



# Character Themes

# Heroes of Virtue

By *Richard Baker*

Illustrations by *John Stanko and Jim Nelson*

Developing your character into someone who has a rich story can be a fun and rewarding process. You likely have an idea of what race and what class you want to play, but you might have only a general idea of what your character's life was like before you start playing the character at the gaming table. A theme can help you flesh out your character and provide some interesting options for developing his or her background.

This article details four character themes: the chevalier, the guardian, the hospitaler, and the noble.

## CHARACTER THEMES

Your character's theme is a career, calling, or identity that describes who he or she is in the world. Just as race and class create basic definitions about who your character is, theme adds a third character component to help refine your story and identity. For example, if you're a human rogue who chooses the guardian theme, you might be a member of an order of guardians who don't stand toe to toe with their enemies but use subterfuge and distraction to protect their charges. Perhaps your order stresses action over reaction, believing that the best way to properly guard someone is to get off the first shot against that person's enemy. Or perhaps you are a guardian without a cause, ready and willing to become part of a new group of heroes. Each theme can encompass several unique stories within the same concept.

For information on using themes as part of character creation and rules for how to gain and use theme powers and features, see "Heroes of Nature and Lore," the first article in this series.

## CHEVALIER

Dedicated to the ideals of chivalry, chevaliers are gallant warriors who serve as champions and exemplars to the people around them. A chevalier's personal honor is his or her most treasured possession; it is far better to die with honor than to live without it. Chivalric codes vary from race to race and culture to culture, but most agree on a number of noble virtues that all chevaliers should aspire to: courage, fairness, mercy, justice, loyalty, honesty, charity, piety, moderation, and gallantry.

Although chevaliers strive to cultivate all the chivalric virtues, the most important elements of their code revolve around behavior on the field of battle. Honor demands that chevaliers seek out the most worthy foes on the field to defeat in a fair fight. Chevaliers aren't under any requirement to stand and die against superior foes—but they must stand as long as they hold out any hope for victory, and they need to execute a fighting retreat rather than flee in panic if the battle is hopeless. Likewise, chevaliers strive to fight fairly. Flanking foes or attacking dazed enemies is fair enough, especially if the enemy has the advantage of numbers, but performing a coup de grace or attacking a stunned foe is not honorable. Some chevaliers might wait for enemies that have fallen prone to stand again before resuming combat, or to permit a respite if a foe requests one. Of course, enemies who refuse to fight in a chivalrous manner fall outside the protections of honor and should be dealt with in the most expedient manner available.

Chevaliers frequently come from well-born families. Many chivalrous traditions arise from the requirements of elite military social classes, such as heavily armored cavalry and highly trained sword

### THE CHIVALROUS CODE

The chevalier seeks always to conduct himself or herself in a chivalrous manner. The concept of chivalry embraces courage on the battlefield, justice and fealty in the service of others, and courtly manners and fair speech. In short, it is a philosophy or way of life as well as a code of conduct. Details of what constitute chivalrous behavior vary from culture to culture, but most chevaliers would agree that the following precepts are a good start.

- Serve your liege lord with valor and faith.
- Protect the weak and defenseless.
- Give comfort and charity to those in need.
- Treat others with respect.
- Live by your code of honor.
- Despise wealth for its own sake.
- Seek foes worthy of you.
- Obey those placed in authority.
- Eschew injustice, cruelty, and deceit.
- Speak the truth always.
- Persevere to the end in any enterprise.
- Never refuse a challenge from an equal.
- Never turn your back upon a foe.

fighters. Acquiring the specialized equipment and years of training needed to serve as their realms' most highly prized warriors—whether that warrior ideal is a human knight, a dwarf giant-slayer, or an eladrin bladesinger—is never cheap or easy. In some lands, aspiring heroes aren't permitted to become chevaliers unless they can prove their noble birth and thus their right to claim the privileges of knighthood, but in most places low-born warriors of skill and personal integrity can win their spurs

through the sponsorship of royal patrons or their performance on the battlefield. No one denies that chevaliers are prone to more than a little haughtiness toward those they perceive as their social inferiors, but even the prickliest among them are conscious of their obligation to protect the weak and the poor from those who would oppress them.

### Creating a Chevalier

A number of chevaliers are fighters (and most of those are knights), but other heroes also feel drawn to this gallant path. Many paladins and warpriests become chevaliers, dedicating themselves to upholding the chivalric virtues as they confront evil. Among elves and eladrin, ranger chevaliers aren't uncommon; elven chivalry does not disdain ranged weapons or the use of magic. Likewise, tiefling hexblades sometimes become “dark chevaliers,” unleashing their warlock powers only against enemies who have demonstrated that nothing less will do.

### Starting Feature

In many lands, heavy cavalry—whether mounted on horses, giant boars, wolves, griffons, or dragons—is the noblest and most powerful of the military arms. Chevaliers are therefore highly trained equestrians (or the appropriate equivalent for more fantastic creatures), and they can perform astonishing feats of horsemanship.

All chevaliers also have some skill in close combat and are expected to open a battle by bringing their enemies to grips as quickly as possible. *Valiant charge* embodies the courage you hold as the noblest of the martial virtues. You charge into the midst of your foes and lay about you with your

weapon, intentionally throwing yourself into the point of greatest danger—and greatest honor.

**Benefit:** While mounted, you and your mount gain a +5 power bonus to Athletics checks and Acrobatics checks to jump, swim, or hop down. You can use your skill check or your mount's skill check, whichever is better.

In addition, you gain the *valiant charge* power.

**Valiant Charge**

Chevalier Attack

*You charge your enemy and strike out, momentarily holding it where it stands.*

Encounter ♦ Martial

No Action Special

**Trigger:** You hit a creature with a charge attack.

**Effect:** The creature is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

## Additional Features

### Level 5 Feature

Word of your deeds has spread throughout the land, and your emblem is widely known. Common people know you as a defender of the weak, nobles regard you as a desirable ally, and minor villains discover that they have pressing business elsewhere when you appear on the scene. In some kingdoms, you can call upon various privileges of knighthood or nobility, such as the right to expect hospitality from local lords or the authority to stand in judgment over lawbreakers.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 power bonus to Diplomacy checks and Intimidate checks.

### Level 10 Feature

Years of practicing self-discipline and temperance have made you exceptionally healthy, both physically and morally. You withstand assaults on your mind or body better than others who don't ask as much from themselves.

**Benefit:** You gain a +1 power bonus to saving throws.

## Optional Powers

War is the flowering of chivalry, or so the saying goes. For all the trappings of gallantry, romance, and courtly manners, chevaliers are skilled warriors first and foremost. They train for battle from childhood, often serving first as pages and then as squires to older, established chevaliers. This rigorous program of martial training hardens the body and prepares the spirit for the tests chevaliers face on the battlefield, and many chevaliers continue these practices throughout their careers.

### Level 2 Utility Power

Unless you're riding a fantastic beast such as a dragon or a griffon, your mount can be an easier target for your enemies than you are. Opponents might try to dismount you by striking at your steed first. However, you have learned a technique for maneuvering your mount away from the worst of these ignoble attacks.

**Battle Riding**

Chevalier Utility 2

*You quickly guide your mount away from danger.*

Encounter ♦ Martial

Immediate Interrupt Melee 1

**Trigger:** A mount you are riding is damaged by an attack.

**Effect:** Your mount takes half damage from the triggering attack. After the attack is resolved, your mount can shift 1 square.



## Level 6 Utility Power

When battle goes against you, you fall back on the discipline and inspiration of the chivalric code. When other warriors would quit, you drive yourself onward that extra mile. Your personal honor demands no less.

### Indefatigable Chevalier Utility 6

*You call upon your iron self-discipline to shake off the effects of enemy blows.*

**Daily** ♦ **Martial, Healing**

**Minor Action** **Personal**

**Effect:** You regain hit points equal to your healing surge value, and you can make a saving throw.

## Level 10 Utility Power

In battle, sometimes one side or the other holds a strategic piece of ground and refuses to yield it. When you decide to make a stand, you are difficult to dislodge—as are any companions standing with you.

### Loyal Stand Chevalier Utility 10

*You protect nearby allies with a flurry of blocks and parries for a short time, refusing to give ground.*

**Encounter** ♦ **Aura, Martial**

**Minor Action** **Personal**

**Effect:** You activate an aura 1 that lasts until the end of your next turn. You and your allies gain a +2 power bonus to AC while in the aura, and you can reduce the distance of push, pull, or slide effects against you or your allies in the aura by 1 square.

## GUARDIAN

Members of elite societies or military orders dedicated to the preservation of a worthy ideal, guardians are vigilant warriors ready to defend their sworn charges with their lives. Although strength and fighting spirit are useful to guardians, most pride themselves on using their heads, not their hands. Guardians believe that the service they offer doesn't permit personal glory-seeking or needless risk-taking. If the causes or the people they protect can be defended only by head-on battle, then guardians do not hesitate to draw their weapons. On the other hand, if the best way to carry out a mission is to employ stealth or subterfuge, or flee the scene, so be it.

A guardian's orders vary widely from realm to realm. Some exist to protect another group or organization, such as the high priests of a particular god, the members of a wizards' guild, or a family line harboring a great destiny or a magical legacy. Some are sworn to protect a rare or treasured site or item, such as the forge-flame burning eternally in the heart of a dwarven citadel, or a mighty artifact of good that a demon lord seeks so that it can destroy the item. A few guardian orders are mercenary squads of the highest quality, priding themselves on offering the best, most loyal protection that gold can buy. However, most guardians are sworn to the service of a kingdom or realm. They serve as bodyguards to the royal family and high-ranking members of court, protect the treasures and the secrets of the realm, and undertake missions of vital interest to the crown.

## Creating a Guardian

Characters who specialize in melee combat make the best guardians. Fighters and paladins are naturally strong candidates for this theme, since they combine good close-combat capabilities with excellent durability—a vital characteristic, since guardians must be ready to take an arrow for their charges if that's what the situation demands. Militant clerics

### FALLEN GUARDIANS

Fellowships of champions such as the Silver-shields of Mithralfast or the Moonwarders who protect the initiates of the Isle of the Druids are known throughout the wide lands of the world. An adventuring guardian could be one small part of a strong order, with allies and refuges to call upon in many lands, or he or she might belong to an order on the verge of dying out. A number of guardian orders have fallen over the years, leaving behind handfuls of widely scattered rovers who no longer have anything to serve. These individuals sometimes take on young trainees and do their best to pass along the traditions of their broken companies. Others abandon their old haunts and set out to do what good they can in the world, each hoping to find a worthy cause. And every now and then, a young warrior stumbles across an old relic or hears the story of an ancient order that inspires him or her to take up arms in the name of an order that has otherwise vanished from the world. Guardians without an order to call their own might not have the resources of guardians from a still-functioning order, but they are free to follow their consciences wherever they go.

likewise become guardians on occasion, protecting their wards with wise counsel as well as strength of arms. Rogues and rangers can also do well as guardians, since they can be less obvious than more heavily armed characters, and they have talents for circumventing avoidable dangers rather than battling through them.

## Starting Feature

Guardians require good melee combat skills, and they are expected to do their best to protect nearby allies caught up in the melee. *Guardian's counter* embodies your alertness and unflinching courage. With a single quick stride, you move to an endangered ally's side, shielding him or her from attack with your own body.

**Benefit:** You gain the *guardian's counter* power.

### Guardian's Counter Guardian Attack

*Seeing a friend in danger, you step up to take the attack meant for your ally—and then you strike back.*

**Encounter** ♦ **Martial**

**Immediate Interrupt** Close burst 2

**Trigger:** An ally within 2 squares of you is attacked and you are not included in the attack.

**Effect:** You and the ally shift up to 2 squares as a free action, swapping positions. You become the target of the triggering attack, in place of the ally. After the attack is resolved, you can make a basic attack against the attacker.

## Additional Features

### Level 5 Feature

The ability to sense trouble that others don't notice isn't something that just happens; it's the result of years of honing your powers of observation and your ability to read others' intentions. A flicker of the eyes,

a tensing of the shoulders, a leaf quivering without a breeze, a sudden silence in the forest—for you, these might as well be shouted warnings of danger.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 power bonus to Insight checks and Perception checks.

### Level 10 Feature

Many guardians' tasks revolve around keeping a particular person safe. You might be partnered with a wizard or a cleric, sworn to accompany your charge on his or her travels and guard him or her with your very life. You might serve for a time as a bodyguard to a high noble, be tasked with escorting an important diplomat through dangerous territory, or be caught up in the effort to spirit off to safety a child of prophecy. Regardless of the nature of your obligation, you have developed an uncanny instinct for danger. When your charge is lost or in peril, you can feel it in your bones.

**Benefit:** Choose one creature to be your bonded charge. You can sense when your bonded charge is in danger, as long as he or she is within one mile. You can sense the general direction and distance to your bonded charge if you don't know where he or she is. If an enemy attacks your bonded charge, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls against that enemy until the start of that enemy's next turn.

You can have only one bonded charge at a time. Your bonded charge must be someone your guardian order is sworn to protect. Generally speaking, you can't designate someone as a bonded charge whose melee combat skills equal or exceed your own; you're supposed to protect people who don't fight as well as you do.



## Optional Powers

As a guardian, you are familiar with techniques for fighting defensively, protecting nearby companions from attack, and remaining alert and ready for trouble. Depending on the nature of the order you serve and the missions you tackle, you might decide to learn how to get the most from these talents.

### Level 2 Utility Power

The most basic test of a guardian's skills is keeping someone else alive in the middle of a hard-fought melee. As long as you stay close, you can deflect blows meant for the one you are protecting and make sure that no enemies take advantage of flanking or a sudden opening.

#### Guardian's Defense Guardian Utility 2

*Fighting side by side with an ally, you guard his or her back.*

**Encounter** ♦ **Martial**

**Minor Action** Close burst 1

**Target:** You and one ally in the burst

**Effect:** Until the end of your next turn, each target gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses. Additionally, enemies cannot gain combat advantage against either target until the end of your next turn.

### Level 6 Utility Power

Whether you're more observant than most other adventurers or you adapt to situations with incredible speed, it's almost impossible for your enemies to get the drop on you. When goblin arrows start hissing through the air and your companions are frozen in sudden confusion, you're already leaping into the fray.

#### Ready for Anything Guardian Utility 6

*Your enemies think they caught you off guard; they're wrong.*

**Daily** ♦ **Martial**

**No Action** Personal

**Trigger:** You are surprised at the start of an encounter.

**Effect:** You are not surprised.

### Level 10 Utility Power

Protecting the back or the flank of the comrade fighting next to you is second nature by now. Without a moment's hesitation, you throw yourself into the path of an attack to take the blow meant for your ally. You might be better able to withstand the injury, or you might not—but no better example of service to others and courage in the face of adversity exists.

#### Watch Out! Guardian Utility 10

*You take a hit intended for one of your friends.*

**Encounter** ♦ **Healing, Martial**

**Immediate Interrupt** Melee 1

**Trigger:** An ally adjacent to you is hit by an attack that does not include you as a target.

**Effect:** The triggering attack misses your ally and hits you instead. After the attack is resolved, you can spend a healing surge.

## HOSPITALER

Hospitalers are members of a religious order of compassionate warriors sworn to provide care and comfort to the poor, the sick, and the injured. Their chapter houses are in many large cities, offering comfort and healing to those in need of it. However, hospitalers are most famous for their work out in frontier lands, where they aid travelers (especially religious pilgrims) who are in distress far from any other help. Fortified hospices stand near difficult mountain passes, at remote river crossings, and in lonely clearings in dark, monster-haunted forests. Many are the travelers whose lives have been saved by hospitalers watching over dangerous roads in the wilds.

In addition to serving as healers and sponsoring almshouses and hospices throughout the land, hospitalers are valiant soldiers. Hospitaler orders keep roads safe from bandits and monsters, especially routes used by pilgrims journeying to holy sites. They defend important shrines and protect high-ranking members of the priesthood. Finally, hospitaler orders are the backbone of many crusading armies seeking to confront great evils in far lands.

Like chevaliers, hospitalers are seen as knights of a sort and are entitled to a number of privileges in most realms. They are responsible for maintaining estates and strongholds, overseeing justice in their demesnes, and marshaling companies of soldiers to protect the lands around their estates. However, they are loyal to religious leaders, not secular rulers. Hospitaler commanders hold high ecclesiastic rank as well as knightly titles and estates. In practice, most hospitalers split their time between the estates for which they are personally responsible and the chapter houses or hospices of their order. Titles and estates are awarded

on the basis of seniority and family influence, so low-ranking hospitalers rarely have estates of their own. Instead they serve as seneschals or lieutenants to landed hospitalers, swear fealty to the king or high nobles of the nearest realm, or take up arms in a crusade.

## Creating a Hospitaler

Clerics of any kind and paladins are the backbone of hospitaler orders. Armed with potent healing abilities, they are well equipped to carry out the sacred mission of their societies. Fighters and rangers sometimes become hospitalers despite their lack of divine magic; hospitalers fight as well as heal, and hospitaler chapters offer excellent opportunities for brave, true warriors to win respect and renown.

## Starting Feature

All hospitalers are skilled with at least one healing prayer and can quickly offset the injuries inflicted by enemies. In addition, hospitalers are warriors as well as healers; enemies that strike their companions risk

### Shield of Devotion

Hospitaler Utility

*With a quick prayer you bestow minor healing on a stricken ally, then prepare yourself to smite the enemy who struck your friend.*

**Encounter** ♦ **Divine, Healing**

**Immediate Reaction**      **Close burst 5**

**Trigger:** An ally within 5 squares of you takes damage from an enemy attack.

**Target:** The triggering ally

**Effect:** The target regains hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier. Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +2 power bonus to your next attack roll against the enemy that damaged the target.

*Level 11:* The target regains hit points equal to 5 + your Wisdom modifier.

*Level 21:* The target regains hit points equal to 10 + your Wisdom modifier.

their righteous anger. *Shield of devotion* allows you to immediately grant minor healing to an ally struck by a foe, and then strengthens your weapon arm against that enemy for a short time.

**Benefit:** You gain the *shield of devotion* power.

## Additional Features

### Level 5 Feature

Other knightly warriors often amass great personal wealth with their lands, but hospitalers hold only noble titles and offices as stewards. Without any great personal fortune to draw upon, they cannot easily afford to maintain themselves in the style demanded by their high station or provide themselves with suitable entourages in their travels. In recognition of this fact, most kingdoms grant hospitalers the right to request hospitality from landed knights and nobles of the realm. (Naturally, hospitalers can also expect food and shelter from chapter houses, hospices, and temples affiliated with their order.) When you travel, you can ask to be put up in any temples, castles, or manors you pass by; your hosts are obliged to provide for your needs for a minimum of three nights. Enemies are free to ignore your demands, of course.

**Benefit:** You can request food and lodging for yourself and your traveling companions from any temple affiliated with your hospitaler order, or from any noble household. Your request for hospitality will be honored in all but the most unusual circumstances.

### Level 10 Feature

When battle turns against you and your companions, your star shines most brightly. If multiple



comrades fall or become seriously wounded, you can use your *shield of devotion* prayer a second time in the same battle.

**Benefit:** You can use *shield of devotion* twice per encounter.

## Optional Powers

Most hospitalers are skilled battlefield healers as well as devout warriors. Armed with potent divine prayers, they serve to bolster and refresh allies fighting alongside them.

### Level 2 Utility Power

Claws, fangs, blades, and arrows are bad enough, but many enemies also employ deadly poison, foul magic, or vicious combat maneuvers that can cripple unfortunate warriors. Sometimes it's more important to help an ally shake off a stunning blow or purge poison from his or her body than it is to knit a wound with a healing prayer. *Hospitaler's prayer* helps to remove an effect hampering the target, and it also serves as a potent prayer of protection for a short time.

#### Hospitaler's Prayer Hospitaler Utility 2

*Your prayer alleviates one malady afflicting your comrade and shields him or her from harm for a short time.*

**Daily** ♦ **Divine**

**Minor Action** Close burst 5

**Target:** One ally in the burst

**Effect:** The target can make a saving throw. Until the end of your next turn, the target gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses, or a +4 power bonus if the saving throw you grant with this power fails.

### Level 6 Utility Power

Many eager warriors boldly throw themselves into the midst of their enemies, seeking glory even if it

means leaving their allies far behind them. Sometimes, this reckless strategy can result in the boldest of your comrades getting into serious trouble when you can't easily come to his or her aid. The *radiant stride* prayer surrounds you in a bright, glowing mist, helping you to slip around the enemies standing between you and your stricken friend, without being cut down yourself. The lingering mists help to conceal you from your enemies for a short time, giving you the chance to heal or retrieve your friend.

#### Radiant Stride Hospitaler Utility 6

*Cloaking yourself in a bright nimbus of light, you go to the side of a wounded comrade.*

**Encounter** ♦ **Divine**

**Move Action** Personal

**Effect:** You shift up to your speed. You must end the shift adjacent to a bloodied or unconscious ally. Until the end of your next turn, you gain partial concealment, and your allies also have partial concealment while adjacent to you.

### Level 10 Utility Power

As a devoted hospitaler, you seek to keep your allies on their feet, battling on valiantly against whatever evils confront you. This powerful prayer restores a badly wounded ally to something approaching full health, and cures him or her of one detrimental condition.

#### Fight on, Friend Hospitaler Utility 10

*You heal a badly wounded companion, restoring health and banishing one affliction or hindering condition of your choice.*

**Daily** ♦ **Divine, Healing**

**Minor Action** Melee touch

**Target:** One bloodied or unconscious ally

**Effect:** The target regains hit points equal to twice his or her healing surge value. In addition, the target automatically saves against one effect that a save can end.

## NOBLE

Heroes arise from all levels of society. Some begin their stories as peasants, some as rough-and-ready homesteaders from frontier lands, and others as well-off townfolk, but some heroes are born into privilege. Noble-born heroes enjoy opportunities and comforts that many commoners can only imagine, but if they are blessed with wealth and influence by the luck of being born to high station, then they are also obligated to do more with the gifts they have been given.

The definition of nobility varies from land to land and race to race. In most realms, the aristocracy falls into three groups: low nobility, high nobility, and royalty. Low nobles include landed knights, squires, baronets, lairds, hidalgos, seigneurs, and other holders of minor titles and estates. Typically a low noble's lands rarely extend for more than a day's ride or include more than one good-sized town. Most low nobles owe allegiance to a nearby high noble, who might bear a title such as baron, count, duke, marquis, earl, landgrave, or prince. High nobles can be major powers, since they are wealthy enough to raise their own armies and are near-absolute rulers over the lands of dozens, perhaps hundreds, of low nobles. High nobles in turn owe their allegiance to the sovereign of their realm. Royal titles come in a bewildering variety, ranging from king or queen to archduke, high prince, tsar, khan, shah, or something even more exotic. Of course, the ranks of the nobility also include everyone in the titled landholder's family. A member of a noble family who isn't the actual titleholder is generally called lord or lady.

An adventurer from a noble family is rarely the family's active titleholder or ruler. Governing and defending a fief is an important duty, and the affairs

of the kingdom leave little time for dungeon delving and adventure seeking. Most noble heroes are therefore untitled lords or ladies who are closely related to a titleholder. A hero might be the heir apparent to the title of head of the family, standing only one heartbeat away from a noble seat, or he or she might be further removed from the order of succession, free to indulge a taste for adventure with little concern for ever becoming a baron, a duke, or a king.

Regardless of whether they hold titles or might inherit them, nobles still enjoy a number of perquisites of their high stations. Common officials and lawkeepers can arrest or hinder nobles only in exceptional circumstances. Important people in nearby lands are careful to treat nobles with respect, even deference, for fear of offending a powerful family. Nobles are also wealthy by the standards of most people. As long as they're anywhere near home, nobles can afford fine meals, excellent lodgings, and sufficient allowances and stipends to maintain themselves in comfort.

## Creating a Noble

Noble heroes can be found in every character class. Naturally, knights are frequently born of noble families. Wizards can come from noble backgrounds, since noble families possess the means and the opportunity to arrange for promising youngsters who display an interest in magic to be tutored in the magical arts. Nobles blocked from inheriting titles by older siblings are encouraged to enter the clergy, and they might become clerics or paladins. Even a rogue could have an aristocratic origin; a street-savvy thief might be a troublemaker who became bored with a life of being pampered or a runaway seeking to avoid the duties of holding high rank.

## Starting Feature

Nobles are born to lead. Commoners naturally look to you to make decisions and take charge of any important endeavors, and that includes leading your followers, retainers, and soldiers in battle. (Your friends and allies aren't obligated to follow your commands, of course; they're not your servants.) If you grew up training to be a warrior, you know how to lead with the sword; if your family instead tutored you in other areas of endeavor, your noble bearing and confidence still command respect.

**Benefit:** You gain the *noble presence* power.

### Noble Presence

### Noble Utility

*You encourage your allies to improve their positions and stand firm against the foe.*

**Encounter** ♦ **Martial**

**Move Action**    **Close burst 3**

**Target:** One or two allies in the burst

**Effect:** Each target can shift up to 2 squares as a free action, and each target gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

## Additional Features

### Level 5 Feature

Now that you have demonstrated that you are a hero of some account and a worthy continuation of your family's noble lineage, you are given a magic item that has been in your family's keeping for generations. (If you are far from home when you reach this milestone, a courier shows up in the nearest large town to deliver it to you.) The heirloom is yours to use for as long as you need it, but you're expected to return home with it when you're done with it—it's not to be sold or given away.



**Benefit:** You gain one common suit of magic armor, weapon, or neck slot item of 6th level or lower.

### Level 10 Feature

Whether you've tried to avoid it or not, you can't help becoming involved in the high affairs of your realm and the shifting affairs of the court. The great nobles of the realm rarely confront each other openly, instead surreptitiously jockeying for influence. Recognizing your friends and your enemies when everyone wears a mask of gentility and courtly manners is an art, but your experiences have prepared you well.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 power bonus to Diplomacy checks and Insight checks.

### Optional Powers

Adventuring nobles excel at inspiring those around them, naturally rising to the top in dangerous situations. Some nobles are political creatures who send others out to face danger, but you aren't one of those. Your title confirms what your comrades and followers already know about you—you're a courageous warrior who leads from the front. You won't ask your associates to do anything that you wouldn't do yourself, and they strive to match your bravery and coolness in battle.

### Level 2 Utility Power

Depending on the laws of the land, nobles can have commoners fined, taxed, arrested, or beaten at a mere word. Under such circumstances, few commoners can afford to ignore a noble determined to throw his or her weight around. Even other nobles think twice before giving offense to one of their own, knowing that a careless insult might be the beginning of a

fierce rivalry or a lethal vendetta. You can get what you want by identifying yourself and suggesting that it would be wise to cooperate with you.

### Noble Influence Noble Utility 2

*If a logical argument or a heartfelt appeal won't move your adversary, perhaps your exalted title will.*

**Encounter ♦ Martial**  
**Free Action Personal**

**Effect:** You gain a +5 power bonus to your next Intimidate check made before the end of the encounter. Until the end of the encounter, you can also use Intimidate in place of your next Bluff check or Diplomacy check.

### Level 6 Utility Power

By standing up to the effects of your enemies' attacks, you demonstrate to those around you that they can do so as well. When you recover from the effects of debilitating magic, poison, fear, or another unusual form of attack, your success and your words of encouragement help an ally to follow your example.

### Inspiring Recovery Noble Utility 6

*When you shake off the lingering effects of an enemy's attack, you provide an ally with the inspiration to do the same.*

**Encounter ♦ Martial**  
**Free Action Close burst 5**  
**Trigger:** You succeed on a saving throw.  
**Target:** One ally in the burst

**Effect:** The target can make a saving throw with a +2 power bonus.

### Level 10 Utility Power

You're accustomed to quick obedience from your inferiors, and you seize control of any dangerous situation. When an ally panics or hesitates, it takes you only a single shout or a firm hand on the shoulder to get your friend moving again.

### Urge to Action Noble Utility 10

*With one quick word, you spur a hesitating ally into action.*

**Encounter ♦ Martial**  
**Free Action Close burst 5**  
**Trigger:** An ally makes an initiative check, and the result is lower than your initiative check result.  
**Target:** The triggering ally  
**Effect:** The target's initiative check result improves to your initiative check result.

### About the Author

Richard Baker is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and supplements, including *Manual of the Planes™*, the *DARK SUN® Campaign Guide*, and the *D&D® GAMMA WORLD™ Roleplaying Game*. He's a *New York Times* bestselling author of *FORGOTTEN REALMS®* novels such as *Condemnation*, the Last Mythal trilogy, and the *Blades of the Moonsea* series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®* game at Wizards of the Coast.