

THE TESTED STEEL

A Fighter playbook for the shining city-states. Written against Wizards & Lizards v0.10 (BETA, not yet playtested).

No goddess marked you. No fire was lent to you. You are good at the oldest and simplest thing there is, fighting with a weapon in your hand, and you do it *reliably*, blow after blow, fight after fight, without a shrine to kneel at or a spell that might fizzle. The barbarian hits harder in her fury and the knife in the dark hits deadlier on its one chance, but neither does it every round the way you do. Steel does not run out, and steel does not miss the way magic misses.

YOU TURN THE ODDS

Your gift is mastery, of your weapon, of the moment, of the shape of a fight. You put out steady, dependable damage that the party can count on. And when the enemy has the advantage, more bodies than you, or one foe far stronger than any of you, you are the one who *changes the math*: the trip that drops the ogre, the disarm that defangs the champion, the shove that breaks the encirclement. You make a losing fight winnable. You have no prayers and no spells.

"Magic fails. The gods look away. A blade drilled ten thousand times does neither." — a free-company sergeant

MAKE YOUR FIGHTER

Your **Might** begins at +2. Agility, Wits, and Presence begin at +0; the tables below will raise them.

You begin with:

- **Hit Points 16** (you are built to be hit and keep coming).
- **Speed 2.**
- **Stress 4 + your Presence** (your spent breath and grit, see below).
- **Defense** = Agility + shield + cover. You wear **any armor, to full plate**, and bear **any weapon**.
- **Weapon Mastery** (below), your years of drill made flesh.
- **Martial Cunning** (a Fighter's edge, always on): when you use the **Maneuver** action, a hit inflicts its condition *and* deals your weapon damage, where another must choose one or the other. You alone wound and disable in the same blow, this is how you turn a stronger foe's advantage against it.
- **Tactics**, a veteran's read of a fight: where the line will break, and how to already be standing there.

Now walk the tables. Roll or choose; take what each one grants.

WHERE DID YOU LEARN THE TRADE OF ARMS? (1D6)

1. In the city levies, shoulder to shoulder behind a wall of spears. (+1 **Might** · **Soldiery**)
2. In a fencing-master's hall, until you were better than the master. (+1 **Agility** · **Dueling**)
3. In the fighting pits, where the only lesson is survive. (+1 **Might** · **Brawling**)
4. On the free-company road, sword for hire from city to city. (+1 **Wits** · **Mercenary Lore**)
5. As a guard-captain, drilling others and learning twice over. (+1 **Presence** · **Command**)
6. Alone, in a hard year, against people who meant it. (+1 **Wits** · **Watchfulness**)

WHAT IS YOUR WEAPON? (1D6)

Your **avored weapon** is the one Weapon Mastery answers to.

1. **Spear and shield**, the wall that holds. (skill: **Drill**)
2. **The duelist's blade**, quick and certain. (skill: **Footwork**)
3. **A great two-handed weapon**, all weight and ruin. (skill: **Intimidation**)
4. **Bow or handgonne**, the kill before the closing. (skill: **Marksmanship**)
5. **Paired blades**, sword and dirk, a storm of edges. (skill: **Acrobatics**)

6. **A plain soldier's sword**, and nothing it cannot do. (skill: **Soldiery**)

WHO FIGHTS AT YOUR SHOULDER?

Choose another player's character, the one you have fought beside long enough to read without a word. While you are within reach of each other, both of you have **+1 Defense**, you cover each other's blind side as a matter of habit.

YOUR WEAPON (1D6)

1. **A blade your master left you when they fell.** Once per day, reroll a missed Strike with it.
2. **A war-axe notched once for every hard fight.** Foes who count the notches may have to Endure fear.
3. **A spear of true city-steel.** Its reach lets you Strike a foe one step beyond arm's length.
4. **A handgonne, slow to load, but sure.** Once per fight, a hit with it is a critical.
5. **A pair of fighting knives, worn smooth.** Once per fight you may Flurry for no stress.
6. **A plain sword that has simply never failed you.** +1 to Strike rolls with it.

ADVANCED ACTIONS

You have **Weapon Mastery** already. Choose **one** more now; you will gain others as you rise.

- **Weapon Mastery** (*granted*). With your favored weapon you deal **+1 damage**, and once per activation you may reroll a missed Strike with it.
- **Flurry.** Mark **1 stress** for one extra Strike this activation, and it ignores the Multiple Attack Penalty. Steady pressure, or a way to thin a crowd.
- **Press the Opening.** Against a foe that is Prone, Staggered, Disarmed, or otherwise off-balance, your Strikes deal **+2 damage**. You punish the very advantage your maneuvers create.
- **Whirlwind.** A Maneuver that strikes **every** enemy within reach at once: each is shoved back a step and the weakest is knocked Prone. Against superior numbers, you break the press.
- **Warding Stance.** You threaten the ground around you as a matter of training, no Defend needed: the first foe each round to break from your reach draws a free **Strike**.
- **Turn the Blade.** A reaction: when a melee blow would land on **you**, mark **1 stress** to catch it on your guard: a hit (13+) becomes a partial (reduced damage, no condition); a partial (9–12) becomes a miss. It protects you, not your allies.
- **Second Wind.** Spend an action and mark **2 stress** to find your feet: recover **6 Hit Points** of breath, grit, and refusal.

The ogre is stronger than anyone in the company, so Bram does not trade blows with it, he changes the fight. He Maneuvers to trip it: Martial Cunning means the blow both wounds (his weapon damage) and drops the ogre Prone. Now it strikes at -2 and the whole party hits it at +2, and on his next activation Bram's Press the Opening adds +2 more.

YOUR ACTIONS

Like every adventurer you have the shared actions, roll 3d6, add the attribute, read the ladder (8– miss, 9–12 partial, 13–17 success, 18+ critical):

Strike (Might) · **Shoot** (Agility) · **Defend** (Agility) · **Maneuver** (Might/Agility, and for you it wounds as well) · **Endure** (the fitting attribute) · **Skill** (use one of your skills). And you may always **mark stress** to push a roll, resist a blow, or fuel an Advanced Action.

AS YOU RISE

You grow over five levels. At **2nd and 4th level** you gain a new skill and a new Advanced Action, a new mastery, a deadlier stance, a harder body to break. At **3rd and 5th level** you raise an attribute (to a cap of +3) and your blows hit harder still. Where the others reach for the divine and the arcane, you reach for the next opening.

ADVANCEMENT

Your company rises together over five levels. The GM picks how you earn them: a level at each story milestone, or one for every three significant challenges overcome (optionally counting hauls of treasure). Fill a level's three marks as you earn them; when all three are filled, take that level's gains and write in what you chose.

LEVEL 2 ○ ○ ○ *competence*

+4 Hit Points · new skill _____

new Advanced Action _____

LEVEL 3 ○ ○ ○ *power*

+4 Hit Points · raise an attribute _____ to +_____ · +1 damage (see playbook)

LEVEL 4 ○ ○ ○ *competence*

+4 Hit Points · new skill _____

new Advanced Action _____

LEVEL 5 ○ ○ ○ *power*

+4 Hit Points · raise an attribute _____ to +_____ · +1 damage (see playbook)

By level 5: about 30 Hit Points, attributes up to +3, five or six skills, four Advanced Actions. Advanced Actions are chosen freely from your playbook as you gain them (unless one names a prerequisite).

PORTRAIT

Draw or paste your hero here.

CHARACTER SHEET

Wizards & Lizards

NAME _____

LEVEL _____

ARCHETYPE _____

ANCESTRY _____

MIGHT

AGILITY

WITS

PRESENCE

HP _____ / _____

DEFENSE

SPEED

STRESS :

SHAKEN ☐ :

SKILLS

ADVANCED ACTIONS

KIT AND COIN

BASIC ACTIONS

Strike (Might) · Shoot (Agility) · Defend (Agility) · Maneuver (Might/Agility) · Endure (varies) · Skill (varies). Roll 3d6 + attribute: 8- miss, 9-12 partial, 13-17 success, 18+ crit.

NOTES AND CONDITIONS
