

Folk Hero

created by by Snorb

The Elevator Pitch

You are an adventurer. The daily IX-to-V grind never appealed to you, laboring away in a dusty store or breaking your back on a farm for the better part of your life just isn't for you. What you want is to get filthy stupid rich quickly, and there's only one solution for that. Adventuring.

The odds are against you; if you are fortunate, you will retire to a life of crapulence (or at the very least comfort.) More than likely, you will die alone and unmourned in some forgotten hellhole. But maybe you'll make a name for yourself. Maybe you'll become some kind of **Folk Hero** in the process.

Building a Hero

Step 1. Choose Your Folk

Folk	Description	Skill Bonus	Folk Ability
Human	You should know what a human is by now.	+1 all six skills	Reactionary: +1 Initiative
Drakkhen	Lizard-like humanoids said to be descended from the Dragon Queen.	+2 Athletics, +1 Diplomacy or Lore	Breath Weapon: <i>See below</i>
Dwarf	Short, militaristic, enjoy themselves their alcohol and their honor and their beards and their alcohol.	+2 Athletics, +1 Lore or Thievery	Dwarven Honor: +1 bonus on attack rolls with axes and crossbows
Elf (Autumn)	Copper-haired forest-dwelling elves.	+2 Survival, +1 Athletics or Diplomacy	Arboreal: +2 bonus on Athletics checks while in a forest
Elf (Winter)	Blue-haired elves exiled ages ago from the elven homeland.	+2 Diplomacy, +1 Stealth or Survival	Spell Focus: +1 bonus on spellcasting skill checks
Goblin	Very short, green-skinned, worship the Dark One and have teeth like a dentist's nightmare.	+2 Stealth or Survival, +1 Athletics	Eat Anything: Gain sustenance from eating any kind of food (even rotten food)
Nekou	Humanoids with feline ears and tail.	+2 Thievery, +1 Athletics or Stealth	Catlike Grace: Reduce falling damage by your level.
Quai	Harelike humanoids blessed with unusual luck.	+2 Lore, +1 Diplomacy or Survival	Rabbit Foot: Reroll natural 1s when rolling a d20 (the new result is final, even if it's another 1)
Tinker	Short mouselike humanoids who know no fear.	+2 Stealth, +1 Diplomacy or Thievery	Fearless: +2 bonus on saving throws vs. fear.

Drakkhen Breath Weapon: 40' range, inflicts 1d6 acid (black), cold (white), electricity (blue), fire (red), or poison (green) damage. Requires an attack roll. You choose the damage type at character creation; it cannot be changed afterwards.

Step 2. Choose Your Career

Career	Career Skill	Career Ability
Hunter	Survival	Favored Terrain: Choose one - coastal, desert, forest, mountain, plains, rivers, swamps, or underground; never become lost, leave no trail, can easily track creatures and forage in chosen terrain
Rogue	Stealth or Thievery	Backstab: Triple damage if an opponent is unaware of the rogue's presence
Priest	Diplomacy	Divine Smite: +2 bonus to damage against undead and fiends
Sorcerer	Lore	Eldritch Blast: 40' range, fries one opponent with HELL LIGHTNING for 1d6 necrotic damage. Requires an attack roll.
Troubadour	One skill (player's choice)	Inspire Courage and/or Competence: Allow an ally to reroll a d20; can be used Level/day
Warrior	Athletics	Combat Superiority: +2 bonus to weapon damage

If you are a goblin priest: Most humanoids worship the Astral Dragon. Goblins worship the Dark One, which they say is a twelve-foot tall human made out of fire. This might or might not be an excuse to set people on fire. GMs may allow goblin priests to deal their bonus damage to humanoids instead.*

Step 3. Choose Thy Weapons

You get **two** weapons; a shield counts as a weapon.

Weapon	Damage	Description
Small Weapon	d4	Dagger, brass knuckles, anything easily concealable
Ranged Weapon	d6	Bows, crossbows, slings
One-Handed Weapon	d8	Most swords, axes, maces
Two-Handed Weapon	d10	Greatswords, glaives, and heavy bludgeons

Your fists deal 1 damage (and are best considered an emergency weapon.)

Armor	Defense	Movement
Unarmored	10	12
Leather Jack	12	9
Mail Shirt	14	6
Mail and Plate	16	3
Shield	+1	-1

Defense: The higher this number, the harder it is to hit you. Movement: How many 5-foot squares you can move in a combat round; also applies to skill rolls.

You can always discard armor during an adventure to improve your movement (and you can always get new armor when you return to town.)

Step 4. Hit Points

Roll 1d8; that's your starting Hit Points.

Starting Gear

Besides your weapons and armor, you start with a backpack that has the following: * A bedroll. * A set of clothing. * A waterskin. * Four torches (up to four torches count as one item.) * Seven days' rations (up to seven rations count as one item.) * Room for five more items.

Each party member chooses from two of the following: * Seven days' rations * Seven days' rations * Flint and steel * 50' hemp rope * Thief's toolkit * Physicker's kit (a physicker's kit has enough bandages, silk thread, silver needle, herbs, and poultices for four uses) * Crowbar (one-handed bludgeoning weapon) * Hammer (small bludgeoning weapon) * Spyglass * Spare clothing

You also have a belt pouch containing 2d6 electrum coins called **sesterces**. (These are abbreviated HS.)

Heroic Feats

Each adventurer has some degree of competence in six skills:

Athletics: Climbing, jumping, swimming, balancing.

Diplomacy: Telling the truth, stretching the truth, the occasional white lie, and flat-out deceit.

Lore: Education, folklore, mythology.

Stealth: How not to be seen, and hiding objects on your person.

Survival: Finding food and shelter outside of town, tracking animals and people.

Thievery: Picking locks, picking pockets, disabling traps, and telling your snake pick from your claw pick.

When you need to make a skill check, roll 1d20 and add **half your level (rounded down), your Movement, and your folk bonus**. If a skill is a career skill for you, add **your full level** instead of half your level. If you get a total of 20 or higher, you succeed!

Half your level rounded down at 1st level is 0.

Saving Throws

If you need to make a saving throw to avoid some kind of harm, roll 1d20 and add **your level +3 and any bonuses**. If you get a total of 20 or higher, you succeed!

Saving throws automatically succeed on a **natural 20**, and automatically fail on a **natural 1**.

Inherent Danger

If it would kill a human, it does 1d8 damage. If it would kill a troll, 2d8 damage. If it would mildly inconvenience a dragon, 4d8 damage.

Combat

Initiative

Everybody involved in a combat rolls 1d20 and adds **their Movement**. Rogues add an additional **+2 bonus**. Higher numbers go before lower numbers.

Attacking

Roll 1d20 and add **your level plus any bonuses**. If you meet or exceed your target's Defense, you hit your opponent. Casting a spell counts as an attack.

Attack rolls automatically fail on a **natural 1** and automatically succeed on a **natural 20**.

Additional Attacks

Warriors get a second attack at 4th level, and a third attack at 7th level. Drakkhen can use their breath attack as an additional attack outside of these attacks, as can sorcerers and their **HELL LIGHTNING**. (Drakkhen sorcerers have to choose between their breath weapon and **HELL LIGHTNING**. They can't use both.)

Characters wielding two small weapons (or one one-handed and one small weapon) gain an additional attack.

Damage

Roll your weapon or spell's damage die, add any bonuses, and subtract the result from the monster's Hit Points. A monster dies at 0 Hit Points. Characters are knocked unconscious when they hit 0 Hit Points.

Characters still at 0 Hit Points at the end of a combat must make a saving throw or die. (They regain 1d4 Hit Points after being unconscious for an hour.)

Recovery

Characters recover 1d8 Hit Points after an hour's rest and the use of a physicker's kit. A full night's rest (eight hours) recovers 3d8 Hit Points.

Characters with a physicker's kit readied can use it to restore 1d6 Hit Points on a successful Survival roll. This counts as an attack when made during combat.

Advancement

Your maximum character level is 8. Once you gain 1000 experience points, you gain a level. When you do:

- Erase any excess experience points over 1000.
- Roll 1d8 and add the result to your Hit Point total.
- Improve your attack roll, skill roll, and saving throw modifiers.
- Choose (or roll) one perk from the table below.

d12	Perk	Effect
1	Toughness*	+1d8 (or 5) Hit Points
2	Tower of Will	Reroll failed mental saves Level/day
3	Champion**	+1 damage with one chosen weapon
4	Companion	Gain a dog companion
5	Physicker*	+1 recovery from physicker's kit
6	Brawler	Unarmed strike deals d6 damage
7	Improved Initiative	+2 bonus on Initiative rolls
8	Skill Training***	One non-career skill becomes a career skill
9	Skill Focus***	+2 bonus to one career skill
10	Mobility*	+1 Movement (maximum Movement of 12)
11	RAGE	Gain rage ability
12	Survivor****	Recover 1d4 Hit Points at end of combat

- You may take this perk more than once. Its effects stack. ** You may take this perk more than once. When you do, you can apply it to a new weapon or one you have already chosen (to a max of +3 damage.) *** You may take this perk more than once. When you do, it applies to a new skill. **** This perk only works if you're conscious at the end of combat.

RAGE

When you gain this perk, you can take a penalty to your Defense (up to your level) and gain a corresponding bonus to damage rolls. The Defense penalty lasts until the start of your next turn.

Magic

You may find rune-engraved stone tablets during your adventures; a successful Lore check reveals them to be spell talismans. You can either break the tablet to cast the spell as a one-time effect, or make a second Lore check to permanently learn the spell.

Permanently-learned spells manifest on your body as a tattoo specific to that spell. You may learn a number of spells equal to **twice your Level**.

Casting a spell is treated as a skill roll. A successful skill roll means the spell goes off without a hitch, while a failed roll means the spell fizzles. A natural 1 on a spellcasting roll is bad news.

The Spells

Blinding (Thievery) *Tattoo: A red and brown eye* Removes a creature's sight for 1 round/level. Saving throw to avoid. Does not affect non vision-related senses.

Cancel (Survival) *Tattoo: An ankh, split in half* One target becomes unable to use magic for 1 round/level. Saving throw avoids.

Charm (Diplomacy) *Tattoo: An eighth note* One creature not being attacked by you or your allies becomes your friend for 1 minute/level. Saving throw avoids.

Fetch (Stealth) *Tattoo: An open hand* Grabs one object weighing five pounds or less and moves it anywhere within 40' of you. Attended objects save to avoid.

Fury (Athletics) *Tattoo: A black and purple flame* One adventurer takes 1d6 damage at the start of their turn and deals +1d6 necrotic damage with their weapon. Lasts 3 rounds +1 round for each level above 1st.

Ghost (Stealth) *Tattoo: A humanoid figure interleaved with lines* One adventurer becomes invisible for 1 minute/level or until they attack, cast a spell, or call attention to themselves.

Haste (Athletics) *Tattoo: A blue clock face, hands pointing to IX* One adventurer gains a +2 bonus to combat movement, Athletics checks, attack rolls, and Defense for one round/level. Does not affect Athletics-related spellcasting (Guild rules.)

Kyrie (Lore) *Tattoo: White and gray eight-pointed star* The adventurers gain a +1 bonus on d20 rolls and enemies gain a -1 penalty on d20 rolls. Lasts 1 round +1 round for every 2 levels you have.

Onslaught (Athletics) *Tattoo: An arrow with rainbow-colored fletching* Hit one enemy within 60' with an energy bolt for 1d4+1 force damage, comma, no saving throw. Gain additional bolts at 3rd, 5th, and 7th level.

Phase (Thievery) *Tattoo: A humanoid figure passing through a solid line* Travel through solid objects, such as walls and living creatures. Lasts one round/level.

Protect (Lore) *Tattoo: A blue and white shield* One adventurer gains a +2 bonus to Defense for one minute. Bonus increases by +1 at 3rd and 6th levels.

Radiance (Lore) *Tattoo: A blue and white eight-pointed star* You shed light like a torch for 1 hour/level. Undead and fiends take 1d6 radiant damage if they start their turn within this light.

Repel (Athletics) *Tattoo: A directional arrow with a serrated trail* Push one creature up to 15'. Saving throw to avoid. Creatures pushed into larger objects take 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

Resta (Survival) *Tattoo: Four blue and teal sparkles* One adventurer recovers 1d8 Hit Points. Increases to 2d8+1 Hit Points at 3rd level and 3d8+3 Hit Points at 5th.

Sanctum (Diplomacy) *Tattoo: A blue runic circle* For one round/level, anyone who wants to target you must make a saving throw to do so. Otherwise, they waste their action or choose another target.

Scorch (Athletics) *Tattoo: Red and orange flames* Hits every creature in a 15' cone for 1d4 fire damage/level (up to 5d4 fire damage.) Saving throw halves damage.

Shell (Survival) *Tattoo: A multicolored swirl of energy* Grants resistance to one form of energy damage for 1 minute/level.

Shock (Athletics) *Tattoo: A lightning bolt* While you are outside, hit one enemy with a lightning bolt for 1d8 electricity damage every round. Lasts 1 round +1 for every 2 levels you have. Requires an attack roll each round.

Shunt (Thievery) *Tattoo: A small pyramid in two places at once* You may teleport up to 30', so long as you can see your destination.

Slow (Stealth) *Tattoo: A red clock face, hands pointing to III* One enemy has a -2 penalty to combat movement, Athletics skill checks, attack rolls, and Defense for one round/level. Saving throw at the start of the turn ends this effect.

Travel (Thievery) *Tattoo: An arrow of twisted lines* One adventurer may walk along walls, on ceilings, and on the surface of liquids as if they were solid ground. Lasts 1 round/level.

Valor (Survival) *Tattoo: An upraised sword* One adventurer gains a +2 bonus on saving throws vs. mental effects for one round/level.

Vision (Lore) *Tattoo: A bluish-gray eye* Roll 2d20 and set them aside. Any time over the next hour you may replace an adventurer's or an enemy's d20 roll with one of those two dice. Starting at 7th level you roll 3d20 instead.

The Bad News

If you rolled a natural 1 trying to cast a spell, Bad News happens. A successful saving throw against Bad News "only" lands you on your ass for a few seconds. Otherwise, roll d66 (two six-sided dice, one's the tens and one's the ones) and check to see what happens.

11-14: Mana Drain Choose one spell, randomly or maliciously. You lose access to it for the rest of the day.

15-22: Mana Burn Take 1d8 necrotic damage for each spell you have learned. Characters reduced to 0 Hit Points erupt into unholy purple flames and die in extreme agony.

23-26: Null You cannot cast spells for 1d6 hours. The GM rolls *this* in secret.

31-34: (Un)friendly Fire The spell works as normal, but targets one random adventurer or enemy.

35-42: Naptime You drop into a deep sleep for 2d6 minutes, rolled in secret by the GM. Nothing can rouse you from this sleep save the passage of time.

43-46: The Harpersleep You drop into a deep sleep for 2d6 days, rolled in secret by the GM. You take 1d6 damage every three days unless your companions drip-feed you a pint of water during that time.

51-54: Curse of Restlessness You cannot sleep for 1d6 days. This prevents you from getting any natural healing or recovering abilities spent.

55-62: Foreshadowing *This* spell works perfectly fine. The next 1d6 spells (rolled in secret by the GM) you cast roll on this table.

63-65: The Summoning You instead summon an elemental champion (air, earth, fire, or water, GM's choice). The elemental champion has its own agency and agenda, and may or may not be hostile to you.

66: REALLY Bad News What happens next is too horrifying to describe. Let's just say, oh, I don't know... you die as a result. You are dead, okay? Trust me on this one.

Inspiration

Folk Hero is inspired by *Searchers of the Unknown* (specifically, the *Target 20* edition) and one of its spinoffs whose name I'm... not *entirely* sure I'm allowed to fully speak here, but I think I can get away with *Here is Some #%&\$ing D&D* instead.