



# IN THE BALANCE

## Part 2: Purchase Cards

An Expansion for *Talisman* 4<sup>th</sup> Edition “Revised”  
J.C. Hendee, 4/23/2009

### Notices

Foremost my gratitude goes to “Velhart” and “Dth” on the Fantasy Flight Games *Talisman* sub-forum. Along with others, they provided extensive feedback during this expansion’s development.

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#### Card Template

The original Photoshop template(s) were developed by Jon New of Talisman Island at [www.talismanisland.com](http://www.talismanisland.com). The versions used for layout and compiling of this expansion’s components were further modified and adapted by J.C. Hendee.

# PURPOSE

**NOTE:** *In the Balance, Part 2: Purchase Cards (ITB-2)* can be played without *Part 1: Adventure Cards (ITB-1)*, but some new Objects will not be as meaningful or potent in play. There are also references to *ITB-1* cards that will not make sense and will have to be ignored.

*ITB-2* is intended as an Expansion for *Talisman, the Magical Quest* board game, 4<sup>th</sup> edition “revised” (4ER), produced and copyrighted by Fantasy Flight Games at the time of this package’s release. The expansion’s Purchase deck comprises 56 cards in two sets of 28 each, distinguished by image file names beginning with “1” or “2.” Set “1” are new Objects; Set “2” are repeats of the standard Purchase deck but with new art and some new notes of usage.

*In the Balance* in all of its parts was developed with three basic goals in mind:

1. Provide slight thematic and mechanics based opportunity for Neutral characters to be more than the Alignment of “No Alignment.”
2. Re-balance Alignment inequities in the standard cards within inherent limits. Note: this doesn’t address similar inequities in other game components.
3. Add varied new card features, methods of card interactivity, and advanced options for certain card types without altering standard card classifications and base rules.

## New (& Old) Terminology

In place of some 4ER terminology, *In the Balance* cards often use more concise and/or precise terms. These should be easily understood by those familiar with *Talisman*. Just in case, here are some basic explanations.

**Adventurer** is a “Character in a currently active game under the control of a Player.” This distinguishes it from references to a Character in general (as in a Character card) and/or a Player in general (whether or not in an active game). The need for distinction is rare but can be necessary under certain conditions. In general, “adventurer” is the preferred term used on cards in this expansion; the only way the cards are used is if the “Player” is playing the “Character” in an active game.

**“Starting” Strength or Craft** is as listed on Character Cards, meaning the character’s natural ability versus any skill points added on through game play. This term is more concise than the unspecific 4ER label of “Starting Value [of Strength / Craft].” This alternative term is more easily interpreted by players of previous *Talisman* editions.

**“Natural” Strength or Craft** is Starting Strength or Craft plus additional skill points built up through game play. When this term is referenced, modifiers from Followers, Objects, Magic Objects, or Spells do not

count for any activity or die roll mentioned (unless otherwise stipulated on a card).

***“Current” Strength or Craft*** is Starting Strength or Craft *plus* additional points of skill (hence Natural Strength / Craft)... AND PLUS applicable modifiers from Followers, Objects, Magic Objects, and Spells. In other words, everything that applies to either Strength or Craft according to the activity in question.

NOTE: for brevity on some cards the terms “Craft” or “Strength” appear without mention of “Starting,” “Natural,” or “Current.” In all such cases, this refers to “Current” Craft or Strength and all modifiers are likewise applicable.

### **Shorthand References**

For brevity, some cards reference Craft, Strength, Gold, Purchase cards, etc. by a single letter, plus a leading and/or following number as needed.

- S “Strength,” as in S7 = Strength 7.
- C “Craft,” as in C5 = Craft 5.
- G “Gold,” as in 2G = two Gold.
- P “Purchase [card]”, as in 1P = one Purchase card (drawn randomly unless otherwise indicated).
- D “Die” or “Dice,” as in 2D6 = two Dice with six sides (standard dice that came with *Talisman*).
- +/- Die Modifiers, as in 1D6+1 = one Die with six sides, and add 1 to its roll.

# PLAYING THE CARDS

## Where do adventurers “Purchase” new *ITB* Objects?

The answer is simple: look on the cards. Instead of a lengthy list as to where on the board (or among Adventure “Place” cards) these are sold, that information is placed directly on the cards, along with the Object’s price at all such locations.

## But why are there two *ITB* “Purchase” Sets?

Some *ITB-1* Adventure Cards, particularly “Place-Challenge” cards, have the potential to gain a Purchase Card as “Treasure.” That Purchase card is often drawn “randomly,” which means Purchase cards have to be shuffled. Some players like to keep their primary Purchase deck organized and orderly, so...

There are three ways that *ITB* Purchase cards may be used.

### 1. If you prefer to keep Purchase Cards orderly...

Shuffle *ITB* Purchase card Sets 1 and 2 together, leaving your standard Purchase cards organized. When an adventurer is instructed to draw a random Purchase card, the Player should do so from the *ITB* double deck. Players wishing to acquire one of the new *ITB* Purchase cards via normal means can still look through that deck for something available at their current location. When they are done, they re-shuffle the deck, and all is ready again.

NOTE: Some players’ groups prefer to have the number of Objects of any one type limited by count. In this approach, the number of regular Objects found in the standard Purchase deck is doubled by using the *ITB* Purchase cards. There is no way around this increased inventory if you are going to have a separate organized Purchase deck and a random draw one for use with *ITB-1 Adventure Cards*.

### 2. If you don’t care about orderly Purchase Cards, but prefer to limit the number of any one type of Purchase...

Shuffle *ITB* Set 1 with your standard Purchase Cards and leave out Set 2. You now have a deck ready for random draws that does not increase the number of standard Purchase card types. If an adventurer stops at a location to buy an Object, they look through the deck, acquire what they need, and then re-shuffle the deck. If more than one adventurer is acquiring Purchase cards, such as on “Market Day,” wait until all are done and then re-shuffle the deck once.

### 3. If you don’t care about orderly and don’t care about limiting the number of any one type of Purchase card...

Shuffle *ITB* Purchase card Sets 1 & 2 in with your standard Purchase cards and have at it!

# HOUSE RULES

Optional Rules for Use with *In the Balance*

NOTE: You should also look at the House Rules found in the *ITB-1 Adventure Cards* package. There are many therein related to Objects and Followers found in this set of Purchase cards. Those optional House Rules are not reiterated herein; additional ones are presented instead.

## 1. “Carrier” Followers & the Loss of Objects & Magic Objects

If you look at the standard “Mule” card, you will note the follow:

“If you lose the Mule, leave any surplus Objects of your choice in the space you are in.”

The *ITB-2* “Mule” has kept to a similar description, *but there are problems herein*.

First, Hoarders and Gauders (see *ITB-1*’s document for these terms) have tried to claim that in explicitly saying “Objects” it therefore doesn’t include “Magic Objects,” which are separate among the 7 standard card *types* found in the Adventure deck. This of course is incorrect according to all who play by the spirit as well as the letter of the game’s rules.

Second, this card’s description is so weak and over simplified that it lends to hoarding of objects. It’s in the issue of how the Mule (or any Follower that is a “Carrier” of Objects) is actually “lost.”

There three ways a Follower can be removed from an adventurer’s company. Each affects what it carries differently. Each is easily distinguished from the other two by any players not looking for another rule loophole to exploit and keep their goodies.

The following House Rules, once read aloud, will immediately expose who has the mettle to face the hazards of true adventure... and who’s looking to play the angles and loopholes in the game.

### The Rules:

1. **Currency Objects are always on the adventurer and never carried by a Follower.** Unless otherwise stated, Currency Objects (including Gold) don’t count against an adventurer’s Object limit for what it can carry personally.
2. **If a “Carrier” Follower is “stolen” or leaves or is dragged / driven off** for any reason (panic, abandonment, spell, special abilities, into the River, swallowed whole by a Great Wurm, etc.), whether to another space, to another adventurer, or to the discard pile, **then all Objects and Magic Objects it carries go with it.**
3. **If a “Carrier” Follower is “killed”** in a way where (1) its body remains and is not utterly destroyed, or (2) would be stripped of burdens before being, say, eaten, **then all Objects and Magic Objects it carries are dropped “on” the adventurer’s current space.** At the

end of the adventurer's current turn, it has one chance to exchange Objects and Magic Objects from other Followers, Baggage, or its own possessions with what was dropped. Once the adventurer's turn is over, any remaining fallen Objects may not be claimed until it returns to the space on another turn.

4. **If a "Carrier" Follower is "destroyed" without being removed from the adventurer's possession such as incinerated by a Fireball, etc., then all Objects but not Magic Objects it carries are destroyed (discarded).** Magic objects are dropped on the current space, and, as per #3 above, the adventurer has one chance to recover them.

NOTE: This last point concerning Magic Objects is based in long debates among varied player groups over the last 20 years. The justification is that all Magic Objects are somehow inherently tougher because their "magical." This is highly questionable, if not outright humorous, and easily refuted by many myths, legends, and folklore. But examples for the other side can be found as well. So in *Talisman's* generic world, we let Magic Objects be indestructible unless their magic is somehow nullified before they are destroyed — hint, hint!

## 2. Baggage Objects & the Loss of Objects & Magic Objects

*Baggage* Objects (new in *ITB-2*) are beyond any such assumed to be carried by all adventurers for basic food, bedrolls, etc. Baggage allows an adventurer to carry (but not necessarily

always use) extra Objects without the need of a "Carrier" Follower. Some Baggage Objects have restrictions or even deficits for this bending of the game's standard Object limits. And likewise, as for "Carrier" Followers, there are special considerations if the *Baggage* Object is lost, stolen, or destroyed. Here's how to deal with such, along with some additional rules to keep Hoarders, Gauders, and other exploiters under control.

### The Rules:

1. **No more than 1 Baggage Object may be carried personally by an adventurer.** This includes any standard or commercial expansion Objects, but does not include the Hidden/Secret Pocket.
2. **An empty Baggage Object may be carried inside another Baggage Object;** the so carried Baggage may not contain any further Objects or Magic Objects. Nesting of Baggage for increased counts of Objects is not allowed. The Secret Pocket may not be carried in Baggage; it must be carried personally by the adventurer.
3. **Extra empty Baggage Objects may be carried as single Objects by a "Carrier" Follower.** Baggage objects may not be used to increase a Carrier Follower's Object limit.
4. **Currency Objects are always on the adventurer and never carried in Baggage.** Unless otherwise stated, Currency Objects (like Gold) don't count against an adventurer's Object limit for what it can personally carry.
5. **If a Baggage Object is "stolen,"** whether through an event, special ability, spell, etc., which gives the adventurer no chance to grab any-

thing in it, then all **Objects and Magic Objects** contained in the **Baggage** are likewise stolen.

6. If a **Baggage Object** is “lost,” such as when an adventurer is forced to choose or randomly select an Object to discard, then **Objects and Magic Objects** contained in the **Baggage** may be removed. The adventurer has one chance to move such from **Baggage** to other **Baggage**, **Followers**, or itself within Object limits applicable. Any Objects or Magic Objects that cannot be transferred may be (1) dropped on the current space or (2) forfeited along with the lost **Baggage** object at the adventurer’s discretion.
7. If a **Baggage Object** is “destroyed” or by any terms implied to have been render unusable and unrecognizable (such as being chomped by a Great Wurm or incinerated), then all **Objects but not Magic Objects** within the **Baggage** are destroyed. Magic Objects contained within that destroyed **Baggage** are dropped on the current space and may be transfer, exchanged, or retrieved before the end of the current turn.

### 3. Graduated Armor System (GAS)

**NOTE:** This set of rules should not be implemented without House Rules for Objects and Magic Objects from *ITB-1 Part 1, Adventure Cards*. Those rules are necessary to keep the GAS from being exploited by Hoarders and Gauders.

This approach allows multiple *Armour* Objects to be used to save a Life lost in Battle. When rolling to save a life, you start

with the best **Armour** you have. If that fails, you re-roll on the next best, and so on. The correct probability order for rolling to save a Life with **Armour** Objects is as follows.

1. **Armour**, or any **Armour Object** that saves a Life on a 4, 5, or 6 (50%)
2. **Shield**, or **Bracers + Battle Blades**, or any **Armour Object** that saves a life on 5 or 6 (33.3%)
3. **Helmet**, or **Bracers**, or any **Armour Object** that saves a Life on a 6 only (16.7%)

**Total Chance of successfully saving a life never rises above 76.9%** when using up to 4 differing **Armour** Objects, which fills a typical adventurer’s Object limit. There are built in deficits for going that far, such as no room left for a weapon. With House Rules found in *ITB-1 Adventure Cards*, no more than 1 of any **Armour** type card can be used at the same time.

The above total probability is not derived from adding together percentages listed (a mathematically incorrect method). If you’re curious as to why, read on below. Otherwise, go back to your game or skip ahead to other House Rules herein.

When looking at Graduated use of **Armour**, we need to consider the chance of failure—not success—on each **Armour** object used in a sequence. For only when one fails does can the next one in order get be rolled. Let’s consider...

#### ARMOUR + SHIELD + HELMET

**Armour** fails on 1, 2, or 3 (50% on 1D6). The **Shield** fails on 1 through 4, or 66.7%, but it is only rolled if the **Armour** failed first (66.7% of the time). So the chance of

losing a Life with Armour and Shield is...  $50\% \times .666 = 33.3\%$  chance of losing a Life (or a 66.6% of saving a Life with Armour + Shield).

Now let's add the Helmet. The Helmet fails on 1 through 5, or 83.3%, but is only rolled when Armour and Shield both fail (33.3%). So the chance of losing a Life rolling for the Helmet is...  $33.3\% \times .833 = 27.7\%$  chance of losing a Life (or a 72.3% of saving a Life with Armour + Shield + Helmet).

We must also consider some expansions adding new Armour Objects, such as the "Bracers" found in *ITB-1* and *ITB-2*. It's possible, sans a weapon, that an adventurer could have (readied) 4 different Armour Objects (filling its Object limit). This would be rare among the less aware adventurers, since they are loath to give up a weapon. The smarter ones will see the advantage, once they get a high Strength through point build up and Followers. Then they might not need that puny +1 from a "Sword."

#### **ARMOUR + SHIELD + HELMET + BRACERS**

Bracers save a Life on a rolled 6 like a Helmet, so they fail on a 1 through 5 (83.33%). Assuming the Helmet was used first, the Bracers are only rolled if all other armour has fail (27.7% of the time). So the chance of losing a life in rolling the Bracers is...  $27.7\% \times .833 = 23.1\%$  chance of losing a Life, or...

With the maximum of four (different) Armour Objects the chance to save a Life lost in battle is  $100\% - 23.1\%$  Failure = **76.9% Maximum Success.**

## **4. The True Fate System (TFS)**

Fate was not only mislabeled in *Talisman* 4ER, it was poorly implemented. As it stands, it has two inherently large flaws.

1. **Standard Fate is only used after an adventurer's first roll fails.** Therefore there are no compound probability increases for being "fated" by any one or more of the Powers of the Three Alignments. This approach is not fate but a blind "do-over" with no greater chance of success than the first failed or inadequate roll.
2. **Standard Fate is misused to affect rolls for activities, choices, and actions of personae and other influences in the Land beyond the adventurer's influence, mundane or otherwise.** Fate is not transferable, and yet by the rules an adventurer can somehow apply its Fate to rolled decisions and actions of other personae in the game (Enchantress, Mystic, etc.). These individuals, by their nature and influence, would have their own "fate" as well, not to be countered simply because some wandering adventurer is confronting them. Contradicting this, an adventurer cannot use a Fate point to re-roll the roll of another adventurer — so why does it get to do so with non-player personae?.

Any claims that Fate as implemented gives any new control to adventurers or speeds up the game play are false by these considerations. Even with applying it to rolls for personae outside of the adventurer's control, with "fate" of their own, it is still a blind do-over. On that count, it doesn't even qualify as Luck let alone



Fate. Under the standard rules, hard won Fate points gain little advantage at all.

Fate is something decreed the Universe, Existence, Deities, the belief of the masses, etc., etc. In *Talisman*, it can be seen to come from the Powers of the Alignments (for lack of a better reference). It is individual and each adventurer has their own Destiny – or Fate – not transferable to any other being.

The True Fate System attempts to turn Fate into actual *Fate* and rectify misuse, thereby:

1. returning true power and influence to personae and internal influences in the game, and
2. giving adventurers legitimate edge when for being Fated (having Fate points to use).

#### The Rules:

1. **Fate use is limited to rolls made by the adventurer for its own activities and choices directly under its own control.** These are limited to...
  - a. **Battle**, or Physical Combat
  - b. **Psychic Combat**
  - c. **Armour** rolls.
    - i. This stretches Fate's reach, since Armour is "Passive" Defense and noting is being done to use it.
  - d. **Attribute & Skill Tests.**
    - i. These are rolls vs. an adventurer's Craft or Strength (whether "Starting," "Natural," or "Current") for activities which

fall outside of "a" or "b" above.

#### e. **Praying.**

- i. **NOTE:** this applies only to locations devoted to the adventurer's own alignment.
- ii. **Fate may not be used at the Temple.** The Temple is for all alignments. When praying there, an adventurer attracts the attention of Powers of the Alignments, include those which would prefer to work against it.

#### f. **Movement.**

- i. This applies only to movement requiring the roll of one or more dice. Forms of automatic or fixed movement can't be affected by Fate.

#### g. **Spells.**

- i. **It is the caster who rolls first (or at all), not the target.** Few require rolls; of those that do *for an effect*, they are under the caster's control (at first, if not completely).
- ii. With "Randomize" or like spells of pure effect, the caster may use Fate according to TFS rules to enhance the odds of a desired roll. Since such spells are also partially interactive, the target may then use

a Fate point to attempt to re-roll caster's final roll, but only if the caster first expended a Fate point.

- iii. **Combat based spells allow all participants to use Fate.** The Fireball is one prime example (or any Spell that mimicks Battle or Psychic Combat). Any participant that rolls a dice for itself may use Fate on that roll per the TFS rules.

- h. **1 Fate point may be spent to roll 1 extra die above the number required for an activity noted above. The adventurer then chooses 1 die to ignore.**

- i. This must be done before any die are rolled for the activity. If even one die is rolled, the adventurer forfeits the chance to use a Fate point.

- i. **No more than 1 Fate point may be applied per roll.**

- i. No adventurer may spend 2+ Fate points to roll 2+ extra dice, and so on, in any of the allowed activities above.

who granted the adventurer a Fate were taking a hand in matters... but without taking away the Fate of the Land and its other non-adventurer personae.

These are the correct ways for Fate to have an actual influence on probability in favor of the adventurer. This is how Fate, by its definition, might actually be translated into dice rolls, as if the Powers