

DUNGEON FANTASY™

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EXPLOITS

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LIGHT AND VISION

Light level affects Vision and attack rolls:

Daylight, or within radius of light source: 0

Near sunset: -1

Twilight: -2 or -3

Within 3x radius of light source (as in lit dungeon): -3

Moonlight: -4 to -6

Moonless night: -7

Glowing slime: -8

Overcast outdoors: *extra* -1 or -2

Total darkness (as in unlit dungeon): vision impossible; combat at -10

Light Sources

Candle, Continual Light spell (moonlight), Light spell: 1-yard radius

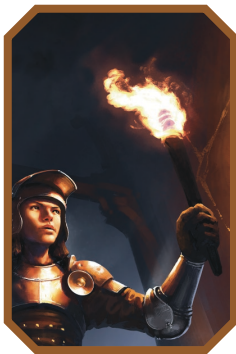
Continual Light spell (torchlight), Flame Jet spell, Flaming Weapon, Glow Vial, Lantern, Torch: 2-yard radius

Continual Light spell (daylight): 4-yard radius

Helmet Lamp, Shield Lamp: 5-yard beam

Bull's-Eye Lantern, Light Jet spell: 10-yard beam

Glow spell, Sunlight spell: use area of effect



FALLING DAMAGE

Distance **Damage**

1 yard 1d

2 yards 1d+1

3 yards 1d+2

4 yards 2d-1

5 yards 2d

10 yards 3d

15 yards 3d+2

20 yards 4d

25 yards 4d+2

30 yards 5d

35 yards 5d+2

40 yards 6d-1

45 yards 6d

50 yards 6d+2

60 yards 7d

70 yards 7d+2

80 yards 8d+1

100+ yards 9d+1

THROWING

Roll against **DX**, **Throwing**, or **Throwing Art** to hit. Basic DX has an *extra* -3 to hit a specific target rather than a general area. Distance and damage are as follows:

<i>Weight</i>	<i>Distance</i>	<i>Damage</i>
Up to BL/8	2.5xST yards	thrust-2
Up to BL/4	1.5xST yards	thrust-1
Up to BL/2	ST yards	thrust
Up to BL	ST/2 yards	thrust+1
Up to 2xBL	ST/3 yards	thrust
Up to 4xBL	ST/5 yards	thrust
Up to 8xBL	ST/10 yards	thrust-1

Distance: +1 to ST for Throwing Art at DX or Throwing at DX+1, or +2 to ST for Throwing Art at DX+1 or Throwing at DX+2.

Damage: +1 *per die* with Throwing Art at DX, or +2 at DX+1.

WOUNDING MODIFIERS

Living, Unliving, and Homogeneous Monsters: This table summarizes the effects of damage type, hit location, and creature type on penetrating damage. For monster with **No Brain** or **No Vitals**, use the "All other" line for the skull or vitals, respectively.

Diffuse Monsters: Ignore the table! Impaling and all piercing attacks inflict at most 1 HP of injury. Other attacks do at most 2 HP of injury. Area effects, cones, and explosions cause normal injury.

Hit **Living** **Unliv.** **Homog.**
Location

Burning (burn)

Skull	x4	x4	x1
All other	x1	x1	x1

Corrosion (cor)

Face/Neck	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5
Skull	x4	x4	x1.5
All other	x1	x1	x1

Crushing (cr)

Neck	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5
Skull	x4	x4	x1
All other	x1	x1	x1

Cutting (cut)

Neck	x2	x2	x2
Skull	x4	x4	x1.5
All other	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5

Hit **Living** **Unliv.** **Homog.**
Location

Fatigue (fat)

All	x1	x1	x1
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Impaling (imp)

Limb/ Extremity	x1	x1	x1/2
Skull/Eye	x4	x4	x1/2
Vitals	x3	x3	x1/2
All other	x2	x1	x1/2

Piercing, Small (pi-)

Skull/Eye	x4	x4	x1/10
Vitals	x3	x3	x1/10
All other	x1/2	x1/5	x1/10

Piercing (pi)

Skull/Eye	x4	x4	x1/5
Vitals	x3	x3	x1/5
All other	x1	x1/3	x1/5

Piercing, Large (pi+)

Limb/ Extremity	x1	x1/2	x1/3
Skull/Eye	x4	x4	x1/3
Vitals	x3	x3	x1/3
All other	x1.5	x1/2	x1/3

Piercing, Huge (pi++)

Limb/ Extremity	x1	x1	x1/2
Skull/Eye	x4	x4	x1/2
Vitals	x3	x3	x1/2
All other	x2	x1	x1/2

Toxic (tox)

All	x1	x1	x1
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DUNGEON FANTASY™

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EXPLOITS



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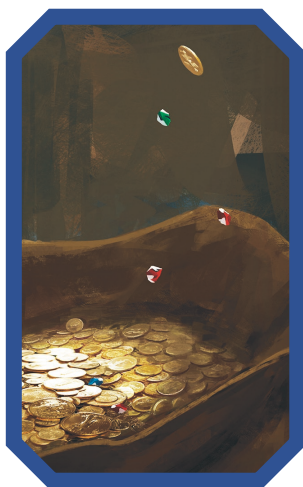
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INTRODUCTION

This book covers everything you need to know about using and abusing adventurers' abilities before, during, and after dungeon raids. It ranges from the basics – rolling dice and understanding the results – to blow-by-blow rules for everybody's favorite activity, *combat*. It also covers all manner of other exploits: kicking in doors, dealing with traps and poisons, visiting town to sell loot and buy gear . . . If you can imagine brave (or just greedy!) heroes doing something in a world of monsters and magic, chances are it's here.

The GM is advised to peruse *Exploits* while the players are poring over *Adventurers* and *Spells* to select abilities and gear. This is *the* guidebook to setting up and handling common situations in *Dungeon Fantasy*. After reading it, *Monsters* and the *Dungeon* will make *far* more sense!

Players are counseled to glance through *Exploits* to discover what their alter-egos can do – or at least to keep the GM honest! It answers a burning question: "How do I get rich without getting dead?" It's *packed* with advice on surviving a dungeon (and pocketing a few extra coins). In fact, it's so packed that new gamers might want to wait until later to read it all. Experienced players will use it alongside *Adventurers* to help them optimize abilities and gear.

Player or GM, you're going to find yourself regularly coming back to this book. The table of contents at the front and index at the back will help you find things, and we've given many rules memorable (dare we say "clever"?) names so they'll stick in your mind. And because delvers have dozens of abilities and face *hundreds* of challenges, we've put the names of key concepts and traits (skills, advantages, etc.) in **boldface** to clarify what does what.

Game on!

MORE IS BETTER!

There's *a lot* of stuff packed into *Exploits* and even more in the rest of the *Dungeon Fantasy* box. Yet it's the nature of delvers to want *more*, always more. Fortunately, you can get that without fighting monsters or facing traps, though it will cost you some gold.

The obvious place to begin is with the lengthy *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* series for *GURPS*, the *Generic Universal RolePlaying System*. Its

volumes add more professions (like the artificer, ninja, and shaman), gear, and monsters, and tackle complicated rules concepts (e.g., summoning monsters, even shapeshifting into them), all of which is *mostly* compatible with this set. These supplements refer to one another and to the *GURPS Basic Set* (the core of *GURPS*). Ignoring the references won't break your game, but we'd be thrilled if you decided to explore further!

Next, there's *GURPS Magic*. This adds tons more spells, including some that might seem strange in *Dungeon Fantasy*. Although *Spells* was adapted from that book, many details were tweaked in the process. Still, the careful GM will find it a valuable addition to the game.

Then there's *everything else* for *GURPS*. If you want more details on fighting or custom-built powers, or feel like adding horror or sci-fi elements, there's a supplement for it. Unlike *Dungeon Fantasy*, though, these releases aren't standalone games – you'll need the *GURPS Basic Set* to make full use of them.

Finally, if what you seek is less in the vein of rules and more along the lines of extra resources for gaming out battles, you'll find the blank hex maps in *Floor Plan 2 – The Great Salt Flats* and the additional figures of the *Cardboard Heroes* series useful.



Sure, adventures have traps an' bad juju. So what? You get to hike an' whack monsters an' break stuff. You find shiny loots, too. Fun times!

– Argua the Barbarian

CHAPTER ONE

ROLLING THE DICE

Practically everything an adventurer, a monster, or the cruel world does depends on dice rolls. Randomness is part of the fun! Without it, highly competent heroes would face no real danger, “insurmountable” obstacles would

never be overcome, and every expedition would have a predictable outcome. There would be no risk, no rewards – and no adventure.

The devil (and often The Devil) is in the details.

WHO ROLLS?

The rules describe several types of dice rolls: success rolls (below), reaction rolls (pp. 11-12), and damage rolls (p. 52). But who throws the dice?

Player Rolls

Players normally roll success and damage rolls for their characters’ conscious actions: using abilities, defending against attacks, wounding foes, etc. If a curse, poison, spell, or trap permits a resistance roll, that’s theirs as well (regardless of whether the potential victim is conscious). This also goes for the player characters’ (PCs’) gear, such as when checking whether a magic item works or a sword breaks.

Players always roll in front of everyone – *especially* the GM.

GM Rolls

The GM rolls dice for the rest of the world: townsfolk, monsters, traps, random loot and encounters . . . *everything!* This includes *all* reaction rolls.

Anything obvious is best rolled in front of everyone. But when the GM rolls for something the PCs have no

way of detecting – such as a monster’s secret power or a random event – that’s done *out of the players’ sight*.

There are also cases where the GM rolls in secret for PCs:

- When the **character** wouldn’t know an action’s outcome for sure. The player declares the action and the GM rolls secretly. This is always true of rolls to gain information via skills like Search, advantages like Intuition, and divinatory spells. On a success, the GM provides useful details; on a failure, no information or a lie. Rolls to use poorly understood artifacts, pull random levers, etc. also work this way, with the GM describing only what’s obvious to the characters.

- When the **player** shouldn’t know what’s going on. This is true of all passive rolls to spot something interesting: ambushers, loot or clues no one was looking for, etc. This includes most Sense rolls (p. 9) and Danger Sense rolls. The GM rolls secretly for each adventurer who might notice, revealing details if anyone succeeds . . . otherwise, too bad! This also applies whenever PCs resist dangers they haven’t detected (e.g., invisible, odorless gas or a cursed item) – because if the GM says “Roll dice,” the players will *know* something is up!

SUCCESS ROLLS

When a character attempts to perform an action (e.g., use a skill), roll three six-sided dice to determine the outcome. This is a **success roll**. The task in question *succeeds* if the total rolled on the dice is *less than or equal to* the number that governs the action – most often a skill or an attribute. Otherwise, it *fails*.

Example: If you attempt to pick a lock and your Lockpicking skill is 9, you must roll 9 or less on 3d to succeed. On a roll of 10 or more, you fail.

Exception: Regardless of the score you’re rolling against, a roll of 3 or 4 is always a success (yes, 4 succeeds even if your target is 3!), while a roll of 17 or 18 is always a failure (even if your target is 17 or higher).

MODIFIERS

Many rules specify bonuses and penalties to success rolls, like “+10” or “-5.” These **modifiers** affect the *number you’re rolling against* – not the total you roll on the dice.

Bonuses always improve your odds, while penalties always reduce them. Modifiers are cumulative unless stated otherwise.

Example: If your Lockpicking skill is 9 and you have a penalty of -5, subtract 5 from your Lockpicking skill for that attempt and roll against 9 - 5, or 4. If you have a bonus of +10, add 10 to skill and roll against 9 + 10 = 19. And if *both* modifiers apply, your roll is against 9 - 5 + 10, or 14.

The most important categories of noncombat modifiers appear below and in *No "I" in "Teamwork" (No Profit Without It)* (below). Specific skills and tasks often specify others, and combat and magic have their own sets of modifiers.

NO "I" IN "TEAMWORK" (NO PROFIT WITHOUT IT)

Dungeon Fantasy is about the adventures of a delving *team*. Two rules apply to tasks that require them to pull together – or whenever the GM wants to involve more of the players!

Complementary Skill Rolls

For some tasks, an optional **complementary skill** could logically assist the mandatory **master skill**. This usually means rolls against two different skills, attempted by two different delvers; the complementary skill user acts as an assistant. But if the GM feels many hands would make light work, an assistant might help using the *same* skill – or *several* assistants may try complementary skills (e.g., three bards making Musical Instrument skill rolls to accompany a fourth's Singing).

If the person doing the task accepts the help, roll against the complementary skill(s) first. This gives a modifier to the master skill roll:

- +2 per critical success
- +1 per success
- 1 per failure
- 2 per critical failure

(The GM is free to allow the individual performing the task to attempt both skill rolls where that makes sense, but this has nothing to do with teamwork.)

Part of the Solution or Part of the Problem

In a situation where every party member *must* roll against a particular skill, skilled delvers can sometimes cover for unskilled friends. Use the party's highest skill level and subtract a penalty equal to the number of members who have no points in the skill. The outcome of one roll – good or bad – affects everyone!

Example: A group of six is climbing. The thief has 18 in Climbing but nobody else knows it. She can lead the climb at 18 - 5 = 13. If she fails, *everybody* is in trouble!

Task Difficulty Modifiers

Certain feats are just easier or harder! Many specific tasks and skills indicate bonuses or penalties, but the GM may assess similar **task difficulty modifiers** (TDMs) in other situations – or even *as well as* standard ones. These are separate from modifiers for time (below), equipment (p. 7), and assistance (above). Some guidelines:

- +6 or more** – Tasks where failure is unlikely for a skilled person, and even the unskilled could succeed. At +10 or better, the GM may *assume* success to speed game play.
- +4 or +5** – Typical *non-adventuring* tasks. Delvers rarely see TDMs this good!

+1 to +3 – Favorable *adventuring* tasks.

0 – Most adventuring tasks and most skill use under stress.

-1 to -3 – Somewhat unfavorable adventuring tasks.

-4 or -5 – Genuinely difficult adventuring tasks.

-6 or worse – Truly memorable adventuring tasks to brag about at the tavern. There's no limit . . . if the GM wants to test experienced delvers who boast skill levels in the 20s, challenges might "scale up" to -10, -15, or worse!

"... With Spikes"

A quick-and-fun way to assess penalties is to apply a cumulative TDM of -1 per nasty qualifier that describes a task. For instance, whatever the normal modifier is for climbing or balancing on something, making the surface *slimy*, *twisting*, and *smoke-obscured* adds another -3. Intensifiers count! If the surface is *horribly slimy*, *wildly twisting*, and *smoke-obscured*, that's -5 instead.

Time Spent

For a *noncombat* task that specifies a *fixed* completion time, you can get a bonus by working slowly and deliberately, or accept a penalty to complete it faster:

Extra Time: Taking more time than usual gives +1 for 2× as long, +2 for 4×, +3 for 8×, +4 for 15×, or +5 for 30× as long (the maximum).

Haste: Hurrying gives -1 per 10% less time taken, down to -9 for 1/10 of the prescribed time. The GM might allow an attempt at -10 to near-instantly complete a task; this always takes at least one second – a Concentrate maneuver (p. 31) in combat.

You cannot claim these modifiers for tasks that have their own rules covering time increases or decreases, or where completion time depends on margin of success (p. 7). Thus, magic *never* takes these modifiers, because it has rules tying time to skill level!

You also cannot slow down or speed up deeds tied to external schedules, be that the phase of the moon or the time it takes the Merchants' Guild to fill an order.

Equipment Modifiers

Exceptionally good or bad gear modifies skill rolls for tasks that use it:

None: Generally, if a task requires equipment and you have *nothing appropriate*, the attempt is at -10. If you have *nothing at all*, you can't roll!

Improvised (e.g., picking a lock with a knife instead of lock-picks): -5.

Basic (normal gear from the equipment list): No modifier.

Good-Quality (5× basic cost and weight): +1.

Fine-Quality (20× basic cost and weight): +2.

Rare or enchanted artifacts can give *much* larger bonuses, which might not track cost or weight in any obvious way.

Weapons, armor, and shields never use these modifiers. They have their own quality grades, explained in *Adventurers*.

BASE SKILL VS. EFFECTIVE SKILL

Your **base skill** is the skill level bought with points and recorded on your character sheet.

Your **effective skill** for a particular task is your base skill plus or minus any modifiers for the task.

Example: If you buy the Lockpicking skill at 9, your *base* skill is 9 whether you have a penalty of -5, a bonus of +10, or both – but your *effective* skill in those situations is 4, 19, or 14.

The terms “base skill” and “effective skill” apply to *all* success rolls, not just to skill rolls. For attribute rolls, defense rolls (pp. 46-47), self-control rolls (*Adventurers*, p. 55), etc., base skill is your unmodified score, while effective skill is your final, modified one.

*You may not attempt a success roll if your effective skill is less than 3, unless you are attempting a **defense roll**.*

If your effective skill is 18 (the highest roll possible on 3d) or higher, *you still have to roll*. Keep reading to learn why . . .

DEGREE OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE

After calculating effective skill by applying all relevant modifiers to base skill, roll 3d to determine the outcome:

Success: If the total on the dice is *less than or equal to* effective skill, you *succeed*, and the difference between your effective skill and your roll is your **margin of success**.

Failure: If you roll *higher* than effective skill, you *fail*, and the difference between the roll and your effective skill is your **margin of failure**.

Example: Suppose you have effective skill 14. If you roll a 12, you succeed by two; that is, your margin of success is 2. If you roll a 15, you fail by one; that is, your margin of failure is 1.

Always note margins of success or failure. They often matter in play. Even when the rules don't use them, the GM might want to reward larger margins of success with more

favorable outcomes – or tie the severity of consequences to margin of failure!

Extremely high or low rolls have special effects beyond those above, regardless of exact margin of success or failure.

Critical Success

A **critical success** is an especially *good* result. You score one as follows:

- A roll of 3 or 4 is *always* a critical success. (If your effective skill is 3 or 4, or even lower for a defense, you can *only* succeed by getting lucky this way!)

- A roll of 5 is a critical success *if your effective skill is 15+*.

- A roll of 6 is a critical success *if your effective skill is 16+*.

The GM determines what happens on a critical success, but it's always something good!

A **critical hit** is a critical success when attacking. The GM doesn't determine the result – use the *Critical Hit Table* (p. 100).

Critical Failure

A **critical failure** is an especially *bad* result. You score one as follows:

- A roll of 18 is *always* a critical failure. (Yes, even if your skill is 18, or 28, or 108!)

- A roll of 17 is a critical failure *if your effective skill is 15 or less*; otherwise, it's an ordinary failure.

- Any roll of 10 or more greater than your *effective* skill is a critical failure: 16+ on a skill of 6, 15+ on a skill of 5, and so on.

The GM determines what happens on a critical failure, but it's always something bad!

A **critical miss** is a critical failure scored on an attack. The GM doesn't determine the result – use the *Critical Miss Table* (p. 101).

REPEATED ATTEMPTS

Sometimes you'll get only one chance at a task (e.g., leaping over an acid pit). Other times you can keep trying until you succeed (e.g., picking a lock). Still other times you won't know whether you succeeded or failed until it's too late (e.g., translating an old treasure map). Finally, there will be times when failure injures you but you can retry – if you survive (e.g., climbing a wall). If the rules don't distinguish between these cases, the GM must. In general:

- If the first failure kills the person making the attempt or destroys the object of the attempt, that's that!

- If a failure causes damage, assess this and allow a retry after a “reasonable” time passes.

- If a failure causes no damage, allow a retry after a reasonable time, but at *-1 per repeated attempt* – that is, -1 on the second attempt, -2 on the third, and so on.

- If repeated attempts are the norm for the task (e.g., attacking in combat), or for a long task, the attempt fails but a retry is allowed at no special penalty, in the usual amount of time.



Beware: Creatures without honor seek unequal battles! Contest not the hulking monster with strength, nor the evasive one with agility, nor the devious one with wits.

– Sir Yvor Gryffyn, Knight

CONTESTS

Often, two rivals – typically a delver and a monster – must compare skills, attributes, or other traits to resolve a situation. This is handled using a **Contest**. In a Contest, each competitor attempts a success roll against the ability being tested – with all applicable modifiers – and a comparison of the results determines the outcome.

QUICK CONTESTS

A **Quick Contest** is resolved rapidly, with a single dice roll by each competitor. This often corresponds to action that's settled quickly – in one second, or even *instantly* – but that isn't always the case. Sneaking up on someone takes time, but it's treated as a Quick Contest because that keeps the game moving!

Each competitor attempts a success roll. Victory is assessed as follows:

- If one succeeds and the other fails, the winner is obvious!
- If both succeed, the winner is the one with the largest margin of success.
- If both fail, the winner is the one with the smallest margin of failure.

A tie means nobody won unless there's a clear "defender," like someone who's being snuck up on. In that case, ties go to the defender.

Margins of Victory and Loss

The amount by which the winner beat the loser often matters. This is the winner's **margin of victory** (and loser's **margin of loss**), calculated as follows:

- *Only winner succeeded:* Winner's margin of success plus loser's margin of failure.
- *Both succeeded:* Winner's margin of success minus loser's margin of success.
- *Both failed:* Loser's margin of failure minus winner's margin of failure.

RESISTANCE ROLLS

Many curses, powers, spells, and similar supernatural attacks that can affect unwilling subjects are resolved by rolling a Quick Contest: the effective skill level of the attack vs. an attribute, skill, or defensive ability of the

would-be victim. Such a **resistance roll** is subject to two special rules:

1. *The attacker must **succeed** to win.* Having the smallest margin of failure isn't good enough! Failure means the attempt fails and the defender doesn't even need to roll.
2. *The attacker must **win** to affect the subject.* There's always a clear defender, who wins all ties.

A further special rule often applies.

The Rule of 16

If a supernatural attack permits a resistance roll and the subject is *living* or *has IQ 6+*, there's a cap on the attacker's effective skill: 16 or the defender's actual resistance score, whichever is *greater*. If the attacker's effective skill exceeds this limit, reduce it to that level. This prevents spellcasters from improving a single spell until it guarantees victory!

Example: A wizard has an effective skill of 18 with a spell resisted by Will. Against someone with Will 16 or less, her cap is 16 and she rolls against 16. Against Will 17, her cap is 17 and she rolls against 17. If her target has Will 18 or higher, she rolls against 18.

REGULAR CONTESTS

Rarely, there's need for a **Regular Contest**: a Contest resolved with multiple rolls per contestant. This represents an ongoing struggle, like wrestling. Each contestant attempts a success roll, with results as follows:

- If one succeeds and the other fails, the winner is obvious!
- If both succeed or both fail, their relative positions are unchanged. They roll again after a "reasonable" time passes (normally one second in combat). Eventually, one will succeed and the other will fail – and the one who succeeded wins.

Take note that *margin* isn't important.

Especially low (1-6) or high (14+) scores on both sides can mean Contests that drag on because both sides keep failing or succeeding. As an optional fix, multiply or divide the lower score by whatever number is convenient to bring it into the 9-12 range. Then multiply or divide the higher score by the same amount, rounding up where necessary.

Example: If the Contest is 20 vs. 23, the GM can halve both scores to 10 vs. 12. If it's 3 vs. 4, the GM might triple them both to 9 vs. 12.

SENSE ROLLS

Sense rolls include **Vision rolls**, **Hearing rolls**, and rolls for special senses. All are success rolls against **Perception**. The **Acute Senses** advantage (*Adventurers*, pp. 46-47) gives a bonus equal to its level when using that sense; e.g., Acute Vision for a Vision roll. The GM often makes Sense rolls in secret (*GM Rolls*, p. 5). Success means you notice something; failure means you don't.

If you *can't* use a sense – say, you're blinded or deafened by magic or injury – then you automatically fail Sense rolls for it!

Danger Sense: If you have the **Danger Sense** advantage (*Adventurers*, p. 48) and fail a Sense roll to notice something *dangerous*, the GM will secretly make another Per roll for you. On a success, you sense the danger anyhow!

VISION

Make a **Vision roll** whenever it's important to *see* something.

Modifiers: Any **Acute Vision** bonuses. Target size and range (*Size and Speed/Range Table*, pp. 97-98). Partial darkness inflicts from -1 to -9: outdoors, that's -1 near sunset, -2 or -3 in twilight, -4, -5, or -6 in moonlight (full, half, or quarter), -7 with no moon, and *another* -1 or -2 if overcast; indoors, consult *Light Sources* (p. 19). Fog and smoke give penalties comparable to darkness. **Night Vision** cancels -1 per level in darkness penalties, but doesn't reduce those for haze.

In *total* darkness, Vision rolls are impossible without abilities like the **Infra-vision** spell, which also cancel all darkness penalties. Total darkness is typical of unlit dungeons!

Don't bother rolling to spot something you know about – like a trap *you* set or an ally you *saw* hide – except when fleeing or in combat. Then roll at +10.

When trying to spot something that's *deliberately* hidden, this Vision roll is usually a Quick Contest against a concealment skill like Camouflage – but the rules often let you replace Perception with a detection skill, typically **Observation** or **Search**.

HEARING

Make a **Hearing roll** whenever it is important to *hear* a sound.

Modifiers: Any **Acute Hearing** bonus or **Hard of Hearing** penalty (-4). Loudness: -2 for whispers or someone standing

still, -1 for quiet conversation, 0 for *most* conversation or movement, +2 for shouting or running, +4 for combat, and from +5 to +9 for magical explosions, collapsing tunnels, and similar racket. Being farther than one yard from the source gives a penalty: -1 at 2 yards, -2 at 4 yards, -3 at 8 yards, and so on, with another -1 per doubling.

When trying to hear someone who's attempting to move silently, roll a Quick Contest of Hearing against the sneak's Stealth. You can replace Perception with the **Observation** skill. *Ignore* loudness (the Stealth roll covers that) and range (which varies).



OTHER SENSES

Taste/Smell: Make a **Taste roll** to notice flavors, a **Smell roll** to notice scents. Add any **Acute Taste and Smell** bonus, and +4 to Smell rolls for **Discriminatory Smell**. The GM may assess bonuses or penalties for strong or weak tastes or odors. Some rules replace Perception with a *Per*-based skill roll against an appropriate skill, like **Poisons**.

Touch: Make a **Touch roll** to detect differences in texture. Add any **Acute Touch** bonus, and +4 for **Sensitive Touch**. Some rules replace Perception with a *Per*-based skill roll against a suitable skill – often **Traps**.

Supernatural Senses: Ranged supernatural senses – like monstrous detection abilities – require **Perception** rolls modified only for target size and range (*Size and Speed/Range Table*, pp. 97-98). These *can* have **Acute Senses** bonuses.

INFLUENCE ROLLS

An **Influence roll** is a *deliberate* attempt by a PC to affect the way an NPC – from a merchant in town to a slaving monster – treats him or her. If combat hasn't broken out, a delver with an appropriate **Influence skill** can elect to substitute an Influence roll for a regular reaction roll (p. 11).

First, choose the skill you're using: **Diplomacy**, **Fast-Talk**, **Intimidation**, **Savoir-Faire**, **Sex Appeal**, or **Streetwise**. The GM may permit other skills in fitting situations; e.g., *Thaumatology* to impress a bookish archmage.

Next, roll a Quick Contest: your Influence skill vs. the subject's Will.

Modifiers: All personal reaction modifiers that would normally affect that NPC. Any specific modifiers noted for the skill or task. From -1 to -10 (GM's decision) for trying an *inappropriate* skill – like Sex Appeal on sexless fungus-beings, or anything *but* Savoir-Faire or Diplomacy on the King.

If you *win*, you earn a "Good" reaction from the NPC. But if you *lose* or *tie*, the NPC resents your manipulation attempt

and you get a "Bad" reaction. See the *Reaction Table* (p. 12) for what these reactions actually mean. *Exception:* If you used **Diplomacy**, the GM will also make a regular reaction roll and use the *better* of the two reactions.

Against an Indomitable creature, you *lose* automatically unless you possess a special advantage: **Empathy** for IQ 6+ mortals, **Animal Empathy** for IQ 0-5 animals, **Plant Empathy** for IQ 0-5 plants, or **Spirit Empathy** for ghosts, demons, etc.

Against an Unfazeable subject, Intimidation attempts fail automatically.

Rules governing specific tasks – like *Interrogations* (above) and *Taunt and Bluster* (p. 58) – sometimes contradict these general ones. They might permit Influence rolls in combat, prescribe unusual skills (like Psychology or Singing), let an NPC roll against something other than Will, or have outcomes other than good or bad reactions. Such rules always override those above!

Influencing PCs?

The GM shouldn't make Influence rolls on behalf of NPCs and tell players how to react – most players resent this. But an NPC *can* use an Influence roll to affect a specific PC action. If the NPC wins, apply the margin of victory as a penalty to the delver's dice rolls for that action. For instance, a beautiful nymph could use Sex Appeal to distract a delver – and if she beat his Will by three, he'd have -3 on rolls to notice her animated vines slithering up behind him!

Interrogations

Foes who are captured (e.g., pinned, trapped, put to sleep, or knocked out) rather than killed can be pressed for information like "Where's the secret door?" and "How do we open the trapped chest safely?" This is a special Influence roll that uses **Interrogation**. You can try this on any victim who cannot flee – because of ropes, a leg-hold trap, magic, Ed the Barbarian's hammerlock, etc. – *and* with whom you can communicate. There are no penalties for the prisoner's ferocity or monstrosity; these are canceled by bonuses for Bad Things Done by Greedy Munchkins (and Best Left Unsaid). Winning extracts the necessary facts, losing doesn't, and losing by five or more means the prisoner *lies*.

FRIGHT CHECKS

A **Fright Check** is a roll to resist *fear*. Brave dungeon delvers don't have to roll when they encounter most monsters – even horrors like the walking dead – or "creepy" places, objects, or events (such as tombs, shrunken heads, and rains of blood). For professional adventurers, that stuff is just part of the job. However, certain spells, monsters, artifacts, and places (like cursed temples) are sources of active *supernatural* dread.

Whenever a rule calls for a Fright Check, those who lack the **Unfazeable** advantage must make a success roll against **Will**.

Modifiers: Any **Fearlessness** bonus; +2 for **Combat Reflexes** or -2 for **Combat Paralysis**; -1 to -4 for **Cowardice**

when your physical safety is at risk; +1 for **Daredevil** when charging into a scary situation; +1 per level for **Higher Purpose** when confronting threats you're sworn to oppose; +1 to +4 for **Xenophilia** when confronting monsters.

Powerful sources of supernatural fear – notably Elder Things – might impose a built-in penalty of almost any size!

If final, modified Will exceeds 13, reduce it to 13 for this purpose. That is, a roll of 14 or more is always a failure for a *Fright Check*.

Those who fail a Fright Check suffer mental stun (p. 27) for seconds equal to their margin of failure – a potentially fatal development in combat! After that time has passed, they may roll vs. Will every second to try to snap out of it.

In addition, those who fail must roll 3d and add their margin of failure. If the total is unlucky 13 or greater, the terrifying incident warped them *permanently*. They gain new disadvantages, worth points as follows:

3d + Margin of Failure	Point Value
13-19	-1 point
20-25	-5 points
26-30	-10 points
31-34	-15 points
35-37	-20 points
38-39	-25 points
40+	-30 points

If the value is just -1 point, the result is a quirk related to the incident. Otherwise, the result is one or more disadvantages that add up to the listed value. The GM assigns these problems, striving to relate them to both the frightening event and the victim's *existing* mental traits.

Anything's possible, including attribute losses – a fear-induced stroke might reduce HT or IQ. However, the GM shouldn't cripple the hero's core capabilities, because that *isn't fun*. As a rule, if a problem doesn't appear on the victim's professional template, or is the exact opposite of key abilities there, it's unsuitable. It's fair to cow a wizard into Cowardice or to lower her HT, but not to rob her of IQ.

Likewise, a barbarian could lose IQ or acquire psychotic Bloodlust, or a holy warrior might develop an unwise Obsession or Vow, but HT loss or Cowardice would be unfair. Phobias related to the cause of the Fright Check are appropriate for *everyone*, though!

All such problems reduce the victim's point value, but can be bought off later with earned points.

Speaking from Experience

*Fear is a deadly arrow in Evil's quiver. It can make the strongest warrior recoil and the swiftest one hesitate for long enough to decide a battle. Even when Good prevails, fear can leave psychic wounds no temple can repair. Confronting Evil demands fitness of **mind** as well as of body. As the body needs the reflexes to evade Evil's blows, the mind requires the wits to escape its horrors. As the body provides the fortitude to endure Evil's violence, the mind supplies the will – and the faith! – to withstand its awfulness.*

– Samar Alqatil, Holy Warrior

REACTION ROLLS

When delvers encounter an NPC whose attitude toward them isn't predetermined, the GM will make a **reaction roll** on 3d and consult the *Reaction Table* (p. 12). The higher the roll, the more favorably the NPC is disposed to the adventurers. The GM makes all such rolls in secret (*GM Rolls*, p. 5).

Unlike every roll explained so far, a reaction roll is *not* a success roll. There are three important differences:

1. There's no "target number" to roll against.
2. A high roll is *good*, not bad.
3. Reaction modifiers apply directly to the dice roll. A reaction *bonus* makes NPCs *friendlier*, while a reaction *penalty* biases NPCs *against* the PCs.

REACTION MODIFIERS

Advantages and disadvantages are common sources of reaction modifiers. **Charisma** *always* gives a bonus, but almost every other bonus is circumstantial; e.g., **Voice** matters only if you're speaking, while good **Appearance** counts only if you're visible *and* of a species similar to the viewer's. Similarly, disadvantages cause penalties in circumstances where they become apparent – see the description. The usual culprits are **Social Stigma** and poor **Appearance**.

The GM may allow a complementary skill roll (p. 6) against a skill like **Carousing** in the tavern, **Merchant** when doing

business, and so on. Treat the result as a reaction modifier instead of as a modifier to a success roll.

If the players roleplay a good approach, or have something the NPC wants, the GM may add +1 or +2 to the reaction roll. An inappropriate or antagonistic approach should give -1 or -2.

MONSTER REACTIONS

Random reaction rolls are no substitute for reason and logic. The heroes can impress townsfolk and even bandits on the road with sufficient wit and cunning, but monsters in the dungeon or wilderness rarely care about appearance or approach . . . they've *already* decided to attack! Don't bother making a reaction roll in that case.

If the GM hasn't decided for sure that the monsters will attack on sight, a reaction roll is possible – but at a penalty stemming from the *monsters'* nature rather than the heroes' comportment. Assess an extra -5 for each of the following that applies:

- Delver entered monster's territory uninvited (always applies in dungeons!).
- Monster is ghostly or from another dimension (demon, Elder Thing, etc.).
- Monster is supernaturally compelled to guard the area (like a wizard's golem).

- Monster is truly evil and delver is good (e.g., demon vs. holy warrior).

- Monster normally eats flesh, blood, life force, soul, etc. of members of delver's race.

No true monster reacts at better than -5. Many react at -10 to -25! **Cultural Adaptability** cancels up to -3 here, but cannot give a net bonus.

Such reaction penalties often accompany a "best-case" reaction. Treat any reaction better than the best-case reaction as the best-case scenario.

INFLUENCE SKILLS

Delvers can sometimes substitute a **Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, or Street-wise** roll for a regular reaction roll; see *Influence Rolls* (p. 10). Treat any modifiers that would apply to the reaction roll as modifiers to the skill roll.

ROLLING, ROLLING, ROLLING

Some rules involving dice don't fit neatly into the "big three" of success rolls (pp. 5-7), reaction rolls (pp. 11-12), and damage rolls (p. 52).

Appearance Rolls: Rolls to see whether someone or something is in the area. These work much like success rolls: the GM sets a target number, adds bonuses or penalties for factors that would make the subject more or less likely to turn up, and rolls 3d. A total less than or equal to "effective skill" means the person or item of interest is present. That's how wandering monsters (p. 85) work, and the GM may use such rolls to settle questions like whether a shop has specific gear. Appearance rolls can often borrow modifiers from success rolls; e.g., if delvers stand around bickering, the GM could apply bonuses to skill rolls for time spent (p. 6) and to Hearing rolls (p. 9) for loudness when checking for monsters. When the heroes actively petition for an NPC's appearance, reaction modifiers might apply. Appearance rolls are always secret (*GM Rolls*, p. 5).

Self-Control Rolls: Checks on whether mental disadvantages manifest; see *Adventurers*, p. 55. These involve rolling 3d against flat numbers specified by disadvantages. The GM may transplant modifiers from success rolls, especially *Will* rolls; e.g., in a demonic temple where good magic is at -2, heroes might suffer -2 to control base urges. Players make self-control rolls for their characters.

Effect Rolls: Rolls for duration or intensity. These resemble damage rolls, the difference being that the effects aren't HP or FP losses. They can involve any number of dice and should *not* borrow modifiers from success or reaction rolls. Examples are the rolls many potions specify; e.g., "lasts 1d+1 hours" or "heals 2d HP." Such rolls are secret for curses and traps, but rolled by the players for their characters' gear and abilities.

Table Rolls: Rolls on tables to answer *what* wandering monsters appear, *what* loot is found, and so on. These can involve any number of dice. The roll is used for a lookup, not as a quantity. Borrowing modifiers from success or reaction rolls rarely makes sense – but on a table designed so that higher or lower is better, it's reasonable to add modifiers that work for or against the PCs to the dice roll, shifting the results. Such rolls are secret in most cases.

Roll and Shout!

If the players catch the GM unprepared, the GM can roll dice for inspiration.

For instance, if a larcenous thief starts sneaking around the unmapped inn, the GM could roll 1d-5 for each door and read 1 as "no lock" and 0 to -4 as Lockpicking modifiers. And each room might hold \$2d×5 in plunder.

For flip questions like "How cute is the bartender?", the GM is advised to retort, "Roll dice! Lower is better."

REACTION TABLE

Roll 3d and apply any reaction modifiers.

0 or less – Disastrous. Monsters attack. Other NPCs hate the PCs and will act in their worst interest. Anything is possible: attack, betrayal, public ridicule, ignoring a life-or-death plea . . .

1-3 – Very Bad. Monsters attack. Other NPCs dislike the PCs and will act against them if it's convenient to do so: attacking, offering grossly unfair terms in a transaction, and so on.

4-6 – Bad. Monsters attack. Other NPCs care nothing for the PCs and will act against them (as above) if they can profit by doing so.

7-9 – Poor. Monsters attack. Other NPCs are unimpressed by the PCs, and may make threats, demand a bribe before offering aid, or something similar.

10-12 – Neutral. Monsters may negotiate. Other NPCs ignore the PCs as much as possible – they're totally uninterested – but transactions will go smoothly and routinely as long as protocol is observed.

13-15 – Good. Monsters may negotiate. Other NPCs like the PCs, and will be helpful within normal, everyday limits. Reasonable requests will be granted.

16-18 – Very Good. Monsters may negotiate. Other NPCs think highly of the PCs and will be unusually helpful and friendly, freely offering aid and favorable terms in most things.

19 or more – Excellent. Monsters may negotiate. Other NPCs are extremely impressed by the PCs and will act in their best interests at all times, within the limits of personal ability – perhaps even risking life, wealth, or reputation.

CHAPTER TWO

DUNGEON DELVING

Now that you know all about rolling dice, it's time to look at what you're rolling for! What follows are rules showing how the abilities included in the professional templates

in *Adventurers* work on adventures. Combat and magic are intricate enough to be treated at greater length, however – see Chapter 3 and *Spells*, respectively.

IN TOWN

Dungeon Fantasy is about killing monsters and getting rich – *not* social interactions. Yet fiend-slaying heroes need a place to prepare, while gold has value only when there's somewhere to spend it. That's the function of "town," which is shorthand for "whatever large, nominally civilized settlement the delvers visit between adventures."

Town holds taverns where adventurers can hear rumors, and inns where they can rent rooms. It has a Merchants' Guild whose members sell most everything but magic items – and a Wizards' Guild that sells those. It's home to temples, whose high priests speak for *gods*. It features Thieves' and Assassins' Guilds that are kept in check by a Town Watch. And it's part of the realm of a monarch, whose King's Men keep *all* the towns in line.

Delvers can act however they want in the dungeon but should be polite in town. Town is home to markets that absorb limitless treasure. Its clerics and wizards command magic beyond adventurers' ken, while its homegrown criminals own the streets. It's able to protect its citizens and the farmers who feed them from roaming monsters (unlike tiny *villages*, which always need outside assistance!). Its power drops off rapidly outside its walls – but within, heroes who don't behave heroically *will* pay.

GETTING READY TO GO

The GM *might* ask the players to create characters and buy gear, and then drop the PCs into a dungeon. This section won't apply in that case. *Real* munchkins will want their heroes to start out in town, though, so that they can beg, borrow, and steal the most useful equipment for the upcoming quest while spending as little as possible.

Getting Stuff Cheap

List prices in *Adventurers* are the going rate. Whether a delver obtains gear through purchase, barter, or inheritance, it normally comes out of starting money at those prices. There are other options, though.

Below, "item" means one large article (weapon, magic item, etc.) or a group of related ones (e.g., a suit of armor or quiver of arrows). The GM should limit each PC to rolls for three or four items – although true munchkins will quibble!

Scrounging: Any PC may try *one Scrounging* roll before each adventure. Success grants \$10 worth of nonmagical items for free. Critical success (*ordinary* success, for someone with **Serendipity**) yields a more valuable, useful item of the GM's choice. Failures, even critical ones, aren't noteworthy.

Crafting: Heroes with **Armory** can start with *ordinary* weapons and armor of their own making – anything listed in *Adventurers* that isn't fine, magical, or otherwise extraordinary. Materials and labor consume starting cash equivalent to list cost, but roll against skill: any success reduces the price by 20%, while any failure means wastage that *adds* 10%. Use whatever specialty (Body Armor, Melee Weapons, or Missile Weapons) suits the item.

Brewing: Individuals with **Alchemy** can use the crafting rules above for any *chemical* or *potion*, while those with **Poisons** can use them for any *poison*. Adventurers with **Herb Lore** can start with *natural preparations* and *healing potions* (minor, major, or great) at *half price* on a success – but still at 10% extra on any failure. Heroes with **Clerical Investment** get holy water at 50% off *without* a roll.

Bargain Hunting: An adventurer who has the **Merchant** skill can roll a Quick Contest vs. a generic skill of 15 (Merchants' Guild members are canny!) for a given item. *Winning* shaves 10% off the price; a *tie* means getting list price; and *losing* makes the price 10% higher than usual. The delver can opt not to pay an inflated price – but that piece of gear won't be available at a better price before the adventure begins.

Black Market: As an *alternative* to bargain hunting, an adventurer can use **Streetwise** to get something cheaply on the black market. Use the same rules, except that losing still leaves the option of buying a legit item at list price. The catch? Critical failure on the roll means the Thieves' Guild or Town Watch confiscates cash or gear equal to 10% of the PC's starting money!

Shoplifting: A daring PC can try a **Filch** roll to steal any article that would fit under a shirt – GM’s judgment, but 3 lbs. is a fair limit. Pricey items are watched more carefully: roll at -1 for anything worth \$100+, another -1 per doubling (-2 for \$200+, -3 for \$400+, and so on), and a *further* -3 for anything rare or magical. *Any* failure means the powerful Merchant’s Guild pillories the thief – he loses all his gear! Even a successful thief must make a **Smuggling** roll before leaving town with stolen goods, with any failure giving identical results.

Scum and Villainy

At the GM’s discretion, delvers caught doing business on the black market, shoplifting, cheating, picking pockets, or debasing coin – or who betray a sponsor – may end up with **Social Stigma (Criminal Record)** (*Adventurers*, p. 66). Thieves can *start* with this trait!

Scoring Extra Cash

Even with the above tricks – especially with those tricks, for failed crooks – money can be tight. These next few measures may help. A PC can try *all* of them *once* while in town before each adventure, or *one* of them *daily* while awaiting a quest (see *Finding a Quest*, below).

Dredging and Mud-Larking: Desperate heroes can try an **Urban Survival** roll to seek coin in gutters. Success finds \$1 times margin of success; critical success finds a useful item of the GM’s choice. Critical failure means a dire case of sewer rot: -1 on all attribute and skill rolls for the duration of the next adventure, barring **Cure Disease**.

Bumming, Busking, and Haranguing: Adventurers can beg, perform, or give sermons for cash. Beggars use **Panhandling**. Buskers use **Dancing, Musical Instrument, Performance, Poetry, or Singing** – and those with several skills start with the *best*, may try one complementary skill roll (p. 6) against each of the others (if the show includes music or song, also check **Musical Composition**), and then roll against effective skill. Soapbox lecturers use **Public Speaking** or **Theology**. Success earns \$2 times margin of success; critical success scores a useful gift. Critical failure means a beating (1d HP) or a broken musical instrument.

Gambling: An adventurer who knows **Gambling** can bet any amount. Roll a Quick Contest vs. a generic skill of 12 for sums up to \$25. Higher stakes attract sharks: +1 to opposing skill per doubling (13 up to \$50, 14 up to \$100, and so on). *Winning* means doubling the sum wagered; a *tie*, breaking even; and *losing*, forfeiting the entire stake. Success at **Sleight of Hand** allows cheating for +3, but *any* failure means the crook loses the bet *and* is beaten for 1d HP.

Working the Crowd: Dishonest delvers can go on a spree with **Pickpocket**. Success nets \$5 times margin of success; critical success means \$50 times the margin! *Any* failure

means a beating (1d HP); critical failure indicates swift justice in the form of a broken hand (1d months to heal, barring magic).

Debasing Coin: Really depraved scum can debase (shave or add impurities to) the King’s coin. Start with honest coin worth up to \$1,000 and then roll against **Counterfeiting**. Success increases the sum by 10%. Failure means ruined coin or lost metal, costing the crook 20% of the stake. Critical failure means the King’s Men stick the counterfeiter’s hand in molten silver, resulting in the One Hand disadvantage.

Finding a Quest

The GM wouldn’t be running a *Dungeon Fantasy* game without an adventure in mind – but having a dungeon ready doesn’t mean the *heroes* know about it!

Rumors: The GM might allow each PC *one* **Carousing** roll (for tavern talk) and *one* **Current Affairs** roll (for news from bards, caravans, criers, merchants, etc.) between adventures. The player decides whether to attempt either roll, but the GM rolls in secret. Success reveals the quest – or if the GM has *several* dungeons ready, each success turns up one at random, and the players can choose based on hearsay. Failure discovers nothing. Critical failure finds a quest with *wrong* rumors, like a cave full of vampires described as “the Faerie Caverns.”

Starving: If nobody succeeds, the GM can say “A week passes,” dock everyone \$150 for cost of living (*Adventurers*, p. 96), and let them try again. To avoid this cost, each hero can try a **Survival** roll (to camp outside town) or an **Urban Survival** roll (to live like a bum). Failure means starting the eventual adventure missing 1d HP.

Advertising: Each week, *one* PC can use **Propaganda** to advertise the party’s services. The GM rolls in secret. Success brings an adventure of the GM’s choice. It’s probably the dungeon the GM had planned all along – but the quest’s bearer smells desperation, so clearly it’s *nasty*. The GM will quietly make the monsters and traps scarier. Critical failure *also* means false rumors, as above.

Details: After learning of a quest, *one* PC can use **Research** to unearth information about the dungeon. Again, the GM rolls in secret. Success reveals something useful (e.g., “It’s full of werewolves!”). This lets heroes with suitable skills prepare accordingly; see **Monsters** for details. Failure gives nothing. Critical failure yields *false* info.

Finding a Sponsor

Once the party has a quest, it may be possible to get *more* money for gear by finding a backer. The group must appoint *one* mouthpiece (ideally a bard) to approach potential sponsors. This spokesperson can try **Savoir-Faire** to seek merchant or noble backing, **Streetwise** to get the support of the Thieves’ Guild, or **Writing** to compose an academic proposal to the Wizards’ Guild or a temple. Apply any **Charisma** bonus.

TAVERN TALES AND MOLDY BOOKS

The GM has to decide what delvers can learn about the upcoming adventure through hearsay or research (*Finding a Quest*, p. 14). Do this after designing the dungeon – having all the facts makes it easier to concoct *useful* tidbits that give a fair return on the players' investment in skills of little use outside town.

Rumors

Come up with a few *general* rumors about the dungeon to give to adventurers who make their **Carousing** or **Current Affairs** rolls: archetype (cave, mine, etc.), dangers obvious from the outside ("Halfway up a volcano, and full of fissures and lava pits."), a simple description of monsters seen nearby ("Ahr! Blue goblins, as sure as I be standin' here!"), fabled loot ("*Everybody* knows there's a Holy Sword in there."), and so on. Critical success reveals a detail instead; see below.

Also cook up two or three bits of hogwash for delvers who critically fail! These should be consistent with the accurate rumors. For instance, if success reveals "The Vault of Vileness is next to the ocean," critical failure

might add "It's full of kraken!" when the Vault is actually a sealed tomb full of undead.

Details

Write down a few *specifics* to share with heroes who succeed at **Research** rolls: particular inhabitants ("The Passages of Pain are said to be the lair of the lich Ruinas, necromancer extraordinaire."), construction ("The complex is the work of Hell Gnomes, masters of cunning locks and Evil Runes."), unambiguous dangers ("It's called the Cave of Curses for good reason – bring an exorcist."), or hints about treasure that go beyond greedy speculation ("The Holy Sword rests within, true. However, Evil placed it upon the Altar of Doom, as it could not be unmade. Only the strong of will can lift it."). Critical success gives an especially valuable tidbit, like a weakness of one of the worst monsters, a password, or a partial map.

Also note a couple of fatally flawed details for researchers who critically fail. Again, these shouldn't disagree with other findings. If holy water *heals* the lich Ruinas, he's unlikely to discourage bogus rumors that it burns him . . .

Failure or critical failure means no backing. Any success gives each adventurer an equipment allowance: gear (*not* cash) worth \$100 times margin of success, minimum \$100 apiece. The catch is that the group owes the sponsor future loot worth *triple* the total allowance (a 200% return). The backer may settle for an artifact of special significance regardless of its value – which usually means it's worth more than the party realizes!

COMING BACK RICH

After most adventures, the delvers will return to civilization – maybe the same town, perhaps a different one – and see what they can do with any treasure they haven't already put to use. This *usually* means selling things, but not always.

Keepers

What the party keeps and what it sells is a matter of group negotiation. Approaches include:

- Split loot by shares or seniority. Enforcement takes the form of "If you cheat, the others will pound you!"
- Allocate items to those who can make the best use of them. This *sounds* altruistic, but munchkins do it because it makes the party *more powerful*.
- Free-for-all! Keep whatever you grab! (Thieves tend to play by this rule no matter what the others do.)

Skills don't affect such negotiations. While PCs can Fast-Talk and haggle with NPCs, weaseling *each other* is pure roleplaying.

Fixer-Uppers: Armor is an unusual special case, as it's made for a particular user. If the new owner's Size Modifier isn't that for which the armor was designed, it will *never* fit. If SM matches, the armor may fit with adjustments. Make an **Armory (Body Armor)** roll, at -1 per unusual property (dwarven, magical, spiked, etc.) – but -5 for fine. Success fits the armor to the new wearer. Failure means it won't fit *that* individual ("Sorry – most people aren't as freakish as you.") but, with further adjustments, might fit somebody else. Critical failure ruins it for good.

Getting a Good Price

True munchkins will want to sell swag they can't use to get money for better gear. Dungeons with vast unexplored depths – or ones that repopulate or rearrange when nobody is visiting – often have a perpetual merchant encampment outside. A few might have shops *inside*, surrounded by magic-free areas and patrolled by armed ogre guards from Stinkerton's. Otherwise, the party has to drag the spoils back to town; see *There and Back Again* (pp. 17-18), and remember that a trip takes longer when hauling 523 lbs. of copper coins, the worldly goods of 114 dead goblins, and a gold cockroach the size of your head . . . while driving off the inevitable bandits bent on stealing it all.

Coin always fetches its full value. For everything else, start with the *lower* of actual value and what the seller *believes* the item is worth (see *Determining Value*, p. 25). The sum actually received depends on the adventurer's **Wealth**: Dead Broke yields 0% of this price (a euphemism for "Get out of my shop, you bum!"); Poor, 10%; Struggling, 20%; Average, 40%; Comfortable, 60%; Wealthy, 80%; and Very Wealthy, 100%. That's because the wealthy can weasel out of taxes and are assumed to be good for any damages caused by stolen, cursed, or exploding articles (the Merchants' Guild collects taxes for the King and insurance from its members). Thus, selling is most profitable if the richest party member does it – probably for a percentage.

There are a few ways to bend the rules, however.

"For you, a special price!" Make a reaction roll (pp. 11-12) before each selling spree. Add any bonuses for the hero's **Appearance** and **Charisma**. On a "Very Good" or better reaction (16+), the merchant likes the seller: treat the PC's Wealth as one level higher (cumulative with the effects of haggling, if attempted).

Haggling: For each item, a PC with the **Merchant** skill can roll a Quick Contest vs. a generic skill of 15. *Winning* means Wealth is considered one level higher for that sale; a *tie* gives the usual rate; and *losing* results in Wealth being treated as a level lower. Thus, even Dead Broke delvers can cut deals,

while Very Wealthy ones shouldn't bother. The seller can reject the offer, but other merchants will be reluctant to make a new one – no repeated attempts (p. 7) until after the party brings its next haul to town!

Black Market: A seller can try to move goods on the black market. Use the haggling rules, except that **Streetwise** replaces Merchant and losing leaves the option of selling to a merchant. Critical failure on the roll means some sniveling snitch turns the PC in for tax evasion or violating Guild privilege, and the Town Watch or King's Men seize the item for good.

The Temple: Those with **Clerical Investment** can trade luxury items and rare artifacts suitable for a temple (like incense and statuary), and blessed items, as if their Wealth were a level higher – no roll required. They *don't* get cash, though, but credit for merchandise in town.

Scrap

Greedy delvers who bring a wagon (\$680, plus \$4,000 for a pair of horses; can hold half a ton) and haul back everything may end up with a heap of scrap – rusty iron gratings, partly sundered doors, and so on. Make *one Scrounging* roll for the party at the adventure's *end*. Success means the junk might be of some value to someone. Failure indicates it really is garbage.



In town, make *one* **Current Affairs** roll to discover whether anybody is buying scrap (“Archmage Recnam Orcen is excavating a new, um, *cellar*, and could use such wares.”). Success finds a buyer who offers \$1d×100 per half-ton wagonload – take it or leave it. Any failure reveals nothing, but for each week the party stays in town (at \$150 apiece for food and lodging), *one* PC can try a **Propaganda** roll; success finds a similar deal through the power of advertising.

Selling the Tale

At the end of a dungeon crawl, the heroes can take a week to immortalize their recent adventures. Each may try *one* roll – **Cartography** to map the journey, **Musical Composition** to compose a ballad, **Poetry** to pen an epic, or **Writing** to create a learned work on the Squid Cult, ochre slime mating rituals, or similar esoterica. Success creates something worth selling; the creator gets \$100 (of course, it costs \$150 a week to live at the inn, which explains why authors live in garrets). Critical success is literally that, and scores \$500. **Dungeon Fantasy** worlds don’t have presses or syndication rights; those who aren’t happy with their fee can deny the world their brilliance, but it won’t help.

Getting Paid

If a quest-giver assigned the delvers specific objectives – e.g., capture a bandit leader, recover an artifact, rescue someone, or slay a powerful monster – achieving these brings further rewards: money, gear, training,

another mission, or whatever was promised. This rarely depends on one skill roll! It’s generally a matter coming back alive with someone or something (if only a severed head).

Still, for an information-gathering quest such as “scout an area” or “spy on an enemy,” a successful roll against a skill like **Cartography** or **Strategy** might garner *extra* money – anything from \$10 to \$1,000 times margin of success.

Speaking from Experience

Never – but never! – accept a mission that doesn’t come with a contract. The contract can be secret. It need not even be written. But the act of agreeing to a deal can be divined by magic after the fact. Few people want bards spreading tales of their infamy.

Never accept the first offer. Nobody ever got rich that way. Negotiate!

*Make sure the bargain either gives you the rights to the story or pays you for them. You’re putting your life and reputation on the line, so it’s **your** tale to sell. Bardic privilege has protected such things for generations. Silence is a service in its own right, and those who desire it must purchase it.*

Finally, make sure there’s an escape clause. I recommend a simple statement that risk past a certain level voids the contract. Invoking this may deal a blow to your reputation – or worse, your ego – but better that than your skull.

– Jag Fairchild, Bard

THERE AND BACK AGAIN

Once the heroes have gear and a quest, their goal is to reach the dungeon. Afterward, they’ll return to town – hopefully laden with loot. The GM is free to skip all this, but it’s traditional to trek across monster-infested wilds, subsisting on rat-on-a-stick.

Getting There Quickly

The GM sets base travel time by rolling dice, proclaiming “40 days and 40 nights!”, or whatever other method seems fun. Assume this accounts for encumbrance, weather, and terrain. Consider setting longer times for lousy travel conditions (“The trip to the Lair of the Weather Witch takes 60 days, not the usual 40.”) or heavily burdened parties (“With everyone carrying as much loot as possible, the trip back takes twice as long”).

Delvers must carry, forage, or conjure three meals apiece per day of travel. If they eat less, they’ll be missing 1 FP per skipped meal (and 1 HP per FP below 0!) on arrival. A few hours of rest won’t restore these FP. This FP penalty will persist until the group rests with food for one day per 3 FP lost – easy in town, risky at the dungeon doors.

Naturally, the GM will roll daily for wandering monsters (p. 85), be those bandits or dire wombats. More days mean more chances to get killed!

Thus, it’s important to minimize travel time. There are three tricks for this. For each, *any* success knocks 10% off travel time, failure adds 10%, and critical failure adds 20%. The results are additive, giving from -30% to +60% travel time. The party can opt out of any of these rolls.

The Golden Path: If the party appoints a guide, that person can make a **Navigation** roll (at -5 with just the shadows of the trees, -1 with a sundial, or no modifier with a compass) to pick an optimal route over the best terrain.

Wind at Your Back: If the guide has **Weather Sense**, a successful roll lets the party walk or sail with the wind, avoid storms . . . whatever. This is *fantasy* weather!

Forced March: If the party is traveling overland, everyone can try **Hiking**, **Riding**, or **Skiing**, as appropriate, to move quickly; use the *worst* result. On water, *one* hero can roll against **Boating** for a small craft, **Seamanship** for a large one, to make good time.

Foraging

Rations are expensive, and cumbersome to lug around a dungeon (you have to bring enough to make the return trip!). Next to magic, foraging is the best way around that. Only a traveler who *knows* **Fishing**, **Naturalist**, or **Survival** – no defaults – can forage in a world with killer bunnies and man-eating shrubs. Roll once per trip.

Success means the adventurer needs only *half* as much food from rations; e.g., 60 meals instead of 120 on a 40-day journey. Critical success means the delver can either consume *no* rations or halve the rations used by himself and one companion.

Failure still means *some* good days – but mostly bad ones. The traveler needs only 2/3 as many rations. Critical failure means relying on rations like everyone else. This is probably a disaster: an outdoorsman counting on foraging and carrying less food will be half-dead after a long trip – or the whole party will be weak, if they're nice and share their food.

Sensible delvers plan on modest failure. Those with Overconfidence bank on success.

Camping and Posting Watches

Camping requires no special skill, but the party should post watches. The order isn't important; when a nighttime encounter occurs, the GM will *randomly* determine whose watch it interrupts, and secretly roll against the higher of **Perception** or **Observation** for that PC. This becomes a Quick Contest against the Stealth skill of sneaky monsters (**Monsters** offers many examples).

If the watch-keeper succeeds (*wins*, in a Contest), the party isn't surprised – although those who were asleep start combat lying down. Otherwise, everyone is asleep or stunned; each delver must make one **IQ** roll per turn, at +1 per turn after the first and +6 for **Combat Reflexes**, and can react only on the turn after succeeding. So post watches – it's free.

Wilderness Camps: If a nighttime encounter involves monsters that hunt by sight, the GM will roll a Quick Contest: the monsters' Vision vs. the party's *highest* **Camouflage** skill, at a penalty equal to the number of party members who have no points in that skill. Victory means the enemy spends enough time sniffing around that any watch-keeper gets a *second* chance to detect the monsters, as above.

Dungeon Camps: When sleeping in a dungeon, camouflage won't work – but if the room has doors, use the same rules with the party's *highest* **Traps** (and no penalty) to set simple noise-makers. In that case, victory means the monsters awaken the party; the delvers won't be surprised. Sleeping heroes still start combat lying down, though.

Tracking

The adventurers may have to follow a trail to the dungeon – say, that of the last group to die there, rivals with a lead, or monsters boiling out to eat travelers. Since it won't be much of an adventure if the party never arrives, they'll *eventually* find the trail. Make *one* **Tracking** roll per delver, at -2 in wastes (ice, rock, etc.) or -4 in goo (slime, swamp, etc.), and note the best result. Success lets the party follow the trail at full speed. Failure or critical failure means time wasted searching for tracks: add 10% or 20%, respectively, to base travel time.



Most treasure maps are sketchy about scale, terrain, and landmarks. Following them without a qualified pathfinder is folly. Fortunately, my rates are quite reasonable.

– Llandor the Gray, Scout

IN THE DUNGEON

Huzzah! The party is now at the gates of the Durance of Doom or Tunnels of Terror. But there's much more to an adventure than meeting monsters and killing them for their treasure . . .

EXPLORATION

Delvers *could* just run around at random, seeing what's there, but successful parties are more methodical.

Mapping

Traditionally, the GM describes what the PCs see in general terms – e.g., how many people can walk abreast and for

how many paces, and which way the tunnel turns – and the players try to map it. The players are allowed to make a map in the real world only if a party member serves as “mapper” in the game world. This demands ink, paper, and *two* free hands (which *cannot* wield torches, shields, or weapons).

If using the map (e.g., to predict where a tunnel exits) leads to nonsense results, the players can ask the GM for a secret roll against the mapper's **Cartography** skill. Success means the GM explains what's wrong so the players can correct their map. Failure means the GM smiles smugly. On a critical failure, the GM pretends it's a success and *lies!* Even a good map of a twisted and weird dungeon will seem wrong – the GM should never reveal *that*.

Light Sources

In a typical dungeon, the party will be blind without light sources (see *Vision*, p. 9). Some lights require a hand, which *can't* be used for combat. Those marked * below don't have this problem, and are good choices for fighters who must carry their own light.

A light *eliminates* darkness penalties to combat and vision out to a certain distance, in a semicircle in front of the bearer:

Candle, **Continual Light** spell (*moonlight*)*, **Light** spell*: 1 yard
Continual Light spell (*torchlight*)*, **Flame Jet** spell, *Flaming Weapon**, *Glow Vial**, *Lantern*, *Torch*: 2 yards
Continual Light spell (*daylight*)*: 4 yards

Spells like **Glow** and **Sunlight** eliminate penalties over their entire area of effect. One of the most useful things a caster can do when combat starts is cast such a spell!

Assume that if the party has any area-effect source, vision and combat are possible at -3 out to *triple* the range of the *best* source; e.g., 6 yards if a torch, 12 yards if a four-yard-radius **Sunlight** spell. After that, the ambient level applies: -3 for the lamps and candles in an evil temple, -8 for glowing slime, or total darkness for an unlit subterranean tunnel.

Other lights throw a beam that eliminates darkness penalties in a path a yard wide, in the direction of the carrier's choice (pointing it is a free action each turn), out to a fixed range:

*Helmet Lamp**, *Shield Lamp**: 5 yards
Bull's-Eye Lantern, **Light Jet** spell: 10 yards

Marching Order

The party should establish one marching order for traveling single-file down narrow passages, another for moving two abreast along typical corridors, and a third for walking three abreast in spacious hallways. Be sure to note any gaps. It makes sense to put people who know **Traps** in front, fighters with long weapons behind those with short ones, and delvers with missile weapons where they'll have a clear shot.

Positioning spellcasters demands careful thought. Placing them in front lets them detect supernatural dangers but exposes them to physical ones better faced by nimble thieves and armored knights. Putting them in back lets them cast unmolested . . . unless attacked from behind. They're probably safest in the middle, or protected by a tougher buddy.

The players must *tell the GM* whenever they want to change marching order. When it becomes important to know who can see by what light sources, trips a trap, or is in front (or back!) when monsters come, the GM will use the *most recent* order. It's too late to change it now . . .

Hidden Doors

Secret Doors: Secret doors are things like pieces of wall that spring open, altars that roll aside, and fireplaces that drop into the floor to reveal hidden portals – but only when

some hard-to-find control is manipulated. Finding them always requires an active search; the GM rolls secretly against the *highest* of **Vision**, **Observation**, or *Per*-based **Traps** for each searcher. Success reveals a door, if there is one; it may require an IQ-based **Traps** roll to open. These rolls often have steep penalties.

Concealed Doors: Concealed doors are ordinary doors *behind* or *inside* other items, like tapestries and wardrobes. They require a roll to find, as for a secret door, but not to operate. However, the GM may wait for a player to declare that she's looking behind the curtain or whatever – so *pay attention* when the GM describes each area!

Speaking from Experience

*A well-rounded party aids mission success but doesn't guarantee it – the group's disposition is just as important. Position your warriors and light-bearers forward, but never neglect a rear guard. If you have **many** fighters, place those who have long swords and spears behind those with shields. Your magic-wielders should occupy the relatively safe center – and as they are most likely literate and have protectors between them and expected avenues of attack, assign one to make and annotate a map, which is valuable during a tactical retreat. Keep everybody close enough that they can easily support one another, yet not so tightly packed that a single trap or spell can take out the entire company. Deploy your swiftest spies ahead of the main body to reconnoiter for foes, hidden dangers, and secret passages. Plan your signals in advance.*

– Grükuk Kzaash, Knight

Scouting Ahead

It's useful to send a thief or a scout ahead of the main marching order to reconnoiter – especially one who can run fast!

Sneaking: Roll against **Stealth** to *sneak* ahead. Normally, any success will do – but if you happen upon a sentry, this becomes a Quick Contest against the *better* of the guard's **Hearing** or **Vision**. In a dark dungeon, you *can't* sneak with a light source; you'll need some way to see in total darkness (like the **Infravision** spell).

Information Gathering: Spotting pits, counting orcs, noticing ordinary doors, and so on requires no roll. A successful **Observation** roll will reveal *interesting* details: the pit is freshly dug, the orcs have a shaman, the second door looks more worn, etc. It will also determine patrol frequency and sentry placement, but that's a Quick Contest vs. **Stealth** or **Camouflage** for *hidden* sentries. If you can get within seven yards (×2 with a telescope, ×2 *per level* with the **Hawk Vision** spell), you can use **Lip Reading** to learn what intelligent monsters are saying – perhaps even a password! Detecting traps requires a **Traps** roll; see *Dealing with Traps* (p. 23). Noticing monster tracks calls for **Tracking**.

Dogging: To follow a monster to its lair or treasure without being noticed, *win* a Quick Contest of **Shadowing** against its Vision. Any other result means it sees you and may try to eat you. This is where the “run fast” part comes into play!

A wizard can cast **Wizard Eye** to do these things remotely; enemies are at -7 to spot it. But spells aren’t a perfect replacement for old-fashioned reconnaissance – magic is fatiguing, and few wizards are skilled at noticing sentries, tracks, and traps. Savvy mages assist thieves and scouts with spells like **Hide**, **Hush**, **Invisibility**, and **Mage Stealth**.

Signaling

Gesture skill can communicate a simple concept – e.g., “six monsters” or “attack” – without compromising stealth. The player should write this down and hand the note to the GM, who will roll secretly. Success means the GM tells everyone the message. Failure – or an attempt to relate anything complex (e.g., “a lich and 20 zombies”) – means the GM says nothing. Critical failure means the GM gets to be evil.

Mimicry (Animal Sounds or Bird Calls) can deliver a *prearranged* signal to warn the party. Outdoors, assume this is stealthy. In a dungeon without animals or birds, it’s likely to warn monsters, too. Failure means the others don’t hear the call of the wild.

If a party member spots danger and doesn’t signal, or fails, the GM may make a secret Vision roll at -5 for an ally. Success means the GM gives a hint (“Bob looks like he’s seen a ghost.”).

EXTRA EFFORT

An adventurer who isn’t up to a feat of strength or speed can push the limits. Spend 1 FP and roll vs. **Will**. If you know a skill that governs the activity – e.g., **Jumping** for clearing a gap or **Lifting** for hefting a weight – you may try a *Will*-based roll against that instead. *Exception:* Lifting allows a HT-based roll, if better.

Success adds 5% times margin of success (minimum +5%) to weight lifted, distance jumped, speed attained, etc. – or to ST, if it governs the task directly. For ongoing activities, the bonus can be maintained for 1 FP per minute. Critical success means the whole task costs 1 FP less.

Any failure gives no bonus. Critical failure further inflicts 1 HP from strain. Repeated attempts (p. 7) suffer a cumulative -1.

PHYSICAL FEATS

The heroes will eventually stop looking around and start acting. In general, *precision* relies on **DX**, *endurance* uses **HT**, *weight moved* is based on **Basic Lift**, and *movement speed* is proportional to **Basic Move**. Most tasks are more specific than this, though!

Dungeon Parkour

Agile delvers like martial artists and thieves use athletics to reach difficult areas. This lets them get into position to deploy a rope or portable ladder for clumsier friends (see *Bridging Hazards*, p. 22). All of the following rolls take encumbrance penalties (*Adventurers*, p. 12).

Balancing

Roll **Acrobatics** to traverse something *narrow*. (*Exception:* Delvers with **Perfect Balance** don’t *have* to roll!)

Modifiers: -2 for something taut or rigid (a ledge or rail) or -5 for something slack (an ordinary rope). A pole helps balance – add +2 for a quarterstaff or 6’ pole, +3 for a 10’ pole.

Failure means a fall, but allows a **DX** roll to catch something and try a pull-up (p. 21). Critical failure (or failure on that DX roll) drops you into the depths.

Climbing

Anyone can climb a ladder without rolling. But to climb anything more difficult, roll against **Climbing**.

Modifiers: 0 for a steep slope or mountain, -1 for a rope straight down, -2 for a rope straight up, or -3 for a vertical wall (becomes *no* penalty with climbing spikes).

Failure and critical failure work as for *Balancing* (above).

Diving

An **Acrobatics** roll at -4 lets you dive through a narrow opening: under a pendulum, between rollers, or whatever. Failure gets you halfway through, which can hurt – and if you could get stuck, you now need an **Escape** roll to get free. Critical failure adds 1d-3 HP of injury (DR *doesn’t* protect).

Jumping

If a horizontal obstacle (e.g., pit or pressure plate) is at most one yard wide – or if you want to leap over a low vertical obstacle (e.g., a body) – don’t roll. The jump just works, though it costs an extra movement point in combat.

A wider horizontal obstacle requires a **DX** or **Jumping** roll. Maximum distance in yards is the higher of **Basic Move/2** or **Jumping/4**. Double that with room for a running start; halve it in combat (where it takes an entire Move maneuver, p. 29). Success gets you across. Failure allows a **DX** roll to catch the far side (no consolation with a *shallow* hazard) and try a pull-up (p. 21). Critical failure – or failure on the last-ditch DX roll – means falling right in!

Hopping over or onto a high vertical obstacle (e.g., a table or chair) requires a **DX** or **Jumping** roll. Failure means you fall down. This takes a Move maneuver in combat. If you take *two* Move maneuvers, you can scramble up without rolling.

Leg Up

A friend can boost you to a high area by making a **ST** roll while you roll **Acrobatics** at -2. If you both succeed, you can reach anything up to the sum of your heights and try a pull-up (below) to get *yourself* up there. Failure by either of you lets you retry, but your partner must pay 1 FP per repeated attempt. On any critical failure, you collapse in a pile and each take 1d-3 HP of injury (DR *doesn't* protect).

Pull-Up

Make a **ST**-based **Climbing** roll to pull yourself up onto anything you can reach: your height plus 1.5'. Failure means you hang there; you may retry, paying 1 FP per repeated attempt. Critical failure means a strained arm (crippled for 30 minutes) and a fall – *bad*, if you're trying to recover from another failed stunt.

Running Climb

If two obstacles are within two yards, you can run at one and kick off back and forth between them to gain additional height before a pull-up. Use the better of **Acrobatics** or **Jumping**, at -4 to gain Basic Move/4 yards or -6 to gain Basic Move/2 yards (round *up*). Failure means a fall from that height; critical failure means maximum falling damage!

Skidding

To cross a slippery surface like ice, make a **DX** or **DX**-based **Skating** roll at the combat penalty for bad footing (p. 35) – usually -2. Failure means falling down; roll **DX** at -4 to stand up before you can try again (this is when the ice weasels attack). Critical failure adds 1d-3 HP of injury (DR *doesn't* protect) to a random limb.

Squeezing

Roll against **Escape** to wriggle through a narrow crack. Success gets you to the other side. Failure means you *won't fit* and can't retry until something (traditionally, shedding encumbrance) raises your effective skill. Critical failure means you're stuck and must be rescued.

Swimming

Water is a common obstacle. Swimming across requires a **Swimming** roll.

Modifiers: +3 for entering intentionally and not falling in; double encumbrance penalties (e.g., Heavy encumbrance gives -6); +1 if Overweight or +3 if Fat.

Failure means you inhale water and lose 1 FP. Roll again every five seconds until you succeed, drown, or are rescued. At 0 FP, you lose 1 HP per FP and must make a **Will** roll every second or fall unconscious; see *Suffocation* (p. 70).

Jaws: Most water in dungeons has Things That Bite – and then you're stuck using Water Move (Basic Move/5, minimum 1), while your effective combat skills are limited to your

DX-based **Swimming** level. Aquatic monsters get their *full* Move and skill!

Swinging

If you can affix a line to an overhead anchor (toss a grapnel or lariat, or climb up and tie it), you can swing across a hazard. Regardless of the rope's true length, *effective* length can't exceed the distance from anchor to ground. You can swing up to 3/4 of effective length from a vertical rope, or 1.5 times effective length if it starts 45° off-vertical. Make an **Acrobatics** roll at the range penalty for that distance (*Size and Speed/Range Table*, pp. 97-98). Failure allows you to retry. Critical failure drops you into the hazard!

HOLDING YOUR BREATH

Those swimming (above) or facing gas can hold their breath. Breath-holding time is as follows:

No Exertion (e.g., sitting quietly): HT×10 seconds.

Mild Exertion (e.g., walking): HT×4 seconds.

Heavy Exertion (e.g., combat, running, or swimming): HT seconds.

This assumes you have a second beforehand to prepare. If you don't – e.g., a gas trap goes off or you fall into water – *halve* these times. On the other hand, a successful **Breath Control** roll multiplies these times by 1.5.

Once this time is up, you must either draw a breath (if you can) or suffer the effects of *Suffocation* (p. 70) . . .

Muscle

Adventurers don't always circumvent barriers. Someone who's strong enough can *go through*. **Strength** also governs lifting: treasure, massive gates, fallen allies . . .

Knock, Knock: Feats of Strength are *noisy*. When using brute force for anything but lifting and carrying personal gear, Stealth is impossible. Nearby foes get an uncontested Hearing roll to hear the racket; success means they may come looking.

Pulling Your Weight: If you aren't strong enough, consider *Extra Effort* (p. 20). This applies to **Basic Lift** for lifting, or to **ST** for ST rolls, distance, and damage. Friends can help, too! The GM decides how many sets of hands can contribute; e.g., two adventurers could lift a chest with two handles, while four could cooperate to raise a four-yard-wide portcullis. Use the total Basic Lift for a lift, or the *highest* ST plus 1/5 of the total of everybody else's ST (rounded up) if the task uses ST (e.g., battering-ram damage).

Hiii-yah! Martial artists can make a **Power Blow** roll to double ST for direct uses and Basic Lift. If an object's Damage Resistance is involved, a **Breaking Blow** roll (at -1 for wood, -3 for stone, or -5 for metal) can divide DR by 5. Pay 1 FP per skill per attempt.

Lifting and Shifting

Basic Lift (BL) rates the weight you can manage. After adding any **Lifting ST** to ST, calculate BL as ST×ST/5 pounds. Use BL as follows:

One-Handed Lift: BL (one second), 2×BL (two seconds).

Two-Handed Lift: 2×BL (one second), 4×BL (two seconds), 8×BL (four seconds).

Shove and Knock Over: 12×BL (one second), 24×BL with a running start (two seconds).

Maximum Press: 15×BL (get your *entire body* under the load and use your back). Costs 1 FP per second *on top of* any extra effort!

Pull/Drag: 15×BL, and also divide the load's effective weight by 2 on a slick surface (e.g., ice), 5 for a one-wheeled wheelbarrow, 10 for a two-wheeled cart, or 20 for a four-wheeled wagon. Add any conveyance's weight to the load before dividing. Determine encumbrance level using *effective* weight, and find Move normally.

Shift/Rock Slightly: 50×BL.

Lifting in Combat: Each second of lifting is a Ready maneuver. To pick up another *character*, you must successfully grapple first (*Grappling*, pp. 40-41) – and your rival may try to break free during the time the lift takes! Shoving something is an Attack maneuver, preceded by a Move maneuver for a running start.

Bridging Hazards

A party member who gets past an obstacle can coordinate with someone on the far side to set up a ladder (no roll) or toss a line (the person doing so rolls vs. **Throwing**) so the others can get there safely – if the group *has* a rope or ladder long enough to reach! Once this is ready, people can be hoisted up or lowered – or cross using handholds or on hands and knees – one at a time. This requires no roll, or a **DX** roll if the GM feels mean (probably at +5, unless feeling *really* mean).

Running Away!

If you can't win, *run!* Each second, heroes and monsters alike can run yards equal to whatever Move their encumbrance (*Adventurers*, p. 12) permits. Each obstacle pushed past gives -1 to Move that second; for an unlocked door, roll vs. the better of **DX** or **DX**-based **Running** skill, with any success giving -1 to Move but any failure costing a full second's progress. A straight, clear course (*not* twisting tunnels), grants +1 to Move. Every 15 seconds, roll against the higher of **HT** or **Running**, with any failure costing 1 FP – which can reduce Move (*Effects of Accumulated Fatigue*, pp. 63-64). Keep track of total ground covered by each side, in case someone wants to stop and use a ranged ability.

Throwing

When throwing *weapons*, use the stats on the weapon table. However, you can throw random objects that weigh up to 2×BL one-handed, or anything you can lift two-handed. In combat, this is an Attack maneuver, rolled against **DX**, **Throwing**, or **Throwing Art**. Apply standard ranged-combat modifiers – and basic DX has an *extra* -3 to hit a specific target rather than a general area.

Distance thrown in yards (hexes) and damage on impact are as follows:

Weight	Distance	Damage
Up to BL/8	2.5×ST yards	thrust-2
Up to BL/4	1.5×ST yards	thrust-1
Up to BL/2	ST yards	thrust
Up to BL	ST/2 yards	thrust+1
Up to 2×BL	ST/3 yards	thrust
Up to 4×BL	ST/5 yards	thrust
Up to 8×BL	ST/10 yards	thrust-1

For *distance*, add +1 to ST for **Throwing Art** at DX or **Throwing** at DX+1, or +2 to ST for **Throwing Art** at DX+1 or **Throwing** at DX+2. Drop all fractions.

Damage is crushing unless the GM rules it's cutting or impaling due to object shape. Add +1 *per die* to damage with **Throwing Art** at DX, or +2 at DX+1.

Catching: If someone throws something *to* you, roll vs. **DX** to catch it. You have -4 if you aren't taking a Wait maneuver, but get a bonus equal to half the thrower's margin of success (drop fractions). This counts as a parry with your catching hand.

Bashing

You can destroy a door or chest with a crushing or cutting weapon. Don't bother with attack rolls! Roll damage at +2, or +1 per die, for All-Out Attack (Strong) – plus *another* +1 per die with **Forced Entry** at DX+1, or +2 per die at DX+2. The GM will subtract DR, multiply by 1.5 if you used a cutting attack, and reduce the target's HP until it breaks.

Swords dislike such abuse, and have a 3 in 6 chance (2 in 6 if fine, 1 in 6 if very fine) of bending: -1 to skill. *Crowbars* revel in destruction, and deliver swing+2 crushing.

Forcing

Another option is to apply boot or shoulder to the door and overpower its attachments without annihilating it. Roll a Quick Contest: **ST** vs. the lock or hinge's HP (6 to 46). You may add **Lifting ST**, +2 for a crowbar, and +1 with **Forced Entry** at DX+1 or +2 at DX+2, but have a penalty equal to the hardware's DR (-3 to -24).

For a *barred* or *wedged* portal, use the bar or wedge's DR (-1 to -16) as a penalty, if greater than the lock or hinge's DR. Similarly, the portal resists with the bar or wedge's HP (14 to 37), if higher than the lock or hinge's HP.

You must *win* to open the door. Repeated attempts (p. 7) have a cumulative -1 and cost 1 FP each.

Bending

To pry apart metal bars in a grate or portcullis, use the *Forcing* rules. A metal bar gives from -6 to -24 for DR, and has from 12 to 46 HP.

TRAPS AND HAZARDS

Monsters aren't the only things that can kill delvers (or at least give them a really bad day). Dungeon security systems include all manner of infernal devices. In *all* cases, if an adventurer with **Danger Sense** is on a fast path to enjoying one of these dangers, the GM should make a secret **Perception** roll. Success warns of danger – *not* what the danger is!

Dealing with Traps

A **trap** is a mechanical device – covered pit, shuriken launcher, overhead chute full of rusty morningstar heads – intended to harm those who trigger it. Everything involving traps is a function of the **Traps** skill.

Finding: Detecting a trap requires a *Per*-based roll, with **Acute Vision** bonuses and darkness penalties. *Concealed* traps give a penalty. The party is assumed to be looking for traps at all times. The GM rolls secretly against their *best Traps* skill – separately for each group, when split up – to see if they notice each trap. When running away (p. 22) or similarly rushed, roll at -5!

Disarming: Disabling most traps calls for a *DX*-based roll, with **High Manual Dexterity** bonuses. *Tricky* traps give a penalty.

Rearming: By making the roll to disarm again, it's possible to rearm *some* traps after the party has passed.

Stealing: Small traps (leg-hold traps, tripwires, etc.) can be taken once disarmed. This is a standard *IQ*-based roll.

Tricks

A *trick* is a non-mechanical “trap” like a mirror or other optical illusion (penalized **IQ** roll to discover), temporary spell (**Detect Magic** cast on dodgy-looking scenery, or an active **Mage Sight** spell, to reveal), or permanent enchantment (mages get a **Perception + Magery** roll to detect). The GM invents the details. It's impossible to prepare for every trick!

Weird Portals: A favorite trick of evil masterminds is a portal that transports the party somewhere *bad*. If you walk through one of these, Magic Resistance *won't* help! You'll also be disoriented and forced to Do Nothing for the first turn after you arrive – when the inevitable monsters attack – unless you can make a **Body Sense** roll.

Dangerous Stuff

Other unpleasantness includes . . .

Gunk: Some “traps” aren't triggered but consist of vile glop sitting where heroes will touch it; e.g., contact poison on

treasure or flesh-eating acid in a mud puddle. To spot these, adventurers get a *Per*-based roll against **Poisons** for toxins, or **Alchemy** for acid, volatile oil, and the like. **Acute Vision** adds if the goo is visible; otherwise, **Acute Taste and Smell** helps sniff it out. Such rolls often have penalties! Make a standard *IQ*-based skill roll to wash it off safely, with failure meaning it gets on *someone*.

Potions: Magic potions (see *Adventurers* for examples) can guest-star as gunk. Use the rules above, but mages get a **Perception + Magery** roll to spot this. Removing such gunk requires an **Alchemy** or **Hazardous Materials** roll.

Evil Runes: Glyphs that drain life, explode, and so on show up regularly in dungeons. Nobody knows who carves them, but they correspond to no conventional spell and defy magical analysis. The only way to distinguish them from orc graffiti or a mason's mark is with a **Thaumatology** roll. Most are permanent and trigger on *intent*, affecting delvers who “cleverly” try to avoid them using 10' poles or pull-ropes. The usual solution is to send in whoever has the most HP – typically the barbarian.

Picking Locks

Portals in *Dungeon Fantasy* are often locked. (Rumor has it that gnomish craftsmen are growing wealthy selling locks to stupid goblins.) Picking a lock requires a **Lockpicking** roll. *Puzzle* locks may make this roll *IQ*-based.

Modifiers: Equipment modifiers (p. 7). From +5 to -5 for cheap through fine locks.

Curses 101

Some dungeon areas are *curse*d by squid shamans, *satanistas*, and their ilk. Common effects are a simple -1 to -3 to success rolls, disease-like symptoms (HP, FP, or attribute loss), flying objects (inflicting damage or stealing gear), and possession (spinning head and vomiting). They might be persistent (constantly affecting a room) or triggered (e.g., afflicting those who touch an altar), and may be confined to the area or continue to haunt victims who leave.

Detection: Those with **Holiness** or **Power Investiture** get a **Perception** roll with a bonus equal to advantage level to recognize a cursed zone before it's too late. If they're not *in front*, though, somebody may already be cursed! An **Occultism** roll can also reveal the danger *if* there's a visible altar, idol, or the like that will curse those who mess with it (e.g., by prying the rubies from the idol's eyes). The GM makes such rolls secretly.

Analysis: A separate **Occultism** or **Theology** roll – at a penalty for altars of *forgotten* cults or *unspeakable* gods – may turn up clues about the curse's effects and triggers. The GM rolls secretly. Critical failure means the curse affects the analyst.

It's unwise to stand around the evil altar, thinking hard about what the squid motif means!

Cleansing: Making a cursed area safe to enter or a cursed altar safe to pillage requires an **Exorcism** roll by a cleric or holy warrior. This is a Quick Contest vs. the often high Will of the evil force possessing the area. A blessed or high holy symbol gives +1 or +2, respectively. This takes *three hours*, if time matters, and fails automatically if anyone casts any magic within the exorcist's sight. The exorcist must *win* to prevail; otherwise, that person can't retry for a week (others can). An exorcist who rolls a critical failure suffers the curse!

Treatment: If a *person* is cursed, use the procedure for cleansing, but add the higher of the victim's **ST** or **Will** to the exorcist's roll.

Magic: Those with more FP than time may use a **Remove Curse** spell for cleansing or treatment. This works just like Exorcism, but costs 20 FP and takes only an hour.

Speaking from Experience

Adventures involve tons of fighting, but the whole point is to get rich. That calls for a plan.

First thing after a fight, search dead enemies for valuables – it's an icky job, but don't waste time. Blood ruins fancy clothing. Acid blood ruins everything. After you're done, have your survivalist friends remove valuable pelts or horns, and ask the clerics and wizards to look for magical body parts. Be fast! Some monsters start rotting right away.

Then search the area while your pals are hacking the bodies. Like people, most monsters don't lug their life's savings around. Check out chests. Look for nearby secret compartments. Watch out for traps!

Don't overlook the fixtures. Cushions and rugs can be worth something. Metal sheeting on doors and furniture can be stripped off and melted down. Sometimes the wood is valuable, too. If you have beefy friends, lug it all to town and you can make a killing.

– Puddin' Noddington, Thief

LOOTING

After the delvers have explored the dungeon, circumvented its barriers, disarmed its traps, and defeated its denizens, it's time for the feature presentation: booty, plunder, spoils, swag, treasure . . . *loot*.

Searching the Bodies

Defeated enemies, dead or alive, may have hard-to-find loot on them. A **Search** roll will find this – but a conscious prisoner must be restrained first (*Prisoners*, p. 25). If *several* people search, use margin of success to determine who finds the best stuff. The GM should reveal the results to the players in secret. That makes it easier for the thief to palm evil, mind-warping things that the cleric would destroy!

Dead Monster Bits

Taking rings from dead hands isn't enough for the truly greedy – some will want to keep the fingers. The necessary preparations must be done while the kill is fresh. If the party returns to an undefended room full of carrion, assume that massive dungeon rats (or grubs, 'pedes, or *something*) carried it off, or at least ate the valuable eyes.

Poisons: Make a **Poisons** roll to milk toxins from a mundane venomous creature (like a cobra, even a *giant* cobra), or a **Hazardous Materials** roll to extract any agent with weird powers. Failure ruins the lot. Critical failure poisons the looter.

Mundane Parts: Make a **Naturalist** roll to identify horns, teeth, and so on with uses as raw materials or in medicine (despite the name, this skill covers "unnatural" creatures such as giant worms). Roll against a suitable **Physiology** specialty to find *internal* parts of this kind. To remove a pelt, or yank out claws, horns, or teeth, make a **Survival** roll. To carve out internal organs, roll **Surgery**. Any failure on the extraction roll spoils the loot.

Magical Parts: Bizarre supernatural organs require a **Thaumatology** roll to find and then a **Surgery** roll to remove. Failure on *either* roll ruins the body part.

Cracking Chests and Vaults

Use **Bashing** (p. 22), **Forcing** (p. 22), or **Picking Locks** (p. 23) to open loot containers, and **Dealing with Traps** (p. 23) for any traps on them. Some notes:

- Bashing or forcing a container almost always sets off any traps on it!
- Picking a *trapped lock* uses the *lower* of **Lock-picking** or **Traps**. Success opens the lock – which, done correctly, also leaves the trap untriggered. Failure means the lock stays shut but the trap goes off.
- Some traps aren't detectable from the outside. With something as small as a chest, a looter can feel for these and try to interrupt them *as the container is opened*. Such work by touch requires a DX-based **Traps** roll at -5, plus any **High Manual Dexterity** and **Sensitive Touch** bonuses. Failure means experiencing the trap.

Identifying the Good Stuff

Not all loot looks like loot. Some has hidden properties that make it more valuable – or trash. Professional dungeon-crawlers *need* special skills to figure out what to keep, sell, and discard. Except as noted, these rolls identify the treasure but not its fair value.

Coin: Assume that any delver who isn't completely illiterate (as barbarians often are) can count and evaluate coin: copper coins are worth \$50/lb.; silver ones, \$1,000/lb.; and gold ones, \$20,000/lb. To avoid being ripped off, bring scales and weigh it all!

Stones: Everybody knows that shiny rocks are valuable. To tell semiprecious stones from gemstones, make a **Merchant** roll.

Luxury Items: To know fine incense from cathouse perfume, rare tropical woods from common types, ermine from rat fur, and so on, roll vs. **Connoisseur (Luxuries)**.

Rare Artifacts: Some things, especially artworks, are valuable because of who made or owned them, or by dint of history. Make a **Connoisseur (Art)** roll to spot a potential item of this kind – and a **Forgery** roll to discover whether it's real or a fake! A **Heraldry** roll might deduce makers or past owners from marks left on the item (GM's decision).

Superior Weapons and Armor: Roll against an appropriate **Armory** specialty or **Connoisseur (Weapons)** to spot better-than-average arms and armor, including such properties as “balanced,” “dwarven,” and “meteoric.”

Blessed Items: A **Perception** roll with bonus equal to **Holiness** or **Power Investiture** lets those with either trait spot a blessed (or *cursed*) item. A cleric can take four hours to pray for the full details by making a **Religious Ritual** roll. Critical failure triggers any curse present.

Magic Items: The most reliable way to spot magic items is for a wizard to make a **Perception + Magery** roll on sight or on touch. Use the **Analyze Magic** spell to reveal specific enchantments. A delver with a backpack alchemy lab can take an hour and make an **Alchemy** roll at -2 to learn the object's *general* abilities (*not* specific spells) – but critical failure wrecks the item! If the artifact is legendary, a **Hidden Lore (Magic Items)** roll will identify its common name and known functions.

Magical Writings: The reader of a text must know its language to have any hope of knowing what it's about. Skimming a spellbook reveals the spells it holds; make a **Thaumatology** or **Religious Ritual** roll for this, as applicable. Roll **Hidden Lore (Magical Writings)** to discover other properties (“Those who read this will turn into a duck!”), with any failure activating *bad* effects. Either takes four hours – or an hour and a half with a **Speed-Reading** roll. Wizardly scrolls show up to **Magery**; clerical or druidic ones, to appropriate **Power Investiture**.

Potions: These are visible to **Magery**. Roll **Alchemy** to analyze a potion's effects. The tester can use a backpack alchemy lab, take four hours, and at worst ruin the potion on a critical failure . . . or taste the stuff, which takes 10 seconds but inflicts any bad effects on *any* failure!

Naturally Occurring Money

Even an “empty” room – especially a cave – may contain loot. To identify the ore the goblins were mining, or the strange metal in the excrement of the rock-chewing worm, make a **Prospecting** roll. The GM decides how much there is and how long it takes to mine.

Speaking from Experience

When exploring mines and caverns, remember that precious things might be all around you – overhead, underfoot, in the walls. Nature provides, and gems and gold are born of the Earth. But mine with respect! My people – the dwarves – were also born of the Earth, and have learned this art. Randomly attacking deep places with picks and mauls is disrespectful, and the surest way to earn Nature's wrath.

– Ælin Rock-Talker, Druid

Determining Value

If looters want to estimate an item's fair value, the GM will make a secret **Merchant** roll. Success reveals a round figure *based only on what they know* (covered at length in Chapter 5). The results will be bogus if the roll fails – or meaningless if the party is missing major details. It's always best to wait for complete identification; e.g., “A fine, balanced broadsword of smiting, blessed by the Squid God, known to be the blade that Hack Slashman used to slay the great wyrm Blargh.”

Prisoners

The spoils of victory sometimes include prisoners. Top priority is to ensure they don't escape. Shackles are ideal, but not every party brings those (thieves *hate* them), and they rarely come in dragon size. Rope or cord will do – divide the prisoner's BL by 50 to find the needed weight in pounds. The GM will make a secret **Knot-Tying** roll to estimate this amount and bind the target. Failure means the captive wriggles free as soon as nobody is looking – or immediately, on a critical failure. For a magic-using prisoner, *any* failure means the spellcaster wasn't gagged and blindfolded securely enough to prevent casting!



Magic provides the best of treasures: enchanted artifacts, spellbooks, even simple potions. Learn to recognize them! Leave coins, jewels, spices, and finery to the short-sighted, the greedy, and the decadent. Wealth brings fleeting power at best. Magic holds the potential for immortality.

– Zephyra, Wizard

CHAPTER THREE

FIGHTING

Delvers inevitably end up fighting: monsters in the dungeon, brigands between there and town, underworld scum *in* town – and perhaps *each other*, if they quarrel over treasure!

As *Dungeon Fantasy* features every possible muscle-powered weapon, and numerous spells and special abilities, covering all the bases calls for a lot of rules.

CALM BEFORE THE STORM

It's the GM's responsibility to set the scene for each fight. Is the party ambushed from darkness, above, or another dimension? Do they hear the boss monster growl the order to attack the instant they kick down the door or turn the corner? Or do they have an opportunity to negotiate (*Monsters*, p. 5), swap their maps and pens for shields and swords, or even *set* an ambush?

How far apart do the belligerents begin? That determines the penalty to Vision (p. 9) if anyone wants to see details, and to ranged attacks if somebody shoots; see the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (pp. 97-98). Distance also penalizes most magic, as *Spells* explains, and is *essential* when running away (p. 22).

What does the battlefield look like? Is there darkness (*Light Sources*, p. 19) or bad footing (p. 35)? Are there objects to jump up onto (*Jumping*, p. 20) or avoid (e.g., lava pits)? Is there room to maneuver, or is the space hemmed in by walls, chasms, or giant meat-grinders?

Most of this is left to GM fiat or revealed by the combat map (pp. 27-28). For fairness' sake, though, a couple of things require more detail.

What Were You Doing?

When traveling or exploring, everyone starts the battle in *Marching Order* (p. 19) as established by the players' latest standing orders. Mappers and torch-bearers have hands occupied as explained in *Mapping* (p. 18) and *Light Sources* (p. 19). Delvers should *write down* what they usually carry (torch and shield, sword and shield, bow and arrow,

quarterstaff, whatever). Everybody should record how they're armored, what magic spells they're maintaining, and so on. Those who leave details unspecified are in full armor with no magic active, wielding a weapon if free hands allow – and a shield, if *that's* possible.

Not all combat happens while marching, however! If violence erupts while encamped, only watch-keepers are prepared like this. Everybody else starts out lying down, armored (*Sleeping in Armor*, above) but empty-handed. See *Camping and Posting Watches* (p. 18).

And if the heroes are engaged in time-consuming activities such as exorcism (*Curses 101*, pp. 23-24) or treating the wounded (*Patching Up*, p. 63), those involved are assumed to be armored but wielding the tools their task requires – *not* weapons and shields – and kneeling or sitting. Those resting to recover FP can have everything at the ready but are sitting or lying down. Only sentries are standing with everything at the ready.

In all cases, people are normally assumed to be taking Do Nothing maneuvers (p. 29) – or Concentrate maneuvers (p. 31) if engaged in skilled tasks (e.g., exorcism, mapping, or patching wounds). Delvers who are *exploring* or *standing watch* (not resting or bent over a task) can state in advance that they're maintaining Wait maneuvers (pp. 32-33), but that's tiring: 1 FP per 10 minutes and no FP recovery possible.

The GM should periodically ask the players what their PCs are doing – especially if the party pauses or enters a new area. Those decisions *stick* if hostilities break out!

Sleeping in Armor

This isn't that hard once you're used to it. Paranoid munchkins are *definitely* used to it! The GM shouldn't be a cad and assess terrible penalties for this. However, the occasional creepy-crawler under the armor, biting and slithering, can be fun.

Surprise Attacks

If one side can ambush the other, it "achieves" or "has" **surprise** when the fight starts – a major advantage! Judge this as follows:

- If two groups meet in a field, empty room, or other area with clear sightlines and no hiding spots, and neither enjoys supernatural concealment (e.g., invisibility), *nobody* has surprise!

- If two groups are separated by a corner, door, or other obstacle, and neither is being sneaky, the GM will secretly try each side's *best* Sense roll (p. 9) capable of detecting the other. Success lets that side opt to attempt to achieve surprise. If that's the PCs, the GM should say, "You think there's somebody there. What do you do?" And yes, both sides can *try*.

- Anyone *already* being sneaky in an area where that's plausible may always try to achieve surprise. Everything takes twice as long while being stealthy, so anyone paying FP to maintain a spell, ability, or Wait (*What Were You Doing?*, p. 26) ends up paying double – and if the clock is ticking, the GM is free to advance it. Again, both sides can *try*.

- If one group is *undetectable* to the other – e.g., they're invisible, or beings that can emerge from a blank wall – they may *always* try to achieve surprise. The ability used or the situation will give them a bonus or their rivals a penalty (-2 or worse) in the Quick Contest to come.

"Try" doesn't mean "succeed." If either group tries to achieve surprise, roll a Quick Contest:

- If *one* side tries, use their *worst* **Stealth** vs. the other side's *best* **Hearing** or **Vision** – or their rivals' **Observation**, if sentries are posted. If they win, they achieve surprise. Otherwise, they don't.

Mental Stun

Failed Fright Checks (pp. 10-11), enemy surprise attacks (pp. 26-27), and supernatural abilities can cause confusion called **mental stun**. In this state, all active defense rolls are at -4 and you can't retreat. On your next turn, you *must* choose the Do Nothing maneuver (p. 29) and try an **IQ** roll, at +6 if you have **Combat Reflexes**. Success lifts the defense restrictions and lets you act normally on later turns. Failure means your defenses remain limited and you must use your *next* turn to Do Nothing and roll to recover . . . and so on, until you finally succeed.

- If *both* sides try, use the *worst* *Per*-based **Stealth** on each side. The winner achieves surprise – and on a tie, both sides are surprised!

When the delvers send a scouting party ahead, roll only for the spies. If they *win*, they may opt to return to alert the others. The whole group can then set an ambush or move up to kick in a door. Roll vs. their *best* **Stealth** modified as in *Part of the Solution or Part of the Problem* (p. 6) – or, if the party sets an ambush where they are, they may use their best **Tactics** skill, if better. Simple success means the *whole group* achieves surprise!

When one group surprises another, everyone on the surprised side suffers mental stun (above). Their **IQ** rolls to snap out of this are at +1 on the second turn, +2 on the third, and so on.



COMBAT MAPS

A **combat map** depicts the battlefield and its important features: walls, pillars, lava pits, etc. Map scale for *Dungeon Fantasy* is 1" = 3': each inch represents one yard.

HEXES

The combat map is overlaid by a hexagonal grid. Each hexagon – or **hex** – is one inch across, so it represents one

yard of distance. It's also the basic unit of movement: each hex a fighter moves represents one yard of movement.

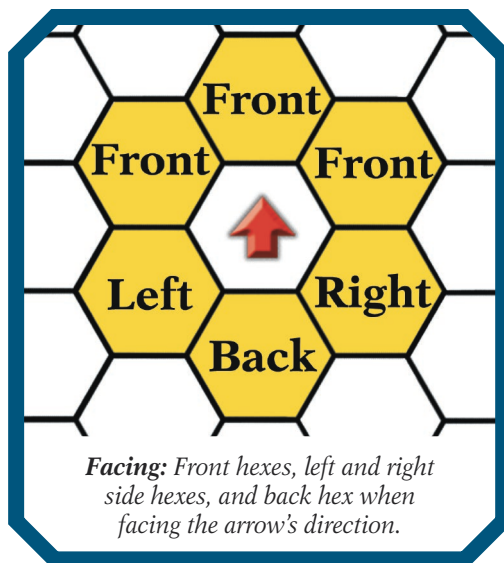
Treat a fractional hex (e.g., one cut in half by a wall) as a full hex: fighters can move through it and occupy it unless the GM rules otherwise. This allows better representation of right-angled walls and irregular caverns. You can move through an ally's hex, but this will slow you down. You cannot move through or occupy any hex *completely* filled by a solid barrier.

FIGURES

You need a marker or miniature **figure** to represent each combatant. Any counter will do, as long as it has a “front” to indicate facing (below) and some way to show when the fighter it represents is lying down. *Dungeon Fantasy* includes cardboard figures scaled to the maps in the box.

Placing Figures

Before combat, the players and GM should discuss *Calm Before the Storm* (pp. 26-27) and place figures on the combat map for everyone involved. Typically, each side can position figures in a specific collection of hexes set by the encounter, and nobody can start behind enemy lines except in an ambush! The GM determines what hexes each side starts in and the distance between those areas.



Gigantic monsters might fill several hexes (see **Monsters**), but each human-sized or smaller fighter must occupy one specific hex. It cannot sit between hexes unless it's crawling or lying down – in that case, a human-sized fighter occupies *two* hexes. Multiple figures can share a hex, but this puts them in close combat (p. 51), limiting their options.

Facing

You must always face toward one of the six hexes adjacent to your hex. Your **facing** defines your *front*, *right*, *left*, and *back* hexes (see illustration). If you're right-handed, the right side is the “weapon side” and the left side is the “shield side.” If you're left-handed, these are

reversed. Only movement, attack, and defense into your front hexes is unpenalized.

COMBAT TURN SEQUENCE

Combat takes place on a second-by-second basis. Any participant who isn't totally incapacitated gets one opportunity to act per second, referred to as that fighter's **turn**. After everyone has taken a turn, one second has passed and another second begins.

Turns occur in an order called the **turn sequence**. *This is set at the start of the fight and doesn't change.* The combatant with the highest **Basic Speed** takes a turn first, then the one with the next-highest score, and so on, in descending order.

If multiple NPCs on the same side have the same Basic Speed, the GM decides which of them goes first. If PCs are involved, ties go to the highest **DX**. If there's *still* a tie, roll

randomly at the start of the combat to determine who acts first and use that order for the entire combat.

To keep track of all this, the GM should make a list of the combatants in the order in which they'll take their turns.

“Your Turn”

Each participant's turn starts when that fighter chooses a maneuver (see below) and ends when that maneuver's movement and dice rolls are resolved. The *effects* of the maneuver – e.g., sacrificing defenses – endure until that fighter chooses a new maneuver. This time period is fixed at one second. Effects such as spells, smoke nageteppo, and alchemist's fire mark one second of duration on each later turn of the person who activated them.

MANEUVERS

A **maneuver** is an action you can take on your turn. Each turn, you must choose *one* maneuver. Your choice determines *what you can do* that turn.

Active Defense and Maneuvers

The maneuver you choose affects your ability to defend against attacks (*Defending*, pp. 46-50). Your most recent maneuver is considered to be in effect until you select another maneuver, on your *next* turn. It influences the defenses you can use if you're attacked in the meantime.

Example: All-Out Attack (p. 30) allows no defense! Choosing that maneuver leaves you defenseless against all attacks that occur between when you pick it and your *next* turn, when – if you survive – you may select a new maneuver.

If you're attacked before you've chosen a maneuver, you're usually considered to be taking a Do Nothing maneuver (*What Were You Doing?*, p. 26), allowing you to defend normally unless surprised (pp. 26-27).

Movement and Maneuvers

Some maneuvers (notably Change Posture and Do Nothing) allow *no* movement, but most let you move your figure around the combat map. Many maneuvers limit movement to a **step** (p. 33), which typically means one hex. Others permit you to spend **movement points** (p. 33) equal to half your Move or your entire Move, and you can move as many hexes as you have movement points. There are important exceptions to all of this, though – see *Movement* (pp. 33-35).

DO NOTHING

As the name suggests, you do nothing! When combat begins, fighters who haven't selected a maneuver are usually treated as having taken this one. Gravely wounded or fatigued delvers may opt to take this maneuver *instead of* rolling to remain conscious. Anyone who's stunned *must* take it and use it for their recovery roll – against **HT** for physical stun (p. 60), **IQ** for mental stun (p. 27).

Movement: None!

Active Defense: Any – but if you're *stunned*, your active defenses are at -4 and you can't retreat.

MOVE

Choose this maneuver to do nothing *but* move – it allows the swiftest movement without sacrificing defense. You may take no other actions but *Free Actions* (below), though.

Movement: You receive movement points (p. 33) equal to your current Move score.

Active Defense: Any.

CHANGE POSTURE

Switch between two **postures**: *standing*, *sitting*, *kneeling*, *crawling*, *lying prone* (face down), and *lying face up*. Any posture other than standing slows your movement and penalizes attacks and defenses; see the *Postures Table* (p. 99).

A human-sized fighter in a lying posture occupies *two* hexes. If you lie down or are knocked down, your lower half occupies the hex you were standing in while your upper half can occupy any adjacent hex. You cannot go directly from either lying posture to standing. You must take one Change Posture maneuver to rise to crawling, kneeling, or sitting; you may choose to get up in either of your hexes. Take a second Change Posture maneuver to stand from any of these postures.

You can switch between *kneeling* and *standing* (only!) as the “step” portion of any maneuver that allows a step – you don't need Change Posture for that. This is *instead of* using the step to move.

Crouching (below) does *not* require a Change Posture maneuver.

Movement: None! You remain in place as you change posture.

Active Defense: Any. Postures other than *standing* penalize defenses but make you a smaller target for ranged attacks.

FREE ACTIONS

Free actions are things you can do during *any* maneuver. The only conditions are that it's *your* turn and you aren't incapacitated. Some examples:

Talk. You can *always* talk. Magical rituals (see **Spells**), Influence rolls (p. 10), giving orders (“*Onward to Victory!*”, p. 57), and similar talk require a maneuver – but just running on at the mouth is free!

Drop an item. You can drop *any* ready item at *any* time during *any* maneuver. If you move, you may drop it in any hex you pass through or any adjacent hex.

Play dead (p. 57).

Maintain spells. You can maintain a spell no matter what else you do.

Cancel spells. You can end a spell early no matter what else you do, as long as you can afford the energy (**Spells**, p. 11).

Crouching

If you're standing, you can crouch at the *beginning* of your turn as part of any maneuver. If you don't move or if you only step, you may crouch *after* performing another action such as attacking or readying. However, you cannot move more than a step and then crouch at the end of your movement. But if you're already crouching, you may *leave* your crouch at any time as a free action.

AIM

Aim a ranged weapon (throwing axe, bow, Missile spell . . .) at something or someone you can see or otherwise detect. Specify the weapon and who or what you're aiming it at. If you follow your Aim with an Attack or All-Out Attack with *that* weapon against *that* target, you get a bonus to hit equal to the weapon's Accuracy (Acc).

Taking multiple Aim maneuvers in succession gives an additional bonus: +1 for two successive Aim maneuvers, +2 for three or more. This makes even Acc 0 weapons like potion bottles worth aiming.

You can **brace** a crossbow on a low wall, table, or anything similar as part of your Aim maneuver(s). Bracing gives an extra +1 to Acc.

If you lose sight of your target between when you Aim and when you attack, you lose all Aim bonuses. If you're *injured*, you must make a **Will** roll or lose your bonuses.

Movement: Step – or *no* movement if bracing a crossbow.

Active Defense: Any, but you *automatically* spoil your aim and lose your bonuses.

ATTACK

Make an armed or unarmed melee attack, or a ranged attack with a thrown or missile weapon. Any weapon used must be ready.

For a melee attack, your target must be within reach. Resolve the attack according to *Melee Attacks* (pp. 37-38). If you made a Feint (below last turn, your target may have a penalty to defend.

For a ranged attack, your target must be within the weapon's Max range. Carry out the attack as explained in *Ranged Attacks* (pp. 41-45). If you took an Aim (pp. 29-30) last turn, you may have a bonus to hit.

Movement: Step. You may step and then attack or attack and then step – your choice.

Active Defense: Any.

Speaking from Experience

Winner of fight is always who defends better – defend, defend, an' defend until enemy makes dumb mistake. Make fake attacks an' run around behind so enemy doesn't defend so good. Sure, be fast when you run an' when you attack for real, but that isn't same as being – what's word? – hasty. Hasty fighter drops guard, gets stabbed. Fast fighter with good defense does stabbing.

– Miao Miao, Swashbuckler

Yah, yah, yah – know when to duck. Winner of fight is who's better at takin' a few hits to give a few. No need to defend against dead enemy!

– Argua the Barbarian

FEINT

"Fake" a melee attack against someone you *could* Attack (above) in melee combat – i.e., who's in reach of your ready melee weapon. This is *not* an attack, though; it won't unready your weapon and never counts as a touch for abilities that require one.

Roll a Quick Contest with your opponent. Each of you uses the *best* of DX, the skill for any ready melee weapon, an unarmed combat skill (if you have at least one empty hand), or Cloak or Shield skill (if suitably equipped).

If your roll *fails* or your margin of success is no better than your rival's, your Feint fails.

If you *succeed* and your opponent *fails*, subtract your margin of success from that foe's active defense against any melee Attack, All-Out Attack, or Move and Attack you make next

turn; e.g., if you roll 12 against skill 15, your victim defends against you at -3 next turn.

If you *both* succeed but your margin of success is greater, subtract your margin of victory from that foe's defense; e.g., if you roll 10 against skill 15 (success by 5), and your rival rolls 12 against skill 14 (success by 2), you win by 3 and your victim defends against you at -3 next turn.

You cannot Feint an opponent who's unable to observe you! However, if your enemy flees, turns away, or loses sight of you *after* you successfully Feint, the defense penalty will still apply *if you attack that foe on your next turn*.

A Feint is good for *one* second. If you don't attack your victim on your *next* turn, the defense penalty vanishes. But if you're capable of multiple attacks that turn, your Feint benefits them all!

In all cases, the defense penalty applies only to *your* attacks on *that* foe. Your allies cannot take advantage of it, and you cannot transfer it to another enemy.

Movement: Step.

Active Defense: Any – but if this unreadies a weapon, that weapon won't be available to exploit your Feint.

ALL-OUT ATTACK

Ber-serk-er! Sacrifice all thought of defense to attack a foe using a ready weapon. If making a *melee* attack, specify one of four options when you choose your maneuver:

- *Determined:* Make *one* attack at +4 to hit.
- *Double:* Make *two* attacks against the same foe, *if* you have two ready weapons (*Using Both Hands*, p. 36) or one weapon that doesn't have to be readied after use.
- *Feint:* Make one Feint (above) and then one attack against the same foe. The Feint applies to *this* attack instead of one you make next turn.
- *Strong:* Make a single attack at normal skill. If you hit, you get +2 to damage – or +1 damage *per die*, if better.

If you already get two or more attacks, Double and Feint add one *extra* attack or Feint, respectively, to your output.

If making a *ranged* attack, you simply get +1 to hit.

Movement: You may remain stationary, turn in place to face any hex, or run *forward*. If you turn or move forward, you must do so *first* and *then* attack – not vice versa. If you move forward, you may move up to two hexes or expend movement points (p. 33) equal to half your Move (round up), whichever is more, and may not change facing at the end of your move.

Active Defense: None! You may make *no active defenses* between when you take this maneuver and your next turn. Good luck.

MOVE AND ATTACK

Move as described for the Move maneuver (p. 29), but make a single, poorly aimed attack – either unarmed or with a ready weapon – during or after your movement.

You attack as described for the Attack maneuver (p. 30), but at a penalty:

- For a *melee* attack other than a slam (p. 40), you have -4 to skill *and* final, effective skill after all modifiers cannot exceed 9.

- For a *ranged* attack, your penalty is -2 or the weapon's **Bulk** rating, whichever is *worse*. If you took an Aim (pp. 29-30), you lose its bonuses.

Movement: You receive movement points (p. 33) equal to your current Move score – but trying to do two things at once gives you -2 on all rolls to avoid falling down, and to avoid obstacles or traps.

Active Defense: Any – but you cannot parry or block with the hand you used to attack (*at all*, if you attacked with a two-handed weapon), and you cannot retreat (p. 50).

ALL-OUT DEFENSE

Defend and *only* that! Specify one of these options when you choose your maneuver:

- *Increased Defense:* Add +2 to *one* active defense of your choice: Dodge, Parry, or Block. This bonus persists until your next turn.

- *Double Defense:* If you fail a defense roll against an attack, you may try a second, *different* defense against the same attack; e.g., if you fail a dodge, you may try a block or a parry. If you fail a parry (armed or unarmed) with one hand, a parry using the other hand *does* qualify as a “different defense.”

Movement: Step – unless you choose Increased Dodge, in which case you may use movement points (p. 33) equal to half your Move (round up).

Active Defense: Any, with the bonuses described above.

CONCENTRATE

Focus on a primarily *mental* task – spellcasting, activating an ability that calls for this maneuver by name, or using a noncombat skill (like First Aid or Intimidation) in combat – even if this has a minor physical component.

If your activity requires multiple, successive Concentrate maneuvers (e.g., a spell that takes more than a second to cast), you must make a **Will** roll at -3 whenever a distraction occurs. This includes anything involving an active defense or resistance roll, or injury, restraint, or being knocked down. Failure means losing your concentration – start over!

Movement: Step.

Active Defense: Any – but it interferes with concentration as noted above.



READY

Carry out a primarily *physical* task. The most important task is preparing equipment (e.g., drawing a sword): A **ready** item is in hand and primed for action! An **unready** one is anything in a holster, scabbard, pocket, belt, or pack – or sitting on a floor, table, rack, or the like. Only a *ready* weapon, shield, or cloak can be used to attack or defend, only *ready* potions can be consumed or thrown, and so on.

It takes *one* Ready maneuver to grab an item that's on your belt, in a scabbard or a holster, or slung on your back.

It also takes one Ready maneuver to grab an item that's in your hex or an adjacent hex and not controlled by someone else. If it's on the ground, though, this requires you to be kneeling, crawling, sitting, or lying down. If you're standing, you must first take a Change Posture maneuver to kneel. You can Ready the item as you stand up again.

And it takes one Ready maneuver to accept one item (e.g., a potion) someone else is holding out to you. You must be in the same or an adjacent hex, and your ally must have taken a Ready maneuver *on their* turn to hold out the item. You cannot exchange several items at once – each object requires its own Ready maneuver from each of you.

Additional uses for Ready are:

Preparing a shield or cloak. Picking up or unslinging a shield or cloak and getting it ready for combat takes a number of consecutive Ready maneuvers equal to its Defense Bonus.

Loading a missile weapon. This requires the number of consecutive Ready maneuvers shown in parentheses after the weapon's Shots statistic on the *Ranged Weapons Table* (*Adventurers*, pp. 103-105).

Putting stuff away. Placing a weapon or other item in a scabbard, belt-loop, pocket, or the like takes *two* consecutive Ready maneuvers. Stowing a shield or cloak on your back takes a number of consecutive Ready maneuvers equal to its Defense Bonus. *Dropping* most items is a free action – but dropping a shield or cloak requires a Ready maneuver. (For these purposes, treat a *buckler* as a weapon, not a shield.)

Regaining control of an unwieldy weapon. Some weapons become *unready* after you attack unless your ST is at least

1.5 times that required to wield them; see the *Melee Weapons Table* (*Adventurers*, pp. 98-103). Then you must take a Ready maneuver before you can attack or parry with them. If you fall down or are stunned, such a weapon becomes *unready*!

Adjusting the reach of a long weapon. Some long weapons require a Ready to change reach; the *Melee Weapons Table* shows this, too. An *unready* weapon may be readied to any legal reach when you ready it – that's just part of the Ready maneuver.

Miscellaneous actions. Lighting a flaming arrow from a ready fire source, opening or closing a door, or opening or drinking a ready potion takes one Ready maneuver. Other activities require a number of consecutive Ready maneuvers equal to the time in seconds for that task; see *Long Actions* (above) for examples.

Switching an ability "off" or "on." Anything that isn't always on and doesn't specify the Concentrate maneuver requires a Ready maneuver.

If a task calls for "consecutive Ready maneuvers," choose the Ready maneuver each turn until you're finished. If you stop in the middle, you must generally start over. The GM can make exceptions where sensible; e.g., piling up rocks to stand on.

Movement: Step – but if trying to Ready an item you aren't carrying (e.g., on a table or rack, or in a friend's outstretched hand), you must stand still.

Active Defense: Any.

WAIT

Do nothing *unless* an event you've specified in advance occurs before your next turn. If that happens, you may transform your Wait into a *Change Posture*, *Attack*, *Feint*, *All-Out Attack*, or *Ready* maneuver. (You've waited too long for other options!)

When you select Wait, you must specify both your exact action and what will trigger it. This can be *anything* covered by one of the permitted maneuvers: "All-Out Attack (Determined) with my sword on the first orc to move toward me," "If Dora sees any orcs, she'll use a Ready maneuver to pull this rope," and so on. A Wait with a ready ranged weapon lets you "cover" a target or area specified when you take the Wait maneuver; see *Opportunity Fire* (p. 43). The GM may permit any other "reflex" action – e.g., cutting a hostage's throat or canceling a spell – that could be done in a *single motion*.

If you're reacting to someone, your reaction interrupts his turn even if he's in mid-motion. You *can* preempt a faster foe! That person can resume his movement or other action after you react, unless your reaction rules that out (e.g., by killing him).

LONG ACTIONS

Each second requires a Ready maneuver:

Don/remove armor: 1 second per glove, 3 seconds per boot or helmet.

Find something in pack or chest: 2d seconds.*

Find something in pouch or pocket: 1d seconds.*

Light candle, torch, etc.: 2 seconds.

Open box or chest: 1 second apiece to insert a ready key, turn a key, or open the lid.

Pick up heavy object: see *Lifting and Shifting* (p. 22).

* You may try a **DX** roll to work faster. Success halves the needed time (round down). Failure spills everything in the container all over the floor!

A Wait is the only way to get an attack on someone running past you when it isn't your turn. Taking *any other maneuver* means you're too distracted to try.

Stop Thrust: You can use Wait to brace a ready thrusting weapon to receive an enemy charge – just say, “I brace for a stop thrust.” You can convert your Wait into an Attack or All-Out Attack against any one foe who moves at least one hex toward you to make a melee attack (armed or unarmed) or to evade (pp. 34-35). Wait lets you strike first. If you hit and your foe fails to defend, your thrust damage is at +1 per two *full* hexes your attacker moved toward you.

MOVEMENT

Those involved in a fight waltz around the battlefield on their respective turns. The players move figures representing the delvers, while the GM moves monsters and other NPCs. Each person's current maneuver determines the *amount* of movement allowed.

Throughout this dance of death, each figure is moved one hex at a time so it's clear what's in reach, where dropped objects end up, whether that person triggers a trap or an enemy's Wait maneuver, and so on. Every fighter must clearly be *in* one hex and *facing* another hex at all times. The dungeon gods don't allow fractional movement or facing the corners rather than the sides of one's hex.

STEP

Most maneuvers allow you to take a **step**. This lets you do *one* of the following:

- Stay where you are!
- Move *one hex* in any direction.
- Go from a kneeling posture to a standing one (or vice versa) *without moving*.

You may *also* turn to face any of the six hexes surrounding yours, before or after you move or change posture. You could turn in place, *or* turn and then move one hex, *or* move one hex and then turn, *or* stand or kneel and then turn, *or* turn and then stand or kneel.

When you select a maneuver that permits a step, you may take the step *before* or *after* the rest of the maneuver – your choice! For instance, with an Attack, you could step and attack *or* attack and step.

MOVEMENT POINTS VS. MOVEMENT SPEED

A *Move* or *Move and Attack* maneuver gives you a number of **movement points** equal to your current Move score; e.g., Move 5 gives five movement points during a *Move* or *Move and Attack*. An *All-Out Attack* or *All-Out Defense (Increased*

Movement: As prescribed by the maneuver declared as your reaction. You can take that movement and *then* Wait, which means you *can't move at all* when you react – or you can stand still and Wait, which lets you move according to the specified maneuver when you react.

Active Defense: You defend normally while waiting or after your Wait is triggered – but if you've taken the movement for All-Out Attack, you cannot defend, while if you haven't moved and then defend, you cannot transform the Wait into an All-Out Attack, only an Attack.

Dodge) maneuver gives *half* as many movement points, rounded up; e.g., Move 5 gives three movement points during these maneuvers.

Each movement point allows a standing fighter to move one hex forward over clear ground. But if you aren't standing, or if you move sideways or backward, or if you cross something like ice or mud, you'll need to “spend” extra movement points to travel just as far; see *Movement Point Costs* (p. 35). These extra costs *do not* affect your step (above).

Zoom!

Some monsters (and powerful heroes!) are fast enough to bend the rules.

Fightin' Quickstep: Move 1-10 gives a one-hex step . . . but Move 11-20 gives *two* hexes, Move 21-30 gives *three* hexes, and so on, with each +10 Move giving +1 hex. Each hex is its *own* step, and steps can be spread out throughout a turn; e.g., with an Attack, a two-hex step would let you step twice and attack, *or* step, attack, and step again, *or* attack and step twice.

Three-Minute Miles: When sprinting (below) with successive Move maneuvers, Move 1-9 gives +1 hex . . . but Move 10-14 gives +2 hexes, Move 15-19 gives +3 hexes, and so on, with each +5 Move giving +1 hex. This applies only to running in straight lines for two or more turns. Many creatures can sprint even faster as a special ability!

Sprinting

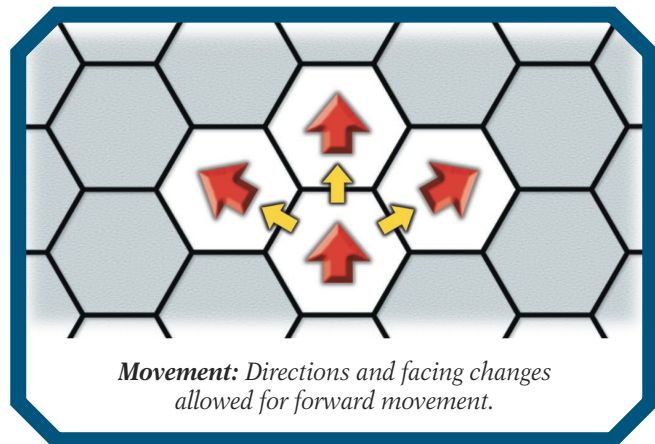
If you select a *Move* maneuver on two or more consecutive turns and spend all your movement points running *forward* on one turn, you're considered to be **sprinting**. You get +1 movement point to spend on forward movement the following turn. This is common when running away (p. 22).

MOVEMENT AND FACING

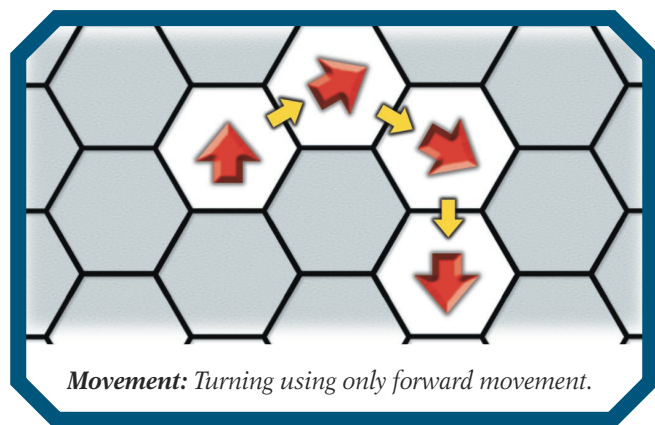
Movement and facing interact during a *Move*, *Move and Attack*, *All-Out Attack*, or *All-Out Defense (Increased Dodge)* maneuver. These rules *do not* affect step (p. 33).

Forward Movement

It costs *one* movement point to enter each hex during **forward movement**, defined as movement into one of your three front hexes. If you go *straight* ahead, your facing won't change; otherwise you must *turn to face the hex* as you enter it and your facing will change by one hex-side (see illustration below).



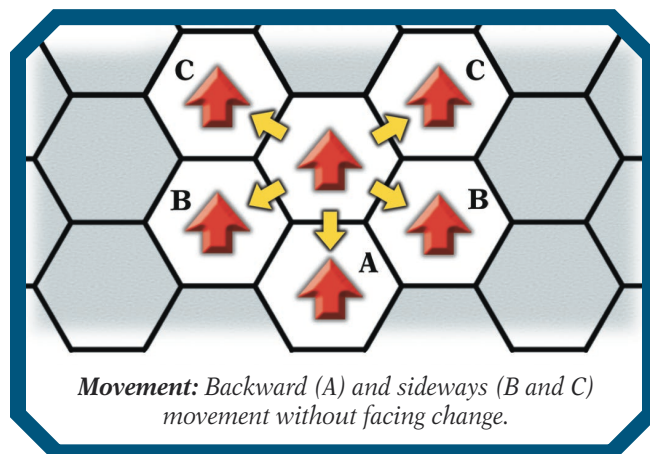
Thus, you *can* change direction while moving “forward.” Three consecutive hexes of “forward” movement let you run in a half-circle and end up facing the opposite direction (see illustration, below).



Backward and Sideways Movement

During a *Move*, *Move and Attack*, or *All-Out Defense (Increased Dodge)* – but *not* an *All-Out Attack* – you may opt to move backward (A) or sideways (B) without changing facing (see illustration below). Each sideways or backward hex costs *two* movement points.

You can also “sidestep” into a *front* hex (C) while keeping your original facing. This *is* allowed on an *All-Out Attack* as well as during those other maneuvers. This, too, costs *two* movement points per hex.



Facing Changes

At the end of your turn, if you took a *Move* or *Move and Attack* maneuver and used at most *half* of your movement points (round up) – or if you chose *All-Out Defense (Increased Dodge)* – you may turn to face in any direction.

If you took a *Move* or *Move and Attack* and used *more than half* of your movement points, you may change your facing by *one hex-side*.

You may also change facing *before* or *during* your movement on a *Move*, *Move and Attack*, or *All-Out Defense (Increased Dodge)* maneuver, but this costs movement points. Each hex-side of facing change counts as one yard of movement; e.g., turning 180° costs three movement points.

MOVING THROUGH OTHER CHARACTERS

You can always move through an ally's hex. This simply costs one extra movement point.

You can step or move *into* an opponent's hex at no extra cost (*Entering a Foe's Hex*, p. 51) ... but to leave out the far side, you must either bowl over (*Slams*, *Tramples*, and *Overruns*, p. 40) or **evade** your enemy.

Evading

Evading is moving through ground occupied by an opponent without trying to knock down your enemy. You can attempt this as part of any maneuver that allows movement, provided you can move fast enough to go at least one hex *past* your foe.

Ask if your foe is trying to stop you – if not, you “evade” automatically. Otherwise, roll a Quick Contest of **DX**. Apply these modifiers to *your DX*.

MOVEMENT POINT COSTS

These movement point costs apply to *Move*, *Move and Attack*, *All-Out Attack*, and *All-Out Defense (Increased Dodge)* maneuvers. Those maneuvers always let you move at least one hex per turn no matter how severe the penalties. Most other maneuvers allow a step (p. 33), which is unaffected by facing, posture, and terrain.

Direction of Travel

Forward: 1 movement point per hex.

Sidestep or backward: 2 movement points per hex.

Posture

Crouching: +1/2 movement point per hex.

Kneeling: +2 movement points per hex.

Crawling: +2 movement points per hex.

Lying down: All movement points to move one hex (belly crawl or rolling).

Sitting: Cannot move!

Facing Changes

Change facing before or during move: +1 movement point per hex-side.

Change facing at end of move: Free! You may face any direction if you used no more than half your movement points; otherwise, you may change facing by one hex-side.

Obstructions

Minor obstruction in hex (e.g., an ally, or a body on the ground): +1 movement point per hex.

Severe obstruction in hex (e.g., a barricade or pillar): You cannot enter the hex.

Enemy in hex: You must evade (pp. 34-35).

Bad Footing

These conditions also give at least -2 to attack rolls and -1 to defense rolls.

Treacherous ground (e.g., mud or ice): +1 movement point per hex (more, at the GM's option).

Gentle slope (up or down): +1/2 movement point per hex.

Steep slope or stairs (up or down): +1 movement point per hex.

Shallow water (up to 1/6 your height): +1 movement point per hex.

Deeper water: All movement points to move one hex.

Modifiers: -5 if foe is standing, -2 if foe is kneeling, or +5 if foe is lying down; +2 if approaching foe from the side, or +5 if approaching foe from behind.

If you *win*, you're free to move on! Otherwise, your enemy stopped you, ending your movement.

You can't evade *anyone* while you're grappled (*Grappling*, pp. 40-41). You can't evade a foe there's no logical way to avoid (GM's decision), either. Giants can step over humans and humans can dart between a giant's legs, but nobody can slip past a monstrous jelly that completely blocks the corridor!

On the other hand, less-than-solid monsters such as ghosts, insect swarms, and evil gas clouds evade and are evaded automatically. Many inflict harm in passing, however.



Mobility isn't cowardice. Flank when you can, flee if you must.

– Masha Deathfoot, Martial Artist

ATTACKING

An **attack** is an attempt to hit a foe or other target. You may try this if you execute an *Attack*, *All-Out Attack*, or *Move and Attack* maneuver (or convert a *Wait* into any of these). Attacks fall into two basic categories:

Melee attacks (pp. 37-38): Whacking someone within **reach** (pp. 37-38) of your ready melee weapon (e.g., sword or quarterstaff) or unarmed attack (fists, claws, teeth . . .).

Ranged attacks (pp. 41-45): Hurling something or shooting at a foe within **range** (p. 43) of your ready ranged weapon (e.g., bow, Fireball spell, or death gaze).

Resolving *either* type of attack takes three dice rolls, in this order:

1. **Attack roll**. A roll against your effective combat skill. Success means you *may* hit.

2. **Defense roll**. After a successful attack roll, an aware opponent may normally try to avoid or intercept the attack. Success means your foe isn't hit – too bad for you!

3. **Damage roll**. If your enemy fails that defense roll – or doesn't try one – your blow strikes home. Roll for damage. Enough damage can force your victim to make *other* rolls to avoid bad effects!

If for any reason you can attack several times on your turn, resolve your attacks *one at a time*.

Ready Weapons

You can attack with a weapon only if it's **ready**. A one-handed weapon is ready if you're holding it in your hand. A two-handed weapon is ready if you're gripping it with *both* hands. Some unwieldy weapons become unready after each attack unless you're extremely strong; see the *Melee Weapons Table* (*Adventurers*, pp. 98-103). To draw a weapon or ready a weapon that became unready after an attack, take a Ready maneuver (p. 32).

Natural weapons (fist, teeth, and the like) are *always* ready unless that body part is restrained (e.g., grappled) or occupied. For instance, you can't bite someone if you're holding a knife in your teeth!

ATTACK ROLLS

Your **attack roll** is a success roll (pp. 5-7). Figure *effective skill* – base skill adjusted for appropriate modifiers – with your

attack. Three important classes of modifiers are discussed below.

If you roll *less than or equal to* effective skill, your attack will hit unless your enemy successfully defends (*Defending*, pp. 46-50). If your foe fails to defend – or can't defend – you hit.

If you roll *greater than* your effective skill, you miss!

Regardless of effective skill, a roll of 3 or 4 always hits and is a **critical hit**. A roll of 17 or 18 always misses and is often a **critical miss**. See *Critical Hits and Misses* (p. 50).

Size Modifier

Add your target's **Size Modifier (SM)** to skill whenever you attack. *Ignore* this for human-sized targets, which have SM 0. Larger targets have a positive SM and grant a bonus, while smaller targets have a negative SM and give a penalty.

Visibility

The partial darkness penalties under *Vision* (p. 9) apply to all attack rolls as well as to Vision rolls. Light sources (p. 19),

Night Vision, and so on reduce these penalties as usual. It's possible to carry a light source while you fight. You can even use a torch as a weapon – treat it as a baton that does one point of burning damage as a follow-up (p. 56). See *Using the Off Hand* (above) if carrying it in addition to a real weapon.

Some situations inflict special penalties *instead* of those for partial darkness:

You cannot see anything. If you're blind or in *total* darkness, and lack a superhuman sense capable of compensating for this, you can try a Hearing roll at -2 to discover a foe's location. Success allows an attack on the correct hex, while failure means choosing a hex and hoping the enemy is there. Either way, you attack at -10 and roll hit location (below) randomly.

You cannot see your foe but can see your other surroundings. If only your enemy is invisible, use the rules above but your attack is at -6.

You cannot see your foe but know his location for sure. If your enemy is in a single smoke-filled hex or the like, no Hearing roll is required and your attack is at just -4.

Hit Location

When fighting foes with discrete body parts, you can opt to target these for the special effects in *Hit Location and Injury* (pp. 53-54). If you don't specify this, you're assumed to be attacking the torso.

Modifiers: 0 for the torso; -2 for an arm or leg; -3 for the vitals or groin; -4 for a hand or foot; -5 for the face or neck; -7 for the skull; -9 for the eye. Double the penalty for the *shield* arm (-4) or hand (-8).

USING BOTH HANDS

You can ready a one-handed weapon in each hand. This *doesn't* automatically grant extra attacks, but if you can already make two or more attacks for some reason – usually because you have the **Extra Attack** advantage (*Adventurers*, p. 49) or selected the All-Out Attack (Double) maneuver – you can distribute your attacks between hands however you like.

Using the Off Hand

Whether you attack once or several times, all attacks involving your "off" hand are at -4.

You may also use both hands to defend. You parry with your master hand – or block with a shield or cloak in *either* hand – at no penalty. You parry with the "off" hand at -2 unless using **Main-Gauche**.

If you have **Ambidexterity**, you may ignore the penalties above!

Dual-Weapon Attacks

However many attacks you have, you may *optionally* trade *one* (and only one) for a **Dual-Weapon Attack**. This splits that one attack into two penalized attacks at once – one using either hand, which can strike unarmed or with a one-handed weapon. If you do this, you *cannot* also try a Rapid Strike (p. 38) this turn.

Both parts of a Dual-Weapon Attack have -4 to hit. This penalty is *cumulative* with the "off" hand penalty – you have -4 with your master hand and -8 with your "off" hand (**Ambidexterity** makes this -4 and -4). Roll each attack separately.

You may attack one foe, whose attention will be divided: -1 to defend against the two attacks. Alternatively, you may strike two enemies in *adjacent* hexes, one with either hand.

Attacking a Random Hit Location

You can always say you're striking "whatever target presents itself" (some rules – like those for shooting blind – *require* this). Roll your attack with *no* modifier for hit location. If you succeed and your foe fails to defend, roll 3d on the *Hit Location Table* (pp. 99-100) to find out where the blow fell. If the attack came from directly above, treat "feet" as "hands" and "legs" as "arms."

Attacking Chinks in Armor

You may use a *piercing* or *impaling* attack to target weak points in armor (not natural DR or that provided by a spell). Roll at -8 for torso armor or -10 for any other location, *instead* of the usual penalty for hit location. If you hit, halve armor DR.

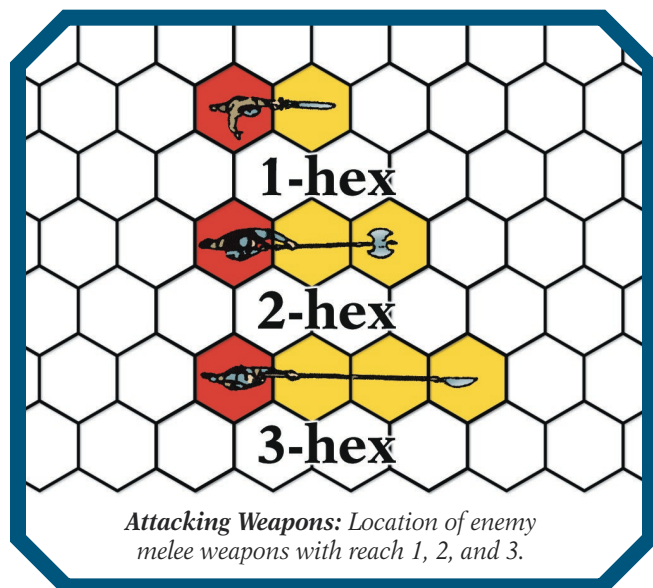
Attacking Weapons

You may also strike at a foe's weapon, if you can reach it! A reach "C" melee weapon (e.g., knife) or a missile weapon (e.g., bow or crossbow) is in its wielder's hex. A reach 1-3 melee weapon is in its user's hex and the one to three hexes directly in front of him; see the illustration below. You can always strike at *any* melee weapon on your first turn after it was used to attack or feint *you*, however!

State whether you're striking to **disarm** or to **break** the weapon, then roll to hit.

Modifiers: -5 to hit a reach "C" melee weapon; -4 for a reach 1 melee weapon (e.g., broadsword or mace) or a missile weapon; or -3 for anything larger (spear, greatsword, polearm, etc.). An extra -2 if you intend to disarm and aren't using a fencing weapon (main-gauche, rapier, saber, or smallsword) or trident.

If your foe fails to defend (*Defending Your Weapon*, p. 47), you hit the weapon.



Breaking a Weapon: If you struck to break the weapon, roll normal damage against the weapon and consult *Damage to Objects* (pp. 55-56).

Disarming: If you struck to disarm, roll a Quick Contest of weapon skills with your foe; an opponent with a missile weapon rolls against DX. Either of you may opt to make a ST-based skill roll instead of a DX-based one, if that would be better. *You* get +2 if using a Jitte/Sai, Kusari, or Whip weapon, while *your foe* gets +2 if wielding a two-handed weapon. If you win, your rival's weapon flies one hex in a random direction. If your foe ties or wins by 1-2, the weapon is merely unready. If your opponent wins by 3+, there's no effect.

Improvised Weapons

Treat common objects drafted into combat service as the weapons they most closely resemble: a stick as a baton, club, or quarterstaff; a heavy tool as a mace or maul; a chain as a kusari; a *hurled* chain as a bolas; and so on. Almost all such weapons are clumsy: -1 to -3 to skill, affecting attacks and parries. Many aren't as long, heavy, or sharp as "real" weapons: -1 or -2 to damage. Others are *too* heavy: +1 or +2 to required ST. As *anything* could be an improvised weapon, assessing such modifiers is left to the GM!

MELEE ATTACKS

When you take a maneuver that lets you make a melee attack, you must specify who you're attacking, with what, and *how*. You can use some weapons in more than one way; e.g., you can swing or thrust with a shortsword. Such weapons have multiple lines on the *Melee Weapons Table* (*Adventurers*, pp. 98-103). State how you're using such a weapon *before* you roll.

Roll to hit as explained under *Attack Rolls* (pp. 36-37). The modifiers relevant to melee weapon and unarmed skills appear in *Melee Attack Modifiers* (p. 95). Except as noted, these are cumulative.

Melee attacks are subject to several other important considerations that require a bit more explanation.

Reach

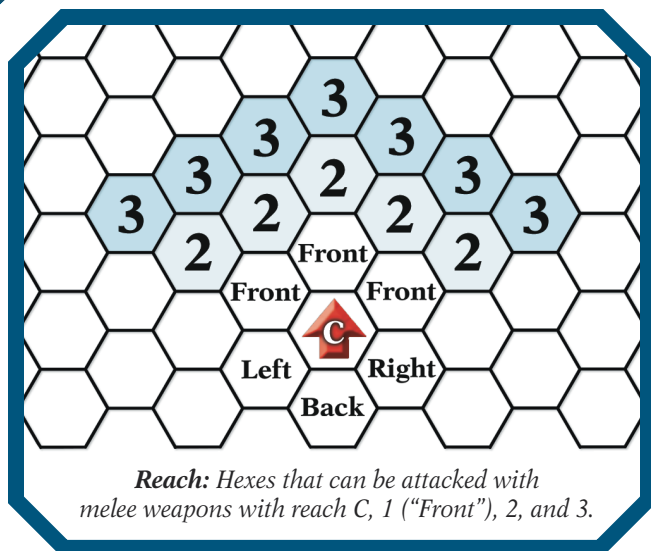
A melee weapon can only attack a target that's within the **reach** given on the *Melee Weapons Table* (*Adventurers*, pp. 98-103), as follows:

Reach C ("Close"): You can strike only at targets in your own hex.

Reach 1 (1 yard): You can strike into any hex marked "Front" in the diagram on p. 38.

Reach 2 (2 yards): You can strike into any hex marked "2" in the diagram on p. 38.

Reach 3 (3 yards): You can strike into any hex marked "3" in the diagram on p. 38.



Some weapons have more than one reach; e.g., a knife can slash at "close" and one-yard reach. If such a weapon has an asterisk (*) on its reach statistic, you must select a specific reach when you ready it and can attack only at that reach; switching to another reach requires a Ready maneuver (p. 32). Otherwise, you can attack at any reach that weapon allows *without* taking a Ready maneuver.

Facing

Normally, you can attack only into the hexes in front of you, as defined in *Reach* (pp. 37-38). If you want to attack other hexes, it's best to turn to face them. If you can't, that's a **Wild Swing**.

Wild Swings

This is a melee attack against a foe to your *side* or *back*, or against someone you can't see. Despite the name, it could be a thrust or even a grapple. Such an attack is at -5 to hit or your visibility penalty (p. 36), whichever is *worse*.

You *can* combine a Wild Swing with an All-Out Attack, but you may *not* choose the "Determined" option. You can also make a Wild Swing during a Move and Attack; use the more severe penalties of the two.

In all cases, effective skill after all modifiers cannot exceed 9 and you *must* use *Attacking a Random Hit Location* (p. 37).

If you possess **Peripheral Vision** or can make a **Blind Fighting** roll, two-handed melee attacks into your side hexes – and one-handed attacks to the *same* side (e.g., right hand to right hex) – aren't Wild Swings. However, one-handed attacks to the *opposite* side (e.g., right hand to *left* hex) still are unless you have **Double-Jointed**, and attacks on foes behind you always are.

Attacking Through an Occupied Hex

You can attack "through" someone else's hex in melee if using a weapon with a reach of two yards or more. You may

attack through a friend's hex at no penalty or a foe's hex at -4. If your attack passes along a line between two hexes, you have no penalty unless *both* hexes are occupied by foes, in which case the -4 for a single enemy hex applies.

Attacking from Above

Ambush from above is a favorite tactic of monsters and athletic delvers. Before combat, handle this using *Surprise Attacks* (pp. 26-27) and give the potential victim an extra -2 to notice unless specifically watching out above . . . which gives +2 (but -2 to notice things on the same level!).

When it comes time to attack, roll at -2 to hit – but your *victim* has -2 to defend. (An alerted foe can take a Wait maneuver and make a stop thrust when you drop.) A drop from *any* height before attacking is considered a step (p. 33).

You'll take falling damage (pp. 67-68) if you dropped from more than two yards, but you may attempt an **Acrobatics** roll to reduce this – and **Catfall** is a big help! If you land on someone, resolve damage to yourself and your target separately from your attack.

Melee Attack Options

When taking an *Attack* or *All-Out Attack* maneuver in melee combat, you may specify two further options.

Rapid Strike

However many attacks you have, you may optionally trade *one* (and *only* one!) for a **Rapid Strike**. This splits that one attack into two penalized attacks in rapid succession, which can target the same foe or two different ones.

Both parts of a Rapid Strike are at -6 to hit. Halve this (to -3) if you have the **Trained by a Master** or **Weapon Master** advantage.

If you make a Rapid Strike, you *cannot* also try a Dual-Weapon Attack (p. 36) this turn.

Deceptive Attack

If your effective skill is 12 or better after *all* other modifiers to your attack roll, you may declare your attack to be a **Deceptive Attack**. High-skill fighters *normally* do this! For every further -2 you accept on your attack roll, your foe has -1 on active defense rolls against the attack. You cannot reduce your final effective skill below 10 this way.

UNARMED COMBAT

Delvers, especially martial artists, sometimes fight without weapons. Toothy, clawed monsters *usually* do! Such **unarmed combat** obeys all the rules in *Melee Attacks* (pp. 37-38) and takes the same modifiers, but also has its own particularities.

Striking

Punches require an attack roll against **DX**, **Boxing**, **Brawling**, or **Karate**, and inflict thrust-1 crushing damage – or thrust with brass knuckles or DR 3+ gauntlets. Reach is C.

SPECIAL MELEE WEAPONS

Delvers love unusual, *complicated* melee weapons! The GM is welcome to simplify these to make the game run smoother.

Garrotes

A garrote is a cord or wire used for strangling. You can use it only to attack unaware or helpless prey – and only from behind. You *must* target the neck at -5 to **Garrote** skill. Consider risking an All-Out Attack (Determined) for +4 to hit!

Your victim may attempt to parry with a hand or close-combat weapon at -3. During a surprise attack (pp. 26-27), mental stun gives *another* -4 to this parry.

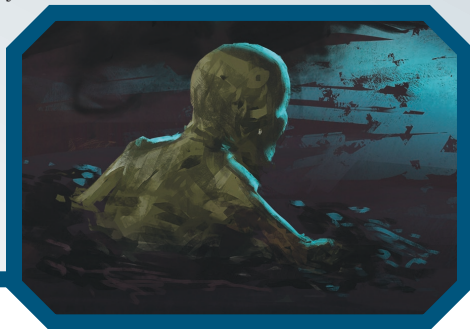
If the parry fails, you may **strangle** your victim (*Actions After a Grapple*, p. 41) on the turn of the attack and every later turn, and have +3 to ST in the Quick Contest. Damage is crushing (×1.5 to the neck) for a rope garrote, cutting (×2 to the neck) for a wire one. Your victim also starts to suffocate (*Suffocation*, p. 70).

To break free, your victim must *win* a Quick Contest of ST-5, Judo-3, or Wrestling-3 against your Garrote skill.

Kusaris

A kusari is a weighted chain. Treat it as a whip (below) when *disarming*, *entangling*, or *parrying*. As it tends to wrap around things, enemies parry at -4 and block at -2 – and fencing weapons *cannot* parry it!

If someone parries your kusari with a weapon, you may choose to attempt an immediate **Kusari** skill roll. Success means your kusari entangles the parrying weapon, failure has no effect, and a critical failure means you drop the kusari! Your opponent may disentangle his weapon by taking a Ready maneuver on his turn; this requires a free hand and a DX roll. If he doesn't, you may attempt a disarm (*Attacking Weapons*, p. 37) on your next turn



Kicks use **DX**, **Brawling**, or **Karate**, and have a basic -2 to hit. On a miss, roll vs. **DX**; failure means you fall down! Damage is thrust crushing – or thrust+1 with DR 2+ boots. Reach is C, 1.

Claws modify punches and kicks, making the damage cutting or impaling, giving bonus damage, or both!

Shoves use **DX** or **Sumo Wrestling**. They roll thrust damage at -1 per die – or at no penalty if you use two hands. *Double* damage and treat it as crushing *exclusively* for the

purpose of **knockback** (p. 53). There's never any actual physical injury! Reach is C.

Picks

Melee weapons swung for impaling damage may get *stuck*. Any attack that *injures* an enemy embeds your weapon in your target. If your victim tries to move away, roll a Quick Contest of **ST**: If you *lose*, your weapon is pulled from your grasp! If you *win*, your enemy can't move. A *tie* means the weapon comes free.

At the start of your next turn, you must either relinquish your weapon, leaving it stuck in your foe (a free action), or try a **ST** roll (a Ready maneuver). A successful ST roll pulls your weapon free. Failure leaves it embedded, leading to further Quick Contests if your enemy tries to leave; next turn, you may relinquish it or try another ST roll.

If the weapon comes free for any reason, it inflicts *half* the injury it did going in; e.g., if the original wound was 4 HP, it deals another 2 HP. If the weapon is one that must be readied after attacking, you can now do so on your next turn.

Critical failure on *any* of your ST rolls means the weapon is *permanently* stuck! You can retrieve it from a fallen foe after the battle.

Whips

You can “crack” a whip at -4 to **Whip** skill, for +2 damage.

Anyone injured on the *arm* or *hand* by a whip must roll against Will modified by the shock penalty (p. 60) for the injury or drop anything in that hand.

When you strike to disarm with a whip, you get +2 in the ensuing Quick Contest; see *Attacking Weapons* (p. 37). To entangle an *opponent* rather than a weapon, attack at -4; a successful hit inflicts no damage but follows the rules in *Lariats* (p. 44).

Whips are poor defensive weapons: -2 to Parry. They're also *unbalanced*, and cannot attack and parry on the same turn.

Bites attack at **DX** or **Brawling**. Damage is thrust-1. Crushing, for humanoid delvers – but typically piercing, cutting, or impaling for monstrous fangs and beaks! Reach is C.

Horns, stingers, and other dedicated strikers use **DX** or **Brawling**. Damage is thrust at +1 *per die*. Reach is C.

In all cases, high skill adds bonus damage (read the skill description). Monsters may have almost any amount of extra damage or reach!

Slams, Tramples, and Overruns

You can bodily run *into* or *over* enemies – a favorite tactic of huge monsters facing wimpy delvers (and of doughty delvers facing wimpy monsters). You must enter your opponent's hex to attempt any of these moves.

Except as noted, everything below requires an *Attack*, *All-Out Attack*, or *Move and Attack* maneuver, and counts as an attack. If you use All-Out Attack to do *only* these things, you may spend movement points equal to your *full* Move on forward movement. If you use Move and Attack, the -4 to hit and effective skill cap of 9 don't apply.

Slams are deliberate collisions – use **DX**, **Brawling**, or **Sumo Wrestling** to hit. Your foe may block, dodge, or parry (though a charging fighter counts as a heavy weapon; see *Parrying Heavy Weapons*, p. 49). If you hit, you *each* roll your thrust-2 crushing damage on the other; as well, look up how many hexes (yards) you ran this turn in the "Linear Measurement" column of *Size and Speed/Range Table* (pp. 97-98) and add the corresponding "Size" modifier to *each die* of damage rolled by both sides. You can use All-Out Attack (Strong) to increase *your* damage. Whoever rolled the lower damage must make a **DX** roll or fall down, and falls automatically if the higher damage roll was at least twice as much. If you miss or

HURTING YOURSELF

A great reason to use weapons is that they – *not* your body – is what's out there whacking things. Unarmed combat has three painful downsides:

Getting parried ("Was that your arm?"). A successful *weapon* parry against a *punch*, *kick*, *shove*, *bite*, *slam* (not a shield rush, which is "armed"), *pounce*, or *grapple* awards the defender a "free shot" at the attacker. The defender may try an immediate skill roll with that weapon – at -4 if the parried attack used **Judo** or **Karate**. Success means the parry counts as a hit on the attacking limb (face for a bite, torso for a slam or pounce). There's no defense roll . . . roll the weapon's damage immediately! This *does* apply when parrying monsters' unarmed melee attacks, unless the monster description indicates the attack counts as a weapon – but see *Parrying Heavy Weapons* (p. 49).

Striking armor ("#\$@&%*!"). A *punch*, *kick*, or *bite* that hits a target with DR 3+ can hurt the attacker! For every 5 points of basic damage rolled, the attacker takes 1 point of crushing damage, to a maximum equal to target DR. This affects the striking body part; e.g., face for a bite or hand for a punch. The attacker's DR protects normally. This, too, applies to monsters' unarmed melee attacks unless specifically counted as weapons. It *doesn't* apply to shoves, grapples, or *Slams*, *Tramples*, and *Overruns* (above).

Parrying weapons ("Maybe grabbing the sword wasn't so smart."). Any *failed* unarmed parry against a *weapon* allows the attacker to choose to hit the original target or the parrying arm.

your opponent dodges, you must run at least two hexes past your enemy if you have enough movement left – and if there's something solid there, roll your damage against *yourself*!

Shield rushes work like slams but require a shield (*not* a buckler or cloak). Roll vs. **Shield** skill to hit. Add the shield's Defense Bonus (+1 to +3) to *your* damage roll and subtract it from *your target's* damage roll.

Pounces work like slams but require four or more legs – they're only for monsters. The creature has +4 to hit and may attack with **Jumping** skill, if favorable. The catch is that afterward, the attacker must make a **DX**, **Acrobatics**, or **Jumping** roll. Any failure means ending the turn lying down in the same hex as the target. Any success means the beast lands on its feet – and if it knocked down its victim, it may claim a free grapple (below).

Overrun occurs when a figure that occupies more hexes than its opponent (like any two-hex or larger monster vs. a delver) opts to move through its tiny rival's hex without evading. Treat this as a slam, except that it's "free" for the larger figure – it can happen during *any* maneuver and doesn't count as an attack. If the bigger combatant doesn't fall, it may pay an extra movement point and continue its maneuver normally.

Trampling is possible only for a standing attacker whose Size Modifier exceeds the victim's by two or more – or by one or more, if the target is lying down. Roll vs. **DX** or **Brawling** to hit. The only legal defense is a dodge. A hit inflicts thrust crushing damage, at +1 per die for creatures with hooves. When someone is knocked down by a slam or overrun and the attacker keeps moving, trampling is *automatic* – don't make attack or defense rolls, just roll trampling damage and *halve* it.

Grappling

If you have an empty hand, you can grab foes or their equipment. You must be in your opponent's hex to try this.

Each attempt requires an *Attack*, *All-Out Attack*, or *Move and Attack* maneuver, and is considered an attack. If your opponent is lying down, kneeling, or sitting, *you* must kneel or lie down unless your rival's Size Modifier is two or more greater than yours; however, you may do this as the step (p. 33) component of an Attack maneuver.

Roll against **DX** or a **grappling skill** – **Judo**, **Sumo Wrestling**, or **Wrestling** – to hit.

Modifiers: *Instead* of standard modifiers for hit locations and weapons, apply 0 to hit the torso; -1 for an arm or leg; -2 for a hand or foot; -3 for the neck or head; or -4 for something someone is holding (like a weapon). If your Size Modifier exceeds your foe's, add your SM difference as a bonus. If a monster uses more than two arms, add +2 per arm beyond the first two.

Your opponent defends normally. The effects of a hit depend on what you grabbed.

If you grabbed an *item*, you're now grasping it; if it's a weapon, your rival cannot use it to attack or defend. On subsequent turns, you may try to wrest it away. Each attempt counts as an attack and requires a Regular Contest of **ST**. If you *win*, you take the item away. If you *lose*, you lose your grip and must start over.

If you grabbed your *foe*, your victim is now at -4 to DX – which gives -2 to blocks and parries, and -1 to dodges – while you're holding on. Until your opponent breaks free (below) or you let go, your victim cannot move away. (*Exception:* You cannot prevent a rival with more than twice your ST from leaving . . . you're just extra encumbrance!) You may try *Actions After a Grapple* (below) on subsequent turns.

If you grappled a body part other than the torso, all of the above applies *and* that one body part cannot be used to attack or defend. There are also additional effects:

Arm or Hand: You cannot snatch a weapon away, but you *can* force your victim to drop it. Roll a Regular Contest of **ST** exactly as if you had grabbed the weapon.

Leg or Foot: You get +3 if you try a **takedown** (below).

Neck: You may attempt to **strangle** (below).

Grappling someone doesn't mean that person is grappling you! If your foe wants to do that, he must grapple on *his* turn.

Grappling someone doesn't give *you* defense penalties, either. However, you can't parry with a limb without releasing its hold on your victim – and to retreat (p. 50), you must let go with *all* of your limbs!

Grappling Moves

So you're wrestling a monster – now what?

Actions After a Grapple

Grappling a foe lets you try special moves on later turns, provided your victim hasn't broken free (below). Each requires an *Attack* or *All-Out Attack* maneuver, and counts as an attack.

Takedown: Bear a *standing* opponent to the ground. Roll a Quick Contest, with each contestant using the *highest* of **ST**, **DX**, or best **grappling skill**. If you aren't standing, you have the usual attack penalty for posture. If you're grappling your enemy's leg or foot, you get +3. If you *win*, your victim falls down in your hex and the adjacent hex of your choice, losing his grip if he was grappling you. If you *lose*, you suffer those effects! On a tie, nothing happens.

Pin: Prevent an opponent who's *lying down* from acting. You must be grappling your foe's torso. Roll a Regular Contest of **ST**. The *larger* fighter gets +3 per point of Size Modifier difference. The fighter with the most free hands has +3. If you *win*, your foe is now helpless; you must stay there to hold him down, but you can free one hand for other actions. If you *lose* or tie, nothing happens.

Strangle: Throttle your opponent! You must grapple your foe by the neck using your hands. (Certain monsters "hug" the torso, or use their body instead of hands.) Roll a Quick

Contest: your **ST** vs. the *higher* of your rival's ST or HT. You have -5 if using only one hand, but +2 per hand after the first two. If you *win*, your enemy takes crushing damage equal to your margin of victory; DR protects normally. Multiply injury to the neck by 1.5. A victim who suffers *any* injury also starts to suffocate (*Suffocation*, p. 70): On his next turn and every later turn until he escapes, he loses 1 FP.

A hand not committed to grappling can be used for an *Attack*, *All-Out Attack*, or *Ready* maneuver. Attacks must be unarmed or use reach "C" weapons. You can bite even if your hands are busy. To Aim, Feint, Concentrate, Wait, or make a *ranged* attack, though, you must first pin your foe.

You may also perform these free actions *on your turn*:

- *Release your grip* with one or more hands.
- *Throw away a ready weapon*.
- *Drag or carry your victim*. Only after pinning your foe, unless you have more than twice your opponent's ST. Just move or step normally, dragging or carrying your enemy (who counts as encumbrance, reducing your Move).

Actions After Being Grappled

If you're grappled, you can't take a Move maneuver unless your ST is more than twice your foe's. Aim, Feint, Concentrate, and Wait – and *ranged* attacks – are impossible. If you're pinned (above), you can't take *any* maneuver that requires physical movement! One special option is important here:

Break Free: Attempt to end your enemy's grapple or pin. This counts as an Attack maneuver (but it's a free action to *relinquish* a weapon someone has grabbed). You may try every turn if grappled, every 10 turns if pinned. Roll a Quick Contest of **ST**. Your opponent gets +5 if grappling you with two hands or pinning you with one, +10 if pinning you with two. If either of you has three or more arms, each arm beyond the first two gives +2. If you *win*, you're free and may step (p. 33) immediately. If your rival falls unconscious or dies, you're *automatically* free at once; a stunned foe doesn't let go but has -4 in the Contest.

If you prefer, you have other options:

Attack or All-Out Attack: You *can* try if not pinned! Attacks must be unarmed or use reach "C" weapons. You cannot use any limb or weapon that has been grappled – or bite, if your neck or head was grappled. The -4 for being grappled, and any posture penalty, still apply.

Ready: You can Ready an item if you have a hand free and aren't pinned, but you must roll vs. **DX**. Failure means you drop the item. A Ready to switch an ability off or on always works.

RANGED ATTACKS

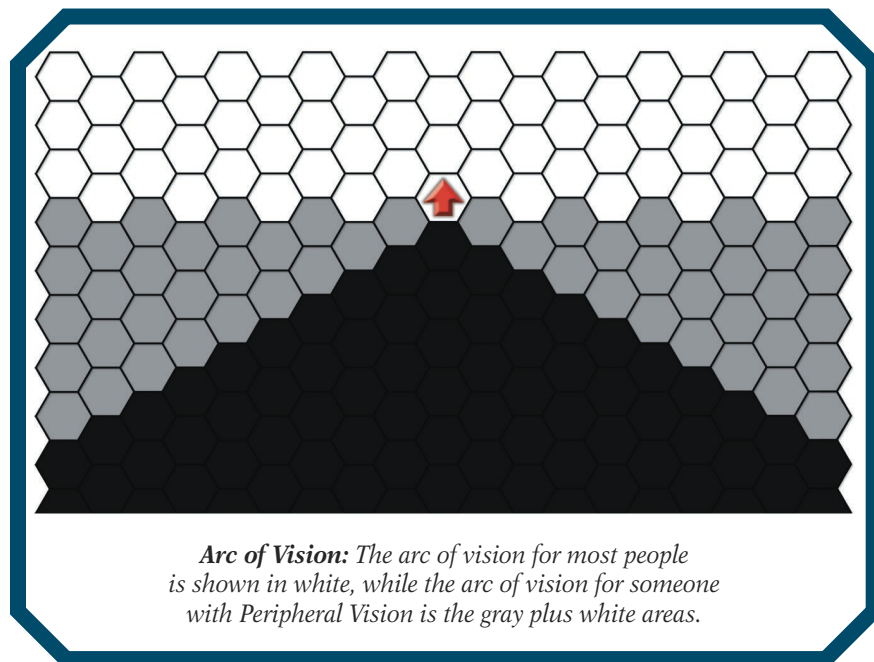
When your maneuver lets you make a ranged attack, you must specify which weapon you're using (hurled rock, cross-bow, Fireball spell, etc.) and your particular target (*not* just, "Those orcs over there.") *before* rolling the dice.

Roll to hit as explained under *Attack Rolls* (pp. 36-37). Common modifiers are described in *Aim* (pp. 29-30), *Size Modifier* (p. 36), *Visibility* (p. 36), and *Range* (p. 43). Others appear in *Ranged Attack Modifiers* (p. 96). Except as noted, all are cumulative.

Like melee attacks, ranged ones come with a backpack full of special rules.

Arc of Vision

You can make ranged attacks into any of the *white* hexes in the diagram below. If you have **Peripheral Vision**, you can attack into any of the *white or gray* hexes. The hexes you can attack into define your **arc of vision**.



Shooting Blind

You may *try* to shoot at someone outside your arc of vision – or in total darkness, or while blinded. Use *Wild Swings* (p. 38), except that now the basic penalty is *-10* instead of *-5*. If you miss, see *Hitting the Wrong Target* (p. 43). Needless to say, you cannot take the *Aim* maneuver!

Line of Fire

Then there's the question of **line of fire**. You can target an enemy if you can draw a straight line between *any* part of your hex and *any* part of your foe's without passing through a solid obstacle. Use a straightedge (e.g., ruler) to determine this. The effects of people and things along that line depend on who or what is in the way.

People

If your line of fire passes through an occupied hex, the occupants – friend or foe – are “in the way.” *Each* such hex

gives you *-4* to hit. However, if your attack passes along a line between two hexes, there's no penalty unless *both* hexes are occupied; then the *-4* for a *single* occupied hex applies.

Exceptions: Someone lying down is in the way only if you're lying down, too. A kneeling or sitting person is in the way only if *either* you *or* your target is kneeling, sitting, or lying down. But a figure with a *Size Modifier* two or more greater than yours is always “in the way” unless you're higher up!

You may hit anyone who's in the way if you miss your intended target (*Hitting the Wrong Target*, p. 43).

Things

Objects that block line of fire generally make an attack impossible, with these exceptions:

- If your enemy is shooting from cover, you can attack an exposed body part at the usual hit location penalty – or at an extra *-2*, if *half* exposed.
- If the object isn't very solid – like a curtain, or even a thin wall for a powerful attack – you can shoot *through* it! This gives *-2* to hit if you can see any part of your enemy, *-4* if you can't but know exactly what hex your foe is in, or *-10* if you're guessing. If you hit, use *Attacking a Random Hit Location* (p. 37). Thin objects like curtains and doors add their DR to your target's DR; anything thicker adds DR equal to its DR plus $1/4$ of its HP.

Shooting from Cover

You must expose your skull, eyes, face, and neck to see a target – and your weapon arm and hand to shoot a one-handed weapon.

You must expose *both* arms and hands to shoot a two-handed weapon, plus *half* of your torso and vitals (enemies target those parts at an extra *-2*), unless you're behind a narrow slit. Your groin, legs, and feet can remain hidden if you have sufficient cover, but you might have to expose more of your body if the cover is partial or if you're unable to kneel, sit, or lie prone behind low cover.

Pop-Up Attacks

A **pop-up attack** is a special Attack maneuver where you emerge from cover, move no more than one hex, make a ranged attack, and *return* to cover – all in the space of one turn! Examples include ducking around a corner or out of a trench. This is possible only with a thrown weapon, crossbow, or Missile spell – never a bow or sling. Pop-up attacks never benefit from *Aim* and always have an *extra -2* to hit.

Aiming

Taking Aim maneuvers (pp. 29-30) immediately before you attack can give bonuses to hit. You must Aim at a specific target (person or object, *not* body part). You can do so only if it's in your arc of vision (p. 42) *and* you have a line of fire (p. 42). Losing either *after* you aim means losing all Aim bonuses.

Range

A ranged attack has a **Maximum Range (Max)** – and usually a **Half-Damage Range (1/2D)** – in hexes (yards). Consult the *Ranged Weapons Table* (*Adventurers*, pp. 103-105) or relevant spell or monster ability for these stats. Your target must be no farther away than Max; 1/2D affects only damage.

The more distant the target, the harder it is to hit. *Ignore* this for a target no more than two hexes away. At greater distances, consult the “Speed/Range” column of the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (pp. 97-98) to find the penalty. For distances that fall between two values on the table, use the *more severe* penalty.

Speed

Ignore target speed except when your target is taking an All-Out Defense (Increased Dodge) maneuver, or using Move maneuvers to sprint (p. 33) or tumble (*Speed Is Armor!*, p. 58). Then add speed in yards/second (i.e., hexes moved) to range in yards and look up the *total* in the “Speed/Range” column to find the penalty. *Don't look up range and speed penalties separately and add them together!*

Elevation

On any kind of significant slope, fighters shooting down-slope enjoy +1 to hit, while those shooting up-slope have -1 to hit. On *steep* slopes – from 45° to 90° (directly above or below) – or when flying, these modifiers become +2 and -2.

Hitting the Wrong Target

If your ranged attack roll *succeeds* and your target doesn't defend, your attack lodges in your victim or goes “bonk” and lands on the floor (Missile spells roll their damage and vanish). If your enemy *blocks* or *parries*, the attack stops in that foe's hex. Regardless, the attack won't hit the wrong person.

But if your attack roll *fails* – or succeeds and then your enemy *dodges* – you may hit a friend or foe who was in your line of fire. You *must* check for this!

Roll for figures along the line of fire in order from nearest to farthest. If you *missed*, start with anyone who was “in the way” and gave you a penalty to hit, then anyone else in your

target's hex, and finally anyone behind your target. If your target dodged, check only for those in or beyond your target's hex. Either way, if the line passes between two occupied hexes, or there are multiple figures in a hex, roll randomly for who's attacked first.

In each case, your effective skill is a flat 9 *or* the number you would have had to roll to hit that person on purpose, whichever is *worse*, and you *must* use *Attacking a Random Hit Location* (p. 37). If you miss or that target dodges, roll for the *next* target. Keep rolling until you hit, someone blocks or parries, or you run out of targets.

Accidental victims get the same defense they would have had if your attack had been intentional.

OPPORTUNITY FIRE

If you have a ranged weapon, you may watch a specified area that's entirely within your arc of vision (p. 42) and attack the moment a target appears, if only for an instant (e.g., to make a pop-up attack, p. 42). This is **opportunity fire**. To do this, you must select the Wait maneuver, stand still, face the specific area you're “covering,” watch for a target in that zone, and *do nothing else*.

If a target appears in the specified area, you must attack *immediately*. If that turns out to be a friend, you get a Vision roll (p. 9) – but if you fail, you attack!

Ranged combat modifiers apply normally, and the area's size may give an additional penalty:

Area Size	Penalty
1 hex	0
2 hexes	-1
3-4 hexes	-2
5-6 hexes	-3
7-10 hexes	-4
More than 10 hexes	-5

Alternatively, specify a single straight line and say that you'll fire at the first target that crosses it. The penalty for that is only -2.

Aim (pp. 29-30) *doesn't* apply unless you're watching *one hex* (only). In that case, each Wait maneuver also counts as an Aim, and you'll get the normal bonus for that amount of aiming if you attack.

If two or more people take opportunity fire at the same target, the attacks are simultaneous.

If *no* target appears, you simply wasted your turn!

Special Rules for Thrown Weapons

A **thrown weapon** – e.g., rock, ninja star (*shuriken*), or spear – is anything physically hurled at the target. Two special rules apply:

- Once thrown, it's *elsewhere*. If you want to attack again, you'll have to go fetch it (from the ground . . . or your foe's body) or ready a new weapon.

● It travels slowly enough that your target can not only block or dodge, but also parry. Success by 5+ (or critical success) with an unarmed parry gives your enemy the option of *catching* your weapon!

Unusual thrown weapons require further rules, which the GM is free to simplify.

Bolas

The bolas is a thrown entangling weapon. Your target can dodge or block – but a parry with anything but a *cutting* weapon (which cuts the cords and ruins the bolas) means it hits the parrying arm, with effects as described below.

On a hit, the bolas does its damage *and* wraps around the target. If you hit a weapon, or an arm or hand that's holding something, roll a Quick Contest of **Bolas** skill vs. your foe's ST. Victory means your victim drops what he's carrying (a shield strapped to the arm is unaffected).

If you hit a leg or foot, you entangle *two* legs. A running target must make a DX roll or fall, taking 1d-2 crushing damage.

If you hit the neck, the bolas causes *Suffocation* (p. 70) until your prey escapes.

To escape, your victim requires a free hand and must make three successful DX rolls (at -3 for paws, -6 for hooves). Each attempt requires a Ready maneuver.

Grenades

A **grenade** is a bottle of something *unpleasant* for hurling at enemies. It requires one Ready maneuver to prepare if carried in delver's webbing or a potion belt (a free action with a **Fast-Draw (Potion)** roll!), two if slung elsewhere (no Fast-Draw possible), or 1d Ready maneuvers if in a pouch (ditto). Anything flammable but not self-igniting takes an *extra* Ready to light if you have flame.

Hurling a grenade is an attack with **DX, Throwing**, or **Throwing Art**. Basic DX has an *extra* -3 to hit a person rather than an area. Combat stats are Accuracy 0, Maximum Range STx2, and Bulk -2.

A grenade shatters on striking a target with natural or armor DR 3+, a shield, or the ground. A person who's targeted may use any active defense, but parrying is unwise – success breaks the vial, douses the defender, and counts as a hit! A shield block douses the shield, *not* its wielder. A dodge means the bottle shatters on the ground in the enemy's hex. If your foe is hit but lacks DR 3+, or blocks with a cloak, the bottle bounces off and breaks in his hex.

Corrosives and contact poisons must hit a *person* (not a shield or the ground) to work. Read the description for effects, including whether any damage is one-shot or ongoing. Against physical damage, *armor* DR protects at only 1/5 value unless noted otherwise. Poison takes DR seconds to seep in and then takes full effect.

For flammables, a direct hit causes ongoing burning damage until the victim takes a Change Posture maneuver to drop and roll, a Move to jump into water, etc.; *armor* DR protects at 1/5 value. A ground burst sets a two-yard-radius fire. Duration and damage for either depend on the grenade. Hitting a shield

sets it aflame, which is distracting (-2 to DX and combat skills, -1 to defenses) but adds one point of follow-up (p. 56) burning damage to shield attacks. A burning cloak or ordinary wooden shield will be ruined if not extinguished before seconds equal to its weight in pounds have passed; this takes a Ready maneuver and a DX roll.

Grenades that generate fumes work no matter how they burst. Vapors fill a two-yard radius for an instant, affecting anyone who breathes, and then dissipate. The effects on *people* generally endure after the gas cloud dissipates!

Grenades are *fragile*. Roll 1d for each if you fall; it breaks on a roll of 1-4. A foe may strike at a bottle on your belt (-5 to hit); any hit breaks it. Either outcome means *you* or your hex is affected as if hit!

Harpoons

Harpoons are *barbed*. Handle this using *Picks* (p. 39), except that the tether lets you attempt ST rolls to free the weapon at a distance. A harpooned victim *can* move, but not beyond the tether's length. To go farther, your foe must win a Quick Contest of ST to pull the tether from your hands.



*Weapons with strings attached?
Huh. Better be stronger than what
you throw them at.*

– Grükuk Kzaash, Knight

Lariats

Like a harpoon, a lariat is considered a thrown weapon despite the fact that you hold onto one end. You may aim at any body part. The only legal defense against a lariat is a dodge.

If you hit the target's arm or torso, you ensnare it. To keep your victim snared on subsequent turns, you must take a Ready maneuver and roll a Quick Contest of **ST** on your turn. If you win, you immobilize your opponent. If you lose, your foe pulls the lariat from your grasp. A tie means you keep your weapon but your enemy is free to move around within its length.

If you lasso the neck, use the same rules but your victim has -5 in the Contest. If you win, you *also* cut off the victim's breathing; see *Suffocation* (p. 70).

If you rope the foot, the target must make an immediate DX roll to remain standing, at -4 if running (moving faster than a step). A fall inflicts 1d-4 crushing damage – or 1d-2 if running. Use the rules above to keep your victim entangled on subsequent turns.

You must keep the lariat taut at all times to immobilize or suffocate your victim. This requires a Ready maneuver each turn.

To escape from a *taut* lariat, cut the rope (DR 1, HP 2). To escape from a *limp* lariat (including one pulled from the attacker's grasp), use the rules under *Bolas* (above).

Nets

A net is an entangling weapon thrown with the **Net** skill. The only legal defense allowed is a *dodge*. A failed defense means the target cannot move or attack until freed.

To escape, the victim requires at least one free hand and must make three successful DX rolls at -4. Animals, and humans with only one hand available, have an extra -2; a *melee* net gives +3. Each attempt is a Ready maneuver that allows no other actions. Three consecutive failures mean the target becomes so entangled that he must be cut free.

It's also possible to escape by damaging the net. With a reach "C" cutting weapon, this takes three Ready maneuvers but requires no rolls. Winning a Quick Contest of ST vs. 14 for a *melee* net or 22 for a large net will *burst* the net – the preferred method of barbarians and monsters! Each attempt takes *one* Ready maneuver.

You may also use a *melee* net as a *melee* weapon with reach 1, 2. Handle attacks as per *Lariats* (p. 44) and attempts to break free as per *Bolas* (p. 44).

Special Rules for Missile Weapons

A **missile weapon** is a weapon that shoots ammunition; e.g., bows propel arrows and slings launch stones. Missile spells – and ranged monster abilities like death-ray vision and acid spit – also qualify.

Missile weapons have a **Shots** statistic. Once you've used that many shots, you must reload before you can attack with the weapon again. Shots is 1 for most fantasy weapons. Missile spells get one shot per casting. Most monster abilities have *unlimited* shots!

Reloading requires a number of Ready maneuvers. For weapons, reload time appears in parentheses after Shots in the *Ranged Weapons Table* (*Adventurers*, pp. 103-105). Missile spells are "reloaded" by recasting. Monster abilities don't *need* reloading.

Example: A bow has Shots 1(2). It can fire one arrow, after which it takes the archer two turns to prepare another.

Crossbows

When you buy a crossbow, you must specify its **ST**. It takes two seconds to cock any crossbow of your ST or less. A stronger crossbow does more damage but takes longer to cock: A crossbow with ST one or two greater than yours takes *six* seconds to cock. One with ST three or four greater than yours requires a "goat's foot" device to cock (takes 18 seconds). You cannot *cock* a stronger crossbow, but you can still *fire* it!

In addition to cocking time, it takes one turn to draw and load a bolt – unless you have **Fast-Draw (Arrow)** – and another to return the crossbow to shooting position.

AREA AND SPREADING ATTACKS

Dragon's breath, Explosive Fireball spells, gas grenades, and similar attacks affect a wide area. These aren't always

ATTACKING AN AREA

With an **area effect** or **explosion**, you can deliberately attack a hex of ground instead of a person. This gives +4 to hit. Anyone who would be affected can use *Taking Cover* (p. 50) to move away from that hex.

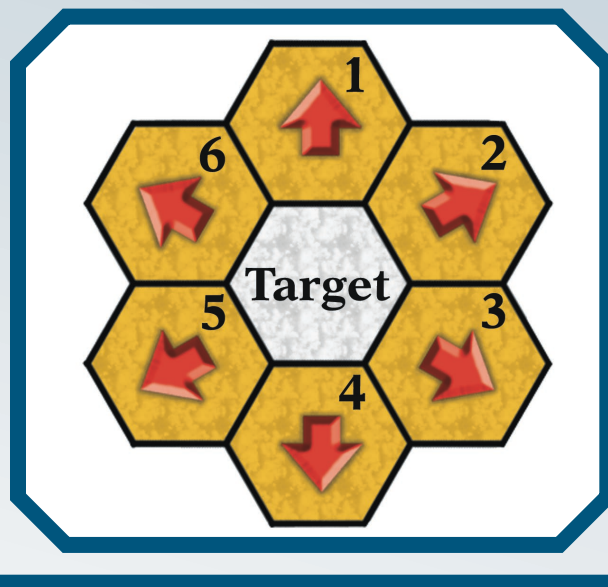
A **cone** is aimed *through* a hex, never at the ground, and can't use this rule.

SCATTER

When an **area effect**, **explosion**, or **cone** misses its target, it's important to know where it ends up!

If your attack roll fails, you miss your target by a number of hexes equal to the margin of failure. If attacking a person and your target dodges, use margin of success on the *dodge* instead. Maximum scatter distance is half the distance to the target (round up).

To determine the *direction* of your miss, roll 1d and consult the diagram. Take the direction *you* are facing as #1 and proceed clockwise. Your attack misses in that direction, by the number of hexes determined above.



ranged attacks – monster breath might work more like a *melee* weapon, while some creatures emanate such effects from their bodies.

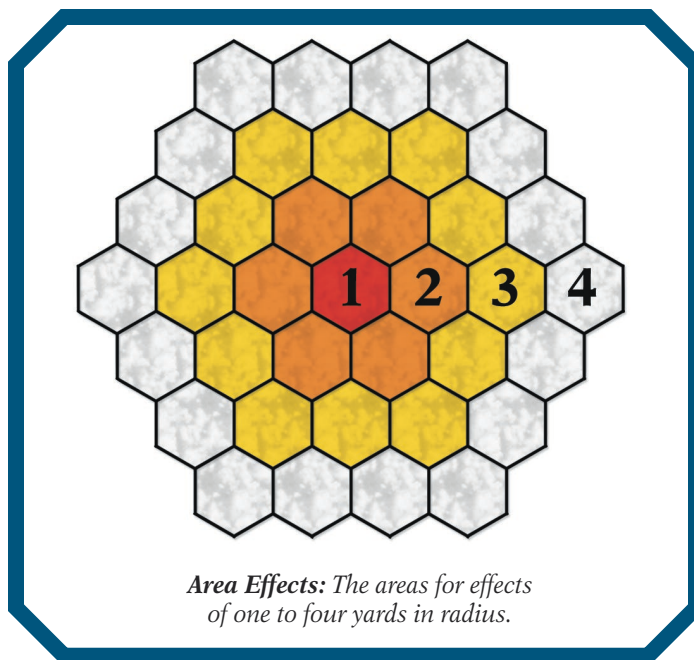
For all such attacks:

- Misses use *Scatter* (above). *Exception:* Zero-range effects emanated from the body never miss!
- The only defense allowed is a *dodge* combined with a *dive* or retreat away from the central or target hex; see *Taking Cover* (p. 50).
- Damage uses *Large-Area Injury* (p. 53) unless only a single body part is within the area.

Area Effects

Area effect attacks affect everyone within a specified radius equally; damage doesn't drop off with distance. On a miss, *Scatter* (p. 45) determines where the area is centered. *Taking Cover* (p. 50) is useful only if it moves you completely out of the area!

On a battle map, a one-yard-radius area effect fills *one hex*. Additional yards of radius fill successive rings of hexes around this. The diagram illustrates the progression for effects one to four yards in radius; extrapolate as needed for larger radii.



Explosions

Explosive attacks, like Explosive Fireball spells, produce a blast on impact. On a miss, *Scatter* (p. 45) determines where the blast is centered.

Explosions *do* taper off with distance – look for the note “ex” after damage type (e.g., “burn ex” for a burning explosion). Listed damage applies only to people *struck directly* or *in the target hex*. Everyone else out to (2 × dice of damage) yards takes less damage. For each person, roll damage, divide by (3 × hexes from center), and round down; e.g., divide

from its outer edges back to the center of the attacker's hex. For instance, for a cone with maximum range 10 yards and maximum width five yards, center five hexes on the line of fire 10 yards away from the attacker; all hexes (even partial ones) in the triangle between there and the attacker are affected.

Anyone *completely* screened from the attacker by an object or person is behind cover, which protects normally. *Taking Cover* (p. 50) is useful if it moves you out of the cone or behind cover.

damage by 3 in hexes *adjacent* to the center.

Taking Cover (p. 50) is useful if it moves you farther from the center

Cones

Cones are things like monster breath and wide gaze attacks. A cone is shot “through” a desired target hex. If it misses, *Scatter* (p. 45) determines a *new* target hex.

The cone spreads to either side of a line of fire traced from the attacker's hex through the target hex, out to its maximum range. A cone also has a maximum *width* – center this on the line of fire at maximum range, and then trace lines

DEFENDING

A successful attack roll doesn't guarantee a hit (unless it's a critical hit, p. 50) – only that *the attack is good enough to hit if the target fails to defend*.

To defend, the target uses an **active defense** – a *deliberate* attempt to avoid *that one attack*. There are three active defenses: **Dodge** (*Dodging*, pp. 47-48), **Parry** (*Parrying*, pp. 48-49), and **Block** (*Blocking*, p. 48). Work out these scores in advance and record them on your character sheet. If an enemy makes a successful attack roll against you, you may choose *one* of these and try a **defense roll** against it.

Your exact options depend heavily on your most recent maneuver. Notably, *All-Out Defense (Double Defense)* (p. 31) lets you attempt a *second* defense against an attack if your first one fails, *Move and Attack* (pp. 30-31) prohibits parrying with the attacking hand, and *All-Out Attack* (p. 30) permits *no* active defense!

Regardless of your maneuver, you receive no active defense if you're unaware of the attack (*Seeing It Coming*,

p. 47). You also have no active defense when unconscious, immobilized, or similarly helpless. Defense is possible only if you are aware of the possibility of an attack from the attacker *and* free to react – by moving out of the way (dodge), deflecting the attack with a weapon or empty hand (parry), or interposing a shield (block).

DEFENSE ROLLS

To defend, apply any relevant *Active Defense Modifiers* (pp. 96-97) to the chosen active defense score and then roll 3d. A roll *less than or equal* to the effective defense means the attack is dodged, parried, or blocked. Otherwise, the attack strikes home – roll for damage!

An active defense roll of 3 or 4 is *always* successful – even if your effective defense score was less than 3. A roll of 17 or 18 always fails.

No defense is possible against a critical hit, though!

Injury and Active Defenses

Active defenses never take a penalty for shock (p. 60). But if you're stunned (p. 60), all defense rolls are at -4.

Defense Bonus

If you have a *ready* shield or cloak, add its **Defense Bonus (DB)** to any Dodge, Parry, or Block roll against an attack that comes from your *front* or *shield side*. Defense Bonuses appear on the *Shield Table* (*Adventurers*, p. 107).

Magic can provide a DB, too. Only the *best* magical DB applies – such bonuses don't "stack." But a fighter *can* claim a shield's basic, nonmagical DB as well.

Retreating and Dropping Prone

You often can – and will want to! – give ground or drop prone for a bonus to your active defense score. See *Active Defense Options* (pp. 49-50).

Seeing It Coming

You get a defense roll only if you know you're being attacked!

Visibility and Defense

If you can see a weapon *at all*, there's no visibility penalty to defend against it. Thus, partial darkness penalties (*Vision*, p. 9) *don't* affect defense rolls. Similarly, there's no penalty if an attacker hidden in smoke or total darkness is striking out of it at a defender who isn't.

However, if your attacker (including his weapon) is invisible or in total darkness, and you don't even know your foe is there, you get *no defense at all!* After being attacked by someone like that – or if you witness an enemy turn invisible or disappear into darkness – you're on alert. You may dodge at -4, and a successful Hearing roll at -2 allows you to parry or block, also at -4. If you're blind, you defend this way against *all* attacks.

Attacks from the Side and Back

Against an attack that comes from one of your *side* hexes, you defend at -2 unless you have the **Peripheral Vision** advantage. Regardless:

- A shield *cannot block an attack that comes from your weapon side*, only one that comes from your shield side.
- A one-handed melee weapon *cannot parry an attack that comes from the other side of your body*, only one that comes from the same side, unless you possess the **Double-Jointed** advantage.

Against any attack that comes from behind – your *back* hex, in combat – you *cannot defend at all* unless you possess **Peripheral Vision** or can make a **Blind Fighting** roll, either of which lets you defend at -2. Even then, the angles are awkward: Unless you also have **Double-Jointed**, you have an extra -2 (total -4) to *parry* an attack from behind and *cannot block* at all.

"Runaround" Attacks

For an attack to count as coming from behind, the attacker must not only attack from behind the defender but also *start* there on the turn of the attack. Starting *anywhere else* and using sheer speed to maneuver behind someone and strike from the back means the victim is somewhat aware of the attack. Treat this as an attack from the *side* instead.

Sneaky Surprises

Undetected traps, attacks from traitorous "friends," and other bolts from the blue generally allow no active defense. If the GM is feeling kind, there might be a roll to detect such a thing and get a defense; e.g., a Hearing roll at -2 to hear a trap trigger, allowing a dodge.

DEFENDING YOUR WEAPON

If your *weapon* is the target of an attack, the rules change:

- You can **dodge** normally.
- You can **parry** only with the weapon being attacked – and only if it's ready. This represents pulling it away or turning it so a blow slides off ineffectively. You cannot, for example, defend a weapon in your right hand by parrying with your left.
- You may combine your dodge or parry with a **retreat** (p. 50), for the usual bonus.
- You *cannot block*.
- A shield's Defense Bonus (DB) provides no benefit whatsoever.

Combat at Different Levels

If one fighter is on significantly higher ground than another (minimum two feet), all active defenses against *melee* attacks are at +1 for the higher warrior, -1 for the lower. If the difference in levels equals or exceeds their horizontal distance (45° or greater slope, as on most stairs) – or one fighter is *flying* over the other – make that +2 and -2.

Personal height and weapon reach *should* affect this, but that gets very complicated. Instead, ignore penalties to the defenses of monsters huge enough that delvers *need* high ground or long weapons just to reach them.

DODGING

A **dodge** is an active attempt to move out of the path of an attack. It's the best defense against missiles when you lack a shield, and valuable whenever you must avoid *any* contact with a foe (like a monster that damages anything it touches). You'll often find yourself using it when attacked multiple times!

Find your **Dodge** active defense score as follows:

$\text{Dodge} = 3 + \text{Basic Speed} - \text{encumbrance penalty}$
(*Adventurers*, p. 12)

Round *down*. For example, Basic Speed 6.75 and Light encumbrance (-1) would give $3 + 6.75 - 1 = 8.75$, which rounds to 8. List the result on your character sheet.

You may try to dodge *any* attack except one you didn't know about! You can attempt only one Dodge roll against a given attack – but there's no limit to the number of times you may use dodge as your defense against *different* attacks during your turn.

Acrobatic Dodge

If you've spent points on the **Acrobatics** skill, then *once* per turn you can attempt a "fancy" dodge; e.g., jumping over the blow or cartwheeling away. Make an Acrobatics roll *before* your Dodge roll. Success gives +2 to the Dodge roll. Failure gives -2.

You *can* combine this option with a retreat (p. 50).

BLOCKING

A **block** is an attempt to interpose a shield, cloak, or similar barrier between yourself and an attack. This requires a *ready* shield or cloak. (If you've already grabbed and lifted someone, you can block with his body!)

Find your **Block** active defense score as follows:

$\text{Block} = 3 + \text{half skill}$

"Skill" is **Shield** for a shield, **Cloak** for a cloak. (For a body, use **DX** or **Wrestling**.) Round *down*. For example, Shield-15 would give $3 + 7.5 = 10.5$, which rounds to 10. Record the result on your character sheet.

BEYOND THE BLOCK

You can use cloaks and shields offensively as well as for a block defense.

Snapping a cloak at someone, pressing with a shield, or obstructing enemy vision with either is a *Feint* (p. 30). This has reach 1.

You can also attack in melee combat. The following require an *Attack*, *All-Out Attack*, or *Move and Attack* maneuver:

Cloak Grapple: You can use a cloak to grapple at reach C, 1. Use **Cloak** skill to hit. Otherwise, this works like an unarmed grapple (*Grappling*, pp. 40-41).

Shield Bash: You can use a shield to whack someone in your front or shield-side hex for damage. Use **Shield** skill to hit. For stats, see the *Melee Weapons Table* (*Adventurers*, pp. 98-103).

Shield Rush: You can use a shield (but *not* a buckler) to try to knock someone down by running into them shield-first. See *Slams*, *Tramples*, and *Overruns* (p. 40).

You can try to block *any* attack that doesn't explicitly forbid it (which some monster abilities do). You may attempt to block just *one* attack per turn.

Blocking Flails and Kusaris: Weighted chain weapons tend to wrap around the edge of a shield, giving -2 to block.

Failed Cloak Blocks: A successful cloak block either sweeps aside an attack or hides your body, misleading your attacker. A failed one amounts to a botched unarmed parry with a hand holding some flimsy cloth! Against a *melee weapon* (only), failure lets the attacker choose to hit the original target *or* the cloak arm – and no, the cloak *doesn't* give that arm extra DR.

PARRYING

A **parry** is an attempt to deflect an attack using a *ready* melee weapon or an *empty* hand. Find your **Parry** active defense score as follows:

$\text{Parry} = 3 + \text{half skill}$

"Skill" is **weapon skill** for melee weapons, or **DX** or **unarmed combat skill** for bare hands. Round *down*. For example, Broadsword-17 would give $3 + 8.5 = 11.5$, which rounds to 11.

Also add any numerical modifier in the "Parry" column of the *Melee Weapons Table* (*Adventurers*, pp. 98-103). Bolas, kusaris, and whips suffer -2 for lack of rigidity. Short batons and most knives get -1 for being small. Quarterstaves enjoy +2 for their length and strong defensive grip.

List every Parry you're likely to use on your character sheet.

You can parry only *melee attacks* and *thrown weapons*. (Martial artists can deflect missiles with the **Parry Missile Weapons** skill; see *Adventurers*, p. 33.)

Parries are subject to more numerous special rules than dodges or blocks.

Number of Parries

Once you've attempted a parry with a given weapon or bare hand, further parries *with that weapon or hand* have a cumulative -4 per parry after the first. Make this -2 per parry if you are using a fencing weapon *or* have the **Trained by a Master** or **Weapon Master** advantage – or to -1 per parry if you have a fencing weapon *and* either of those traits. This penalty applies to multiple parries *on the same turn* – it doesn't carry over *between* turns.

What Am I Parrying With?

Parrying with the Off Hand: Per *Using the Off Hand* (p. 36), weapons in your "off" hand are at -4 to skill and thus -2 to Parry unless you have **Ambidexterity**. The **Main-Gauche** skill *never* suffers this -2 to Parry, however.

Parrying with Fencing Weapons: Weapons with an “F” in the “Parry” column of the *Melee Weapons Table* (*Adventurers*, pp. 98-103) are **fencing weapons**. These blades and their skills – **Main-Gauche**, **Rapier**, **Saber**, and **Smallsword** – high-light defense. You suffer *half* the usual penalty for multiple parries (*Number of Parries*, p. 48), and get +3 to Parry instead of the usual +1 when you retreat (p. 50). However, fencing parries suffer encumbrance penalties (*Adventurers*, p. 12) and cannot defend against flails or kusaris.

Parrying with Unbalanced Weapons: If your weapon has a “U” in the “Parry” column of the *Melee Weapons Table*, you cannot parry with it after attacking with it on your turn. (This doesn't affect parries with your other hand.)

Parrying with Improvised Weapons: You can parry with a non-weapon of suitable size and shape, using the closest melee weapon skill. A pole could parry like a staff; a bow, like a club. Such weapons count as *cheap* for breakage; see *Parrying Heavy Weapons* (below).

Parrying Unarmed: Parrying barehanded requires one empty hand for **DX**, **Boxing**, **Brawling**, **Judo**, or **Karate**, or two free hands for **Sumo Wrestling** or **Wrestling**. Parry is still 3 + *half* skill. You have no penalty to parry another unarmed attack – but you're at -3 against weapons unless the attack is a *thrust* or you're using Judo or Karate (in either case, ignore the penalty). As *Hurting Yourself* (p. 40) explains, failure to parry a weapon gives your attacker the option to hit the parrying arm *or* the original target! Consult the write-up of your unarmed combat skill for further special rules; notably, Judo and Karate get +3 to Parry instead of the usual +1 when retreating (p. 50), but suffer encumbrance penalties (*Adventurers*, p. 12).

Monster Parries: Natural beings without hands (like most animals) can't parry; they can only dodge. Monsters aren't natural! Many *can* parry – sometimes using body parts that count as weapons, *not* bare hands.

What Am I Parrying?

Parrying Flails and Kusaris: Chain weapons may wrap around a parrying weapon and hit anyway! Parries against them are at -4. Knives and fencing weapons *cannot* parry them.

Parrying Bows and Other Missile Weapons: If an attacker using a missile weapon is within reach of your melee weapon, you may parry the *weapon* rather than its *projectile*; e.g., if an archer shoots at you from a yard away, you could try to knock his bow off-target with your broadsword. This has no special modifier.

Parrying Thrown Weapons: You *can* parry thrown weapons! Roll at -2 vs. weapons that weigh 1 lb. or less (knives, shuriken, etc.), -1 for anything heavier.

Parrying Unarmed Attacks: As *Hurting Yourself* (p. 40) explains, if you successfully parry an unarmed attack using a weapon, you may immediately roll against weapon

Speaking from Experience

*Only a fool wouldn't step out of the path of a blow when possible – but it **isn't** possible when quarters are too tight for dodging and bobbing, as in the dungeon, or when ambushed by brigands in forest or mire, as when traveling off the King's road. And though the shield is valuable against hordes, it's too cumbersome to respond quickly to each foe. A sword kept in the guard position between you and your enemies requires only space enough to move the wrist. It's a swift protector and also a valuable deterrent – few creatures will risk claw and tooth against its edge. Truly, the parry is the defense of kings!*

– Sir Yvor Gryffyn, Knight

skill – at -4 if your attacker used Judo or Karate – to damage the attacking limb.

Parrying Heavy Weapons

Heavy weapons can knock away, even break a parrying weapon. Unarmed attacks from high-ST monsters pose a similar threat: For the purpose of these rules, any attack under *Striking* (pp. 38-39) or *Grappling* (pp. 40-41) counts as a weapon with an effective weight of 1/10 of the attacker's ST. Make this *full* ST for the attacks in *Slams*, *Tramples*, and *Overruns* (p. 40)!

A weapon may break if it parries anything three or more times its own weight. (This doesn't apply to barehanded parries; for damage to limbs when parrying unarmed, see *Hurting Yourself*, p. 40.) A weapon parrying three times its weight has a 2 in 6 chance of breaking: it breaks on a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d. Add +1 to these odds per whole-numbered multiple past three: 3 in 6 at four times weapon weight, 4 in 6 at five times, and so on. Weapon quality modifies the odds: +2 if the parrying weapon is cheap, -1 if fine, or -2 if very fine.

If your weapon breaks, the parry still counts *unless* the odds of breakage exceeded 6 in 6. If so, your weapon offered so little resistance that the parry *doesn't* count!

Regardless of your weapon's weight, you cannot parry anything heavier than your Basic Lift if parrying unarmed or with a one-handed weapon, or 2×BL with a two-handed weapon. Attempts to parry anything heavier *fail automatically* – whether or not your weapon breaks, the attack sweeps it aside and damages you normally. If your weapon doesn't break, you drop it; if you're unarmed, you're knocked back one yard (make a DX roll to avoid falling over).

ACTIVE DEFENSE OPTIONS

You can get a bonus to an active defense by choosing one of these options to go with it. These aren't separate defenses but adjuncts to dodging, blocking, or parrying.

You may choose *one* option per turn – and only *once*, against *one* foe. Then you can't do any of these things again until your next turn!

Retreat

Retreat is an option for *any* active defense against a *melee* attack. Choosing it moves you one step (p. 33) – normally one hex – directly away from the foe you’re defending against. You cannot retreat into an occupied hex. You may change facing by *one* hex-side as you retreat, if desired.

Retreating gives +3 to **Dodge**, or to **Parry** using **Boxing**, **Judo**, **Karate**, **Main-Gauche**, **Rapier**, **Saber**, or **Smallsword**. It gives +1 to **Block**, or to **Parry** with any other skill.

Your step back happens immediately, but you’re considered to be in your original hex until your enemy is done attacking. Your attacker *still gets to attack* if retreating would

move you out of reach – and if your assailant has multiple attacks, retreating *doesn’t* change your effective distance for the remaining attacks. However, your retreat bonus aids *all* active defense rolls against *all* of that foe’s attacks until your next turn.

If your opponent attacked you with a maneuver that allows a step but hasn’t yet taken that step, your foe can opt to follow you using the unused step. In effect, your attacker is forcing you back!

You cannot retreat while in a *sitting* or *kneeling* posture, while stunned, after a Move and Attack, or after a Move maneuver used to sprint (p. 33). You *can* retreat (by rolling) if you’re lying down.

CRITICAL HITS AND MISSES

Critical hits and **critical misses** are critical successes (p. 7) and critical failures (p. 7) on *attack* or *defense* rolls in combat.

Critical Hits

A **critical hit** is an especially lucky or good blow. Your foe does *not* get an active defense roll against it!

Whenever you roll a 3 or 4 when attacking, you get a critical hit *and* you roll on the *Critical Hit Table* (p. 100). At effective skill 15+, a roll of 3-5 is a critical hit; at effective skill 16+, a roll of 3-6 is a critical hit. Bonuses to your attack roll increase effective skill, making critical hits more likely; penalties lower effective skill, making critical hits less likely.

Example: Gorignak the Barbarian has base skill 16. He uses All-Out Attack (Determined) to get +4 and targets an orc’s neck (-5). His effective skill is 15. He rolls a 5 – a critical hit! The orc gets *no defense* and Gorignak rolls on the *Critical Hit Table*.

Critical Success on Defense Rolls: Critical success on a defense roll against a *melee* attack means *your attacker* must roll on the *Critical Miss Table* (p. 101). Critical success on a defense roll against a *ranged* attack has no special effect, unless the defense was an unarmed parry against a thrown weapon – that lets you *catch* the incoming weapon without hurting yourself, if you wish!

Critical Misses

A **critical miss** is a disastrously bad attack or defense roll. You might break your weapon, throw it away, even hit yourself!

A roll of 18 is *always* a critical miss. A roll of 17 is a critical miss unless your *effective* skill is 16+, in which case it’s an ordinary miss. A *melee* attack (but *not* a *ranged* attack) or defense roll that fails by 10 or more is also a critical miss.

If you get a critical miss on an *attack* or *parry*, roll on the appropriate *Critical Miss Table* (p. 101). Apply the result immediately.

If you attempted to *dodge*, you lose your footing and fall prone (no effect if already lying down).

If you tried to *block*, you lose your grip on your shield. You cannot block or attack with it – and are without its Defense Bonus – until you take a Ready maneuver.

Dodge and Drop

Dodge and drop is an option for a *dodge* against a *ranged* attack. It grants you +3 to **Dodge** against that attack and all later ranged attacks by that foe for one turn.

The catch? You immediately assume a *lying* posture (face up or face down). While defending against your chosen foe *this turn*, use your *former* posture to assess defense penalties – but against other enemies, you defend at -3 for lying down! Afterward, you’ll be on the ground, at a disadvantage against everyone, until you get up using Change Posture.

Any cover you drop behind doesn’t count against the initial attack that inspired the dodge and drop, but *does* count against subsequent ranged attacks that must pass through it to reach you.

Taking Cover

If an **area effect**, **explosion**, or **cone** (*Area and Spreading Attacks*, pp. 45-46) goes off, you may retreat or dodge and drop to move away *from that attack* instead of *from a foe*. Roll a *dodge* at +3. Defense Bonus is irrelevant.

Succeed or fail, you move one step (p. 33). If you elected to dodge and drop, you’re also lying down – a good idea if the only available cover is too low or shallow to protect a standing person! Success means you react in time to get the benefit of cover and extra distance. Failure means the attack affects you and *then* you move, if you still can.

CLOSE COMBAT

Close combat occurs when you occupy the same hex as your foe or attempt to move through an enemy's hex. It's most common when *Evading* (pp. 34-35) or in *Unarmed Combat* (pp. 38-41). It affects movement, attack, and defense, and favors natural weapons (like claws) over artificial ones (like swords).

ENTERING A FOE'S HEX

You may move or step into an enemy's hex using any maneuver that grants enough movement to do so. You're in "close combat" as soon as you enter that hex, *regardless* of your maneuver or that of your foe.

If you take a *Move*, *Move and Attack*, or *All-Out Attack*, you can run into a foe's hex and *stop* there, facing your enemy. If you don't want to stop, you *must* attempt to evade (pp. 34-35) or slam (p. 40) that opponent – your choice, within the limits of your maneuver.

When you enter an enemy-occupied hex, you occupy *half* of the hex. You have the half of the hex from which you entered; your foe has the other half.

LEAVING A FOE'S HEX

If you start your turn in the hex of a foe who isn't grappling you, you can move out of that hex through any of the three hexes adjacent to *your* side. If you do this using a *Move* or *Move and Attack*, you'll have to spend movement points to change facing, sidestep, or step backward. To leave through one of the three hexes adjacent to your *enemy's* side, you'll have to evade (pp. 34-35) to "move through" your opponent.

If you take a maneuver that allows a step (p. 33), you can step out of the hex and attack, Feint, etc. with a one-hex reach weapon – or you can make a close-combat attack and *then* step out – but your step can only take you into one of the three hexes on *your* side.

If your foe has grappled you, you may still choose a maneuver on your turn, but you cannot leave the hex until you break free (*Actions After Being Grappled*, p. 41).

WEAPONS FOR CLOSE COMBAT

Only small, easily managed weapons are suitable for close combat. You can attack with any melee weapon with reach "C." If using a ranged weapon, *ignore* the standard speed/range penalty and apply the weapon's **Bulk** statistic as a penalty to hit.

SHIELDS IN CLOSE COMBAT

In close combat, a shield still provides its Defense Bonus but it hampers *you* while you wear it. Any attack you make in close combat – except for the *initial* slam or other attack when you first move into your foe's hex – has a penalty equal to the

shield's Defense Bonus! Any DX roll you attempt in close combat *after* your first turn there has the same penalty.

It takes one Ready maneuver and a successful **DX** roll to ditch your shield in close combat.

READYING IN CLOSE COMBAT

You must make a **DX** roll to ready a weapon in close combat. If you fail, your Ready maneuver accomplishes nothing! If you want to use the **Fast-Draw** skill, you must make *two* rolls: the DX roll and, if that succeeds, the Fast-Draw roll to get your weapon *quickly*. A failed Fast-Draw roll forces you to take a full Ready maneuver to ready your weapon.

DEFENSE IN CLOSE COMBAT

You can **dodge** normally in close combat. You can **parry** only with an empty hand or a reach "C" weapon (e.g., a knife). You cannot **block** at all!

You can **retreat** (p. 50) from close combat if you aren't being grappled. Step out of close combat into any of the three hexes on *your* side of the close-combat hex. This lets you try *any* active defense at the usual bonus to your defense roll.

MULTIPLE CLOSE COMBAT

Any number of people may participate in close combat in the same hex. This can be difficult to show with upright figures! A good compromise is to allow a fighter to enter close combat with an opponent while leaving the counter in an adjacent hex.

Up to two fighters may cooperate in a **takedown** attempt against a single foe; up to three may coordinate in a **pin** attempt. Each fighter who wants to help takes an Attack maneuver; the roll is made when the last participant acts. Use the **ST**, **DX**, or **grappling skill** of the attacker with the *best* score, plus 1/5 of the score of each helper (round down).

STRIKING INTO CLOSE COMBAT

You may stand outside a close-combat hex and attack a foe who's in close combat. Your attack is at -2.

If you *hit*, your foe may defend only as explained in *Defense in Close Combat* (above).

If you *miss*, or your target successfully *dodges*, you may hit someone else – friend or foe! – in that hex. If there are several possibilities, roll randomly to see who you imperil first. Your effective skill is a flat 9 or the number you would have had to roll to hit that enemy on purpose, whichever is *worse*, and you must use *Attacking a Random Hit Location* (p. 37). If you hit, your victim may defend as explained in *Defense in Close Combat*. Keep rolling until you hit, someone parries, or you run out of targets.

DAMAGE AND INJURY

If your attack roll succeeds and your target fails any defense roll allowed, *you hit!* For a damaging attack (rather than, say, a grapple), the next step is to make a **damage roll** to determine how much **basic damage** you deal to your victim.

Your ST and weapon determine damage with physical attacks. For things like Missile spells and special abilities, consult the description. Record the damage of your attacks on your character sheet for quick reference. (For the damage a *monster* inflicts, see its entry in *Monsters*.)

If your target has any **Damage Resistance (DR)** – from armor, advantages, spells, and so on – subtract it from your damage roll. If your attack has an **armor divisor** (below), this will modify your target's DR.

A damage roll *less than or equal to* your target's effective DR simply bounces off or is absorbed. But if the roll *exceeds* DR, the excess is the **penetrating damage**. Against a foe without DR, the entire damage roll is penetrating damage.

Once you know your attack's penetrating damage, apply the **wounding modifier** for its **damage type** (*Damage Type and Injury*, p. 53) – possibly adjusted for **hit location** (*Hit Location and Injury*, pp. 53-54) – and round down. The result is the **injury** your enemy suffers, which is subtracted from **Hit Points (HP)**.

Example: Your sword does 2d+1 cutting damage. Rolling two dice and adding 1, you deliver 8 points of *basic damage*. Your foe has DR 3, so *penetrating damage* is 5 points. You then apply the $\times 1.5$ wounding modifier for cutting damage, resulting in 7 points of *injury*. Your foe loses 7 HP.

DAMAGE ROLL

Players make the delvers' damage rolls while the GM rolls for NPCs. Damage rolls are expressed as a number of dice, sometimes with a modifier; e.g., "6d-1" or "1d+2." A negative modifier here can't reduce basic damage below 0 if *crushing* or 1 for *any other damage type*. For instance, if basic damage is 2d-3 and the dice roll 2 or 3, damage is 0 if crushing, 1 otherwise.

High-damage attacks may express damage as a number of dice with a multiplier. For example, "6d \times 3" means "roll 6d and multiply the total by 3." If the six dice come up 21, that's 63 points of damage. This is a quick way to roll lots of dice.

The result of the damage roll (*after* any modifiers or multiplication) is the hit's **basic damage**.

Half Damage (1/2D) for Ranged Attacks

If a ranged attack has two **range** statistics, the first is **Half-Damage Range (1/2D)**, in yards. If the target is at or beyond 1/2D, *halve basic damage* and round down.

For an attack that offers a roll to resist an effect like stunning or paralysis, add +3 to this roll *instead of* halving damage.

If an attack carries a follow-up (p. 56), 1/2D affects the carrier but not what it's carrying. For instance, an *arrow* is affected by 1/2D, but any poison on it is not.

Not all ranged attacks list 1/2D. An attack without 1/2D has full normal effect out to **Maximum Range (Max)**.

Speaking from Experience

*When hunting man or orc, aim for the heart or head. The denizens of deep places often lack such weaknesses, though, making success a matter of piercing scales or hide and hoping for the best. There are many ways to accomplish this, starting with the force of your blow: Strike as hard as you can, using a powerful bow – or a big sword or club, if that's your thing. Consider a weapon that can slip through armor, whether that means the time-tested bodkin arrow or, for the rich, an enchanted penetrating weapon. And if you **do** use bow and arrow, don't show off with long shots, as these reach their target half-spent. You might win archery meets that way, but monsters are considerably tougher than hay bales.*

– Llandor the Gray, Scout

DAMAGE RESISTANCE AND PENETRATION

Damage Resistance (DR) rates the degree of protection that armor, tough skin, magic spells, etc. affords against damage. The DR of armor may vary by body part. Some kinds of protection don't offer the same DR against all damage types. Objects have their own DR that protects them against damage they suffer – and if you take cover behind or inside them, that DR also protects you.

Except as noted, DR from multiple sources is additive. For instance, if you're wearing DR 4 mail, a wizard casts a spell on you that gives DR 3, and you're behind cover with DR 2, you have DR 9.

Subtract DR from **basic damage** to determine the **penetrating damage** that punches through or deforms your protection enough to cause a significant injury. For example, if you're hit by an attack that inflicts 11 points of basic damage and have DR 9, you take 2 points of penetrating damage.

Armor Divisors

An attack that's especially good (or bad!) at penetrating DR will have an **armor divisor**. This is expressed as a number in parentheses after damage dice; e.g., "3d(2)" means 3d damage with a (2) armor divisor.

An armor divisor of (2) or greater means that DR protects at *reduced* value against the attack. Divide the target's DR by the number in parentheses before subtracting it from basic damage; e.g., (2) means DR protects at half value. Round DR *down*. Minimum DR is 0.

Some armor divisors are fractions. *Multiply* DR against such attacks: $\times 2$ for (0.5), $\times 5$ for (0.2), and $\times 10$ for (0.1). In addition, treat DR 0 (e.g., bare skin) as DR 1 against any fractional divisor!

Large-Area Injury

Some attacks (e.g., a pit of acid or lava) affect most or all of the victim's body. This is **large-area injury**. **Area effects**, **explosions**, and **cones** (*Area and Spreading Attacks*, pp. 45-46) *always* work this way. *Melee* attacks from huge monsters (at least SM +7) might count, too!

Damage Resistance protects against large-area injury – but if it varies by hit location, *effective* DR is the *average* of torso DR and the DR of the *least*-protected location exposed to the attack (which could still be the torso), rounded up. For DR that varies against different attacks, “least protected” refers to the location with the lowest DR against *that type of attack*.

A location protected by cover or masked by the body *doesn't* count as “exposed.” Against an explosion or cone, only locations facing the blast or cone are exposed (e.g., if you're turned away, your face and eyes aren't exposed). For immersion in acid, fire, or a similar hazard, only immersed locations are exposed. Against a genuine area effect, *all* locations are exposed!

Ignore special hit-location effects for large-area injury except when just one location is exposed. If a *single* limb or extremity is exposed, injury in excess of that required to cripple it is lost.

Corrosion

Corrosion (cor) damage – acid, disintegration, etc. – destroys the target's Damage Resistance! Remove one point of DR per *full* five points of basic damage rolled. This matters for *future* attacks, not the attack that burned off the DR. Layered DR is affected in order from the outermost to innermost layer. The natural DR of living beings heals at the same rate as lost HP.

DAMAGE TYPE AND INJURY

If an attack causes **penetrating damage**, multiply this by the **wounding modifier** for the attack's **damage type**:

Small piercing (pi-): $\times 0.5$

Burning (burn), corrosion (cor), crushing (cr), fatigue (fat), piercing (pi), or toxic (tox): $\times 1$ (that is, damage is unchanged)

Cutting (cut) or large piercing (pi+): $\times 1.5$

Impaling (imp) or huge piercing (pi++): $\times 2$

For all types but fatigue, damage after this multiplier is the **injury**. Round *down*, but minimum injury is one point for any attack that manages to penetrate DR at all. Reduce the victim's current **Hit Points (HP)** by the injury sustained. Corrosion and burning damage produce further special effects; see *Corrosion* (above) and *Flame* (p. 68), respectively.

Fatigue damage causes **fatigue**, which works like injury except that it reduces the target's current **Fatigue Points (FP)** instead.

Hit location may further affect wounding modifier! The above rules above assume a *torso* hit.

KNOCKBACK

A hard hit may knock the enemy away – a common result of gigantic monster attacks! This is **knockback**. A **crushing** attack can cause knockback regardless of whether it penetrates DR. A **cutting** attack can cause knockback if it *fails* to penetrate DR. Other attacks cannot cause knockback.

Knockback depends on basic damage rolled *before* subtracting DR. For every *full* multiple of the target's ST-2 rolled, move the target one hex away from the attacker; e.g., a ST 10 man is knocked back one hex per full eight points of basic damage. A target with ST 3 or less is knocked back one hex per point of basic damage! If the target has no ST score (like a table) or isn't resisting, use its HP instead.

Anyone who suffers knockback must roll against the *highest* of **DX**, **Acrobatics**, or **Judo**.

Modifiers: -1 per yard of knockback after the first; +4 for **Perfect Balance**.

Failure means falling down.

Anyone knocked into something or someone takes 1d-3 crushing damage if knocked one yard, 1d-2 for two yards, 1d-1 for three or four yards, or 1d per *full* five yards. The person or object struck takes the same damage.

“Knockback Only”: Some attacks – like shoves (p. 39) – do knockback but no damage. Roll damage as indicated and use this only to find knockback as above. This cannot cause *direct* injury, but a collision will still hurt!

HIT LOCATION AND INJURY

If your foe has discrete body parts, the **hit location** you strike often matters. This is assumed to be the **torso** except in these situations:

1. You chose to attack another location (*Hit Location*, pp. 36-37) or a weapon (*Attacking Weapons*, p. 37).

2. Location was chosen randomly (*Attacking a Random Hit Location*, p. 37).

3. The attack affected the whole body (*Large-Area Injury*, above).

Some body parts are affected differently by specific damage types. However, **fatigue** and **toxic** damage only ever cause generalized FP or HP loss, and completely *ignore* hit location. The same goes for effects that cause direct injury without specifying a damage type.

Below, each location gives the penalty to hit that part (in parentheses) and any special effects. If a **wounding modifier** is given, this *replaces* the usual one for damage type – it isn't cumulative with it.

Skull (-7): The part of the head that houses the brain. The skull gets an extra DR 2. The wounding modifier for all *but* fatigue or toxic damage increases to $\times 4$, knockdown rolls (p. 60) for major wounds are at -10, and critical hits use the *Critical Head Blow Table* (p. 100).

Eye (-9): **Impaling** and all **piercing** attacks can target the eye. Injury over HP/10 blinds the eye. Otherwise, treat as a skull hit without the extra DR 2!

Face (-5): The jaw, cheeks, nose, and ears. Many helmets have an open face, allowing this attack to ignore armor DR! Knockdown rolls for major wounds are at -5, and critical hits use the *Critical Head Blow Table*. **Corrosion** damage gets a $\times 1.5$ wounding modifier . . . and if it inflicts a major wound (p. 60), it *also* blinds one eye (*both* eyes, if injury exceeds full HP).

Neck (-5): The neck and throat. The wounding modifier for **crushing** or **corrosion** damage increases to $\times 1.5$. That of **cutting** damage becomes $\times 2$. Anyone *killed* by cutting damage to the neck is decapitated – resurrection is impossible without head *and* body!

Torso (0): The chest and abdomen. No special effects.

Vitals (-3): For humanoids, the heart or lungs (from the front) or the kidneys (from behind). The wounding modifier for **impaling** or any **piercing** damage increases to $\times 3$. Other damage types cannot target the vitals. Knockdown rolls for major wounds are at -5.

Groin (-3): Treat as a torso hit, except that male humanoids suffer *double* the usual shock (p. 60) from **crushing** damage (to a limit of -8), and get -5 to knockdown rolls.

Arm or Leg (-2): The wounding multiplier of **large piercing**, **huge piercing**, and **impaling** damage is reduced to $\times 1$. Injury of more than HP/2 from one blow cripples the limb – but injury beyond the minimum required to cripple is lost.

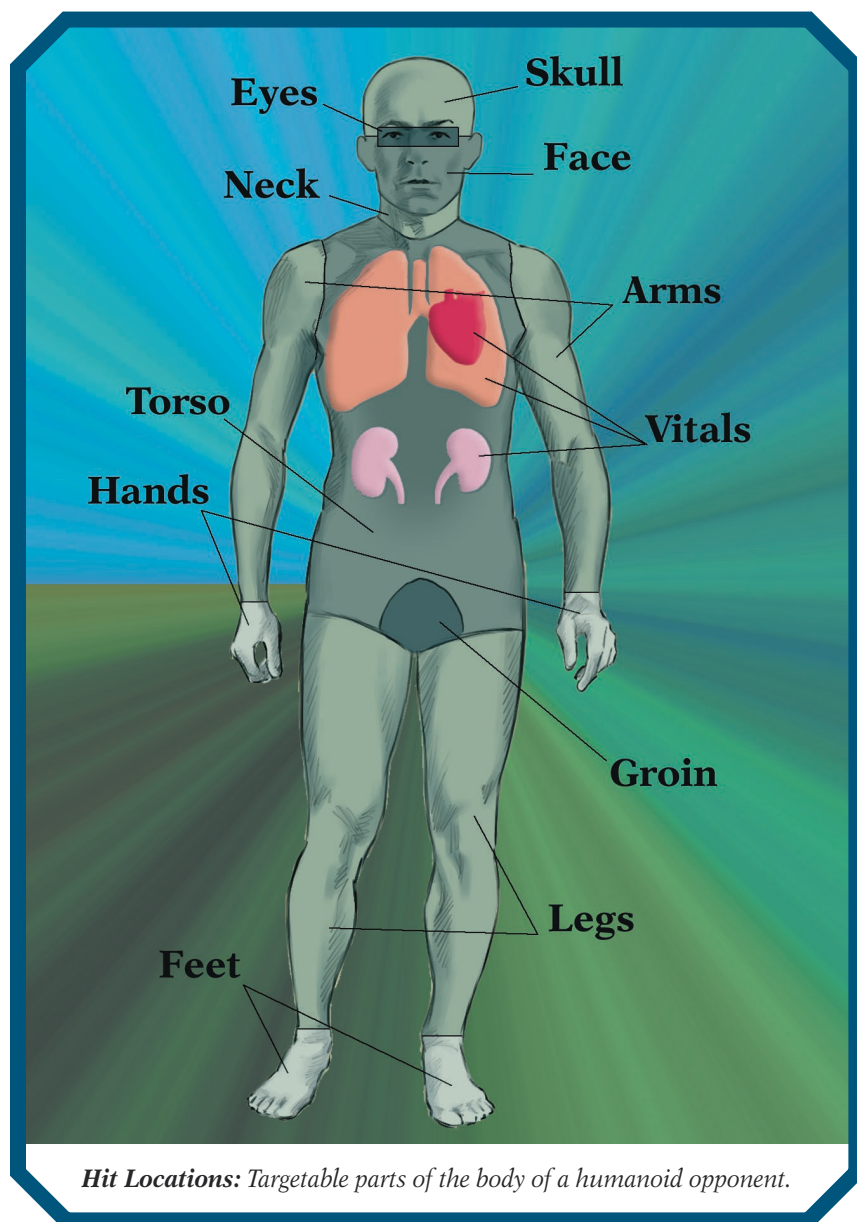
Hand or Foot (-4): As for an arm or leg, but injury of more than HP/3 from one blow cripples the extremity (excess injury is still lost).

All this assumes a *living, humanoid* target. Many monsters lack specific hit locations (*all* locations, for formless blobs), have different (or no!) vulnerabilities, or are subject to *Unliving, Homogeneous, and Diffuse Targets* (p. 55).

EFFECTS OF INJURY

If you're injured, subtract the points of **injury** from your **Hit Points**. At positive HP, you're usually still in the fight. See *Injury* (pp. 59-63) for the gory details, but in brief:

- If you have *less than 1/3* of your HP remaining, *halve* your **Move** and **Dodge** (round up).



• If you have *zero or fewer* HP left, you must roll vs. **HT** every turn (including the one on which you were injured). Failure means you fall unconscious.

• If you reach *fully negative* HP (e.g., -10 if you have 10 HP), you risk death! Make an immediate **HT** roll to avoid dying. You must roll again when you reach -2×HP, -3×HP, and -4×HP. At -5×HP, you die *automatically*.

Sudden HP loss has additional effects:

Shock (p. 60): This is a penalty to DX, IQ, and skills based on those attributes *on your next turn* (only). It's -1 per HP lost for most delvers, but never worse than -4, no matter how much injury you suffer.

Crippling (p. 61): Injury *over* HP/2 to an arm or leg, or *over* HP/3 to a hand or foot, renders that body part useless. Any crippling wound is automatically a **major wound**.

Major Wound (p. 60): This is an injury greater than 1/2 of your HP in a blow, or any crippling wound. Make an immediate **HT** roll. Failure means you fall down, **stunned**; failure by 5+ means you're unconscious. See *Knockdown* (p. 60) for modifiers and other details.

Stunning (p. 60): If you're stunned, you have -4 to active defenses and can't retreat. On your next turn, you *must* Do Nothing and try a **HT** roll. Success lets you act normally on later turns. Failure leaves you stunned – try again next turn!

Damage to Objects

Objects lose HP just like delvers and monsters, but they don't suffer shock, stun, and so on – they just break. If a hit is in doubt, apply all relevant combat modifiers (e.g., Size Modifier) and roll to hit. Unless you're attacking somebody's weapon (*Attacking Weapons*, p. 37), there won't be a defense roll. Then roll damage.

Most items have innate DR. Assume DR 2 for wooden items, DR 4 for small metal objects and metal-and-wood melee weapons, and DR 6 for solid-metal melee weapons. Larger objects (doors, walls, *castles*) can have *much* more DR – see *Walls* (p. 82) and *Entrances* (pp. 82-83). So can fantastic materials and enchanted artifacts.

Subtract DR and apply *Unliving, Homogeneous, and Diffuse Targets* (below). Complex machines are Unliving, solid objects (melee weapons, doors, walls) are Homogeneous, and things like nets and mattresses are Diffuse.

If no HP are specified for the target, use the *Object Hit Points Table* (p. 102) to find HP from weight. The GM may alter HP for unusually frail or tough objects.

Don't worry about HT rolls! Just use these rules:

0 HP or less – Disabled. The object cannot perform its function but isn't reduced to bits. If it's an obstacle, the delvers can squeeze past (the GM might require an **Escape** or **Forced Entry** roll). A weapon may function somewhat (*Broken Weapons*, p. 56). It can be repaired in town for 1d×10% of base item price.*

UNLIVING, HOMOGENEOUS, AND DIFFUSE TARGETS

Damage and Injury (pp. 52-57) assumes a living humanoid, animal, or similar being. Monsters described using one of the following terms are less vulnerable.

Unliving

Damage and injury work normally, except that **piercing** or **impaling** damage to any location *but* the **eye, skull, or vitals** (if present) has reduced wounding modifiers:

Small piercing (pi-): ×1/5

Piercing (pi): ×1/3

Large piercing (pi+): ×1/2

Impaling (imp) or huge piercing (pi++): ×1

Examples: Flesh golems; most corporeal undead; complex machinery.

Homogeneous

Ignore *all* knockdown and wounding modifiers for hit location. Eyes and limbs (if present) can still be crippled. **Piercing** or **impaling** damage to *any* location has reduced wounding modifiers:

Small piercing (pi-): ×1/10

Piercing (pi): ×1/5

Large piercing (pi+): ×1/3

Impaling (imp) or huge piercing (pi++): ×1/2

Examples: Creatures of earth, stone, or metal; plants; uniformly solid or hollow artifacts like melee weapons, furniture, doors, and walls.

Diffuse

Ignore *all* knockdown and wounding modifiers for hit location. Eyes and limbs (if present) can still be crippled. **Impaling** and **piercing** attacks (any size) never do more than 1 HP of injury, regardless of penetrating damage! Other attacks never inflict more than 2 HP of injury. Area effects, cones, and explosions cause normal injury.

Examples: Creatures of air, fire, or water; slimes; swarms; partially materialized spirits.

-1×HP – Destroyed. An obstacle is removed; a weapon is useless. The pieces are large enough that the thing could be fixed in town for 100% of base item price.*

-5×HP – Pulverized. The craftsman just shakes his head. "Sorry."

* Repairs won't restore magical properties. A *priceless artifact* cannot be repaired at any cost. Getting around these rules to fix extraordinary items is the stuff of quests!

Broken Weapons

If a weapon reaches -1xHP or below, it's useless – but if it's just disabled, it *might* still be usable. If it weighs 1 lb. or less (e.g., a dagger) or is a *missile* weapon (e.g., a bow or sling), it's useless even if merely disabled. Otherwise, roll 1d:

Axe/Mace weapons. On 1-3, the head breaks off, leaving you holding a club (if 3 lbs. or heavier) or baton (if lighter). On 4-6, the weapon is useless.

Polearms. On 1-3, the head breaks off, leaving you holding a quarterstaff (if reach 2) or long staff (if reach 3). On 4-6, you're left with a club; the rest is lying on the ground in front of you, and can be wielded at -2 to skill, -1 damage, and -1 reach.

Rapiers and smallswords. On 1-3, treat a broken smallsword as a dagger, a broken rapier as a smallsword; damage remains impaling! On 4-6, the blade snaps off at the hilt; the weapon is useless.

Spears. On 1-3, the head breaks off, leaving you holding a quarterstaff (if reach 2+) or baton (if reach 1). On 4-6, the spear breaks further down; a reach 1 spear is useless, but a longer one leaves a baton in your hand and a spear with reach 1, doing normal damage, lying in front of you.

Swords and sabers. On 1-3, the blade breaks off at the halfway mark, losing its tip. It can still make cutting attacks at -2 to damage, but it's useless as an impaling weapon – a thrust does thrust *crushing* damage. If the sword was reach 2, it's now reach 1. On 4-6, the blade snaps off at the hilt; the sword is useless.

Two-Handed Axe/Mace weapons. On 1-3, the head breaks off, leaving you holding a quarterstaff (if reach 2) or club (if reach 1). On 4-6, the weapon breaks further down; a reach 1 weapon is useless, but a longer one leaves a club in your hand and a very clumsy weapon (-4 to skill, -2 damage, -1 reach) lying in front of you.

Other weapons. Use the closest example above. The GM has the final say, and may choose to roll if there's more than one way for the weapon to break.

If the weapon effectively becomes a different kind of weapon, figure skill and damage according to the new weapon type!

SPECIAL DAMAGE

Many *interesting* dangers – especially monster attacks and traps – are exceptions to “roll damage, subtract DR, lose HP.”

Follow-Ups

Some attacks (e.g., poisoned arrows, flaming swords, and venomous monster fangs) carry a **follow-up**: a secondary effect (like paralysis or toxic damage) that occurs *after* the primary one. The primary effect is always damage of some kind – typically cutting, piercing, or impaling, occasionally crushing, and only rarely anything else.

If the primary damage penetrates the target's DR, *the DR doesn't affect the follow-up!* For example, if the impaling damage of a fire arrow penetrates DR, *all* of its follow-up burning

damage is automatically penetrating. Follow-ups that bypass DR this way *never* inflict knockback – even if their damage type usually does.

If the primary damage *doesn't* penetrate DR, the follow-up occurs *outside* DR, as if the target had been touched. If the DR would affect the follow-up, it does so in full. For instance, if a poisoned arrow failed to penetrate DR, any armor DR would stop the poison (which must reach flesh) while skin DR would not – but against a fire arrow, *either* source of DR would subtract its full value from the follow-up burning damage.

Follow-ups are never affected by **Half-Damage Range** (p. 52).

Speaking from Experience

*Poison is dishonorable? Hey, whatever! Savvy fortune-hunters like me know it's just another weapon in the arsenal. Poison has two **real** drawbacks: First, if the monster doesn't bleed, the stuff won't work. Second, even the deadliest gunk isn't as reliable or reusable as the knife it's smeared on.*

– Hap Badapple, Thief

Special Delivery

Armor Divisors (pp. 52-53) and **Follow-Ups** (above) aren't the only ways around DR! Here are a few other possibilities. Not all effects delivered by such means work automatically on reaching their target – there's often a chance to resist, either with an uncontested roll of some kind or as described in *Resistance Rolls* (p. 8).

Blood Agent: To be effective, this must reach the eyes, nose, open mouth, or an open wound. *Any* DR will stop it. If a **follow-up**, however, it's effective if the primary attack carries it past DR and inflicts the necessary wound. If an **area effect** or **cone** (*Area and Spreading Attacks*, pp. 45-46), it works like a **respiratory agent** (below) – *ignore* DR! *Examples:* Poisonous spit or spray.

Contact Agent: To be effective, this must touch bare skin or seep through clothing. Any DR *except* Tough Skin will stop it. If a **follow-up**, it's effective if the primary attack penetrates DR *at all*. If an **area effect** or **cone**, it just has to touch the victim (who needn't inhale it), and DR can't prevent this unless its sealed – which no *ordinary* armor is! *Examples:* *Insidious* poisonous spit or spray; the fabled Hand of Death.

Malediction: A supernatural effect that *always* ignores DR! There's usually a chance to resist, though. *Examples:* Curses; psychic attacks.

Respiratory Agent: To be effective, this must be inhaled. *Ignore* DR – but targets who are holding their breath or don't breathe are unaffected. *Examples:* Demon's brew (*Adventurers*, p. 116), grenade potions (*Adventurers*, pp. 116-117), and other poison gases.

Sense-Based: An effect channeled through one or more of the victim's senses (e.g., vision or hearing). It can affect only those using the targeted sense – but DR is of no value! *Examples:* Banshee's howl (hearing); Medusa's gaze (vision).

Attacks Without Damage

Not all attacks inflict damage, either!

Afflictions usually offer a chance to resist. This might be a modified HT or Will roll (e.g., HT-4 or Will+2) or use *Resistance Rolls* (p. 8). Failure to resist causes a baneful effect – blindness, paralysis, stunning, etc. – *instead* of damage. *Afflictions* (pp. 65-66) offers many examples. Most afflictions don't

interact directly with DR but *avoid* it courtesy of *Follow-Ups* (p. 56) or *Special Delivery* (pp. 56-57). Some damaging attacks have afflictions as **side effects**: if they cause injury, the victim must roll to resist at a penalty proportional to this, typically -1 per 2 HP. See the individual monster, trap, or spell for details.

Binding attacks don't interact with DR, either. A failed active defense means spider silk, skeletal hands erupting from unhallowed ground, or whatever snares the target in a manner similar to *Grappling* (pp. 40-41). This prevents movement and possibly *all* physical action. To break free, the victim might have to roll vs. DX or ST, or win a Quick Contest of ST with the attack. Bindings with DR and HP can be chipped away by damage.

NONCOMBAT SKILLS IN BATTLE

Fightin' delvers don't just move, attack, and defend! Clever and *dirty* tricks are part of the fun, and might use anything from the knight's military skills, through the thief's cunning and agility, to the bard's wit.

"Onward to Victory!"

Fantasy warriors often shout orders, wave battle standards, and strike inspiring poses. This can serve a purpose . . . *if* the fighter stops hacking and slashing for a second! Each option below requires its own *Do Nothing* maneuver. (All are actually doing *something*, but overlooking this lets badly wounded heroes contribute without passing out.)

Advice: Choose *one* companion to observe and advise. On *that person's* turn, your ally can choose to listen to or ignore you. If your friend listens, roll vs. your **Tactics** skill. This counts as a complementary skill roll (p. 6) to all of that individual's attack and defense rolls that turn: +2 on a critical success, +1 on a success, -1 on a failure, or -2 on a critical failure. Reroll each turn. If multiple people advise someone, *that fighter* chooses who to heed, and only that advisor rolls.

Encouragement: A successful **Leadership** roll gives +1 to your *side's* Fright Checks, resistance rolls against mind control or fear, and self-control rolls for disadvantages that affect combat. Critical success gives +2. This bonus lasts until your next turn – but you can roll and shout for as many turns as you like. Failure, or several people trying this at once, gives no benefit (but no penalty).

Observation: You can take a turn and ask the GM for a secret **Strategy** roll. Success means the GM will reveal the enemy's general plan – if any – beyond "Kill 'em all!" For instance, "Guard the altar," "Keep these delvers away from the west wall," or "Kill the guy wearing the Sacred Talisman." Failure means the GM *lies*.

Playing Dead

To opt out of combat, feign death. This is a free action – just fall down, drop your weapon (monsters *never* trust a

"corpse" with a ready weapon!), and stop moving. If a monster that attacks only the living would attack you, roll a Quick Contest: **Acting** vs. the *higher* of its IQ or Perception. It gets all its bonuses for special senses; you're at +1 at half HP, +2 at 0 HP, +3 at -1xHP, +4 at -3xHP, or +5 at -4xHP (you're *really* dead at -5xHP, and succeed automatically). If you *win*, your would-be tormentor overlooks you and eats someone else.

Recognizing Magic

Delvers who know a spell recognize it automatically. If it's important to identify an *unknown* enemy spell ("Is Sir George asleep or dead?"), ask the GM for a secret **Thaumatology** skill roll. Success means the GM reveals the spell – the *closest* spell, for spell-like effects that aren't spells. As always, failure means the GM lies!

Roguish Skills in Battle

Thieves aren't front-line fighters. In an ideal world, they'd *avoid* fights. Yet they're often on point, scouting or searching for traps, when the whacking starts. Fortunately, roguish skills can be helpful in combat.

Backstabbing

When the GM starts combat time, anyone may try a **Stealth** roll to hide in shadows, duck into the bushes, etc., as long as at least half of the party remains conspicuous as a diversion.

Modifiers: A basic -5; encumbrance penalties (*Adventurers*, p. 12); +5 if the party is ambushing, no modifier in a stand-up fight, or -5 if the party is ambushed (see *Surprise Attacks*, pp. 26-27); -5 anywhere *but* in bush or shadowy tunnels.

Success lets the sneak get behind the *nearest* foe (GM's decision) – or *any* enemy, on a critical success. When setting up the battle map, the delver starts one step away from and behind this target.

The sneak's *first* attack roll on that foe is at +4 because it's perfectly set up. Use this to offset the -3 for vitals (x3 injury), -5 to use a garrote (p. 39), -7 for skull (+2 DR but x4 injury), -8 for chinks in torso armor (*halve* DR), or -10 for chinks in vitals or skull armor (half DR *and* extra injury). The attacker can All-Out Attack for further bonuses, but this isn't recommended – attacking reveals the delver's presence!

This is considered an attack from the back (p. 47). Most victims get no defense.

Hidden Weapons

A *small* blade can be hidden in the palm, along the forearm, or whatever. Make a **Holdout** roll, at no modifier for shuriken, -1 for daggers, -2 for larger knives, or -3 for sabers, shortwords, and smallswords. Success means that when combat starts, the *first* attack with that weapon will be hard to see coming: -2 to target's defense. Ensuing blows won't surprise anyone.

Practical Poisoning

Anybody can poison a blade – a long action (p. 32) *before* combat. There are tricks for getting a larger dose to the target with one blow. A poisoner with lots of poison may apply *two* or *four* doses. When the poisoned weapon hits, roll vs. **Poisons**. Failure means it's no more effective than one dose. Success gives -2 to HT rolls to resist and x2 damage for two doses, or -4 to HT rolls to resist and x4 damage for four; e.g., four doses of monster drool (*Adventurers*, p. 116) require a HT-4 roll to avoid 8 points of injury.

Talented Trapping

Traps are great fun in an ambush! Traps viable for delvers include concealed caltrops (margin of failure on Vision determines how many affect the victim), crossbows with trigger lines (inflict their usual damage), leg-hold traps (damage a foot and, if anchored, hold the target in place until he breaks free), trip-ropes (roll DX-2 or fall), and shallow stake pits (thrust impaling damage based on *victim's* ST). Each affects one hex on the combat map.

Make one **Traps** roll per trap. Repeated attempts are allowed but take a minute apiece – and critical failure means the *trapper* is affected! On any success, record the margin. In battle, the GM will make a secret Vision roll (p. 9) for anyone entering a trapped hex, at a penalty equal to this margin (allies aware of the trap add +10, but success is *automatic* only for the trapper). Those who make the Vision roll see and avoid the trap. The first person to fail trips the trap, after which it's obvious or sprung, and can't affect anyone else.

Speed Is Armor!

Not really – if you're hit, it's better to be an immobile lump in dwarven plate. Still, mobility keeps martial artists, swash-bucklers, and thieves from *getting* hit.

Your *first* dodge after any of the moves below counts as your **Acrobatic Dodge** (p. 48) for the turn, even if you didn't

use **Acrobatics**: +2 to Dodge if your trick succeeded, -2 if it failed.

Acrobatic Evade: You may substitute **Acrobatics** for DX when evading (pp. 34-35) on a *Move* maneuver, tumbling between your foe's legs, rolling over his shoulder, or similar.

Acrobatic Guard: You can declare that you're acrobatically avoiding *one* opponent and doing nothing else. Select the *Move* maneuver, take only a step, and roll a Quick Contest: **Acrobatics** vs. your enemy's best melee skill (DX, for unskilled foes). If you *win*, your rival will have a penalty equal to your margin of victory on all rolls to hit you until your next turn. Otherwise, you wasted your turn. Regardless, you still get your usual active defenses.

Acrobatic Stand: If you're lying down, you can jump to your feet using one *Change Posture* maneuver instead of two by making an **Acrobatics** roll at -6 plus encumbrance penalties (*Adventurers*, p. 12). Failure means you're sitting; critical failure means you fall face-down!

Athletics in Combat: Scenery and GM permitting, the feats under *Dungeon Parkour* (pp. 20-21) can be part of a *Move* or *Move and Attack* maneuver. During a *Move and Attack*, they replace the usual "Move" portion, and rolls for your stunt *and* your attack both have an *extra* -2 for doing two things at once.

Tumbling: During a *Move* maneuver, you may try to cartwheel or roll. Roll against **Acrobatics**. Success grants your full movement points and means anyone who makes a *ranged* attack on you adds hexes moved to range. Failure means you get half your usual movement points and no special benefits. Critical failure means you *fall down* in place!

Taunt and Bluster

Delvers can draw the aggression of monsters away from wimpier allies. Many skills work for this: **Animal Handling** to provoke dumb animals, a suitable **Psychology** specialty to distract things that *have* a psychology, **Religious Ritual** to aggravate evil monsters (especially demons), and **Singing** to taunt foes smart enough to understand insults (IQ 6+).

Take a *Concentrate* maneuver and roll a Quick Contest of skill against the *higher* of the monster's IQ or Will. If you *win*, that foe decides to attack *you* from now on. A tie means it continues to fight as it was. If you lose, it targets a hurt or otherwise vulnerable party member! Win, lose, or tie, if you roll a critical success, your mark *also* makes an All-Out Attack on its next turn.

You can try **Intimidation** to drive off a monster *if* it has IQ 6+ *and* isn't Indomitable or Unfazeable. This excludes most animals, golems, undead, plants, and demons. Roll dice as above. If you *win*, that foe attacks somebody *other* than you next turn, and must move *away* from you to do so (so if you step between it and a friend, you can protect your friend) – and if you rolled a critical success, it must make a Will roll or flee the battle. If you tie or lose, though, it wants *your* lungs!

CHAPTER FOUR

BAD THINGS

The adventurer's life isn't all song and glory. You get tired. You get dirty. You might even get *hurt* – or worse, *dead*. That's why the gods created clerics.

While what follows is worded in terms of what befalls unfortunate delvers, it applies equally to NPCs – monsters included! – unless their traits specifically exempt them.

TEMPORARY ATTRIBUTE PENALTIES

Many effects lower attributes *temporarily*. This affects *some* quantities based on them:

- **ST** reductions lower **thrust** and **swing** damage, and **Basic Lift**.
- **IQ** penalties affect **Will** and **Per** equally.
- Any attribute penalty affects skills based on that score; e.g., -2 to IQ gives -2 to IQ-based skills (and to Per- and Will-based skills, since IQ reductions lower Per and Will).



For playability's sake, other quantities are unaffected:

- A penalty that lasts for *only one turn* – like shock (p. 60) – *doesn't* affect resistance rolls, Fright Checks, or active defenses (e.g., DX penalties lower combat skills, but not Parry or Block based on them).
- ST reductions *don't* affect HP.
- DX and HT penalties *don't* lower Basic Speed (and thus Move or Dodge).
- HT penalties *don't* reduce FP.

For *permanent* attribute losses, recalculate all of the above!

INJURY

Injury is any temporary loss of **Hit Points**. It most often results from getting hit in combat (*Damage and Injury*, pp. 52-57), but hazards, accidents, traps, diseases, spells, and overexertion can also cost you HP. *All* injury is marked off against your HP score – there's no need to record separate wounds. But some injuries produce special effects!

EFFECTS OF ACCUMULATED INJURY

Repeated wounding will eventually cause *any* target to weaken and collapse, even if no single injury is very great. The chart below summarizes the effects of being at low or negative HP. All effects are cumulative.

Less than 1/3 of your HP left – *Reeling*. Halve your Move and Dodge (round *up*).

0 HP or less – *Near collapse*. In addition the above effects, you must roll vs. **HT** *every turn* (including the one on which you were injured), at -1 per *full* multiple of HP below zero. Success lets you act normally until *next* turn. Failure means you fall unconscious. *Exception*: If you choose Do Nothing on your turn, you can remain conscious without rolling . . .

if you attempt no defense rolls. If you try to defend, make this HT roll immediately before your first defense.

-1×HP – *Near death*. In addition to the above effects, you must make an *immediate* **HT** roll. Success lets you act as above (until you fail a HT roll and collapse). Failure by 1 or 2 means you collapse with a **mortal wound** (p. 60). Any worse failure means you *die*. If you live, roll again when you reach -2×HP, -3×HP, and -4×HP, whether as a result of one wound or many. For example, if you have 11 HP, you must roll to avoid death at -11 HP. If you survive, you must roll again at -22 HP, -33 HP, and -44 HP.

-5×HP – *Dead*. Sorry. Resurrection is still an option.

-10×HP – *Destroyed*. Damage that *could* physically destroy the body does, meaning that resurrection (or reanimation . . .) is no longer an option. Such bodily destruction is nigh-certain for burning, corrosion, or cutting damage. Impaling or piercing damage leaves a messy-but-recognizable corpse; so does crushing damage, unless the body is squished between moving walls, by a falling ceiling, etc. Fatigue and toxic damage – and direct injury without a damage type – leaves an intact cadaver unless the cause is something that specifically breaks down the corpse!

Mortal Wounds

Failing a HT roll to avoid death by 1 or 2 means you've suffered a **mortal wound** – you're *dying*. You're instantly incapacitated as though you had failed a HT roll to remain conscious. If further injury triggers another HT roll to avoid death, *any* failure will kill you.

While mortally wounded, you cannot regain HP and you must roll against **HT** every half-hour unless you're put into suspended animation. On any failure, you *die*. On a success, you linger for another half-hour . . . then roll again. On a critical success, however, you pull through miraculously: you're no longer mortally wounded (but you're still incapacitated).

To recover from a mortal wound without a critical success, someone must stabilize you. Options are an **Esoteric Medicine** roll (takes an hour, and repeated attempts have a cumulative -2), a **Stop Bleeding** spell, or a **Great Healing** spell (which *does* heal HP at the same time, but failure means it can't be tried again for 24 hours). These rolls are at -2 if you're at -3×HP or worse, -4 if you're at -4×HP or worse!

If you recover from a mortal wound, make one final **HT** roll. Failure means your HT drops by one permanently. Critical failure means that in addition, the GM may give you the Wounded disadvantage, reduced Appearance from scarring, or a similar problem.

Stun

Failed knockdown (p. 60) rolls – and certain critical hit results and afflictions (pp. 65-66) – cause **stun**. You may perform any active defense while stunned, but defense rolls are at -4 and you cannot retreat or use *Acrobatic Dodge* (p. 48). On your next turn, you *must* choose the Do Nothing maneuver (p. 29) and try a **HT** roll. Success removes the defense restrictions and lets you act normally on later turns. Failure means you remain in this state – your next maneuver must also be Do Nothing, but you'll get another HT roll . . . and so on, until you recover.

Death

Dying Actions: If the dice indicate that a delver has been *killed* (not merely mortally wounded) by injury that would leave a recognizable corpse (not bodily destruction), the GM should give the player *one final turn* for a “dying action.” Shock, crippling, and so on affect this normally. At the end of that turn, the hero drops dead.

Hack the Corpses! If your character dies, keep track of further injury to know whether the body has been destroyed and is beyond resurrection.

A Running Man Can Cut a Thousand Throats: If a *totally helpless* or *unconscious* victim is attacked in an obviously lethal way (cut throat, decapitation by guillotine, etc.), don't bother tallying HP and rolling dice – the target goes to -5×HP and dies. The GM decides what's “obviously lethal”

for monsters. But merely *unaware* isn't helpless; in that case, game out the attack (*Backstabbing*, pp. 57-58).

SHOCK

Shock is flinch or distraction caused by injury. Whenever you're injured, reduce your **DX** and **IQ** by the number of HP lost – to a limit of -4, regardless of injuries – *on your next turn only*. Your attributes return to normal on the turn after that. Shock affects DX- and IQ-based skills, but *not* resistance rolls, Fright Checks, or active defenses (*Temporary Attribute Penalties*, p. 59).

Ignore shock if you have **High Pain Threshold**. Double it (to a limit of -8) for **Low Pain Threshold**.

High HP and Shock

For those with HP scores of 20 or more (like many monsters), shock is -1 per 2 HP lost at HP 20-29, per 3 HP lost at HP 30-39, per 4 HP lost at HP 40-49, and so forth, with each *full* 10 HP adding one to the injury needed. The penalty is still never worse than -4.

MAJOR WOUNDS

A **major wound** is any *single* injury larger than 1/2 of your HP (e.g., 6 HP or more if you have 11 HP) *or* any injury of any size that causes **crippling** (p. 61). A major wound requires a HT roll to avoid **knockdown** (below).

KNOCKDOWN

Whenever you suffer a major wound (above), and whenever you're struck in the *head* (skull, face, or eye) *or* *vitals* for enough injury to cause a shock penalty (above), you must make an immediate **HT** roll.

Modifiers: 0 for a major wound that isn't to the head or vitals, or for a head or vitals wound that causes shock but isn't a major wound; -5 for a major wound to the *face* or *vitals* (or the *groin*, on a humanoid male); -10 for a major wound to the *skull* or *eye*; +3 for **High Pain Threshold** or -4 for **Low Pain Threshold**.

Success means no special effect beyond shock.

Failure causes **knockdown** (which *isn't* the same as *Knockback*, p. 53): You fall prone if you weren't already, drop anything you're holding, *and* automatically suffer **stun** (above).

Failure by 5 or more, or critical failure, means you fall unconscious!

Many monsters are less susceptible. For those with **No Brain**, head injuries don't cause knockdown or stunning unless they're major wounds – and even then, the roll is at no special penalty. **No Vitals** means vitals and groin injuries don't cause knockdown or stunning unless they're major wounds, in which case the roll has no special penalty. **Homogeneous** and **Diffuse** creatures enjoy *both* benefits.

CRIPPLING

Sufficient injury to a *limb*, *extremity*, or *eye* may **cripple** it. This requires a *single* wound that exceeds a certain fraction of the victim's HP:

Limb (arm, leg, tentacle, wing, prehensile tail, stinger, etc.):

Injury over HP/2.

Extremity (hand, foot, fin, *nonfunctional* tail, *extraneous* head, etc.): Injury over HP/3.

Eye: Injury over HP/10.

The table below gives minimum crippling injury for deliver-level HP.

HP	Limb	Extremity	Eye
10-11	6	4	2
12-13	7	5	2
14	8	5	2
15	8	6	2
16-17	9	6	2
18-19	10	7	2
20	11	7	3
21	11	8	3
22	12	8	3

It's sometimes possible to cripple a body part with less or *no* injury; e.g., with certain critical hit results.

A blow to a *limb* or *extremity* can never cause more injury than the *minimum* required to cripple the body part; e.g., if a wizard with 10 HP suffers 9 points of injury to her arm, she loses only 6 HP. No such limit applies to the eyes!

Dismemberment

If injury *before* applying the above limit was at least *twice* the minimum needed to cripple a body part, the body part isn't just crippled but *destroyed*. A cutting attack or explosion severs a limb or extremity; otherwise, it's irrevocably crushed, burned, or whatever.

Effects of Crippling

Any crippling or dismembering injury is automatically a major wound (p. 60), which requires a knockdown (p. 60) roll. Below are additional effects specific to particular body parts. These last until the fight is over – or possibly longer (*Duration of Crippling*, below).

Hand: You drop anything you were carrying in that hand. If using two or more hands to hold something, roll vs. **DX** to avoid dropping it. You cannot hold anything (e.g., a weapon) in that hand. You can wear a shield on that arm and use it to block but not to attack. Until healed, you have the **One Hand** disadvantage.

Arm: As for a crippled hand . . . but while someone with a crippled hand could carry something in the crook of the arm, you cannot use a crippled arm to carry *anything*! You don't drop a shield on that arm (unless the arm is severed), but you cannot use it to block – and as it's just hanging in front of you,

reduce its Defense Bonus by one. Until healed, you have the **One Arm** disadvantage.

Foot: You fall down! You cannot stand or walk without a crutch or something to lean on. You can still fight if you brace yourself against a wall. If you have nothing to lean on, you may assume a kneeling or sitting posture. Until healed, you have the **Lame (Crippled Leg)** disadvantage.

Leg: You fall down! You can still fight if you assume a sitting or lying posture. Until healed, you have the **Lame (Missing Leg)** disadvantage.

Eye: You're blind in that eye. Until healed, you have the **One Eye** disadvantage – or **Blindness**, if you lose both eyes.

Other Body Parts: Monsters that lose the use of stingers, tails, and other "limbs" can no longer attack using those body parts. Those that lose the use of wings can't fly – and if they were flying at the time, they *fall*.

Speaking from Experience

Allies rendered *hors de combat* by arm and leg injuries can often be returned to the fray by timely healing – well, provided the body part has not been severed. The trick is that healing magic swift enough to work in battle acts on **all** wounds equally: To fully heal the limb, fully heal the fighter. Injuries too severe for hasty ministrations require prayers of Restoration or Regeneration after the skirmish. These will accomplish in one month what the body needs many times as long to do, and can cure the otherwise incurable. Warriors who are silver-rich but time-poor should visit the temple, where the gods may see fit to make instant repairs – for a generous donation, of course.

– Sister Miriam Suntemple, Cleric

Duration of Crippling

If you suffer a crippling injury, roll vs. **HT**, at +5 with **Rapid Healing** or **Very Rapid Healing**. Don't roll for dismemberment, though – treat *that* as automatic critical failure!

Success – *Temporary crippling*. Until you're back at *full* HP, you suffer as described in *Effects of Crippling* (above). Once you're fully healed, those effects disappear.

Failure – *Lasting crippling*. You suffered lingering damage, like a broken bone. Merely healing HP won't end the crippling effects – roll 1d for the number of *months* those problems will endure without healing magic (pp. 62-63).

Critical Failure or Dismemberment – *Permanent crippling*. You lose the use of the body part – along with the body part, if dismembered! – for good. You acquire the noted disadvantage permanently but get no extra character points for it – it simply lowers your point total. To correct this, get healing magic.

RECOVERY

These rules may seem harsh, but don't despair . . . you can get better!

Recovering from Unconsciousness

Failure by 5+ on a knockdown roll, a failed HT roll to stay conscious at 0 HP or less, a mortal wound, and many other things can leave you unconscious (sometimes described as "knocked out" or "passed out"). The GM decides whether you're *truly* unconscious or "merely" incapacitated by pain and injury – but either way, you can't *do* anything. You'll recover as follows:

- 1 HP or more remaining** – You'll awaken automatically in 15 minutes.
- 0 HP or less remaining, but above -1×HP** – Make a **HT** roll to awaken every hour. Once you succeed, you can act normally, and you don't have to roll against HT every second to remain conscious unless you receive *new* injury. As you have less than 1/3 of your HP left, you're at half Move and Dodge.
- 1×HP or below** – You're in bad shape! You get a *single* **HT** roll to awaken after 12 hours. Success lets you regain consciousness and act as described above. Treat failure as a mortal wound (p. 60), but with rolls to avoid death every 12 hours instead of every half-hour.

EFFECTS OF HEALING

When healing someone, a few rules *always* apply no matter what the means of healing (bandaging, potions, spells, etc.):

- A mortal wound (p. 60) must be stabilized before healing can restore consciousness or missing HP.
- If restoring lost HP changes the patient's category under *Recovering from Unconsciousness* (above), treat them as having been in the *new* category for the *entire* time they've been unconscious; e.g., if someone has been knocked out for 15+ minutes, healing them to positive HP awakens them.
- Healing *all* HP always awakens the subject *and* ends temporary crippling (p. 61).

High HP and Healing

Healing rates given for natural recovery, first aid, spells, potions, and so on assume someone with fewer than 20 HP. For those with HP scores of 20 or more, multiply HP healed by 2 at HP 20-29, 3 at HP 30-39, 4 at HP 40-49, and so on, with each *full* 10 HP adding one to the multiple.

Very Rapid Healing

If you have this advantage, increase the multiple under *High HP and Healing* by one, to a minimum of ×2 – that is, multiply all HP healed by 2 at HP 1-19, 3 at HP 20-29, 4 at HP 30-39, and so on.

Natural Recovery

Except if your injury is due to *Disease* (pp. 66-67) or *Poison* (pp. 69-70) that hasn't been cured or run its course – or unless you've been cursed not to heal – you may make a **HT** roll at the end of each full day spent in camp or town doing *nothing* but resting and eating three meals. Roll at +5 with **Rapid Healing** or **Very Rapid Healing**. Success restores 1 HP. Most heroes get assistance first . . .

Healing Magic

Magic is the standard way for *delvers* to get better! See **Spells** for details, but here's how some key spells interact with the injury rules:

Awaken: Instantly revives anyone unconscious due to anything *but* an unstabilized mortal wound (p. 60).

Great Healing: Stabilizes a mortal wound *and* heals the subject.

Regeneration: Reverses dismemberment (p. 61)! Slowly.

Restoration: Alleviates lasting/permanent crippling (p. 61) but *not* dismemberment. Also slow.

Stop Bleeding: Stabilizes a mortal wound, allowing revival and healing.

Suspended Animation: Pauses diseases, poisons, HT rolls for mortal wounds, etc.

Yes, The Temple Is Open!

A party that needs healing (perhaps because *their* healer is incapacitated!) can seek help. Temples in town sell cures that use a mix of mundane skills, healing waters, spells, and prayer. This process takes *two hours* – most of it waiting, the rest for diagnosis and spellcasting. Though hardly free, it's cheaper than curative potions or scrolls (which are priced for portability), and results are guaranteed. Standard prices are:

Basic healing: \$2 per HP, to a maximum of \$100 for *all* HP

*Awaken subject from suspended animation that **doesn't** absolutely require Remove Curse:* \$5

*Cure **physical** affliction (remove any one disease, poison, or infestation, or stabilize a mortal wound) or put an incurable subject into suspended animation:* \$50*

*Cure **supernatural** affliction (each case of possession, petrification, shapeshifting, madness, or anything that requires Remove Curse):* \$100*

Repair lasting/permanent crippling: \$750 per body part†

Repair dismemberment: \$1,600 per body part†

Resurrection: \$15,000‡

* If the condition is progressive – like a mortal wound or being turned to melting ice – paying double lets you jump the queue and save two hours.

† An arm and its hand or a leg and its foot counts as *one* body part. Each eye or ear requires its own fee. These prices buy *instant* healing – anyone willing to wait a month for the cure to work pays only the \$50 to cure a physical affliction.

‡ A donation to convince the gods to send someone back. Every \$500 (or fraction) the subject's friends can't pay means the patient returns missing one character point in core professional template abilities; e.g., being \$5,000 short might cost a wizard one level of Magery, or a knight a level of ST. The GM's word is final! Minimum donation is \$2,500 (that's a 25-point sacrifice).

Patching Up

When Ed the Barbarian is facedown in his own blood and you need him to bash something, the surest fix is to pour a healing potion in his ear or cast healing magic (pp. 62-63). However, clerics and druids study nonmagical healing skills for a reason.

For most tasks below, *one* attempt is allowed. Failure produces no change. Critical failure inevitably makes things worse.

Antidotes: In a wilderness setting, an hour and a **Pharmacy** roll will cook up an anti-toxin for a *known* poison – if the victim can hang on for that long.

Bandaging: Mundane wound binding takes 30 minutes and requires a **First Aid** or **Esoteric Medicine** roll. This specific skill use gets +1 from a first aid *or* healer's kit. Success restores 1d-3 HP, minimum 1 HP.

Bleeding: If a monster attack, poison, or weapon specifically causes ongoing HP loss via bleeding, a **First Aid** or **Esoteric Medicine** roll will stop this unless noted otherwise. Each attempt takes one minute. Apply +1 for a first aid *or* healer's kit – but also any penalty indicated for the effect.

Medic!

In battle, healing normally means a healing spell or potion – but it's a fantasy tradition to hastily stuff a bandage into an ally's wound. The medic must take a Concentrate maneuver, be within one hex of the patient, have one hand free, and have bandages or a first aid or healer's kit ready in the other hand. The attempt requires a **First Aid** or **Esoteric Medicine** roll, at +1 for a proper kit but -10 for haste! Success heals 1d-3 HP, minimum 1 HP; critical success restores 3 HP. Failure has no benefit; critical failure costs 2 HP.

Horrible Grubs: In the event of skin-boring grubs, burrowing arrowheads, or similar unpleasantness, healing magic can cure the injury but not solve the problem. That takes a **Surgery** roll – at -5 without real surgical instruments (e.g., just a dagger). Failure means 2d injury, critical failure means 4d injury, and either means the grubs are still there.

Weird Afflictions: Make a **Diagnosis** roll to reveal what's wrong with somebody who isn't responding to healing, or to avoid -5 when casting **Cure Disease**. Roll **Poisons** to identify poison and avoid -5 on **Neutralize Poison**. Use **Thaumatology** to deduce the spells needed to cure an ongoing magical effect.

Weird Treatments: Magic spells have no penalty to cure a *diagnosed* weird affliction. If the party lacks the right curative spell, taking a day out to make an **Esoteric Medicine** roll might work . . . if the disease or poison doesn't kill in hours or minutes! The GM may cackle and apply penalties – and a whole day holds the potential for *many* random encounters with monsters that can smell suffering.

Fido and Ol' Paint: Use the same rules to patch up the party's pets, but **Veterinary** skill replaces Esoteric Medicine and First Aid.

FATIGUE

Fatigue is any temporary loss of **Fatigue Points**. It can result from using spells or chi skills, missing meals or sleep, performing heroic physical feats, suffering fatigue damage or *Suffocation* (p. 70), and countless other things. Fatigue is marked off against your FP score, just as injury comes off of HP.

EFFECTS OF ACCUMULATED FATIGUE

The chart below summarizes the effects of being at low or negative FP. All effects are cumulative.

Less than 1/3 of your FP left – *Very tired*. Halve your Move and Dodge. If you're also reeling from *Effects of*

Accumulated Injury (pp. 59-60), divide by four! As well, halve ST for ST rolls (e.g., to force a door or pin someone) and for *Lifting and Shifting* (p. 22); this doesn't lower HP or damage. Round all results *up*.

0 FP or less – *Near collapse*. To do anything but talk or rest, you must make a **Will** roll; in combat, roll before each maneuver other than Do Nothing. Success lets you act normally. Any failure means you fall unconscious and stay that way until you recover to positive FP. Critical failure means you must also make an immediate **HT** roll, with failure indicating a heart attack (*Mortal Conditions*, p. 66). Whatever you do, once you're at 0 FP or below, each FP lost or spent for *any* reason also causes 1 HP of injury. Fatigue can kill you!

-1xFP – Collapse. You fall unconscious. While unconscious, you recover lost FP at the same rate as for ordinary rest, awakening when you reach positive FP. Your FP can *never* fall below -1xFP, but you can continue to die: Read any further FP cost as HP of injury instead!

FATIGUE COSTS

The following activities commonly deplete FP.

Special Abilities

Casting magic (see *Spells*) and using certain special abilities – *especially* a martial artist's chi skills – costs FP.



Exertion

Mundane feats often cost FP, too. Examples are *Extra Effort* (p. 20), *Running Away!* (p. 22), repeated attempts at several physical tasks under *Dungeon Parkour* (pp. 20-21) and *Forcing* (p. 22), and extreme lifts (*Lifting and Shifting*, p. 22). Use the delver's FP level *before* a feat's FP cost to assess results; e.g., if extra effort would reduce someone to less than 1/3 of their FP, halve ST and Move *after* that extra effort ends.

Mental fatigue is quite possible! Staying at maximum alert for more than a short fight is tiring. See *What Were You Doing?* (p. 26).

Fighting a Battle

After a battle – that is, the moment the GM ends combat time – everyone must pay a FP cost based on their

encumbrance level (*Adventurers*, p. 12). The GM may exempt a delver who takes only Do Nothing maneuvers and makes no defense rolls.

Encumbrance Level:	None	Light	Medium	Heavy	Extra-Heavy
Fatigue Cost:	1 FP	2 FP	3 FP	4 FP	5 FP

This is cumulative with FP missing *before* the fight (e.g., due to a previous battle) and FP spent or lost *during* it. A fighter might collapse once the adrenaline wears off! Smart delvers rest after combat whenever possible.

Travel

Hiking is tiring. Whenever adventurers on foot are engaged by bandits, wilderness monsters, etc., they *start* the fight missing the FP under *Fighting a Battle* (above). For instance, a delver at Medium encumbrance starts 3 FP short. The cost for fighting the battle *also* applies afterward.

Delvers traveling by wagon have it easier: 1 FP on a road, 2 FP off-road. Mounted ones have it easiest of all: Make a *HT*-based **Riding** roll; any success costs 0 FP while any failure costs 1 FP.

Missed Sleep

Delvers who don't get a night's sleep lose 3 FP.

RECOVERING FROM FATIGUE

You can recover most lost FP by resting quietly. Reading, planning, and maintaining spells that require no concentration are all right. Sentry duty, exploration, travel, *casting* spells, or anything else that costs or *could* cost FP is *not* all right.

Ordinarily, you regain 1 FP per 10 minutes of rest. Make that 1 FP per *five* minutes if you're **Fit** or **Very Fit**, or per 20 minutes if you're **Very Unfit**.

Spellcasters who know the **Recover Energy** spell recover 1 FP per five minutes of rest at skill 15-19, or 1 FP per two minutes at skill 20+. Martial artists with the **Breath Control** skill can roll against it once per two minutes of rest to recover 1 FP. These two abilities *replace* ordinary recovery, cannot be used together, and don't benefit from Fit or Very Fit.

Other ways to regain FP are guzzling a paut potion (*Adventurers*, p. 116) and having a friend cast Lend Energy. Either works instantly and in addition to recovery due to rest.

Then there are the exceptions:

Disease/Poison Fatigue: Some *Disease* (pp. 66-67) and *Poison* (pp. 69-70) inflicts FP. To get these FP back, you must be cured or wait for your condition to run its course.

Heat/Cold Fatigue: Extreme temperatures sap FP (*Temperature*, p. 70). To recover, you must get out of the heat or cold.

Suffocation Fatigue: To regain FP lost to *Suffocation* (p. 70), you need *air*!

Rest and Breath Control – and magical cures that don't explicitly treat these kinds of fatigue – work only after you've met the appropriate conditions. Then recovery proceeds normally.

Two further kinds of fatigue are even harder to cure:

Sleep Fatigue: Each night without sleep costs 3 FP (*Missed Sleep*, p. 64). Recovering from this requires eight hours' sleep for every 3 FP.

Starvation Fatigue: Starvation costs 1 FP per missed meal (*Getting There Quickly*, p. 17). Every 3 FP lost requires a day of rest plus three meals to recover.

Short breaks, Breath Control, and magic that doesn't specifically cure such fatigue do *nothing*. You must sleep or eat. These FP costs assume the demands of *adventuring*, with all its stress, toil, and bad air. Ignore them in town.

All fatigue is cumulative for the purpose of how many FP a delver has left – but keep separate track of losses that require special recovery conditions.

OTHER PAIN AND SUFFERING

Besides fighting, what *else* causes injury, fatigue, and misery? A famous bard once tried to count the ways. She lost her voice before the 117th verse. But here's a start.

ACID

Acid is any liquid that corrodes equipment and flesh. There are many such chemicals, not all of which are properly "acid." Only alchemists bother to distinguish.

Anyone *splashed* with acid suffers 1d-3 corrosion damage where it hits. If this is the face, roll vs. **HT**. A failed roll – or a direct hit to the eyes – means damage is to the eyes. See *Crippling* (p. 61) for the odds of lasting or permanent blindness.

Immersion in acid (e.g., an acid pit) inflicts 1d-1 corrosion damage *per second*. Treat this as *Large-Area Injury* (p. 53). If the *face* is immersed, make the **HT** roll to avoid eye damage every second.

Foolishly *swallowing* acid causes 3d HP of injury at a rate of 1 HP every 15 minutes. An **Esoteric Medicine** or **Poisons** roll can treat this. Any success halts injury; any failure costs 1 HP but allows a repeated attempt.

All this describes *typical* acid. Stronger and weaker examples exist! The theoretical upper limit is the fabled *alkahest* (universal solvent): 1d damage per splash, 2d-1 damage per second for immersion, or 9d injury at 1 HP every five minutes if swallowed (and the only treatment is an **Alchemy** roll at -5).

AFFLICTIONS

Afflictions are baneful effects other than direct injury or fatigue, caused by a variety of Bad Things. Curses, diseases, and poisons generally allow attribute rolls to resist (e.g., "HT-6"); spells and supernatural abilities tend toward *Resistance Rolls* (p. 8). See the specific cause for any duration

required – often minutes equal to margin of failure on the resistance roll.

Irritating Conditions

Any combination of penalties to attribute, active defense, self-control, and skill rolls is possible!

Coughing or Sneezing: You're at -3 to DX and -1 to IQ, and cannot use Stealth.

Crippling: A specific body part temporarily experiences *Effects of Crippling* (p. 61).

Disadvantage: You temporarily acquire one or more disadvantages (*Adventurers*, pp. 56-68).

Euphoria: You're at -3 to DX, IQ, skill, and self-control rolls.

Intoxicated: You're affected as if you had partied too hard! **Tipsy** gives -1 to DX and IQ, and -2 to self-control rolls except those to resist Cowardice. **Drunk** doubles these penalties.

Itching: You're at -2 to DX for the itch's duration. Scratching relieves the itch, but this requires a Do Nothing maneuver in combat.

Knockdown: You fall prone and drop anything you're holding, as if you had failed the HT roll under *Knockdown* (p. 60).

Nausea: You have -2 to all attribute and skill rolls, and -1 to active defenses. As well, roll vs. **HT** if you're exposed to a foul odor or stunned, or fail a Fright Check – and roll every hour if riding a mount, wagon, ship, etc. Failure means (25 - HT) seconds of vomiting; treat as **retching** (p. 66).

Pain: You have a penalty to all DX, IQ, skill, and self-control rolls: -2 for **moderate pain**, -4 for **severe pain**, or -6 for **terrible pain**. **High Pain Threshold** halves penalties; **Low Pain Threshold** doubles them.

Slow: You get a turn only every two, three, or more seconds in combat, depending on the affliction. Your last maneuver is considered to be in effect if you're attacked between turns.

Slower Move: Your Move in all mediums (but *not* Basic Speed) is reduced by some percentage up to 80%, rounded down, to a minimum of Move 1.

Incapacitating Conditions

These afflictions prevent you from taking some or all voluntary action while they last. Many also leave you stunned: you must Do Nothing each turn, defend at -4, and cannot retreat.

Agony: You're in such pain that you can only moan or scream. If standing or sitting, you fall down. While the affliction endures, you're stunned and lose 1 FP per minute or fraction thereof. **Low Pain Threshold** doubles the FP loss. **High Pain Threshold** lets you overcome the agony enough to act, but at -3 to DX and IQ.

Choking: You cannot breathe or speak. While this endures, you suffer the effects of *Suffocation* (p. 70). You're also stunned – although you may sit, kneel, or go prone if standing, or go prone if kneeling or sitting. Targets that don't breathe are unaffected.

Daze: You're conscious – and if standing, you remain upright – but you can do *nothing*, not even defend. If slapped, shaken, or injured, you'll recover on your next turn unless the specific effect says otherwise.

Ecstasy: You're incapacitated with overwhelming pleasure. Treat as **agony** (above), but neither Low Pain Threshold nor High Pain Threshold has any effect.

Hallucinating: You can *try* to act but must roll vs. **Will** before each success roll. Success means you merely suffer 2d seconds of disorientation; this gives -2 on success rolls. Failure causes you to hallucinate for 1d minutes; the penalty is -5. The GM is free to specify the details of hallucinations, which needn't be visual. On a critical failure, you "freak out" for 3d minutes – you might do *anything*! The GM rolls 3d; the higher the roll, the more dangerous your action.

Paralysis: You cannot move any voluntary muscles, and will fall over if not in a balanced position. You cannot defend, or attempt any action that requires speech or movement, but you *don't* have to Do Nothing – you remain conscious and can use abilities or spells that require neither speech nor movement.

Retching: You're conscious but vomiting (or suffering dry heaves). You cannot benefit from potions – you'll just throw them up! You *can* act, but you have -5 to DX, IQ, and Per, and automatically fail at anything that requires a Concentrate maneuver. When the affliction ends, you lose 1 FP.

Seizure: You suffer a fit. Your limbs tremble uncontrollably, you fall down if standing, and you cannot speak or think clearly. You can do *nothing*, not even defend. When the affliction ends, you lose 1d FP.

Sleep: You fall down if standing and sleep for the duration. If slapped, shaken, or injured, you'll recover on your next turn unless the specific effect says otherwise.

Stasis: You and your gear stop in time. You're frozen in place – in mid-action or even midair! You can do *nothing*; you're unaware of the universe and can't act at all, not even mentally. The universe can't affect you, either; you can't be

injured, moved, deprived of equipment, or affected by supernatural powers. Any effect that was already in progress (fire, poison, etc.) halts for the duration. Unlike **paralysis** (above), stasis affects even beings without muscles or metabolisms.

Stunned: You suffer *Mental Stun* (p. 27) or *Stun* (p. 60). Depending on the cause, you may get IQ or HT rolls to recover or remain stunned for a fixed duration.

Unconsciousness: You're knocked out, just as if you had suffered injury. Nothing short of an **Awaken** spell can revive you.

Speaking from Experience

The world is filled with spells, poisons, curses, and plagues that can afflict the unfortunate adventurer with any number of conditions – from pain and sickness, through paralysis and petrification, to immediate failure of the heart. Each has its cure, and it is the healer's obligation to provide this. The dangers are so diverse, however, that I often find myself praying for the magic to deal with the specific contingency.

– Francesco Zombani, Cleric

Mortal Conditions

Coma: You suffer no *actual* injury but collapse as if you had been wounded to -1×HP or below and passed out, with effects as described in *Recovering from Unconsciousness* (p. 62): a single **HT** roll to awaken after 12 hours and eventual death if you fail.

Heart Attack: Your heart stops and you collapse! You drop to 0 HP and -1×FP, if you were above those levels. Regardless of current HP, you'll die in HT/3 minutes (round up) unless rescuers restore *all* your HP and FP, and then make an **Esoteric Medicine** roll (each attempt takes a minute). If you die, treat this as death at -1×HP or your current HP, whichever is worse. Beings without hearts – including Homogeneous and Diffuse monsters – are unaffected.

Mortal Wound: You suffer no *actual* injury but collapse as if you had been wounded to -1×HP or below and failed a HT roll to avoid death by 1 or 2, as described in *Mortal Wounds* (p. 60) – complete with **HT** rolls to avoid death every half-hour.

Petrification: You and your gear turn to stone. You cannot act and aren't conscious. Magic can cure this condition – but while it endures, you're considered inanimate, *not* living or even formerly living.

DISEASE

Battling severe illness *is* a heroic struggle, but *Dungeon Fantasy* is about battles involving swords and sorcery. Though plagues resembling the real world's harshest, most life-altering sicknesses might ravage NPCs – sending the PCs on quests to find cures and save the day – the role of ailments contracted by *delvers* is to heighten the challenges of adventuring.

Heroes certainly face disability and death . . . they just don't waste away in bed!

Disease is any form of contagion or infection – natural or supernatural – that respects those principles and works as follows:

Exposure: Contact with disease usually results from venturing into a foul place (e.g., sewer, corpse-filled necropolis, or mosquito-infested swamp), or being wounded by a disgusting monster (like a slime, zombie, or giant rat) or a filth-smear trap or weapon. Fantasy diseases don't respect germ theory, however – in the Frozen North, *getting cold* could give you a cold! Strongholds of Evil are *often* pestilent.

Resistance: Mundane diseases are resisted by **HT**, possibly at -1 to -6. Supernatural ones are curse-like, and may implicate **Will** (perhaps at a penalty). **Resistant to Disease** usually helps – but against curses, **Magic Resistance** or even **Power Investiture** is more useful. Some ailments require an immediate roll on entering a room or being wounded; others call for a single check after spending time in an area or fighting certain creatures; still others involve daily checks while adventuring in an unclean place.

Schedule: After a failed resistance roll, most disease sets in either instantly or after a fixed delay; e.g., an hour or a day. Duration is usually relatively simple, like “a week” or “until Cure Disease is cast.” If the GM wants to keep track, variability such as “4d days” can enhance the tension!

Effects: Minor jungle fever, swamp lung, sewer rot, etc. gives -1 on all attribute and skill rolls until cured – it's a colorful interpretation of “. . . *With Spikes*” (p. 6). More significant illnesses might inflict *Irritating Conditions* (pp. 65-66), particularly coughing, sneezing, nausea, pain, and minor disadvantages. The worse may cost FP or HP on an ongoing basis (“1 HP/day for 2d days”) – often with a daily **HT** or **Will** roll to avoid it – or in one shot (“3d HP”). Enough fatigue or injury might give rise to other symptoms (“nausea sets in at less than 1/3 of HP”).

Recovery: Recovery is normally automatic once duration ends. If there are daily rolls to avoid fatigue or injury, recovery might follow any success, *three* consecutive successes, a *critical* success, or whatever. With one-shot FP or HP loss, “recovery” is just another word for “healing.”

Treatment: Most diseases respond to **Cure Disease**, at -5 without a **Diagnosis** roll. Curse-like ones might call for **Remove Curse**, at -5 without an **Occultism** roll. Nastier ailments can penalize these curative spells! Any illness might respond to a day out from traveling for treatment with **Eso-teric Medicine** or medicines brewed using **Pharmacy**.

FALLING

Delvers who fail to negotiate chasms, narrow ledges, or steep slopes – or who step into pits – smash into the ground! Damage depends on distance fallen; see the *Falling Damage Table* (below). There are some special considerations:

Circus Act: A falling victim can try an **Acrobatics** roll; success subtracts five yards from the fall. Someone with **Catfall**

gets this benefit automatically, and may roll vs. **DX** to halve damage. Ignore this for falls onto spikes – there's no “safe” way to get stabbed!

What's Down There? Falling damage is normally *crushing*. Small spikes make it *large piercing* (wounding modifier $\times 1.5$); serious ones like spears make it *impaling* (wounding modifier $\times 2$). Halve basic *crushing* damage if the victim lands on something soft, such as corpses; spikes are never soft. Ignore falling damage for landings in fluids . . . but water means *Swimming* (p. 21) applies, and *Acid* (p. 65) or flaming liquid (*Flame*, p. 68) still hurts!

The Bigger They Are . . . Falling damage assumes someone with fewer than 20 HP. A bigger victim makes a bigger splash. For those with HP scores of 20+, multiply basic damage by 2 at HP 20-29, 3 at HP 30-39, 4 at HP 40-49, and so on, with each full 10 HP adding one to the multiple.

Wear a Crash Helmet! Damage Resistance protects against falling damage, but *Large-Area Injury* (p. 53) applies. As the sudden stop can cause whiplash, minimum injury is 1 HP of per full 5 points of basic damage rolled.

My Poor, Aching Feet: Roll 3d on the *Hit Location Table* (pp. 99-100). If the result is an arm, leg, hand, or foot, and injury sustained could cripple that body part, it's crippled. The victim still suffers *full* injury – not just the minimum needed to cripple!

Falling Damage Table

For intermediate distances, use the next *highest* line.

Distance	Damage	Distance	Damage
1 yard	1d	30 yards	5d
2 yards	1d+1	35 yards	5d+2
3 yards	1d+2	40 yards	6d-1
4 yards	2d-1	45 yards	6d
5 yards	2d	50 yards	6d+2
10 yards	3d	60 yards	7d
15 yards	3d+2	70 yards	7d+2
20 yards	4d	80 yards	8d+1
25 yards	4d+2	100+ yards	9d+1

Falling Objects

Random falling objects do whatever damage the GM likes. Light things must fall for a while to do much damage, while heavy ones barely need to move, but don't turn this into a physics problem!

If a *specific* object falls a *specific* distance, the damage it dishes out is the damage it would take in a fall. For instance, a neatly labeled Fifty Pound Weight with 30 HP ($\times 3$ falling damage) falling from a couple of stories (call it 5 yards, for 2d damage) inflicts 6d.

If a *creature* drops onto another *creature*, work out falling damage for the attacker's height and HP. Each party inflicts this damage on the other – halved for softness, unless colliding with an iron golem, earth elemental, or similar. A successful **Acrobatics** roll or use of **Catfall** reduces the damage a falling person *takes* but doesn't affect the damage *caused*.

When someone is hit by a falling object or person, roll 3d on the *Hit Location Table* (pp. 99-100) for where it hits. Any DR there protects normally. A rock or foe *can* fall on your foot – and if so, your boots protect as well as they would against a sling stone or kick. However, a falling person obeys the normal rules for falling damage.

Speaking from Experience

Fire is arguably the single most reliable way to destroy things. It is effective against almost all enemies that are alive, most that are undead, wooden doors, and a great many other inconveniences commonly encountered in the dungeon. It spreads effortlessly, if large-scale destruction is desired, and affords an excellent distraction. As a weapon, I prefer the Flame Jet spell – fast, handy, and precise. When I need to deny part of the battlefield to my foes, though, there's something to be said for creating fire or smoke over a huge area. Non-wizards have fewer options, but they shouldn't pass up enchanted flaming weapons, alchemist's fire, and the cheap, time-tested expedients: burning torches and flaming arrows.

– Zephyra, Wizard

FLAME

Flame inflicts *burning* damage. It often turns up in combat (dragons and wizards love it) or as a dungeon challenge (so do GMs!).

Ordinary Fire: A bonfire, Create Fire spell, patch of blazing alchemist's fire, or other hazard described simply as “a fire.” It inflicts 1d-3 burning damage per turn spent partly in the flames (dashing through some hexes that are on fire, some that aren't), or 1d-1 per turn spent *entirely* in fire. This is large-area injury (p. 53).

Fire Hazards: Scorching barriers and traps are hotter. Forest fires, burning buildings, and flaming oil pits typically do 1d burning damage per partial turn or 2d-1 per whole turn spent in them. For *lava* pits, that's 5d-1 or 8d+2! Usually large-area injury – but if you stick one body part in, its DR protects normally.

Fire Tests: Reaching into flames to snatch something inflicts the damage for a partial turn spent in fire. For a furnace, crucible, or other contained heat source, this can be 3d burning damage! Damage affects the hand, the DR of which protects normally.

Incendiary Weapons: Torches, flaming arrows, and the like inflict 1 point of burning damage; magical flaming weapons, 2 points; and fire-wreathed monster claws or bites, any amount. These are follow-ups (p. 56) and damage is per *hit*; damage is per *second* only if held in place. Alchemist's fire on a victim keeps burning for 1d per second! The DR of the location struck protects normally – but armor DR is at 1/5 value against alchemist's fire, which *seeps in*.

Fire Attacks: Fireballs and flame jets always strike a specific hit location, the DR of which protects normally. *Area and Spreading Attacks* (pp. 45-46) – e.g., *Explosive* Fireballs and *huge* flame jets (like dragon's breath) – cause large-area injury. Any damage amount is possible, but it's *once per attack*, not ongoing.

I'm on Fire!

Monsters won't catch fire unless coated with flaming fuel (like alchemist's fire); any fur singes away too quickly to matter. The same goes for armored fighters, including delvers. But humans, elves, orcs, and similar intelligent humanoids are normally clothed when unarmored – and clothing *burns*. (Unarmored PCs can go naked, but the GM *will* exploit this . . .)

If a *single* hit inflicts 3-9 points of basic burning damage, it will ignite *part* of your clothing. (The Ignite Fire spell will do this at its third level of effect.) This does 1d-4 burning damage per second and is distracting (-2 to DX).

If a *single* hit inflicts 10+ points of basic burning damage, it will ignite *all* of your clothing. This does 1d-1 burning damage per second and is *very* distracting (-3 to DX).

A Change Posture maneuver to drop and roll, or a Move to leap into water, will put out burning clothing automatically. Beating it with your hands takes Ready maneuvers – one if partly on fire, *three* if wholly aflame – plus a DX roll (any failure means starting over).

Burning clothing inflicts large-area injury (p. 53). The DX penalties for distraction apply only if this injury could harm you, and never affect rolls to extinguish the flames. If the flame inflicts injury, though, shock (p. 60) *does* penalize these rolls!

My Shield! A *wooden* shield or cloth cloak that takes 10+ points of burning damage in one second – or *any* shield hit with flaming fuel – catches fire. This gives you -2 to DX. Extinguishing it takes a Ready maneuver and a DX roll. A cloak or wooden shield that burns for seconds equal to its weight in pounds is *ruined*.

My Gear! Most other equipment won't burn up – but *exposed, flammable* gear might, if you take large-area burning damage or if it's *deliberately* targeted! A measly 1 point of burning damage will ignite a paper item in hand. Scrolls and maps are destroyed instantly; you have three seconds to extinguish a book, which takes a Ready maneuver and a DX roll. Alchemist's matches and alchemist's fire are ignited by 1 point of burning damage if in hand, 3 if tucked into a belt or pack – and ignited alchemist's fire damages *you*.

I Lost Everything in the Fire: Suffering 30+ points of basic large-area burning damage destroys *all* your gear that isn't completely metal, stone, or glass. Rations, candles, and lamp oil burn up. Paper, cloth, wood, and leather items – including weapons and armor – are charred beyond repair. Coins and gems in sacks, purses, and wooden chests tumble to the ground. Liquids boil away, rupturing their containers.

POISON

Poison is any substance that causes harmful effects to the living and isn't covered by *Acid* (p. 65), *Disease* (pp. 66-67), or *Potions* (*Adventurers*, pp. 116-117). Such a thing might work identically to disease, but it responds to **Resistant to Poison** and **Neutralize Poison** – not to **Resistant to Disease** and **Cure Disease**. What matters is *cause*, not *effect*.

Exposure to poison might occur via *any* means described under *Follow-Ups* (p. 56) or *Special Delivery* (pp. 56-57):

- **Poisoned attacks.** Cutting, piercing, and impaling attacks can transmit blood or contact follow-ups. Examples include edged weapons; dart, spike, and needle traps; and venomous teeth, stingers, and claws. The poison works only if the attack penetrates DR. Crushing attacks can deliver only contact agents – and only if they hit bare skin. Poison on weapons and traps lasts for one wound or three hits blocked, parried, or stopped by DR.

- **Poison spit.** Blood agents must hit the face (-5 to hit). Contact agents need only hit an unarmored hit location – and a few can even seep through armor in seconds equal to its DR!

- **Poison clouds.** An area effect or cone (*Area and Spreading Attacks*, pp. 45-46). A trap might release dust, mist, or gas. A monster might exhale or be surrounded by a cloud – and some liquid or gaseous beings *are* poison, so merely being in their hex counts! A respiratory or blood agent affects anyone in the area who breathes; a contact agent affects everyone in the area, period.

- **Poisonous presence.** The worst monsters can poison with a sense-based attack (most often by meeting the victim's gaze) or even a malediction (e.g., teleporting poison inside the body!).

- **Poisoned objects.** Doorknobs, coins, and other articles coated with contact agents as traps do nothing until touched with bare hands. This is most common on objects tiny or fine enough that working with them while wearing gloves gives -3 or worse to skills.

- **Poisoned food and drink.** Out of combat, be careful when foraging for food, sipping from mysterious dungeon fountains, or dining with enemies.

To *detect* poison, roll as described in *Dangerous Stuff* (p. 23): a *Per*-based **Poisons** roll with whatever **Acute Sense** bonuses the GM deems applicable. To *use* poison, see *Practical Poisoning* (p. 58); this also works out of combat (e.g., to poison drinks), but a dose big enough to give -2 or -4 to resist also gives enemies +2 or +4 to detection rolls.

Resistance: Most poisons are resisted by **HT** at -1 to -6. Very mild poisons grant bonuses, while the worst give bigger penalties or offer *no* resistance. If a roll is allowed, **Resistant to Poison** adds its bonus. Roll immediately before the poison's effects – possibly more than once, for poison that does damage in cycles.

Schedule: Unlike real-world poison, fantasy poison often takes effect immediately. It might be one-shot, but it could be cyclic, dealing its damage a certain number of times at specific intervals; e.g., 1d per second for 10 seconds, or 4d every hour for three hours. If there *is* a delay, this needn't be linked to interval. One poison could cause 2d damage immediately and then 1d every hour for three hours; another could do *nothing* for an hour and then cause 2 points of damage every second for 10 seconds!

Effects: Most poisons inflict either toxic damage that costs HP or fatigue damage that drains FP; DR never affects this. Many cause *Afflictions* (pp. 65-66); e.g., dust that sets off coughing or choking; drugs that induce sleep, unconsciousness, or coma; venom so excruciating that it leads to pain, agony, or paralysis, and cripples when injected into a limb; magical mushrooms that result in hallucinating; bad food that triggers nausea or retching; or a lethal heart-attack toxin. Combinations are possible – especially afflictions linked to a certain amount of toxic damage (“paralysis if victim loses more than HP/2”). Successful resistance might prevent *all* effects or merely reduce them, resulting in half damage (say, 2d instead of 4d) or a lesser affliction (like coughing instead of choking) – and for cyclic damage, the resistance roll might be repeated before each cycle.

Recovery: If there are ongoing effects that allow periodic resistance rolls, *any* success, *three* consecutive successes, a *critical* success, or something similar might halt all later unpleasantness. If an affliction sets in, recovery time could be fixed (“an hour”), variable (“3d minutes”), subject-specific (“16 - HT hours”), tied to the resistance roll (“minutes equal to margin of failure”), or until the subject regains some or all lost HP or FP.

Treatment: One-shot damage can only be healed. Poisons that cause cyclic damage or persistent afflictions can be halted early by **Neutralize Poison**, at -5 without a **Poisons** roll. An anti-toxin (*Adventurers*, p. 115) *for that poison* always works in 1d minutes . . . and in fantasy, such a thing usually exists, though it might not be for sale! If the poison isn't rapidly killing the victim, taking a day to treat it with **Esoteric Medicine** or an hour to brew an antidote with **Pharmacy** works. Insidious poisons may penalize these skills and spells!



Subterranean races see well in the dark because deep places are dark, and are poison-resistant because such realms are full of poison: toxic fungi, venomous monsters, and – too often – noxious traps.

– Aelin Rock-Talker, Druid

For examples of these concepts, see *Poisons* (*Adventurers*, pp. 115-116) and the venomous creatures in *Monsters*.

SUFFOCATION

If you're *completely* without air – perhaps due to *Holding Your Breath* (p. 21), being strangled (*Actions After a Grapple*, p. 41), a flexible weapon (garrote, bolas, lariat, etc.) around your neck, or an effect that causes choking (*Incapacitating Conditions*, p. 66) – you lose 1 FP per second. When drowning due to incompetence at *Swimming* (p. 21), you can get *some* air but it's mixed with water – roll vs. **Swimming** every five seconds, with failure costing 1 FP.

At 0 FP, you must roll vs. **Will** every second or fall unconscious. You also lose 1 HP per further FP lost (*Effects of Accumulated Fatigue*, pp. 63-64). Regardless of FP or HP, you'll die in HT/3 minutes (round up) without air.

If you get clean air before you die, you'll stop losing FP and start recovering FP at the usual rate (*Recovering from Fatigue*, pp. 64-65). If unconscious, you'll awaken at 1 FP.

If you went without air for more than HT/5 minutes (round up), roll vs. **HT** to avoid permanent brain damage: -1 to IQ.

TEMPERATURE

Fire and ice *attacks* do damage that DR can prevent. Hot and cold *environments* have more insidious effects. If the temperature is unrelentingly low or high – the cold of ice caverns, the heat of lava tubes – everyone must roll against **HT** at the start of each day's adventuring.

Failure means spending that day missing FP equal to the margin of failure. This *isn't* cumulative day to day (reroll daily) but *is* additive with all other FP losses – and if FP go below 0, lost HP *do* accumulate (*Effects of Accumulated Fatigue*, pp. 63-64).

Cold: Roll at -5 without winter clothing or for *wet* clothing, 0 for dry winter clothing, or +5 with genuine *arctic* clothing. The GM may apply a penalty of any size for extreme temperatures or winds; arctic climates inflict from -1 to -5, and fantasy realms are often scarier! Adventurers with **Survival (Arctic)** may use *HT*-based skill instead of HT for the roll. The **Warmth** spell gives +3, while **Resist Cold** waives the roll.

Heat: Apply encumbrance penalties (*Adventurers*, p. 12) to the roll. The GM may add a penalty of any size for extreme temperatures or humidity; while tropical climates rarely give much worse than -5, volcanic settings regularly do! Delvers with **Survival (Desert or Jungle)** may use *HT*-based skill instead of HT for the roll. The **Coolness** spell grants +3, while **Resist Fire** waives the roll.

Adaptation: **Temperature Tolerance** toward heat or cold gives a HT bonus equal to the number of levels against suitable temperatures.

Sudden Exposure: Also roll if an adventurer suddenly encounters an unusually cold or hot area. If a hero who has already rolled that day loses a bonus or acquires a penalty,

reroll with the more punishing modifiers and use the *poorer* of the two results to assess missing FP. Ambient temperatures take a minute to force a roll or reroll, but can continue to do so as they plunge or rise; e.g., entering the Flame Caverns might trigger a HT roll after one minute, HT-1 after two, HT-2 after three, and so on, with delvers missing FP equal to their worst margin of failure. But roll *immediately* if it's cold and somebody is soaked or loses clothing; e.g., the Ice Grotto already demands HT-3 rolls, but someone who dives into a frigid pool (naked or wet, that's -5) must make an immediate HT-8 roll!

Recovery: To recover from temperature fatigue, go someplace where *no* HT roll is required for cold or heat, as the case may be; then you'll regain FP normally. Camp will do – but if you break camp and resume adventuring in the cold or heat, you'll have to roll again. You'll also recover normally if you encounter the opposite extreme (e.g., heat if you're cold) . . . but a minute after full recovery, you must roll for the *new* problem!

TRAPS

Traps are mechanisms or enchantments intended to harm those who encounter them. They give the GM an opportunity for diabolical creativity! For each, briefly note *what it is* and *what triggers it*, plus any information necessary to adjudicate *Dealing with Traps* (p. 23) and *Dangerous Stuff* (p. 23). At a minimum:

Detect: The roll needed to find the trap, with any difficulty modifier. The go-to skill is **Traps**. For gunk sitting around without a mechanism, use **Poisons** for *Poison* (pp. 69-70) – or **Alchemy** for *Acid* (p. 65), fuels that burst into *Flame* (p. 68), or *Potions* (*Adventurers*, pp. 116-117). **Thaumatology** works for visible magical dangers like Evil Runes, but spells need **Detect Magic**. Not every trap is detectable – only magic can spot a trap concealed *inside* a wall or chest, or *behind* a door! In all cases, make *Per*-based rolls for ordinary skills, standard IQ-based rolls for spells.

Disarm: The skill required to render the trap harmless, plus *its* modifier. This is most often *DX*-based **Traps**, but gunk requires **Alchemy**, **Hazardous Materials**, or **Poisons**. Some traps allow alternative skills; e.g., **Armory (Missile Weapons)** would be as good as Traps for neutralizing an *accessible* crossbow. Also note whether failure triggers the trap! Some traps can't be disarmed – consider a pit with an illusionary floor over it. The only solution might be to spot and avoid such a trap.

Avoid: How to get around the trap if it's found but not disarmed. This needn't require a roll; it's simple enough not to step on the big, red tile. If there *is* a roll, it's almost always against **DX** – or **Acrobatics** or **Jumping**, if higher. Here, too, there may be a modifier. By definition, failure means triggering the trap!

Save: Whether the trap offers a last-ditch chance to avoid its effects when triggered. This is often a **Dodge** roll – or a **DX** roll, if covering the eyes or grabbing something would do.

Hasty breath-holding requires a **HT** roll. Some undetectable traps can still be *stopped* if someone states in advance that they're carefully reaching or stepping (Move 1) into a suspicious area with the intent to intercept traps. This grants a save against **DX**-based **Traps** at -5, plus **High Manual Dexterity** and **Sensitive Touch** bonuses if feeling about with just the hands – but failure means suffering the effects! Any save might be penalized or qualified; e.g., “A Hearing-2 roll lets the victim hear a click behind him, allowing a Dodge roll at -2 to duck.”

Effects: The trap's consequences. It might hit the victim with a spring-loaded melee or ranged weapon (find damage as if someone with respectable ST were wielding such a weapon), drop something heavy (*Falling Objects*, pp. 67-68), restrain the target (assign an effective ST), or release gas (*Poison*, pp. 69-70) ... among *many* other things. It may affect a whole area! Evil Runes and other magical traps should generally specify an equivalent spell and its effective skill level. If a poison or spell allows resistance separate from the trap's save, provide the details.

Shots: How many times the trap can be triggered. Most traps are one-shot. A few can fire several times. Magical traps often have *infinite* shots! Things without shots, like pits, are “constant.”

Rearm: If the trap can be disarmed, indicate whether it can be reset by making the roll to disarm a second time.

Steal: State whether an **IQ**-based **Traps** roll – possibly with a modifier – lets someone *take* the trap! If it does, spell out what the thief acquires and how much it weighs; e.g., “a ST 15 crossbow (6 lbs.).”

Speaking from Experience

*Did you know traps kill more treasure-hunters than monsters do? It's true! A Wizards' Guild study found that the need to eat people, suck life force, absorb mana, or whatever limits the deadliness of most creatures. However, someone with enough time and resources – like, say, a whole race that has centuries to excavate a tomb complex, or an immortal lich – can **always** cook up a deadlier trap. Pits can be dug deeper, deadfalls can be made heavier, and bad guys love pouring in extra poison and carving more Evil Runes. That's why no adventuring party should be without a traps expert. In theory that could be a spellcaster, but I can sum up the problem with that in two words: meteoric iron.*

– Puddin' Noddington, Thief

Sample Traps

Here are some classics to provide inspiration!

Concealed Crossbow

Crossbow concealed behind *tiny* hole in thick wall, triggered by loose floor tile.

Detect: **Per**-based **Traps** at -9.

Disarm: **DX**-based **Traps**. Failure triggers!

Avoid: **DX** or **Jumping**, if trigger is on only path; otherwise automatic (don't step on tile).

Save: Hearing roll at -2 allows **Dodge** at -2.

Effects: 1d+5 impaling. *Shots:* 1.

Rearm, Steal: No – crossbow is *inside* wall.

Crusher

Complex mechanism drops counterweighted ceiling, triggered by loose floor tile.

Detect: **Per**-based **Traps**.

Disarm: **IQ**-based **Traps**. Failure triggers!

Avoid: **DX** or **Jumping**, if trigger is on only path; otherwise automatic (don't step on tile).

Save: **Dodge**, at -2 without **Danger Sense** but +3 for diving for cover.

Effects: 10d crushing to everyone in hex! *Shots:* 1.

Rearm: Yes. *Steal:* No.

Frozen Runes

A 30' stretch of floor covered in Evil Runes casts magic on anyone who passes.

Detect: **Per**-based **Thaumatology** – or **Perception** + **Magery**, for mages.

Disarm: No.

Avoid: **DX** at -5 to walk without stepping on runes.

Save: No.

Effects: Resist Frostbite-15 with **HT** or suffer 3d injury.

Shots: Infinite.

Rearm, Steal: No.

Illusion-Covered Pit

A 30'-deep spiked pit under 10'x10' square of illusionary floor.

Detect: **Per**-based **Traps** (or suitable spell).

Disarm: No.

Avoid: **DX** or **Jumping** – or automatic with ladder, board, etc.

Save: No.

Effects: 3d impaling. *Shots:* Constant.

Rearm, Steal: No.

Trip-Rope

Thin-but-strong cord at ankle level, at top of staircase.

Detect: Vision at -5 or **Per**-based **Traps**.

Disarm: Automatic.

Avoid: Automatic (step over cord).

Save: **DX** at -2.

Effects: Fall down stairs – 2d crushing and land prone.

Shots: Constant.

Rearm: Yes. *Steal:* Yes. Gives 1 yard of cord (0.05 lb.).

CHAPTER FIVE

TREASURE!

The *whole purpose* of raiding dungeons is a heady cocktail of “growing powerful” and “getting rich,” mixed to taste by the individual adventurer (who might add a dash of “defeating evil”). Power is as likely to mean potent gear as it is to take the form of more character points to spend on better abilities – and wealth *definitely* implies treasure. This makes loot too important to be boring!

Identifying the Good Stuff (pp. 24-25) discusses this subject from the players’ perspective. Now it’s the GM’s turn. For each

major treasure item or collection of small ones, the GM must provide at least two pieces of information:

- *Fair value*, for use with *Getting a Good Price* (pp. 15-16). This can be pulled out of thin air for anything but coins and equipment listed in *Adventurers*.
- *Weight*, because how much the heroes can haul back to town is one of the key limits on wealth.

And for cash, gems, and luxuries, that’s all you *need* . . . but where’s the fun in that?

How Much?

Some GMs believe it’s easier to deal with *too little* loot than *too much*. That’s a shaky claim. Even a disastrous dungeon crawl should pay off well enough that the PCs can afford to recharge power items, restock consumables, and spend a week or two in town. Otherwise, nobody will show up for the next adventure. Why would skilled pros do perilous work that doesn’t pay – and why would the *players* stay interested?

Soaking up excess money is easy. Listed prices are just suggestions – things will get more expensive if word gets around that the delvers struck it rich! Towns are full of merchants, guilds, and mysterious strangers charging exorbitant fees for unique artifacts brought back by other adventurers, for treasure maps, for rituals that charge power items far beyond their usual limits, for training in exclusive spells and abilities, and much more.

As well, the GM has no obligation to make all treasure – even *powerful* stuff – salable. A wagon-load of potent magic items might sell as scrap if they’re weird artifacts no wizard in town can analyze, or if they bear the Number of the Beast. Goods stolen by monsters are still stolen once recovered; the King or Merchants’ Guild might pay a reward for their return, but they won’t accept “finders, keepers” as a defense. Nobody buys dusty, unlabeled potions. And so on.

Finally, if you give the heroes things they can use, they won’t sell them! It’s a good idea to include at least one gewgaw that each party member will fall in love with, and to make these the *best* items in the haul. Everything else

in the wagon might barely cover beer and bed, but that won’t matter if the barbarian got a new axe and the bard got a magic lute.

Playing Hard to Get

Another control on treasure is *getting* it. Killing monsters is just the beginning:

Dead Bodies: Small, valuable items on corpses require **Search** rolls, often at penalties for tininess. *Consumables* (arrows, potions, etc.) might be used up by the owner if the PCs don’t win the fight fast enough – and *fragile* gear (anything in bottles counts!) can break if the carrier falls in battle.

Containers: Locked containers work like locked doors (*Entrances*, pp. 82-83). Most won’t stand up to a beating: a wooden chest has DR 2, HP 14; an ironbound one, DR 5, HP 18; and a solid iron strongbox, DR 12, HP 10. But two things keep adventurers from simply bashing. First, *fragile* valuables, like potion bottles, will break on 1-4 on 1d (let impulsive players learn this the hard way!). Second, bashing *will* trigger any traps present.

Troves: Loot in the lair of the final boss of all the boss monsters *might* simply be heaped up in piles, like the classic dragon’s hoard. But monsters appreciate security, too! Why else would they live in underground fortresses full of traps and locked doors? A trove is likely to be in a vault with a stout door, good lock, and/or traps, all of which use the usual rules – but often with extra-large penalties.

ALL THAT GLITTERS

Anyone who has ever played a fantasy game – digital or pen-and-paper – knows that a successful adventure sends delvers home with chests full of gold and jewels! The GM is cautioned to be *slightly* stingy here, because this kind of wealth is portable, and hard to control without the headache of realistic economics. Always include a bit, though – *at least* \$350 to \$400 per PC, so the heroes can spend a couple of weeks in town afterward, and replace arrows and such.

PRECIOUS METALS

Identifying the Good Stuff (pp. 24-25) provides per-pound values for precious metals. As cash, such treasure generally takes the form of **standard coins** that are 50 to the pound regardless of composition – so when estimating weights for loot, allow 0.02 lb. per coin. In practical terms:

- **Copper** is worth \$62.50/lb. as pure metal, but *copper pieces* are 80% pure (\$50/lb.) and worth \$1.
- **Silver** is worth \$1,000/lb. in ingots, bars, etc. A chunky *silver piece* is 100% pure: \$20 (= 20 copper).
- **Gold** is worth \$20,000/lb. as bars, dust, or whatever. A large *gold piece* is 100% pure: \$400 (= 20 silver or 400 copper).
- **Platinum** is rare and inflated in value, worth \$40,000/lb. A good-sized *platinum piece* is 100% pure: \$800 (= 2 gold, 40 silver, or 800 copper).

Fantasy hoards also feature funky alloys:

- **Billon** is a red-pink copper-silver alloy, worth \$500/lb. Standard coin: \$10 (= 10 copper).
- **Tumbaga** is a gold-colored copper-gold alloy, worth \$3,000/lb. “Piles of gold” in tavern tales are often tumbaga. Standard coin: \$60 (= 60 copper or 3 silver).
- **Electrum** is a green-tinted silver-gold alloy, worth \$10,000/lb. Standard coin: \$200 (= 200 copper or 10 silver).

As more-precious metals are denser, high-value standard coins aren’t as large; say, 1” across for copper, 0.9” for silver, 0.7” for gold, and just 0.65” for platinum. *Purity* stays stable because it’s easily tested, but nonstandard coins can be of any *size*; e.g., gold coins twice as wide and four times as heavy would be \$1,600 and 0.08 lb. Fully sorting coins by size and composition *can’t* be rushed – it takes a minute per 50 coins for one person, if time is of the essence.

Statues and ornaments *aren’t* usually pure. Most are alloyed for durability, or merely gilded. These can have any value! A huge “gold” statue that weighs a literal ton is almost certainly solid stone with 1/4

lb. of gilding (\$5,000) – not hollow and made from 2,000 lbs. of gold (\$40 million).

Distinguishing copper, silver, gold, or platinum – and thus its value – calls for no skill roll. Identifying billon, tumbaga, or electrum calls for an **Alchemy** or **Merchant** roll at +2. The GM rolls secretly and *lies* on any failure (billon is mistaken for copper, tumbaga for gold, and electrum for silver or gold). This only affects delvers’ decisions in the field. In town, coins, bars, ingots, and dust trade at full value as money – the King’s laws protect delvers, too!

Ornamental metal objects – chalices, statues, weapons, etc. – *aren’t* coin, so *Getting a Good Price* (pp. 15-16) applies and an accurate estimate is instrumental to not being gyped. If gilding is involved, a scratch and a **Merchant** roll will do. For alloys, only an **Alchemy** roll made using a backpack alchemy lab (*Adventurers*, p. 114) will suffice. The GM rolls secretly. Success in either case estimates the *real* value of metal present; failure means a lowball lie, and thus a lower return in town.



GEMS

Expensive rocks have negligible weight – they can be of *any* value without increasing a looter's load. A legendary diamond the weight of but one standard coin would be worth around \$90,000! This makes gems attractive treasures, best handed out sparingly.

Specify what each gem is, as a quest might call for “three \$1,000 rubies” or whatever. Though fantasy gem prices depend mostly on shininess – not monopolies and marketing – rarity makes some stones more desirable. *Relative* values are:

Obsidian: 2

Agate, Hematite, Magnetite: 5

Azurite, Chalcedony, Jet: 10

Malachite, Quartz: 15

Calcite, Coral, Jade, Onyx, Turquoise: 20

Amber, Lapis Lazuli, Sard, Tourmaline: 25

Amethyst, Aquamarine, Beryl, Bloodstone, Cat's Eye, Iolite, Moonstone, Peridot: 30

Emerald, Garnet, Opal, Pearl, Ruby, Sapphire, Topaz: 35

Diamond: 40

For instance, a \$50 agate, \$200 turquoise, and \$400 diamond would have comparable size and weight. However, price anything but a cut-and-polished, *gem*-quality stone as

a commodity like gold or incense – common jade is great for crafting weapons but would fetch a lousy \$100 per *pound* if you were lucky!

Evaluating *each gem* requires a secret **Merchant** roll. Failure means the GM lies – as always, erring on the low side. As gems *aren't* coins that always trade at full value, this makes *Getting a Good Price* (pp. 15-16) harder.

JEWELRY

With the inclusion of gems, things like bracelets, belt buckles, cloak pins, belly-button jewels, and crowns could have any value at negligible weight. *Each piece* requires a secret **Merchant** roll to evaluate, with the usual effects on a failure.

Optionally, the GM may note each piece's metal value, gem value, and craftsmanship; e.g., a tacky quarter-pound silver belt buckle with a smiley face picked out in 50 tiny \$10 diamonds might be worth \$250 for silver + \$500 for gems + \$100 for work = \$850. If the delvers prefer, they can prize out gems to sell at whatever price the merchant offers and then exchange the metal at coin rates, but they'll lose any value added for fine work (and *automatically* ruin any magical powers!).

IT'S POPULAR IN TOWN

The economy runs on more than metal and rocks! Wealthy townsfolk – nobles, high-ranking guild and temple officials, and even settled *former* adventurers – value all kinds of stuff that delvers don't.

LUXURY ITEMS

Evaluating the luxuries of the rich and debauched calls for **Connoisseur (Luxuries)** skill – or in a pinch, **Merchant** at -4. Below are price ranges for these kinds of goods, sorted by type. When assessing weight, add up to 50% more for any commodity in a durable cask or bottle.

Booze: Strong drink. Bulk beverage prices range from \$5/gallon for ale, through \$10/gallon for good wine or mead, to \$150/gallon (or more!) for fine wine or distilled spirits. A gallon weighs about 8 lbs.

Pigments: Dyestuffs, inks, and such. Price *per ounce* is a mere \$1 for henna and other everyday colors, but up to \$40 for bright colors with exotic ingredients. There are 16 ounces to the pound, but truly costly stuff is rarely found in such quantities.

Scents: Incenses, perfumes, and spices. Price *per ounce* of perfume or incense goes from \$5 for cighthouse perfume to \$35 for ambergris. For spices, the ceiling is far higher – \$300/ounce for finest saffron. Boring garden herbs fetch only \$4 *per pound*.

Soft Goods: Furs, fibers, and textiles made from them. Wool, ordinary fur, and leather are around \$2/lb. to \$3/lb., but ermine, finest satin, and intact tiger pelts can fetch up to 10 times as much! The *ne plus ultra* is giant-spider silk cloth, at \$565/lb.

ANTIQUES AND OBJETS D'ART

Things like paintings, sculptures, the quill used to sign the Treaty Between Men and Elves, and the original Treaty itself rarely have high intrinsic values (like gold and gems) or guild-regulated trade (like dyes and perfumes). They're worth whatever some fool will pay for them – that is, the GM can set *any* price. The GM should also note whether these treasures are real or fake, and if they bear hallmarks, coats of arms, or other hints at their importance.

The usual roll to identify such things is **Connoisseur (Art)**, but **Heraldry** will suffice if there are identifying marks. Historical artifacts are obscure enough to need rolls against **Research** (only in town!) or even a **Hidden Lore** skill. Fakes can be called out only by **Forgery**. A group that has made *all* necessary skill rolls can try **Merchant** to evaluate the item. Otherwise, they *might* get 10% of fair value from a merchant, *before* adjusting as described in *Getting a Good Price* (pp. 15-16).

SELLING THE UNIQUE

For most treasure, liquidation starts with learning *what it is* by making the skill rolls in this chapter and *Identifying the Good Stuff* (pp. 24-25). There may be a roll to realize you've found something special, another to analyze it, and still others to spot forgeries or do research in town.

If the identification skills don't include **Merchant**, roll against *that* to learn fair value (*Determining Value*, p. 25). If identification wasn't attempted – or failed – this will either be impossible or yield meaningless results. Some items *suggest* one or the other, but the GM decides.

For common goods (coins, nonmagical gear available in town, etc.), the GM may skip one or both of those steps to speed game play. In *Dungeon Fantasy*, any twit can identify and price gold or a broadsword!

Then visit a merchant and try *Getting a Good Price* (pp. 15-16). A few things – like random potions, and questionable antiques and objets d'art – won't fetch much. Others (e.g., unpedigreed maps) *can't* be sold if unidentified.

And what about totally off-the-wall *artifacts* the GM throws in? These are too rare to have a fair value, making it tricky when heroes go to sell them or choose them as power items. To get a rough price, start with an item's *best* property:

Property no better than that of mundane gear (ordinary armor, weapon, lantern, etc.): \$2,500

Property no better than that of exceptional nonmagical gear (fine-quality item, high holy symbol, meteoric iron or orichalcum armor or weapon, etc.): \$7,500

Property no better than that of a standard enchanted item: \$15,000

Property well beyond any standard item, or cosmic: \$25,000

If the artifact has several distinct properties, start with the best and add 1/5 of the value of the others; e.g., a cosmic gizmo with three exceptional nonmagical properties would be worth $\$25,000 + 3 \times (\$7,500/5) = \$29,500$. This is the sell price.

To establish value as a power item, use the value of the nearest underlying item (fine broadsword, orichalcum plate armor, or whatever), or simply assume the \$2,500 (13 FP) or \$7,500 (25 FP) above for nonmagical gear.

Seem low? It is! The vast gamut of *known* and *identifiable* wonders makes it hard to sell the *weird*, *unidentifiable*, and possibly *dangerous*. The GM can boost sell price for delvers who complete a quest to establish an artifact's pedigree.



HEY, WE CAN USE THIS!

On the ground floor of the “things heroes will use rather than sell” department is the nonmagical gear in *Adventurers*. Starting delvers with small budgets will appreciate replacement consumables (arrows, bandages, mapping paper, torches, etc.) . . . or a few \$60 throwing axes if they've been hurling \$40 hatchets . . . or \$90 gauntlets if they've got \$15 gloves. The cutoff will rise after one or two successful quests: \$900 composite bows to replace \$200 longbows, \$1,000+ bits of plate armor, and so on. At these early stages, matching equipment to the adventurers' skills and needs will ensure that it's kept, not sold.

The party will eventually be outfitted well enough that such rewards are redundant. The heroes might still ferry these goods back to town to sell (*Getting a Good Price*, pp. 15-16) – indeed, if the group has a competent seller, anything that costs \$50 or more per pound is better than copper coins! Most notable here are swords and high-end metal armor. Equipping every humanoid foe this way is *giving away money* – so unless that's the goal, the GM should outfit ordinary zombies and orcs with clubs or spears, and cheap or *no* armor.

But even well-equipped delvers will think about keeping mundane gear of such high quality that it rivals magical items. This *definitely* includes weapons, shields, and armor with modifiers such as “dwarven,” “fine,” and “meteoric.” It also encompasses anything in *Special Orders (Adventurers*, pp. 112-114) the GM isn't selling in town – from \$40-a-shot nagetteppo to \$1,000 backpack alchemy labs. Concoctions such as alchemist's fire and poisons make the list, too.

Delvers may want to use equipment immediately, so specify *all* exceptional properties – including whether an item was designed for someone with a Size Modifier other than 0. An *IQ*-based roll against the skill needed to use the gear – or **Connoisseur (Weapons)** or an appropriate **Armory** specialty, for weapons or armor – will spot a better-quality article. As the price tags in *Adventurers* are common knowledge among delvers, no special roll is needed to *evaluate* such things.

WRITINGS

Not all useful items are weapons, armor, or tools – some provide knowledge. Two cases are of special value.

Maps

Ordinary maps to safe places people visit regularly are worth \$25 if the GM feels kind – maybe \$50, if especially pretty.

Reliable maps to dungeons and lost wilderness, showing the location of treasure, *start* at \$100. There's no upper limit, but more than \$500 should be rare. Such maps cannot be sold *at all* until pedigree is established through a **Research** roll in town. Use **Forgery** to spot fakes.

Typical maps are light – just 0.1 lb. Huge rolls of vellum, charts engraved in stone, and so on can weigh any amount.

Spellbooks

A spellbook is a *fantastic* find. It lets spellcasters avoid paying a guild or temple to learn spells: between adventures, they can invest unspent character points in any of its spells they have the prerequisites for. When they're done, they can sell it.

Spellbooks *aren't* magic items – anyone who knows a book's language can understand the words, though only those who could cast its spells can learn magic from it. On the other hand, some are cursed! See *Identifying the Good Stuff* (pp. 24-25) for details.

The GM should secretly list every spell in a spellbook. To know what spells are there without investing points in study takes a roll against **Musical Composition** for bards, **Religious Ritual** for clerics or druids, or **Thaumatology** for wizards. Doing so makes it possible to estimate value.

A spellbook with identified spells can be sold to a temple or guild (who want it out of circulation). The going rate is \$100 *per spell*. The sky's the limit for books holding *secret* or *forbidden* spells – that is, ones the GM doesn't otherwise permit! Secret death and teleportation spells have supposedly fetched \$50,000+.

The lightest spellbooks weigh 3 lbs. Huge tomes containing many spells can weigh up to 12 lbs.

MAGIC ITEMS

For many delvers, items of magical power are the ultimate treasures!



POTIONS

Potions are one-use magical liquids. See *Adventurers* for the basic list – but others that emulate *anything* in **Spells** might exist. Hostile effects are *usually* associated with grenades; helpful ones, with drinkable or utility potions. Durations of non-standard potions can be minutes, tens of minutes, or hours.

Both standard and unique brews are “safe” treasures for the GM to award, for three reasons:

- Impact is limited – one use later, they don't exist!
- Labels, if any, simply can't be trusted. Until analyzed with **Alchemy** (*Identifying the Good Stuff*, pp. 24-25), potions are useless at best and risky at worst.
- Elixirs found down dark holes boiling with evil monsters are difficult to sell even after they're analyzed, so they won't

make delvers excessively rich. Alchemists in town buy at a flat \$100 – they verify “yes, this is magic” right away, analyze them safely later, and at worst net \$20 (for a minor healing potion) or at best retire (the legendary philter of resurrection . . .).

All the GM has to do for a custom potion is name the spell, provide any duration, and specify drinkable, utility, or grenade. Whether it causes a single Flame Jet when shaken and pointed toward the enemy or gives the drinker Great Haste for an hour, it'll bring \$100 in town.

SCROLLS

Scrolls are texts that cast spells when read. A given scroll might cast any single spell – *once*. If the spell's effects are variable, the *scroll* specifies such parameters as area, damage dice, and level of effect. The user can't adjust these things!

To use a scroll, the reader requires comprehension of the *written* language it was penned in. The scroll must be ready in *two* hands and read aloud in a firm voice, which requires *spoken* comprehension. Reading takes *twice* the spell's usual casting time.

The spell is cast – exactly as if the reader cast it on the desired subject – the moment reading is complete. This requires no skill roll unless the spell is cast at a distance and/or Resisted. Then roll as usual, using the scroll's skill level.

When the spell goes off, the reader pays the energy cost for whatever spell effects the scroll's creator chose. The spell can be maintained at its usual cost. Energy can come from **FP**, a suitable **Energy Reserve**, or a power item. There's no cost reduction for the scroll's skill level.

Reading a scroll aloud *always* causes its power to dissipate and its writing to vanish, regardless of whether the spell works!

Types of Scrolls

Scrolls come in four classes:

- A **clerical scroll** bears a clerical spell and requires **Power Investiture** to activate.
- A **druidic scroll** bears a druidic spell and requires **Power Investiture (Druidic)** to activate.
- A **wizardly scroll** bears a wizardly spell and requires **Magery** to activate. **Bardic Talent** also works, if the bard sings aloud – bards *can* use scrolls to cast wizardly spells they can't learn.
- A **universal scroll** can bear any spell and be activated by anyone – no need for special advantages! The underlying spell type remains clerical, druidic, or wizardly.

Any of the above types can also be a **charged scroll**. This works at no energy cost to the reader! If it casts a *maintainable* spell, duration is fixed – the user cannot terminate the spell early or extend it (but it's still subject to Dispel Magic, etc.).

Scrolls as Treasure

The GM must note the type of scroll, its language, its spell, and the spell's skill level and specific parameters. These details need to be identified to sell the scroll, but this is easy to do: Read it *silently*, which neither casts the spell nor exhausts the scroll. Doing so allows anybody who could cast from the scroll to determine its spell. Others remain clueless.

When selling scrolls with *Getting a Good Price* (pp. 15-16) do the following:

- For an uncharged scroll, start with the energy cost to cast the spell with the chosen parameters; basic value is \$20 per energy point. For a charged one, add energy to cast to *total* maintenance cost for the specified duration; basic value is \$50 per energy point.
- *Double* value for a universal scroll.
- Most scrolls cast at skill 15. *Triple* value for skill 20.

As an alternative to selling a scroll, a spellcaster who meets the prerequisites to *learn* the spell (not merely *cast* it!) may try to do so – another way around training expenses. Read the scroll and roll against its skill. Success means being able to spend one character point to learn the spell *instead of* casting it. Critical failure means the spell affects the reader in a horrible way of the GM's choosing. The attempt depletes the scroll even if it fails or the reader doesn't have a point available!

SUPERNATURAL ORIGINS

Here's a list of potential explanations the GM can use for magic items, each with the effects it implies. *Any* magic item other than a scroll can have *any* origin – enchanters don't appear to be limited to the standard connections between spells and professions!

Alchemical. Created using strange reagents. Treat as **wizardly**, except that a delver with a backpack alchemy lab can *fully* identify all properties in four hours by making an unmodified **Alchemy** roll, while the **Analyze Magic** spell is at -2.

Clerical. Also called **blessed** or **divine**, the article is enchanted via prayer or clerical magic. Affected by sanctity. Those with **Holiness** or **Power Investiture** can tell it's special by making a **Perception** roll at a bonus equal to advantage level. Use is sometimes restricted to people with such advantages.

Cosmic. A godly artifact stolen by or granted to mortals. Unaffected by mana, Nature's strength, sanctity, or anything but *other* cosmic stuff. A **Perception** roll lets *any* fool realize it's powerful!

Druidic. Enchanted using druidic magic. Affected by Nature's strength. Druids can tell the item is special with a **Perception** + **Power Investiture (Druidic)** roll. Use is sometimes restricted to druids.

Materials. The item has extraordinary properties by dint of being made from something amazing – often monster parts – rather than enchanted after the fact. Treat as **druidic** or **wizardly**, but all rolls for analysis are at -2.

Racial. As **materials**, but the craftsmanship of a magical race (e.g., brownies or pixies) – not the base materials – underlies the **druidic** or **wizardly** magic.

Spirit. The home of a bound spirit. Treat objects that contain minor angels or demons as **clerical**, major ones as **cosmic**, totems or nature spirits as **druidic**, elementals as **druidic** or **wizardly**, and trapped souls as **wizardly**. Breaking such items can release hostile entities!

Wizardly. An item enchanted by wizardly magic. Such a common origin that **magical** has become a synonym. Affected by mana. Anyone with **Magery** will realize the item is special on a **Perception** roll modified by their advantage level. Use is sometimes restricted to those with Magery.

Scrolls are usually inked on heavy paper – *bark*, for druidic scrolls. Twenty weigh 1 lb. Gamers who love bookkeeping can treat this as 0.05 lb. apiece.

ENCHANTED ITEMS

Enchanted items bear *permanent* spells, placed there by spellcasters who specialize in such work instead of adventuring magic. Such an item obeys these rules:

- *Anyone* can use it unless it explicitly requires Magery, Power Investiture, or another trait.
- It retains its power indefinitely – but if *broken*, it loses *all* magical properties forever.
- It has a **Power** rating, established when created. This is always at least 15 and may be higher. If it's important to know the skill level of a spell cast or effect created by an enchanted item, use Power. Apply a temporary -5 to Power in low mana for a wizardly item, or in low sanctity for a clerical one; apply any local reduction to Nature's strength for a druidic one. If this reduces Power below 15, the item won't work in that place.

● A wizardly item in a no-mana region or a clerical one in a no-sanctity zone *won't work at all*.

Always-On Items

Most enchanted items are always on. This is how all the items in *Adventurers* work, save for the few with limited uses (below). For such an item to function, the user must wear or carry it in the usual manner (ring on a finger, sword in hand, and so on). These things don't let the wearer cast spells – they automatically cast a spell *on themselves* or *on the wearer* at no energy cost.

The capabilities of such items won't always be obvious. In the case of found treasure, the GM should avoid dropping clues!

For all always-on items, unless specified otherwise:

- *Casting time and energy cost are irrelevant*. The item doesn't let the user cast the spell – it puts the spell on itself or the user, at no cost, as soon as it's worn or wielded.
- *The effects last as long as the item is worn or carried*.
- *If the spell comes from **Spells**, all other effects are as described there*.

Casting Items

Some enchanted items enable the user to *cast* one or more specific spells – perhaps only for personal use, but possibly on any subject. These follow the rules given for the spell(s) they contain. Unless specified otherwise:

- *Casting time is as described for the spell*. There's no ritual, but the user must will the item to work for the same length of time. High Power doesn't affect this.
- *Energy cost is the same as for a normal casting of the spell*. High Power doesn't affect this, either.
- *Determine success normally*. Use the item's Power as the caster's base skill. Apply all the usual modifiers for the kind of spell being cast. A Resisted spell allows a normal resistance roll – use modified Power as the caster's skill in the Quick Contest.
- *Only one person at a time can use the item*. If two people attempt to use it, only the first to touch it can use it. If one *can't* use it – e.g., it works only for wizards and one of those people lacks Magery – that touch doesn't count.
- *All other effects are as usual for that spell*.

Common Enchantments

Everything under *Magic Weapons and Armor* (*Adventurers*, pp. 117-118) and *Other Items* (*Adventurers*, p. 118) is well-known! Any spell from *Spells* might appear in an enchanted item, too – that book gives typical prices for several that are common knowledge.

Here are a few other always-on enchantments – known only to powerful temple and guild monopolies – with their costs for use with *Getting a Good Price* (pp. 15-16). The prices *aren't* common knowledge; estimating fair value means analyzing the item.

Accuracy

Weapon/Projectile

Higher levels of this standard enchantment give more than +1 to hit.

Cost: \$20,000 for +2 or \$100,000 for +3. For a missile (e.g., an arrow), it's only \$100 for +2 – but \$10,000 for +3.

Defending Weapon/Shield

Melee Weapon/Shield

Higher levels of this standard enchantment give a better Parry or Block bonus than +1.

Cost: \$20,000 for +2 or \$40,000 for +3.

LIMITED-USE ITEMS

Not all enchanted items work forever – some have limited “uses” or “charges.” For example, the gem of healing and the siege stone in *Adventurers* grant one use, and the necklace of fireballs has 10. If so:

● *Ignore casting time*. The wielder must take *one* Concentrate maneuver to focus on the item, or a Ready to smash or an Attack to hurl it (or a part of it), as described for the item. This activates the item and expends a use. If the spell is Resisted, use modified Power in the resistance roll, as usual; successful resistance still expends a use.

● *Ignore energy cost*. The energy is built into the item. The wielder doesn't have to provide it. Limited-use effects are generally momentary – but even if it makes sense to maintain them, the user cannot spend energy to do so.

● *The final use destroys the item*. Nothing remains to sell or salvage!

Two powerful examples require *no* maneuver to use – they can be invoked at any time, even when it isn't one's turn in combat!

Lesser Wish: The item's wielder may specify the result of *one* dice roll *by, for, or against* him or her immediately *before* the roll is made. The roll cannot involve magic, and must be for something the user can perceive (attacks or defenses in combat are fine; enemy ambushes, secret reaction rolls, etc. aren't). Each wish affects a single roll – to specify a “3” on your attack roll *and* maximum damage, spend *two* wishes! *Cost*: \$6,000.

Wish: The item's owner may replace the result of *one* dice roll just made *by, for, or against* him or her with any other result, immediately *after* the roll is made. This otherwise works like a Lesser Wish, except that if the result of the roll would make the user aware of something previously unknown (like being struck from behind!), the wielder *can* change it! *Cost*: \$8,250.

Deflect

Armor/Shield

Higher levels of this standard enchantment give more than +2 to Defense Bonus.

Cost: \$40,000 for +3, \$160,000 for +4, or \$400,000 for +5.

Fortify

Armor

Higher levels of this standard enchantment give more than +2 to DR.

Cost: \$16,000 for +3, \$60,000 for +4, or \$160,000 for +5.

Ghost Weapon

Weapon/Projectile

The weapon affects all insubstantial beings as if they were tangible.

Cost: \$5,000 per pound of weapon weight (minimum 1 lb.).

Graceful Weapon

Melee Weapon

Once ready in hand, the weapon can attack *and* parry every turn – ignore “U” on its Parry stat and unreadying due to ‡ on its ST stat.

Cost: \$3,000 per pound of weapon weight (minimum 1 lb.).

Loyal Weapon

Weapon

The weapon seeks to return to its owner’s hand if it’s dropped or thrown – even if the fighter is incapacitated. If dropped, it returns next turn (no Ready maneuver required!). If thrown, it flies until it hits something or falls to the ground, and then returns at Move 12, avoiding enemies and obstacles.

A loyal weapon can be trapped or captured out of the air while returning. Catching it requires a DX-4 roll. Its constant attempts to return to its owner give anyone else -4 to fight with it.

A loyal weapon may have only one owner at a time. If sold or given away in a wholly voluntary transaction, it becomes

loyal to the new owner. If its owner dies, it returns to the body but becomes loyal to the next person to pick it up.

Cost: \$15,000 per pound of weapon weight (minimum 1 lb.).

Penetrating Weapon

Weapon/Projectile

Higher levels of this standard enchantment give a better armor divisor than (2).

Cost: \$15,000 for armor divisor (3), \$50,000 for (5), \$150,000 for (10), or \$500,000 to ignore DR. Double cost for a missile weapon (e.g., a bow). For a missile (e.g., an arrow), it’s only \$75 for (3) – but \$5,000 for (5), \$15,000 for (10), or \$50,000 to ignore DR.

Puissance

Weapon/Projectile

Higher levels of this standard enchantment give more than +1 to damage.

Cost: \$20,000 for +2 or \$100,000 for +3. Double cost for a missile weapon (e.g., a bow). For a missile (e.g., an arrow), it’s only \$100 for +2 – but \$10,000 for +3.

Enchanted Treasures

As most enchanted items will see immediate use, note *every* enchantment and foible – including the spell, its Power (15 unless specified otherwise), and its supernatural origins (p. 77). If its magical powers work only for a user with Magery or Power Investiture of some kind, note that, too.

As well, completely define the underlying object *without* its spells. This matters when selling treasure (a *fine* magical sword is worth more than an ordinary one) and when the thing is used as a power item (which relies on *nonmagical* value; see *Adventurers*, p. 115).

Identifying enchanted items before selling them with *Getting a Good Price* (pp. 15-16) is a job for **Analyze Magic**. Blessed items can be identified with **Religious Ritual** (takes four hours). Price the magical properties of anything with Power 20+ or cosmic origins at *triple* the usual rate!

UNIQUE ITEMS

Don’t be afraid to include the occasional artifact that just *does what it does*: a musical instrument that gives +1 to all Bard-Song rolls, a bow that gains +1 to effective ST (up to double ST) per turn it’s held drawn and ready, armor that changes size to fit any wearer, and so on. Not every wondrous item needs to be based on standard gear and spells!

In terms of *Supernatural Origins* (p. 77), such one-offs may be cosmic or spirit items, or the result of extraordinary

materials or racial craftsmanship . . . but since they don’t bear well-defined spells, they can’t be analyzed in the usual ways. Some might not even be detectable as magic, or seem all that special. Most reveal their secrets only after much trial and error. But they often end up being the most memorable items in the campaign, because they’re truly *unique*.

If adventurers decide to sell such treasures, so be it – see *Selling the Unique* (p. 75).

CHAPTER SIX

GAME MASTERING

The Game Master (GM) has a *big* job that involves wearing many hats.

Interpreter and referee. **Dungeon Fantasy** is just a set of guidelines. It leaves many decisions to the GM – and if something seems unclear, the GM is the final authority. The GM is free to change *any* number, *any* cost, *any* system. The designers provide *rules*; the GM's word is *law*.

Mastermind. The GM places traps and obstacles in the heroes' path. The GM controls the monsters, choosing who

and how they attack. In this sense, the GM is the players' adversary! That isn't the same as being *adversarial*. The goal is to challenge the players – not to argue with them or kill their PCs without hope of defense.

Banker. The GM sets the payoff for each risk, and awards all treasures and character points. The GM also decides what prices loot fetches in town, what the shops are selling, and what happens when somebody begs, haggles, or *steals*.

Writer and storyteller. **Dungeon Fantasy** provides *one* adventure; the GM creates the rest. The GM decides what shops are in town, who the King is, what gods answer clerics' prayers, and so on – such details have deliberately been left blank. When NPCs talk, it's the GM who gives them a voice.

Minor deity! All this makes the GM a cosmic force from the characters' perspective. The GM should strive to be *fair* and *consistent* in this role, never arguing for the sake of arguing, moving the goalposts, or showing favoritism. If the GM is a “god” of anything, it's *having fun*!



The world is far too weird to be random. Genius – possibly evil – is at work.

– Uncle Seamus, Wizard

MASTERING DUNGEONS

If you're not the GM, please stop reading.

– The Management

This book so far has provided rules for kicking in doors, defeating traps, and sneaking around; for combat; and for every kind of mental and physical suffering. An entire *other* book, **Monsters**, provides things to fight. In theory, that's everything the GM requires to design a dungeon – “just” sketch a map, choose what dangers lurk there, and then assign doors and other obstacles DR, HP, and skill penalties that reflect how hard they are to get around.

In practice, specific advice and examples come in handy. In that sense, this section is the mirror image of *In the Dungeon* (pp. 18-25), revisiting dungeon-related topics from the viewpoint of those who *create* dungeons rather than those who raid them.

DUNGEON DESIGN

Dungeons *don't* have to make sense but they *do* demand some forethought so the GM isn't making stuff up while the players tap their toes. **Dungeon Fantasy** is all about *what the heroes do* – that's why most of this book describes ways for PCs to exploit their skills! The GM should be ready to respond

to the players' actions, which means making notes on the elements below when planning each adventure.

Archetype

What is the dungeon? Knowing the answer is helpful when making maps and tackling the players' unexpected questions! Possibilities include:

Cave: Unlit and damp, with deep fissures, falling rocks, and similar natural dangers. A cave lacks “rooms” or “levels” as such, but erosion can produce the same effect. It may house cave-dwellers (bears, giant bats, etc.) – or *intelligent* monsters that have made it their lair and installed traps and doors. Open caves make it easier for distant foes to hear the party; tighter ones challenge armor-clad heroes to wriggle through narrow openings.

Cellar: Might be lit (usually poorly: -3 to Vision), and even in use; in the latter case, the users are either hostile or rarely seen (perhaps monsters are eating them). Extended cellars have numerous small rooms separated by thick walls that support the building above, and thus have lots of doors and, potentially, traps – but also easily secured areas for resting in. Monsters tend to be either humanoids or kept pets, unless something has burrowed in.

Labyrinth: A *deliberate* dungeon, created to challenge those within. Some are meant to keep something in – usually a terrible monster. Others are designed to tax explorers to the limit, but reward those who reach the far side or some inner area. Labyrinths tend to twist and sprawl; feature endless obstacles, tricks, traps, and monsters; and often require adventurers to use all their skills to survive.

Mine: Dark, unless in use (parts in use will be lit: -3 to Vision). “Traps” are more like mining hazards: collapsing galleries, suffocating or explosive gas, and so on. Mines can extend for miles and have many levels, but consist almost entirely of claustrophobic tunnels. Monsters might be the *miners* (e.g., evil gnomes) or what devoured them (giant worms, demons, etc.). Treasure often consists of raw ore or uncut gems.

Prison: Prisons resemble cellars with some important differences. They have jailers, torturers, plenty of locked doors, and traps that offer ways for guards to pass. There are also cooks, kitchens, and work areas for slave labor. Prisoners and wardens alike may qualify as monsters! An important subcategory is the *menagerie*: a prison for beasts. Wizards in particular imprison some very unusual things . . .

Sewer: Sewers run under metropolises. They have entrances all over town, but the *interesting* parts are remote. Sewers are wet, rank, and unhealthy; heroes can expect to make lots of HT rolls! Many have both deliberate traps (set by assassins and thieves) and bad engineering (e.g., collapsing walls). Some are dimly lit by glowing slime (-8 to Vision). Inhabitants include slimes, giant rats, and undead drowning victims.

Tomb: Tombs tend to be dark, sealed, and dry. Many are labyrinthine, with cunning tricks and traps for foiling grave-robbers. Traditional residents are the undead and

things that eat corpses. As burial is a religious ritual, tombs are often sanctified and include prayer facilities; sanctity variations, curses, and strange altars are likely. The dead are frequently buried with rich treasures, however, making the dangers worth braving.

Warren: A warren is excavated by the burrowers who lair there (big ants, worms, killer bunnies). Most such creatures can navigate in the dark; light is unlikely. The size and shape of tunnels depend on the monsters that dug them; e.g., 7'-thick worms chew 7'-wide tunnels. The walls might be shored up with dung, viscous goo, or the bones of prey. Dangers like webs and trapdoors are likely.

Some dungeons include differently themed areas. It's customary to offer a clue when the adventurers enter a new sector. This might depend on a skill roll: **Hidden Lore** for a forgotten labyrinth, **Prospecting** for a mine, **Urban Survival** for a sewer, **Theology** to spot tomb symbols, **Naturalist** for a warren, even **Streetwise** to know a prison. Such rolls are *Per*-based. Success gives the PCs a chance to prepare, and sometimes counts as a complementary skill roll (p. 6) for later attempts to spot that zone's typical dangers.

Maps

The next step is to map the dungeon – get some graph paper and start drawing rooms and passageways. *Caves* have irregular areas linked by narrow tunnels. *Mines* and *sewers* are artificial and thus fairly regular; most have more corridors than rooms. *Warrens* can go either way, depending on the residents. *Cellars*, *prisons*, and *tombs* typically have lots of rooms and squared-off floor plans. *Labyrinths* vary too much for generalizations beyond “confusing.”

ADVANCE PREPARATION

There are several things the GM must do before a single die is rolled:

Prepare the adventure. If you're playing the included adventure, simply read through it. Designing your own adventure, on the other hand, might take days or weeks of work! Either way, be sure you're fully familiar with the adventure *before* the players arrive.

Brief the players. If your players are already familiar with *Dungeon Fantasy*, tell them in advance what templates (professional and racial) are “legal,” what gear is available, and any changes you're making to the standard assumptions about starting cash and character points. If you have *new* players, review the rules so you're ready to answer questions and help them design characters!

Set up the play area. You'll need the contents of the *Dungeon Fantasy* box, plus pencils and paper. You should have *some* way to screen secret dice rolls from the players – standing the box on its side is simple yet

effective. When resuming a game in progress, make sure everyone's character sheet is there.

Who's Got the Sheets?

In the Stone Age of dungeon-crawling games, many GMs collected character sheets at the end of each session and handed them out at the beginning of the next. Ostensibly, this let the GM see how well the PCs were doing, making it easier to plan the upcoming session. But as those early games were somewhat adversarial, the *real* reason was often to make it harder for players to “cheat” by altering abilities and gear.

While a good gaming group shouldn't have this problem, it's still useful for the GM to be the keeper of records. That way, if the GM is present, nobody's character sheet will be forgotten, and the abilities and gear of each *character* will be handy even if the *player* can't show up. And in the Digital Age, cloud storage makes it easy to keep and synchronize multiple copies!

Don't worry much about cartographic perfection or architectural soundness! Focus on the details below. For rules covering maps made by *adventurers*, see *Mapping* (p. 18) and *Selling the Tale* (p. 17).

Scale

Decide how many feet or yards each graph-paper square or hexagon represents.



Walls

Draw reasonably thick walls. Assign DR and HP in case the players decide to carve a shortcut! Most dungeon walls are stone at least 6" thick.

Thickness	DR	HP
Six inches	78	75
One foot	156	94
Two feet	312	118
Three feet	468	135

These DR values only *look* big. Crushing and cutting attacks chip away one point of DR per point of *basic damage* until DR reaches 3. Then *Bashing* (p. 22) applies! Treat the wall as having DR 3 and the listed HP; reducing HP to 0 creates a person-sized hole.

Ups and Downs

In a multilevel dungeon, map each floor or level – and include stairs, ladders, ramps, shafts, magic lifts, and the like. Keying a particular way up or down with the same color or letter on each level lets you see at a glance where the heroes end up.

Area Labels

Number any area that will contain interesting features or encounters, so you have a way to refer to it in your notes.

Each set of “generic” areas (connecting tunnels, prison cells, etc.) can *share* a number and description. Numbering areas in the order delvers are most likely to reach them lets you consult your notes with minimal page-flipping as the party explores.

Legend

You'll need symbols that represent doors, *secret* doors, stairs, ladders, and so on. You'll find it easier to answer the players' questions if you box off these symbols and use the same ones in all your dungeons.

Area Information

Looking at your map, write down the area labels in numerical order and note anything interesting in each area as you go. Your notes should be *thorough* but needn't be *wordy*. A four-room dungeon can be hours of fun if it has lots going on, while 1,337 rooms with identical doors, no furniture, an orc apiece, and minimal loot is a recipe for boredom. “Interesting” is subjective, but the next few topics cover some classics.

Entrances

Doors, grates, portcullises, and similar barriers often block entry to areas.

Locks

Any such barrier may be *locked*; see *Picking Locks* (p. 23). Standard **Lockpicking** penalties range from +5 to -5. Legendary locks can give -10 or worse! The Magelock spell *can't* be picked – it requires **Counter-spell** or **Lockmaster**.

Doors

If lockpicking fails, nobody has suitable skills, or the delvers just want to break stuff, it's time for *Forcing* (p. 22) or *Bashing* (p. 22). Any lock or bar can be *forced*. Typical values are:

Construction	Lock/Hinge		Bar/Wedge	
	DR	HP	DR	HP
Light	3	6	1	14
Average	6	12	2	18
Heavy	9	18	4	23
X-Heavy	12	23	8	30
Vault	24	46	16	37

The door itself can be *bashed*. Use these numbers:

Construction	Wood		Ironbound		Iron	
	DR	HP	DR	HP	DR	HP
Light	1	23	5	27	12	36
Average	2	29	10	34	25	46
Heavy	3	33	15	39	50	58
X-Heavy	6	42	30	49	75	66
Vault	12	54	60	62	150	84

Metalwork

Gratings and grilles are subject to *Bashing* (p. 22) or *Bending* (p. 23). The HP below are *per bar* – defeating one bar lets a Skinny person pass, two lets most adventurers get by, and three admits Fat delvers. For *unlocked* portcullises, *Lifting and Shifting* (p. 22) is another option; weight appears for these, along with the minimum effective ST needed to pull off a two-handed lift without assistance or extra effort.

Construction	DR	HP	Weight	ST
Light	6	12	200 lbs.	12
Average	9	18	500 lbs.	18
Heavy	12	23	1,000 lbs.	25
X-Heavy	18	35	2,000 lbs.	36
Vault	24	46	3,000 lbs.	44

Inhabitants

Many areas should have monsters! Record their complete stats elsewhere for easy consultation whenever they show up. All you need to note in area information is the type and number of foes, any deviations from standard abilities and equipment, and perhaps some key stats (*especially* Hearing and Vision for sentries; see *Scouting Ahead*, pp. 19-20). For more details, see *Perilous Encounters* (pp. 85-86) – and of course **Monsters**.

Nasty Surprises

Traps and Hazards (pp. 23-24) touches on many unpleasant gimmicks that could lurk in a dungeon. A few *clever* dangers – hidden on entrances, in rooms, or on furnishings – are part of what makes a dungeon crawl fun! Avoid the temptation to put them *everywhere*, though. That will make the players paranoid, turning the game into a tense-but-tedious mine-clearing operation. Some specific notes:

Traps: Describe *unique* traps in the notes for the area that holds them. Many traps are “generic,” though, and show up repeatedly. Record stats for these separately. Area information merely needs to note the traps’ location, plus deviations from the standard versions.

Curses: Try to make these unique. Curses that show up often enough to get “generic” stats will seem *lame* – not weird and creepy! To describe a curse, specify its *resistance roll* (if any) and *effects*: damage (type and amount), or injury if it bypasses DR and comes directly off FP or HP; afflictions (pp. 65-66); or spell-like effects (anything harmful in **Spells** is inspiration for a curse). If the curse is due to an evil spirit, indicate its effective Will for would-be exorcists.

Evil Runes: These differ from curses primarily in that they’re uncommon but not rare, and mostly cause instantaneous effects similar to wizardly spells – usually Burning Touch, Deathtouch, Dehydrate, Frostbite, or Shocking Touch. Note the spell, effective level, any resistance roll, and damage.

Gunk: Gunk requires a *resistance roll* and *effects*, like a curse. Resistance is normally against **HT**, generally at a penalty; effects typically mirror acid, poison, or potions. Note

whether the gunk must touch skin or can leach through armor (similar to oozing doom; **Adventurers**, p. 116). Some glop rusts or rots gear! For that, make a HT roll for the equipment – again, possibly at a penalty. Delicate tools (like lockpicks) and articles with moving parts have HT 10; armor, weapons, and heavy tools (like poles) are HT 12. *Fine*-quality combat gear and *good*-quality tools get +1, *very fine*-quality weapons and *fine*-quality tools get +2, orichalcum gets +2, silver or dragonhide *usually* gets +1, and meteoric iron is immune to magical goo. Failure most often means the item is ruined.

Tricks: Even more so than curses, tricks should be remarkable. What makes a trick tricky is that it’s *unexpected*! For things like weird portals and shifting passages, indicate where the adventurers end up by keying the entrance(s) and exit(s) as you would for a staircase between levels.

See *Traps* (pp. 70-71) for a handy format for writing up not only traps per se, but almost anything above.

Obstacles

Some areas should include *obvious* quandaries that call for *Dungeon Parkour* (pp. 20-21) and *Bridging Hazards* (p. 22). These include interesting spots that are hard to reach, and self-evident dangers that can be avoided but not disarmed, destroyed, or resisted; e.g., acid pits. Note all of the following that apply:

- **Height** of a vertical challenge; e.g., drop to a lower area, distance from the floor to the top of a giant altar or to a small opening halfway up a wall, or depth of a pit.
- **Width** of a horizontal challenge: chasm, icy surface, lava pool, water, and so on.
- **Penalties** to rolls to defeat these challenges (“... *With Spikes*,” p. 6).
- **Consequences** for those who fail to negotiate the challenge. When crossing a high obstacle, this means *Falling* (pp. 67-68) – perhaps onto spikes, into *Acid* (p. 65), or even into lava (*Flame*, p. 68). (Lava is rather final, so use it sparingly!) When *Skidding* (p. 21) to traverse ice, this means falling down. When *Swimming* (p. 21) across water, it means drowning. And so on.

Special Features

An area might contain all manner of weird and wonderful stuff – most of it bad, some of it good, all of it entirely up to the GM. Old favorites include:

Altars: These might be cursed (*Curses 101*, pp. 23-24) or blessed (*Last Ditch*, pp. 90-91) – or raise effective sanctity for *evil* clerics in the area.

Enchanted Fountains: These affect people who drink from or bathe in them, or items dipped in them, causing corrosion (1d-1 corrosion damage for a dip, 3d HP of injury if swallowed), poisoning (note damage and the penalty to any HT roll to avoid it), potion effects, and more. A table of random effects – or *separate* tables for drinking, bathing, and dipping! – is more fun than a single, predictable effect.

BEYOND THE DUNGEON

True to title, *Dungeon Fantasy* focuses on subterranean escapades. Yet its rules work elsewhere – the combat system can handle a fight under open skies as easily as underground, and tomb-raiding feats are useful for housebreaking. This makes quests *outside* the dungeon possible, if the GM and players want!

Wilderness Adventures

Ignoring finicky details like ecology, the main differences between the Mines of Madness and the Bog of Badness are that the latter lacks doors and a roof, and features outdoors-themed rather than subterranean dangers. Both are still dismal, monster-infested, trap-riddled places that demand cautious exploration.

Outdoors, promote *There and Back Again* (pp. 17-18) from prelude to highlight, adding task difficulty modifiers (p. 6) for weather and terrain. On a mission to explore unknown territory, do the same for *Mapping* (p. 18) and *Scouting Ahead* (pp. 19-20). Play up the ordeals of *Travel* (p. 64) and *Temperature* (p. 70), and give the heroes cause for *Climbing* (p. 20) and *Swimming* (p. 21). When it comes to *Wandering Monsters* (p. 85), create different tables by region (lakeshores have water monsters, deserts don't). Use *Surprise Attacks* (pp. 26-27), *Bad Footing* (p. 35), *Elevation* (p. 43), and *Combat at Different Levels* (p. 47) whenever the lay of the land supports them. For rewards, replace treasure chests with *Dead Monster Bits* (p. 24) and *Naturally Occurring Money* (p. 25) – and if the quest-giver is paying for reconnaissance, don't forget about *Getting Paid* (p. 17).

Town Adventures

The GM can develop temples, guilds, the Town Watch, and the King's Men from impersonal forces – handled mostly by abstract dice rolls – to sources of adventure. Prowling alleys, breaking into buildings, and fighting gangs and evil conspirators differs little from sneaking down tunnels, bashing doors, and killing monsters!

In town, *Dungeon Parkour* (pp. 20-21) is useful for negotiating fences, rooftops, and fortifications – and

Picking Locks (p. 23) is more likely to arise than in caves. Genuine heroes will avoid slaughtering townsfolk, making *Influence Rolls* (p. 10), *Reaction Rolls* (pp. 11-12), and *Prisoners* (p. 25) important. When violence becomes inevitable, it will involve people more often than monsters, rendering *Unarmed Combat* (pp. 38-41), *Taunt and Bluster* (p. 58), and *Poison* (pp. 69-70) more effective and therefore more likely to see use. Afterward, *Healing Magic* (pp. 62-63) is as close as the nearest temple. *Scoring Extra Cash* (p. 14) might be possible during breaks in the action, while *Getting a Good Price* (pp. 15-16) is essential for moving stolen goods.

Other Planes of Existence

Visits to the “elemental planes,” the Astral Plane, Hell, and similar realms usually start when the heroes pass through a weird portal or accept a quest from shady clerics or wizards. They're like wilderness adventures, minus Nature. The focus is on travel and the environment, but these (and the monsters!) are *otherworldly*.

In alien dimensions, fluctuations in mana, Nature's strength, and sanctity are likely. After that, key rules depend on the realm! On the Elemental Plane of Fire, *Flame* (p. 68) and heat (*Temperature*, p. 70) are probable, and fire abilities might work at +1 to +5 while cold- and water-related ones have -1 to -5. On the Plane of Water, the balance between water and fire abilities will tilt the other way, and *Swimming* (p. 21) seems likely. But the GM shouldn't declare “You burn to death” or “You drown” – the adventurers ought to be transformed or given a temporary means of surviving.

This means the delvers might be projected – not physically transported! The GM could rule that visitors to the Astral Plane have spirit bodies: Will and IQ act like ST and DX, Basic Speed becomes IQ/2, and “psychic storms” inflict *Fright Checks* (pp. 10-11) and *Afflictions* (pp. 65-66). Material objects needn't come along for the ride; everybody might arrive naked and have to find new gear. Rewards might consist entirely of extra character points and remuneration paid by a quest-giver (*Getting Paid*, p. 17).

Mana: Areas with other-than-normal mana (*Spells*, pp. 7-8) are interesting *occasional* challenges. Don't fill a whole dungeon with no-mana areas just for kicks, though – that's boring for wizards and bards, and unfair to delvers with magical Signature Gear.

Natural Features: Ore veins (specify net yield in \$ and lbs.), weird fungus (glows, or poisons those who eat it, or *heals* those who eat it), and so on.

Sanctity: Areas can have different sanctity levels (*Spells*, p. 5), too, affecting clerics much as mana affects wizards. Use this *sparingly* – clerics are the only healers in most parties!

Statues: These may talk, posing riddles for the *players* to solve. Getting the answer right might open a door or even grant a wish. Or perhaps the statue seems mundane, but is a petrified NPC (be sure to offer a clue) who'll reward the party if freed with a **Stone to Flesh** spell. Treat *walking*, *attacking* statues as monsters!

Secret and Concealed Doors

Secret and concealed doors are de rigueur in a dungeon! Avoid the temptation to put them everywhere, though – testing every last 10' wall section while making an “ugh-ugh” noise was fun in 1990s video games, but it isn't at the gaming table.

As *Hidden Doors* (p. 19) notes, a *secret* door requires one roll to spot and another to operate, while a *concealed* door demands only a detection roll – but the searcher must be looking inside or behind the right scenery have any chance of success. Assign each such door a penalty to any rolls involved (typically from -1 to -10). Area information should also describe what hides a concealed door – and well-placed red herrings (a big cabinet here, a tapestry-lined hall there) make nice additions to *any* area.

Booty

An area or its inhabitants will often have swag. Provide details! This is such a huge topic that it gets its own chapter (pp. 72-79).

PERILOUS ENCOUNTERS

Killing monsters and taking their stuff ... that's *Dungeon Fantasy* in a nutshell! **Monsters** describes the creatures, but deciding where and when they appear – and in what numbers – is as important as dungeon layout when planning adventures.

Wandering Monsters

Wandering monsters are hostile things that traipse around looking for trouble. They might actively patrol an underground dungeon or piece of wilderness. They could even pop in from Hell without rhyme or reason!

If roving creatures are present in a dungeon level or outdoor region, determine how often they show up by assigning that area odds of an encounter on 3d:

6 or less – This suits “safe” roads.

9 or less – This is usual for *most* wilderness and dungeon.

12 or less, 15 or less – Save this for Hell, giant wasp hives, and similar monster-infested locales!

Modifiers: +1 to +3 if the party is moving in a manner that will attract attention (e.g., wheeling a cart or ballista through a dungeon); -1 to -3 for deliberate, *successful* attempts at caution (e.g., everybody makes **Stealth** rolls and uses **Infra-vision** instead of lights).

The GM is welcome to assign further situational modifiers. The GM must also set the *frequency* of such rolls. The following schedule is typical:

- Hourly when moving around indoors, searching for secret doors, and so on.
- Daily when traveling outdoors.
- Once per night when the party camps.

- Once whenever they stop to conduct a long task, like an exorcism.

- Once per attempt to bash or force a portal.

When a roll indicates an encounter, the GM decides what appears – and how quickly. Some areas have only one sort of monster. Others have many; if so, it's traditional to put together a random encounter table and let *it* determine the party's bad fortune! In either case, the number of monsters can be fixed or determined by the dice; e.g., “2d orcs.”

Set Encounters

Set encounters are run-ins with monsters the GM has deliberately placed in specific areas. These can still involve dice rolls! Area information that says something like “9 or less chance of 2d orcs” or “touching the altar summons a demon on 12 or less” gives a dungeon better replay value.

Balancing Encounters

Variations in player skill – or an unlikely roll when a fight starts – can make a weak fighter effective or a strong one useless. And combat involves *several* characters. Thus, matching encounters to the party is art, not science; there's no mathematical formula. Nothing helps a GM as much as experience, but here's a primer:

Offense: Except in the most trivial of encounters, at least one creature should be able to threaten the PC who has the *highest* DR. If basic damage that high would slaughter the delver with the *lowest* DR, consider alternatives – especially low-damage attacks that have armor divisors or ignore DR completely (like innate Deathtouch spells or poison gas). Against a party with high active defenses, sufficient skill to use *Deceptive Attack* (p. 38) can reduce these; *Area and Spreading Attacks* (pp. 45-46), many spells, and *Surprise Attacks* (pp. 26-27) enabled by *Stealth* can bypass them altogether. Most monsters can attack only once per turn. Those capable of multiple attacks get extra shots at bypassing active defenses, resistance, and DR, and therefore need slightly lower skill and/or damage to be dangerous.

Defense: Some monsters are *expendable* and easily squished. These aren't necessarily trivial; numbers and effective offense can let them chip away at the party before being exterminated. Others are *evasive*, and difficult to hit. This might be due to high Dodge, or it could be because of some innate spell-like defense that lets them blink aside or turn insubstantial momentarily with reasonable reliability (say, on a 15 or less – or even automatically, once or twice per turn). Yet others are *tough*, with enough DR to turn all but the heroes' biggest physical attacks, sufficient HP to soak up several solid hits, HP regeneration, and so on. An interesting option is Injury Reduction. This divides all wounds by 2, 3, or more after DR, the net effect being that strong warriors can't kill the creature in one blow, while weak ones can at least injure it somewhat.

Mobility: A creature that has Move 11-20 can step two hexes, one with Move 21-30 can step three hexes, and so forth, allowing it to approach, strike, and dart out of reach – very annoying! Flying monsters in wide-open spaces can avoid melee *completely* while breathing fire, dropping rocks, and so on; this forces delvers to resort to missile weapons (which usually aren't as nasty as melee attacks) or magic (at -1/yard, for Regular spells). Creatures capable of teleportation, melding with stone, and the like can make *every* attack a surprise, leaving the adventurers little option but to Wait and react. Only give out such abilities if the PCs have *some* way to defeat the monsters.

"And Stay Down!"

Fights can drag on when high-HT monsters never fail HT rolls. To avoid this, the GM can adjust the injury level that will defeat monsters in a given encounter. This is usually somewhere between a 1-HP tap and a major wound for *fodder*, or between 0 HP and -1xHP for *worthy* monsters. Monsters defeated this way may cower, play dead, flee, or surrender – or vanish, if ghostly or summoned! *Bosses* always fight to negative HP and attempt all their HT rolls.

Monsters come in three broad power levels, which modify the above assumptions:

Fodder appear in hordes that outnumber the party. They have weak attacks that are dangerous mainly because the threat of lucky dice (critical hit, maximum damage roll, winning a Quick Contest, etc.) increases when each PC faces *many* enemies every turn. Such creatures should still be

able to injure the PC with the lowest DR, though! There's no need for multiple attacks – a mob of fodder is essentially a distributed monster that has lots of attacks already. Fodder monsters don't require great defenses. They often enjoy exceptional mobility, though, nipping in and out like jackals or piranha, or swarming through the air like hornets.

Worthy monsters can challenge the heroes when the numerical odds are more-or-less equal. Most use the offense, defense, and mobility guidelines as written. Tradeoffs are possible, and can make the encounter interesting. The GM might bolster offense a bit at the expense of defense, or vice versa. It's still unwise to punch offense up to instant-death

levels, even for a critter with *no* defense (ultimately, the monsters' survival doesn't matter, while the PCs' does) – or to make defense near-perfect, even for an enemy that can't hurt the party (*Dungeon Fantasy* is about *killing* monsters!). Mobility enhances offense *and* defense somewhat – remember that when making other trades.

Boss monsters, like dragons, are meant to challenge the entire party all on their own. They can be superlative in every category! Any attack might be lethal, so the PCs can't just swarm in

with a hail of All-Out Attacks. Multiple attacks are likely, especially if the boss lacks fodder for backup. Such creatures are often evasive *and* tough – the heroes might have to discover a special vulnerability in order to win. Some serious foes like this lack mobility, and sit there trading blows, but that isn't universal. A boss might be a challenge *because* of mobility, moving all over the place so that only one PC can engage it at a time.

RUNNING THE GAME

Creating an adventure with monsters to fight and treasure to find is just the beginning of the GM's job! The *game* begins when the players assume the roles of their characters and start *doing stuff*. The GM has to listen to the players describe their actions, and then use the rules to tell them what happens, so they can describe what they want to do next . . . and so on.

This section aims to help the GM with all that. However, the most important things aren't "rules" at all, but guidelines for good GMing.

Don't lean on rules. No rules are perfect – including these! When a rule gives a silly result, *follow common sense instead*. Even if the rules seem fine, don't let them become crutches. When flipping pages or doing things "by the book" would bring the action to a halt, *just wing it*. And don't let the players hold up the action arguing about rules, either – they're

supposed to be playing brave adventurers, not lawyers. *Your* decision is final!

Be fair, especially when death is on the line. Give all the players an even chance. If you change a rule or make an exception, do so equally for everybody. And *always* give the heroes their opportunities to defend, to resist, to survive. Delvers may die despite it all, but your job is to *challenge the players* – not to kill their characters.

Keep the action moving! When things lag, it's *your* job to liven them up. Improvise something, if only an impromptu fight. Inspire the players and keep *everyone* involved!

PACING

One of the secrets to running a fun game is to keep things moving at the pace best suited to what the players want to be doing. This includes knowing when to pause!

Sessions

A **session** is a single meeting of the GM and players to play *Dungeon Fantasy*. It should go something like this:

(In)formalities. The session begins when the GM has the adventure notes ready, the players have their character sheets out, and the small talk has died down. Ensuring that this goes smoothly is the first secret to pacing!

Bookkeeping. Tackle this quickly to avoid derailing the game with accounting. Except at the start of the group's first session, resolve *Spending Bonus Character Points* (pp. 92-93) – and if the adventurers have just returned to town, let them settle up with their backer (*Finding a Sponsor*, pp. 14-15), collect rewards (*Getting Paid*, p. 17), sell loot (*Getting a Good Price*, pp. 15-16), and so on. Delvers in town may want to shop for gear or try *Scoring Extra Cash* (p. 14), too.

Scene-setting. If starting a new game, introduce the PCs – maybe they encounter each other in a tavern or are assembled by a quest-giver. If starting a new adventure, brief the players on it. Details will depend on how *Finding a Quest* (p. 14) and *Tavern Tales and Moldy Books* (p. 15) work out – and the group may want to find a new sponsor or shop for mission-specific items. If resuming a quest in progress, refresh the players' memory!

Action! When all that's going on is travel, camping, or lengthy tasks, use checks for *Wandering Monsters* (p. 85) to mark time. If monsters turn up, game out the fights! Once enough hours or days have passed to complete the job at hand, make any rolls it requires.

When the delvers are actively exploring, be patient. Let them scout, search for hidden doors, map, etc. Don't rush them – *especially* if there are secrets to find! Still, don't let things get tedious or boring. If there's nothing to find, roll dice in secret, tell the players they missed nothing, and skip to the next *interesting* area, locked door, or set encounter.

Fighting is always worth gaming out! Half of each session, maybe more, should be combat. This might mean just one fight for players new to *Dungeon Fantasy*, or when there are *lots* of combatants – or a dozen crisp clashes for experienced gamers crushing fodder. Whenever the players seem restless, it's time for rousing violence (or a trap).

Closing ceremonies. End the session with *Awarding Bonus Character Points* (p. 92). Put away adventure notes and character sheets. Plan the *next* session with the players.

Adventures

An **adventure** is a quest – usually a dungeon delve, but occasionally town troubles, a rough-country romp, or an extradimensional escapade. Its phases are:

1. *In Town* (pp. 13-17) tasks to prepare: find a quest, find a sponsor, buy gear, and so on.
2. *There and Back Again* (pp. 17-18) tasks to reach the dungeon.
3. *In the Dungeon* (pp. 18-25) tasks and *Fighting* (Chapter 3). These make up the majority of any adventure!

4. *There and Back Again* tasks to get home – slowly, if injured or laden with treasure.

5. *In Town* tasks – and possibly *Healing Magic* (pp. 62-63), *Training Expenses* (p. 93), and recharging power items – to dispose of loot.

These tasks typically fill several sessions – especially if there's lots of fighting. That's fine! Just follow the guidelines for pacing a session for each one.

It's important to have a beginning, a middle, and an end, but the pattern is negotiable. Exploring the sewers under town might make the sequence 1-3-5. Finding a dungeon on the trip back from another dungeon would be 1-2-3-2-3-4-5. Repeatedly raiding the same huge dungeon would look like 1-2-3-4-5-2-3-4-5-...

Speaking from Experience

*Missions are never “no strings attached.” You get them from someone; you report in afterward to get paid. Do jobs for enough people in enough places and you will learn about the world and its patterns. Be circumspect, though, or you will create rivals who know everything about **you** and **your** patterns!*

– Jag Fairchild, Bard

Campaigns

A series of adventures like those above is a **campaign**. The adventures don't *have* to be related. What matters is that the same group of heroes is involved – although players may join, leave, replace dead PCs, or try new characters.

Still, adventures strung together into “arcs” provide good flow and continuity. Maybe the first dungeon contains a map to the second, which holds an artifact that leads worried clerics in town to give the delvers a third quest. Perhaps several dungeons are clustered so closely that it makes sense to visit them all in a single trip. Arcs may be punctuated with interludes – town adventures and short “side-quests” unrelated to the big picture, visits to strange monasteries to learn unusual skills, etc.

Chances to pause in town to heal, train, and reequip should follow most adventures and *all* lengthy arcs. “Town” needn't be the same destination each time, however. The heroes might end up somewhere different from where they set out, or travel uneventfully between adventures, embarking on each quest or series of quests from a new town with different shops, goods, and prices. Traditionally, more experienced delvers visit bigger, stranger places – from towns, through cities, to foreign ports. Larger settlements offer more quests and greater opportunities for urban adventure.

Once you have multiple towns and dungeons, strange monasteries, and foreign lands, you're building a *world*. That's inevitable for a campaign! An experienced GM may *plan* a campaign – mapping the locations of towns and dungeons, coming up with names for the King and guild leaders, and so on – before creating a single dungeon.

GAME TIME

Game time is the time that passes *in the world where the adventurers live*. It rarely passes at the same rate as real-world time!

Time During Adventures

Combat is played in “slow” time. One turn equals one second, but resolving it can take *minutes* of real-world time – especially with inexperienced players. In a life-or-death situation, it’s only fair to give the players time to think!

When somebody wants to stay put for a while between encounters – say, to set traps, count coins, identify items, exorcise a curse, or rest (a night in camp takes eight hours) – sufficient game time passes for the *lengthiest* item on the group’s agenda. *Everybody* has that much time to do things. The real-world time that passes is however long it takes to handle the necessary discussions, rolls, and bookkeeping. Each such pause is grounds for a *Wandering Monsters* (p. 85) check.

When the heroes are exploring the dungeon, assume that the real-world time needed to settle that – for talking, dice-rolling, and so on – is also the game time taken. For long walks, use hours equal to half the distance in miles, if greater. For example, if scouting, mapping, and searching for hidden doors generate 10 minutes of discussion and rolling, 10 minutes pass in the game world . . . but in a mile-long passage, it’s 30 minutes, because carefully covering that much ground takes a while. Usually, each hour means one check for wandering monsters.

In all noncombat situations, game time that passes *also* counts for continuing fatigue or injury (e.g., due to poison), durations (of potions, spells, light sources, etc.), and so on. The status of these ongoing effects can matter if combat starts. If exploration or a wandering monster *does* trigger a fight, switch to slow time!

For travel, roll as needed for the trip – including (typically daily) checks for wandering monsters. Fights that arise happen in slow time. Work out the game time that passes for the journey using *Getting There Quickly* (p. 17). The real-world time is however long it takes to game all this out, but typically *much* less!

Time Between Sessions

The game is “paused” between sessions. However much real-world time goes by, no *game* time passes!

Time Between Adventures

Between adventures, game time passes by the week. Each week costs everyone \$150 for food and lodging, and the time can be used for *Scoring Extra Cash* (p. 14) and *Finding a Quest* (p. 14). The GM may require certain numbers of weeks to learn unusual skills or have custom gear made – or for safe travel (“Four weeks pass as you sail to the Land Across the Sea.”). As always, the real-world time needed is the time taken to resolve everything with words and dice.

MAKING EVERYBODY USEFUL

A fun game involves *everybody*. *Dungeon Fantasy* strives for this by ensuring that members of every profession can contribute to a fight, so that nobody has to sit out long stretches of combat time . . . and by building unique strong points into each template, so that diverse challenges draw attention to different specialists, giving each player a turn in the spotlight.

Ultimately, it’s the GM’s job to contrive events so that each PC has roughly the same number of chances to shine on every adventure. Here are some suggestions:

Barbarian: Fighting, obviously! *Outside* combat, high ST is useful for bending bars, lifting portcullises, giving a leg up, and otherwise assisting thieves. A barbarian is more than muscles, though – outdoor skills are also important, so play up time spent traveling. Fitting rewards are weapons too heavy for others to wield and armor too massive for lesser warriors to move in.

Bard: Don’t rush through business in town before and after dungeon crawls – these activities showcase the bard’s social abilities. Make sure some monsters are susceptible to taunts and trickery, or are willing to negotiate. Surprise the party with the occasional artistic turn; e.g., a command performance for the Faerie Queen. Include ornate and magical instruments in hoards.

Cleric: Healing is always in demand, so spotlighting the cleric requires little effort. Yet it’s no fun to be nothing but a walking, talking healing potion! Toss in cursed items and areas to identify and exorcise, undead to repel, and the occasional disaster that calls for an organized prayer for help. Blessed items and ornate holy symbols shouldn’t be too rare.

Druid: To compensate for weakened abilities underground, set part of each adventure outdoors. Don’t make *every* monster a demon, Elder Thing, or similar horror – include hostile animals and plants. Play up desperate poison cures, the mysterious properties of slimes, and so on. Most druids aren’t materialistic, so an interesting *pet* may be the best “treasure.”

Holy Warrior: Ensure that Higher Purpose and detailed knowledge of monsters and their weaknesses come into play – these abilities differentiate the holy warrior from the knight and cleric. As with the cleric, curses offer worthy tests. A common quest item for such champions is the “holy sword”: a blessed weapon that *only* fighters with Holiness can wield.

Knight: Given the importance of combat, the knight is rarely far from the spotlight. The trick is making such a warrior useful *without* sword in hand.

Try to play up skill at Leadership and Tactics – let the knight verbally assist the thief trapped in combat across a chasm, or lead some spear-carrying NPCs. Mighty weapons and armor make the best prizes.

Martial Artist: Few challenges put a greater premium on DX and athletic skills than obstacles that demand mighty leaps and deft steps. This gets boring by itself, so mix in *weird* stuff that draws on chi instead of mana, Nature's strength, or sanctity. Reward the martial artist with powerful exotic weapons nobody else has mastered – or enhanced gauntlets and boots, if an unarmed fighter.

Scout: Like the barbarian and druid, this delver lives for outdoor action, so don't omit travel and tracking. Be careful not to cripple the scout's archery skills by staging every battle in dark, close tunnels with no clear shot. Also include archery-related *noncombat* challenges, like shooting lines across chasms. Favored treasures are ever-better bows and arrows.

Swashbuckler: The swashbuckler is easily entertained, rivaling the knight in combat and the martial artist at athletics, and boasting Luck enough to take fun risks. This profession attracts fans of dash and flair, so handle crazy stunts with "Sure! Roll at -10!" instead of "No." Include this warrior's blade of choice – or ways to improve an *existing* blade – in the spoils.

Thief: The party won't get far without the thief. With all the locks, traps, and scouting missions in *Dungeon Fantasy*, the biggest theft might be of the spotlight – at least out of combat. If the player gets bored, challenge a rarely used skill (e.g., Forgery). Welcome finds include better tools and small-but-valuable items to palm (out of sight the others!).

Wizard: The wizard is indispensable. Spotting magic items, countering hostile magic, identifying books and potions, defeating enemies with a glance . . . and there's a spell for everything, preventing easy boredom. Better equipment is the key to keeping the player happy: books of lost spells, ornate artifacts for power items, and so on.

KEEPING THE HEROES ALIVE

It's no fun having your character killed! Resurrection is a solution, but an *expensive* one (*Healing Magic*, pp. 62-63) – and the unfortunate player misses out on the action until the other PCs schlep the body to town.

Yet *Dungeon Fantasy* is ultimately about the rousing sound of tunnels collapsing, the bracing smell of suffocating gas, and the salt spray of (your friends') blood. Adventures that lack serious risks also lack thrills – they're rarely much fun for *anyone*.



The GM must walk a fine line between a cakewalk and a wholesale massacre. There are several techniques that can help here:

Intelligent scenario design. Don't put traps in every corridor and monsters in every room. Even traps that can't harm the dungeon's denizens must be reset if triggered – and lich-lords have better things to do than reapply contact poison whenever stupid zombies rub it off. Voracious beasts can't be too numerous or they'd starve; territorial creatures need space. If the place *must* be wall-to-wall death, have quest-givers offer helpful clues or items. A dungeon should give the delvers a fair chance – perhaps a better-than-fair chance, since they *are* the heroes.

Safety-net rules. Part of offering a fair chance is not denying the benefits of abilities, rules, and gear that can keep the heroes alive. Roll to see if the delvers detect traps and would-be ambushes (remember **Danger Sense!**). Permit active defenses against all but surprise attacks – and resistance rolls against disease, poison, and spells. Remind players of advantages like **Luck**. Keep *unavoidable* death gazes and withering touches that *bypass armor* rare.

Sensible threats. Monsters need only be impossible for *ordinary* folks to defeat; traps and poisons should be unavoidably lethal to victims of *average* Will and HT. That's why townsfolk award quests to heroes who are neither ordinary nor average! The PCs should be able to prevail with a mix of brute force, brains, and luck. Take a good look at what the delvers can do and withstand before putting death in their path. As their abilities and gear improve, so can the challenges. If overpowering the adventurers is part of the plan, make sure the monsters have uses for defeated foes . . .

Realistic monster behavior. Give monsters reasons to take defeated or outclassed PCs prisoner rather than kill them outright. Scheming bosses will exploit slave labor, and try to ransom heroes who are on quests for the wealthy. Evil beings always need sacrifices for rituals a few days down the road. Even dumb beasts may “skin” victims of equipment and stash them in a web or crevice as surplus food. Capture and escape (and reclaiming lost gear!) are staples of adventure fiction.

Last Ditch

To keep the game fun when things go wrong due to bad rolls more than bad planning, the GM may want to grant hints or assistance.

Seeking Guidance: If the players are merely at a loss for what to do next, they may roll against **Meditation** to seek enlightenment (popular with martial artists) or **Theology** to decide “What would my deity do?” Success means the GM gives a *small* hint – nothing as clear as magical divination,

just a cryptically worded shove in the right direction. This has the benefit of making contemplative PCs actually *seem* contemplative.

Praying: “There are no atheists in dungeons.” Adventurers who *really* need help can pray! Roll vs. the highest of **IQ**, **Meditation**, or **Theology**, at a base -10, +1 per unspent character point permanently sacrificed, +1 per **Holiness** or **Power Investiture** level, and -3 for anybody with **Social Stigma (Excommunicated)**. Success means a fortuitous coincidence saves the supplicant; e.g., the hero’s pack snags, stopping a fall. Critical success means a miracle; e.g., teleportation to safety by the delver’s god. (Gamers familiar with the computerized adventures of @ will find this comforting.)

Altars and Shrines: Dungeons often contain ready-made altars and shrines – just not ones holy to friendly gods. Someone with **Clerical Investment** and an hour to spare can make a **Religious Ritual** roll to sanctify such a site (if it isn’t actually *cursed*). Success makes it holy; only critical failure angers the incumbent god enough to blast someone.

PLAYING THE NPCs

Non-player characters (NPCs) are all characters played by the GM: quest-givers in town, bandits on the road, and yes – monsters!

Rules like *Finding a Sponsor* (pp. 14-15) and *Getting a Good Price* (pp. 15-16) cover interactions with townsfolk, but it’s fun to *roleplay* important transactions before rolling dice! The GM can reward amusing or clever player dialog with +1 or +2 to the rolls involved. To inspire this, the GM should supply major NPCs with voices and personalities. Don’t bother with character sheets – the professional abilities of merchants, cloistered priests, and town drunks aren’t *adventuring*-related and don’t appear in *Adventurers*.

Monsters use **Monsters** stats – those *are* character sheets. There’s no need for character points . . . many monster abilities would have *no* fair point value in an adventurer’s hands! If a monster is willing to negotiate, it also needs a voice and personality. Examine the creature’s traits for inspiration; disadvantages in particular often hint at attitudes.

Gang members in town, bandits on the road, rival adventurers, and so on fall in between. They *need* only monster-style details, but the GM may create them as characters using *Adventurers*, with however many points seems appropriate. *How they act* should be consistent with their stats. It’s mostly obvious who’s nice and who’s scum – and when it isn’t, put Acting or Fast-Talk on the skill list.

Most monsters automatically despise delvers, while some people are naturally friendly; these reactions are predetermined. When PCs meet NPCs *without* such biases,

consult *Influence Rolls* (p. 10) or *Reaction Rolls* (pp. 11-12) and game out the results.

Hirelings

Shorthanded delvers may hire *minor* NPCs. The GM creates such characters, spending 1/4 or 1/2 of a new PC’s character points (62 or 125 points) on a collection of abilities suited to the job: spear-carrier, archer, etc.

Now Hiring! Once per week in town, one PC can roll to find a suitably skilled hireling. Use the *highest* of **IQ**, **Merchant**, or **Propaganda**. Success finds such a person; failure doesn’t. Critical failure finds a crook who will abscond with valuables at the first opportunity!

Loyalty: Make a reaction roll for a new hireling, applying the reaction modifiers of the individual who made the hiring roll. Record the result as **Loyalty**. The GM will make a success roll against Loyalty whenever the hireling is ordered to face *exceptional* danger (even for a dungeon; e.g., “Be the first into this dark room.”), or *any* danger alone – at up to -5 for *obvious* danger. Failure means the hireling refuses and Loyalty drops by one; the delvers can accept this or terminate their servant. Long-term, Loyalty rises by one per quest survived (and by one extra if resurrounded at the PCs’ expense!).

Payment: A 62-point hireling costs \$200/week; a 125-point one, \$400/week. Missing a week’s pay means the hireling quits. Delvers must reimburse hirelings for consumables (arrows, provisions, torches, etc.) expended and gear lost on quests. Hirelings cover their own living arrangements in town; don’t pay *another* \$150/week.

With a proper shrine, the cleric can then lead the party in a prayer for aid. Roll against **Religious Ritual** at -10, plus **Holiness** or **Power Investiture**, plus the total of all points sacrificed by everyone. Success and critical success work as above, but benefit the *entire group* – perhaps another party of delvers with the same quest reinforces and heals them, or a powerful monster offers an alliance against a *worst* monster!

Pass the Plate: When a god answers delvers' prayers, anyone who benefits is advised to donate \$1,000+ to the temple when next in town. Otherwise, the helpline will be busy next time . . .

God Does Not Play Dice: As GM, *you* are an omniscient and omnipotent deity where the PCs are concerned. If repeated bad luck has deprived the players of hope despite their best efforts, you don't have to wait for prayers – you can cheat to fix things. Roll the dice in secret and then lie about the roll. "It worked! You finally got the door open. You rush through and slam it behind you. The orcs cannot follow." Instead of character points sacrificed up front or cash paid later, a fair cost is fewer points for any session during which this happens; see *Awarding Bonus Character Points* (p. 92).

When checking for aid, failure shouldn't make matters worse. If things are so bad that brave adventurers are begging, it isn't funny to have The Devil show up and curse them, too.

However, if the players *insist* on getting their characters killed through carelessness or stupidity, too bad. You can't rescue them *every* time – that's no fun, either!

SETTLING RULES QUESTIONS

In any question of rules, the GM's word is *law*. A good GM will discuss important questions with the players before deciding; a good player will accept the GM's decisions. Building this atmosphere of trust is easiest when the GM knows the rules thoroughly and respects them . . . but rules can't cover every situation. When they don't, the GM can use several techniques:

Success rolls. Use a success roll (pp. 5-7) against an appropriate attribute or skill when a question arises about a given character's ability to do a particular thing.

Random rolls. For questions about unplanned details – e.g., "Does the bandit's armor fit me?" or "How long has the orc's torch been burning?" – random rolls are customary. The GM

sets the odds ("On 1 or 2 on 1d, it fits" or "1d×10 minutes") and leaves the rest to fate.

Fiat. You don't have to use the dice at all. If only one possibility would keep things fun for everyone, *that's the answer*. "Luckily for you, the wizard's Explosive Fireball didn't incinerate the ancient scroll you came to fetch!"

DEALING WITH THE PLAYERS

Players are *individuals*, with opinions and biases. There will be times when the GM needs to keep the peace. Here's some advice for doing just that.

Arguments

As the GM, *always* listen to reasonable suggestions from the players – and if you make a mistake, be willing to reverse your decision. But *you* are the final authority and the court of last resort. If you make a decision you think is fair, and someone insists on arguing . . . let that gamer find another game. Games are fun. Arguments aren't.

"I changed my mind!"

Certain players will try to "take back" actions that lead to bad consequences. Don't let them do it unless they could *realistically* have changed their minds in time to avoid the trouble.

If Leif says, "I dive into the dark doorway and roll to my feet!", and you roll the dice and tell him, "You fell down the stairs for 8 points of crushing damage," Leif can't take it back. But if Leif says, "I bash the door," and then changes his mind – let him. "Okay. After a couple of whacks, you stop." A tough door takes a while to batter down, so Leif had time to reconsider. (Of course, wandering monsters might still show up!)

In general, if a player announces an *irrevocable* act, the deed is done and that's that.

Table Talk

If your players are too noisy, tell them, "If you say it, your character says it." This means the *characters* cannot be stealthy unless the *players* are quiet, and the *characters* cannot make speedy decisions unless the *players* decide quickly. Enforcing this rule can save the GM's sanity.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

In a *Dungeon Fantasy* game, the heroes constantly grow in ability. *Players* often see this as the goal of delving – even if their *characters* quest for riches and magic items.

Managing such growth is essential for fun times! Too fast, and the PCs will become demigods the GM cannot challenge without extreme dangers, leaving the game teetering on a

knife-edge between "cakewalk" and "total party kill" – and when the delvers never lose or can't win, the players (and GM!) will get bored. Too slow, and there will be no incentive to keep playing – again, people will get bored.

Like so much else, this is a balancing act for the GM.

AWARDING BONUS CHARACTER POINTS

At the end of each session, the GM should award **bonus character points** (which seasoned fans of RPGs call **experience points**): a reward for good play. Actions that advance the heroes' quest always qualify as "good play." *Good role-playing* counts, too – especially making choices compatible with a PC's profession and disadvantages, and speaking in character instead of just saying, "My guy does this."

The GM is free to award any number of points; between 0 and 5 points per session is reasonable. The GM may also give out extra points, perhaps equal to those for a session, upon an adventure's conclusion. The two are cumulative – any award for completing a mission would accompany that for the quest's final session.

The GM may prefer to formalize these awards – a tradition in "old school" dungeon-crawl games! Here's just one possible approach.

Session Awards

Add up everything as the session progresses and award the total (minimum 0) at session's end.

Battles

A battle *lost* or *fled* gives 0 points. A battle *won* gives each hero an award based the monsters' toughness:

Fodder, clearly weaker than PCs: 0 points

Worthy monsters, about equal to PCs: 1 point

Boss monster, clearly more powerful than PCs: 2 points

Modify this as follows (minimum total award is 0):

Hordes of monsters (lots of fodder, boss and fodder, etc.): +1 point

Party members killed: -1 point/death

Feats

Overcoming noncombat challenges may give everyone a reward:

Defeating important traps and obstacles in a clever way that surprises GM (never just "I roll vs. Traps."): 1 point

Exorcising cursed area without any PC getting cursed: 1 point (not just for the cleric – the others must stand guard!)

Finding and entering secret area GM has designated a "bonus area": 1 point

Finding and extracting item GM has designated a "quest item": 1 point

*Negotiation or trickery that successfully avoids a **deadly** foe (e.g., *The Devil*):* 1 point

Quest advanced only because GM cheated: -1 point

Adventure Awards

At adventure's end, everyone gets 5 points if the party returns to town with enough loot to pay off any sponsor, rest

for a week (\$150 apiece), and recharge *all* power items completely (see *Power Items*, **Adventurers**, p. 115). Adjust this as follows (minimum 0):

Cleared dungeon (killed every non-random monster): +1 point
Dead PCs: -1 point/death

Insufficient loot to meet above needs: -1 point

Left dungeon less than half explored: -2 points

Needed divine intervention: -1 point

Recovered "quest item" requested by sponsor: +1 point

Speaking from Experience

No adventurer ever survived to old age by **not** learning from experience. The most important lesson is "Do not rush through life." Certainly, the whirlwind of battle can be a great teacher – try me at quarterstaves sometime! – but take care not to overlook everything else adventures have to offer: exploration and travel for their own sake, puzzles to solve, rivals to outwit as well as outfight, secrets to unearth, and fabled artifacts to recover. Set aside time afterward to collect your thoughts, to contemplate what went well and what you could have done better, to remember fallen allies. Most important, let these things guide your growth! If you realize you were not as sharp as you believed in some capacity – or were caught wholly unprepared – take that as a sign that you should put in some practice and seek the counsel of whatever mentors, masters, and writings opportunity places in your path.

– Uncle Seamus, Wizard

SPENDING BONUS CHARACTER POINTS

Players may spend bonus character points at the start of a game session, or save them indefinitely to afford big-ticket abilities or be ready to profit from *Exceptional Training* (p. 93). The following rules apply when spending points:

- To improve an *existing* trait that comes in levels, pay points equal to the *difference* in cost between the new and old levels.
- To add a *new* trait with a *positive* point cost, pay points equal to the trait's point cost.
- To remove an *existing* trait with a *negative* point cost, pay positive points equal to the trait's negative point cost.

In *all* cases, increase the character's point total by the number of points spent.

Adding and Improving Abilities

Anybody can improve traits already on their character sheet. Completely *new* abilities must come from the hero's professional template, though the GM may make exceptions;

see *Exceptional Training* (below) and *Traits Gained in Play* (p. 94). In general:

Attributes and Secondary Characteristics: Anyone can raise these, subject to certain limits. Maximum ST, DX, IQ, HT, Will, or Per is 20; HP or FP can be at most 1/3 higher than ST or HT, respectively; Basic Speed can't exceed its figured value +2; and Basic Move can be at most +3 over its figured value. Yes, a wizard *could* bulk up to ST 20 – but a barbarian would find that more useful!

Advantages: Heroes can add advantages (including special powers) only from their professional templates. Traits that come in levels can be raised to the maximum level indicated on the template – or barring that, to whatever limit the GM sets.

Skills and Spells: Delvers can improve regular skills, special skills, and spells they know – and buy new ones on their templates – as desired.

Exceptional Abilities

Each profession is allowed to surpass general limits – or even go beyond what its template suggests – in a few areas. Exceptional levels of a trait have the usual cost per level.

Barbarians: Up to ST 25, and HP up to 1.5×ST (round up).

Bards: Any amount of Charisma and Wild Talent; new Bard-Song abilities; and more wizardly spells.

Clerics: Up to Will 25, Energy Reserve 20 (Holy), and Healer 6; Luck up to Ridiculous Luck; new Holy abilities; and more clerical spells.

Druids: FP up to 1.5×HT (round up); up to Energy Reserve 20 (Druidic); new Druidic abilities; and more druidic spells.

Holy Warriors: Up to Will 25; Luck up to Ridiculous Luck; and new Holy abilities.

Knights: HP up to 1.5×ST (round up). Can add or improve melee weapon skills whenever they have enough points – even mid-battle!

Martial Artists: Up to Chi Talent 6, Enhanced Dodge 3, and Extra Attack 2; any amount of Wild Talent; and new Chi abilities.

Scouts: Basic Move up to +6 over its figured value; up to Per 25; and any amount of Multi-Aim.

Swashbucklers: Basic Speed up to +4.00 over its figured value. Can buy the martial artist's Blind Fighting, Kiai, and Power Blow skills *without* needing Chi Mastery!

Thieves: Up to DX 25 and Enhanced Dodge 3 – and Luck up to Ridiculous Luck.

Wizards: Up to IQ 25 and Energy Reserve 20 (Magical); any amount of Improved Magic Resistance and Wild Magic; and more wizardly spells.

Exceptional Training

As part of an adventure, the GM may decree that something like being trained by a legendary master, reading an ancient tome of wisdom, or visiting a remote monastery offers heroes the

opportunity to acquire an ability that's normally off-limits. This costs the usual number of points. If teaching is involved, it traditionally takes weeks – and *Training Expenses* (below) might apply even if the GM otherwise ignores that optional rule. Barring *Supernatural Modifications* (p. 94), this may be the only way for delvers to gain traits from professional templates other than their own!

Buying Off Disadvantages

If a character *starts* with a disadvantage the player finds annoying, it's possible to get rid of it. "Buying off" a disadvantage costs positive character points equal to its negative point cost; e.g., 5 points to erase a -5-point problem.

For a *mental* or *social* disadvantage, that's it! The hero outgrows a psychological flaw or society forgets a social one (fantasy civilizations have shoddy record-keeping . . .).

A *physical* disadvantage – from hideous looks to a missing body part – isn't escaped so easily. To buy one off, the delver must pay not only points but also cash for magical assistance; \$100 per -1 point is standard, but the GM can set any cost.

There's a similar cash outlay to shed mental or social problems that are *supernatural* in origin. For instance, Social Stigma (Excommunicated) [-10] is a social punishment enforced by the gods – eliminating it requires a \$1,000 donation to a temple, not just 10 points!

OPTIONAL RULE: TRAINING EXPENSES

If the GM likes, adventurers who want to spend points on *new* abilities (not just improved ones) need training by their guild, mentor, or school, and must pay tuition, bribe Secret Masters, buy spellbooks, and so on. This helps explain why delvers go a-looting!

Improving an attribute or secondary characteristic – or an existing trait *already* acquired from one's professional template – has no cash cost.

Adding a totally new advantage, power, skill, or spell from one's professional template costs \$40 per point. That applies to the *first point* in a new skill or spell (so \$40), but to the *whole cost* of the minimum level of anything else (e.g., Extra Attack, which costs 25 points/level, requires \$1,000). After the trait is gained, adventuring experience is enough to improve it.

Adding anything *off* one's template costs at least \$80 per point . . . if the GM even allows it. ("Trained by a Master? Sure! That's 30 points and \$2,400. Ka-ching!") This is always *Exceptional Training* (above), though not all exceptional training costs cash – if the heroes complete a difficult quest to find a reclusive master, she might teach them for free.

Buying Off Disadvantages (above) costs money, too, if the problem is physical or supernatural. Those costs pertain even when the GM doesn't enforce training expenses!

TRAITS GAINED IN PLAY

The GM may rule that an adventurer *suddenly* acquires a new trait as a consequence of in-game events like social interaction, combat, or divine intervention. Such character development isn't directly related to bonus points.

Alternative Rewards

Not every personal improvement *characters* earn needs to take the form of points for *players* to spend – the GM may give out *abilities*.

This is usually a quest reward that *replaces* end-of-adventure bonus points. The GM should state up front what the heroes are getting into, on behalf of whom, and for what

potential gains. For example, the Wizards' Guild might reward adventurers who recover the Necronomicon by granting wizards 5 points in "forbidden" spells and everybody else a rare potion that permanently bestows a 5-point advantage.

One-note game sessions can likewise pay off in abilities. A session of cross-country slogging might yield a few points in outdoorsy skills instead of end-of-session bonus points. This is a great way to add essential skills to the party!

A player whose character acquires traits this way simply writes them on the character sheet and increases the PC's point total by their value. Unlike *Adding and Improving Abilities* (pp. 92-93), there's no cost in bonus points.

Players who dislike such a reward may take *half* its value (round down) in generic character points instead.

Disadvantages Acquired in Play

When a delver acquires a disadvantage out of the blue, just write it on the character sheet and lower the character's point total accordingly. This includes things like body parts lost in combat and permanent divine curses.

Unlike starting disadvantages, these problems *don't* give back extra points to spend. Starting with Social Stigma (Excommunicated) [-10] or One Eye [-15] generates 10 or 15 points to spend – but being cursed for temple robbery or losing an eye in battle simply lowers your point total by 10 or 15 points.

You can "buy off" a disadvantage acquired in play as usual.

Supernatural Modifications

Divine will, wishes, and so on can produce permanent transformations of *any* kind – for good or for ill. Such things instantly add traits, adjusting the character's point total to match.

Details depend on the source of the change. A divine boon is simply added without consultation – if the gods grant you *Magery*, you have no say in the matter! A wish granted as a quest reward might let the *player* choose *any* single trait worth up to 10 points. Where such a benefit can be refused or left unused, it's lost – there's no compensatory award of bonus points.



TABLES

MELEE ATTACK MODIFIERS

When attacking in melee combat, figure *effective skill* by:

1. Starting with your base skill with your melee weapon or unarmed attack.
2. Applying target's Size Modifier (SM), unless attacking a weapon.
3. Applying all relevant conditional modifiers below. Modifiers are cumulative. If *any* modifier marked with an asterisk (*) applies, adjusted skill after all modifiers cannot exceed 9.

A roll of this number, or less, is a hit.

Attacker's Maneuver

All-Out Attack (Determined): +4

Move and Attack: -4*

Attacker's Posture

Crawling or lying down: -4 (if crawling, can only make reach "C" attacks)

Crouching, kneeling, or sitting: -2

Attacker's Situation

Affliction: see *Afflictions* (pp. 65-66)

Bad footing: -2 or worse (GM's option)

Grappled: -4

Holding large shield: -2

Major distraction (e.g., all clothes on fire): -3 or worse (GM's option)

Minor distraction (e.g., part of clothes on fire): -2

Shock: -HP of injury received last turn (maximum -4)

ST below that required for weapon: -1 per point of deficit

Successful Tactics roll by friend: +1, or +2 on critical success; see "*Onward to Victory!*" (p. 57)

Wearing shield in close combat: -DB of shield

Other Actions by Attacker

Attacking from above: -2

Attacking through unfriendly hex: -4

Backstabbing: +4 to first attack; see *Backstabbing* (pp. 57-58)

Deceptive Attack: -2 per -1 penalty to foe's defense

Dual-Weapon Attack: -4/-8 with primary/off hand (-4/-4 w. Ambidexterity)

Kicking: -2

Off-hand attack: -4 (no penalty w. Ambidexterity)

Rapid Strike: -6 on both attacks (-3 w. Trained by a Master or Weapon Master)

Striking into close combat: -2

Using improvised weapon: -1 to -3 (GM's option)

Wild Swing: -5* or visibility penalty, whichever is worse

Speaking from Experience

*Too good? Never too good at fighting! Any furlless can chop melons to show off. (Hmm, actually kind of fun.) But in **real** fight, melon is monster head, moving around to get out of way, an' you have to chop it with wrong hand while wading in dark swamp with tentacles pulling on leg an' eels biting toes. Good enough to do that is whole other thing.*

– Miao Miao, Swashbuckler

Target (choose one)

In addition, a foe using Acrobatic Guard (*Speed Is Armor!*, p. 58) is attacked at a penalty equal to margin of victory.

Hit location: 0 for torso, -2 for arm or leg, -3 for groin, -4 for hand or foot, -5 for face or neck, -7 for skull; double penalty for shield arm or hand; *impaling* and *piercing* attacks can target vitals at -3, eyes at -9

Hit location, chink in armor (*impaling* and *piercing* attacks only): -8 for torso, -10 elsewhere

Hit location, grappling: 0 for torso, -1 for arm or leg, -2 for hand or foot, -3 for neck or head, -4 for something someone is holding

Weapon, to *break*: -5 to hit a reach "C" melee weapon (e.g., knife); -4 for reach 1 melee weapon (e.g., broadsword) or a missile weapon; -3 for anything larger (e.g., spear)

Weapon, to *disarm*: as above, plus an extra -2 if not using a fencing weapon or trident

Visibility

Combined visibility penalties cannot exceed -10.

Cannot see *anything*: -10*

Cannot see foe: -6, or -4 if you know foe's location to within one yard*

Partial darkness, fog, or smoke: -1 to -9 (GM's option)

RANGED ATTACK MODIFIERS

When making a ranged attack, figure *effective skill* by:

1. Starting with your base skill with your ranged attack.
2. Applying target's Size Modifier (SM) – or +4 if attacking a hex of ground.
3. Modifying for target's range and speed (*Size and Speed/Range Table*, pp. 97-98).
4. Applying all relevant conditional modifiers below. Modifiers are cumulative. If *any* modifier marked with an asterisk (*) applies, adjusted skill after all modifiers cannot exceed 9.

A roll of this number, or less, is a hit.

Attacker's Maneuver

All-Out Attack: +1

Move and Attack: -2 or weapon's Bulk penalty, whichever is worse, and no Aim possible

Attacker's Situation

Above target: +1, or +2 on 45° or greater slope

Affliction: see *Afflictions* (pp. 65-66)

Bad footing: -2 or worse (GM's option)

Below target: -1, or -2 on 45° or greater slope

Close combat: weapon's Bulk penalty

Major distraction (e.g., all clothes on fire): -3 or worse (GM's option)

Minor distraction (e.g., part of clothes on fire): -2

Shock: -HP of injury received last turn (maximum -4)

ST below that required for weapon: -1 per point of deficit

Successful Tactics roll by friend: +1, or +2 on critical success; see "*Onward to Victory!*" (p. 57)

Other Actions by Attacker

Aim for one turn: add weapon's Accuracy bonus

Backstabbing: +4 to *first* attack; see *Backstabbing* (pp. 57-58)

Braced crossbow: +1 after a turn of Aim

Dual-Weapon Attack: -4/-8 with primary/off hand (-4/-4 w. Ambidexterity)

Extra Aim: +1 for two seconds, +2 for three or more seconds

Off-hand attack: -4 (no penalty w. Ambidexterity)

Opportunity fire: 0 if watching 1 hex; -1 if 2 hexes; -2 if 3-4 hexes or a line; -3 if 5-6 hexes; -4 if 7-10 hexes; -5 if 11+ hexes watched

Pop-up attack: -2, and no Aim possible

Using improvised weapon: -1 to -3 (GM's option)

Target

Attack hit locations or weapons using the penalties under *Melee Attack Modifiers* (p. 95). If an enemy behind cover is shooting or otherwise partly exposed, you can attack an exposed hit location at the usual penalty – or at an extra -2 if *half* exposed. If the enemy is fully concealed, use *Visibility* (below).

Target behind someone else: -4 per occupied hex

Target crouching, kneeling, crawling, sitting, or lying down: an *extra* -2 to hit torso, groin, or legs

Target only half exposed: -2

Visibility

Combined visibility penalties cannot exceed -10.

Blind, target completely invisible or concealed, or in total darkness: -10*

Cannot see foe: -6, or -4 if you know his location to within one yard*

Partial darkness, fog, or smoke: -1 to -9 (GM's option)

Target has light concealment (e.g., bushes): -2

ACTIVE DEFENSE MODIFIERS

When performing a dodge, block, or parry, figure your active defense roll by:

1. Starting with your base Dodge, Block, or Parry score. (Combat Reflexes and Enhanced Defenses bonuses are considered part of the *base*.)

2. Applying the relevant conditional modifiers below. Modifiers are cumulative.

A roll of this number, or less, means you avoid the attack.

Defender's Equipment

Parrying with any knife but kukri, long knife, or main-gauche, or with stake or short baton: -1 to Parry

Parrying with balanced Staff weapon: +2 to Parry

Parrying with bolas, kusari, or whip: -2 to Parry

Parrying with improvised weapon: -1 or -2 to Parry (GM's option)

Ready shield or cloak: add Defense Bonus vs. *front* or *shield-side* attack

Unarmed parry vs. weapon: -3 to Parry (0 vs. thrust, or w. Judo or Karate)

Defender's Maneuver

All-Out Attack: no defense possible!

All-Out Defense (Increased Defense): +2 to *one* of Dodge, Block, or Parry

Move and Attack: cannot retreat, or parry or block with hand used to attack

Defender's Posture

Crawling or lying down: -3

Kneeling or sitting: -2

Defender's Situation

Affliction: see *Afflictions* (pp. 65-66)

Bad footing: -1 or worse (GM's option)

Can't see attacker: -4, and block or parry requires a Hearing roll at -2

Close combat: only reach "C" weapons can parry

Distraction (e.g., clothes on fire): -1 or worse (GM's option)

Encumbered: penalty equal to encumbrance level to Dodge, or to Judo, Karate, or any fencing Parry

Grappled: -2 to Block or Parry, -1 to Dodge, and cannot retreat

Pinned: no defense possible!

Stunned: -4 and cannot retreat

Successful Tactics roll by friend: +1, or +2 on critical success; see "Onward to Victory!" (p. 57)

Nature of Attack

Attack from behind: no defense possible (defense at -2 w. Peripheral Vision)

Attack from side or "runaround" attack: -2 (no penalty w. Peripheral Vision)

Critical hit: no defense possible!

Deceptive Attack: -1 per -2 the attacker took to his attack

Dual-Weapon Attack: -1 if both attacks strike the same target

Flail or kusari: -4 to Parry/-2 to Block; fencing weapons and knives *can't* parry

Hidden weapon: -2 to *first* defense; see *Hidden Weapons* (p. 58)

Melee attack from above: -1, or -2 on 45° or greater slope, or if *foe* is flying or attacking from above

Melee attack from below: +1, or +2 on 45° or greater slope or if flying

Successful Feint: penalty equal to attacker's margin; see *Feint* (p. 30)

Thrown weapon: -2 to Parry if 1 lb. or less, -1 to Parry if heavier

Trident: -1 to Dodge, +1 to Block or Parry

Other Actions by Defender

Acrobatic Dodge: +2 to Dodge if Acrobatics roll succeeds, -2 if it fails

Dodge and drop: +3 to Dodge vs. *ranged* attack

Multiple parries: -4 to Parry per parry after the first, cumulative (*halved* for fencing weapons, and for Trained by a Master or Weapon Master)

Off-hand parry: -2 to Parry (no penalty w. Ambidexterity or Main-Gauche skill)

Retreat: +3 to Dodge, or to Boxing, Judo, Karate, or any fencing Parry; +1 otherwise

Speaking from Experience

Tactics describe a triangle: offense, mobility, defense. Of the three, defense is the most reactive and thus the most difficult. Control whatever you can! Take the high ground, commit one hand at a time, retreat if you can afford it, get up when knocked down, and do not overvalue attacking. Some claim the best defense is a good offense – an error against a rival who calmly favors defense until her foe overcommits. Be that person, not her victim.

– Masha Deathfoot, Martial Artist

SIZE AND SPEED/RANGE TABLE

This table is mainly for *Vision* (p. 9) and *Ranged Attacks* (pp. 41-45), but the GM can use it for *any* success roll that size, speed, or range might believably affect.

Linear Measurement: This column gives target *range* or *size* in inches ("), feet, or yards. When adding speed to range, speed is properly in "yards per second," but treat it as "yards" for this lookup!

Speed/Range: For most combat and all Sense rolls, *ignore* speed – look up range in yards in the "Linear Measurement" column, and then read over to the "Speed/Range" column to find the range modifier. If range falls between two values, use the higher. At ranges of two yards or less, there's no modifier – shooting a close target is no easier (or *harder*) than attacking it in melee combat! For targets taking All-Out Defense (Increased Dodge) maneuvers – or using Move maneuvers to sprint or tumble – add hexes moved on their turn to range before looking it up in the "Linear Measurement" column;

e.g., if a scout is shooting at an orc 10 yards away who's sprinting at Move 5, speed/range is 10 + 5 = 15 yards, giving -5 to hit.

Size: The modifier to see or hit an object or creature due to its size – its Size Modifier (SM). Humans have SM 0, but huge targets give a bonus while tiny ones give a penalty. Check a creature's racial template or monster stats to learn its SM. For other targets, look up the target's longest dimension (height, for a humanoid) in the "Linear Measurement" column, and then read across to the "Size" column to find SM. If size falls between two values, use the higher. Add +2 to SM for anything box-, sphere-, or blob-shaped, or +1 for elongated boxes like wagons and coffins; e.g., a giant four yards tall has SM +2, but a hut four yards across has SM +4. For objects much smaller in *two* of three dimensions (e.g., a rope 100 yards long but just 2" thick), use the *smallest* dimension instead of the largest when shooting it with a missile or stabbing it with a thrusting attack.

Linear Measurement	Speed/Range	Size
1/5"	0	-15
1/3"	0	-14
1/2"	0	-13
2/3"	0	-12
1"	0	-11
1.5"	0	-10
2"	0	-9
3"	0	-8
5"	0	-7
8"	0	-6
1 foot	0	-5
1.5 feet	0	-4
2 feet	0	-3
1 yard	0	-2
1.5 yards	0	-1
2 yards	0	0

Linear Measurement	Speed/Range	Size
3 yards	-1	+1
5 yards	-2	+2
7 yards	-3	+3
10 yards	-4	+4
15 yards	-5	+5
20 yards	-6	+6
30 yards	-7	+7
50 yards	-8	+8
70 yards	-9	+9
100 yards	-10	+10
150 yards	-11	+11
200 yards	-12	+12
300 yards	-13	+13
500 yards	-14	+14
700 yards	-15	+15

If *huge* distances or sizes come up, each 10× increase in linear measurement gives -6 to speed/range modifier or +6 to SM.



In battle, size and distance can be friends or foes, depending on who you are and how you fight. For my folk – the halflings – these things have always been loyal allies. Our sharp eyes and compact size let us pepper big, easy-to-hit enemies with stones and arrows long before they have any hope of returning the favor.

– Hap Badapple, Thief

MANEUVERS TABLE

You may select one maneuver on your turn in combat. This table summarizes these maneuvers and their effects. See the full write-up for exceptions!

Maneuver	Description	Active Defense	Movement	Page
Aim	Aim a ranged weapon to get its Accuracy bonus.	Any*	Step	29
All-Out Attack	Attack at a bonus or multiple times.	None	Half Move	30
All-Out Defense	Increased or double defense.	Any†	Varies	31
Attack	Attack unarmed or with a weapon.	Any	Step	30
Change Posture	Stand up, sit down, etc.	Any‡	None	29
Concentrate	Focus on a mental task.	Any*	Step	31
Do Nothing	Take no action but recover from stun.	Any§	None	29
Feint	Fake a melee attack.	Any	Step	30
Move and Attack	Move and attack at a penalty.	Limited¶	Full Move	30
Move	Do nothing but move.	Any	Full Move	29
Ready	Prepare a weapon or other item.	Any	Step	32
Wait	Hold yourself in readiness to act.	Varies	Varies	32

* Attempting an active defense *will* spoil aim and *may* spoil concentration.

† Gives +2 to Dodge, Block, or Parry, *or* allows two defenses against each attack.

‡ Any posture but standing penalizes defense.

§ Defenses are at -4 if taking Do Nothing due to stun.

¶ Cannot retreat, or parry or block with attacking hand.

POSTURES TABLE

Attack: The modifier when making *melee* attacks. Posture doesn't affect *ranged* attacks.

Defense: The modifier to all active defense rolls.

Target: The modifier to hit your torso, groin, or legs with a *ranged* attack. Other hit locations are attacked normally.

Movement: The effect on movement.

Posture	Attack	Defense	Target	Movement
Standing	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal; may sprint
Crouching	-2	Normal	-2	+1/2 movement point per hex
Kneeling	-2	-2	-2	+2 movement points per hex
Sitting	-2	-2	-2	None
Crawling*	-4†	-3	-2‡	+2 movement points per hex
Lying Down*	-4	-3	-2‡	1 yard/second

* A human occupies *two* hexes while crawling or lying down.

† Only reach "C" *melee* attacks allowed.

‡ If attacker isn't above you *and* is farther away than his own height, he attacks *all* hit locations at -2 with *ranged* attacks.

HIT LOCATION TABLE

Roll 3d on this table whenever *Attacking a Random Hit Location* (p. 37) applies. If the victim lacks the indicated body part(s), read the result as a roll of 10-11: a *torso* hit.

Example: A leg or foot result for a serpent-man with a humanoid torso atop a snake's lower body – or *any* limb or extremity hit for a true serpent – becomes a torso hit.

Never roll on the table when *deliberately* targeting a hit location! Make the attack roll at the listed penalty instead.

Roll	Location (Penalty)	Notes
–	Eye (-9)	[1, 2]
3-4	Skull (-7)	[1, 3]
5	Face (-5)	[1, 4]
6-7	Right Leg (-2) or Tail (-3)	[5, 6, 7]
8	Right Arm (-2)	[5, 8]
9	Torso (0) or Wing (-2)	[9, 10]
10-11	Torso (0)	[10]
–	Groin (-3)	[1, 11]
12	Left Arm (-2)	[5, 8]
13-14	Left Leg (-2) or Tail (-3)	[5, 6, 7]
15	Hand (-4)	[8, 12]
16	Foot (-4)	[7, 12]
17-18	Neck (-5)	[1, 13]
–	Vitals (-3)	[1, 14]

[1] Attacks that miss by 1 hit the torso instead. Treat this as a roll of 10-11.

[2] Only **impaling** and **piercing** attacks can target the eye – and only from the front or sides. Injury over HP/10 blinds the eye. Otherwise, treat as skull (note [3]) without the extra DR!

[3] Skull gets an extra DR 2. Wounding modifier for all *but* fatigue or toxic damage increases to $\times 4$. Knockdown rolls for

major wounds are at -10. Critical hits use the *Critical Head Blow Table* (p. 100).

[4] Jaw, cheeks, nose, and ears. If target has an open-faced helmet, ignore its DR. Knockdown rolls for major wounds are at -5. Critical hits use the *Critical Head Blow Table*. **Corrosion** damage gets a $\times 1.5$ wounding modifier; if it inflicts a major wound, it *also* blinds one eye (*both* eyes, if injury exceeds full HP). For random attacks from behind, treat as skull (note [3]) instead.

[5] Limb. Reduce wounding multiplier of **large piercing**, **huge piercing**, and **impaling** damage to $\times 1$. Loss of over HP/2 from one blow cripples the limb – a major wound. Injury beyond that threshold is lost.

[6] Tails not used for combat or movement are part of the torso – but for beings with fish tails, prehensile tails, scorpion stingers, etc., roll 1d on any random leg hit; a 1 hits the tail instead. For wounding purposes, treat tails as limbs (note [5]). A crippled tail is useless *and* gives the victim -1 DX on land, or -2 DX and half Move in air or water.

[7] For a creature with more than two limbs used to run, scurry, swim, etc., *any* roll on the table of 6-7, 13-14 that isn't a tail hit (note [6]) strikes a random leg. A roll of 16 hits a random foot. For instance, centaurs, tigers, and other quadrupeds roll 1d even/odd for right/left and 1d even/odd for front/back.

[8] For deliberate attacks on someone with a shield, *double* the penalty to hit: -4 for shield arm, -8 for shield hand. For a creature with more than two arms (or tentacles) or hands (pincers, paws, etc.), *any* roll of 8 or 12 on the table strikes a random arm. A roll of 15 strikes a random hand. Roll dice in whatever way is convenient. For three limbs, roll 1d and label them 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6; for four, roll 1d even/odd for right/left and 1d even/odd for upper/lower; and so on.

[9] For wingless creatures, treat a roll of 9 as 10-11: a torso hit. For winged monsters, it's a wing hit instead. If rolling randomly, roll for which wing (for one pair, roll 1d: 1-3 is right, 4-6 is left). For wounding purposes, wings are limbs (note [5]). Crippling a wing makes flight impossible.

[10] For centaurs and the like, roll 1d for a random torso hit that isn't a wing hit (note [9]): 1-2 is the humanoid body, 3-6 is the larger animal body. Deliberate attacks on either are at no penalty.

[11] Humanoid males suffer *double* shock from **crushing** damage, and get -5 to knockdown rolls. Otherwise, treat as a torso hit.

[12] Extremity. If rolling randomly, roll for which extremity; for humanoids, roll 1d: 1-3 is right, 4-6 is left. Treat as a limb (note [5]), except that injury over HP/3 in one blow inflicts a crippling major wound. Excess injury is still lost.

Speaking from Experience

Not every monstrosity has a heart or a brain. But if it walks, cutting its legs out from under it will work. If it carries a weapon, sever the arm. If it flies, slash the wings.

– Samar Alqatil, Holy Warrior

[13] Increase wounding multiplier of **crushing** and **corrosion** attacks to $\times 1.5$, and that of **cutting** damage to $\times 2$. Anyone *killed* by cutting damage to the neck is decapitated!

[14] Increase wounding modifier for an **impaling** or any **piercing** attack to $\times 3$. Other damage types cannot target the vitals. Knockdown rolls for major wounds are at -5.

CRITICAL HITS

A roll of 3 or 4 is *always* a critical hit.

A roll of 5 is a critical hit *if your effective skill is 15+*.

A roll of 6 is a critical hit *if your effective skill is 16+*.

The most important thing about a critical hit is that *your target gets no active defense against the attack!* Also roll on the appropriate table below to check for special effects.

CRITICAL HIT TABLE

All doublings or triplings of damage refer to *basic damage* (not injury).

3 – Blow does triple damage.

4 – Target's DR protects at half value (round down) after applying any armor divisors.

5 – Blow does double damage.

6 – Blow does maximum normal damage.

7 – If *any* damage penetrates DR, treat the hit as a major wound, regardless of injury inflicted.

8 – If *any* injury occurs, it inflicts double normal shock (to a limit of -8) – and **High Pain Threshold** merely halves this to normal shock (-1 to -4)! If that injury is to a limb or extremity, that body part is crippled as well. Unless the injury was enough to cripple the body part anyway, this crippling is very brief: it wears off in (16 - HT) seconds, minimum two seconds.

9, 10, 11 – Normal damage only.

12 – Normal damage, and regardless of whether damage penetrates DR, target drops anything held in hands, mouth, tentacles, etc. – including screaming victims, who are no longer grappled or pinned!

13, 14 – If *any* damage penetrates DR, treat the hit as a major wound, regardless of injury inflicted.

15 – Blow does maximum normal damage.

16 – Blow does double damage.

17 – Target's DR protects at half value (round down) after applying any armor divisors.

18 – Blow does triple damage.

CRITICAL HEAD BLOW TABLE

Use this table only for critical hits to the *face*, *skull*, or *eye*.

3 – Blow does maximum normal damage *and* ignores target's DR.

4, 5 – Target's DR protects at half value (round up) after applying any armor divisors. If *any* damage penetrates, treat the hit as a major wound, regardless of injury inflicted.

6, 7 – If the attack targeted the *face* or *skull*, treat it as an *eye* hit instead, even if the attack couldn't normally target the eye! If an eye hit is impossible (e.g., from behind), treat as 4, 5.

8 – Normal head-blow damage, and target is knocked off balance and must Do Nothing next turn (but may defend normally).

9, 10, 11 – Normal head-blow damage only.

12, 13 – Normal head-blow damage, and if *any* damage penetrates DR, a *crushing* attack causes deafness (for recovery, see *Duration of Crippling*, p. 61), while other attacks cause severe scarring (target loses one Appearance level – or two, for a *burning* or *corrosion* attack – but hideous monsters might instead lose a horn or fang, for -1 to damage on future attacks until healed).

14 – Normal head-blow damage, and target drops his weapon (one at random, if carrying more than one) *and* releases any pinned or grappled victims.

15 – Blow does maximum normal damage.

16 – Blow does double damage.

17 – Target's DR protects at half value (round up) after applying any armor divisors.

18 – Blow does triple damage.

CRITICAL MISSES

A roll of 18 is *always* a critical miss.

A roll of 17 is a critical miss *if your effective skill is 15 or less*; otherwise, it's an ordinary miss.

Any roll of 10 greater than your *effective* skill is a critical miss: 16 on a skill of 6, 15 on a skill of 5, and so on.

On either table below, it's possible to "fall down." Fliers and swimmers are forced into an awkward dive or roll: -4 to attack and -3 to defend until they take a Change Posture maneuver. Fighters that cannot fall (snakes, those lying down, etc.) suffer 1d-3 HP of general injury instead – perhaps an opponent steps on them!

CRITICAL MISS TABLE

Use this table for critical misses on *armed* attacks and parries, or when a defender critically succeeds against an armed melee attack.

- 3, 4 – Your weapon breaks (*Broken Weapons*, p. 56). *Exception:* If it's a weapon hefty enough to do swing+3 *crushing* or more, or *any* fine or very fine weapon, reroll. Only on a second "broken weapon" result does the weapon actually break. If you get any other result – or are wielding an orichalcum or Shatterproof weapon – you drop the weapon instead.
- 5 – You manage to hit *yourself* in the arm or leg (50% chance each way). *Exception:* If making an *impaling* or *piercing* melee attack, or any ranged attack, reroll. If you get a second "hit yourself" result, use *that* – half or full damage, as the case may be. If you get something other than "hit yourself," use that result.
- 6 – As 5, but half damage only.
- 7 – You lose your balance. You can do *nothing* else (not even a free action) until your next turn, and all your active defenses are at -2 until then.
- 8 – The weapon turns in your hand. You must take an extra Ready maneuver before you can use it again.
- 9, 10, 11 – You drop the weapon. *Exception:* A *cheap* weapon *breaks*; see 3, 4.
- 12 – As 8.
- 13 – As 7.
- 14 – If making a *swinging* melee attack, your weapon flies 1d hexes from your hand – 50% chance straight forward (1-3 on 1d) or straight back (4-6). Anyone in the target hex must make a DX roll or take half damage from the falling weapon! If making a *thrusting* melee attack or any ranged attack, or parrying, you drop the weapon, as 9, 10, 11.
- 15 – You strain your shoulder! Your weapon arm is "crippled." You don't have to drop your weapon, but you cannot use it – to attack or defend – for 30 minutes.
- 16 – You fall down! If making a ranged attack, see 7 instead.
- 17, 18 – Your weapon breaks; see 3, 4.

UNARMED CRITICAL MISS TABLE

Use this table for critical misses on *unarmed* attacks (bites, grapples, punches, slams, etc.) and parries, or when a defender critically succeeds against an unarmed melee attack. This is the *usual* table for monsters that don't wield weapons!

- 3 – You knock yourself out! You trip and fall on your head, or stumble face-first into an opponent's fist, shield, or breastplate. Roll vs. HT every 30 minutes to recover. For monsters that can't be knocked out, treat as 5.
- 4 – If attacking or parrying with a limb, you strain it: take 1 HP of injury and the limb is "crippled." You cannot use it – either to attack or defend – for 30 minutes. If biting, head-butting, etc., you pull a muscle and suffer moderate pain (*Irritating Conditions*, pp. 65-66) for the next (20 - HT) minutes, minimum one minute.
- 5 – You hit a wall, floor, or other solid object instead of striking or parrying your foe. You take crushing damage equal to *your* thrust damage to the body part you were using; DR protects normally. *Exception:* If attacking someone who's armed with a ready impaling weapon, you fall on the weapon! You suffer the weapon's damage based on *your* ST.
- 6 – As 5, but half damage only. *Exception:* If attacking with natural weapons, such as claws or teeth, they *break*: -1 damage on future attacks until you heal (for recovery, see *Duration of Crippling*, p. 61).
- 7 – You stumble. On an attack, you advance one hex past your opponent and end your turn facing away from your foe, who's now behind you! On a parry, you fall down.
- 8 – You fall down!
- 9, 10, 11 – You lose your balance. You can do *nothing* else (not even a free action) until your next turn, and all your active defenses are at -2 until then.
- 12 – You trip. Make a DX roll to avoid falling down, at -4 if kicking.
- 13 – You drop your guard. All your active defenses are at -2 for the next turn, and any Deceptive Attack or Feint penalty against you until your next turn counts *double*! This is obvious to nearby opponents.
- 14 – As 7.
- 15 – You *tear* a muscle. Take 1d-3 HP of injury to the limb you used (to one limb, if you used two), or to your neck if biting, head-butting, etc. You're off balance and at -1 to all attacks and defenses for the next turn. You're at -3 to any action involving that limb (or to *any* action, if you injure your neck!) until this injury heals. Reduce this penalty to -1 if you have **High Pain Threshold**.
- 16 – As 5.
- 17 – You strain a limb or pull a muscle, as in 4. *Exception:* An IQ 3-5 creature fails so miserably that it loses its nerve. It flees on its next turn, if possible. If cornered, it assumes a surrender position (throat bared, belly exposed, etc.).
- 18 – As 3.

OBJECT HIT POINTS TABLE

The table below gives the Hit Points (HP) of nonliving artifacts for use with *Damage to Objects* (pp. 55-56).

Weight: The artifact's weight. If this falls between two values, use the *lower*.

Unliving: The HP of an Unliving object of this weight; e.g., any machine with moving parts.

Homogeneous/Diffuse: The HP of a Homogeneous or Diffuse object of this weight. Melee weapons and most solid obstacles are Homogeneous. Curtains, nets, and other things that brush aside when struck are Diffuse.

Weight	Unliving	Homogeneous/Diffuse
1/64 lb.	1 HP	2 HP
1/8 lb.	2 HP	4 HP
1/2 lb.	3 HP	6 HP
1 lb.	4 HP	8 HP
2 lbs.	5 HP	10 HP
3 lbs.	6 HP	12 HP
5 lbs.	7 HP	14 HP
8 lbs.	8 HP	16 HP
11 lbs.	9 HP	18 HP

Weight	Unliving	Homogeneous/Diffuse
16 lbs.	10 HP	20 HP
27 lbs.	12 HP	24 HP
43 lbs.	14 HP	28 HP
64 lbs.	16 HP	32 HP
91 lbs.	18 HP	36 HP
125 lbs.	20 HP	40 HP
216 lbs.	24 HP	48 HP
343 lbs.	28 HP	56 HP
512 lbs.	32 HP	64 HP
729 lbs.	36 HP	72 HP
1,000 lbs.	40 HP	80 HP

There is also DR! For portable gear, use DR 2 for wood, DR 4 metal-and-wood items and *small* metal ones (say, anything lighter than 1 lb.), and DR 6 for *large* metal equipment.

The GM may alter DR and HP to suit the adventure's needs! See *Walls* (p. 82) and *Entrances* (pp. 82-83) for examples. Wood and metal vary, brittle things have low HP for their weight, and alchemy and fantastic materials are wildcards – there's no need for *every* statue of the King or giant orcish siege engine to be equally tough!



APPENDIX

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Four friends are about to begin a session of an ongoing *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign. One is the **GM**; the others are playing **Puddin' Noddington** (a gnome thief), **Uncle Seamus** (a human wizard), and **Sir Yvor Gryffyn** (a human knight). For simplicity, this example refers to everyone by character name. Quoted text means the player is speaking in character; parentheses indicate descriptions and asides.

GM: Thanks for coming, everyone. Last session ended with your party arriving at the catacombs' locked entrance and destroying the skeletons guarding it. What do you do?

Yvor: "Is the door safe, thief?"

Puddin': I look up from the patch of moss where I *just* managed to get comfy, "I am not a thief. I am a master locksmith. Besides, it might have magical traps."

Yvor: You really think so?

Puddin': Well, to be honest, I'm mainly roleplaying my **Laziness**, but better safe than sorry.

Seamus: "I can check for that. Stand back." I cast **Detect Magic** on the door. I have it at skill 16, so it only costs me 1 FP.

GM: That's a roll to gain information, so I make it. (Rolls a 12, for success by 4.) Fortunately, this door seems to be nonmagical.

Seamus: "It's clear. Now, please do your job."

Puddin': "Fine, fine." I sigh dramatically, get up, and check it for traps.

GM: What's your Per-based **Traps** skill? I roll that one secretly.
Puddin': My **Traps** is 16, but my Per is one higher than my IQ, so 17.

GM: (Rolls an 8. The trap required a Per-based **Traps** roll at -5, so this is success by 4.) You spot the poisoned needle in the keyhole, but it's recessed. Roll against DX-based **Traps** to disarm it, at -8!

Puddin': My DX is two above my IQ, and I get to add my **High Manual Dexterity 2** to that, right? So that's 20, minus 8 is 12. (Rolls a 12.) Whew, just barely! What's the **Lockpicking** penalty?

GM: Roll at -5, which I think puts you at a 15.

Puddin': Yep. (Rolls an 11.) Success by 4. "They didn't want us coming in, but I think the skeletons and this trapped lock are our only obstacles." I push it open.

GM: The door creaks open and the scent of dust and decay wafts out. The entranceway is ringed with intricate carvings. Seamus, you can read **Ancient**, right? The carvings identify this place as the tomb of Saboucar the Mad, She Who Killed the Sky, and warns you to leave.

Yvor: "That's bad news, but good for us. We're in the right place."

Seamus: "Right. Now we just need to learn whether Saboucar is back or someone else is drawing on the deathly power of this place."

GM: The corridor ahead is completely unlit, with enough room for two abreast. Remind me of your marching order?

Yvor: Puddin' and her pistol crossbows are just in front of Uncle Seamus and me, side-by-side. I've got my sword and shield out.

Seamus: And I'm using **Cartography** to map. I can maintain the **Light** spell for free, and we're walking at half speed, so I'll alternate between mapping and moving the light with us.

GM: You know that the light makes stealth impossible, right?

Yvor: Yeah, but we're blind without it.



*Unknown to the delvers, the tomb's unsealing has awoken a leather-clad vampire, who is currently sneaking out of the tomb. He automatically sees the party's light. They cannot see him in the unlit tunnel, but they may be able to hear him. The GM secretly rolls a Quick Contest of the vampire's **Stealth** (which succeeds by 4) against both Puddin's **Per** (which succeeds by 4) and Yvor's **Per** (which fails by 2). Seamus is busy mapping and does not get a roll. In stealth, ties go to the person being snuck up on, so Puddin' hears the vampire, though the GM rules that she didn't hear him until he was just four yards away.*

GM: Puddin', you just barely hear movement from ahead. You don't know what or exactly where.

Puddin': I stop and raise my left hand as a signal to halt.

Yvor: I step forward so she's just behind me.

Seamus: I set down my mapping kit and ready my staff.

GM: Seamus, that's a bit too much at once; we're about to go into combat time. I'll let you set the kit down gently instead of dropping it, but that's all. As you do, you look up to see a pale man in leather armor come charging out of the darkness, a greatsword held high in both hands. He snarls, "The gift of fresh blood for the first time in ages! I'll grant you quick deaths as thanks."

*The vampire has the highest Basic Speed and thus goes first. The GM rolls against his self-control roll for Uncontrollable Appetite (Mortal Blood) and gets a 17 – critical failure! The GM decides that the vampire will open with pure offense – an All-Out Attack (Double) – despite this being a poor tactical choice. For the first attack, the GM rolls against the vampire's **Two-Handed Sword** skill and succeeds; it doesn't matter by how much.*

GM: He's making an All-Out Attack (Double) against Yvor. How are you defending?

Yvor: My **Broadsword** Parry is 14, plus 3 for my shield's DB, is 17. (Rolls.) Success! I turn his blade aside.

GM: He doesn't even pause. (Rolls for the second attack and succeeds.) As your swords clash, he quickly reverses his for another slash. Defense?

Yvor: Thanks to my **Weapon Master**, multiple parries are at just -2, so I parry again at 15. (Rolls.) Made it. As I bat his sword aside, I retort, "I fight for king and country, you monster, and that makes me unbeatable!"

Puddin': Laying it on a little thick, aren't you?

Yvor: Just playing my quirk about battle cries. Do we go now?

GM: Yep. You all have the same **Basic Speed**, so you act in order of **DX**.

Puddin': Then I'm first. I don't think it's worth the delay to aim, since he may not All-Out Attack again, so I'll fire a crossbow bolt into his vitals.

GM: Roll at -3 to hit the vitals, plus another -3 because he's at the outer edge of where the **Light** spell covers.

Puddin': Actually, I have **Night Vision 5**, so only the vitals penalty applies. (Rolls.) Got it!

GM: He can't defend, thanks to All-Out Attack, so roll damage.

Puddin': I do 1d+3 impaling. (Rolls.) That's 8 points of basic damage. I choose *not* to taunt him, though, as he's kind of scary and I'm plump and delicious.

The GM applies the DR 2 from the vampire's leather armor, leaving 6 points of penetrating damage. Impaling attacks to the vitals have a wounding modifier of ×3, so the vampire suffers 18 HP of injury, dropping from 20 HP to 2 HP. This exceeds the vampire's HP/2 and is thus a major wound to the vitals, requiring a roll against HT at -5 to check for knockdown. The vampire fails by 3, and thus drops his sword and falls prone, stunned.

GM: Your bolt slams into the dead center of his chest, piercing his armor! He staggers back and falls, dropping his greatsword. He seems badly shaken. Yvor?

Yvor: "Your perverse existence ends now!" I swing for his neck twice – not All-Out Attacking, just using **Weapon Master** to pull off a Rapid Strike at -3 to hit.

GM: Plus -5 to hit the neck and -3 for darkness, so -11 total.

Yvor: Oh, right. I'll compromise: one swing to the neck at -11 and then one to the torso for -6. (Rolls.) Argh, missed the neck! (Rolls.) Hit the torso at least. He still can't defend, right? So that's 2d+7 cutting damage. (Rolls.) Only 11 points. I hate my dice.

The vampire's DR 2 reduces the 11 points of basic damage to 9 points of penetrating damage. Because cutting attacks have a ×1.5 wounding modifier, the vampire suffers 13 HP of injury, dropping from 2 HP to -11 HP. This is another major wound, but not to the vitals, so the GM rolls against the vampire's HT at no penalty. He fails by 1, but there's no effect as he's already knocked down and stunned.

Seamus: My turn. Wait, vampires are one of the few undead who have to sleep, right? I can try a **Sleep** spell, but it'll take three Concentrate maneuvers. Can you two hold him off for that long?

Yvor: Absolutely. I just swapped my traitorous dice for three new ones. Go for it!

Seamus: I place my hand to my brow and begin speaking words of arcane power. They faintly resemble a lullaby.

GM: That brings us to the second turn, which will begin with the vampire taking a Do Nothing maneuver and rolling against **HT** to recover from being stunned . . .

The heroes manage to defeat the vampire over the next few combat turns, and continue deeper into the catacombs, where they successfully destroy the rest of his undead pack. None of the monsters have meaningful loot, but . . .

Seamus: I feel like we're missing something. I cast **Seek Magic**. (Marks off 5 FP.)

GM: (Rolls in secret and succeeds.) You sense something up above the alcove in the north wall. Once your **Light** gets closer, you can just barely make out a recess about 15' up.

Yvor: Can I give Puddin' a leg up?

GM: It's too far for that; she'll have to climb. But I'll let you use your **ST** as a complementary roll for her **Climbing**, which is at -3 for a vertical wall.

Yvor: (Rolls.) Success, so +1 for you.

Puddin': (Rolls at a net -2.) Made it. I scramble up. What do I see?

GM: A single, small chest. It doesn't appear to have a lock, just a latch.

Puddin': Yeah, as if I'd trust that. Can I make a quick rope harness and lower it down to Yvor?

GM: Sure, there's even ornamentation to use as a tie-off. Give me a **Knot-Tying** roll to see if it comes loose once you start lowering it.

Puddin': You're evil. (Rolls.) Whew, success. I shinny down the rope. "So Uncle, is the magic *on* the chest or *in* it?"

Seamus: I cast **Detect Magic** on the chest itself. My FP are low, so I'll want a five-minute rest to get back the 1 FP.

GM: (Rolls.) Don't worry about it; you critically succeeded! The chest is mundane, but the latch is enchanted; anyone not of the vampires' clan who tries opening it gets a deadly shock instead. There's also something magical inside.

Seamus: Can I use **Dispel Magic** on it?

GM: Not on a permanent enchantment.

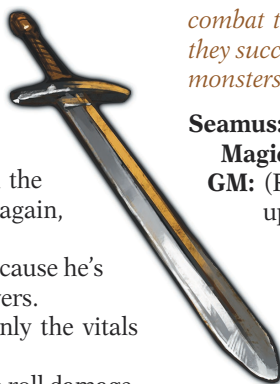
Seamus: "Both, lass. The latch will harm us if we try to open it."

Yvor: "But not if I crack it open from behind?" I want to force the hinges.

Puddin': "Here, use my crowbar." I'll hold the latch shut to make sure that it isn't accidentally triggered.

GM: It's an average hinge, so roll against your **ST**, at +2 for the crowbar but -6 for the hinge's DR, while I roll against the hinge's HP of 12. (Yvor succeeds by 3; the GM succeeds by 0.) With just enough pressure, you pop the hinges off. Carefully tipping the chest on its side, you pour out an assortment of coins . . . and what seems to be a light cloak covered in feathers.

All three simultaneously: Dibs!



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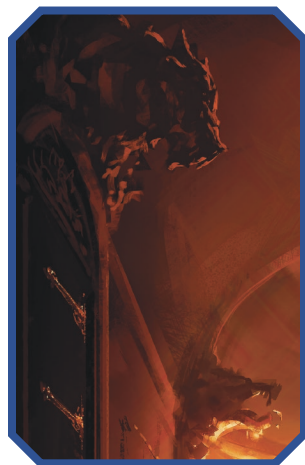
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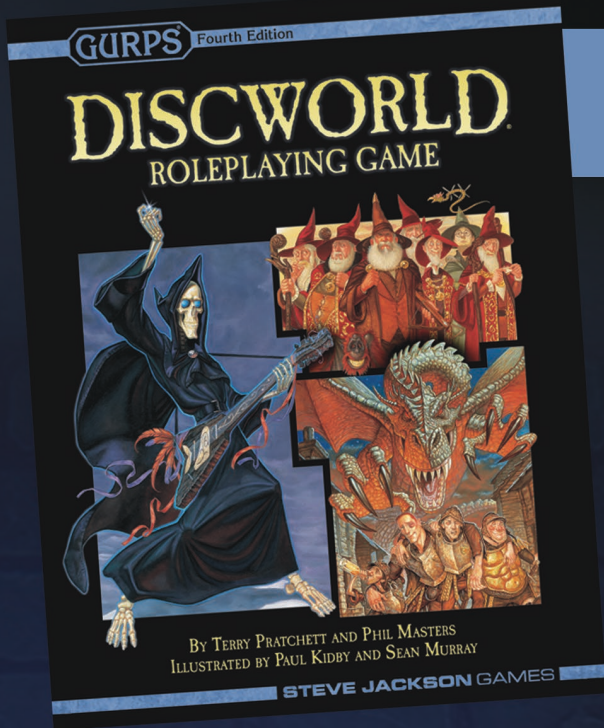
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ADVENTURE PLANNING FORM

Adventure Name: _____ GM: _____ Date: _____

Quest-Giver: _____ Promised Payment: _____

Alternative Rewards to Character Points (p. 94): _____

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Scrounging Critical-Success Results: _____

Dredging and Mud-Larking Critical-Success Results: _____

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GM CONTROL SHEET

Character Name/Player	ST	DX	IQ	HT	HP	Will	Per	FP	Basic Speed	Move	Reaction Modifier

Character	Injuries & Afflictions	Key Traits (Special Abilities, Disadvantages, etc.)

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WANDERING MONSTERS AND RANDOM TRAPS

For each encounter table, decide how many dice to roll (typically 1d or 2d) when an encounter is indicated, and associate ranges of dice-roll results with specific monsters and/or traps. In each case, give the number of creatures as either a set value or a variable determined by yet another dice roll, such as "1d+3" or "2d."

Occur where (on journey, anywhere in dungeon, in a specific room)? _____

Odds of an encounter (3d)? 6 or less / 9 or less / 12 or less / 15 or less

Frequency of encounter rolls: _____

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Dice Roll	Number	Creature or Trap

Notes: _____

Occur where (on journey, anywhere in dungeon, in a specific room)? _____

Odds of an encounter (3d)? 6 or less / 9 or less / 12 or less / 15 or less

Frequency of encounter rolls: _____

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Dice Roll	Number	Creature or Trap

Notes: _____

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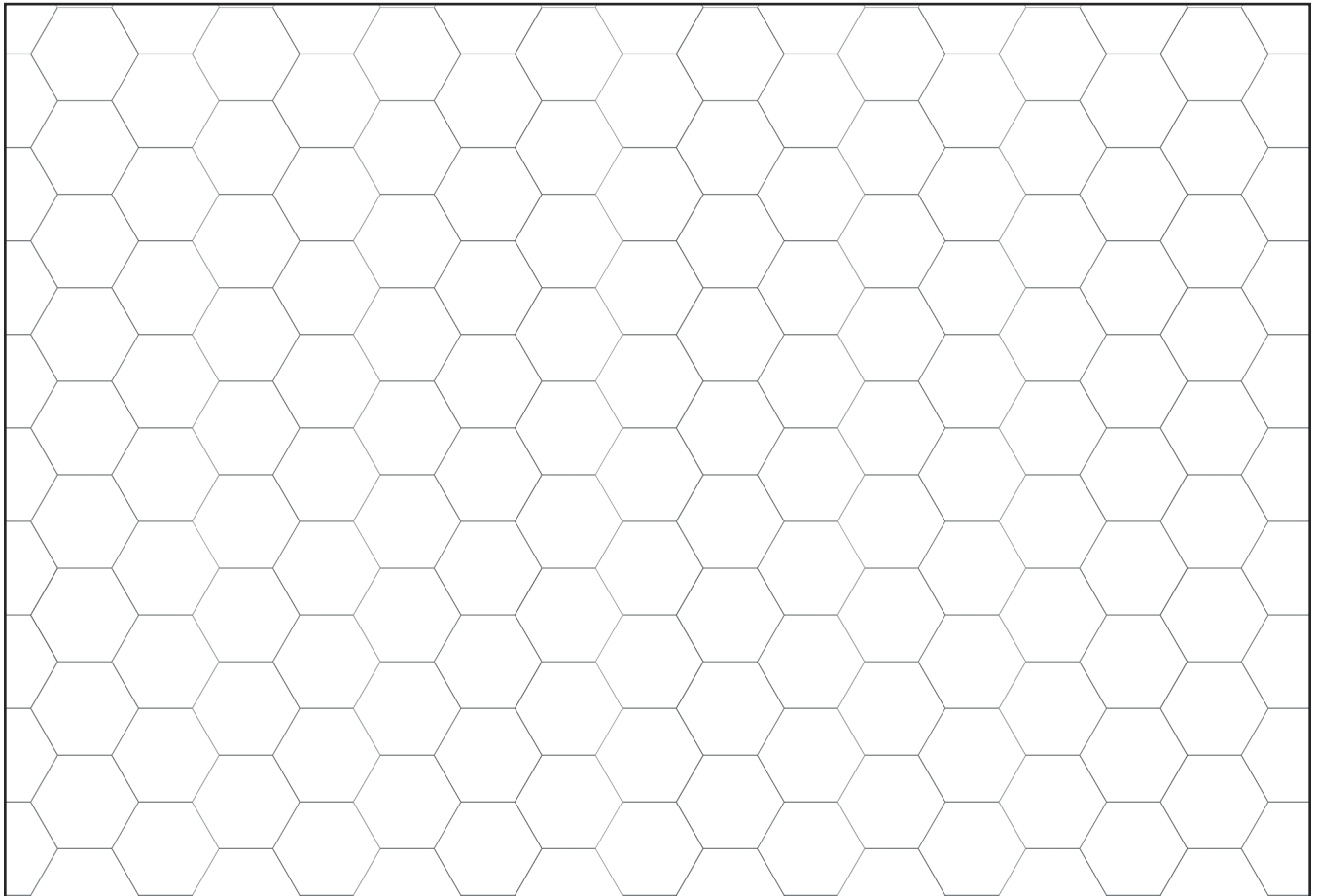
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