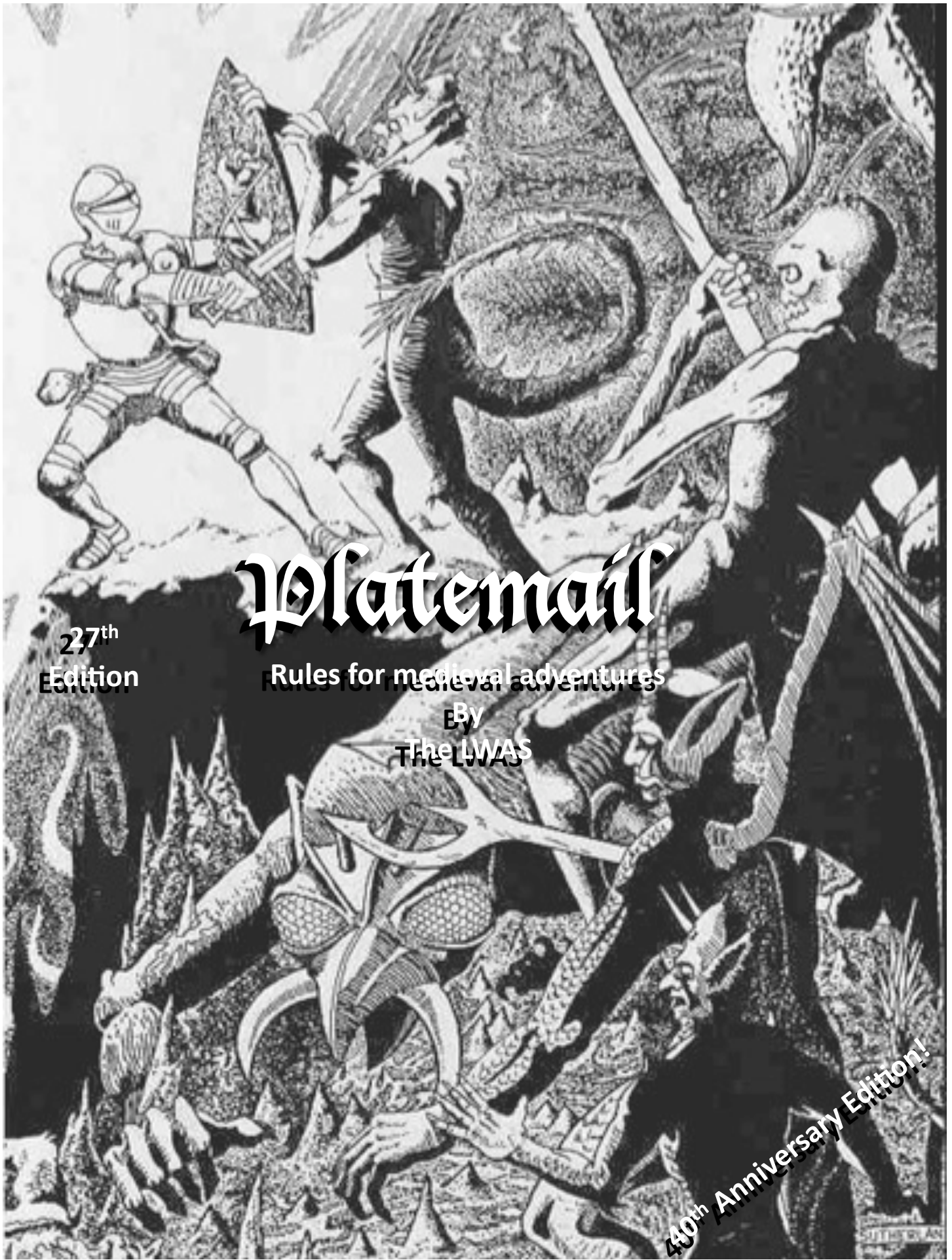




Platemail

27th
Edition

Rules for medieval adventures

By
The LWA's

40th Anniversary Edition!

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Platemail, the improbably enduring game of adventure. Platemail began 40 years ago as a few speculative additions to a miniatures war game of medieval battles. It has grown into a new form of entertainment that combines elements of improvisational theater, adventure fiction and film, riddles and games of logic, all built on a foundation of bloodthirsty combat.

If you are new to Platemail, you will have many questions about the rules and conventions of the game. What do I actually do? (Whatever you want!) How do I know when I've won? (It helps if you are still alive!) Much has been written on this subject, and the confused new player is encouraged to scan the introductory chapters of more recently devised adventure games. We choose to leave such matters to your judgment and imagination. But we do have two bits of advice: (1) Learn by doing. Create a character, find a few friends to join you as players and at least one to act as 'referee' – the player responsible for creating adventures, playing the roles of monsters and various other non-player people and beings, and adjudicating rules. Then try your hand at the introductory adventure found in the companion volume, 'The Moaning Tower'. And, (2) make a point of meeting people who already have some ideas about how such games can be played. Adventure gaming is a community more than a set of rules.

If you are a returning enthusiast, this 27th edition brings several noticeable changes: After extensive play testing, it is clear the controversial nude jousting rules, first introduced in the 22nd edition, needed to be removed. As with every new edition, the lists of abilities, gifts, curses, spells, and monsters have been expanded and revised in various ways in response to player requests. We have bowed to the pressure of changing trends in the adventure gaming hobby by expanding the selection of armor to include both mail *and* plate barding. For legal reasons, we have changed the spelling of the name of a certain monstrous demon to 'Bälrog', that of a race of diminutive humanoids to 'Höbbit', and those of several fictional characters who appear in examples of play. Our sincere apologies to any estates that feel we previously infringed on their license. The present edition is lavishly illustrated, including several images of combat created by Tom Eiler, a contributing artist for the medical text, 'The Anatomy of Fatal Wounds'.

SECTION I: CHARACTERS

CREATING A CHARACTER

Race: Players select the race of their character, from among the humanoids listed below. Some campaign settings may contain only a subset of these, or may include additional races invented by the referee. Members of each race automatically have certain abilities, gifts and curses, the details of which are explained more fully in following sections. These are in addition to any abilities gained from their class or gifts or curses rolled randomly later in character creation:

Dwarf: Hearty, Iron Will, Greedy, Vendetta (vs. orcs, goblins, and elves). Their base movement rate is only 15 meters per turn. Dwarven warriors begin play with dwarven mail (AC 6; see the companion volume on magic and magical items).

Elf: Fairy Blood, Fleet-of-Foot, Agile, Comely, Sneak, Eagle Eye, Acute Hearing, Melancholy and Vendetta (vs. orcs, goblins and dwarves). Elves are permitted to perform a split-move-fire in combat, as a mounted archer, when fighting with a bow on foot. Elves begin play with an elven bow (see the companion volume on magic and magical items). They never need check morale when faced with undead. Their base movement rate, including benefits of the Fleet-of-Foot gift, is 25 meters per turn.

Half-orc: Powerful, Hideous, Goblin blood. Their base movement rate is 20 meters per turn.

Höbbit: Agile, Sneak and Midget. Höbbits gain +1 per die for attack rolls with slings or thrown weapons. Their base movement rate is only 16 meters per turn.

Human: One extra mundane ability of the player's choosing (i.e., in addition to those gained through his membership in a class, as explained below), taken from the general list or, once his class is chosen, his class list. Human base movement rate is 20 meters per turn.



Gifts and Curses: At character creation, a character may choose to roll on Table I, from 0 to 3 times (player's choice). For each roll, roll 2d6 and use the result to find the row, and then another 1d6 to find the column. Once the decision to roll on this table is made, the results must be accepted. The effects of Gifts and Curses are explained in Appendix I. If a rolled gift or curse seems to directly conflict with or replicate an ability, gift or curse the character already possesses due to his race, re-roll.

Table I: Gifts and Curses

2d roll	1d roll					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	Demonic	Midget	Goblin blood	Giant blood	Fairy blood	Demigod
3	Maniac	Greed	Melancholy	Amore	Loyalty	Love
4	Deaf	Stupid	Sickly	Syphilis	Eagle-eye	Acute Hearing
5	Outlaw	Poor	Bastard	Rage!	Relic	Artifact
6	Leprosy	Hideous	Peg-leg	Rich	Heirloom	Filthy Rich
7	Craven	Coward	Fear (subject)	Iron Will	Brave	Valorous
8	Enemy	Debt of Honor	Side-kick	Favor	Patron	Thane
9	Kin slayer	Blackguard	Cur	Vendetta	Likeable	Commanding voice
10	Liar	Drunkard	Cad	Ferocious	Lucky	Beautiful voice
11	Mute	Schwachling	Fool	Rugged	Comely	Fleet of foot
12	Slave	Gentry	Noble	Successor	Titled	Royal

Class – There are three general categories, or ‘classes’ of characters: Warriors (knights, vikings, mercenaries, etc.), Rogues (thieves, cutthroats and assassins) and Magicians (sorcerers, necromancers, witches and magic-wielding priests). Each character must be assigned to one of these classes when he or she is first created. Membership in a class bestows the abilities listed below; these are in addition to the abilities players gain through membership in a race or choose later in character creation:

Warrior: May use all weapons (except guns and lances, which require separate abilities, explained below), armors and shields. All Warriors know their native language. Warriors advance their ‘combat dice pool’ (explained below) much faster than other classes.

Rogue: May use all light and medium weapons and leather armor (see Tables IV and V). Rogues begin play knowing their native language and the secret language, ‘Thieves’ Cant’, and are literate in any language they know.

Magician: May use all light weapons. Magicians begin play literate in any language they know, and knowing both their native tongue and one secret arcane language specific to the setting. (For example, a medieval European sorcerer might know ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics.) Most importantly, magicians are capable of learning and casting magic spells, as explained in the chapter on Magic and developed in the companion volume.

Mundane abilities: At character creation, all characters select one or more mundane abilities, which can be selected either from their class list or the general list. See Table II for details, and Appendix I for definitions of all abilities. A character’s class determines how many mundane abilities he or she may select at character creation (note this is in addition to any abilities gained through membership in a race; e.g., a Human Warrior would choose 3 mundane abilities, total):

<u>Class</u>	<u>Starting Abilities</u>
Warrior:	2
Rogue:	4
Magician:	2

Table II: Mundane abilities

Warrior	Rogue	Magician	General*
Guns	Evaluate	Alchemist	Agile
Hearty	Heavy weapons	Crafty	Climbing
Jousting	Locks	Familiar	Devout
Leader	Mail	Leather armor	Language&
Mounted archer	Pick Pockets	Medium weapons	Literacy
Powerful	Search	Priest	Perception
Survival	Shields	Scholar	
Tracking	Sneak		
	Traps		

* available to any class

& may be chosen more than once

Other Character Attributes

Level ('Lvl'): A character's general degree of expertise, skill, and worldliness is measured by his or her 'level'. All characters begin play at level 1, or 'first level'. The chapter on Experience and Advancement explains how a character's level rises through play, and how that increase influences his or her abilities and powers. 'Hit dice' are the equivalent of levels for monsters (see the chapter on Monsters, and the companion volume for examples).

Hits: A character's 'Hits' represent his or her reserves of physical resilience, fighting skill and luck at avoiding or absorbing physical damage. High hits can signify either a troll's ability to shrug off sword blows, or a master-thief who seems to squirm out of harm like a cat with all 9 lives intact. A character's Hits generally equal his or her level, but may be modified by various abilities, gifts and curses, and can decrease through injury or fatigue (and rise again through recovery). See the chapter on Injury and Consequences for more concrete details.

Combat pool: The combat pool is a number of dice available to the character for executing attacks (and sometimes other actions) in combat. The combat pool advances with Level at a rate that depends on the character's class. See Table III.

Armor Class: A measure of how difficult the target is to strike and wound. Humanoids begin play with a natural Armor Class of 3; this is modified for worn armor, shields and certain

abilities. Some worn armor also reduces the severity of damage from blows that hit you. See Table VI for details.

Movement rate: The distance a character can normally move during 1 combat turn. Humans normally have a movement rate of 20 meters/turn. An un-encumbered character running on a flat surface with no need to defend himself can move at twice his base movement rate. Note that when characters wear armor, their movement rate suffers a penalty. See Table VI for details.

Morale modifier: Characters who are faced with great danger, painful wounds or terrifying beasts may be required to undergo a morale check. The character's Morale modifier influences his chances of success. All Warriors begin play with a morale modifier of +1 due to their martial training. Rogues and Magicians have morale modifiers of 0. Various abilities, gifts and curses can add to or subtract from the morale modifier.

Reaction modifier: Reaction rolls can be used to determine the responses of non-player characters (and other creatures) to the player character. These rolls are modified by certain abilities, gifts and curses, but most characters begin play with a reaction modifier of 0.

Table III: Combat pools			
Level	Warrior	Rogue	Magician
1	1	1	1
2	2	1	1
3	3	2	1
4	4	2	2
5	5	3	2
6	6	3	2
7	7	4	3
8	8	4	3
9	9	5	3
10	10*	5*	3&

* Further increases follow preceding pattern

& Magicians' combat pools never rise above 3

Starting equipment: Player characters are presumed to be young adults with some modest collection of money and possessions that they've earned, found, inherited or stolen:

Warrior: Leather armor, a shield, 2 weapons, and 5d6 silver shillings.
 Rogue: 1 weapon, 15m of rope and thieves picks and tools, and 5d6 silver shillings.
 Magician: Mysterious robes, a book of spells, a stout staff, various sorcerous ingredients, and 5d6 silver shillings.

Players may spend their initial allotment of cash on other gear (if they wish to trade in some component of their 'kit' that is also permitted). Costs and properties of weapons, armor and

other common gear are provided in Tables IV to VII. Equipment is discussed further in the chapter on Gear. Note some gifts and curses modify starting equipment and wealth.

The problem with 1st level characters: First level player characters have a few advantages over the rabble of normal humans and orcs they'll encounter on their adventures – gifts and abilities. Some players will be greatly superior to most mortals, simply by luck of the dice, and will find they quickly advance. But, gifts often come with curses, the luck of the dice can easily turn against a 1st level character, and combatants with just a single die in the combat pool have few resources or options in a fight. If you play this game straight up, 1st level characters will die as often as not. If your group has a problem with this, let them start with 2nd or higher level characters. But keep in mind – a level goes a long way!

'Building' characters: Some players will come to the game with firmly defined ideas about their characters. For example, a group of players might wish to play landed knights in the 100 years war. There is almost no chance that all will randomly roll the necessary gifts to make this work at 1st level. If the referee permits, these character concepts can be facilitated by letting the players pick, rather than randomly roll, gifts and curses, and/or begin play at 2nd or 3rd level. This will result in significantly more powerful characters, on average, and should be done with referee approval and supervision.

A word on balance: Human, half-orc, dwarf and hōbbit characters generated with random gifts and curses will start play more or less equivalent in ability (though dwarves will likely be tougher in melee combat). Elven characters are more powerful. Similarly, a character created by choosing gifts can be far powerful, on average, than one that rolls them randomly. If a gaming group seems unable to handle this sort of unfairness, the referee should forbid elves and 'built' characters. Alternatively, the referee could permit elven player characters but require them to randomly roll gifts and curses, whereas other races choose their gifts. This will result in a balanced, but unusually high-powered, campaign.

Example of character creation: *The player begins by choosing a race (Human). Next he looks at Table I and, like all gamblers, sees only the up sides. He decides to try his luck. His first roll is: 2d = 7, 1d = 5, giving the 'Brave' gift. Yeah! Next, he rolls 2d = 4 and 1d = 4, giving him...Syphilis. Ugh. Maybe our player has pressed his luck far enough. Next he chooses a class (warrior), and then chooses three abilities from Table II (two for his class; one for his race). He decides to name his character Krang the Destroyer and to go with a simple character concept. He picks abilities that are barbarian stand-bys: Powerful, Hearty and Survival. Finally, the player notes his various other statistics: His level is 1, like all starting characters. His hits would normally be equal to his level, but he gains 1 extra for the Hearty ability. Looking at Table III, he sees Krang's combat pool equals his level, 1 (though as a warrior it will rise quickly). His AC is normally 3, but when wearing the leather armor and shield he gets as part of his warrior's starting kit it will be 5. His movement rate is normally 20, but falls to 16 in his armor. His morale modifier benefits from both his class (+1) and his Brave gift (+1), for a total of +2. His reaction modifier is normally*

0, but falls to -3 with the ladies if they learn of his Syphilis. Finally, he rolls 5d6 for his starting cash, getting 14 silver shillings. He can't think of anything he wants, so he just pockets it for later. A summary of Krang, in a format convenient for play is provided below:

Kang the Destroyer

Race: Human Class: Warrior Level: 1

Abilities: Powerful, Hearty, Survival

Gifts and curses: Brave, Syphilis

Hits: 2 Combat pool: 1

AC: 5 Movement rate: 20 (16)

Morale modifier: +2 Reaction modifier: 0 (-3 with informed ladies)

Gear: Sword, Bow, Leather Armor, Shield, 14 silver shillings

GEAR

Money: The five common currencies are copper farthings (f), silver pence (p), silver shillings (s), gold crowns (c) and gold marks (m). These are interchangeable at the following rates:

$$1 \text{ m} = 6 \text{ c} = 120 \text{ s} = 1440 \text{ p} = 5760 \text{ f}$$

i.e., 1 crown = 20 shillings; 1 shilling = 12 pence; and 1 pence = 4 farthings. There are many local variants on these coins and exchange rates.

Weapons: Tables IV and V summarize the vital statistics and costs for diverse melee, thrown and missile weapons. The meaning of these statistics is detailed in the chapter on combat. Magical weapons are discussed in the companion volume on magic and magical items.

Table IV: Melee weapons

Type	Weapon	Skirmish	Damage	Dueling Attack	Dueling Parry	Dueling Reach	Cost
None	Brawling	-2	-2	-1	NA	-2	—
Light	Cudgel	-1	0	-1	0	0	1p
	Dagger	-1	-1	0	-1	-1	10p
	Staff	-1	-1	0	+1	0	5p
	Rapier	-1	-1	0	+1	0	6s
Medium	Sword	0	0	0	+1	0	12s
	Axe	0	+1	0	-1	0	6s
	Mace	0	0	+1	-1	0	4s
	Spear	0	0	0	-1	+1	4s
	Pole arm (2H)	0	+1	0	-1	+1	5s
	Flail	0	+1	+1	NA	0	6s
Heavy	Battle Axe (2H)	+1	+1	+1	-1	0	8s
	Great sword (2H)	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	4c
	Pike (2H)	+1	+1	0	-2	+3	6s
	Halberd (2H)	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	10s
	Gallaway flail (2H)	+1	+2	+1	NA	+1	15s
Special	War Lance*	+1	+2	+1	NA	+2	4s
	Sport Lance*	NA	-1	0	NA	+2	15p
	Shield#	NA	-2	-1	+1	-1	3s

* Usable only by mounted combatants who have the Jousting ability

Statistics apply only when shield is used to parry or attack in dueling combat

Table V: Missile weapons

Type	Weapon#	Skirmish	Damage	Dueling Attack	Range	Cost
Slings	Sling(L)	-1	-1	-1	20	10p
	Staff sling(M)	0	0	0	40	3s
Bows	Short bow(L)	-1	-1	-1	25	4s
	Horse bow(M)	0	0	0	30	6s
	Long bow(H)	+1	0	+1	40	8s
Thrown	Cross bow(H)@	+1	+1	+1	40	2c
	Rock(L)	-1	-2	-1	10	—
	Dagger(L)	-1	-1	0	5	10p
	Axe(M)	0	0	0	5	6s
	Javelin(M)	0	0	0	10	15p
Guns*	Pistol(M)@	0\$	+1	0\$	10	5c
	Arquebus(H)@	+2\$	+2	+1\$	20	20c
	Blunderbuss(H)&@	+1	0	+2	10&	3c
	Grenado!	NA	+1	0	10	5 s
	Petard!	NA	+3/+1	NA	NA	3 c

* Usable only by combatants who have the Gun ability

& Special: area attack; cone 10 m long with 3 m base; no effect beyond

Parenthetical letter indicates whether weapon is considered light, medium or heavy

\$ Leather armor and shields are ignored; mail and plate are both considered armor class 4 vs. pistols and arquebuses

@ Takes 3 full turns to re-load

! Explosive; see chapter on Spot Rules for details of use

Armor: Table VI summarizes the vital statistics and costs for armors. Each suit of armor is described by the armor class of someone who wears it, the penalty to damage rolls for blows that do succeed at striking him, the movement rate penalty incurred for wearing it, and its cost. Barding is armor for horses (or, possibly, other similar sized mounts).

Table VI: Armors

Type	Armor Class	Damage Reduction	Movement Penalty	Cost
None	3	0	0	—
Leather	4	0	-4	10s
Mail	5	-1	-6	8c
Plate	6	-1	-8	30c
Shield	+1	0	0	3s
Mail barding	5	-1	-6	20c
Plate barding	6	-1	-10	80c

Additional equipment: Prices of other useful equipment, beasts, goods and services can be found on Table VII.

Table VII: Assorted gear and services

Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Farm Animals		Household Goods		Clothes	
Cat	2 f	Carpet	8 s	Boots	2-5 p
Cow	6 s	Chair	2-4 p	Cape	3 p
Dog	3 p	Goblet	1 p- 5 s	Surcoat or Jupon	5 p
Fowl	1 p	Lamp	5 p	Clerical robes	2-12 p
Goat	1 s	Mattress	4-8 p	Coarse clothes	1 p
Pig	2 s	Table	5-12 p	Court clothes	1-8 c
Sheep	1 s	Tapestry	5-15 s	Fine clothes	2-4 c
Beasts of Burden		Adventuring Gear		Fur	1 s – 1 c
Camel	2 c	10' pole	1 p	Gloves	3 p
Drey horse	30 s	Backpack	1 s	Hat	1-4 p
Donkey	12 s	Flint and tinder	4 p	Rags	2 f
Ox	9 s	Hard tack (1 day)	1 p	Sorcerous robes	5 s
Palfrey	3 c	Hunting Horn	1 s	Travelling clothes	3-5 p
Pony	1 c	Lamp, hooded	2 s	Vehicles	
Rouncey	20 s	Maps	5 p-1c	Great boat or raft	10 c
Sumpter	2 c	Pavillion	1-8 c	Great carriage	50 c
Beasts of War		Pouch	2 f	Merchant ship	100 m
Courser	6 c	Rope	1 p/meter	Small boat or raft	3 c
Charger	15 c	Spikes	3 p/each	Small carriage	15 c
Destrier	30 c	Tent	2 p	Wagon	2 c
Mastiff	5 s	Torches	1 f/each	War ship	200 m
Hounds of the Hunt		Water skin	3 p	Hirelings	
Alluant	5 s	Food and Services		Cavalry soldier	15 p/week
Blood hound	1 s	Bottle of spirits	2 p	Infantry soldier	4 p/week
Brachet	8 p	Fine dinner at a restaurant	2 p	Laborer	1-2 p/week
Wolf hound	8 s	Flagon of ale or beer	1 f	Lackey	10 p/week
Birds of the Hunt		Flop-house stew	1 f	Messenger	5 p/week
Eagle	5 c	Jack of wine, sack or port	1 p	Sergeant	20 p/week
Falcon	3 c	Pub lunch	2 f	Common servant	3 p/week
Goshawk	6 s	Rations, 1 day	1 p	Harlot	1 p/hour
Kestral	5 s	Sit-down dinner at an inn	1 p	Tack	
Merlin	1 c	Stabling a horse one night	1 p	Caparson	2-5 s
		Stabling a nag one night	1 f	Bit and bridle	2 p
		Fine suite	3 p/night	Saddle	4p – 2 s
		Good room	1 p/night	Saddlebag	1 p
		Average room	3 f/night		
		Palet	2 f/night		
		Long-Term Accommodations			
		Board (food) in the country	1 s/month		
		Board (food) in town	18 p/month		
		Country cottage	15 p/month		
		Floor in a townhouse	4 s/month		
		Room at an inn	6 p/month		

Steeds: The prices of common mounts can be found on Table VII. See the companion volume on monsters and beasts for details regarding the various kinds of horse. Several creatures also described there can be ridden; e.g., wargs are sometimes used as mounts by orcs.

Hirelings: As soon as player characters get a few coins in their pockets it may occur to them that their lives would be much easier if they had a henchman or two to help carry gear, keep goblins at bay, etc. Eventually, some characters will become powerful enough to draw loyal followers through abilities such as Followers. In the near-term, it is quicker and easier to just hire them. Prices for several kinds of hirelings are provide in Table VII. In general, such employees will be equivalent to first level characters, but with few or no gifts and only the abilities necessary to conduct their jobs. Their loyalty under stress should be tested with morale checks, and their responses to the player characters tested with reaction rolls (though nothing smoothes over a bad reaction roll like a bonus...)

EXPERIENCE AND ADVANCEMENT

The character's level advances through experience as he or she defeats foes, recovers treasures, and does other things that earn experience points.

Experience: A character's experience is measured by 'Experience Points' ('EXP'). EXP are awarded at the referee's discretion, but the following guidelines are recommended:

- Defeating a foe: 10xhit-die or level (this can include killing, incapacitating, forcing to surrender, driving off in a way that the enemy can't return to attack again).
- Successful ability roll in a stressful or conflict situation: 5
- Successful saving roll: 10 per 'pass' required to succeed.
- Casting a spell in a stressful or conflict situation: 10 x spell complexity level
- Surviving an adventure: 50
- Succeeding at the goals of an adventure: 50
- Doing something hilarious or interesting in play: 5 or 10
- Doing something glorious, honorable, infamous or nefarious in play: 100 (e.g., winning a grand tournament; kidnapping a king; leading an army to victory).
- Treasure: 1 per Crown worth of money, jewelry or other valuables
- Magic Items: 10 for a minor item or weapon; 50 for a major item; 100 for an artifact or relic.

Advancement: The number of EXP required to advance to the next level = 500 x current level; i.e.:

Table VIII: Experience Point Requirements

New Level	Additional EXP required	Total EXP required
2	500	500
3	1000	1500
4	1500	3000
5 (Hero)	2000	5000
6	2500	7500
7	3000	10500
8	3500	14000
9	4000	18000
10 (Superhero)	4500	22500

Every time a character advances to a new level (e.g., when going from first to second and again when going from second to third), he or she gains the following benefits:

- Pick one new ability. This must be a mundane ability when the character advances to levels 2, 3 and 4. It may be a heroic or mundane ability when advancing to levels 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. It may be a super-heroic, heroic or mundane ability when advancing to levels 10 and above. Heroic and super-heroic abilities are listed in Tables IX and X (below) and explained in Appendix I.

- The character's level and hits increase by 1.
- Consult Table III and update the character's combat pool.

Heroic levels, abilities and survival rolls: At level 5 the character gains the status of a Heroic character. A heroic magician is called a wizard; a heroic warrior or rogue can be called whatever he wishes; it is customary to name him something impressive sounding or ridiculous.

- Heroic characters have access to heroic abilities.
- A heroic character can combat powerful beings using the heroic combat system (non heroic characters can only do so when using magic weapons).
- A heroic character can 'single out' a foe for dueling combat.
- A heroic character always has initiative over non-heroic characters and monsters with fewer than 5 HD in skirmish combat (but not other combat systems).
- A heroic character never need check morale.
- A heroic character provides a morale bonus to nearby friendly forces, and can try to rally those have failed a morale check.
- Any enemy of less than heroic level or monster with fewer than 5 HD must check morale when faced with a hostile wizard (heroic level magician), because of their uncanny creepiness.
- Finally, a heroic character may attempt a saving throw to survive an otherwise fatal injury or other threat, or to perform some action that is physically imaginable but would otherwise be statistically impossible using the normal rules. This 'Deus ex Mechina' saving throw always has a task number of 7 and generally is not modified.

Table IX: Heroic abilities

Warrior	Rogue	Magician	General*
Archer	Disguise	Brilliant	Beast master
Battle Hardened	Gang	Demonic servant	Diplomacy
Captain	Hide-out	Laboratory	Followers
Honor	Jumping	Library	Other class\$
Steed	Murder	Lore	Pious
Steel thews	Nimble		
Sword master	Poisons		

* available to any class

\$ any mundane ability from another class

Super-heroic levels and abilities: At level 10 the character gains the status of a 'Superhero'. He or she is now essentially impervious to normal mortals, though he should still watch his manners around dragons, gargantuan giants, Bälrogs and similarly powerful monsters. A super-heroic magician is called an Arch Mage (or, if also a priest, might have an analogous religious rank). A superhero warrior or rogue simply must have some sort of noteworthy name; e.g., Darth Crankius or The Dread Pirate Snedly. Superheroes have all the powers of Heroes, plus:

- Superhero characters have access to superhero abilities.
- A superhero character always has initiative over non-heroic and heroic characters and monsters with fewer than 10 HD in skirmish combat (but not other combat systems).
- Any enemy of less than hero level or monster with fewer than 5 HD must check morale when faced with a hostile superhero.
- Finally, a superhero may attempt Deus ex Machina saving throws as a hero, *and* once per adventure may simply declare that he automatically passes such a saving throw (i.e., without having to roll the dice).

Table X: Superhero abilities

Warrior	Rogue	Magician	General*
Fortress	Catlike	Compelling voice	Saintly
Herculean	Unseen	Genius	
Indominable	Wall-walking	Soul-Jar	
Warlord		Tower	

* available to any class

SECTION II: PLAYING THE GAME

COMMON CONCEPTS

Die rolls: The central mechanic for resolving events is a roll of a single 6-sided die, adding or subtracting any relevant modifiers to the result, and comparing the modified result with a target number. If the modified result is equal to or greater than the target number, whatever was being attempted succeeds; if less than the target number, it fails.

Exploding 6's: Any die roll that is a natural 6 is re-rolled. If the subsequent roll is also a 6, the result is considered to equal 7 (plus modifiers), and the player rolls again. If that subsequent roll is also a 6, the result equals 8 (plus modifiers), and so on. This 'exploding die' mechanic is only useful when the target number exceeds 6 or the acting character has a negative modifier, and can be ignored in other cases.

Automatic failures: A natural roll of 1 on a die is always a failure for that die, regardless of the task number or modifier (though another die from the same pool might succeed).

Target numbers: The value of the target number increases in proportion to the difficulty of the task. Unless otherwise noted, always assume a target number of 6. A task number of 3 is considered simple, 4-5 moderate, 6 difficult, 7 very difficult, 8 nearly impossible (though hero-level characters will often achieve such tasks), and 9 is super-human.

Dice pools: Many actions, particularly those performed by characters of 2nd or higher level, or monsters with more than 2 'hit dice' (an attribute analogous to character levels), involve rolling multiple 6-sided dice at once. Most commonly, the number of dice rolled equals the character level or combat pool (for monsters, both of these numbers often equal their 'hit dice'). Each is modified by the same modifiers and compared to the same target number. The player keeps a tally of the number of dice that 'passed'; i.e., equaled or exceeded the target number.

Note that any situational or other modifier that impacts the ability of a character (e.g., a wound) should be reflected in an addition or subtraction from that character's dice pool. Any circumstance that impacts the difficulty of the task the character is attempting (e.g., poor lighting) should be reflected in a modification to the task number.

Example: Simeon, a 3rd level rogue attempts to sneak through a room full of guards. The referee sets a task number of 8 because the room is lit and has several people in it. The trickster benefits from a +1 modifier due to his Agility ability. He rolls 3d6, obtaining a 2 a 6 and a 4. He re-rolls the 6, obtaining a 6, so the final value for that die is 7, plus the +1 modifier =8. Success! The player notes that he obtained one 'pass'.

Passes: The number of 'passes' achieved in a die roll is a measure of the degree of success for whatever was being attempted. In general, a single pass is sufficient to achieve at least some modest level of success, and any additional passes result in exceptional success.

Counter-actions: A counter-action is an action whose purpose is to negate the effect of something an opponent just did. Unless otherwise noted, assume a task number of 6. If the

counter-action achieves an equal or greater number of 'passes' as the action it targets, then the original action has been negated. The most common examples are the Parry, Dodge and Counter-spell actions in combat, or the use of Perception to detect a foe that is trying to sneak past you.

Example: The captain of the guard that Simeon is sneaking past is alert and has his eyes peeled for sneaking rogues. He is 3rd level and has the Perception ability. He rolls 3 dice, getting a 3 a 5 and a 6. He doesn't bother re-rolling the 6 because the task number is the standard value of 6 and, lacking a modifier, he can't change the number of passes by doing so. His one 'pass' equals the thief's (amazingly lucky) pass. So, the captain spots Simeon from the corner of his eye and reaches for his sword...

Using Abilities: Many of the high-jinks adventurers get up to involve uses of their abilities. For example, a rogue who uses 'Search' to spot a secret door, or a wily forest-ranging warrior who uses 'Tracking' to follow a band of orcs. The default, or standard, ability attempt has a target number of 6, and 1 pass is required to succeed at whatever is attempted. If a player insists on his character trying something that is clearly covered by an official 'ability' that he lacks, let him give it a shot, but impose a -2 modifier. If players want to attempt something not covered by an official ability, just set a task number, decide whether the character has any modifiers from relevant abilities, gifts or curses, and roll a number of dice equal to the character's level.

Saving throws: A saving throw is an attempt to avoid an imminent threat or overcome some (usually inanimate) obstacle. Examples include avoiding a trap, walking over a slippery log, avoiding a dragon's flame, or resisting the nefarious influence of a necromantic spell. Saving throws are always resolved by rolling a dice pool equal to the character's level vs. a task number that reflects the difficulty of the task. Characters frequently benefit (or suffer) from die modifiers based on abilities, gifts or curses. See Appendix I for details and examples (but don't feel bound by them! Saving throw modifiers are at the discretion of the referee, and should consider the thoughts of the players. The referee should feel free to make ad hoc rulings regarding which abilities contribute modifiers to a given saving throw. A task number of 6 is assumed if none is specified. Unless otherwise stated, 1 pass indicates that the danger was avoided or resisted. However, some assaults or hurdles specify different consequences for different levels of success (i.e., numbers of passes). For example, a desperate leap across a chasm might leave the jumper hanging from the far edge with 1 pass, landing solidly but taking 1 Hit of damage on 2 passes, and landing nonchalantly with 3.

COMBAT

Four 'nested' systems: Many adventure games have well-developed combat systems, but most struggle with the problem that a system designed for one kind of combat – e.g., a sword duel – is ill suited to another – e.g., a cavalry charge. We deal with this through a set of 4 separate but related combat systems:

Skirmish combat is the simplest, quickest and easiest to scale from one-on-one fights to massive engagements with dozens of combatants on a side. Think of this as the default system for resolving any fight where you want to determine the outcome but don't want to spend a half hour to do it. These are not 'mook' rules – combatants maintain the same balance of powers that they have in the more complex dueling combat system, and player characters can be slain easily. Action just moves forward at a brisk pace.

Dueling combat is designed to play out a clash of arms between two, up to perhaps a few, well-matched foes, where the excitement comes from contesting each attack and parry. This is the rule system you will use when a player character goes toe to toe with a dangerous monster or important non-player character.

Jousting combat is a specialized form of dueling, used to resolve a fight or sporting event in which two cavalrymen charge each other with lances.

Heroic combat is the most abstract system, and is designed to model clashes between beings that are beyond the powers of normal mortals. Only hero and superhero player characters, particularly powerful monsters (5 hit dice or greater) or combatants armed with magic weapons, are allowed to use this system. They should do so when they face a foe, like a dragon or giant, that is too powerful for anyone to deal with in a 'normal' fight using the skirmish or dueling rules.

All four systems use similar dice rolling mechanics, attributes and abilities, so it is easy to move back and forth between them from one turn to another, or to use one system for one part of a fight while simultaneously using another system for another part of the same fight. For example, if a heroic-level character leads a troop of knights against an orc gang, the skirmish rules



could be used to quickly resolve the outcome of the clash between most of the combatants on both sides, while simultaneously using the dueling system to resolve the fight between the player character and orc captain. If the orc captain's vile necromancer lord arrives on the

scene, cowering friend and foe alike with his horrifying presence, you might switch to the heroic combat system to contend with such a powerful and uncanny foe.

Common concepts: The rules described below apply to all combat systems, unless an exception is noted in a following section.

Armor Class: A combatant's armor class sets the task number for any attacks directed against him. This is calculated as: Armor class rating of worn armor (Table VI) + bonus for shield (+1, if used) + any bonuses for special abilities, gifts or items.

Example: a warrior wearing mail armor (armor class rating 5), carrying a shield (+1) and having the Agile ability (+1) has an armor class of 7 (pretty good!).

Attack roll: A roll of some or all of the dice in a combatant's combat pool in an attempt to strike one or more foes. The task number is usually the target's armor class. Common modifiers include those for the weapon being used (Tables IV and V), relevant abilities, gifts and curses, and, for missile weapons, range.

Charge attacks: An attack delivered after moving up to half of your movement rate. A charge attack with a pole arm, spear, lance, pike or halberd gains a +1 bonus to hit *and* damage. Likewise, any attack using a pole arm, spear, pike, lance or halberd against a foe that just charged you gains a +1 bonus to hit and damage. A character that charges in the dueling combat system must begin the exchange of blows with an attack.

Consequences: Effects of being struck by an opponent, such as being knocked down, bleeding, dropping a weapon or being mortally wounded. A roll on the consequences table (Table XI) is sometimes called a 'damage roll'.

Damage reduction: Some armors (mail and plate) and some beasts (e.g., dragons) benefit from 'damage reduction' – a penalty to damage rolls on the consequences table.

Hits of damage: For each 'pass' in the attack roll against a target, one 'hit' is scored. The effects of this hit are relatively simple and proscribed for non-player characters and monsters in the skirmish combat system, and are resolved in a more complicated way using the consequences system for player characters or when dueling.

Engagement: A combatant who comes within weapons reach of a foe who is facing that combatant is said to be 'engaged'. He or she must stop all movement as soon as engaged, and cannot move away from the foe until the following turn. This rule means running past a dangerous foe always puts you at risk of attack and slows you down, though you are not permanently 'glued' in place. Exception: no combatant can 'engage' a foe who is more than three times his own body weight – they will just blow right past you. This includes mounts, so combatant's on foot usually can't engage mounted foes.

Flank, rear and prone attack: An attack delivered from a foe's side or rear or against a foe that is prone on the ground (other than a snake or something that is normally that way) gains a +1 modifier to-hit.

Initiative: At the beginning of each turn, each side or individual combatant (depending on the combat system being used) rolls 1d6 and adds modifiers for relevant abilities gifts or curses (such as Leader or Agile). The groups or combatants then act in order of

descending value of their initiative roll. Resolve ties with an unmodified roll of a single die.

Missile fire: Missile fire is resolved as for any other attack, but all missile fire attacks (including thrown weapons) suffer a modifier of -1 for every full multiple of the weapon's range between the attacker and target (Table V). The combat pool for a combatant using a missile weapon can be split among multiple targets *only* if using a weapon that is supplied with multiple missiles and that can be relatively quickly re-loaded or prepared (e.g., a draw-bow or a brace of pistols; not a crossbow or single, irreplaceable javelin).

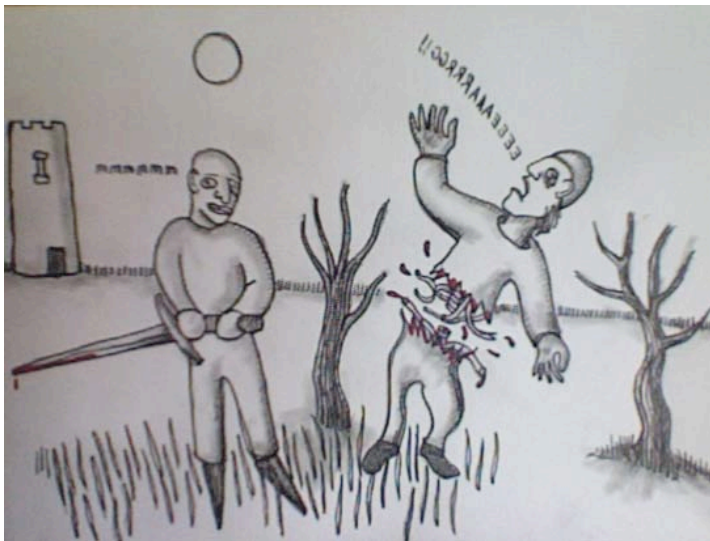
Mounted combatants: Mounted combatants use their mount's movement rating and benefit from a +1 bonus to attack when striking in melee combat at a foe on the ground. A foe on the ground cannot engage a mounted foe, and suffers a -1 penalty to attack a mounted foe, unless using a polearm, spear, pike or halberd.

Movement vs. actions: In general, each combatant chooses to either move (up to his or her full movement rate) or act (attacking or casting a spell) when his turn in the initiative order comes. Charge and 'split fire moves' are exceptions in which both movement and an attack occur in the same turn. Simply turning in place or stepping a couple of meters do not count as 'movements', and can always be combined with another action.

Spells and magical effects: Spells and spell-like magical abilities are cast or activated as normal actions during combat, in place of making an attack. They cannot be performed while simultaneously moving more than a few steps. See the chapter on Magic for further details.

Split move fire: The 'split move fire' action, permitted only to mounted archers (and elves fighting on foot with a bow), involves firing a missile while simultaneously moving up to half your mount's (or, if an elf, your own) movement rate. The missile fire attack can come at any point in the movement.

Surprise: If two opposed sides stumble across one another without prior warning, their leaders should make a saving throw, modified by +1 for the Acute Hearing or Eagle Eye gifts or Perception ability, and -1 for the deaf curse. The side with the largest number of



'passes' gets a number of turns of unopposed movement and/or actions equal to the difference in number of passes. In the event of a tie, simply determine initiative normally and begin the first turn. If one side succeeds at ambushing the other through the use of the Sneak ability or other means, provide at least 1 turn of unopposed action to the ambushing side.

Turn: A turn is an abstract period of time during which a combatant can run a few meters, charge a

foe, or deliver a few sword whacks at an adjacent enemy. It is perhaps a minute. Or sometimes it might be more like 10 seconds. Or something like that.

Skirmish combat

Order of Events

- (1) All sides roll for initiative
- (2) Each member of first side does one of:
 - Move (up to full movement rate)
 - Attack (melee, missile or spell)
 - Charge (move half movement rate and deliver an attack)
 - Split-move-fire (move half mount's movement rate and fire a missile)
- (3) Consequences of all successful attacks are applied
- (4) Check Morale if appropriate
- (5) Repeat steps 2-4 for all other sides, in descending order of initiative.

Sides, leaders and initiative: Initiative in Skirmish combat is resolved by sides. All members of a side share the same initiative value and act together. A side that includes a leader uses that leader's initiative result. It may be convenient to divide combatants into more than 2 sides, subsets of which might cooperate (i.e., a side can be subdivided into combat teams that have separate initiative values and act at different parts of the turn). Dueling 'reach' has no effect on Skirmish initiative. But, the following special exceptions apply:

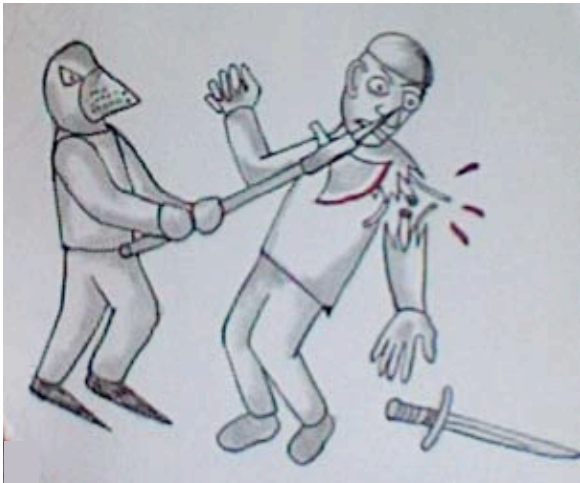
- All sides that lack a leader act after sides that include a leader
- A side led by a superhero always goes before sides not led by a superhero
- A side led by a hero always goes before sides not led by a hero
- A side that includes pikes in formation has initiative over a side that does not when the two engage in melee combat.
- A side that includes mounted combatants has initiative over a side that does not

If two or more conditions apply, give precedence to the first from the top of the list above.

Attack rolls: Each combatant who attacks during step (2) rolls their entire combat pool at once, comparing all dice to the target or targets' armor class. The combat pool can be divided among combatants as the attacker wishes. Use the skirmish attack modifier for weapons, not the dueling attack modifier (Tables IV and V; the Skirmish attack modifier is an abstraction that combines the ability to strike a foe, penetrate armor and do serious damage. These are handled separately in dueling combat). If two or more targets having different armor classes are attacked, split the dice among them before rolling. It is often possible to speed play by pooling dice from multiple attackers into a single roll and/or let the referee sort out who of the group of potential targets was hit.

Hits, damage and consequences: All dice rolled as part of an attack that equal or exceed the target's armor class score a hit against the target. For most monsters and unimportant non-player characters, simply reduce their hit total by 1 and impose a 1-die reduction in their combat pool for every hit received. If the target remains at or above 1 hit, these penalties remain in effect until the end of the combat, when they recover at a rate of 1 hit and 1 penalty die per hour. If the target has its total Hits reduced to 0, it is considered incapacitated or killed. No damage roll is necessary. For player characters, important

non-player characters or interesting monsters, use the full consequences system, explained below.



Example: Fortenbras, a 7th level human warrior hero and Gimbald, a 4th level dwarven warrior, are in the midst of the battle of Krack Mummen (an ancient castle, which will appear in an upcoming Platemail module) and witness a troop of orcs assault the fort's main gate using a battering ram. The two stalwarts leap through the postern gate and descend on the vermin. The players wish to use the skirmish system to resolve at least

the first turn or two of combat, as they are simply leaping onto a crowd of rabble and would rather clear the battlefield than savor every stroke. When the postern gate is opened, the two sides stand 3 meters apart, and the referee rules that only the 15 orcs who fit in the platform just in front of the gate are close enough to participate in the fight (at least for now). No heroes are present with the orcs, so Fortenbras and Gimbald automatically have the initiative. Fortenbras has a combat pool of 7 dice and a to-hit bonus of +3 (he is Powerful, a Sword Master and fights with his magic sword, Leg-Biter). The dwarf has a combat pool of 4 dice and also a +3 to-hit bonus (he is Powerful, Ferocious, and presently fights with a heavy weapon – his 2-handed battle axe). The orcs have armor class 5 (they wear mail hauberks, but their shields are presently on their backs because they have been wielding a battering ram). The stars of our story collectively roll 11 dice, adding 3 to each. Nine result in passes (modified values of 5 or more). The orcs in front of our heroes are all 1 hit-die monsters, so 9 are reduced to 0 hits and incapacitated or killed. The referee immediately calls for a morale check for the 6 who remain on the platform, and sets a modifier of -1 (they just witnessed their peers slaughtered). The orcs' normal morale modifier is +1, but their 1d roll (i.e., because their side consists of combatants having 1 hit die) is a 4 – not high enough even after modification. When their turn comes to act, they break and flee back down the causeway that descends from the Krack Mummen gatehouse. Gimbald says 'that makes three!' and pats his axe.

Dueling

Order of events

- (1) Singling out foes (explained below)
- (2) Each combatant rolls for initiative
- (3) The first combatant does one of:
 - Move (up to full movement rate)

- Engage an opponent in an exchange of blows, by stepping up to a foe within ~3 meters. Do not resolve attacks yet...
 - Charge up to 1/2 full movement rate and engage
 - Fire one or more missiles or cast a spell. Anyone targeted by a missile at this stage may attempt to dodge it if they wish.
 - Split-move-fire (move half mount's movement rate and fire a missile)
- (4) The second combatant to act performs one of the options listed above, unless he has already been engaged by a foe. Additional combatants do likewise in order of their initiative rolls.
 - (5) Resolve all exchanges of blows among all pairs or groups of mutually engaged foes, as described below. Apply the results of all hits immediately.
 - (6) Check morale, if appropriate

Singling out a foe: If a combatant wishes to engage one or more foes in dueling combat, and



the opponent(s) agree, simply move to the initiative step. However, if the intended dueling partner tries to keep ranks with his compatriots and fight a massed combat using the skirmish rules, the aggressor can try to 'single out' a foe - clearing some space on the battlefield and engaging his opponent. The aggressor makes an unmodified standard saving throw. If it succeeds, the intended target must either flee or accept battle. If a leader is singled out and flees, his side must immediately check morale. A hero always succeeds (without rolling) at singling out another hero or lesser foe, and a superhero always succeeds at singling out any opponent.

Exchange of blows: The distinctive feature of the dueling combat system is the exchange of blows between two or more foes. Each turn, combatants take turns delivering attacks and/or countering with a parry or dodge, trading blows back and forth until all have exhausted their combat pools. For each pair or small group that are mutually engaged (i.e., everyone can reach everyone else by taking a step or two or three), take turns doing one of the things from the list below, starting with the first person in the initiative order and working your way down to the last. Each time through the initiative order is referred to as a 'beat' - one slice of action from the round as a whole. Each action expends one or more dice from the combatant's combat pool. Once everyone has had a chance to act once, the first 'beat' ends; start again at the top of the initiative order and repeat with the second 'beat'. Do this as long as any combatant still has dice left unexpended in their combat pool. Any combatant who has expended all dice while others have not must do nothing when his turn in the order comes. When all combatants have expended all dice, the exchange of blows is over and the next turn can begin. Everyone's

combat pool is reset to its initial value. The actions permitted in an exchange of blows, and their 'cost' in Combat Pool dice are:

- **Attack (1d):** perform one melee weapon attack, rolling a single die and comparing the modified result with the target's armor class.
- **Parry (1d):** This is a counter action that can be performed immediately after you are struck by a successful attack, even if your turn in the initiative order has not yet come. This counts as the defender's action for the current 'beat'. If you perform a parry after you have already acted in the present 'beat', you lose your action in the next 'beat'. A parry need not be declared before the attack it counters; i.e., one only need attempt to parry a *successful* attack. One die is rolled and modified by the parrying character's relevant weapon or shield parry modifier, and certain abilities (e.g., Agile or Sword Master). If the modified result is a 6 or higher, the blow was deflected and does no damage.
- **Dodge (1d):** A counter action that functions like a parry, but applies a melee or missile weapon attack and is modified only by Agile or similar abilities. Note missile attacks come before the exchange of blows during dueling. If a combatant dodges a missile and later engages in an exchange of blows, be sure to count the die as 'expended' from his combat pool for that turn.
- **Great blow ($\geq 2d$):** The combatant conducts a single attack that expends two or more dice from his combat pool. The attack is still resolved on a single roll of one die and, if successful, does the target a single hit. But, for every die expended after the first, the to-hit and damage rolls each receive a +1 bonus.
- **Desperate defense ($\geq 2d$):** The combatant conducts a single parry or dodge that expends two or more dice from his combat pool. The parry or dodge is still resolved on a single roll of one die and, if successful, counters a single successful attack. But, for every die expended after the first, but the parry or dodge roll receives a +1 bonus.
- **Grapple/Push/Trample (1d):** A special form of attack in which the aggressor tries to exert his brute strength to toss an opponent to the ground or push him back. This attack expends 1 die from the combat pool, but is not resolved as a normal attack. Instead, both the aggressor and target make a standard saving throw, modified by abilities relevant to their size and strength (Powerful, Giant Blood, etc.; use the damage bonus for a monster). If the aggressor gets more 'passes' than his target, the target is knocked to the ground or pushed or tossed 1d6 meters. He is stunned (see the Consequences section, below) and prone. He must regain his senses before he can act, and must spend a beat standing to regaining his feet.
- **Move/Stand/Act (1d):** Regain your feet if knocked down, or move up to $\frac{1}{2}$ of your Movement allowance, or perform some other brief act.

Reach and Initiative: Initiative in dueling combat is influenced by weapon length. Add the 'reach' modifier from Table IV to the combatant's initiative roll at the beginning of each turn.

Hits in the Dueling system: Much of the flavor and excitement of dueling combat comes from the variable, uncertain effects of injuries. When an attack succeeds, roll 1d6 for damage, modifying for relevant abilities (e.g., Powerful), the weapon used (Tables IV and V), damage reduction from heavy armor (Table VI) or natural armor (e.g., for dragons), and consult the Consequences table (Table XI). See Injury and Consequences, below, for further details. Resolve the effects of each hit immediately as they occur.

Missile fire and spells in the Dueling system: Missile fire and spells take place during step (3), before the resolution of exchanges of blows (step 5). Once a combatant is engaged in an exchange of blows, he may not ready any missile weapon or cast a spell (but may fire a pistol if it is already loaded). Otherwise, missile fire and spell casting in dueling combat are resolved following standard rules.

Example: Returning to the battle of Krack Mummen, we find Fortenbras and Grimbald standing before the postern gate surrounded by dead and writhing orcs. A great Uruk-Hai captain (a dangerous 5 Hit Die monster – effectively a hero for the orc army) steps forward to rally his ranks. He singles out Fortenbras for single combat and prepares to charge. Grimbald doesn't like the look of this fellow and steps back, letting his friend cut the brute down to size. Fortenbras' player accepts the challenge, so no roll to single out is required. Initiative is determined normally: He rolls a 1, the Uruk captain a 5. Fortenbras' +1 initiative bonus (from the Leader ability) isn't enough to overcome the difference, so the orc goes first. The game master decides a 2nd level warrior on the wall will participate as well, firing his bow at the orc. He rolls an unmodified 3 for initiative and also goes after the orc. The Uruk captain rushes up the ramp to the gateway, engaging Fortenbras. Before the exchange of blows can be resolved, the archer fires, rolling 2 dice. His short bow is a little under-powered to reach the 30 meters between himself and the duel, so he suffers a -1 range penalty. And, a short bow suffers a -1 penalty in dueling combat, at any range. Rolling 2 dice, he gets a 4 and a 6. The re-roll of the 6 yields a 5, so it stays as a 6 rather than increasing to 7. His modified results are a 2 and a 4 – both too low to penetrate the Uruk's mail and shield (AC 6).

The Uruk begins the exchange of blows with a normal attack. He rolls a 5, adding 1 for his intrinsic attack bonus (Uruks are powerful) and +1 for his axe's



dueling attack bonus, for a 7. This is enough to strike Fortenbras, who's armor class is 5 (mail). Fortenbras doesn't want to start the fight with a wound, so he attempts a parry, rolling a 4 + 1 for his sword and +1 for being a sword master. A 6; the blow is knocked aside. The orc retains initiative and strikes again, rolling a 2 + his modifier of +2 = 4. Not enough. Fortenbras decides to take advantage of the opening by expending 3 dice of his combat pool on a great blow. He rolls a 3 + 3 for his normal modifier + 2 more for his great blow = 8. A clear hit. The Uruk decides this is a good time to burn a die on a parry of his own. He rolls a 2 + his shield's parry bonus of +1 = 3 – failure. He gambled and lost – not only will he be struck, but he expended a much-needed die from his combat pool and won't get to act in the next beat. Fortenbras rolls his damage die – a 5 + 1 for his Powerful ability + 1 for his magic sword + 2 for his great blow -1 for his target's mail armor = 8. Consulting the consequences table, he sees this yields "+1 hit" (i.e., 2 hits rather than 1). Rolling again, he gets a 5 + 3 = 8. "+1" hit again, for a total of 3! He rolls again, getting a 4 + 3 = 7. Cross-indexing with the Uruk's remaining 2 hits, he sees a "Kd, W, P": his foe is struck a mighty blow that knocks him to the ground, imposes a 1-die penalty to his combat pool, and a wound (meaning these 3 hits and penalty will not recover quickly if the Uruk survives the fight, which isn't looking likely). On the next beat, the Uruk cannot act because he expended his next action on a parry during the last beat. Fortenbras has 3 dice remaining in his pool for the turn, and likes how things are going. He gambles, using them all in one great blow that might end the fight. His attack roll is a 5 + 3 + 2 + 1 for having a foe on the ground = 10; another clear hit. The Uruk has 2 dice left in his pool (2 spent; one lost to a penalty from his wound), and decides he has to at least try to stay in this fight. He spends them both on a desperate defense. He rolls a 3 + 1 for his shield's parry bonus + 1 for his extra die = 5. Not quite good enough. Fortenbras' damage roll is a 5 + 3 = 8; another +1 hit result. Rolling again, he gets a 1+2 + 3 = 5. Cross-indexing with the 0 hits row (i.e., because his wound reduced the Uruk by 2 more hits, to 0 remaining), he gets a result of X, I, W. Incapacitated, mortally wounded and another wound. If we wanted to track the Uruk's progress as he circles the drain, we could work through the saving throws vs. his mortal wound. But this fight is over...

Jousting: A mounted knight fighting with a chivalric lance is perhaps the most powerful humanoid melee combatant in the game. When attacking combatants who are not similarly armed, resolve combat using one of the other three systems; the advantages of the mounted lance are already built into the skirmish and dueling weapon attributes and rules. The following rules should be used when two lancers face off on the field of battle or in the jousting lists of a tournament.

Initiative: Initiative is always simultaneous in jousting combat. Both combatants resolve their attacks together.

Actions: The default action is 'charge', but do not add a charge bonus to-hit unless specified.

Attacks: Each combatant delivers a single attack, where all dice in the Combat Pool are rolled together (unless one or more dice are reserved for countering a foe's attack; see below). The task number (tn) for the attack, and the results of success depend on the goal:

- Break a lance (tn=4). Agile, and similar abilities provide modifiers, but normal modifiers for attack (Powerful, weapon attack modifiers, etc.) do not. Additional successes have no effect. A single success results in the attacker intentionally breaking his lance – a good thing during sport jousting!
- Unhorse foe (tn=6). The lance's Dueling bonus to attack does not count as a modifier; Powerful and other similar modifiers *do* count. With 1 success, the target is staggered in the saddle; 2 successes the target is cleanly unhorsed; with three passes, both rider and mount are driven to the ground.
- Knock off helmet crest (tn=7). Agile, and similar abilities provide modifiers, but normal modifiers for attack (Powerful, weapon attack modifiers, etc.) do not. With 1 success, the foe's ornamental helmet crest is knocked off. Such crests are commonly worn during sport jousting or in parade, but are rarely worn elsewhere. Additional successes have no effect.
- Injure target (tn=the target's armor class). The lance's dueling bonus to attack and all other normal attack modifiers count (including the charge bonus). Each success delivers 1 hit on the target; use the consequences table to determine other effects of the blow. I.e., this is just a regular attack.
- Sweep (tn=4). The lance's dueling bonus to attack does not count as a modifier; Powerful and other similar modifiers *do* count. A legal but low-class move in the jousting lists. You can try it in battle if you want, but you'll regret it if you drop your spear... This has the same effect as an attempt to unhorse (above), but on a successful blow the attacker must also make a standard saving throw, modified for strength (eg., the Powerful ability and similar abilities) not to drop his lance.
- Injure opponent's horse (tn=horse's armor class). The lance's dueling bonus to attack and other normal attack modifiers count, as does the charge bonus. Each success delivers 1 hit on the target; use the consequences table to determine other effects of the blow. This is an exceptionally dishonorable act that will earn the attacker the Blackguard curse. It is also illegal in a sport joust.

Countering a foe's attack: Each combatant can also opt to hold back one or more dice from his combat pool. These are rolled vs. a task number of 6, modified for the Agile ability *and* the Powerful ability (or similar abilities) and +1 if you carry a shield. Each success negates a success from the opponent's attack.

Example: Parcival encounters Leslie the Fey Knight, a blackguard with odd taste in clothing, while crossing a forest clearing. Hating each other on sight, they spur their horses into a charge and joust. Both are using war lances, wear plate armor and carry shields. Parcival is a 6th level Hero with a combat pool of 6 dice and his abilities include Agile and Steel Thews. Leslie is less gifted; he is 4th level and his only modifier comes from the Powerful ability. Parcival decides to spend 3 dice trying to

unhorse his foe and 3 dice countering his foe. Leslie goes all-out (4 dice) in an attempt to injure the hated do-gooder. Parcival's attack roll is a 2 and two 4's, modified by his Steel Thews ability to a 4 and two 6's; i.e., two successes. Leslie rolls a 2 a 4 and two 5's. His modifier is +1 for Powerful and +1 for the war lance's attack bonus, +1 for the charge bonus, for a 5 a 7 and two 8's. Parcival's armor class is 6 + 1 for a shield + 1 for Agile = 8. Two successes! Parcival rolls 3 dice for his counter attempt: 1 4 and 5, plus 3 (for Agile and Steel Thews) = 4, 7 and 8 —also two successes. He fends off Leslie's lance. Leslie is spilled from his saddle and crashes to the ground in a clatter of plates while Parcival gallops past, unharmed.



Heroic combat: Many monsters are so large and physically or magically powerful that even a hero has little chance against them using the skirmish or dueling combat systems. But hero- and superhero-level characters have an option: Heroic combat. If your character is lower than heroic in level (i.e., 1st-4th), you may only engage in heroic combat if you fight with a magic weapon.

Heroic combat follows the steps below:

- (1) Single-out a foe, if necessary (as for dueling combat, above).
- (2) Declare intent
- (3) The referee declares which, if any, heroic ability modifier applies
- (4) Both combatant's roll a pool of dice (i.e., initiative is irrelevant), apply the modifier from (3) and compare to a task number of 6. Armor Class and normal attack or spell casting modifiers are not relevant. Both sides tally up their number of successes.
- (6) The victor is the side with the most successes; calculate the margin of victory by subtracting the loser's successes from the winner's successes.
- (7) Resolve the consequences for the loser, which generally scale with the margin of victory.
- (8) Repeat from step 2 if both combatants are still active.

Intent: A combatant's intent is the goal he is trying to accomplish during the turn of combat. This can be as simple as, 'hurt my foe'. But, it can be more effective (and is nearly always more interesting!) if you have some other intent, such as "trick the Tyrannosaurus Rex into

running off a cliff", or "tie the giant's shoes together, so he trips". The referee can reject or modify an intent if it strikes him as unreasonable, but players should be given plenty of latitude to think up something creative. After all, if they are engaged in heroic combat, they probably are up against something that is likely to kill them. Boring intents lead to boring heroic combats; interesting intents lead to interesting heroic combats!

The Heroic combat pool: Always a number of dice equal to the combatant's level (regardless of class), or, for monsters, hit dice or combat pool (whichever is higher). This pool abstractly represents all the things you might imagine your character could be trying – hacking with a sword; casting spells; sneaking about.

Modifiers: The die modifier for a heroic combat roll can only come from one heroic or superheroic ability (i.e., mundane abilities are generally not relevant) and/or one magic weapon or item. And, that ability and/or weapon must be relevant to the character's intent. Monsters that have the intent to simply do lethal damage can use their skirmish combat to-hit modifier.

Consequences: If the intent was simply to harm a foe, the loser takes hits equal to the margin of victory, and any other effects are resolved using the consequences system. For other intents, the referee adjudicates the meaning of the margin of victory. In general, a margin of success of 1 indicates the intent was marginally accomplished, 2 indicates it was fully accomplished, and 3 indicates it was spectacularly accomplished.

Example: a troop of hearty adventurers exploring a strangely extensive cave system has been run to ground by a foul Bälrog. Their leader, the heroic Magician Glarbag the Magnificent, knows he has essentially no chance of defeating it by just throwing fire balls or other such nonsense. But someone has to do something, so he engages it in heroic combat to give the party time to flee. The Bälrog gleefully accepts, so no roll to single out is required. Glarbag's intent in the first turn is to tempt it onto a conveniently placed bridge and then exert his wizardly might to collapse the bridge. The character is certainly capable of similarly powerful acts of magic, so the referee allows the intent. The Bälrog just wants to kill the wizard, so his intent is simple. Both combatants roll their heroic combat dice pools – 8 for the wizard and 10 for the vile demon. The demon has an exceptionally high +3 bonus (his skirmish attack bonus) while the wizard says he'll draw on the power of his magic staff, so the referee gives him a +1 bonus for a relevant magic weapon. He isn't really casting a spell he knows, so the referee rules that none of his abilities that provide spell-casting bonuses are counted. Anyone with an eye for numbers would think things look bad for the wizard, but one reason we roll the dice is that all kinds of crazy things can happen. The Bälrog rolls three 1's, all of which are automatic failures (as for any other roll), three 2's (also failures) and four 3's or higher (all of which 'pass' due to his bonus), for 4 successes. The wizard rolls three 6's (!!), two 5's, all of which pass due to his +1 bonus, and the rest 4's or lower, for 5 successes. He marginally wins, and the referee rules he's cracked the bridge, unbalancing the Bälrog...but, the demon can act to either save himself or strike out next turn before really falling. Bälrogs are naturally ill-tempered, so his intent next turn will be to grasp the wizard and pull him over as well, rather than doing something sensible like, say, saving himself. Glarbag isn't

sure what to do, so he says he'll try to fend the demon off and withdraw. There are no heroic abilities about withdrawing, so the referee rules the wizard gets no modifiers. The Bälrog returns to statistical form, earning 7 passes, and the wizard gets only 2 (the two natural 6's from his heroic combat pool). A clear win for the Bälrog results in Glarbag being entwined in his demonic whip and pulled over the side and into the deep, presumably never to be seen again...

INJURY AND CONSEQUENCES

When an unimportant monster or non-player character takes a hit of damage, and everyone is in a hurry to get on with the action, it is sufficient to simply reduce its total hits by 1 and impose a 1-die reduction to its combat pool and any ability rolls or saving rolls it might attempt (i.e., as for non-players in skirmish combat). Anyone reduced to 0 hits is incapacitated or (if the referee is not interested in keeping track of him any further) killed. Anyone reduced to negative hits is dead. No damage roll is required (and thus all weapons result in the same damage).

When player characters and important or otherwise interesting monsters or non-player-characters take a hit of damage, use the following procedure:

- Reduce the injured character's total hits by 1. If more than 1 hit of damage is done as a result of the same attack, subtract all from the target's total hits.
- Roll on the 'consequences' table (Table XI), modifying the roll by the attack's damage modifier and any penalty for the target's worn armor or natural armor, and cross-indexing with the target's *remaining* hits, after reduction for the injury.
- Apply the rolled injury or other effect.
- If hits = 0 and the character is not otherwise incapacitated, he or she must save vs. injury to keep from swooning. This save must be attempted at the beginning of every subsequent turn in which the character has 0 Hits remaining. Any character reduced to negative hits is dead.

The Consequences table: The Consequences table (Table XI) is a mechanism for randomly determining the results of injuries. Roll 1d6 and modify the result with any bonus or penalty to damage. These include the modification for the attacker's physical might or size, and/or for the weapon used (see Tables IV and V). Some armors (mail and plate) or natural armor provide a 'damage resistance' that acts as a penalty to damage rolls. If the modified result is 8 or more, add 1 to the number of Hits the target takes and re-roll on the next lower 'Hits remaining' category (this can occur any number of times, so there is always some chance that a single wound will do many hits of damage). Consequences on Table XI are abbreviated, using the following legend.

- B: Bleeding. The target must save vs. damage at the beginning of each turn or lose another hit. If he succeeds 3 turns in a row, or is healed of the injury, this consequence is removed.
- D: Dropped item. Target drops his primary weapon or other important item in his hands.
- I: Incapacitated. The combatant is rendered unconscious or otherwise unable to act until recovered from the injury.
- Kb: Knocked back 1d6 meters
- Kd: The combatant is knocked down or unhorsed and must regain his feet before he can act normally again. All attacks against a downed opponent gain a +1 to hit.
- M: Must immediately check morale vs. a task number of 6.

- P: Penalty. Reduce target's combat pool (and any dice pool for saving throws or ability rolls) by 1 die until recovered from the injury
- S: Stunned. The target is briefly rendered senseless or incapacitated by pain. He saves vs. damage at the beginning of each turn. As soon as this save is passed, the consequence is removed and he may act normally.
- T: The injured combatant is unbalanced or otherwise discommoded, and may not act or move on his or her next turn. The following turn he may act normally again.
- W: Wound. The combatant will not quickly recover the lost hit, and will continue to suffer any associated consequences of the injury, until healed (see recovery, below).
- C: Crippled: The character has suffered some permanent wound, like the loss of a hand or foot or eye, or another injury that leaves the character with significant weakness, immobility or loss of sensation. Suffer a 1-die penalty to combat pool and any relevant saving throw or ability roll (like, leaping a pit if you lost your foot). The hit from this would recovers as for other wounds, but the penalty for being crippled is permanent.
- X: Mortal wound. The combatant must save vs. damage at the beginning of each turn or die.
- Murderated: Horribly and instantly slain.

Table XI: Consequences

Hits	Damage roll*								
Remaining	0 or less	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 or more
0	W, B, P	W, B, P	W, B, P	W, B, P	W, B, P	X, I, W	X, I, W	X, C, I, W	Murderated
1	Kb, M	Kd, M	B, P	B, S	W, B	P, W	C, M	C, W, M	+1 Hit; re-roll
2	M	D, Kb	P	S, P	B, P	Kb, W	Kd, W	P, W	+1 Hit; re-roll
3	Kb	D	T	P	B	Kd, M	S	W	+1 Hit; re-roll
4	D	T	S	W	Kd, Kb	D, M	B	P	+1 Hit; re-roll
5	—	D	M	T	Kb	Kd	S	I	+1 Hit; re-roll
6	—	—	T	M	D	Kb	W	B	+1 Hit; re-roll
7	—	—	—	M	T	S	Kb	P	+1 Hit; re-roll
8	—	—	—	—	M	P	T	S	+1 Hit; re-roll
9	—	—	—	—	—	D	Kd	M	+1 Hit; re-roll
10 or more	—	—	—	—	—	—	Kb	T	+1 Hit; re-roll

* 1d6 + damage modifiers; exploding die on natural 6's, as usual.

X: mortal I: incapacitated Kd: Knocked down M: Morale check
S: stunned B: bleeding P: penalty Kb: Knocked back 1d6 meters
W: Wound C: crippled T: lose next turn D: Drop weapon or item

Damage saves: A damage save is always resolved as a normal saving throw, modified by the Hearty ability (or similar abilities). One pass is sufficient to avoid or remove the consequence in question.

Recovery: Hits and consequences recover quickly (minutes to hours) if the blow in question did not result in a wound, and much more slowly (days to weeks) if it did result in a wound

('W' result on the consequences table). A non-wound injury (and its associated long-lasting consequences, including incapacitation and penalty dice) can be negated through one of the actions below. Note that some of these methods of recovery can only be done once per day.

- Drink a flagon of ale, wine or fresh spring water (once per day)
- Shake it off; spend 1 full turn and attempt a save vs. damage (once per non-wound injury, up to your level times per day)
- Rest for 1 hour (any number of times per day)

A wound injury (and its associated consequences) is a more serious thing. At the end of each day of rest in a sheltered space, attempt a damage save. If successful (one pass), recover 1 hit at its associated long-lasting consequences (incapacitation and penalty dice).

If a character has multiple wounds, he can pick which ones to recover from first.

MORALE

A morale check is a saving throw to keep your nerve in the face of danger or horror. The following list of threats normally calls for a morale check:

- A shocking injury ('M' result on the consequences table)
- When part of a combat team that has suffered ¼ or more casualties, or faces a clearly superior force
- When faced with an enemy wizard
- Faced with an enemy Superhero of any class or a monster with 10+ hit dice
- Facing the undead or un-natural horror
- The referee thinks it is a good idea

Heroes, characters with the Valorous gift and certain monsters never need check morale. Characters with the Craven curse always fail morale checks. In skirmish combat, it is frequently convenient to check morale for an entire side with a single roll.

All morale checks are made as standard saving throws vs. a task number of 6. The following modifiers apply:

- Warrior class: +1
- Brave gift: +1
- Monster: + listed morale modifier (in place of class or Brave bonus)
- A friendly hero or superhero is immediately nearby : +1
- Part of a team led by someone with the Leader ability: +1
- Threat has level or hit dice lower than your level: +1
- Coward curse: -1
- Threat has a level or hit dice higher than your level: -1
- Hopelessly outclassed: -1
- Just witnessed defeat of your peers by foe: -1

On a failed morale check, you must flee the threat; if you cannot flee, you must surrender; if you cannot flee or surrender, you may defend yourself but suffer a 1-die penalty to your Combat Pool due to panic.

Rallying: A creature whose morale has cracked can try to recover by attempting another morale check. In the absence of a leader or friendly hero or superhero, it is only possible to rally when removed from the threat that caused the morale failure in the first place. If a leader or hero or superhero is present, it is possible to rally in the presence of the threat.

REACTION ROLLS

A reaction roll can be made whenever two characters or groups of characters encounter one another in ambiguous circumstances, where their interactions could evolve for the better or worse, and where the referee doesn't know or care what the non-player character reactions should be like. Reaction rolls are modified by a variety of abilities, gifts, curses and racial enmities. Reaction rolls are made by rolling 2d6 (just because...), applying all relevant modifiers from gifts, curses and abilities, and comparing with the following table:

- 2 Violent dislike
- 3 Lasting negative response; will avoid or act against the interests of the target character(s) for the foreseeable future.
- 4-5 Immediate negative response; will avoid or act against the interests of the target character(s) for the duration of the present encounter, but may be convinced to improve his opinion in the future..
- 6-8 Neutral
- 9-10 Immediate positive reaction; will aid or befriend the target character(s) for the present encounter, but may re-evaluate his response later.
- 11 Lasting positive reaction; will aid or befriend the target character(s) for the foreseeable future.
- 12 Lasting friendship or service

MAGIC

Members of the magician class, characters that have the Fairy Blood gift (including all elves), and certain monsters are able to perform acts of magic. Whether these are arcane formulaic spells, priestly prayers or intrinsic supernatural powers, all such effects are described as 'spells' and use similar dice-rolling mechanics.

Spells and spell complexity: The companion volume on magic and magical items lists and describes a variety of spells available to Magician characters. The referee and players should feel free to add to this list by mining the wide range of published gaming materials, myths, fairy tales, and their own imaginations. The 2nd edition Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Spell Compendia are particularly extensive and useful resources; most require little or no conversion. Most importantly, 1-die of damage in this system should be treated as 1 hit of damage in Platemail.

Spells are organized by their complexity level, which measures how difficult the spell is to learn and cast (and, generally, the power of its effects). Magic users will usually perform magical acts described by spells having complexity levels equal to or lower than their character level or (for monsters) hit dice. However, this is not a rigid rule: A character of any level can attempt to learn and, once learned, cast any spell (unless otherwise specified; e.g., see the Fairy Blood gift).

Arcane and Priestly spells: Spells come in two varieties: Arcane spells, which can be learned and cast by any member of the magician character class, and priestly spells, which can only be learned and cast by a magician who also knows the Priest ability. It is recommended that priestly spells be further limited so that a character is only capable of casting those that are appropriate for his or her religion. In general, abilities that modify spell learning and spell casting rolls are specific to *either* arcane or priestly spells.

Learning spells: Characters who belong to the magician class begin play knowing 1d6 spells of their choice (of any level). Arcane spell casters may learn additional spells through the following steps:

- Find a written record of the spell in another magician's spell book, or...
- Be instructed by another magician or demom who already knows the spell, or...
- Conduct research in a magical library, if you have the Scholar ability, or...
- Conduct research in a magical laboratory, *and, for all of the cases above...*
- Make a standard saving roll, modified by relevant abilities (Crafty, Scholar, Library, etc.), noting the number of 'passes'. This roll may be repeated once per month per spell being learned, where the number of 'passes' accumulates from month to month. When the total number of passes equals the spell's complexity level, it is fully learned and can be cast. A magician can simultaneously work on learning only a few spells at a given time; the sum of complexity levels for all spells he is studying or researching simultaneously must be equal to or lower than his level, with a minimum of 1 spell.

Priestly spell casters learn new spells through meditative retreat and prayer, requiring the same duration and spell learning rolls, but modified by different abilities (Devout, Pious, etc.).

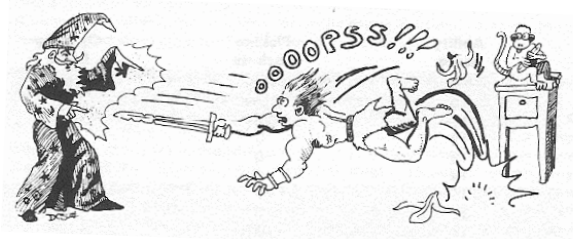
There is no limit to the number of spells a magician can eventually learn. Note there is no restriction to the complexity level of spell a character can try to learn – it will just be a very slow process if you are working on a spell much higher than your level.

Casting rolls: When a spell is cast, make a standard saving throw attempt (i.e., level or hit die vs. a task number of 6, adding and subtracting relevant modifiers to each die), noting the number of passes. The spell is successfully completed if/when the number of passes equals the spell's complexity level. If an insufficient number of passes are achieved in the first turn, the caster may continue to roll a new standard saving throw every turn, accumulating the total number of passes from turn to turn until the goal is reached. If the caster stops casting and attempts some other movement or action before this goal is reached, the attempt fails and all accumulated passes from previous turns are lost.

Modifiers to the spell-casting roll include (but are not limited to):

- Crafty: +1 for arcane spells (Brilliant: +2; Genius: +3)
- Using a wizard's staff: +1 for arcane spells
- Aided by a familiar: +1 for arcane spells
- Devout +1 for priestly spells (Pious: +2; Saintly: +3)
- Using a relic: +1 for priestly spells
- Spell complexity level exceeds the caster's level: -1
- Distracted by attacks or other interference: -1

Note there is no intrinsic limit to the level of complexity level of spell a character can try to cast. But, casting a spell of much higher level than your own is very slow (and can be quite dangerous; see below).



Enchantment spells: Certain arcane spells let the caster create permanently enchanted objects (amulets, weapons, staves, etc.). These function like normal spells, except one spell casting roll is made per month (rather than per turn), and the spell can only be cast when the caster has continuous access to magical laboratory (excepting scrolls; see the Create Scroll spell for details).

Cooperative spell casting: If two friendly magicians know the same spell, they can aid one another in a spell-casting attempt, pooling their spell-casting dice into a single roll. This also applies to cooperative enchantments.

Counter spells: A counter spell is a spell that negates the effects of another spell. It is generally cast immediately after a foe's spell casting roll, and if successful halts or negates its effects. All members of the magician class are able to cast counter spells; characters and monsters that have some form of innate magical ability (Fairy Blood, etc.) *cannot*. One need not learn new counter spells; it is assumed that any member of the magician class has sufficient training to attempt to counter any spell or spell-like magical effect he or she encounters. A counter spell is cast exactly like a normal spell, with the following exception: If a counter-spell is cast to halt a foe's spell before it takes effect, the counter-spell must succeed (i.e., achieve a number of passes equal to its complexity level) during the first turn of casting. If more than 1 turn is taken to cast a counter spell, the targeted spell takes effect and is then halted if/when the counter spell succeeds. A counter spell always has a complexity level equal to that of the spell it is intended to counter. If the counter-spell casting attempt fails or is abandoned, the original spell takes or continues full effect.

Saving throws: Some spells can be resisted by a saving throw (these are noted in the spell descriptions in the companion volume). These are resolved as standard saving throws, and are modified by certain abilities and gifts (Devout, Pious, Iron Will, Weak Will, etc.). In general, a saving throw vs. a magical spell requires a number of passes equal to the spell's Complexity Level.

Exhaustion: Casting spells can exhaust the caster, represented by hits and penalty dice (i.e., reductions in the combat pool and pools of dice rolled for saving throws, ability attempts and similar rolls). If enough damage is taken from exhaustion, it is even possible that the act of casting a spell will kill the caster. Hit reductions from spell casting DO call for a roll on the consequences table (always an unmodified roll), and so can lead to 'wounds'. The following circumstances incur 1 hit of exhaustion damage:

- Casting a spell or counter spell having a complexity level greater than the caster's level or hit dice
- For every natural '1' rolled in a spell-casting or counter-spell-casting attempt, in excess of the caster's level.
- For any failed attempt to cast a counter spell

Example. A 3rd level caster rolls a total of 9 dice over three turns during a spell casting attempt before achieving the required number of passes. Four of those dice yielded natural '1's (curses!). The caster takes 1 Hit of damage, regardless of the complexity level of the spell. If that spell was greater than 3rd complexity level, the caster would incur a second hit.

Creating new spells: Referees can create new spells at will and give them to non-player sorcerers or hide them away in dusty tomes. Just give some thought to the balance of the campaign. Players can also create new spells, with the referee's consultation and approval. However, only characters that are magicians, know the Scholar ability, and have access to or own both a Library and a Laboratory can create new spells. First, set an appropriate spell complexity level (by comparison with spells in the companion volume of spells). Then, perform spell-learning rolls as for any other spell. But, you must achieve a number of passes equal to twice the complexity level.



ENCHANTMENTS AND MAGICAL ITEMS AND CREATURES

Much of what makes a magician powerful (and interesting) is the collection of magical creatures and items at his or her disposal:

Familiars: Sorcerers' familiars are small animals, imps or homoculi that are inhabited by a demonic spirit that has forced a psychic connection with the magician who owns them. Only a magician who has the Familiar ability may possess one, and he or she can possess only one at a time (if it dies, he may summon another and bind it to his will). A familiar provides a +1 bonus to arcane spell casting rolls. And, they can absorb 1 Hit and 1 penalty die of exhaustion incurred from arcane spell casting. This temporarily incapacitates the familiar, until it recovers as per the normal rules.

Demonic servants: Some magicians form pacts or alliances with demons, gaining aid in exchange for sacrifices, the ownership of their soul after death, or other payment. A demonic servant provides a +1 bonus to spell learning attempts (Priestly or Arcane) and can act as instructors for any spell. They provide +1 on Deus ex Machina rolls (representing the supernatural aid of your demonic ally). And, demons may have any number of other abilities and can be commanded or negotiated with to use them in the service of their allied magician. However, they are slippery and innately evil, and will twist the intent of their instructions or even betray their nominal ally, sometimes just for amusement. If this ability is taken more than once, more than one demon can be bound. However, the bonus to spell learning and Deus ex Machina rolls never rises above 1. If a demonic servant is slain, it can be replaced by another of a similar type. Characters with the Priest or Devout abilities may only take this ability if they are members of a devil-worshipping religion. Reaction roll.

Necromatic undead: Several spells permit magicians to create undead beings (zombies and their like). Any undead being created by such a spell is allied with and follows the orders of its creator as long as it exists. Undead encountered as monsters have no such sentiments, and will hatefully pursue the living, magician or not.

Golems and constructs: These mindless magical robots can be constructed through several different spells. They follow the directions of their creator until destroyed, but are otherwise passive.

Summoned beings: Certain spells allow casters to summon animals, monsters, spirits and other supernatural beings. Such beings normally remain only briefly before returning to wherever they call home. But, while bound to our world, they follow the commands of their summoner.

Magic Weapons: Magic weapons are enchanted arms that always provide a +1 bonus to attack, parry and damage (never more!). They can be used by a character of any class and do not require a saving throw to activate. Magicians can make them using the spell Create Magic Weapon. A character of any level can engage in heroic combat when wielding a

magic weapon. The most interesting magic weapons have other special spell-like or injurious properties; see the companion volume on magic and magical items for examples.

Magic Armor and Shields: Magic armor and shields are enchanted to always provide a +1 bonus to armor class (never more, though using both magical armor and a magical shield will provide a +2 bonus over equivalent non-magical arms). If a type of armor provides damage reduction (i.e., mail and plate), this is also improved by 1 (i.e., from -1 to -2). It can be used by a character of any class (providing that character is able to wear the armor type in question) and does not require a saving throw to activate. Magicians can make them using the spell Create Magic Armor. The most interesting magic armor has other special spell-like or protective properties; see the companion volume for examples.

Staffs: An arcane magician can create a magical staff using the Create Staff spell. A staff serves as a focus for a magician's power, providing +1 to spell casting rolls. A staff also counts as a magic item in heroic combat when used by a magician.

Scrolls: A scroll is an enchanted writing that contains the power of an arcane spell. It is often a piece of high-quality parchment, but can be a book, an inscription on a wall or any other form of writing. Anyone who reads the scroll in its entirety will release the power of the spell, as if it had been successfully cast. A spell-casting roll is required, and rules governing exhaustion apply, so the act of reading a scroll can be quite dangerous to a low-level character, especially a non-magician. Unfortunately, the act of reading a scroll can suck the reader in; a saving throw (modified by things relevant to will power and intelligence) is required to stop before reading it in its entirety. Naturally, the reader must be literate and know the language in which the scroll is written. Some scrolls are written in an obscure or secret language known only to magicians, or possibly even a language of the creator's own devising. Scrolls are made with spell, Create Scroll. A scroll is destroyed or disenchanted once read.

Tomes: Tomes are complex and varied things; in some campaigns, they are the only means of learning new spells – making them some of the most important and powerful magic items. Tomes commonly contain a mixture of things: ancient histories; mythological allegories; autobiographical pontificating; the fevered ramblings of sorcerers driven mad by years of contemplating the occult. And, most are written in secret languages, making it a challenge just to read them. But, interspersed among these backwards, upside-down alphabets and tracts on the culinary habits of long-dead gods are a variety of useful things. Tomes are the primary way in which arcane spells are recorded for posterity and learned by future generations of wizards. So, any magician who has completed his apprenticeship and moved out into the



wider world will soon find himself wondering where he might find a tome that might teach him some of those interesting spells his former master refused to pass on. Because of their importance, many tomes are also enchanted objects; some are made with the spell, 'Create Tome' and can be used to cast a spell, like a scroll, without being consumed. Referees should invest some time and energy into developing Tomes as a way of defining how magic 'works' in the game world, and of controlling the sorts of spells player's wizards can learn.

Amulets: These small, personal, magic items generally provide some subtle protection or enhancement. Most operate automatically and continuously and can be used by a member of any class.

Potions: A character with the Alchemy ability and access to a magical laboratory can create potions of various sorts. Creating a potion takes 1 week and requires a successful spell casting roll, achieve a number of 'passes' equal to the complexity level of the potion. See the companion volume of magic and magic items for examples.

Lesser Magic Items: Lesser magic items are enchanted objects that possess the power of a spell having a complexity level of 1-3, or a similarly potent power not represented by an arcane or priestly spell. They are created by the spell, Create Lesser Magic Item. Most require a standard saving throw to activate and are usable by a character of any class (though magicians benefit from any bonus to spell casting rolls when using such items).

Greater Magic Items: Greater magic items are enchanted objects that possess the power of a spell having a complexity level of 4 or higher, or a similarly potent power not represented by an arcane or priestly spell. They are created by the spell, Create Greater Magic Item. Most require a saving throw with a task number of 6 and two passes required for success to activate. They are usable by a character of any class (though magicians benefit from any bonus to spell casting rolls when using such items).

Artifacts: Artifacts are unique magic items and often have spell-like powers with no clear parallels in the spell lists. Most are usable by any class and do not require a saving roll to activate. See the companion volume on magic and magic items for examples.

Relics: Relics are holy or religiously meaningful objects, such as the bone of a saint or a fragment from an object connected to a deity. A person bearing a relic gains +1 bonus for spell casting rolls when casting priestly spells that are related to the religious figure or deity in question, and for saving throws when praying for a miracle. One cannot benefit from more than 1 relic for a given roll.

Laboratories: Magician's laboratories are collections of sorcerous components and hermetic experimental devices used in the exploration of magical forces and objects and the creation of new magical items. An arcane magician who wishes to create magical items and potions or invent new spells must use a laboratory, either by gaining access to one built by a friendly wizard or by building one his or her self. Simply knowing the relevant spells is

insufficient—creating magical items requires eye of newt and bubbling cauldrons and related nonsense. The Laboratory ability reflects the invested time and resources required to create and stock a functioning magician's laboratory.

Libraries: Magician's libraries are collections of arcane tomes, treatises, texts, written spells, instructional manuals, historical accounts, motivational self-help books and all other recorded information of a sorcerously scholarly nature. Libraries can be resources for learning new arcane spells, and are required to create new spells. A magician in need of a library can gain access to that of another wizard, or can build his own. The Library ability reflects the investment of space, time and other resources into the creation of an arcane library.

Sorcerous towers: Arch-wizards and similarly powerful magical beings often create a 'sorcerous tower' imbued with a variety of special powers. (Anyone with the resources can build a tower and call himself a sorcerer; we are speaking here of something more mysterious and powerful). Sorcerous towers always include a Laboratory, a Library and a Pentagram (as the spell of that

name), are protected by the Ward spell, and are imbued with 3 additional powers equivalent to a Greater Magic Item (chosen at the creator's discretion and with the referee's approval; for example, a sorcerous towers might be invisible or capable of teleporting). Most wizards also choose to fill a sorcerous tower with additional traps, henchmen, zombies, etc. The Sorcerous Tower ability reflects the investment of space, time and other resources into the creation of a sorcerous tower.

Enchanted or holy places: There exist a variety of magically powerful places. Some can be created by magicians (e.g., using spells such as Magic Wood). Others are intrinsic parts of magical realms. Others are mysterious in origin. All have spell-like powers that may be similar to one or more arcane or priestly spells; others have powers or effects with no parallels in the annals of known spells. A 'holy' place provides spell-like benefits of a religious nature; the priestly spell, 'holy place' can create such a place. In general, any magician aligned with the spirit of the place (e.g., a priest in a religious holy ground) doubles his level with respect to all spell casting rolls and saving throws related to magic.



MIRACLES

Miracles are super-natural acts or events that might resemble spells in their effects but are not achieved through arcane or even priestly magic. They are achieved through faith and are accessible to characters of any class, provided they have the Devout ability, or a more powerful ability of a similar kind, and are not living in a state of sin or bad grace, according to the tenets of their faith. Miracles are performed by attempting a standard saving throw vs. a task number that depends on the power and grandeur of the miracle, and with one or more of the following modifiers:

Common modifiers to miracle saving throws

Devout: required

Pious: +1

Saintly: +2 (not in addition to 'Pious')

Bearing a relic: +1

Occupying a holy place: +1

Acts of Faith (task number = 6)

Common Prayer Most medieval people pray several times daily, and devout persons do so earnestly. Such prayers are generally directed toward the well being of others or the world in general. An 'inspired' common prayer may have some subtle but noticeable benevolent effect (such as protecting a friend's household from an illness that ravages the city in which they live).

Courage of the Righteous The successful supplicant is able to resist or recover from terror or madness, through the support of his god.

Prayer for Forgiveness This is the only common act of faith that can be attempted by a character living in a state of dire sin. A successful prayer for forgiveness will give the supplicant an insight as to the penance or sacrifice that is required to return a sinner to his god's good graces. Without the aid of a priest's confession, this prayer is required before someone in a state of sin can again attempt other miracles.

Prayer for Guidance A successful prayer provides the character with insight as to how he might achieve some goal.

Prayer for Insight The supplicant's deity provides insight to a perplexing or troubling problem or mystery.

Prayer for Luck The supplicant begs that the deity will aid him (good luck) or impede a foe (bad luck) in some circumstance or conflict in which the character does not feel his native abilities will be enough. Success might be manifested by a +1 advantage or -1 disadvantage in a saving throw, attack or other task.

Prayer for Protection An attack or other hazard aimed at the supplicant is deflected or dulled.

Revive: The character or someone for whom he prays is restored of 1 hit of *non-wounding* damage and its associated consequences.

Minor miracles (Task number = 7)

Confound Magical Forces: Arcane spells cast at the character, or one under his protection,

automatically fail, for the duration of one encounter or adventure event.

Cure Minor Disease: A victim is completely cured of one generally non-fatal disease, such as black bile or phlegm (though any accumulated damage from that disease must still heal normally).

Defy Evil or the Undead: The character repels an intrinsically evil being, such as the undead or a demon. If the attempt is successful, the being in question must equal the number of 'passes' in a countering saving throw or flee as if it had failed a morale check. Even if this saving throw succeeds, the being cannot closely approach or touch the character.

Find the Open Way: The path to some goal is revealed by way of a god-given insight.

Heal the Wounded: 1 hit of damage (and associated consequences) are healed to a single wound.

Major miracles (task number = 8)

Call Back the Dying: A believer who has died within the last hour, but who is generally intact, returns to life and in stable, though still injured, condition (i.e., whatever caused his death will not immediately claim him, but he still must recover normally from cuts, etc.). This miracle cannot be performed on someone who has received last rites, been buried by a priest in hallowed ground or who has been severely disfigured (decapitated, burned to a crisp, etc.). This miracle does not defy God's laws because it is a form of healing those who almost-but-not-quite died. Recalling a soul that has passed on to judgment in the afterlife is a blasphemous abomination left to depraved necromancers.

Cure Blindness: Sight is returned to a blind person.

Cure Major Disease: A victim is completely cured of one generally fatal disease, such as plague, leprosy or the pox (though any accumulated damage from the disease must still heal normally).

Heal Grievous Wounds: The supplicant heals a believer of 2 hits of damage from a wound, and its associated consequences.

Heal the Lame: The cleric restores function to the limb(s) of a believer who has been lamed by injury or disease. This requires a task number of 9 roll if the limb has been amputated.

Remove Curse: Any harmful, lasting arcane or demonic magic is dispelled from a believer.

Visions: The supplicant gains detailed insight into the future, past or the state of affairs in some distant or unobserved place.



SPOT RULES

Many circumstances arise during play that require an adjudicated outcome of success, failure or other outcomes. In general, this should be done through badinage or obvious extensions of the rules for saving throws, ability rolls and various kinds of combat. Suggestions for certain common events are provided below. All are easily extended, changed or ignored; don't take them too seriously.

Disease: When exposed to infectious germs, or recovering from a nasty wound (one that has not healed after a week), or if some miss-alignment of the stars has caused an imbalance in your character's humors, he or she must try to fend off disease. Make a standard saving throw, modified by the 'Hearty' ability, or other relevant gifts, curses and abilities. Failure indicates the character has acquired one of the following diseases:

Black bile: The character suffers from an imbalance of the humors that results in effusion of vast quantities of black bile from his rectum. He suffers 1 hit of damage per day, which cannot recover until he is healthy. Lasts 1d3 days.

Gangrene: A character that takes a serious wound from a slashing or piercing weapon might have to save vs. Gangrene. A character with Gangrene takes 1 hit of damage per day until he overcomes the infection (i.e., by attempting another saving throw vs. disease per day). If a limb wound becomes gangrenous, the progress of the disease may be halted through amputation.

Leprosy: Leprosy is a slow but dreadful degenerative disease that rots the flesh from the victim's living frame. The victim gains 1 penalty die to combat pools and dice pools for saving throws and ability rolls. He gains a -3 reaction roll modifier from any non-leper who recognizes his condition.

Palsy: Palsy is an insidious, lingering disease of the nervous system. The victim becomes uncoordinated and spasmodic throughout the course of his disease. While ill, he gains 1 penalty die to combat pools and any saving throw or ability involving movement.

Phlegm: The character suffers from an excess of phlegm, which oozes and leaks from his head. The victim is sluggish and unemotional throughout the course of the disease, and gains 1 penalty die, which cannot be recovered by normal rest until the disease has passed. 1 saving throw to overcome the disease per week; otherwise, it lasts up to 1 month.

Plague: The victim is disabled by high fever, sweats and painful, ugly swellings in the groin and armpits. If the disease progresses to its horrific conclusion (as it generally does), these buboes burst, spreading disease through the body and killing the victim. A character that contracts plague takes 1 hit per missed saving throw (i.e., daily unless he spontaneously recovers) and is incapacitated throughout the course of the disease. Make 1 saving throw per day, for up to 5 days. The task number for saving throws is 7 rather than 6.

Sepsis: A character that takes a major wound to the body from an impaling weapon risks sepsis—a deep infection that spreads through the blood stream to overwhelm the character. The character takes 1 additional hit per day until he successfully saves.

Syphilis: The pox is acquired through intimate, carnal knowledge of a harlot or similarly dissipated person. If caught, the progression of the disease is inexorable. After a dormant period of 1d6 years, the victim begins to become physically weak and loose control of his

nerves (represented by 1 or more penalty dice to combat, saving throw and ability dice pools). Eventually, he will also go insane. There is no known cure, though some healers believe they can aid such cases through bleeding, purgatives, cauterization, etc. A character with Syphilis gains a -3 reaction modifier from anyone of the opposite sex who knows of their affliction.

Yellow bile: The victim suffers from an imbalance of the choleric humor and feels agitated, distracted, bad-tempered and easily angered throughout the course of the disease. Attempt 1 saving throw per week to recover; will spontaneously recover in 1 month.



Darkness: Don't go adventuring if you are afraid of the dark – much of your short life will be spent crawling through poorly lit tunnels. Darkness imposes penalties to die rolls for activities that require clear sight (including most actions in combat). -1 for dim light (like a moonless night), -2 for near pitch blackness, and -3 for utter and complete blackness.

Doors: Characters often think it would be fun to kick in a door. Resolve such vandalism with a saving throw modified by abilities, gifts and curses that reflect physical strength and size (+1 for Powerful, etc.). Assume a default task number of 6. Flimsy doors will be lower; stronger doors higher. A braced steel door would be physically impossible for a mortal human to kick in, and should have a task number of at least 9. Doors can also be opened with subtlety by picking locks, using the Rogue ability of that name. The task number of the lock should reflect its complexity. Finally, skilled players will propose ways through doors that are simply clever and would obviously work. Resolve such suggestions through reason rather than dice rolls.

Encumbrance? Some games have elaborate rules for encumbrance. This game has only one: If players insist on their characters carrying or wearing unreasonable amounts of gear, do something mean to them.

Explosives: The Grenado and Petard are black powder bombs that can be used by characters who have the Guns ability. A grenado is a fist-sized clay or thin metal pot packed with powder and scrap metal, and is ignited by a short fuse. It is lit and thrown (taking one turn) and explodes at the end of the following turn. The 'range' indicates the throwing range; a to-hit roll is used to see whether the thrower succeeds in placing it where he wishes (within range). A miss indicates the grenade scatters 1d6 meters in a random direction. When it explodes, every figure within 5 meters takes 1d3 wounds. A Petard is similar to a grenado but is the size of a small keg. Too heavy to throw, it is generally placed by hand and then lit by someone who then runs far, far away. No to-hit roll is required. The person who places a petard decides how many turns worth of fuse he wishes to burn, between a minimum of 1 and maximum of 10 (any longer and the fuse is more likely to go out than ignite the bomb).

When it explodes, everyone within 5 meters takes 2d3 wounds with a +3 modifier, and everyone within 20 meters takes 1d3 wounds with a +1 modifier. Any door, gate or thin wall immediately next to the petard is automatically destroyed (large walls, like the outer wall of a castle, may be damaged but will not be destroyed by a single petard).

Falls: Take 1 Hit for every 3 meters fallen. Make a standard saving throw, modified by Agility and other relevant gifts, curses and abilities, to avoid the first Hit of damage from a fall.

Fire: Take 1 Hit for every turn spent engulfed in flame or exposed to extreme heat, or for every blast of natural flame. Some magical fire may cause more damage.



Fatigue: For each of the following conditions, take 1 Hit of damage and 1 penalty die to combat pools, ability rolls and saving rolls: Lost night sleep; no water for 1 day; half day of vigorous exercise; 1 hour exposure to extreme heat or cold without appropriate gear or shelter. This damage always recovers as for a non-Wound injury.

Insanity: When faced with a mind-bending horror or after undergoing some life-changing trauma or stress, make a standard saving throw, modified by relevant gifts, curses and abilities (e.g., Iron Will). Failure indicates the character has acquired one of the following mental illnesses:

Catatonia: A catatonic lapses into a waking, wide-eyed coma, and is inactive and apparently insensate throughout his madness. He may stand, fall, or curl into a fetal position, and might be silent, moan, or repetitively groan or squeak nonsensical words.

Dementia: The victim is detached from reality; he sees, hears, smells and feels things that cannot be perceived by others, and concocts elaborate, deluded stories to explain the things he perceives.

Hysteria: Hysteria is a madness brought on by dis-favorable alignments of the planets and/or miasmas. It is characterized by wildly fearful and irrational behavior. It is generally not possible to treat the cause of hysteria (one must simply wait for the planets to change alignment or the miasma to pass), but persons with imbalanced humors are more strongly afflicted than others, and thus bleeding and purgatives can be of some help. A hysterical character can formulate no rational plans or complex actions, and reacts with rage or terror to all threats or strong stimulants.

Lunacy: Lunacy is a madness brought on by sensitivity to the powers of the moon. It is characterized by wildly aggressive behavior, frequently without obvious reason.

Characters suffering from lunacy may work themselves into such a fit that they go berserk, not knowing friend from foe. A character that succumbs to lunacy can be treated by bleeding and purgatives, but can be difficult to restrain and treat.

Melancholy: Melancholy is an affliction of the mind and spirit brought on by subtle imbalance of the humors, often in association with tragic or disheartening life events. It is characterized by apathy, low affect, sadness, and discouragement. -1 to saving throws or ability rolls that require persistence or gumption.

Neurosis: The character develops an extreme, highly noticeable family of nervous 'ticks' and irrational obsessions. He might begin with a simple compulsion to always dismount from the same side of his horse, and gradually evolve to elaborate rituals that must be gone through every time he mounts and dismounts.

Paranoia: The victim suffers from the irrational belief that he is persecuted by an insidious, powerful enemy or group of enemies. As the madness progresses, the victim slowly realizes the ever-expanding scope of the conspiracy.

Phobia: The character has an extreme, irrational fear of some commonly encountered thing (e.g., horses, enclosed spaces, darkness, flowing water, etc.).

Minor skills: Ever wonder whether your character knows how to swim, ride a donkey or wash his own socks? Neither do I. Your character knows all sorts of common, minor skills. Write them on your sheet if you wish. Or don't. Or perhaps decide you don't know some of these things just for fun. The stentorian voice of THE RULES is mute on these issues.

Poison: Poisons cause 1 or more hits of damage and may have additional effects, like blindness, paralysis or instant death. Most call for a standard saving throw, modified by the Hearty ability (and similar abilities and gifts), to avoid their consequences. Additional modifiers for the saving throw might reflect the virulence of the poison. Some rogues become skilled in the preparation and administering of poisons (without this ability you are as likely to dose yourself as your intended victim). Some examples:

Alcohol: Alcohol consumed in excessive quantities leads to dramatic losses of coordination, reason and judgment. For every multiple of 2 drinks (flagons of ale, glasses of sack, etc.), the character must save. A failed roll indicates the character has gained a penalty die for any physical or mental activity. However, the character also becomes braver while drunk, and so is immune to 'fear' magics and effects and morale checks. And, he may ignore penalty dice from injuries (i.e., the 'P' consequence from Table XI) while inebriated. He takes 1 hit of non-wound damage per failed saving throw when the spirits wear off (2 hours per dose).

Belladonna: Belladonna is a coarse branched herb whose leaves, bark and berries are highly poisonous. Ingestion of any significant amount, dissolved in wine or laced in food, will cause the victim to develop fever, a racing pulse, burning throat, followed by hallucinations, convulsions and possibly death. Symptoms appear within 30-60 minutes of ingestion. The victim must save; success indicates the character is incapacitated with fever, hallucinations and convulsions for 24 hours; failure indicates incapacitation followed by death within 6 hours.

- Black lotus dust:* A fine black powder made from the dried leaves of the black lotus. When thrown in the face of a target, it acts as a lethal inhaled poison doing 4 hits of damage (save with a -1 modifier for half damage).
- Blade venom:* Blade venom is a mineral or plant alkaloid that spreads through the body after being introduced through a cut or puncture, and corrodes the victim's tissue. The effects are strongest near the wound, but will eventually spread throughout the body. While effects vary, most blade venom does 1 hit of damage on the turn after the wound that injected it, after which the victim attempts a save. If this save succeeds, no further damage is taken. If it fails, the victim takes an additional 1 hit of damage.
- Cobra venom:* If cobra venom is injected to a victim's blood stream through a bite, its neurotoxins will cause the victim to lose coordination over the course of the following 1d6 turns. The victim first attempts save. If this roll fails, he gains 1 penalty die for physical actions for 1 hour, and he might fall if he happens to stand on stairs or perch on a branch. If the victim fails this initial save, he must attempt a second save; if it fails, the victim dies of asphyxiation within 30 minutes when his diaphragm relaxes. If it succeeds, he recovers in 1 hour.
- Contact poison:* A tacky paste that is absorbed through the skin, making the victim dizzy. Save or gain 1 penalty die for 3 hours. Acts within 1d6 turns.
- Curare:* Curare is a tacky liquid distilled from a tropical vine. If ingested it is harmless (even reputed to have medicinal effects). If introduced to the blood stream, such as through a wound, it leads to immediate (next turn) and extreme muscle relaxation. The victim first saves vs. poison. If this roll fails, he gains 2 penalty dice for physical actions for 1 hour, and may fall if he happens to stand on stairs or perch on a branch. Even if this save succeeds, the victim gains 1 penalty die for 1 hour. If the victim fails this initial save, he must attempt a second save; if it fails, the victim dies of asphyxiation when his diaphragm relaxes. If it succeeds, he recovers in 1 hour.
- Fish poison:* A liquid that, when poured into water, poisons all fish within a 3-meter area, 3 m deep. Save or take 3 hits of damage within 2d6 turns.
- Giant mushroom spores:* A fine powder concentrated from dry spores from the giant 'madcap' mushroom. Anyone inhaling this dust must save or be disabled by insane hallucinations for 1 hour, after which he must save with a -1 modifier or gain a madness.
- Hemlock:* A woody herb with a purple-spotted stem and a disagreeable parsnip odor. Ingestion of any part, especially young leaves, is moderately to highly toxic (depending on dose). Over the course of 1-3 hours, the victim will experience nervousness, trembling and loss of coordination (1 penalty die for physical acts). Soon after, he must save vs. poison. Success indicates depression followed by coma for 6-48 hours; failure indicates depression followed by coma followed by death within 2d hours.
- Insect poison:* A thin, acrid liquid that is highly poisonous to insects. Save with a -1 modifier or take 4 hits of damage within 1d6 turns. Insects will instinctively avoid this poison; i.e., they would not cross a line of it on the ground and would not attack someone slathered in it.
- Reptile poison:* A dry, crumbly cake that reptiles find appetizing and lethal. Save or take 3 hits of damage 10 minutes after ingesting.
- Slime Poison:* A caustic brine that is harmless to most things, but when splashed on slimes and

puddings burns them like white-hot irons (doing 1 hit of damage per 1 liter dose).

Traps: Player characters will hopefully encounter all manner of pits, flying spikes, poison gas and other nefarious traps over the course of their travels. If concealed, these can be found using the Search ability. Once found, they can be disarmed or otherwise avoided using the Traps ability (the same ability can be used to make your own traps if the fancy strikes you). Once triggered, many can be escaped or otherwise mitigated through saving throws, modified by relevant abilities, gifts and curses (e.g., Agile might provide a bonus to dodge a swinging blade). The task number should reflect the level of danger of the trap; 6 is a good default. It is possible that the outcome of a saving throw vs. a trap might also vary with the number of 'passes'; e.g., one pass might indicate a close miss or partial escape, 2 a clean avoidance, and 3 a stylish and nonchalant side-step.

Water: If immersed in water, make a saving throw each turn to avoid drowning. The task number starts at 3 and rises by 1 each turn. Most people start to turn blue around turn 3 or 4...

SURVIVING PLATEMAIL

This page provides a few noteworthy observations and words of advice for players and referees of Platemail.

- *Easy-come-easy go:* A player character can be created in Platemail in 5 minutes; less for someone familiar with the game. And characters that throw themselves into the middle of the action and survive can advance quickly. But, combat can be quick and brutal, so characters are killed just as easily and quickly. We encourage players to embrace this aspect of the game – enjoy your characters while they are alive, but be ready to move on to the next one when the inevitable happens...
- *Wounds are dangerous but hits are not:* Combat in Platemail can be deadly. But, it is also relatively easy to shrug off light injuries and be ready to fight again in an hour or two. The critical distinction here are 'wounds': once you have one, you are weakened and possibly incapacitated (maybe soon dead...); but non-wounding hits are generally just a temporary inconvenience. The lesson here is: don't hesitate to leap into the fray; the mayhem of battle is much of the fun of the game. But, pay special attention to enemies who bear weapons that can easily deliver wounds with their first blow (guns, heavy weapons, or very large beasts), and pull back or fight defensively if your hits are depleted to a level at which wounds are an expected consequence of further injury (~ 1-2 wounds remaining).
- *Levels count for a lot:* A second or third level warrior is substantially more powerful than the same character at first level. And any character that reaches hero status (5th level) is enormously more capable and rugged than a normal man or orc. If you develop an unhealthy attachment to a new character, just hold on tight and nurse him or her through to second level; things get much easier from there. Or, whine to your Dungeon Master and he might let you begin play with a second or third level character.
- *Rules were made to be bent:* The rules of Platemail are relatively straightforward and generalizeable to new circumstances. But they are vague on many details; principally judgments regarding what sorts of abilities, gifts, curses and circumstances should modify saving throws, attacks and other rolls. Embrace this element of the game; it means you, the players and referee, get to decide what solution best fits the event you are trying to resolve.

APPENDIX I: ABILITIES, GIFTS AND CURSES

MUNDANE ABILITIES

- Agile:** Increase Armor Class by 1. +1 bonus to missile attacks (including thrown weapons), parry attempts, initiative, and ability or saving rolls involving manual dexterity, speed or athleticism.
- Alchemist:** The character knows how to create various potions, elixirs and chemicals. See the chapter on Enchantments and Magic Items and the companion volume for details. The character must have access to a magical laboratory to use this ability.
- Climbing:** Ability to climb cliffs, walls and other sheer surfaces (anyone can climb a tree...).
- Crafty:** The character has an exceptionally sharp mind. +1 bonus to attempts to cast or learn spells, and ability or saving rolls involving memory, deduction or other cleverness.
- Devout:** The character is a deep believer and strict adherent to his religion. +1 bonus to saving throws vs. magic and moral checks vs. undead and demons. +1 bonus to learn or cast priestly (but not arcane) spells. The character is able to attempt miracles. +2 to reaction rolls from fellow believers.
- Evaluate:** Ability to judge the value and specific properties of exotic treasures, including magic items.
- Familiar:** The character has a magical companion in the form of a small animal, imp or homoculus. See the section on Magical Creatures for further details.
- Guns:** Ability to fight effectively with black-powder guns. These weapons have several unusual properties; see table V for details.
- Hearty:** Increase Hits by 1. +1 bonus to saving throws vs. poison, exhaustion, various injury effects (see Table XI) or any other physical challenges involving injury or fatigue.
- Heavy weapons:** Ability to fight without penalty with any heavy weapon other than a gun or mounted lance.
- Jousting:** Ability to fight with the mounted lance and participate in Jousting combat.
- Language:** Knowledge of a foreign or ancient language. Does not imply literacy. This ability may be selected any number of times for different languages.
- Leader:** The character can serve as a leader for a side in skirmish combat and can rally nearby friendly combatants. He may normally expect to have simple orders followed by his followers. +1 bonus to initiative in any type of combat, and to the morale ratings of anyone following their lead. A saving throw may be called for if the leader attempts to give dangerous or otherwise questionable orders. Small engagements involving the troops the character leads can be easily resolved with the Skirmish combat system, or possibly incorporated into larger battles resolved using some alternative, related rule set for mass combat, like TSR's Chainmail.
- Leather armor:** Ability to fight and move effectively while wearing leather armor.
- Literacy:** The character can read and write any language he knows.
- Locks:** The ability to pick locks. Task numbers for lock picking attempts reflect the complexity and accessibility of the lock mechanism (6 is a common default), and are modified by Agility or similar abilities, gifts and curses.
- Mail:** The character can fight and move effectively while wearing mail armors.
- Medium weapons:** Ability to fight without penalty with all medium weapons.
- Mounted archer:** Ability to use any normal bow (not cross bows) normally from a mount's back, and the ability to perform the split-fire-move action in skirmish or dueling combat.
- Perception:** The character is observant and can use this ability to hear low noises or notice subtle things. Bonuses are gained for Acute Hearing, Eagle Eye or similar gifts (but not for the Search ability, which serves a different purpose). +1 to Surprise rolls. This ability can be used to 'counter' attempts to sneak, pick pockets or disguise.

- Pick Pockets:** The ability to remove purses and other small items from a victim's possession without notice. May be counted by the Perception ability.
- Powerful:** The character is heavily muscled. Increase Damage bonus by 1 for melee and thrown attacks. +1 bonus to melee attacks and any ability or saving roll involving brute strength.
- Priest:** The character is a recognized authority of a religion, and is able to perform its rites and rituals. This ability is a pre-requisite for casting priestly spells. +2 bonus to reaction rolls from members of the same religion.
- Scholar:** The character is learned in history, philosophy and the natural sciences. He or she may attempt a saving throw to know almost any obscure fact about exotic cultures and natural phenomena, or to read at least snippets of any language. +1 bonus to spell learning rolls.
- Search:** This ability is used to spot hidden traps, secret doors and hidden compartments. This ability fulfills a different purpose from Perception and the two do not provide bonuses for one another.
- Shields:** The character can fight effectively with a shield.
- Sneak:** The character is skilled at moving quietly or hiding in shadows or other cover. With a successful ability test, the character goes un-noticed by those nearby.
- Survival:** The character is skilled at hunting, foraging, finding water and shelter, orienteering in natural environments, recognizing natural animals and their properties, and other skills of woodcraft.
- Tracking:** The character can follow the spore marking the passage of most creatures.
- Traps:** The character can disarm, avoid (or create!) mechanical traps of all kinds. This ability does not aid in spotting traps, which calls for the 'search' ability.

HEROIC ABILITIES

- Archer:** +1 bonus to attack and damage with any bow or crossbow
- Battle-hardened:** Hits equal character level +2; +2 bonus to saving throws vs. poison, exhaustion, various injury consequences (see Table XI) or any other physical task involving injury or fatigue. This ability replaces, and does not 'stack' with the Hearty ability. Only a character that already has the Hearty ability may select this ability.
- Beast master:** The character receives a +3 reaction roll modifier for any natural animal. If a favorable reaction is obtained, the character may befriend the creature. On a successful ability test, the creature will join the character as a side-kick; additional ability tests can be made to train the animal in various skills and tricks.
- Brilliant:** The character is a rare intellect. +2 bonus to attempts to cast or learn spells, and ability or saving rolls involving memory, deduction or other cleverness. This ability replaces, and does not 'stack' with the Crafty ability. Only a character that already has the Crafty ability may select this ability.
- Captain:** The character is an accomplished military leader who has risen to a position of authority in an army or mercenary troop. He commands the loyalty of at least several hundred common soldiers, as well as several more seasoned lieutenants. The character may make ability rolls to divine the plans of opposing squadrons in battle, or to command a body of troops to do something challenging or dangerous. Only a character who already knows the Leader ability may select this ability. It is assumed that the soldiers under the character's command are paid or otherwise compensated by someone else. Players wishing to play scenarios centered on battles involving their company may wish to use a related game, such as TSR's Chainmail, to resolve mass combat.
- Demonic servant:** The character has forged a pact with a demon and may call on it for aid and dark teaching. +1 to spell learning attempts (priestly or arcane) and on Deus ex Machina rolls (representing the supernatural aid of your demonic ally). Characters with the Priest or Devout abilities may only take this ability if they are members of a devil-worshipping religion. A character

with this ability receives a -3 reaction roll modifier from anyone opposed to the aims and views of demons.

Diplomacy: The character is skilled at negotiation, navigating exotic cultures and customs, and associated intrigue and snake-oil salesmanship. He may use an ability roll to cajole or argue a non-player character into agreeing with his position or forging an alliance (modified by any gifts or abilities related to intelligence and attractiveness). He generally receives a +2 reaction roll adjustment when speaking to peaceful or neutrally disposed strangers.

Disguise: The character is able to take on the appearance and mannerisms of another humanoid of broadly similar size and shape. He may make an ability roll to fool a casual observer; 2 or more passes are required to convince someone who would be closely familiar with the persona that has been adopted. This can be counted by the Perception ability.

Followers: The character has 1d6 loyal, skilled followers (beginning equivalent to 2nd level player characters, complete with class, abilities, gifts and curses). They need not be paid (though it would be a problem if they starved...) and will follow the player character's directions unless they happen to fail a morale roll or save vs. insanity and are temporarily disabled by fear or lunacy.

Gang: The character is leader of a group of 2d6x5 briggands, cut-throats or pirates. They are generally loyal to the character and will follow his orders and protect his interests, though they are members of a shiftlessness profession and might betray the character if there seemed to be some profit in it. Most are equivalent to 1st level rogues. They need not be paid like a hireling, but you must keep them reasonably busy and with a few silvers in their pockets or there will be trouble.

Hide-out: The character has constructed or taken over a hideout for a criminal gang in some likely looking cave, tree fort or abandoned tower. It is equipped with hidden and locked entrances and at least 3 traps (others can be added at the owner's discretion).

Honor: The character is widely known to follow the ideal of behavior held up by his society, such as a code of chivalry. If the character overcomes a challenge to his honor or achieves some goal that advances honor in his culture (e.g., victory in a tournament, rescuing of a maiden from danger, or defense of one's lord in battle), then he gains 100 bonus experience points. If the character suffers some insult to his honor, or acts in a way inconsistent with his honor code (e.g., publicly refusing a challenge to a duel), then he loses 100 experience points.

Jumping: Ability to make horrifyingly long jumps without being crushed to a pulp. For every 'pass' the character achieves on an ability roll, he may ignore 3 meters of a fall (i.e., that distance does not contribute to damage taken from the fall). Or, he may leap across a horizontal distance equal to 3 meters + 1 meter per pass.

Laboratory: The character has created and stocked an arcane laboratory suitable for the creation of enchanted objects and researching new spells. +1 bonus to spell casting attempts for all arcane (non priestly) spells of enchantment, including the animation of necromantic servants, creation of magic items, etc. This laboratory may be used to help create new spells.

Library: The character has constructed and stocked a library suitable for both scholarly and arcane research. +1 bonus to spell learning attempts for arcane (non priestly) spells, in addition to that provided by the Scholar ability. This library may be used to help create new spells. Only a character that already has the Scholar ability may take this ability.

Lore: The character has a deep knowledge of supernatural beings, objects and places. He may attempt an ability roll to recognize and know the properties of any magical creature or item, any demon, fairy, etc. Only a character that already knows the Scholar ability may take this ability.

Murder: The character is skilled at delivering a single mortal blow against an unsuspecting foe. If the character makes a melee attack from concealment and succeeds at striking his victim with an edged weapon or garrote of some sort, then have both the character and his victim attempt a standard saving throw. If the attacker gets a higher number of passes than his target, the blow just struck is

automatically mortal and incapacitating. Otherwise, resolve as for any other blow in dueling combat.

Nimble: The character is remarkably graceful and athletic. Increase armor class by 2. +2 bonus to missile attacks (including thrown weapons), parry attempts, initiative, and ability or saving rolls involving manual dexterity, speed or athleticism. This ability replaces, and does not 'stack' with the Agile ability. Only a character that already has the Agile ability may select this ability.

Other class: The character may select any mundane ability from the class list for a class other than his own. In no case may he select a heroic or super-heroic ability from another class's list.

Pious: The character constantly turns his mind toward his god, thinking always of His will. +2 bonus to saving throws vs. magic and moral checks vs. undead and demons. +2 bonus to learn or cast priestly (but not arcane) spells. +1 bonus to perform miracles. +3 reaction roll bonus from a fellow believer.

Poisons: The character is a skilled and practiced poisoner. He or she can safely distil and administer various kinds of poisons, and is aware of sources for most of the common kinds. He or she may call on this ability to identify poisons, and has a chance of indentifying antidotes.

Steed: The character has acquired an exotic animal as his loyal and battle-worthy steed. Choose from between an exotic animal (e.g., a sabre tooth tiger), or a magical creature (e.g., a griffon), or an exceptional horse (+2 hits, +1 to attack and damage, and capable of following simple commands).

Steel throws: The character has an overpowering physique. Increase damage bonus by 2 for melee and thrown attacks. +2 bonus to melee attacks and any ability or saving roll involving brute strength. This ability replaces, and does not 'stack' with the Powerful ability. Only a character that already has the Powerful ability may select this ability.

Sword Master: +1 bonus to any attack, parry and damage with any sword.

SUPER-HEROIC ABILITIES

Catlike: The character is preternaturally dexterous. Increase armor class by 3. +3 bonus to missile attacks (including thrown weapons), parry attempts, initiative, and ability or saving rolls involving manual dexterity, speed or athleticism. This ability replaces, and does not 'stack' with the Nimble ability. Only a character that already has the Nimble ability may select this ability.

Compelling voice: The character's voice and force of personality are so powerful that he can command the obedience of most mortals simply by opening his mouth. When using this power, he makes a standard ability test, modified by gifts and abilities related to intelligence and attractiveness. If the number of passes exceeds his audience's level, they believe in and follow whatever he says, short of a completely demented or suicidal act. A character can try to resist by countering with a saving throw modified by any gift or ability related to his force of will. This ability influences anyone within hearing of the character.

Fortress: The character has constructed or acquired a large castle or equivalent major fortress, complete with a staff and troops sufficient to man its fortifications. He is lord of this keep and its garrison, and can specify its fortifications, interior buildings, etc. (within reason and the constraints of geography). Players wishing to play scenarios centered on sieges or other major battles centered on this fortress may wish to use a related game, such as TSR's Chainmail, to resolve mass combat.

Genius: The minds of most men are like insects before the penetrating thoughts of the character's world-striding brain. +3 bonus to attempts to cast or learn spells, and ability or saving rolls involving memory, deduction or other cleverness. This ability replaces, and does not 'stack' with the Brilliant ability. Only a character that already has the Brilliant ability may select this ability.

Herculean: The character has an overpowering physique. Increase damage bonus by 3 for melee and thrown attacks. +3 bonus to melee attacks and any ability or saving roll involving brute

strength. This ability replaces, and does not 'stack' with the Steel thews ability. Only a character that already has the Steel thews ability may select this ability.

Indomitable: Hits equal character level +3; +3 bonus to saving throws vs. poison, exhaustion, various injury consequences (see Table XI) or any other physical task involving injury or fatigue. This ability replaces, and does not 'stack' with the Battle-hardened ability. Only a character that already has the Battle-hardened ability may select this ability.

Saintly: The character is graced by a close connection to his god; he is the closest mortal thing to an angel. +3 bonus to saving throws vs. magic and moral checks vs. undead and demons. +3 bonus to learn or cast priestly (but not arcane) spells. +2 bonus to perform miracles. +5 reaction roll bonus from a fellow believer.

Sorcerous tower: The character has created and enchanted a sorcerous tower. See the description of such towers in the chapter on Enchantments and Magical items and places.

Soul-Jar: The magician has succeeded at transferring his everlasting soul into an inanimate object. As long as that object remains safe, he cannot be killed by any means. No matter what you do to him, his body will slowly recover, at a normal pace (perhaps taking months or even years to overcome ghastly injuries), to full health. Of course, if the object is ever destroyed, he dies instantly and irrevocably.

Unseen: The character is so adept at stealth that he can wander virtually in plain sight without drawing attention. Reduce the task numbers for stealth attempts by 3 (i.e., so a super-human effort becomes a standard roll).

Wall-walking: The character is capable of climbing such sheer and overhanging surfaces that it he actually appears to be skittering across walls and ceilings. He is, for all practical purposes, a bug. Reduce the task numbers for climbs by 3 (i.e., so a super-human effort becomes a standard roll).

Warlord: The character is a gifted and ruthless general, and controls a major army (i.e., several thousand troops in a quasi-historical medieval setting; possibly greater or smaller numbers in other settings). While he needn't pay them every week personally, there should be some plan in place for supporting the operation (we recommend looting). The character has several hero-level underlings and countless troops. +1 to morale for all his troops; +2 in his personal presence. If players wish to act out large battles with their armies (and what warlord wouldn't!), we recommend using a set of miniatures rules, such as TSR's Chainmail.

GIFTS AND CURSES

Acute Hearing: +1 modifier for any saving throws involving listening or noticing sounds.

Amore: The character cultivates a chaste, chivalric love for some suitable subject (a princess, etc.). Whenever the character is acting in the defense or interests of his amore, or is in a situation where he can show off for her, he may attempt a standard saving throw to become 'inspired', gaining a +1 bonus for all actions, attacks, saving throws, etc. for the remainder of that encounter.

Artifact: The character has inherited, found or otherwise come into possession of a magical artifact (see the companion volume for examples). Possibly something, a ring for example, with great significance for the events of the campaign world...

Bastard: The character is an illegitimate child. Start play with half the normal amount of cash, and suffer a -2 reaction roll modifier in any situation where social status is an issue.

Beautiful voice: The character has an exceptionally beautiful voice. +2 reaction roll modifier for any interactions where he has an opportunity to speak calmly; +4 if it is appropriate to sing.

Blackguard: The character is a rascal with low morals and an aggressive streak. A blackguard of any level may attempt a Deus ex Mechina roll (see the section on Heroes for details) when in a tight spot. But, he suffers a -2 reaction roll modifier from any upstanding person who recognizes him for what he is. And, he should expect to be pursued by the Dudley-do-right's of the world.

Brave: +1 morale modifier.

Cad: The character has low moral fiber and ungentelemanly conduct. Any time he is presented with an opportunity to misbehave (a free night in a new city, for example), or in a social situation where proper behavior is expected, he must make a standard saving throw (modified by gifts or abilities relevant to self control) or pursue a debauched plan or embarrass himself. -2 to reaction rolls from upright citizens who are aware of the character's leanings.

Commanding voice: The character has a firm, stentorian voice. He receives a +1 bonus to any ability rolls related to Leadership (or similar abilities), and a +2 reaction modifier when he is ordering, declaiming or otherwise being pushy.

Comely: The character is physically beautiful. +1 bonus to reaction rolls, and a +1 bonus to saving or ability rolls in that might be helped by impressing or winning over another member of the same or similar race.

Coward: You are yellow. -1 to morale

Craven: You are positively lily-livered. Always fail morale rolls.

Cur: You are a mean, ill-tempered cuss, and no one likes you. You must periodically make a standard saving throw (modified for gifts or abilities related to self-control) not to impose on those around you with your nasty disposition. -2 reaction roll modifier from most people.

Deaf: The character cannot hear. He is unable to make saving rolls to notice sounds, and no roll is required to sneak up on him from a direction he cannot see.

Debt of Honor: The character owes a substantial favor or burdensome payment to another person.

Demigod: You are the child of a deity (of the pantheon variety; you aren't Jesus). The character may select one superhero ability from any class (in addition to any other abilities). He or she is also just a generally impressive looking and sounding person; +2 to all reaction rolls. The character may attempt Deus ex Machina saving throws at any level (see the section on Heroes for details). And, he or she get a +2 modifier to all Deus ex Machina saving throws. But, you gain as an enemy one god who is opposed to the interests of your parent deity.

Demonic: At least one of the character's immediate ancestors was a demon. The character has innate spell casting abilities comparable to a magician, including 1d6 intrinsic spell-like powers – all spells suitable for evil purposes. He does not know counter spells and cannot learn or create new spells unless he is also a magician. His spell casting rolls advance as for a normal magician, though generally warriors and rogues with this gift will lack relevant bonuses and so will always have low chances of success with spells having high complexity levels. A magician with this gift starts play with 2d6 spells instead of the normal 1d6. The character has something vaguely sinister about his or her appearance; -2 to reaction rolls from most people. But, +2 to reaction rolls from orcs and other evil beings. Finally, the character may attempt Deus ex Machina saving throws at any level (see the section on Heroes for details). But, he will appear evil to any priest or devout believer in a non-demonic religion, and holy powers (protection from evil, etc.) can be used against him.

Drunkard: The character has a compulsion to consume alcohol until drunk, at least once a week and usually more often. If presented with an opportunity to consume alcohol he must make a standard saving throw or succumb to his urges.

Dullard: Your...character...is...boring... -2 reaction roll modifier to anyone who you burden with your tiresome company.

Eagle eye: The character has freakishly sharp vision. +1 modifier for any saving throw or ability test involving seeing or searching for things or tracking, and a +1 bonus to hit with thrown and missile weapons at ranges beyond the first range increment.

Enemy: The character has an implacable foe that is more powerful than the character in some respect (physically, socially, or magically). He appears at the game master's discretion.

- Fairy blood:** The character has an ancestor who was a fairy. He has innate spell casting abilities comparable to a magician, including 1d6 intrinsic spell-like powers. He does not know counter spells and cannot learn or create new spells unless he is also a magician. His spell casting rolls advance as for a normal magician, though generally warriors and rogues with this gift will lack relevant bonuses and so will always have low chances of success with spells having high complexity levels. A magician with this gift starts play with 2d6 spells instead of the normal 1d6. The character looks a little funny; +2 to reaction rolls from fairies, elves and their kind. -2 to reaction rolls from everyone else.
- Favor:** The character is owed one significant favor from a powerful social superior (a baron, bishop, etc.).
- Fear:** The character has an overwhelming fear of some person, type of creature, environmental phenomenon or place. He must check morale whenever he is faced with the object of his fear.
- Ferocious:** The character fights rabidly and viciously in close combat. +1 to hit in melee combat.
- Filthy Rich:** The character owns an obscene amount of property or treasure. He begins play with 100x the normal amount or value of possessions, and each month automatically receives 2d x 25 crowns.
- Fleet of foot:** Increase base movement rate by 4 meters per turn.
- Fool:** The character may or may not have a low Intelligence, but his mind is marked by an intrinsic silliness, fancifulness and lack of discipline. He always believes in illusions, and may not learn the Scholar or Lore abilities. -2 reaction roll modifier from anyone who would judge the character's intelligence or maturity.
- Gentry:** A member of the landed gentry who has been granted control of land and rule over the commoners who live on it in exchange for military service and fealty to the granting noble lord. If the character is a warrior, he begins play with two horses (a Destrier and a Palfrey), mail armor, 2 hand weapons and a shield, a fortified manor with servants, dogs, etc., and an income of 100 c per year. If he is a rogue, assume he fled his inheritance; he gets 10 c worth of whatever he could carry and a few memories. If a magician, assume he forsook his heritage to join the church or apprentice himself to a wizard.
- Giant blood:** The character has an ancestor who was an ogre or giant (don't ask). He is truly huge. He gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage in melee combat, +1 to his base hits and +1 to any saving throws vs. damage or involving physical resilience or power. But, he suffers a -1 modifier to any attempt at stealth, and a -2 reaction roll modifier from most people.
- Glutton:** The character is weak willed in the face of food and other creature comforts, and will turn aside from other goals when the opportunity to consume presents itself. He will also tend to grow fat, slovenly and unhealthy as he ages. If the character has an opportunity to eat or pursue food, he must make a saving throw to avoid eating to excess, even if it means neglecting other duties. A glutton cannot have the Agile ability after the age of 30.
- Goblin blood:** At least one of the character's ancestors has a nasty secret – one look at his pointy ears, black eyes and sallow expression shows he has orc or goblin blood in his veins. He can see in the dark like a gimlet (no penalty in near total darkness; only -1 in pitch blackness), and his sharp teeth provide a +1 damage bonus for unarmed (brawling) attacks in dueling combat. -2 reaction roll modifier with most people because of the character's appearance.
- Greed:** The character is consumed by greed and will place himself and others at great risk to acquire some treasure that has caught his eye. Whenever the character encounters a valuable treasure, he must make a standard saving throw to resist do everything in his power to gain that treasure, including stealing from or even killing his own companions.

- Heirloom:** The character inherits an object of great value from one of his ancestors, such as a valuable treasure, signet ring or other recognized, important object, or a magical weapon or magical item. It is worth at least 500 c on the open market.
- Hideous:** The character is monstrously ugly. Suffer from a -2 penalty to reaction rolls and any saving throws or ability attempts whenever physical appearance is relevant.
- Iron Will:** The character has an unusually forceful will. He gains a +1 bonus for morale and +1 for any saving throw or contest involving self control or a struggle of wills, including saves vs. the effects of spells and to saving throws vs. Insanity.
- Kin slayer:** The character is not technically an outlaw, but is known (rightly or wrongly...) to be responsible for the death of a close relative – a strong taboo. -4 reaction roll modifier unless the character can clear his name (rightly or wrongly...).
- Leprosy:** The character suffers from the degenerative disease of Leprosy (see the spot rules on disease).
- Liar:** The character lies compulsively about both trivial and important matters. He must succeed at a standard saving throw to tell the truth under stress. -2 reaction roll modifier from anyone who can tell you are lying.
- Likeable:** There is something about you people just like. Maybe it is that twinkle in your smile. +2 to reaction rolls in most circumstances.
- Love:** The character has a strong emotional attachment to someone. Whenever the character is acting in the defense or interests of his love, he may attempt a standard saving throw to become 'inspired', gaining a +1 bonus for all actions, attacks, saving throws, etc. for the remainder of that encounter.
- Loyalty:** The character feels a strong sense of loyalty to an organization (e.g., an order of chivalry) or to a boss, servant, colleague, or other fellow traveler. Whenever the character is acting in the defense or interests of this group or person, he may attempt a standard saving throw to become 'inspired', gaining a +1 bonus for all actions, attacks, saving throws, etc. for the remainder of that encounter.
- Lucky:** The character can attempt Deus ex Machina rolls at any level, and may re-try any failed saving throw, ability roll, attack or other roll once per day per level.
- Maniac:** The character is floridly insane, exhibiting an every-changing constellation of bizarre behaviors including but not limited to paranoid delusions, irrational fears, and hallucinations. Whenever stressed, he must make a standard saving roll to avoid doing something peculiar. He automatically fails all saving throws vs. insanity. -4 reaction roll modifier from anyone who observes the character at his worst.
- Melancholy:** The character is depressed and lacking in motivation, either due to an imbalance in his humors, a frustrated passion, or an arcane curse. He suffers a -1 penalty whenever attempting a saving throw that calls for gumption and stick-to-it-iveness.
- Midget:** The character is a wee little thing, well under 1.5 meters tall. He suffers -1 modifiers to attack and damage in melee combat, a -4 meters/turn base movement rate, and may only use light weapons. But, he gains a +1 modifier to any attempts at stealth.
- Mute:** The character cannot speak. Contrary to popular assumptions, a mute magician can still work magic. Somehow they just do it. Actually it is sort of creepy. -2 to reaction rolls in any situation where the character would normally be expected to speak. A mute character cannot have the Leader ability, or any other ability that normally calls for verbal communication.
- Noble:** A member of the hereditary nobility who command the gentry and commoners and control most land in the feudal kingdoms. The character is not (yet) titled, but is a lesser close relative of a baron, duke or other great noble. +3 reaction roll from members of the same or similar societies. His word is law with commoners and gentry, and he has access to property, horses, armor,

weapons, servants, etc. through his family. Any reasonable amount of common items are provided. His allowance amounts to 10 c per month.

Outlaw: The character is a wanted and widely recognized outlaw. He will be hunted by the authorities or local posse if recognized. -4 to reaction rolls for anyone who recognizes the character.

Patron: The character has a dependable patron who is a powerful social superior, such as a baron or bishop. This person can be counted on to provide the character work, gifts, aid and counsel. The player can attempt a reaction roll with a +4 bonus to sway his patron.

Peg-leg: The character lost one of his legs below the knee, due to some past injury. His movement rate is half normal, and he suffers a -1 to -2 penalty for saving throws involving jumping, climbing, etc. (depending on circumstances). He cannot Charge in combat.

Poor: Money slips through the character's hands. Perhaps he inherited debts, gambles compulsively, or has taken a vow of poverty. The character begins play with 1/3 the normal amount or value of possessions, and should be forced into situations that strip him of 2/3 of the wealth he gains through adventure or work.

Rage! The character flies into uncontrollable rages when threatened or struck. If the character faces an aggressive combatant, fails a morale roll in combat, or is struck by a physical attack, he may attempt a standard saving throw to become 'inspired', gaining a +1 bonus for all actions, attacks, saving throws, etc. for the remainder of that encounter. He also gains a +1 to damage in melee combat when enraged.

Relic: The character acquired (by inheritance or some other means) a holy relic, such as a saint's finger bone or a splinter of the true cross. See the description of relics in the chapter on enchantments and magic items.

Rich: The character begins play with 10x the normal amount or value of possessions, and each month automatically receives 2d x 25 schillings.

Royal: The character is a close relative to a king or prince. He has access to several major estates and fortified castles, countless horses, armor and weapons, servants and pocket cash equivalent to 100 c per month. His word is law to anyone but a family superior, and he has significant political power. What he is doing adventuring in stinky holes in the ground is anyone's guess.

Rugged: The character is big-boned and sand-papery; apply a -1 modifier for any damage roll on the Consequences table when he is struck.

Schwachling: The character is wan, etiolated and slack-limbed. -1 to attacks and damage with any melee or thrown weapon and -1 for any saving throws vs. damage or involving challenges of physical strength.

Sickly: The character was born with imbalanced bodily humors and seems always to be falling ill. -1 penalty to saving throws involving illness, poison or exhaustion.

Side-kick: The character has a close personal friend or assistant who follows him around like a loyal dog and provides aid and companionship; e.g. a squire, apprentice, etc. The player generates another 1st level character and completely controls that person's behavior (except in the event of a failed morale test).

Slave: The character is the property of someone else; if he escapes, he gains the 'outlaw' curse as well. -2 to reaction rolls from members of your home society.

Stupid: You are a moron. -1 penalty to any saving throw or ability roll calling for insight, cleverness, or intellect. The character is not smart enough to be a magician (and would make a poor thief). -2 reaction roll modifier for any thinking person who has a conversation with you.

Successor: The character is the first-born of a noble and stands to inherit his parent's wealth, property and title. The character receives all the benefits of the 'noble' gift, and the character will

gain the benefits of the 'titled' gift once his parent dies. +3 reaction roll bonus from members of the same or similar culture.

Syphilis: The character suffers from the creeping doom of the French pox. See the spot rules on disease for details.

Thane: The character has a contractual loyalty to a liege lord, who grants the character land, long-lasting favor or employment (for instance, as a house-hold knight or housecarl) in exchange for loyal service. Whenever the character is acting in the direct service of his lord (e.g., protecting him in battle), he may attempt a standard saving throw to become 'inspired', gaining a +1 bonus for all actions, attacks, saving throws, etc. for the remainder of that encounter.

Titled: The character is a titled noble (baron, marquis, duke, etc.). He owns the things spelled out in the description of the 'Noble' gift, his word is law within his estates, and he has substantial political power.

Valorous: The character never fails a morale roll, under any circumstances.

Vendetta: The character has an overwhelming hatred of some person or type of creature (player's choice). Whenever he has the opportunity to act on that hatred by attacking or otherwise impeding its object, he may attempt a standard saving throw to become 'inspired', gaining a +1 bonus for all attacks and other actions and saving throws for the remainder of that encounter.

Weak will: The character is naturally craven and susceptible to suggestion and influence. He suffers a -1 penalty to saving throws involving a struggle of wills, including resistance to many spells, and insanity, and a -1 to morale.

SOURCES

This is the one page where we break the 4th wall and discuss some of the sources that have been lovingly reproduced (read: 'looted') in the production of 27th edition Platemail.

Relatively little was lifted directly from TSR's 3rd edition Chainmail, but that game obviously serves as the inspiration and jumping off point for everything found here. Platemail's spell list contains much not found in Chainmail, but all of Chainmail's spells appear in close to their original form here.

One of the maps in the introductory adventure, 'The Moaning Tower' was taken from the outstanding collection of old school dungeon maps presented on 'Dyson's map archive, available at: <http://rpgcharacters.wordpress.com/maps/>

The artwork used throughout these volumes is intentionally and gratuitously copied from a variety of Advanced and Basic Dungeons and Dragons rules books and adventure modules originally produced by TSR; most important is the genre-defining work of David Trampier. Our motivation (other than obvious laziness) was to create a game that looks and feels as much as possible like the games I pawed on store shelves when I was 12 years old. All of the original artwork found here was produced by Tom Eiler — if only we could all see our gaming worlds through his uniquely creative eye.

There are numerous influences in the spells, magic items and monsters that make up much of the meat of Platemail. One of the least obvious (unless you are a fan of the original!) is TSR's exceptionally engaging board game, Divine Right, which presents what might be the greatest fantasy role playing setting you've never heard of. A great many of the spells and items presented in the magic volume are lifted more or less directly from the rules and fan-produced materials for that game. Additional major influences include Call of Cthulhu (Chaosium), Dragonquest (SPI), Chivalry and Sorcery (FGU), the works of JRR Tolkien and Robert E. Howard, and, of course, the rich vein of 1st edition Advanced Dungeons and Dragons rules books. Our purpose was for Platemail to serve as a sort of distillery and conduit that would bring together my favorite pieces of all these games and serve them up in a coherent form.

The extensive borrowing found in Platemail means this must be taken as a collection of material intended for free distribution to a small circle of like-minded fans of these games; no part of this game is intended for paid distribution or reproduction. Please enjoy this with your own gaming group but do not re-distribute.

Revised and expanded!

This 40th anniversary edition has been thoroughly revised and expanded to a titanic and unprecedented 60 pages. Players may now choose from 3 classes of character and wield any of more than 30 weapons. Magicians may cast dozens of spells, to be found in the companion volume on Magic, and many of the denizens of fantasy fiction and film can be found in the Companion Bestiary.