. It is limited to small, non-living objects.

Flame Dart

One of the most colorful and popular of spells, the 'Flame Dart' projects a field of magical fire towards an object or thing. The amount of damage produced is directly related to the amount of experience with the spell.

Detect Magic

This spell is used to reveal objects that have spells cast upon them. It can also be used to find things made invisible by spells.

Trigger

R. Rogers' Reactivating Ritual, or 'Trigger' allows the caster to 'set off' operating magical spells. Thus the magic user can avoid damage from magical traps or close doors with a snap of the fingers. This spell is commonly used in Wizard games.

Calm

This spell is used to prevent a combat situation. The 'Calm' spell is cast when first a monster is spotted. The monster is bathed in an aura of 'Mellowness' and pauses for a moment to contemplate the universe and its belly button. The Magic User may thus beat a hasty retreat. It affects only one non-magical creature at a time and is limited at first to minor monsters. With experience, more aggressive creatures can be 'Calmed'. However, do not try this on dragons. It is not practical to cast this in close combat or where aggressive actions have already taken place. For example, if you cast a 'Calm' against a Saurus Rex about to take a bite out of you, the monster generally just calmly eats you.

Dazzle

Erasmus' Razzle Dazzle produces a flash of brilliant magic that temporarily blinds a creature eyeing the magic user. The duration of this effect is determined by the caster's skill in the spell. This spell is quite effective in close combat.

How to Play the Mage's Maze

The most popular entertainment among those of the magical persuasion is a game known as "Mage's Maze." Each Wizard has his own personally customized game environment, suiting his or her peculiar predilections. While each game is thus somewhat different, all known examples share certain common features.

The object of Mage's Maze is to enable your game creature to reach the finish point ahead of that of your opponent. Since the creatures are self-willed (and often very willful), the only way to achieve this is by encouraging your creature to follow a correct route to the finish. This is done by removing obstacles, placing bridges and ladders, and otherwise providing a hospitable path (or by impeding your opponent's creature).

Mage's Maze is played exclusively by casting spells. Popular spells include Trigger, Open, and Fetch. Some variations use additional spells such as Flame Dart, Zap, Darkness, and Invisibility.

The *Trigger* spell generally activates a pre-existing Shape Change spell on your creature. In one popular form of the game, each creature may take on one of several sizes at any given time. Each Trigger spell increases creature size up to some limit, after which the next Trigger switches to the smallest size. Of course, the creatures also interact in various ways — a larger creature may eat a smaller, or like-shaped creatures may be attracted to each other.

The *Open* spell may be used to remove obstacles or open doors in the game environment. The Mage casts Open, then concentrates on the offending obstacle.

Fetch is often used to move bridges, ladders, carpets, or other useful objects around the game board. After casting the Fetch spell, the Mage focuses on an object, and must maintain concentration until it has been deposited in the desired location.

Flame Dart is sometimes used to create an area of warmth to which the creatures will be attracted. Of course, most spells affect your opponent's creature as well as your own, so caution must be applied in their use.

THE THIEF

What is a Thief?

Sultan of Stealth, Chief of Chicanery, Potentate of Plunder, the Thief is the master of many skills. From subterfuge to housebreaking, Thieves live by their wits. Since the Thief cannot fight as effectively as the Fighter, or cast spells as the Magic User, he seems to be the weakest of adventurers. However, he is also the most powerful of adventurers, for he can get away with murder.



How do I become a Thief?

Agility is an important thing to develop if you intend to pursue the honorable profession of purloining. Most of the skills a thief uses are based on his (or her) grace and dexterity. There are many schools of thought that teach the skills necessary:

Using Stealth is following the Way of the Rat; a slow, cautious scuttle with all senses alert. Climbing is following the Way of the Three-Toed Sloth, which ascends above those who seek it and goes where they cannot. Running is the Way of the Cockroach, which pauses first to assess the danger, then runs like mad. Lock Picking is the Way of the Aardvark, which delicately inserts its tongue into the termite's nest to get out the luscious treasure within. Throwing is the Way of the Dive Bomber Beetle, which launches itself into the air and plots a course straight and true until it hits something and bounces off. All of these disciplines must be mastered before you will know the One True Way of the Thief.

You must become one with your lock-pick. This tool can open doors into realms you have only imagined. The Thieves' Toolkit will allow you to see what you have not seen before, and to go where you could not go. Wonders will lie before you, and become your own, for the Art of the Thief is to free others from their need for material possessions and to teach them that inner peace comes not from what you have, but from what you have not. The Way of the Thief is the Way of the Cuckoo Bird which, by laying its egg in other birds' nests so that it hatches and kicks out all other eggs, reveals that unless you share with others, you have nothing. The Thief is thus the teacher of great knowledge and truth.

What is a Thieves' Guild?

To aid the Thief on his never-ending journey for the True Way, The Thieves' Guild was created. This benevolent organization was formed to give the Thief a chance to socialize among people of like mind without having to watch his purse, for this is the refuge from the petty worries of the world. The Thieves' Guild motto is 'Thou shalt not steal here.' This is the place to find those lock-picks and tool kits you crave. Here is where you relieve yourself of another's possessions and fence the items for cash.

How do I find the Thieves' Guild?

Thieves' Guilds, due to unfortunate social pressures, are forced to keep a low profile. Unlike the Adventurer's Guild that allows any scum off the street to enter and call himself an adventurer, the Thieves' Guild allows only the true followers of the Way to enter its portals. Thus a series of secret signs has been adopted.

To identify yourself as a Thief, you must make the proper 'Thief Sign'. This consists of placing your thumb upon your nose with the hand held perpendicular to the face and the fingers outspread. You then wiggle your fingers while focusing your eyes on your thumb and patting your belly with the other hand. This is the proper way to greet a fellow follower and still retain your pocket money.

When searching a strange town for the Thieves' Guild, it is wisest not to be too obvious about it. Asking the sheriff where you can find the local Thieves' Guild will at the very least make him suspicious of you and quite possibly get you thrown into the local hoosegow. Most local thieves will know the location of their guild, so give them the sign and they'll give you what you are asking for. Remember to find out the password, for the Guild wishes to discourage casual inquirers and spies. Attempting to enter the Thieves' Guild without the password is like picking a fight with a Troll; it's easily done, but you'll be done in easily.

How to make friends and Influence Important People

Knowing who to know is crucial for the aspiring Hero. Here are examples of some of the types of people you are likely to meet, and ways in which you will need to deal with them:

Rulers

While the majority of Adventurers never get to meet the ruler of the land they are in, nevertheless their lives are directly affected by him or her. Rulers, be they Kings or Queens, Dukes, Lords, or Sultans, have a profound impact upon their environment. A good ruler keeps his lands free from monsters, his people safe from brigands, and his adventurers very bored. It is hard to be a Hero in such a place. A bad ruler, on the other hand, neglects to maintain a routine rout of monsters, ceases to retain a trained militia to break up the bad guys, and in short, allows his (or her) kingdom (or queendom), castle, domain, holdings, or empire, to go to pot. This is where real Heroes are made.

Wizards

Wizards and other Magic Users should be treated with respect. Even though they may be testy and temperamental, weird and wicked, or silly and simple, it is best to keep one's calm and be polite. It is better than being a toad.

Peace Officers

Sheriffs, militia, constables, and cops are also good people to be polite towards. It is hard to be a Hero from inside the local dungeon.

Healers

Heroes are constantly undergoing intense and extensive physical damage during the course of an adventure. Healing Potions help restore vital body parts and ease the pain. Healers are a major source of Healing Potions. Never annoy a Healer unless you are covered by a good health insurance plan.



Guildmasters

Guildmasters are a useful resource for adventurers. Guildmasters usually are retired local adventurers and know much about the region. They usually can give information and advice about the local monsters.

Innkeepers

In order to recover from a hard day of adventuring, there is nothing better than a nice warm meal and a snugly bed. Innkeepers are quite capable of exacting vengeance upon a rude adventurer, whether by moldy bread and uncooked stew or by the bedbugs, so it is best not to perturb them.

Shopkeepers

Shopkeepers and merchants are good sources for needed equipment.

Magical Creatures

There abounds in this land a wide variety of strange, intelligent creatures, some of which have or use magic. It is sometimes hard to tell monsters from magical creatures since some monsters are magical. Magical Creatures include fairies, Faery Folk, Shapechangers, Dryads, and enchanted humans. They all tend to be powerful so it is recommended that adventurers approach strange creatures with caution.

Famous Monsters of Adventureland

What would a Hero do without some horrible monster ravaging the countryside, devouring large farm animals, depopulating the peasants, and causing insurance rates to go up? Monsters are the stuff that heroes are made of. After all, it is very difficult to rescue damsels unless they are distressed.

What is a Monster?

Razer of rulers, annihilator of adventurers, bane of insurance salesmen; monsters come in many colors, shapes and sizes. The best way to determine whether a creature is indeed a monster is to observe it carefully in its natural habitat. Here are some warning signs that could indicate a tendency to being a monster:

- 1) Oozes green ichor that shrivels plants, corrodes metal, and smells like rotten turnips
- 2) Eats people with its mouth full
- 3) Collects half-eaten corpses
- 4) Drools, gibbers and slavers
- 5) Attacks first and asks questions later
- 6) Twitches its tentacles in anticipation of torturing tourists
- 7) Will not eat his spinach

Of course, this makes it difficult to tell a monster from your average adventurer. An easy rule of thumb is this -- if a creature attacks, kill it -- and call it a monster afterwards.

The Humanoids

Goblins

Goblins are short, squatty creatures living in large colonies underground. Although they seem cowardly at first encounter, they tend to observe an adventurer and assess his (or her) weaknesses. Once they regain their courage, they tend to gang up on the unsuspecting hero. It is not advisable to go exploring a goblin hole unless accompanied by a party of Dwarves.



Kobolds

Kobolds are distant relatives of dwarves, although neither will admit it. They live in caves deep underground and shun sunlight and outsiders. Small and spindly, they do not fight very well. However, they can be powerful magic users and enchanters, so it best to be cautious around them.

Goons

Goons are semi-domesticated relatives of ogres. Not actually a monster unless you make them mad, Goons are large, ugly, and rather dumb. With patience, kindness, and five years of extensive training, they can be housebroken.

Giants

Giants come in many varieties and sizes. They can be highly intelligent or very stupid, extremely cultured or pure brute, patient and gentle or likely to tear off your leg at the slightest provocation. Always use caution when dealing with Giants.

Minotaurs

Minotaurs are half-man, half-bovine creatures of great strength. They tend to be extremely bull-headed and charge ahead whenever they see red. Some do, however, take more after the human side of the family. When intelligence combines with this sheer brute force, you have a foe worthy of a Hero's skills.

Trolls

Large, sly, and generally nasty, the common northern hemisphere Troll is extremely sensitive to sunlight, so he lives in dark places and travels mainly at night. The skin of a Troll is like heavy armor and resists damage from weapons and fire. Unfortunately, the common southern hemisphere Troll, while not as tough as his cousin, has a disgusting habit of rapid regeneration and can heal wounds almost as quickly as a Hero can make them. Fire prevents such regeneration. In general, it is always wise to know which hemisphere one is in when dealing with Trolls. The beard of a Troll is frequently used in making potions.

Ogres

Ogres are big, ugly and stupid. They are also very strong and aggressive. Their hobbies include crunching bones and smashing skulls. They tend to carry around their prized possessions in chests. It is not clear where the chests come from, why Ogres get them, or how Ogres even open the chests. These are topics of heated debate among scholars.

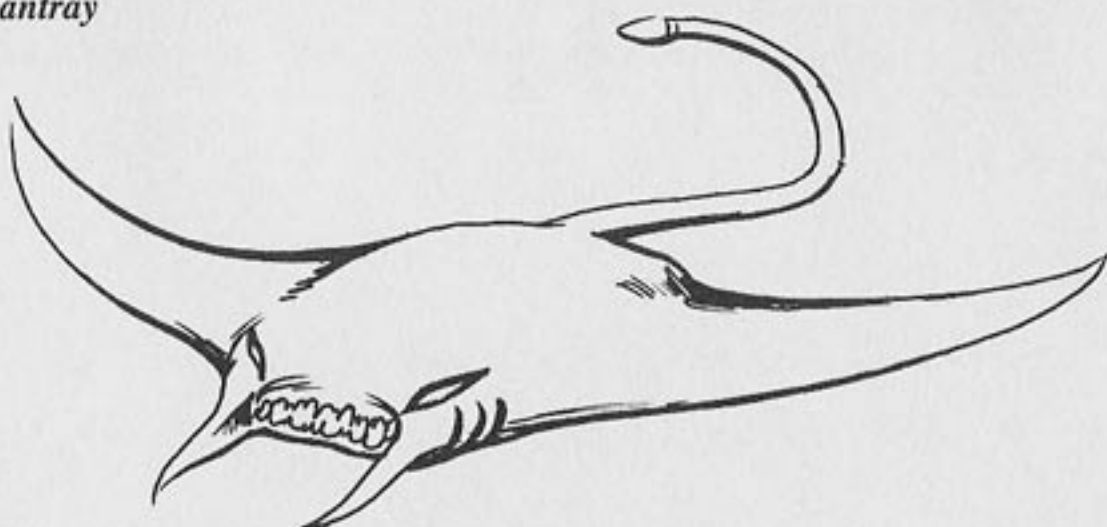


The Inhumanoids

Saurus

Creatures of enormous appetites and very little brain, Sauruses tend to do a lot of running around. The Saurus is scaly and lizard-like with highly developed hind quarters upon which it runs, and small, under-developed front legs used to grasp food. Its large mouth is filled with sharp teeth. Despite its fearsome appearance, it is remarkably easily defeated by the seasoned adventurer.

Mantray



Assumed to be of magical origin, the Mantray has the abilities of camouflage, flight, and controlled lightning. Resembling a cross between a Manta Ray and a Sting Ray, it lives in forested areas where it conceals itself upon the ground, awaiting the unwary.

Moose

A moose is a large, ungainly creature with great antlers. It is prized by trophy hunters and as a result is oversensitive about losing its head. It is therefore extremely temperamental, and has a wicked bite.

Bear

A hungry or angry bear can be a fierce opponent. A quick swipe of sharp claws can make mincemeat of the average adventurer. A bear standing on its hind legs is obviously a bear to beware.

Griffin

This cross between a lion and an eagle is usually found in the more arid regions around mountainous areas, but an occasional griffin has been spotted as far north as Spielberg Valley. The mobility of flight adds to the danger from the knife-edged claws and beak. The Griffin has a curious affinity for mock turtles.

Cheetaur

The Cheetaur is noted for its speed and cunning. This cat-like creature with a humanoid torso has a deadly slashing combination of claws and bite. The northern variety is more panther-like and slower at running than its slender southern cousin, but retains its swiftness in attack. Fortunately for the local inhabitants, Cheetaurs never prosper in the colder regions.



Saurus Rex

This monster resembles a saurus on steroids. Recommended strategy for encounters: Run away.

Dragons

Avoid entirely unless you are already a certified Hero.

The Undead

Skeletons and Zombies

Animated skeletons, although rather disconcerting, are seldom a real threat to a seasoned adventurer. Assuming, of course, that the adventurer has more in his skull than the skeleton.

The Zombie is an animated corpse that shambles along trailing bits of decomposed flesh and extremities. Disgusting and extremely smelly, they are difficult to kill, being already dead. The Zombies' annual convention is known as a Jamboree.

Floating Spirits, Ghosts, Spectres, and Wraiths

Floating Spirits are a minor sort of ghost caused by desecrated graves. Although they are graceful and even strangely attractive, they can draw out the life from any unfortunate who wanders into a graveyard at night without magical protection. Undead Unguent is commonly used to repel floating spirits and is usually available at the local healer or apothecary.

Ghosts, Spectres, and Wraiths can be easily identified by the feelings of intense cold and fear that immediately precedes their appearance. They should be avoided at all cost unless the adventurer is a Wizard-class Magic User or a Paladin-level Hero.

The Unknown

Night Gaunts

No one is certain just what these creatures look like since those who have met Night Gaunts are dead. Adventurers should be cautioned against sleeping in unprotected wilderness areas at night because the Night Gaunts'll get ya if ya don't watch out.