



SCIMITAR

Roleplaying
System
4th Edition

Complete Rules for Character
Creation, Skills & Combat



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About this Scimitar⁴ Edition

Previous incarnations of Scimitar combined the game setting with extensive rules. This new Lite Edition has been stripped down and made to be as simple and accessible as possible.

It contains only the basic rules that you need to get gowing. We will follow this with a companion book cover Scimitars Magic System.

The Thayathorn Game world is now published seperately as a System Free world. The Scimitar⁴ game system will blend in seamlessly with it if you so choose, however if you have your own favourorite system, go ahead and use what you like and are used to.

Scimitar⁴ is free. You can download it for free, if you wish to purchase hardcopies, we sell them at cost price - Widderpress does not charge anything above what the printers charge. Links for more information are at the end of this book.

Introduction & Core Mechanics



Welcome to Scimitar

If you're reading this, you've probably decided that you'd like to try running or playing *Scimitar*. Good choice.

This game was built to be fast, flexible, and — most importantly — fun. It doesn't need an encyclopaedia of rules to make sense; what it does need is imagination, a few dice, and players who enjoy a good story.

This isn't a game about optimising character sheets or memorising charts. It's a game about people — their courage, their flaws, those truly lucky moments and those ridiculously bad decisions that we will re-tell with fondness for years to come — and the dice are just there to keep things honest. If a rule ever gets in the way of the story, make a quick ruling and carry on. The rules exist to serve the story, not the other way around.

What You'll Need

You'll need:

- **Two six-sided dice** (yes, just ordinary ones)
- **Paper and pencil** for notes and character sheets
- **A Game Master** — that's the person who sets the scene, plays everyone else in the world, and keeps things moving
- **A few players** who are ready to take some risks and have a laugh doing it

That's it. Everything else — monsters, cities, gold, betrayal, and glory — you'll build together.

Rolling Dice in Scimitar

Almost everything in *Scimitar* comes down to one of three rolls: the **Skill Roll**, the **Opposed Roll**, and the **High Dice**.

The Skill Roll

Whenever you try to do something difficult — climb a wall, fire a pistol, sweet-talk a suspicious guard — you'll make a Skill Roll.

- Roll **two six-sided dice**.
- Add your **Skill Level** (and any modifier the GM gives you) to *each* die.
- If either die comes up a six, reroll it and add your skill bonus again. Keep rerolling sixes for as long as they keep coming up.

Once you have your total, the GM compares it to a **Target Number** to decide how well you did.

Example: Skill Roll

Lira is trying to leap between two rooftops. She has Acrobatics 2 and rolls 5 and 6.

She adds +2 to both dice: $(5 + 2) + (6 + 2) = 15$.

Because she rolled a six, she rerolls it, getting a 3, and adds another +2 — for a final total of 20.

The GM says this is a Challenging jump (Target 18), so Lira lands perfectly, coat flaring in the wind.

Task Difficulty

Every Skill Roll tries to beat a **Target Number**, or in some cases counts how many **Benchmarks** it clears. The harder the task, the higher the number.

A Target Number is set by the GM — beat it, and you succeed. A Benchmark Number is used for open-ended rolls, where instead of a single pass/fail you count how many Benchmarks your result clears (used for things like Augmentation, below).

Task Difficulty	Target Number	Benchmarks
Simple	4+	1
Routine	8+	2
Average	12+	3
Challenging	18+	4
Difficult	24+	5
Formidable	36+	6

You'll find this chart on the character sheet. Most of the time you won't need to look it up — after a few sessions you'll know instinctively what counts as *Challenging* and what's merely *Routine*.

Negative Modifiers

Not every roll goes your way. Sometimes you’re trying something you’ve never learned. Sometimes you’re exhausted, off-balance, or simply having a terrible day. Negative modifiers represent all of that.

Negative modifiers come off your final total, not off each die. Roll 2, 6, 5 (total 13) with a –1 penalty, and your final result is 12. Simple — no need to apply penalties die by die.

Penalties stack. You can easily find several bad things hitting you at once:

- Untrained skill (using a skill outside your clusters): –2
- Fatigued: –1
- Wounded: penalty per the Universal Wound Chart (see Section 6)
- Distracted, stunned, panicked: GM’s call

Example

Lira, bleeding and exhausted, tries to vault a fence. Her total penalties add up to –3. She rolls well — but not that well — and ends up in a hedge. Kellan pulls her out, laughing too loudly.

The Opposed Roll

Sometimes the dice decide not just whether you succeed, but whether you beat someone else doing the same thing. That’s an **Opposed Roll**. Both sides roll a Skill Roll as normal — the higher total wins.

Example: Opposed Roll

Kellan is trying to bluff a watch-captain. Kellan’s Deception 2 faces the captain’s Insight 1.

Kellan rolls 4 and 3, adding +2 to each: total 11. The captain rolls 5 and 1, adding +1 to each: total 8.

Kellan keeps a straight face; the captain believes every word.

The High Dice

Not everything needs skill — sometimes fate just has its say. For random outcomes, locations, or pure luck checks, use the **High Dice**.

Roll two six-sided dice **one after the other**. Read the first as the tens digit and the second as the ones digit, giving a result from 11 to 66. For example, a 4 then a 6 means 46.

Example: High Dice

You’re drawing lots to see who gets the short straw. You roll a 1, then a 9 — that’s 19. Bad luck.

Augmentation Rolls

Sometimes the best results come from teamwork rather than raw talent. **Augmentation** lets a character support someone else’s Skill Roll using a related skill of their own — the scout helping the tracker, the scholar helping the negotiator, the ranger helping the soldier aim.

How it works:

- The acting character declares their primary Skill Roll.
- A second character offers support with a relevant skill, rolling it as an open Benchmark roll (2d6 + skill, no target number — just see how many Benchmarks they clear).
- The number of Benchmarks cleared becomes a bonus added to the total primary roll.

Augmentation is built to be a cooperative mechanic — someone’s specific knowledge genuinely improving the action. A character may occasionally augment their own roll if the GM agrees the two skills are clearly linked, but this should be the exception, not the norm.

Example — Lira Supports Kellan’s Hunt

Kellan is tracking a wounded boar. Lira, no tracker herself, has decent Animal Lore and offers to help, scanning the undergrowth for signs of where a wounded animal would go to ground.

She rolls her Animal Lore as an open Benchmark roll and clears 2 Benchmarks (Routine). Kellan adds +2 to his Tracking roll. Between the two of them, the boar doesn’t get far.

Final Thought for New Players

The rules in this section form the heartbeat of *Scimitar*. Learn them, and everything else — combat, travel, intrigue — flows from the same simple rhythm:

Roll two dice, add your skill, reroll sixes, and tell the story that follows.

Attributes & Derived Stats



Meet Kellan & Lira

Before we start crunching numbers, let’s introduce our two sample characters. We’ve already met them in passing. **Kellan Veyne** is a broad-shouldered mercenary, the kind who prefers a straight fight to a crooked deal.

His sister, **Lira Veyne**, moves through the world with a lighter step and a quicker grin — streetwise, sharp-eyed, and only occasionally honest.

We’ll use them throughout this book to show how the rules work in practice. Even within the same family, two characters can feel completely different once the dice start talking.

What Are Attributes?

Attributes describe what your character is naturally good — or bad — at. They’re the foundation for every skill, roll, and daring act you’ll attempt.

There are three layers:

- **Master Attributes** — the core of who you are.
- **Slave Attributes** — secondary traits that stem from those cores, shaped by your choices.
- **Derived Attributes** — the practical numbers (health, fatigue, movement) that fall out of the first two.

Master Attributes

These are your big four: **Strength, Agility, Intellect**, and **Presence**. They drive everything else your character can do.

To determine each, roll **High Dice** (read as 11–66) and cross-reference the result below to find your modifier. This modifier is your base bonus whenever no specific skill applies.

Roll	Modifier	Description
1–13	–3	Pathetic
14–22	–2	Poor
23–32	–1	Slight
33–44	+0	Average
45–54	+1	Fair
55–63	+2	Impressive
64–66	+3	Exceptional
67+	+4	Phenomenal

Example: Rolling Master Attributes

Kellan rolls for Strength and gets 58 → +2 (Impressive). For Agility he rolls 41 → +1 (Fair).

Lira rolls 35 for Strength (+0) and 61 for Agility (+2).

Right away we can tell which sibling lifts the anvil and which steals the lockpick.

Slave Attributes

Each Master Attribute governs two Slave Attributes:

Master	Slaves
Strength	Stamina & Endurance
Agility	Dexterity & Reaction
Intellect	Willpower & Observation
Presence	Appearance & Aura

For each pair, choose which side is **Dominant (D)**, **Equal (E)**, or **Subservient (S)** — this reflects which trait your character leans on more. Then use the table below to find each one’s modifier.

Master Score	Dominant	Equal	Subservient
<11	−1	−2	−4
12–17	−1	−2	−3
18–23	+0	−1	−2
24–29	+0	−1	−2
30–37	+0	0	−1
38–43	+1	0	−1
44–48	+1	0	0
49–53	+2	+1	0
54–60	+2	+1	0
61–65	+3	+2	+1
66<	+4	+2	+1

Example: Assigning Slave Attributes

*Kellan decides he’s more enduring than quick to tire, so under Strength he marks **Endurance (D)** and **Stamina (S)**. With a Strength roll of 58 (in the 54–60 band), that gives Endurance +2 and Stamina +0.*

*Lira values her sharp reflexes over fine control, so under Agility she marks **Reaction (D)** and **Dexterity (S)**. With a roll of 61 (in the 61–65 band), that gives Reaction +3 and Dexterity +1.*

These small choices shape who they are in play as much as the dice do.

Derived Attributes

Now we use the Slave modifiers above to work out the numbers that define health, stamina, and movement. Each derived stat works the same way: find your value in each of the two columns, then **add the two results together**.

Hit Total

This shows how much punishment you can take before things go dark. It isn’t a precise countdown — you might fall before you hit zero, or hang on past it — but it’s your overall measure of resilience.

Endurance Mod.	Value	Stamina Mod.	Value
−4	5	−4	0
−3	6	−3	1
−2	7	−2	2
−1	8	−1	3
0	9	0	4
+1	10	+1	5
+2	11	+2	6
+3	12	+3	7
+4	13	+4	8

Hit Total = Endurance column value + Stamina column value.

Example: Hit Total

*Kellan has Endurance +2 and Stamina +1. Cross-reference gives 11 + 5 = **16 Hit Total** — tough enough to shrug off a few bruises.*

*Lira has Endurance 0 and Stamina +1, giving 9 + 5 = **14 Hit Total**. She’s wiry, not fragile, but she’d rather dodge than trade blows.*

Shock and Death

Hits show how hurt you are. **Shock** and **Death Rolls** decide whether you stay on your feet or fall for good. The full procedure is covered in Section 6 (Armour, Damage & Healing) — here’s the short version:

- Whenever you take a wound, make a **Shock Roll**: roll 2d6 (rerolling sixes) plus your **Strength modifier**, and try to beat the damage you just took.
- If you fail the Shock Roll, make a **Death Roll** the same way, using your **Endurance modifier** instead.
- If you’re already below 0 Hits, every wound forces both rolls, and the targets are doubled.
- A character automatically dies if their negative Hits reach or exceed their full Hit Total.

That’s all you need to know for now — we’ll walk through it with examples once combat is on the table.

Fatigue

Fatigue represents physical and mental strain — how long you can keep going before exhaustion sets in.

Stamina Mod.	Value	Willpower Mod.	Value
−4	−1	−4	−1
−3	−1	−3	−1
−2	0	−2	0
−1	0	−1	0
0	0	0	0
+1	+1	+1	+1
+2	+1	+2	+1
+3	+2	+3	+2
+4	+3	+4	+3

Fatigue Score = Stamina column value + Willpower column value.

When a character attempts something strenuous, make a Fatigue Skill Roll against a difficulty the GM sets for the task. If the roll fails, the character becomes **Fatigued**: a −1 penalty to all rolls until they get a chance to recover (see Section 6 for recovery times).

Example: Fatigue

Lira has Stamina +1 and Willpower +1, giving a Fatigue Score of +2. After a long chase, she rolls 5 (+2) and 2 (+2) for a total of 11 against an Average (12+) target — she fails, and becomes Fatigued until she can rest.

Kellan, swinging a great-axe for ten rounds straight, rolls 20 against a Challenging (18+) target. He’s fine, and keeps fighting.

Movement Rate

This shows how many paces you can cover in a single combat round (about ten seconds). Double it for running, triple it for sprinting.

Agility Mod.	Value	Strength Mod.	Value
−3	8	−3	2
−2	9	−2	2
−1	9	−1	3
0	10	0	3
+1	11	+1	3
+2	11	+2	4
+3	12	+3	4
+4	12	+4	5
+5	13	+5	5

Movement Rate = Agility column value + Strength column value.

Example: Movement

Kellan (Agility +1, Strength +2) = 11 + 4 = **15 paces per round**.

Lira (Agility +2, Strength 0) = 11 + 3 = **14 paces per round**. Kellan’s the faster mover for once — she’ll never let him forget that she’s still the more agile of the two.

Action Attributes

A few stats are used specifically in combat and emergencies — simple cross-references from attributes you already have:

Action Attribute	Based On
Initiative Bonus	Reaction
Surprise Bonus	Observation

Example

When ambushed, Lira uses her Observation (+2) to spot the danger early. Kellan’s Reaction (+1) means he’s usually half a beat behind.

The Faith Pool

As your character grows, you’ll meet situations where a single roll doesn’t quite capture the full weight of conviction, discipline, or sheer bloody-mindedness. That’s what the **Faith Pool** is for.

Your Faith Pool represents two things: your **total capacity** for inner certainty (your maximum), and your **current** reserve of it. Different beliefs and cultures will flavour this differently at the table, but the mechanics stay the same.

Regaining Faith. You recover 1 Faith Point whenever you meaningfully participate in a ritual, ceremony, or moment of real spiritual significance to your character — the GM decides what counts. Rare events may restore more.

Spending Faith. At any time — even after seeing a bad roll — you may spend 1 Faith Point to **force a reroll of any single die**: one die from a Skill Roll, an Opposed Roll, a High Dice check, even the GM’s die, if appropriate.

Example

Lira, normally indifferent to such things, finds herself cornered and rolls terribly. She spends 1 Faith Point. “I don’t pray,” she mutters, “but if anyone’s listening...” Reroll. Success. Kellan claims her luck likes her more than she admits.

Choosing Your Starting Faith. Decide how strongly your character holds their beliefs at creation — and choose honestly, because you’ll be expected to roleplay it. Extreme positions (*Contemptuous* or *Fanatical*) should be cleared with the GM first.

Faith Level	Description	Faith Pool Total
Contemptuous	Openly hostile to belief	0
Indifferent	Doesn’t care either way	1
Non-Practicing	Goes through the motions, rarely engages	2
Devoted	Attends rituals and genuinely believes	3
Devout	Deeply committed	4
Fanatical	Consumed by belief	5

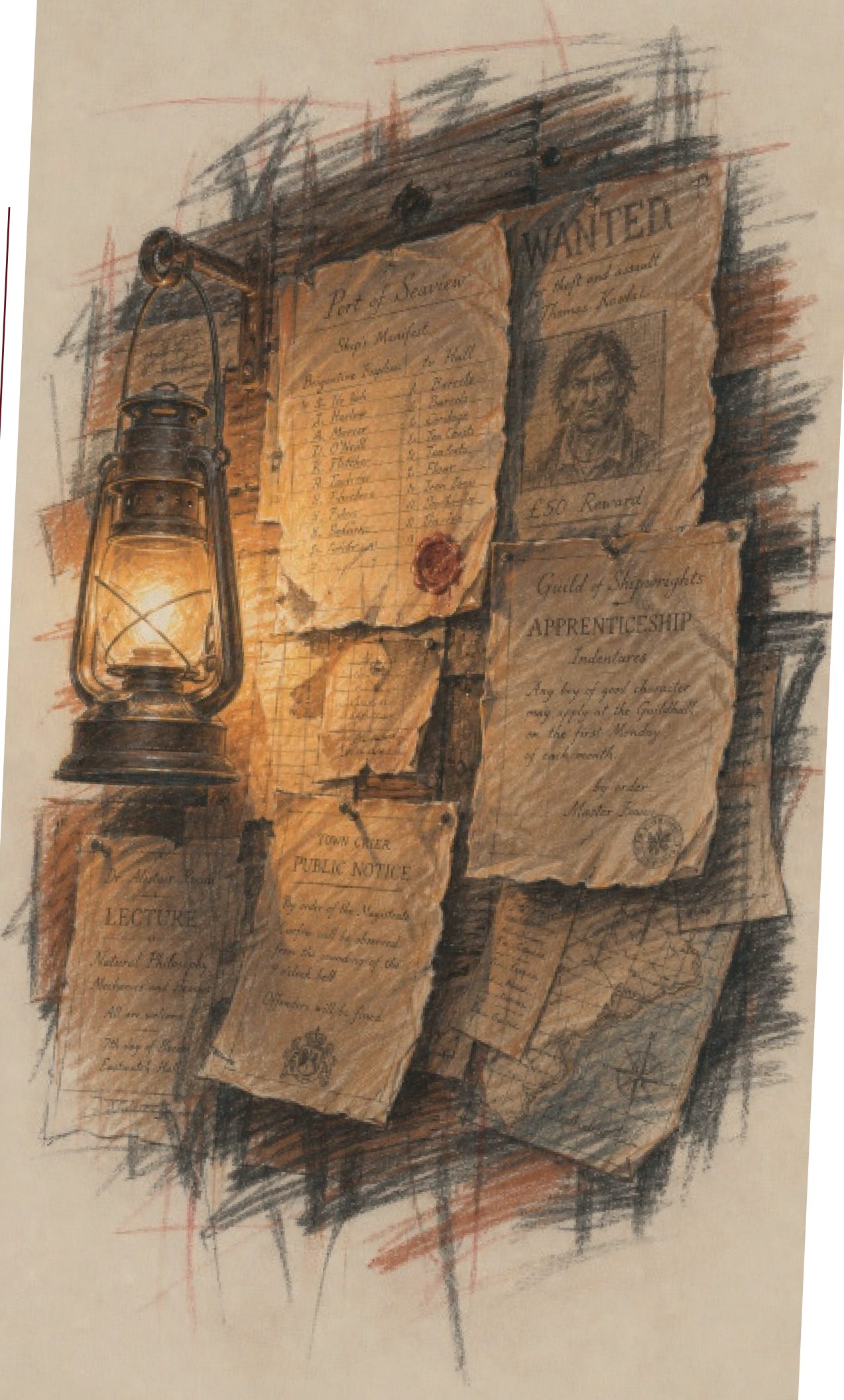
Your total is your maximum pool. Your starting **current** value is normally equal to your total, unless the story suggests otherwise.

Summary

That’s your character’s framework built. In just a few rolls and choices we’ve shaped who Kellan and Lira are — not only in numbers, but in attitude. You can already picture how they’ll behave when blades flash or tempers flare.

Next, we turn to **Occupations & Skill Clusters**, where those attributes come to life as real abilities — the things our two siblings have learned from a lifetime of work, travel, and trouble.

Occupations & Skill Clusters



Finding Your Place in the World

By now you know what your character *can* do — their raw abilities, reflexes, and endurance. The next step is figuring out *who they are* and *how they learned* to use those gifts.

That’s what **Occupations** and **Skill Clusters** are for. They tell the story of your character’s life before the adventure began. Were they a blacksmith, a scholar, a thief, or a wandering mercenary? Or something this book never thought of?

In *Scimitar*, you aren’t locked into predefined classes. Occupations are flexible templates, and **Skill Clusters** are collections of related skills. You can mix, match, or invent new ones with your Game Master. Everything that follows is a starting point to inspire you, not a cage to trap you in.

Kellan & Lira Choose Their Paths

Kellan Veyne, the elder, has spent years swinging blades for coin. He’s fought under banners he barely remembers and learned to trust his armour more than politics. He’s heading for the **Mercenary** occupation — a practical mix of Combat, Streets, and Wilderness clusters.

Lira Veyne took a different route: alleys instead of battlefields. She grew up surviving on charm and quick fingers, and calls herself an “independent acquisitions specialist.” Her choices lean toward the **Thief** occupation, drawing from Crime, Streets, and Entertainments.

If you and your GM prefer, you can design completely new occupations. Maybe *Sky-Courier*, combining Athletic and Seamanship, or *Clockwork Savant*, blending Industry and Philosophy. If it fits your world, it fits the rules.

How Skill Clusters Work

Each occupation draws on **three clusters** — broad categories of knowledge. When you pick your occupation, choose three clusters and rank them by how central they are to your character’s life:

- **Rank 1 — Core training.** Cheap and easy to improve. The skills of your profession.
- **Rank 2 — Secondary skills.** Related but not mastered. The skills life has taught you along the way.
- **Rank 3 — Peripheral skills.** Expensive to learn. Background skills — upbringing, hobbies, circumstance.

These ranks decide how many **Skill Points** it costs to buy abilities from each cluster.

Starting Skill Points

Decide the level of experience for your game. Your GM can pick one of these benchmarks:

Character Type	Skill Points
Young / Inexperienced	38
Seasoned / Professional	46
Veteran / Powerful	54

Tip: err on the lower side if you want characters to grow into their power; higher totals produce seasoned heroes right from the start.

Buying Skills

Each skill you know is rated from 0 to 4. The higher the number, the more reliable you are. To purchase a level, spend Skill Points according to your cluster rank.

You don’t need to spend every point — what’s left over is kept as experience to spend later. In *Scimitar* this reserve is called **Lore** (see below).

Desired Skill Level	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
1	3 pts	5 pts	7 pts
2	6 pts	9 pts	12 pts
3	10 pts	14 pts	18 pts
4	15 pts	20 pts	25 pts

Default Skills. Some skills require another as a prerequisite (a *default*). For example, you can’t study **Law** until you have **Script** (Read & Write), and your Law skill can never exceed your Script level.

Example 1 — Kellan’s Skill Shopping

Kellan’s chosen clusters: 1) Combat, 2) Streets, 3) Wilderness. He has 46 points to spend.

Skill	Cluster	Level	Cost
One-Handed Slashing Attack	1	3	10
Shield Parry	1	2	6
Leadership	2	2	9
Streetwise	2	1	5
Hunting	3	2	12
Tracking	3	1	7

Total = 49 points — he’s 3 over, so he drops Leadership to level 1 (5 pts) instead. That leaves him 1 point under budget, kept as Lore.

Example 2 — Lira’s Skill Shopping

Lira’s chosen clusters: 1) Crime, 2) Streets, 3) Entertainments. With 46 points, she buys:

Skill	Cluster	Level	Cost
Sneak	1	3	10
Sleight of Hand	1	2	6
Lock Picking	1	2	6
Streetwise	2	2	9
Acting	3	1	7
Singing	3	1	7

Total = 45 points — 1 left over, recorded as Lore.

Natural Skill Levels

When you spend your points, there will always be a few skills you *almost* bought. Maybe you ran out of points, or another skill felt more important. That doesn’t mean you’ve never heard of it.

A cluster represents a whole background of training and exposure — even skills you never formally trained in, you’ve probably seen done, or tried once. So:

- You have **Skill 0** in every skill in your **1st (primary)** cluster.
- You have **Skill –1** in every skill in your **2nd** cluster.
- You have **Skill –2** in every skill in your **3rd** cluster.

These aren’t purchased skills — no attribute bonuses, no prerequisites. They’re a baseline competence for simple tasks: you can attempt basic versions of anything inside your clusters, but difficult work will usually be beyond you without real training.

Example

Kellan didn’t buy Tracking in his Wilderness cluster — wait, he did. Suppose he hadn’t: as his 3rd cluster, he’d roll at –2. He wouldn’t out-track a hunter, but he could follow obvious wagon ruts.

What If I Don’t Have the Skill At All?

You can still attempt anything that has no prerequisite, even outside your clusters — it’s just always going to be difficult. The GM increases the task’s difficulty by at least one level to reflect the lack of training.

Example

Lira has no idea how to appraise antique furniture. She tries anyway. The GM bumps the target up one level — Challenging instead of Average. She rolls poorly and sells a priceless chair for 8 gold. Kellan is furious. Lira shrugs.

This natural-skill system keeps characters flexible without making them experts at everything. Want to do something well? Buy the skill. Just need to manage simple tasks? Your cluster familiarity has you covered.

Tailoring Your Own Clusters

Every campaign world is different. The clusters listed later are there to inspire you, not limit you.

Need a *Desert Nomad* cluster with Endurance, Riding, Survival, and Trade? Make it. Steampunk metropolis campaign? Build a *Steamwright* cluster mixing Mechanics, Engineering, and Commerce.

When creating a new cluster:

- Keep to about 8 skills per cluster as a guide.
- Balance physical, mental, and social skills.
- Check with your GM that it doesn’t overlap too heavily with an existing cluster, and that the skills are balanced for its rank.
- Write a short flavour line explaining the culture or lifestyle it represents.

If you or your GM think a skill belongs in two clusters, that’s fine — pick whichever fits the story best. *Scimitar* rewards creativity over rigid bookkeeping.

Remember: *Scimitar* is about playing characters, not optimising them. Choose skills and clusters around ideas, not maximisation. The GM always has final say.

Finishing Touches Before Play

Once your skills are bought:

- Write each on your character sheet.
- Add the relevant attribute modifier (average multiple modifiers together, rounded down).
- Round positive averages down, negative averages up.

You now have the working numbers that carry you through the game. When you see Kellan roll his *One-Handed Slashing Attack* (skill + Strength) or Lira roll her *Sneak* (skill + Agility), you’ll know exactly where those figures came from.

Skill Clusters

These clusters are examples — frameworks to lift, bend, or rebuild. If your campaign needs a Clockwork Engineer, a Nomadic Herbalist, or a Sky Corsair, invent them.

Academic Cluster

For scholars, nobles, and anyone raised among books and ink.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Arithmetic	—	Intellect
Engineering (Structural)	Arithmetic	Intellect
Etiquette	—	Presence
Geography	Script	Intellect
Law	Script	Intellect
Medicine	—	Intellect
Philosophy	—	Presence
Religion	—	Intellect

Agricultural Cluster

For those tied to soil, livestock, and open horizons.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Agriculture	Plant Lore	Intellect
Animal Lore	—	Observation
Carpentry	—	Dexterity
Drive Cart/Wagon	—	Dexterity
Hunting	Animal Lore	Observation
Plant Lore	—	Intellect
Rope Lore	—	Dexterity
Trapping	—	Observation

Athletic Cluster

For athletes, labourers, and acrobats.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Acrobatics	—	Agility
Animal Handling	—	Intellect
Climbing	—	Stamina
Endurance	—	Endurance
Jumping	—	Agility
Running	—	Stamina
Swimming	—	Stamina
Weight Lifting	—	Strength

Combat Cluster

For soldiers, duellists, and anyone who’s seen the wrong end of a blade.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Brawling	—	Agility
Leadership	—	Presence
Off-Hand Attack	One-Handed Weapon	Agility
One/Two-Handed Attack (Slash/Pierce/Crush)	—	Str / Rct / Int (avg)
Firearms Attack	—	Agility & Dexterity (avg)
Shield Parry	—	Agility
Tactics	—	Intellect
Weapon Lore	—	Intellect

Commerce Cluster

Merchants, traders, and hustlers of every stripe.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Appraisal	—	Observation
Arithmetic	—	Intellect
Bribery	—	Presence
Commerce	Arithmetic	Intellect
Fast Talk	—	Presence
Haggling	—	Presence
Language	—	Intellect
Streetwise	—	Observation

Crime Cluster

For smugglers, burglars, and charming rogues.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Disguise	—	Presence
Forgery	—	Observation
Gambling	—	Presence
Hide/Sneak	—	Agility
Lock Picking	—	Dexterity
Sleight of Hand	—	Dexterity
Stalk	—	Observation
Thrown Weapon Attack	—	Agility & Dexterity (avg)

Entertainments Cluster

For performers, artists, and social butterflies.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Acting	—	Presence
Contortions	—	Agility
Disguise	—	Presence
Drawing/Painting	—	Presence
Juggling	—	Dexterity
Oratory	—	Presence
Play Instrument	—	Presence
Singing	—	Presence

Industry Cluster

For artisans and builders who turn sweat into craft.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Carpentry	—	Dexterity
Design	—	Intellect
Engineering (Mechanical)	Physics	Intellect
Mechanics	—	Intellect
Physics	—	Intellect
Rope Lore	—	Dexterity
Ship Lore	—	Intellect
Smithing/Welding	—	Stamina

Philosophy Cluster

Thinkers, diplomats, and talkers.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Debate	—	Presence
Diplomacy	—	Intellect
Etiquette	—	Presence
History	—	Intellect
Hypnotism	—	Aura
Language	—	Intellect
Oratory	—	Presence
Religion	—	Intellect

Seamanship Cluster

For sailors, pilots, and anyone who trusts a deck over dry land.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Boating	—	Strength
Climbing	—	Agility
Navigation	Arithmetic	Intellect
Gunnery/Gun Lore	—	Intellect
Pilot (Sail/Steam Craft)	Navigation	Intellect
Rope Lore	—	Dexterity
Seamanship	—	Intellect
Swimming	—	Stamina

Streets Cluster

For beggars, guards, mercenaries, and survivors of city alleys.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Acting/Fast Talk	—	Presence
Brawling	—	Agility
Evasion	—	Agility
Hide	—	Intellect
Jumping/Running	—	Agility / Stamina
Panhandling	—	Presence
Sleight of Hand	—	Dexterity
Streetwise	—	Intellect

Wilderness Cluster

For hunters, scouts, and anyone who sleeps under open sky.

Skill	Default	Attribute
Animal Lore	—	Intellect
Foraging	—	Observation
Herbalism	Plant Lore	Intellect
Hunting	Animal Lore	Intellect
Navigation	—	Intellect
Survival	—	Intellect
Tracking	—	Observation
Swimming	—	Agility & Strength (avg)

Creating New Clusters

Pick a trade, culture, or way of life and list about 8 relevant skills. Balance mental and physical talents where possible, and check for overlap with existing clusters. Skill clusters for the same occupation might vary by setting — a soldier raised on guns and steam engines plays very differently from a warrior from a primitive tribe.

Once written and approved by your GM, treat it exactly like any other cluster — Rank 1, 2, or 3, priced accordingly.

Character Templates

Templates are example archetypes built from three clusters. They’re starting points, not prisons.

Template	Clusters
Mercenary	Combat • Streets • Wilderness
Thief	Combat • Crime • Streets
Scholar	Academic • Philosophy • Industry
Merchant	Academic • Commerce • Streets
Soldier	Athletic • Combat • Streets
Explorer	Academic • Commerce • Wilderness
Diplomat	Combat • Commerce • Philosophy
Sailor	Athletic • Commerce • Seamanship
Entertainer	Athletic • Crime • Entertainments
Hunter	Agriculture • Combat • Wilderness

This is a starter set — a quick way into play. Build your own with your GM any time one of these doesn’t fit the character you have in mind.

Creating Your Own Templates

When building new archetypes:

- Pick 3 clusters that best fit your idea.
- Decide which is Rank 1, 2, and 3.
- Add a short description or personality hook.

Example: Custom Template

Sky Courier — Athletic (1), Seamanship (2), Commerce (3). Airship messengers who deliver packages and gossip in equal measure.

Whether you start with a template or build your own, remember the heart of *Scimitar*: **your character’s story matters more than their category**. The numbers exist to help you tell it well.

The Lore Pool

Not every kind of growth comes from swinging a sword or reciting prayers. Some characters grow through the things they learn, the people they meet, the places they wander. That broad, worldly experience is represented by the **Lore Pool**.

Earning Lore. Characters gain 1 Lore Point every session, no matter what happened — just living the adventurer’s life teaches you something. The GM may award extra Lore for completing important missions, uncovering secrets, clever planning, or memorable roleplaying. There’s no cap.

Example
Lira gains her usual 1 point at the end of a session, plus 1 more for talking her way out of a disastrous duel Kellan started. Kellan earns +1 for saving a villager in the same chaos. Lore sometimes rewards the chaos and the heroism.

Spending Lore. Lore is your long-term advancement currency.

Use	Cost
Increase a skill	Normal cost from the Skill Cost table
Trade for cash/equipment	10 Lore → 1 high-value coin (Guinea, or your setting’s equivalent)
Buy a point of Faith (single use)	1 Lore → 1 temporary Faith Point

Increasing Skills. Check the skill’s Cluster rank, pay the appropriate Lore cost, and raise it by one point. The GM may ask for a quick justification — what taught you this? — though usually the adventure itself answers that.

Trading Lore for Wealth. Sometimes you need to cash in life experience for actual supplies. 10 Lore buys 1 Guinea (or your setting’s equivalent), flavoured however fits — a lucky opportunity, money finally owed to you, a forgotten trinket worth selling.

Buying Faith. Convert 1 Lore into 1 point of Faith at any time, spent immediately (or before the next session). This doesn’t raise your Faith maximum — only your current total, temporarily.

Example
Kellan spends 3 Lore to improve his One-Handed Attack skill. Lira spends 10 Lore on a Guinea, claiming she’s “investing in new opportunities.” Later, mid-roll, she burns 1 more Lore for a single-use Faith Point. “Just this once,” she whispers.

The Lore Pool ties advancement to story, not bookkeeping. Over time, a character’s Lore total becomes a quiet diary of their journey.



A Practical Guide to Gear

Money matters in *Scimitar*, but it shouldn’t get in the way of the story. This section keeps things simple: a single universal currency, clear equipment lists, and a light encumbrance system that favours play over bookkeeping. If your setting has its own currencies, just build a conversion chart against the baseline below.

Kellan buys whatever will keep him alive. Lira buys whatever will get her out of trouble (and occasionally into it).

Money: How the World Measures Wealth

For *Scimitar*, a **gold coin (Crown)** is treated as roughly a quarter ounce (about 6 grams), though actual purity can vary by culture.

A **Gold Bar** is worth **10,000 Crowns**, pure gold, weighing around 3 kg. It’s the preferred way wealthy people store value, and the least preferred way to run from bandits.

Rule of Thumb: If it fits in a purse, it’s coin. If it needs two hands, it’s a gold bar. If it needs a wagon, it’s a problem.

Starting Money

At character creation, roll **2d6 × 200 Crowns**. The GM may adjust this by up to ±50% depending on background — nobles and merchants often start richer, street urchins and hermits usually don’t.

Spending Your Coin

The following tables list representative prices for food, drink, tools, clothing, weapons, and armour. They’re meant to support quick decisions, not granular market simulation.

Food & Drink

Item	Price
Mug of ale, mead, or beer	3
Mug of tea	4
Mug of coffee	15
Glass / bottle of poor wine	1 / 4
Glass / bottle of good wine	2 / 10
Glass / bottle of fine wine	5 / 25
Glass / bottle of vintage wine	20 / 150
Glass / bottle of brandy	6 / 50
Glass / bottle of gin	1 / 10
Glass / bottle of whiskey	6 / 100
Joint of meat	2
Cheese (hunk)	1
Sausages (5)	6
Loaf of bread	1
Bar of chocolate	10
Hearty meal	4
Banquet	10
Salt (dram)	2
Pepper (dram)	140

Tools & Equipment

Item	Price
Carpenter’s tools	45
Mason’s tools	40
Blacksmith’s tools	110
Mechanic’s tools	120
Surgeon’s tools	100
Pitchfork	12
Plough	20
Rope (10 ft)	5
Heavy chain (per foot)	25
Lantern	70
Lamp oil	12
Flint & steel	10
Grapple hook	18
Powder horn	10
Backpack (leather)	20
Blanket	10
Chalk (6 pcs)	5
Shot (per 10)	10
Sleeping mat	8
Spyglass	2000
Watch, pocket	250

Clothing

Item	Price
Boots, soft	20
Boots, riding	30
Breeches	25
Cloak	20
Dress	20
Gloves	16
Hat / cap	15
Jacket	20
Jewellery (plain / quality / excessive)	30 / 300 / 3000
Robe, plain	15
Robe, embroidered	46
Shoes	20
Tunic	16
Vest	12

Weapons

(Prices only — full combat stats are in Section 5.)

Weapon	Price
Knife	10
Hand Axe	60
Club	15
Broadsword	200
Sabre	280
Spear	52
Mace	80
Claymore	480
Greatsword	600
Halberd	400
Shortbow	500
Longbow	1300
Javelin	120
Crossbow, light	900
Crossbow, heavy	1800
Matchlock pistol	1720
Matchlock rifle	2400
Musket	2000

Armour

(Prices only — full protection stats are in Section 6.)

Armour	Price
Padded cloth	400
Soft leather	600
Hide	600
Rigid leather (Cuir Boulli)	1370
Ring mail hauberk	1600
Chain mail hauberk	2000
Full chain mail	4840
Plate mail	1 Gold Bar + 3000
Full plate mail	2 Gold Bars
Helm, open / full	335 / 560
Shield, wood/leather	150
Shield, metal	400

Encumbrance

Scimitar keeps encumbrance simple:

- Each **large item** (bigger than your hand) = **1 point**.
- Each **small item** (hand-sized or smaller) = **¼ point**.
- Armour is the exception – reduce encumbrance by full armour value (**AAV**)
- Your carrying capacity is set by your **Fatigue Score** (see Section 2).

Fatigue Score	Encumbrance Capacity
–2 to –1	6
0	8
+1 to +2	10
+3 to +4	12
+5	14
+6	16

Exceeding your limit makes life harder: for every full point over, reduce one physical attribute modifier (Strength or Agility, your choice) by 1, along with all skills and derived stats that depend on it. Some bulky gear — especially heavy armour — carries its own extra encumbrance penalty, noted in the armour tables in Section 6.

Example — The Veyne Siblings Pack Their Bags

***Kellan** packs a Broadsword (1), Shield (1), Chain mail hauberk (3, bulky), Rope (¼), Bedroll (1), and Rations (¼) — total 6½ points, well under his limit. He grumbles regardless.*

***Lira** (Fatigue Score +2, capacity 10) packs three daggers (¾), lockpicks (¼), chalk (¼), thieves’ tools (1), a shortbow (1), 12 arrows (¼), a cloak with far too many pockets (¼), and rope (¼) — about 4 points total. She travels light. “Kellan carries the heavy stuff,” she says.*

Final Thoughts on Equipment

Don’t overthink money. It’s a tool to shape the story: a reason to take a risky job, a reward for service, or a reminder you spent too much on wine last night.

What matters is that your characters have the things that make them *feel* like themselves — Kellan’s sword and shield, Lira’s quiet little tools of mischief. The rest is just flavour.

Combat & Action



A Quick Word Before the Blades Come Out

Combat in *Scimitar* is fast, dangerous, and cinematic. It isn't about counting squares or crunching probabilities — it's about the story of the fight, the tension in the dice, and the desperate choices you make when everything's on the line.

You already know how Skill Rolls work. Combat uses the same system, with a few extra rules to capture momentum, timing, and grit. Let's walk through it step by step, with Kellan and Lira showing how a real fight unfolds.

Combat Overview

A combat round represents an abstract stretch of time — long enough for shouted warnings, a clash of weapons, and someone making a terrible decision. Call it seconds, not minutes; the GM sets the clock to fit the scene.

Each round follows this structure:

1. **Declare Actions**
2. **Assign Swing Points**
3. **Roll Initiative**
4. **Resolve Actions**
5. **Apply Damage, Shock & Death Rolls**
6. **End-of-Round Effects**

Simple. Clean. Fast. Let's break it down.

1. Declaring Actions

Before anyone rolls initiative, each character briefly states what they intend to do: attack, defend, fire a weapon, move, perform a stunt, or “do something stupid” (Lira's specialty). You don't need technical declarations — just the intention. Plans can change mid-round, but that often costs you something — position, a penalty, an opportunity lost.

Example — The Veynes in Trouble

Kellan: “I'm stepping forward and attacking the bandit leader.”

Lira: “I'm circling behind the wagon to get a flank. And if it's dark, I'm snuffing the lantern.”

GM: “Classic Veyne strategy — one distracts, the other cheats.”

2. Swing Points

Combat isn’t just about hitting fast or hitting hard — it’s about *how* you fight. Swing Points represent your fighting style in the moment: pressing the attack, defending desperately, striking fast, or going all-in for a devastating blow.

Every character in melee has **Swing Points** equal to:

Weapon Skill Level + Relevant Attribute Modifiers

If you possess the skill to use a weapon, you get its Swing Points automatically each round.

Using Swing Points. At the start of each round, every player distributes their Swing Points across four combat values:

- **Attack (Att)** — how accurate your strike is
- **Defence (Def)** — how hard you are to hit
- **Speed (Spd)** — how quickly you act (affects initiative)
- **Damage (Dam)** — how much hurt you deal on a hit

Every melee weapon has base values in these four areas (see the weapon table below). Your Swing Points are **added** to these base stats in whatever distribution you choose — all into one, or spread across several. Your choice defines your stance for the round.

Example Setup

*You have Weapon Skill 2 and a relevant attribute modifier of +2, for **4 Swing Points** total. Your weapon is a **broadsword**, with base stats Att +1 / Def +2 / Spd +0 / Dam +2.*

/ Stance | Att | Def | Spd | Dam |

/---|---|---|---|---|

*/ All Attack | **+5** | +2 | +0 | +2 |*

*/ All Defence | +1 | **+6** | +0 | +2 |*

*/ Quick Strike | +1 | +2 | **+4** | +2 |*

*/ For the Kill | +1 | +2 | +0 | **+6** |*

/ Aggressive | +3 | +2 | +0 | +4 |

/ Defensive | +1 | +4 | +2 | +2 |

/ Balanced | +2 | +3 | +1 | +3 |

*Each row is **weapon base + your Swing Point allocation**. “All Attack” = +1 base + 4 points = +5 Attack.*

What these bonuses do: Attack adds to your attack roll. Defence adds to your Parry/Dodge roll. Speed adds to your initiative roll. Damage adds to your final damage after a successful hit.

Tactical use. Switch stance every round — burst forward in an opening strike, turtle up when wounded, go all-out to finish a foe, or balance everything evenly.

Example — Kellan and Lira in Combat

***Kellan** (4 Swing Points, Broadsword) sees a large foe approaching and goes **Aggressive**: Att +3, Def +2, Spd +0, Dam +4. He wants to hit hard.*

***Lira** (3 Swing Points, Dual Daggers) goes **Quick Strike**: Att +1, Def +1, Spd +4, Dam +0. She wants to move before anyone else.*

Both choices fit their personalities perfectly.

A few notes:

- Swing Points reset every round.
- Your stance applies to every action you take that round.
- If disarmed or switching weapons, recalculate from the new weapon’s base stats.
- Narrate your stance in-character — “guard up,” “lunging forward,” “circling fast.”

Weapon Reference Table

Every weapon has four base combat values — Attack, Defence, Speed, and Damage — plus a minimum Strength modifier needed to wield it without penalty. These are starting points; reskin or rename any of them to fit your world.

Weapon	Att	Def	Spd	Dam	Min. Str
Knife	+1	+0	+1	+0	—
Hand Axe	+1	+0	−1	+1	—
Club	+0	+0	−1	+1	—
Dagger	+2	+0	+1	+0	—
Short Sword	+1	+1	+1	+1	—
Broadsword	+1	+2	+0	+2	—
Sabre	+3	+2	+1	+0	—
Spear	+0	+1	+0	+2	—
Mace	−1	−1	+0	+3	+1
Quarterstaff	+4	+2	+3	−1	—
Claymore (2H)	+0	+0	+0	+4	+1
Greatsword (2H)	−1	−1	−1	+5	+1
Halberd (2H)	−1	−1	+0	+5	—
Shortbow	+0	—	+1	+1	—
Longbow	−1	—	+1	+2	—
Light Crossbow	−1	—	−1	+2	—
Heavy Crossbow	−2	—	−2	+5	—
Javelin (thrown)	−1	—	+0	+3	—
Matchlock Pistol	−2	—	−1	+1	—
Musket	−2	—	−2	+4	—

Bows, crossbows, and firearms have no Defence value — see Ranged Combat below for how they work instead. “Min. Str” is the Strength modifier needed to use the weapon without an extra penalty; the GM applies a −1 penalty per point short.

3. Initiative

Initiative decides who acts first.

- If not in direct combat yet, roll a Skill Roll using your **Initiative Bonus** (Reaction).
- If already in combat, roll using your weapon’s **Speed** value instead.
- For small fights, everyone rolls separately. For large battles, roll once per side per round using a representative character’s Initiative Bonus.

A relevant skill can augment this roll — if the party has time to plan, *Tactics* makes a good augmenting skill (see Augmentation, Section 1).

Highest total acts first. Ties are broken by the GM’s judgement, or by whoever rolled the higher base die before modifiers.

Example

Kellan rolls 11. Lira rolls a very impressive 29. Lira always moves first. Kellan insists it’s because she cheats.

4. Attacking

Combat attacks use an Opposed Roll: **2d6 (rerolling sixes) + allocated Swing Points**, compared against the target’s Defence roll (or, if they’re unaware, a Target Number the GM sets based on the situation — Position, Terrain, Cover, Fatigue, and so on all factor in).

Example — Lira’s Dirty Fighting

Lira tries to stab a guard from the shadows, with +2 Swing Points on Attack. She rolls 5 and 6 (rerolling the six to a 4): (5+2) + (6+2) + (4+2) = 21.

The guard, unaware, doesn’t get to defend — instead the GM sets an Average target (12). She beats it by 9 and stabs a very surprised guard.

5. Parrying & Dodging

As long as you’re aware of an attack, you can make a Defence Roll to oppose it.

- **Parry:** use your weapon’s Defence value plus any assigned Swing Points.
- **Evade:** if you have room to move, you can roll an Evade skill instead of your weapon’s Defence score. This is a skill action rather than a combat stance, so you don’t get to attack as well — but a successful Evade also lets you reposition for next round.

A successful Parry or Evade avoids the blow entirely. A failed defence means you’ve been hit — go to Damage.

Example — Kellan Blocks a Blow

A brigand rolls high. Kellan rolls even higher with Shield Parry. The GM rules: “He hits, but your shield deflects the blow.” Kellan’s shield: the real hero.

6. Damage & Hit Locations

A successful attack doesn’t end the story — now you find out how badly the target is hurt, and where the blow landed.

Rolling Damage. Roll a Skill Roll using the weapon’s Damage value plus any Swing Points assigned to Damage. Subtract Armour (and any other protection the GM allows). Compare the result to the **Universal Wound Chart** below.

Wound Type	Hits Lost	Active Penalty
Superficial	1	−0
Light	3	−1
Moderate	6	−1
Serious	9	−2
Critical	12	−4
Lethal	15	Limb/location unus-able

Hits Lost is a temporary reduction to your Hit Total. The Active Penalty applies to any action involving the damaged location, and penalties from multiple wounds stack.

Hit Locations. Once damage is known, roll **1d6** to see where the blow landed:

Roll	Location
1	Torso
2	Left Arm
3	Left Leg
4	Right Arm
5	Right Leg
6	Head

This is deliberately simple — fast and cinematic. A wound that comes back **Lethal** to the head or torso is grave, and very likely fatal, but it’s the GM’s call how the scene plays out rather than an automatic kill. A character fighting for their life, with help at hand, might yet survive what should have ended them. That’s a story beat, not a number.

Groups who want more anatomical detail can use an optional High Dice location table — see the Optional Rules note at the end of this section.

7. Shock & Death Rolls

Wounds don’t just cost Hits — they can knock you out, or kill you outright, if the shock is too great.

Shock Roll. Whenever you take a wound, roll 2d6 (rerolling sixes) plus your **Strength modifier**, trying to beat the damage you just took. Fail, and you fall unconscious (or the GM rules you’re conscious but unable to act, if that suits the scene better).

Death Roll. Only made if the Shock Roll failed. Roll 2d6 plus your **Endurance modifier**, again trying to beat the damage taken. Fail, and the character dies.

Negative Hits. Once your Hits drop below 0, every wound you take forces a Shock Roll, and every failed Shock Roll forces a Death Roll. All targets for both rolls are **doubled** while you’re in negative Hits.

Automatic death. A character dies outright if their negative Hits ever reach or exceed their full Hit Total.

Example — Kellan Takes a Heavy Blow

Kellan takes 12 damage from an axe. He must beat 12 on a Shock Roll (Strength modifier +2): he rolls 5 and 5 (no sixes), adding +2 to each, for a total of 14. He beats it — still on his feet, though it hurt.

Later, badly wounded and at –4 Hits, he takes another solid hit. Now every wound demands both rolls, and the targets are doubled. He’s in real danger now — and he knows it.

8. Ranged Combat

Ranged attacks — bows, crossbows, pistols, muskets, thrown weapons — follow the same core procedure as melee, with a few differences.

Declaring and Swing Points. Declaration works exactly as in melee. Ranged weapons don’t use Defence — you can’t block a bow with a sword — so you never assign Swing Points to Defence for a ranged attack. Instead, you can assign points to **Range**: each point assigned reduces the effective range band by one step (Medium becomes Close, Long becomes Medium, and so on). Attack, Speed, and Damage all still apply normally.

Initiative order. If the shooter isn’t engaged in melee, ranged attacks resolve *before* melee actions that round. If the target *is* engaged in melee, ranged attacks resolve *after* melee, reflecting the difficulty of firing into a close-quarters scrum. When several characters are shooting, roll Opposed Initiative among them to set the order.

Damage, Shock, and Death work exactly as in melee — see above.

Range Bands

Range Band	Difficulty	Modifier
Point Blank	Simple	0
Close	Routine	–3
Medium	Average	–6
Long	Challenging	–9
Extreme	Difficult	–12

A well-placed Swing Point in Range can shift these bands down to something more manageable.

Additional modifiers, layered as the GM sees fit:

Situation	Modifier
Target small	–6
Target large	+2
Target prone	+1
Target in cover	–6
Target moving	–3

Example

Lira fires a dagger at a pursuing guard at Medium Range (Average target). She assigns +1 to Attack, +1 to Speed, and +1 to Range — shifting the band to Close, dropping the target to Routine. She rolls, hits, and the dagger sinks home.

Kellan, meanwhile, throws a rock with everything in Damage and nothing in Attack. He misses. Lira tells him to “leave the finesse to the professionals.”

9. Special Combat Actions

Charge, Grapple, Disarm, Kick/Punch, Push/Shove, Aimed Attacks, Subdual, and similar manoeuvres all use standard Skill Rolls, usually at a higher difficulty or as a contested check against the target.

Example — Lira Attempts a Disarm

Target: 21. She rolls a 6 (rerolled to a 3) and adds her bonuses for a total of 19 — failing by 2. She loses 1 Swing Point for the attempt. “Worth a try,” she says.

10. End of Round

At the end of each round: Swing Points reset, fatigue may be tested, wounds may trigger new Shock Rolls, and positions update for the next round. Combat continues until one side flees, surrenders, or someone does something clever that ends the fight early. (Usually Lira.)

Putting It All Together — A Short Sample Fight

Scenario: Kellan and Lira ambush three highway brigands.

Round 1

- Lira sneaks into position: Initiative 10. Kellan charges head-on: Initiative 4. Lira acts first.
- Lira attacks (Target 15), rolls 19 — beats it by 4, dealing 5 damage. The guard makes his Shock Roll, barely.
- Kellan attacks (Target 18), rolls 23 — beats it by 5, dealing 7 damage. The brigand fails his Shock Roll and collapses.

Round 2

- Lira throws sand in a guard’s eyes (a special action). Kellan presses the advantage. The fight’s momentum shifts entirely — within moments, the remaining brigands flee.

Lira loots quietly. Kellan complains loudly.

Final Thoughts

Combat in *Scimitar* rewards clever tactics, building momentum, and knowing when to press and when to retreat. The rules give you structure. The fight belongs to you.

Optional Rule: Enhanced Hit Locations

For groups who enjoy gritty realism, replace the 1d6 location roll with High Dice for a precise anatomical hit. Roll High Dice and consult below — this is entirely optional and changes nothing else about how wounds or penalties work.

Roll	Location	Roll	Location
1 – Lower Body	1 - Groin 2 - Abdomen 3 - Left Hip 4 - Right Hip 5 - Stomach 6 - Lower Back	4 – Right Arm	1 - Right Hand 2 - Right Wrist 3 - Right Forearm 4 - Right Elbow 5 - Right Upperarm 6 - Right Shoulder
2 – Left Arm	1 - Left Hand 2 - Left Wrist 3 - Left Forearm 4 - Left Elbow 5 - Left Upperarm 6 - Left Shoulder	5 – Right Leg	1 - Right Foot 2 - Right Ankle 3 - Right Shin 4 - Right Calf 5 - Right Knee 6 - Right Thigh
3 – Left Leg	1 - Left Foot 2 - Left Ankle 3 - Left Shin 4 - Left Calf 5 - Left Knee 6 - Left Thigh	6 – Upper Body	1 - Chest 2 - Neck 3 – Face 4 – Skull 5 – Reroll (x2 Effect) 6 – Player Choice

Use this table only if your group wants the extra detail — the simplified 1d6 table above is the default, and is all most groups will ever need.

Armour, Damage & Healing



Before We Begin

Armour in *Scimitar* is protective, but it isn't magic. A sword still hurts. A mace still breaks bones. Armour simply changes how much a wound eats into your Hit Total — and sometimes whether the blade catches flesh at all.

This section covers armour values, how damage and wounds actually resolve at the table, natural and medical healing, and an optional rule for groups who want longer-term consequences from serious injuries.

1. Armour: What It Does

Armour reduces the damage you take from a successful attack. It does *not* make you harder to hit — that's handled by your stance and your Parry or Evade rolls.

Armour has two things that matter at the table:

- **Armour Absorption Value (AAV)** — how much damage it soaks up from each blow.
- **Encumbrance Penalty** — heavier armour reduces your physical stats, which matters a great deal when someone is trying to kill you.

Armour Absorption Table

Armour Type	AAV	Modifiers
Padded Cloth	0	+1 Crushing
Soft Leather	1	-1 Piercing, +1 Crushing
Rigid Leather (Cuir Boulli)	2	-1 Piercing, +1 Exploding
Hide	3	-1 Piercing, +1 Crushing
Banded Mail	3	-1 Piercing
Ring Mail Hauberk	4	-1 Piercing, -1 Crushing
Chain Mail Hauberk	4	-1 Piercing, -1 Crushing
Full Ring Mail	4	-1 Piercing, -1 Crushing, +1 Exploding
Full Chain Mail	5	-1 Piercing, -1 Crushing, +1 Exploding
Scale Mail	5	+1 Piercing
Plate Breastplate	6	-1 Piercing
Plate Mail	7	
Full Plate Mail	8	+1 Piercing, +1 Exploding
Helm, Open	1	+1 Exploding
Helm, Full	1	+2 Exploding

Example — Kellan Takes a Hit in Mail

Incoming damage: 9. Chain mail AAV: 5. Result: 4 Hits lost — the chain absorbs much of the blow. Kellan: “Told you this was worth the cost.” Lira: “It clangs when you breathe.”

Armour Penalties

Heavier armour reduces Agility, Stamina, Reaction, and Movement Rate while worn. These reductions apply immediately and affect combat rolls, Defence, and Fatigue checks. A character in armour also picks up Encumbrance Points, as covered in Section 4.

Example — Armour Penalty in Action

Kellan dons his chain hauberk: Agility drops by 1, Stamina drops by 1, Movement drops by 1 pace. He mutters. Lira calls him “Sir Clanksalot.”

2. Damage, Wounds, Shock & Death

This is the heart of how combat actually plays out — and it’s deliberately just one system, used everywhere. You met the short version in Section 2 and used it in Section 5; here’s the complete picture in one place.

Step 1 — Roll Damage. When an attack hits, roll the weapon’s Damage value (plus any Swing Points assigned to Damage), then subtract the target’s Armour Absorption Value.

Step 2 — Find the Wound. Compare the result to the Universal Wound Chart:

Wound Type	Hits Lost	Active Penalty
Superficial	1	–0
Light	3	–1
Moderate	6	–1
Serious	9	–2
Critical	12	–4
Lethal	15	Limb/location unusable

Hits Lost comes straight off the Hit Total. The Active Penalty applies to anything involving the wounded location, and stacks if a character is carrying multiple wounds.

Step 3 — Shock Roll. The wounded character rolls 2d6 (rerolling sixes) plus their **Strength modifier**, trying to beat the damage just taken. Fail, and they fall unconscious (or are conscious but unable to act, GM’s call).

Step 4 — Death Roll (if Shock failed). Roll 2d6 plus the character’s **Endurance modifier**, again trying to beat the damage taken. Fail, and the character dies.

Negative Hits. Once a character drops below 0 Hits, every further wound forces a Shock Roll, and every failed Shock Roll forces a Death Roll — and all targets are doubled. This is where fights become genuinely dangerous.

Automatic death. A character dies outright the moment their negative Hits reach or exceed their full Hit Total.

A **Lethal** wound to the head or torso is about as bad as it gets — close to certain death — but it’s the GM’s call how the scene resolves, not an automatic kill outside this process. A character with help at hand and a kind roll might cling on. That’s a dramatic choice for the table, not a separate rule.

Example — Kellan Drops Below Zero

After two unlucky hits, Kellan is at –4 Hits. He takes a third wound for 8 damage. Because he’s in negative Hits, the Shock Roll target is doubled to 16. He rolls 2d6 + Strength (+2): 5 and 5, plus 2 each, for 14. He fails, and must now make a Death Roll at a doubled target too — Endurance (+3) needs to beat 16. He rolls 6 (rerolled to 4) and 5, plus 3 each: (4+3)+(5+3) = 15. He fails by 1.

Lira drags her brother out of the fight before the GM has to say the word “dead.”

(This example shows how brutal negative Hits become — use it to set expectations with your players before the first real fight.)

3. Natural Healing

Healing comes from rest, treatment, and time.

Without treatment, characters heal a set number of Hits per full day of complete rest, based on Endurance:

Endurance Modifier	Hits Healed / Day
–1 or weaker	1
0 to +1	2
+2 to +3	3
+4 or higher	4

No combat, no running, no stress — proper rest only.

With treatment, a successful Medicine roll advances that day’s healing rate to the next level. Multiple healers don’t stack — it’s still only doubled.

Example

Lira treats Kellan’s wounds with Medicine 1 and succeeds. His natural healing (Endurance +3 → normally 4/day) becomes 8/day. She reminds him she saved his life. Constantly.

4. Medical Treatment

Field Treatment. Requires Medicine 1+. Slows bleeding and stabilises an unconscious character. It doesn’t restore lost Hits — it only stops further Shock and Death checks from that wound.

Surgical Treatment. Requires tools and time (hours). A successful Medicine (Surgery) roll heals 1d6 Hits immediately. A failed roll may worsen the condition. Lira once tried to “help” Kellan surgically. He did not allow a second attempt.

Rest Facilities. A proper bed in a quiet room increases natural healing by +1 per day and reduces fatigue penalties. It also gives Lira a chance to steal from the innkeeper.

5. Recovery From Shock & Fatigue

Shock recovery. An unconscious character regains consciousness once their Hits rise above 0, or whenever the GM rules the immediate danger has passed.

Fatigue recovery. Light fatigue clears with about 10 minutes of rest. Serious fatigue needs a full hour. Mental or magical fatigue — if your setting uses such things — needs proper sleep.

Example

Lira, after too much sprinting and stabbing, collapses from fatigue. After an hour she’s fine. Kellan lifts her onto a wagon in the meantime. She pretends to still be unconscious to avoid the walk.

Closing Thoughts

Armour keeps you alive. Shock decides whether you stay conscious. Healing determines how long you last in the field. Kellan lives by this chapter. Lira tries her best to avoid it.

Optional Rule: Severe Injuries

For groups that enjoy gritty realism, a major wound can leave a lasting mark — a broken limb, a limp, a scar that aches before a storm.

Whenever a character suffers a **Critical** or **Lethal** wound (12+ Hits in a single blow), roll **2d6 + Willpower modifier**. The margin by which the roll falls short of the wound’s severity decides the outcome, at the GM’s discretion:

Margin Short	Result
0–3	Minor complication — a temporary –1 to a related skill until properly healed
4–7	Lasting impairment — a permanent –1 to a related skill or attribute
8+	A genuine disability — GM and player work out together what it means for the character

This is entirely optional. Plenty of groups will get more enjoyment skipping it and keeping the tone heroic — wounds that heal clean, scars that are just stories. Use it only if your table wants the extra weight.

Closing Thoughts & Running Scimitar



A Word Before We Finish

If you’ve reached this point, you now understand the core of *Scimitar*: how characters act, fight, survive, and grow. The system is intentionally light — a framework you can shape to your own worlds, stories, and players.

This closing section gathers a few last pieces of advice, part practical and part philosophical, to help you run the game smoothly.

The Heart of Scimitar

Scimitar grew out of years of roleplaying, tinkering, and watching good characters come alive through play. The rules are here to support the story, not overshadow it. The dice add tension, but the people at the table create the meaning.

A few principles for running the game:

- 1. Be Generous With Creativity.** If a player wants to swing from a chandelier, leap onto a balcony, or run across a table while firing a pistol — let them roll for it. Make a ruling, set a fair Target Number, and let the dice tell you what happens.
- 2. Consistency Beats Complexity.** You don’t need a rule for everything. But whatever rulings you make, apply them consistently. Players love knowing the world behaves fairly, even when danger is high.
- 3. Failures Are Story Seeds.** A failed roll isn’t the end — it’s a fork in the road. Failure should make things *interesting*, not miserable. Lira misses a lockpick roll? A patrol turns the corner. Kellan fails a Shock Roll? He wakes up hours later with a headache and fresh rumours swirling.
- 4. Players Shape Their World.** Templates, skill clusters, equipment — every part of *Scimitar* is designed to bend. Encourage players to invent professions, skills, traditions, and cultural details of their own.
- 5. Combat Is Dangerous.** A few unlucky rolls can change everything. Lean into that. Let players win because they’re clever, daring, or desperate — not because they’re invincible.

Running the Game as GM

A few final tips to keep things flowing:

Keep the dice visible. Open rolls add excitement and honesty. Players love watching you panic when you reroll a six three times in a row.

Don’t overprepare. A handful of NPC names, one map scribble, and a strong opening scene are often all you need. Let players surprise you.

Reward good ideas over good stats. If a player’s plan is smart or entertaining, give them an easier Target Number. If it’s brilliant, maybe skip the roll entirely.

Use Swing Points to build momentum. They’re your best tool for cinematic action — encourage players to take risks to keep theirs flowing.

A Note on Using This Book

Scimitar was built around its own world, but this edition is deliberately **systemless** — it’s the engine, not the car. There’s no magic system here, no races, no setting lore. That’s by design: this book exists so the rules can stand on their own, ready to run any world you bring to the table, whether that’s a published setting, a homebrew world, or something you make up around the kitchen table tonight.

If you’d like rules for spellcasting, fantastical creatures, or other expansions, watch for separate, dedicated supplements down the line. None of that is needed to play what’s in this book — everything here is a complete, self-contained game.

A Final Walk with Kellan & Lira

Our example siblings have come a long way. They started as two rough outlines — one strong, one cunning — and became characters you can picture stepping off the page. Kellan with his battered shield and stubborn heart. Lira with her quiet step, quick fingers, and sharp grin.

Use them, ignore them, or build your own duo. The important thing is this: **your characters will tell stories you didn’t expect.**

That’s the magic of roleplaying games. And that’s what *Scimitar* is built for.

Credits & Thanks

Game Design & Writing: Ewan Murray
First Edition: *Scimitar*, 1989
Second Revised Edition: *Scimitar Roleplaying*, 1992
Third Definitive Edition: *Scimitar*³, 1998
(This) **Fourth Lite Edition:** *Scimitar*⁴, 2026
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Closing Line

The rules end here. Your story doesn’t.
Pick up the dice. Take a breath. Step into the world.
Welcome to Scimitar.

Character name

Players name

Scimitar⁴ Character Record



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Characteristics									
Primary & Secondary Attributes			Tertiary Attributes						
STRENGTH	%				Shock Bonus		Death Bonus		
Endurance					Initial Bonus		Surprise Bonus		
Stamina					Fatigue Score				
AGILITY	%								
Reaction									
Dexterity									
INTELLECT	%								
Willpower									
Observation									
PRESENCE	%								
Appearance									
Aura									
Hit Locations									
1 - Torso									
2 - Left Arm									
3 - Left Leg									
4 - Right Arm									
5 - Right Leg									
6 - Head									
Augment									
(1)									
(2)									
(3)									
(4)									
(5)									
(6)									
Target									
4+									
8+									
12+									
18+									
24+									
36+									
Difficulties									
Simple									
Routine									
Average									
Challenging									
Difficult									
Formidable									
Wounds									
Superficial (1)									
Light (3)									
Moderate (6)									
Serious (9)									
Critical (12)									
Lethal (15)									

[illegible]

Scimitar⁴ Character Sheet - © Widder Press 2026 - Permission to copy for Personal Use

Equipment, Artifacts, Holdings & Other Possessions

Weapon Statistics

Weapon	Attack	Defence	Speed	Damage	Range	Swingpoints
Armour	Head	Torso	L Arm	R Arm	L Leg	R Leg

Notes & Additional Information

Notes & Additional Information

Scimitar⁴ Character Sheet - © Widder Press 2026 - Permission to copy for Personal Use



Additional Resources

Check out our website for additional resources, many of which are free to download



World of Thayathorn

Scimitar was created for the Thayathorn World Setting. Visit our website for more information.



Scimitar and Thayathorn were created by

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink that reads 'Iwan Murray'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.



