

DARK DUNGEON

2nd Edition

The Fantasy Role Playing Game
Freeware Lite Version

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1. An introduction to Role Playing

Blade and Greystar shuffled around the corner of the ledge. They were now more than fifty meters high, on the accursed Nostradamus Cathedral, hunting for John Ryder, the evil high priest of the Y-Runes sect. Perhaps he was the most dangerous man alive. Or well, he was dead already actually. But that never stopped him from returning to wreak havoc. He was back in town, ready to plunge another sixhundred and sixty six souls into hell.

*And he could be around every corner.
Including this one.*

(Fantasy) Role Playing is a hobby that evolved in the 1970's in the USA, and quickly spread around the world. There are different kinds of role playing, but all share their roots in wargaming, improvisational theatre and believe it or not - psychotherapy.

To understand what a game is like, try to imagine a group of three to six people sitting in a quiet living room, weaving a story together. One of them is the Storyteller or Game Master, and thinks up the boundaries of the world, tells what happens to the heroes, and plays the adversaries and supporting cast. He or she describes the basics of the story as it unfolds.

The other people are players, each acting out a specific role or Character, heroes as they were - and they choose what their hero wants to do, and say what their hero says.

To make decisions about fights (who wins or not), or about whether the heroes succeed at specific tasks, the players sometimes roll dice. Usually if the dice are high this means success is more likely, and if they are low failure is more likely. How much must be rolled, and what specific heroes are capable of is laid down by the Rules of the Game System used, and the judgement of the Game Master. Remember playing cowboys and indians when you were a kid? Well, this is very much like it, except that you now have rules to avoid the conflict of 'Bang, you're dead!' and 'No I'm not!'

Unlike other games, Fantasy Role Playing is not so much about winning or losing, but more about telling a heroic story together. It is about weaving a human drama or comedy in your imagination together, and about experiencing the fun, fear, and excitement of your own personal hero. Games can last a few hours to days on end, and some play their favorite heroes for many years. Some players even like to dress up and run around in the forest at night, waving swords at one another!

The **Dark Dungeon 2nd Edition game** is designed to play fast and easy, give realistic results and provide a great variety between characters. Also, it's fairly easy to learn, and you can make a new character in ten minutes even if you know little about RPGs. We think this is one of the very best RPG Systems around, better than any of the commercial ones we know (and we know quite a few). If you want to test our assertions, just try this free version of the rules. If you like them, don't hesitate to share them among your friends and spread the word!

A Small Dictionary of Terms

Game Master (or GM)

The storyteller and referee of a role playing game. He or she shapes the world and the adventure, and plays all the characters and creatures that are not played by the other players. You can compare a Game Master with a film director or a story writer on a small scale.

Players

The other players each play one single role of an important character of the story. They build this role by themselves, and improvise how their hero reacts and acts as the story unfolds. In this respect you can compare players with star actors on a very small scale.

10-sided Dice (or d10)

The Dark Dungeon Game uses a very particular kind of die. It doesn't have six sides like the ordinary variety, but it has ten sides! These sides are numbered from 1 to 9, plus a 0, which must be read as 10 (ten!). In the game, it's always good to throw as high as possible, so 7 is better than 3, and 10 is better still. You can buy ten-sided dice in most better game stores and toy shops. Often ten-sided die is written down as d10.

Character or Hero

The persona or role a player plays in the game. This could be a wizard, a knight, a princess, or anyone or anything else in the game world.

Character Sheet

A piece of paper on which you write down the abilities, skills, name, description and possessions of a character.

Session

A game session. Typically one session lasts a between two and eight hours. Usually there are one to six players, and one Game Master.

Adventure

A complete story with a start and finish. An adventure usually takes one to four sessions, but may take more.

Campaign

Several connected adventures, much like a miniseries. A campaign may last just a few sessions, or many realtime years.

Game World

The imaginary world in which the adventures of the player's characters take place. The original fantasy world for Dark Dungeon is called Yaddrin. Yaddrin is a medieval place where magick is real and dragons and other monsters exist. Yaddrin is only an example, though. Imaginary worlds may take any form. They may be set in a Science Fiction future, a historic or fantastic past, or an alternative version of today's reality with paranormal and occult influences. The Dark Dungeon system is written especially for medieval fantasy.

Game Time vs Real Time

Game time is the time the characters experience in the game world, real time is the time the players are actually playing. These times do relate, but are not necessarily the same. The players may skip a two week journey of their characters by describing it in a single sentence.

Game Rules or Game System

A set of rules to describe characters in the game world, and resolve the results of their actions. It is a tool to help the Game Master and the players spin their stories and adventures. Dark Dungeon 2nd Edition is such a set of rules, especially written to be both realistic and quick and easy to use.

How to Use These Rules

If this is the first time you play a role playing game, first skim these rules a bit. Then if you want to be Game Master (and someone must be the Game Master!), read the last chapter, and prepare a story for two or three of your friends. You can use the story "Baron of the Spinward Marshes" provided in this booklet if you like. Then invite your friends, let them make their heroes, and go ahead - have fun!

2. How to make a Character

What is the stuff that adventurers are made of? Nobody knows for sure. But Kadzjim was made of that stuff all right. He was a full-bred arab male, six and a half feet tall, which was huge among his people, with a strong and supple body. He was a good at fighting, especially boxing and throwing knives, and he was very nimble too. He loved to travel, and his curiosity was second to none. But maybe even more peculiar to him was his excellent sense of smell.

The first thing to do when you want to play a game of Dark Dungeon, is create a character. A character is the role you are going to play in the adventure (at least if you are a player, and not the Game Master of this particular game). You can be almost anything you want, as long as it is within bounds of the game setting, and as long as it is not a too powerful character. You cannot be the very best, allpowerful, allknowing super hero as of yet - because the game would not be so much fun then (where's the point in playing if you have everything already?).

So, in Dark Dungeon you can basically be any sort of person in a fantasy setting: a knight, a sorceress, a thief, a priest, a wizard's apprentice, a mercenary warrior, a courtesan, a noblewoman, a barbarian clan member, and so on. Usually characters will be humans, but some may be elves, halfelves, or dwarves too. First thing is to decide which of these sort of roles you wish to play. Once you have decided on that, you can start building your character up and flesh it out.

Distribute Fifty Skill Points

The first next step in building your character, is to decide on the abilities and skills of the character, and how good he (or she!) is at them. Both are measured in points, and you have a total of fifty points to distribute among them.

Abilities

The abilities are Strength (also shortened as STR), Dexterity (DEX), Constitution (CON), Intelligence (INT), Willpower (WIL) and Appearance (APP).

An average ability in any of these is rated 0 (zero). For every point you want above 0, you have to pay two skill points (that's because abilities are hard to train). An ability of 3 is high, and an ability of 5 is very high. Five is also the highest level of ability you may start with, but in the course of many games you may increase your abilities up to 10, which is an almost superhuman level.

You may also have below average abilities. For every point you go below 0, you gain two skill points you may use elsewhere. A score of -2 is very low, and -4 is extremely low - the lowest you may have (but you should not go this far). You can also best use only 20 skill points for your abilities, and leave the rest for your skills.

When Jelena first began her adventuring career, she was not too different from most Arabian women. But even then she was extremely agile (DEX 5), observant (INT 2), and with above average endurance and strength (CON 1, STR 1). She also had a persuasive pretty face (APP 2). She only lacked a little in courage (WIL -1; making a total of 20 skill points).

Skills

Whereas all people have all six abilities (even if they only have them at an average 0), not all people have the same skills. There are many different skills, ranging from horseriding and swimming, through fighting with certain kinds of weapons, to disciplines of magick. You only have a skill if you invest in it. If you do not have a skill, you can not use it, unless you are instructed, or the task is very easy.

Skills cost only one point per level, and you start counting at level 1. (Zero level skill cannot be bought: you either know a skill, or you don't). Skill 1 is beginner level, 3 is average, 5 is high and very skillful. Five is also the maximum you may start with, but you may raise your skills up to 10 over the course of many games. Skill levels 7 through 10 are truly masterful. Only top professionals have such high scores. There is no limit to how many skills you can buy, except in points. You can find a limited list of skills on the next page to choose from.

Difficult Skills

Some special skills you must note, are especially hard to learn. You need a minimum DEX, STR, INT, WIL, and/or minimal writing or language skills before you can buy these skills. You can recognise these skills by the requirements listed in parenthesis behind them. To learn Arching with a longbow, you must be strong enough to use it (STR 3), for example.

Free Skill: Mother Language

In addition to the skills a character buys, he or she will also have some very common skills. The character will have level 5 in his or her native language and if desired also level 3 the common language of the world.

Shimrod was in his early days a typical wizard, with high intelligence and a very strong will (INT 3, WIL 4), both essential in the learning of magick. Of course he was well lettered (Read&Write 3), and versed in the Latin language (Latin 3), which was the language of magick. Only because he had all these prerequisites, he was able to learn his many magick skills. Skills like turning himself or anything else invisible (invisibility 2 - better than a beginner), conjuring up fireballs and flames (evoke and control fire 5 - maximum level to start with), and charming people into doing all sorts of things (charm magick 3 - pretty good at it - totalling 30 pts)

But Shimrod was good at some other things too. He was very dextrous and fast (DEX 4), and wielded a sword like a professional (sword 4). He could sneak like a thief, and knew a lot about healing (stealth and sneaking 3, first aid 3). (Together this is 18 pts making a total of 48). And... Shimrod had a certain charm (the player uses his last two points to give Shimrod an APP of 1). Naturally Shimrod also knew his native language: Anglian, as any native Briton would (Anglian 5, free skill).

Equipment and Money

The typical character will have 50 to 100 silvers in spare cash, a knife, clothes, and all the tools of his or her trade. If you use one of the templates on page 5, you will have the equipment listed in the template. If you thought up your own character profession entirely, ask your Game Master what you can have, or buy all of your equipment for a maximum total of 25 gold instead. You can find an equipment list on the back of the booklet.

General Skills:

Acrobatics (STR 3, DEX 3)
 Acting
 Combat Tactics
 Cooking
 Dancing
 Excellent Hearing
 Etiquette
 First Aid
 Gambling
 History (INT 3, Read&Write 3)
 Horse Riding
 Hunting
 Intrusion and Picking Locks
 Leadership
 Night Vision
 Preaching
 Psychology (INT 3)
 Read & Write
 Rock Climbing (DEX 3)
 Sailing
 Search
 Seduction
 Singing
 Sleight of Hand and Picking Pockets (DEX 3)
 Swimming
 Survival, Rural
 Stealth and Sneaking
 Trading
 ANY CRAFT (define: e.g. woodcraft, blacksmithing, farming)
 ANY KNOWLEDGE SKILL (define: e.g. alchemy) (INT 3, R&W3)
 ANY LANGUAGE (define: e.g. Anglian, Latin, Castellan)

Weapon Skills:

Archery (longbow) (STR 3)
 Archery (shortbow)
 Axe (twohanded battleaxe) (STR 3)
 Brawling (or boxing)
 Club
 Crossbow
 Dagger
 Lance (horseback)
 Mace (steel club)
 Main Gauche (lefthanded dagger) (DEX 3)
 Morningstar Flail
 Pole Arm (like a halberd, twohanded)
 Rapier
 Shield (small)
 Shield (medium)
 Spear (twohanded)
 Staff (twohanded)
 Sword (short)
 Sword (long)
 Sword (lefthanded short) (DEX 3)
 Sword (twohanded bastard) (STR 3)
 Throw Dagger
 Throw Spear
 Whip

Faith, Ceremony:

Faith in St. Michael, archangel of vengeance and fighting demons
 Faith in St. Gabriel, archangel of visions
 Faith in St. Rafael, archangel of healing
 Crosstian Ceremony (Latin 3, Read&Write 3)

Magicks (all need INT 3, WIL 3, Latin 3, Read & Write 3):

Charm Magick
 Clairvoyance
 Conjure and Bind Demons
 Evoke and Control Fire Magick
 Evoke and Control Lightning Magick
 Flight and Levitation
 Invisibility
 Telekinesis
 Telepathy
 Shapeshifting into Animals

Appearance, History and Personality

Now it is time to name your character. Choose a name you like, a fantasy name. And then you should decide how your character looks, your character's background, and his or her personality. These are actually the things that will give your character life - so think on them! You will not have to think everything up at once though, your ideas may grow as you play, and you can fill in many details later.

Try to visualize what your character looks like. Is your character tall, short (high STR is often tall), what color of eyes, what kind of build, what sort of hair and hair color, any birth marks, what type of clothing, which colors? Does he or she look like a movie star you know (high APP!), or can you draw a picture of him or her?

And then, what is your character's background? Did he or she come from a rich or a poor family? Brothers and sisters? Are parents still alive? Were close relatives murdered perhaps, or was he or she never even accepted as a legal child? What kind of shaping events happened in his or her childhood? Any important teachers, enemies, promises, lost or unrequited loves? Especially when the character has dark secret, it can become very interesting to play. Just imagine you play someone who accidentally killed someone and is on the run!

Last but not least, think about your character's personality. Is he or she brave (high WIL), or cowardous (low WIL)? Is the character observant (high INT), or a bit slow witted (low INT)? Outgoing or not? Obnoxious (low APP) or a charmer (high APP)? How does he or she react to problems? What does your character want out of life? What does he or she like to do, and who would they befriend, or even fall in love with? You don't have to decide everything yet: maybe you will find out most of what your character is like when you play!

Cyrion Raven was a tall, handsome man. Blonde, with piercing blue eyes, and an athletic body (STR 3, APP 2). (In fact, he looked somewhat like a young Rutger Hauer in the movie Ladyhawke). He wore a black chain mail hauberk, a crossbow, and a long sword on his side.

He came from a rich family. But he seldom talked about it. That was because his family had done horrible things in his eyes. Especially his mother, the Witch. He had left them at a young age to travel the world. And soon he fell in love with a princess, a beautiful elf, Arwena. He even would marry her. But he was brutally attacked by her father's henchmen just before the marriage, and left in a pit with wolves to die. When he finally recovered, many months later, she had left without a trace. She was very bitter, they said, and might have killed herself. Her father was such a wreck because of it, that he was not worth Cyrion's vengeance any more.

Still Cyrion feels the pain if he thinks of her. So often he appears as a brooding and silent man. He will travel in search of Arwena until he finds her, and would truly go to the ends of the earth if necessary (WIL 3). And underway he will help others who are thwarted in their true love. Because he recognises the injustice they go through. And one day, he hopes, he shall find happiness for himself again too.

Character Templates

Below are eleven examples of typical professions for a new adventurer. All can be both women and men: you can either play a female knight or a male one, whatever you like best.

Just pick any template you like, and invest points in the skills you like of the template. You may always take additional skills, and raise any of your abilities, as long as the total costs no more than 50 points. Skills and abilities listed in black must be learnt, because they are needed for other listed skills. If you want a skill with an ability in parentheses, you must also have that ability at the level listed.

Courtesan

Courtesans (male: Minstrel) spend their adventurous lives travelling, making music, and seducing the opposite sex. They love pleasure, as they know life is short enough as it is.

Typical Skills: *Seduction, Etiquette, Acting,*

Read&Write, Riding Horse, Swimming, Psychology, Gambling, Singing, Dancing, Throw Dagger, Brawling, Sleight of Hand and Stealing

Items: seductive clothing, rich clothing, dagger, trained weapon, perfumes, fancy jewelry, musical instrument, backpack with food and wine, 50 silver

Dwarf

Dwarves are sturdy, four feet tall, grumpy and with enormous beards. They love to work in their tunnels, and are often greedy for gold, gems and beer. Also, they like to fight.

Typical Skills: *Battle Axe, Shield, Dagger, Brawling, Searching,*

Mining and Tunneling (craft), Weaponsmithing (craft),

Jewelrysmithing (craft), Rock Climbing (DEX 3), Night Vision

Items: helmet, chain hauberk, sturdy clothes, axe, dagger, shield, backpack with food and beer, 50 silvers

Elf

Elves are creatures of the forest, slender, agile and taller than man. They are magical in nature and seldom meddle with other races. But sometimes they join an adventure for their own mystical reasons.

Required Skills: **Read&Write 3, Latin 3, INT 3, WIL 3,**

Typical Skills: *Charm Magick, Clairvoyance, Telepathy,*

Survival (Rural), Animal Lore (knowledge), Arching (shortbow), Staff,

Swimming, Hunting, Singing, Dancing, Excellent Hearing

Items: beautiful clothing, green cloak, leather cuirass, leather bracers and boots, shortbow and quiver with twelve arrows, staff, pouch with elven bread and elven wine (very tasty and nourishing), and no money!

Elfling

Elflings are no taller than human children of ten or twelve. They have pointed ears, come from nature, are very curious and love adventure.

Typical Skills: *Arching (shortbow), Dagger, Shortsword, Swimming,*

Singing, Dancing, Cooking, Excellent Hearing, Night Vision,

Survival (Rural), Stealth and Sneaking, Search, Hunting

Items: sturdy green clothing, leather jacket and boots, shortbow and quiver with twelve arrows, dagger, backpack with food and wine, 50 silver

Exorcist

Exorcists and Inquisitors travel the world to rid it of demons, devils, undead and other unnatural evils. They are fervent believers in St. Michael, and fight both with their pure faith and their physical weapons if needed.

Required Skills: **Read&Write 3, Latin 3, INT 3,**

Typical Skills: *Crossian Ceremony, Theology (knowledge), Preaching,*

Faith (St. Michael of Demonsmiting), Faith (St. Gabriel of Visions),

Mythology (knowledge), Demon Lore (knowledge), History,

Mace, Horse Riding, Swimming

Items: black robes, leather cuirass, crucifix, bible, vial with holy water, ritual candles, mace, pouch with food and waterflask, 50 silver

Grey Friar

The Grey Friars have sworn an oath to tend to the wounded and the sick, and save lives wherever they can. They shun violence, but are often much help in a party of heroes.

Required Skills: **Read&Write 3, Latin 3, INT 3,**

Typical Skills: *Poison Lore (knowledge), Disease Lore (knowledge),*

Faith (St. Raphael of healing), Faith (St. Gabriel of visions),

Crossian Ceremony, Preaching, Theology (knowledge of the bible),

Herb Lore (knowledge), Psychology, First Aid, Swimming

Items: grey robes, simple clothes, crucifix, bible, bandages, healing herbs, candles, pouch with food and wine, 50 silver

Knight

The noble knights may be the richest among adventurers, but they also have most responsibilities. Often they have a castle or realm to defend, and a Lord to obey. Also they have the duty to protect the weak.

Typical Skills: *Longsword, Broadsword, Bastard Sword, Horse Riding,*

Morningstar Flail, Brawling, Mace, Etiquette, Lance, Shield,

Heraldry (knowledge of coats of arms), Swimming, Leadership

Items: sword, full helmet, light chain hauberk, rich sturdy clothes, dagger, shield, horse with saddle, saddlebags with food and wine, 10 gold

Mercenary

Mercenaries are soldiers of fortune, hired by warlords to fight their wars. They see a lot of the world travelling thus, and meanwhile enjoy their earnings any way they can.

Typical Skills: *Short Sword, Mace, Dagger, Brawl, Wrestle, Shield,*

Shortbow, Spear, Crossbow, Cook, Hunting, Survive (Rural), Gamble,

Stealth And Sneaking, Swimming, Horse Riding, Combat Tactics

Items: ringmail brigantine, leather boots, sturdy clothes, open helmet, trained weapons, dagger, backpack with food and wine, 100 silver

Rogue

Rogues are bandits, outlaws and thieves. Their whole life is an adventure, and even if it is hard to trust them, they are the best in covert missions.

Typical Skills: *Stealth and Sneaking, Intrusion and Picking Locks,*

Sleight of Hand and Picking Pockets (DEX 3),

Acrobatics (STR3, DEX3), Rock Climbing (DE X3),

Brawling, Dagger, Club, Throw Dagger

Hunting, Search, Horse Riding, Swimming, Survival (Rural)

Items: leather jack and boots, cloak, dagger, trained weapon, lockpicks, rope, pouch with food and waterskin, 50 silver

Witch

The witch (male: warlock) is often shunned by normal people, but she knows very powerful secrets. Often she can see where no one else can, and thus she may be invaluable to the success of any venture.

Required Skills: **Read&Write 3, Latin 3, INT 3, WIL 3,**

Typical Skills: *Charm Magick, Clairvoyance, Flight and Levitation,*

Shapeshifting into Animals, Telepathy, Herb Lore (knowledge),

Animal Lore (knowledge), Psychology, Monster Lore (knowledge)

Items: mystical or simple clothing, dagger, book of spells, fancy jewelry, mage's amulet, various herbs, pouch with food and waterflask, 50 silver

Wizard

The wizard (female: sorceress) is versed in the magick arts, and spends most of his life in study. But sometimes they feel that venturing in the world is needed, to change history, or to find new knowledge.

Required Skills: **Read&Write 3, Latin 3, INT 3, WIL 3,**

Typical Skills: *Charm Magick, Evoke and Control Fire Magick,*

Evoke and Control Lightning Magick, Invisibility, Telekinesis,

History, Occult Lore (knowledge), Alchemy (knowledge)

Items: impressive mystical clothing, dagger, book of spells, fancy bracers, mage's staff, magical powders, pouch with food and wine, 100 silver

3. Using your Skills and Abilities

What is the formula of succes? Some say it is natural ability, some say it is skill and practice, and yet others say it is sheer luck. In reality, all three may have to do with it. When Guillaume tried to pick the complex locks of the Ferdanian Reichsbank Vault, he surely had an aptitude for such things. Because he had good dexterity. But he was also very skilled at the ignoble art of intrusion. And above all, he was especially lucky that day.

There will be many times in the course of an adventure that you try to do things of which the outcome is uncertain. Often the results will be fairly obvious, because the task at hand is so easy that you hardly can fail. Other times it's just impossible to do, like trying to cast a spell when you don't know magick. But many times, it will be something in between.

In all these cases, the Game Master may ask you to either make a Skill Check, or an Ability Check. You make a Skill Check if you have a particular skill that's very much fit for the task at hand. If you do not have any applicable skill, or if it's something very general you try to do (jump over a ditch, for example), you make an Ability Check.

Skill Checks

To make a skill check, you roll a ten-sided die (d10), and you add the level of the skill you want to use. The Game Master sets the difficulty for the task you want to try, and may tell you beforehand what you need to roll in total. If you make at least the total set by the Game Master, you succeed in the task, if not, you fail. In the table below are the typical target numbers you need to make with your skill checks:

3	very easy	
6	easy	- most typical EASY check
9	difficult	- most typical HARD check
12	very difficult	
15	extremely difficult	
18	near impossible	
21	quite impossible (for any but gods)	

Jean Luc estimated that climbing the somewhat slippery, overhanging cliff would be a rather difficult task (difficulty 12). Fortunately, he was a very experienced rock climber (rock climbing 5). He spit on his hands, and with care he gripped the first stone. Step by step he went upward, until he came at the ledge. Then, catching his breath, he swung his legs up. He was lucky (player rolls an 8, plus 5 from the skill is a 13, which is more than 12, thus a succes). His legs caught over the edge, and he could pull himself up.

Sometimes you may want to do things you do not have a skill for. In this case, you may try to substitute another skill if it is very much alike. If you can fight well with a shortsword for example, then you might use this skill to swing a longsword or even a club, too. Whether you can substitute a particular skill with another, is the decision of the Game Master. If the Game Master feels the other skill is not really good enough, he or she may also decide to make the roll more difficult for you, because the skill you use is different from what you need. And some skills you cannot substitute with anything, like magick skills - you either know them or you don't.

Ability Checks

Often, the tasks you attempt are so general in nature, that you do not need to make a Skill Check, but an Ability Check instead. This is the case when you try to break through a door that is stuck (Strength), try to dodge a falling rock (Dexterity), try to stay under water for more than a minute (Constitution), and so on. The Ability Check is for general things. What you can use a particular ability for is noted in the next box:

STR	- lifting things, jumping up, forcing doors and chests, pushing, sprinting
DEX	- EVASION, climbing, jumping (down), dodging
CON	- staying underwater, not going k.o., resist poison, running long
INT	- PERCEPTION, noticing things, remembering, solving puzzles, getting ideas
WIL	- resisting magick, resisting pain, resisting temptation, being courageous
APP	- persuading others, attracting others, looking good

When you make an Ability Check, again you make a roll with the d10, and now you add the applicable ability. Note that if your ability happens to be below zero, you actually subtract from the roll! If you make at least the total set by the Game Master, you succeed in the task, if not, you fail. You can use exactly the same table as for the skill checks, in the last column.

Castor tried to stay as long under water as he could, so that he could reach the far grating and escape. Fortunately, his physique was good enough (roll 7, plus CON 2, makes 9 - enough for a normal hard task). He set his feet to the grating and pushed with all force. The thing was really stuck, but again he was fortunate. It gave way (STR 3, plus a roll of 8, more than enough to make the needed 9). Quickly he swam upward, before his lungs could hold it no longer. He burst out of the water, and breathed deeply. 'Free at last!', he thought. But in his enthusiasm he failed to notice the guard in the room (INT check for perception, rolled a 2 plus 3 - not enough for a fairly easy 6). He climbed up exactly under the guard's feet, and saw the crossbow pointing at him just a bit too late.

Sometimes the Game Master may also allow you to substitute an ability where you normally would need a skill. For example, if you first pick up a sword, you may try to just bash your enemy with sheer force (STR). Or if you try to think of an important historic fact, you might have learnt it in your general education (INT), even if you're no historian. However, the Game Master will always make the roll more difficult for you. Typically you will have to roll at least (!) one class (3 points) higher than if you had the right skill.

Merit was not especially versed in psychology, and did not think about people's motivations often. But she did have her common sense. So she did pick up that her client was lying about the package he gave her to deliver. It was a much more dangerous mission than he admitted. (The Game Master figured that detecting the lies would not be difficult for someone with psychological insight - roll 6 or more - but Merit had no skill. So instead he let her roll on INT, but she would have to make a class higher - roll 9 or more. Merit makes a 7 and has INT 2, so she detects the lie.)

'Fumbles' And 'Naturals'

If you roll a straight 1 or a 10 (0) on the die before you add your skill or ability, something special happens. A straight 10 is really good, a straight 1 often very bad.

If you roll a straight 10, this is called a 'natural'. You always succeed in what you try to do, as long as it is remotely possible. This is even true if you do not have enough skill to normally make the roll you need. As a guideline, your Game Master will often treat your 'natural' as if you rolled 3 higher than you did.

If you roll a straight 1, you may have really screwed up! To see if that is the case, you must roll the die again.

- If you roll 5 or more, you just add 1 to your skill or ability, and that's the roll for your Skill or Ability Check. So, probably you failed, but not too badly.

- But if you roll a **1, 2, 3 or 4** on your second roll, you really botched it! This is also called a '**fumble**'. Whatever you tried really backfires. You trip over your own feet, you hit your friend instead of your enemy, your magick creates the opposite effect, you sneeze and wake up the whole garrison instead of sneaking past the guard, and so on. What happens exactly is up to the Game Master. The lower your second roll, and the more difficult what you actually tried to do, the worse your fumble will be.

When the sorceress Rani cast her final spell on the evil demon prince Pazuzu, she was incredibly lucky and efficient (she rolls a straight 10, and adds a skill of 5, making 15. Because it is a "natural", the Game Master treats the result as if it is even 3 higher, or an 18). Rani her sorcery was virtually irresistible, and her charm enveloped the demon. Yet, if anyone could resist such mighty spells, Pazuzu was the one.

But Pazuzu didn't. Instead he just clenched his teeth, tripped over his own feet and fell down the deep pit of Hell he came from. (To defend Pazuzu rolled a straight 1 on the die, and when rolling again to check for a fumble, he rolled 1 again!)

Resisting Others

Many times you will be matching your skills or abilities against those of others. Perhaps you have a contest of who can run fastest, or sing best. Or you could do some arm wrestling. Or maybe you try to sneak past someone, while he is on guard duty and tries to notice suspicious things.

In all these cases, both parties must make a roll with d10 on the skill or ability they are using, and the highest wins. So if you try to wrestle your neighbour down, both of you roll a d10, and add your STR. The highest of the two wins!

The skills do not necessarily have to be the same. So if you try to sneak past, and the guard might notice you, you roll on your Sneaking skill, but the guard rolls on his INT.

At certain times the Game Master may also feel one party has a sure advantage over the other. In that case he will give the advantaged party a +3 on the roll. When you wrestle arms for example, the highest STR is much more important than luck, so the higher STR would get a +3. And if you sneak past a guard who is really not paying attention, you also get a +3. On the other hand, if the guard actually is paying attention and has Excellent Hearing skill too, he would instead get the +3, and roll on his Excellent Hearing skill!

Explanations of the General Skills:

Below follows a short explanation for each of the general skills in Dark Dungeon 2nd Ed. You don't need to learn these by heart. Just look in the list when you want to know something!

Always remember that, the harder the task, the higher you need to roll, and the more important it is to have a high skill!

Acrobatics (STR 3, DEX 3)

You can walk a tightrope, jump great heights both up and down, and know how to fall without taking damage. Jumping and falling greater distances increases the difficulty level. Note that the human record jumping up is about two and a half meters, and jumping wide about eight meters.

Acting

You may convincingly impersonate all kinds of people (let people believe you are a guard or a noble, for example). You can also convince people that you are really drunk, sleeping, stupid, and so on. If you are good at this skill you might make money with play-acting in theatres.

Combat Tactics

With this skill you can find and use the most advantageous positions to fight from. You get a better overview of a battle, know where to expect enemies, are able to retreat or attack through the best route, and have a knack of gaining initiative or even surprise.

Cooking

You can not just fry an egg, but make good and tasteful meals from most ingredients you can find. If you are really good, you can make money as a cook in Inns or as a private cook for the nobility.

Dancing

You can easily dance, choreograph, invent, remember and pick up new dances. If you have high dancing skill you may earn money in a travelling company of artists, or as a dancing teacher for the nobility. Sometimes the Game Master may allow you to use dancing skill to evade attacks, instead of DEX.

Excellent Hearing

With this skill you can even hear sounds that are far away or soft, and understand whispers that are otherwise impossible to hear. You will also notice strange sounds more easily, and may roll on it for perception checks.

Etiquette

You know how to act distinguished, charming and correct. Such manners are highly regarded especially in noble company, but may also serve well to impress and convince other officials.

First Aid

You can give first aid if someone is wounded, burned, sick or nearly drowned. You can stop their bleeding, make simple stitches to sew up a wound if necessary, apply bandages and set broken bones straight. You can give mouth to mouth, and give heart massage to save someone from dying. The worse the wounds, the harder your task! If you are successful however, you may reduce the normally needed healing time, or save people from dying. For more information read the section "Recovery from Wounds" in the next chapter.

Gambling

You are good at playing card games, bluffing games, dice games, and generally all games involving bluff and chance. If you are very good at this, you might even make a living playing cards!

History (INT 3, Read&Write 3)

You know many historical facts, including dates, personalities, happenings, places and objects that played a role in history. You may thus recognize old castles, have an idea where old treasures might be buried, and what a particular old artefact might be good for.

Horse Riding

You can ride a horse, calm a horse, let it jump, chase and maneuver, let it make speed, and ride for a long time without tiring. You also can distinguish the age and quality of horses and take basic care of them. The higher your skill, the faster you can ride and maneuver, even in rough terrain.

Hunting

You know where certain wild animals can be found and can find and follow their tracks. Also, you can make some basic traps and snares to catch those animals. If you are good at this, you can make a living selling wild meat. Note that this is not the same as survival skill, and that you can not use weapons yet! You must learn separately to handle a spear or bow!

Intrusion and Picking Locks

You can pick locks to open without the right key, open combination locks, and easily jemmy windows, doors and hatches. Also you can find and disable simple traps and alarms. To do your work, you always need some tools, like false keys, screwdrivers, hairpins and crowbars.

Leadership

You can command troops in battle, know how to build morale and keep your men happy, and can motivate them to do better. You can also lead other groups, and impress people in general. The better you are at this, the larger the groups you can lead, in harder circumstances. If you are very good at this, you may earn your living as a Serjeant or officer in an army.

Night Vision

This is a very unusual skill for humans, and normally only elflings and dwarves will have it (although thieves might learn it with long training). You can see at night with this 'skill', even when there is only very little light to go around. If there is no light at all, then you are just as blind as anyone else.

Preaching

You can convince people with religious anecdotes, impress people by quoting from the Bible, and even convert people to the faith. It is an essential skill to be a good priest. You may also persuade people to do what you want them to, as long as you can place your arguments in a religious context.

Psychology (INT 3)

You can gauge someone's intentions, feelings and predict their reactions. You may also estimate if someone lies or tells the truth - which often is very useful. Given some time you may also figure someone's willpower, intelligence, background, and even guess at their deepest wishes and fears.

Read & Write

You know how to read and write. If you have at least level 3, you only have to roll for reading bad handwriting or if correct spelling is an issue (when writing magick spells, or writing letters to the queen). If you have a high skill, you may earn your money as a scribe.

Rock Climbing (DEX 3)

You can climb sheer rocks or walls, with or without rope, clamps and tools. Slippery walls and overhanging cliffs are harder to climb. If you fail your roll you must retreat back where you came from, because it's too hard for you to climb the stretch. If you fumble, you fall, and may have injured yourself.

Sailing

You can sail boats and ships, handle them in rough water, know how and when to use sails, maneuver through undepths, and make speed in a chase with ships. You also know sailing jargon, and how to use ropes on ships. If you are good at this, you can make a living as a sailor.

Search

You can quickly find things and notice things more easily. You know where to look for certain things, such as valuables, money, papers, traps, secret panels and doorways, and so on.

Seduction

You can make others fall in love with you, make them feel romantic, seduce them into joining you, or even making love with you. If you are good at this, or the other party willing, you may even seduce members of your own sex. To resist a succesful seduction attempt, you must make a WIL or faith-check.

Singing

With this skill you can sing and compose songs, and sing in choirs. If you are very good you may earn a living as a minstrel, or attract the opposite sex with your beautiful song.

Sleight of Hand and Picking Pockets (DEX 3)

With this skill you can pick pockets, money pouches and handbags without the victim noticing. Or instead you might replace or plant items in someone's pockets. If you are really good, you may even steal worn jewels, bracelets, armour, rings, or even clothing right from under a victim's nose.

Swimming

You can stay above water, swim with or without load, swim for a long time without tiring, and dive and swim underwater. It is a must for sailors.

Survival, Rural

You know where to find and forage food, how to discern poisonous from edible plants, and how to build a simple shelter in the wilderness. Also you can find water, and make a fire or stay warm with the materials at hand.

Stealth and Sneaking

You are good at hiding and sneaking around. This is very useful if you want to follow people without being noticed, or when breaking into places. But note that it is virtually impossible to sneak around in metal armour!

Trading

With this skill you can estimate the price of trade goods, buy for a low price, sell for a high price, and generally bargain for a better price. Also, you may trace rare goods on the market place. If you are very good you can make a living as a merchant.

ANY CRAFT (define: e.g. woodcraft, blacksmithing, farming)

With this skill you can practice a particular craft which you must define more precisely. You could have Woodcrafting 2 for example, or Blacksmithing 5. If you are good at your skill, you may earn money as a craftsman. If you want several crafts, you have to buy them separately. Some typical crafts are Woodcrafting, Blacksmithing, Farming, Armouring, Weaponsmithing, Carpentry, Tailoring, Pottery and Jewelsmithing.

ANY KNOWLEDGE SKILL (define: e.g. herb lore) (INT 3, R&W3)

With this skill you have specialist knowledge of some kind, which you must define more precisely. You might have 'Vampire Lore 2' for example, or 'Herb Lore 4'. Each knowledge skill must be bought separately. Whether a particular skill can be learnt is the decision of the Game Master. Typical knowledge skills are Poison Lore, Herb Lore, Theology, Mythology, Demonology, Animal Lore, Monster Lore, Plant Lore and Alchemy.

Gaab was a true walking encyclopedia, but even he had to think for a moment what he knew about the church of Aلدorf. "Few people know", he said finally, "that this church was actually built before the Messiah was born. And how a church can be built before Crossstianity existed is a riddle to me still!" (Gaab rolls on his Theology, and rolls a 7 plus a skill of 5. The Game Master figures this is a very high roll, and Gaab would know something that is almost a secret. Hence he fills in the story, making up some facts that fit the adventure as he goes along.)

ANY LANGUAGE (define: e.g. Anglian, Latin, Castellan)

With this skill you can speak another language, which you must define more precisely. You could speak Anglian 3 for example, or Latin 2. If you have at least level 3, you speak the language well, and can make your way in everyday life. Native speakers typically have skill 5 or better. If you have a higher skill in a language you might become a poet or a writer in that language. With skill 1 or 2 you must almost always roll to see if you understand something in the language. If you want to speak more different languages, you have to buy them separately. Reading and writing is a separate skill too. Typical languages are Anglian (english), Keo (french), Ferdan (german), Latin, Elfish and Dwarfish.

4. Combat: Fighting Man to Man

Sion drew her katana as quick as lightning, but the enemy was quicker still. A small dart whizzed past Sion's head as she ducked for the floor. The dark elf had the initiative now, and again he shot with his small repeating crossbow. But this time he missed wide. This was Sion's chance. She leaped forward and swung her curved sword with precision. Again she proved her skill and amazing luck. The dark elf was not fast enough to dodge, and his head came clean off his neck.

Inevitably, your character will get in a fight some time. That's what it is an adventure game for! Combat is an essential part of the lives of our fantasy heroes, whether they like it or not.

Combat Rounds

Combat is handled in separate units of time, called combat rounds. In each combat round, each character or monster may perform one action. And because you (normally) can do only this one action in the round, it is very important to be the first one to do something. We call this 'having the initiative'.

Gaining The Initiative

Whenever a fight starts, someone will be the first to draw their weapon and strike a blow. Who this is, is determined as follows:

1. If either party surprises the other (by sneaking up behind them, for example), they may strike first.
2. If both parties want to fight, and are aware of each other, the one with the longest weapon strikes first. Thrown and shot weapons are even faster, and magick spells cast in combat are always slowest.
3. If both have similar weapons, or if one or both try to be extra fast to beat their opponents, they may make a DEX roll to gain the initiative. Each rolls a die and adds their DEX, and the one with the longer or faster weapon adds three more. Whoever scores highest may act first.

Kuller and Erik had been working on each others nerves now for long enough. They would fight it out in a duel. Erik had his throwing knives ready, his muscles tense. Kuller loosely held his crossbow. They stood twenty paces from each other and stared each other in the eye, waiting for the right moment.

Erik was faster. But only just. (Erik rolls 8 plus DEX 4, and Kuller rolls only 5 plus DEX 3, but he has a faster weapon - you only have to pull the trigger on a crossbow, - so he gets 3 points extra. Kuller thus makes 11, and Erik 12).

Actions

Once it is clear who has initiative, all act in turn. The highest initiative goes first, then the next highest, and so on, until everybody has acted. You may do only one action in your turn. An action may be an attack, a parry, an evasion, drawing a weapon, reloading a crossbow, diving behind a rock, running five meters toward the enemy, and so on.

Once you have done your action, your turn is over. So if you have to parry an enemy sword with your own, you cannot attack back in this round!

There are only two exceptions to this rule:

1. If you have a shield and a weapon, or a left-handed and a right-handed weapon, you may actually make a special

combined maneuver: a parry and attack, a double attack, or a double defense. You roll separately for each.

2. If you have used up your action already, and are attacked (again) in a round, you may 'borrow' the action of your next round to defend. In that case you give up your initiative, and come after all your current opponents in the next round.

Fridleif charged the dark werewolf, and chopped at the beast with his axe. But he missed. The wolf saw its chance and clawed at Fridleif ferociously. Fridleif had to duck quickly, losing his initiative, and the wolf now came upon him again! (Fridleif 'borrows' his action from the next round to duck the blow, and thus loses the initiative in his next round to the wolf).

The Attack

The most common action in a combat is the attack. The attack may be with a melee weapon, such as a club or sword, or with a missile weapon such as a bow. Whatever is the case, you always roll a weapon skill check for an attack. So if you attack with your shortsword, you roll a d10, and add your shortsword skill. To see if you have hit, and where, look up the result in the attack table below.

9	Arms
10	Legs
11	Torso (defender chooses: arms, chest or guts)
12	Chest
13	Guts
14	Head
15	Critical! (attacker chooses location, more damage)

Special: vs Unsuspecting Target, From Behind, or vs Prone Target +3 On Roll

As you may note you must make at least a 9 to hit someone in combat. That is because people generally try to avoid being hit. If you are attacking from behind however, surprising a victim, or hitting on someone who is down or held, you may add 3 to your roll, up and above your skill.

Mordred just flailed his morningstar on the troll from behind. No matter that it was an attack in the back. He didn't have any morals. And it was easier. The iron ball hit the monster right on the skull with a terrible crunch.

(He rolls a 6, adding morningstar 5, adding another 3 for attacking from behind, making a 14, or a hit on the head.)

If the Game Master feels a victim is especially defenseless, he may give you a +6 instead, or rule that you kill automatically. If a victim is unconscious for example, and you have ample time to deal with him, there is no point in rolling the dice.

The Defense

If you were effective enough to hit somebody with your attack, it is not guaranteed that you actually hit and damage him yet. Your opponent may still try to parry, block or evade your hit. But it will cost him his action for the round.

If you defend against an attack, you must always roll a d10, and add a certain skill or ability. Your defense is successful if you make at least the same number as the attacker made with his attack. So if you are hit with a 12, you must make at least a 12 too. A natural is always enough to defend. If you fail your

defense you are hit by the attack, and probably you will be wounded or even killed. How bad the wound will be depends on your armour, and how badly you missed your defense. But first, here are the different ways to defend:

Evasion is dodging or ducking the blow. To do so, you must roll d10, and add your DEX. Evasion can normally not be used in combination with an attack. But if you roll a natural for your evade, you not only evade, but may attack back in the same round, too.

Blocking is done with a shield, or a left-handed weapon. Roll a d10 and add your shield skill. You can block with your shield and attack with the weapon in your other hand in the same round if your block is successful.

Parrying is done with your attack weapon, catching the blow of the enemy. To parry you roll a d10 and add your weapon skill. If you roll a natural for the parry you may attack back in the same round.

You can defend only once against any attack (aimed or not). The only exception is when you decide beforehand to block with both your weapons, or both your shield and weapon.

Machteld faced her enemies with dread. Ska warroirs. Two of them at the same time. And they were fast (the two Ska have initiative and go first, Machteld will go last). The first one struck her with his fierce blade, and she only just managed to throw her shield in between (the Ska rolls 6+4=10 for his attack, Machteld defends with 8+3=11, one point more). The second one attacked swiftly then, but barely missed her (4+4=8 is a miss). That gave Machteld the opening to use her own sword, and she thrust for his heart (9+4=12, chest). He jumped back far, and she missed. But now she had the edge on him (the second Ska already attacked this round, and so borrows his defense from his next round; he rolls a 9, plus DEX 3; he evades, but in the next round he will go last).

The first Ska left Machteld no breathing space. He hit again, now for her shoulder ... (the new round begins, with the first Ska still having first initiative, Machteld being second, and the second Ska now being last).

Aimed Attacks

Sometimes, you may want to just go for someone's throat and kill him. Or maybe you just want to knock someone unconscious, knock him on the ground, or disarm him. In all these cases you may make an aimed (or declared) attack. You must then state what you want to do before you roll the d10 for the attack. So if you want to behead an opponent, you say: 'I chop his head off'. And if you want to knock him out, you say 'I knock him unconscious with the flat of my sword'. Only then you roll the d10 for the attack. In the table below you can find what you must make for these special attacks. If you fail to make this number, you miss altogether.

12	Knock opponent unconscious Disarm opponent Knock down opponent on ground or off ledge Hit specific location (such as head or leg)
15	Kill opponent with a terminal hit (decapitate, stab through the heart or eye)

Blade had been evading the huge black knight for some time now, but this was his chance. He threw his meagre dagger with skill and precision, exactly in the eye slit of the visor. The dagger pierced through the knight's eye into his brain, and killed in an instant. No matter how much armour the knight wore, this humble dagger had slain him.
(Blade's player declared he wanted to go for the eye slit, and had to make a 15. And, believe it or not, he rolled a 9. Adding his throw dagger skill of 6 is exactly enough. A point less and he would have missed completely.)

Doing Damage

If a weapon hits, it will do damage. But how much damage is done depends on the weapon, and on the armour the victim wears. It's hard to damage a knight in plate armour with your fist, and hard not to damage an unarmoured woman with a twohanded axe. There are several classes of wound damage: the Bruise (B), the Light wound (L), the Severe wound (S), and the Critical wound (C). Each class is worse than the next.

Also, you have several classes of armour and weapon strength. You can find those in the tables below. Note that the heavy armours and weapons need a minimum STR or CON to use.

Armour classes:	
no armour, simple clothes	0
leather, very thick clothes, or quilted cloth armour	1
ringmail, light chainmail or reinforced leather	2
heavy scale mail, open steel helmet (CON 0 to wear)	3
heavy plate, closed steel helmet (CON 3 to wear)	4
dragon scale (CON 6 or better to wear)	5

Weapon classes:	
fist	0
dagger, knife, light club, kick, bite, claw	1
shortsword, rapier, axe, mace, spear, (cross)bow	2
longsword, broadsword, morningstar (STR 0 needed)	3
bastardsword, pole arm, longbow (STR 3 needed)	4
greatsword (STR 6 needed)	5

Now, the damage you do depends on whether the armour is stronger, the weapon is stronger, or both are just as strong. You can see the results in the table below.

armour better:	Bruise (B)
armour equal to weapon:	Light wound (L)
weapon better:	Severe wound (S)
weapon 3 or more better:	Critical wound (C)
critical hit	one class higher
missed defense by 1 to 3 pts	one class lower

There are two special instances. One is if you strike a critical hit (roll 15 or more). Then your damage goes up. A B becomes an L, an L becomes an S, and an S becomes a C.

The other is if your victim only missed his defense roll by one, two or three points. He has then still reduced the damage a bit. Thus a C becomes an S, an S an L, an L a B, and B stays a B.

The first orc thrust a short sword in Darian's leg, and pierced his boot. It bled badly and the wound was deep. (Short sword, 2 is better than the leather boot, 1, so the wound is a Severe one). The second hit him with a club on the head, where he fortunately had a helmet. It just dazed him a little. (A plate helmet, 4, is much better than a club, 1, so the wound is only a Bruise). Undisturbed, Darian struck back with his heavy bastard sword, and swung right through the unarmoured orc's chest. (The sword is four classes better than no armour, making a Critical wound).

Taking Damage: The Woundbox

Although the first blow may kill you, you might also sustain a lot of wounds. To figure how many wounds you can take, you use a wound box. Each character has a wound box, and you should draw one on your character sheet, too. In the box below you can see what it looks like.

As you can see, the box includes five major locations of the body, and each has its own row of small boxes. The numbers in some boxes are the minimal CON you need to use that particular box. So, if you have a CON 3, you must cross out all boxes with a number greater than 3 (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, etc.). The open boxes then left are the wounds you can take.

	B	L	L	S	S	C
head	(0)	()	(5)	()	(10)	()
guts	(-1)	()	(4)	()	(9)	(5)
chest	(-2)	()	(3)	()	(8)	(10)
legs	(-3)	()	(2)	()	(7)	
arms	(-4)	()	(1)	()	(6)	

Whenever you get hit, or get a wound, you put a pencil cross in one of the open wound boxes: in the row of the location where you were hit, and in the column of the wound type. Thus if you are wounded severely in your leg, you put a cross in one of the 'S' columns, in the 'legs' row.

If all boxes of the right wound type already happen to be full, you must increase the wound type by one class. So if you are hit for the second time on your head with a Light wound, and you had only one free box there, you will instead get a Severe wound. Because your head hurt so much already, the second hit actually makes it worse! And a Severe wound to many in any location will become a Critical wound. Wounds can move up only one step, this way, though. So a Bruise will never promote to a Severe or worse (unless you are hit incredibly often and the Game Master rules otherwise).

Ogland had an excellent constitution. And even if it were his only true quality, it made him nearly indestructible.

	B	L	L	S	S	C
head	(X)	()	(5)	()		(X)
guts	(-1)	(X)	(4)	()		(5)
chest	(-2)	()	(3)	()		
legs	(-3)	()	(2)	()		
arms	(-4)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(6)	

(With a CON 6 his woundbox looked like this, even after a bad beating. Note the Bruise on his head, the Critical on his chest - not bound to a location in the box -, the Light in his guts, and the many wounds in his arms. Actually Ogland took three Light wounds in his arms, but since he had no Light wounds left there, the last one moved up to a Severe.)

Effects of Wounds

It's never fun to be wounded, but some wounds are worse than others. Bruises and Light wounds are relatively harmless, but painful. They are usually just fleshwounds, bruises and sprains. You can move on with discomfort, and that's it.

But Severe wounds are worse. These are deep fleshwounds, bones may be broken, and you may have internal bleeding. You will not die from these wounds, but you will be hampered by them. How you are hampered depends on where you are hit. A Severe wound to the head may cause unconsciousness (CON or WIL check of 6 to stay standing). And a Severe wound to your swordarm may hamper you in fighting, giving you a -3 on hitting with your sword. A Severe in your leg may stop you from running. The exact effects of a Severe wound are up to the Game Master. However, the first Severe in a combat, and any Critical wound you get have special effects.

The First Severe Wound

The first time in a combat you are wounded Severely, is usually a breakpoint. You lose a lot of blood, probably, or might even have broken something. To avoid passing out on the spot, you must make an ability check on CON or WIL. Whichever is the best for you. You need to make 6 or better to keep fighting, otherwise you faint.

Note that this check is only for the first Severe wound in each fight. If you manage to stay on your feet the first time, you'll take any beating that follows until you win, run away, or die.

Sustaining Critical Wounds

If you get a Critical wound, you are in life danger. You probably have heavy internal bleeding, and suffer from shock. Whenever you get a Critical wound you must make a CON or WIL check to avoid dying within the next minutes. Roll a d10 again and make sure it is a high roll! Add your CON or WIL, whichever is best for you.

You must make a 9 or better to stay alive. If you fail, you die. If someone immediately gives you first aid (skill check 9+), and is succesful, you may be a bit more lucky. In that case you only need 6 or better to stay alive. But even if you live, you will be incapacitated and hardly able to stand, until you take a very long rest, tend to your wounds, and heal.

The dagger had struck deep into Sylyana's breast. Blood gushed out of the wound, and out of her mouth. Garlock did his utmost to save her, and tried everything he had learnt from the old healer. But his attempts were feeble (roll 3, First Aid skill 2, makes only 5, not 9). For a moment it seemed she might make it, as she was fighting with all her willpower to stay alive (WIL 3, her CON was only -1, and would not help her much). But then the light in her eyes faded. (roll only 4, plus 3 from WIL is 7, two points short for a 9). Garlock cried in agony. He lost her.

Some people, you may note, have more Critical woundboxes. Because they have extremely high endurance (CON), they can take a much worse beating. But even they have to make the above CON or WIL check each time they get a Critical wound. And once you receive more Critical wounds than you can take (no more boxes?), the game is over anyway. You die straight away then, without any further checks.

The same goes for an aimed attack to kill you (15+, see before). You just don't live anymore if you lost your head.

Recovering From Wounds

If you are wounded it takes time, rest and care to recover. The worse your wounds are, the longer you need. And rest and care really means rest and care. If you keep on travelling and just don't tend to your wounds, they will stay as bad as they are, or could even get worse! Your Game Master will inform you how your wounds are. The following table is used as a guideline.

Bruises	a few days	3
Light wounds	one or two weeks	6
Severe wounds	one or two months	9
Critical wounds	three to six months	12

In the last column you can see what you must roll for first aid, (or if the GM allows: herb lore) to shorten the healing time to the minimum. If you roll a 'natural', your treatment of the patient is so effective, that the wound becomes one class less bad. A Critical wound would thus become a Severe, a Severe a Light, a Light a Bruise, and a Bruise would heal right away. Note that you need ample time for a good treatment, at least a few hours or even days, and a good place to let the patient rest. And you can roll only once for each treatment, of course!

Catherine took tender care of the wounded Justice. He was almost killed by the assassins from the Guild, but his endurance pulled him through the worst part. Normally it would have taken many months for him to recover. But even after the first week it was clear that he would heal much faster. Maybe it was her love of him that made him live. The wound in his chest had already healed so much that he would be able to walk around without fear. In a month he would be able to take on his enemies again. (Catherine rolled a natural on her First Aid, and Justice his Critical became a Severe, now taking only a month or so to heal.)

If you have been knocked unconscious during combat, you will generally recover within the hour. Sometimes the Game Master may allow you to roll on CON to recover during combat, but then you can also remain unconscious much, much longer if you fumble on this roll.

5. The Luck of Heroes

Alexander Malory ran like hell as the angry Indian Qaa soldiers pursued him. He just had to make it through the open field, even if it was completely impossible. A volley of a hundred arrows flew through the sky and was sure to pierce him at least a dozen times. But Alexander's luck was incredible. He dodged and rolled and ran, and picked up his hat before he lost it. He wasn't hit a single time!

Heroes would not be heroes if they did not have that extra bit of luck. That extra bit of luck to survive the most deadly attacks, or to get run over by a cart with four horses and roll out unscathed. And that is why all characters played by a player have Luck Points. Luck Points are wild cards to save your life where you would otherwise have failed your rolls.

All player characters start out with two luck points. Once you use one in an adventure, it is used up forever. You can only get new luck points at the start of a new adventure, and sometimes the Game Master may grant you one extra point for a particularly virtuous, heroic and self-sacrificing deed.

When to Use a Luck Point

There are two ways in which you may use a luck point. Both are handled below.

1. You may use a luck point whenever you want to save your life, either before you must make an important roll, or just after you missed an important roll. If you use a luck point in this way, you will always survive, but you still may be wounded. The exact effect of the luck point will be determined by the Game Master. As long as you have luck points, the Game Master will always allow you to use a point in this manner.

Sylyana was in a rage, possessed by the Ancient Gods. And Ozar saw her coming too late. With her razorsharp daggers she pierced Ozar's chest and guts. Ozar slumped to the ground, and was left to die. Only because he had some favours of his own Gods left, he survived.

(Ozar failed his defense against Sylyana's attacks twice, and gets two Critical wounds in a row. He can take only one, and would die. Ozar's player quickly uses his last luck point to survive. Because it is late in the adventure, and the luck point was used late however, the Game Master rules that he still has a Critical wound, and remains unconscious.)

2. In some cases the Game Master may allow you to increase your chances of doing something, by sacrificing a luck point. He will not often grant this, but may do so if you want to save the lives of others, or to do some very heroic deed. You must offer the luck point before you make your skill or ability check. The Game Master will then decide how high the bonus of the luck point is. Usually this will be +3, but sometimes it may be higher.

Maximillian just had to save his friend Maeglina from dying at the gallows. But there was so little time, and his chances were so slim. She was being hanged before his eyes at this very moment! He didn't hesitate any longer. He kissed his dagger for luck, and threw it at the rope, to cut her free. The dagger swiveled feebly through the air. But it hit! Maeglina dropped to the ground choking, and the crowd roared in surprise. (Maximillian uses a luck point to hit the rope. The Game Master rules the luck point 'at least a +3', but Maximillian needs an extremely difficult 15 in total, as the rope is far away too. He rolls 6, plus skill 3. Even plus another three this is not enough, but the Game Master loves the heroism of it all, and makes it work anyway, only just!)

Getting New Luck Points

Once you have used a luck point, it is gone. But you may gain new luck points in two ways.

1. At the start of a new game session the Game Master will give you one new luck point. New times bring new chances!

2. If you do a particularly heroic, dangerous and selfsacrificing deed, the Game Master may also award you a luck point. Usually this will only be at the end of the adventure, but at times this may even be during a break in the adventure.

You may never raise with your luck points above a total of three at a single time. So if you have three luck points left from last adventure, you cannot get the new point at the start of the adventure. This point will just be lost.

6. Magick: Weaving Spells

Grimalkin was only a mage's apprentice. But he knew the precepts of all good magick. A big spell is not necessarily an effective spell. And a small spell can go a long way to do a powerful thing. Carefully he concentrated on the target and the magick energies he wanted to direct towards that target. He gestured subtly with his hands, and spoke the Latin words of the magick formula. It worked.

With a shock the magick fire released from his hands, and he felt the energy hardly drained his mind this time. In the wink of an eye a thousand sparks sprung forth, and all the candles in the tree were lit with a purple fire.

He smiled contently. Alou would love it.

Magick is the essence of fantasy. But only few can master it truly. As you have already seen, you must have high intelligence and willpower (INT 3, WIL 3), and be able to read the language and writings of magick (Latin 3, Read&Write 3). Once you have these things, you may learn the disciplines of magick from one of its masters.

There are many disciplines, and only a few are listed in these limited rules. With each of them, you can weave a particular type of spells and cause particular magick effects. But apart from that, all magick works in a similar manner, and you must always follow through the same steps to cast a spell.

Focus: on the Magick and on the Target

Working magick is really about bringing supernatural powers to work on something or someone. So, you need at least two connections, or 'focusses'.

1. The first is one on the supernatural powers of your choosing. This can be an **amulet** of some sort, or a magick staff, a magick gem, a deck of tarot cards, a runestone, or something else like this. All mages have at least one of these, and often one for each kind of magick they practice. Without these, their magick is much more difficult for them to do.

2. The second one is a **connection with the target**. The simplest way is if you either see or hold your target. In most cases this is enough to work magick on them. But sometimes you want to affect someone further away, or have a stronger connection. In this case you must either have some thing that once belonged to your target (like nailclippings, hairs, or blood), or your target must use something that you prepared especially (such as a potion or a piece of clothing). If you do not have a connection with your target, your magick is much harder or even impossible to do.

Jeremy would not be able to seduce the princess when he was near her. The guards would notice that he was casting a spell. So instead he decided to brew a love potion for her, which he would disguise as the finest wine. But there would be the normal foci in it for Charm Magick, like rose leaves and Castellan flies. He would cast the spell so that when she drank it (target focus!), she would fall in love with him.

How Difficult is the Spell?

Once you have your focusses ready, you must then weave your spell. And the more powerful the spell is that you want to do, the longer you must prepare in weaving the spell. How difficult a spell is, will be determined by your Game Master with help of the table and guidelines below.

Base Spell Difficulty:

6	minor effect,	or L damage
9	typical spell,	or S damage
12	powerful effect,	or C damage

Modifiers (add to the basic difficulty):

Very short duration (a minute or so)	-3*
Long duration (a few days)	+3
Extreme duration (years)	+6
Affects only a small creature or area	-3
Affects a big area or many creatures	+3
Affects a whole village or bigger	+6

*Damaging spells cannot be made easier by letting them last only a minute, they are instantaneous anyhow.

To judge how difficult a magick spell is, you must first determine if the spell causes damage or not.

1. If the spell causes damage, or wounds, you should use the gravity of the wound as a basis for the difficulty. If it is a spell that is supposed to kill, you need a base 12. If it must only cause a light wound, the base is a 6. Spells that cause damage normally work instantaneously, and then end.

2. If the spell does not cause damage, you should estimate on how much the effect changes reality. If it is only a small change like making someone disappear in the shadows as long as he stands still, this would be a minor effect and need only 6. But if it is really a big change, like making someone completely invisible and inaudible in bright daylight, no matter if he starts attacking you, would be a powerful effect (base 12)! If you can't decide, take 9 as a base. Spells that do not cause damage normally last for a few hours.

Emrys considered one second. He could just fireball the knight straight away and kill him (Critical wound, thus a base 12). Or he could throw oil on him first and ignite the knight's cloak with a fiery finger instead (lighting oil is fairly easy, and the fiery finger causes no direct damage, thus a base 6).

Modifying the Base Difficulty

Normally, a magick spell affects just one nearby person or creature of human size, and it will either cause instant damage or last for only a few hours.

Yet sometimes you will want to affect something bigger, like a huge bear, or a group of people. And sometimes you want to make a spell last for days, or sometimes just for a moment. In these cases, you adjust the needed roll as indicated in the above table. If there is more than one adjustment, you need to add them up. A spell may never be easier than 6, though.

But watch it! The size or number affected is always the biggest in the whole spell. So if you want to kill a dragon, that is a Critical wound (12), and a huge target (+3 or even +6, making 15 or 18). Even if you try to kill him with a tiny explosion of fire in his brain (because smaller is normally cheaper), you still affect a huge dragon, and this will not change the difficulty (it will still be 15 or 18)!

Casting the Spell!

Now the difficulty is set, you can then cast the spell. You speak the magick words, make the magick gestures, and perform the needed rituals while holding your focusses. The more difficult the spell, the longer you must do these rituals, and the longer you need to chant the magick words.

Then you must roll a d10, just like any other skill check, and add the applicable magick skill. So if you want to weave a Charm spell, you roll d10 and add your Charm Magick skill. If you make the difficulty set, the spell works, and the magick will start taking effect!

If, for some reason you can't speak the magick words (if you are gagged and bound, for example), the Game Master will give you a penalty of -3 on your roll. If you are extremely well prepared, by chanting the spell for hours, and you have a very good focus of your target, the Game Master may give a bonus of +3 on your roll.

Daniel had been repeating the words of the spell for over an hour now, while twisting the feather between his fingers. He was not good at this, but he had to do it to escape from this hole! Finally, he focussed all his mind on his body.

"Volare Volare Volitare" he sang. And lo! He floated up in the air, out of the pit.

(Daniel has Flight and Levitation 1, and rolls a 4. But for his extreme preparation the Game Master gives him another +3. In total enough for a 6, to float for just a minute or so!)

Resisting a Spell

If you are affected by a spell, you may still try to resist. You may try to evade a fireball, or you may use your willpower to overcome charm magick. In all cases that you want to resist, you must do something which would help, and make at least the same number as what the mage made to do the spell. So if the mage rolled a total of 13, you also have to make a 13, or more. If he rolled just 6, you need only 6.

Kruumsh ducked for the bolt of lightning that sprung from Shalafi's fingertips. He might have been quick enough to reach the cover around the corner. But he didn't make it by far. The bolt was just too damn fast and fried him straight away. (Shalafi rolled 12 for his lethal lightning bolt, doing a Critical wound for damage. Kruumsh tries to duck away, and rolls a 4 plus a DEX 1, making only 5. The bolt hits easily, and causes its Critical damage.)

Strain on the Mind

Once a spell takes effect, it also drains the energy for the magick from the mind of the spellcaster. How much a spell drains, can be found in the table below.

6	Cantrip	B strain
9	Spell	B strain
12	Invocation	L strain
15	Ritual	L strain
18	Greater Spell	S strain

To understand how the mind of a mage is affected, you must first know that all people not only have physical energy, but also mental or spiritual energy. This latter energy is also called Mana, or 'Sanity'. All characters therefor do not only have a physical woundbox, but they also have a Sanity box.

An example of the sanity box can be found below. The boxes with numbers in them higher than your WIL must be crossed away. You cannot use these. Thus if you have a WIL of 4, you must cross out all higher numbers (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10).

SANITY BOX	B	B	L	L	S	C
	(0)	(-1)	(-2)	(-3)	(-4)	(5)
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(10)
	(10)	(9)	(8)	(7)	(6)	WIL

Note that if you have a very high WIL, you also get extra Critical wounds which you may sustain. These are not bound to a location, and may be used for physical wounds too.

All the other Sanity boxes are purely mental energy, which can be drained by magick use or other mental strain only. In all other respects the boxes work in the same way as other wound boxes. If you get strain, you cross off a wound in the appropriate column. If there is no right box free anymore, you must take an empty box of (at most) one class worse. Sanity is healed at the same rate as physical wounds, through resting only.

Light wounds on Sanity make you feel weak and giddy, or give headaches. Severes can make your ears, eyes and nose bleed, and may drive you insane. In fact, each time you get Severe strain on your sanity, you must make a check on WIL of 6 or better to avoid going temporarily insane or passing out. Also, the Game Master may give you a -3 on all magick, until you have rested enough to heal any Severe Sanity wounds.

Fumbling with Magick: Side effects

Using magick is a particularly fickle thing. And sometimes it may not do exactly what you wanted to. Sometimes it may also leave some traces you never meant. Milk may turn sour, flames may burn blue, and animals may get strange young if you use witchcraft, for example. Or a demon or other magickal being might be attracted by your magick use. Fortunately, this will not happen often. But it may.

In practice, whenever you use magick and roll a straight 1 on the die, you get such a strange 'magickal side effect'. It will not always be bad, and your spell might still succeed. The strange effect will always have something to do with the kind of magick you used, and is seldom more powerful than what you wanted to do. The exact nature of the side effect will be decided by your Game Master. Below are some suggestions your Game Master might use, on rolling another d10.

- 1 spell backfires and leaves a scar or wound in face or hands
- 2 spell backfires and affects yourself instead!
- 3 spell fails and instead a demon appears within the next few hours
- 4 spell fails and you get a true vision or nightmare afterwards
- 5 milk turns sour, food turns foul, animals get nervous
- 6 silvery mist rises from the ground, or a strange odour fills the room
- 7 a storm rises and blows past the path of the spell
- 8 the spell lasts much longer or shorter than you wanted
- 9 you start to itch everywhere, or some of your hair colors grey
- 10 if you cast another spell here, it will work completely wrong

Zeddog burned the candles, drew the circle, and chanted the words to summon a small imp to spy for her. But even though she did everything right, something went askew. It wasn't the demon she asked for that appeared. It was a much bigger one. Even if it had a friendly smile.

Charm Magick

With this discipline of magick you can make people think that you are their best friend, that they love you, and that they will do anything for you. You can not really force them to obey your command exactly as you want it, but they will follow your suggestions very closely. Also, the victims will still act according to their own nature and ability. It is hard to make someone kill himself, for example (powerful, at least 12), and impossible to let someone do something that is beyond his abilities.

Clairvoyance

With this magick you can see, hear and smell, and sometimes even feel, what happens somewhere else, where you can not actually reach. So you could see in your mind's eye what happens behind a wall, or what happens with someone you know right now, or you could listen to a conversation in a room you know, while you are at the other end of town. You can only see what happens now or in the very recent past or very soon future. Also you can only look at places, objects or persons that you have some focus of.

Syrawenn filled the cup with water and shook the water until it rippled. 'Tell me what is going on in that house' she whispered. Her eyes went into a stare as the images appeared before her in the water. First, she saw the scared eyes of a girl. Then a candle, and a rat scurrying past some breadcrumbs. She tried to focus more. There she was. The daughter of the Duke. Her hands were tied together with rope. (Since Syrawenn never was in the house, but the house is not too far, Syrawenn needs a 9. She rolls a 6, with Clairvoyance 4.)

Conjure Lesser Demons and bind them

This discipline of magick is often seen as an evil one. With it you can conjure forth lesser demons from their own plane. To do this you must draw a magick circle into which they can appear, and often bring a simple sort of sacrifice to lure them. And once they have appeared you can bind them with magick words and symbols, so that they will work for you and follow your commands. Demons may take many forms. Some will look like small and ugly men, like the imps, some look like flies or huge insects, and others look like failed experiments in genetic manipulation, with four arms and two heads. And some may even look like humans, some ugly, and some seductively beautiful, like the succubus. Demons can often do their own magick, and can be very powerful. But they are also all treacherous. They will always try to escape your bindings. And although they must follow your commands to the letter if you bind them, they will still try to twist your words to get their own way. Once a binding ends, the demon will go back to its own realm of existence, and turn into thin air.

Zeddog drew the circles of appearance, and wrote the runes of the demon's name in chicken blood. Then she started chanting her call for him. Suddenly she felt her head go giddy as the circle filled with smoke. Within the smoke he appeared. An incubus. A beautiful man with eyes that were all black (an incubus is particularly powerful, so she needs a 12, which she makes with a roll of 9, and a conjure 4). As he gazed at her with all his charm, she almost forgot that she should bind him. Quickly she did her next spell, and spoke the words that would smite this demon with respect and fear for her. Adonai! Fortunately, she was strong enough (roll 8 plus conjure 4 is far more than a minimal 9 for a few hours). The demon failed to resist (WIL check only 3 plus 0), and shuddered before her. 'What is your wish, Mistress?' he whispered with a deep voice.

Evoke and Control Fire Magick

You can call forth damaging flames, bolts of fire and fireballs, and let them shoot from your fingertips. You can also light or extinguish fires at will. The more damage the fire does, the more difficult the spell.

Evoke and Control Lightning Magick

You can call forth damaging bolts of lightning from your staff or your fingertips. You can send shocks through water or metal, and paralyse people with smaller shocks of lightning. Also, if there is thunder and lightning in the sky, you may redirect the lightning to let it strike where you want.

Flight and Levitation

You can levitate from the ground, and float, or even fly through the air. Flying slowly, or just making a giant jump is easier, and flying fast and far is more difficult. You can let others fly too, but you cannot control how they fly (they control that themselves), and you must touch them first.

Invisibility

You can turn yourself, or someone or something else, invisible. If you just want to blend in with the shadows, or in a dense forest, while you do not move, this is easy. To walk around invisible through a guarded castle, and not be smelled by the dogs either, is very hard (at least 12). If you are very invisible, you much easier surprise others in a fight, and you will almost always have an advantage (+3, decision of the Game Master).

Telekinesis

With telekinesis you can move objects and people as if you lift them with invisible hands. You can thus move weapons, throw things, open doors, or even locks (but this is very difficult - at least 12), and if you are very good you may even lift people or animals and wrestle them to the ground or throw them through the air. If you want to resist telekinesis against you, you must match your STR against the Telekinesis skill of the mage.

Telepathy

You can talk to others with your thoughts alone, or listen to what they think but don't tell. If you read someone's mind you must still understand their language, or the thoughts will not make much sense to you. All you will see then are some vague pictures of what they want or think, or hear words that don't make sense. You can also use this magick to feel if there is a thinking being or person in the close vicinity, and where they probably are (6 for within the room, 9 for within a hundred meters or so).

Shapeshifting into Animals

You can change into any sort of natural animal (a bear, a bird, a wolf, a cat, a fish, and so on), or turn anyone else into an animal. You will still think as a human but make the sounds of the animal, and feel, breathe, fight and move like the animal. Your DEX, CON, WIL and INT will be unchanged, but your STR will change if you become bigger (more) or smaller (less). Any wounds you may get as an animal will stay when you revert back to human form. Normally, your clothes will not change with you, and you can not speak while you are an animal. To do these things both would make the spell more difficult (base 12 instead of 9). You can also only change part of your body (get a wolf head or bear claws for example), and this is easier (6 instead of 9). To change someone into an animal, you must have some focus of the type of animal too (a feather, a pluck of hair, a tooth or bone, a scale).

The guard once again yelled at Ne'ermynde: "Are you a witch?!" Ne'ermynde looked annoyed. With a careful flick of his wrist he whipped out a fishscale and mumbled a few magick words: 'Custodius Habet Piscis Facies'. The guard his eyes widened as he prepared to yell even louder. But no words came out. Instead he just opened his mouth and made slight choking sounds. His head had turned all scaley, with the weak eyes of a fish, and a toothless mouth. The guard dove his brand new fish face in the water barrel, just to breathe. (As the spell is potentially very lethal, the Game Master first rules this spell as a 12+, and not a 6+. Ne'ermynde rolls a 6 plus a skill of 3. That's only 9. But because the Game Master likes the idea so much he lets it work anyway, and makes sure the guard can save himself.)

7. Religion: Virtues and Miracles

Sister Catherine believed in the way of the Lord, and in her Patron Saint Raphael, the Angel of healing. Every day of her life she spent in trying to help people that were ill, wounded or troubled otherwise. And that is why she had pledged never to hurt anyone, or let anyone be hurt, unless it was really necessary. That was not always easy, as she travelled with some friends who tended to get into pretty bad fights. But she often managed to stop them from needless fighting. And the Angel Raphael always granted her miracles that healed her friends afterward if they got hurt anyway.

Religion is an important part of everyday life, especially in a Medieval world of fantasy. There are many religions, like those of the Celts, the Greeks or the Vikings. But for simplicity we will concentrate on the most powerful religion in the west of the fantasy world Yaddrin: the religion of the Cross.

Religion has two important aspects: ceremony, and faith. Ceremony is only practiced by priests and priestesses, and works much like magick, as it strains the mind and works with formulae spoken in Latin. Faith on the other hand can be practiced by anyone, and anyone with faith can pray for miracles. But faith also requires that you keep to a certain set of ethics.

Religious Ceremony

Ceremony can be learned only by priests. With Ceremony you can perform blessings, perform marriages, baptise, remove curses, and perform burial rites. Also you can bless water, so that it becomes 'holy water'. Holy water repels unnatural creatures like vampires and demons and sometimes it can undo witchcraft. You may further bless an area so that it becomes hallowed ground. Hallowed ground repels evil spirits, demons and devils and keeps the dead in their graves.

To learn Ceremony you must first learn to speak, write and read the language of the bible and other holy scriptures: Latin (Latin 3 and Read&Write 3). Once you have learnt these you may be brought into priesthood. The power will then be vested in you to perform holy ceremonies.

To perform a Ceremony, you must always be at some sacred place, or have some sacred objects with you. These are usually a cross, a bible, and some hallowed water or hallowed candles. Once you perform the ceremony you roll a d10 as usual and add your ceremony skill. If you perform a ceremony in a church, on hallowed ground, or if you stay awake all night in prayer before the ceremony, the Game Master may grant you a +3 on the roll.

6	 blessing/protection for minutes	 B strain
9	 blessing/protection for hours	 B strain
12	 blessing/protection for weeks	 L strain
15	 blessing/protection for years	 L strain
	very small area (cup of water)	 3 easier
	large area (house) or several people	 3 harder
	huge area (village) or very many people	 6 harder

As you can see, how difficult a ceremony is depends on how big the area is you want to bless, and how long you want the blessing to last. If you don't make as much as you wanted to, the Game Master may still rule that the ceremony works, but less long than you wanted, or for a smaller area.

Once you have performed the ceremony it will strain your mind. How much strain, you can also find in the table above.

Brother Litho figured that the girl was vexed by unholy spirits. He would bless her to protect her against the influences of evil, so that she might be free. Just to be sure, he brought her to a church, and did the ritual of cleansing. He sprinkled her with holy water, made the gestures with the cross, and repeated the words of the ceremony.

Until then, the girl had been quiet and cooperative. But then, her eyes suddenly flared up, and she twisted her head a hundred and eighty degrees. "Uhm... I guess we need a real exorcism here", Litho muttered.

(Litho prepared his blessing well, by going in a church, so he would get a +3. And he has Ceremony 3. But unfortunately he rolls a 1, and then another 1: he really fumbles and fails!

If Litho would not have fumbled with his second roll, he would have had a 1 plus 6, and made a blessing which would have lasted a few minutes, and would have cost him a B strain).

Faith and Praying for Miracles

Saints and Deities grant miracles to their faithful worshippers. Sometimes they do this of their own accord, for their own mysterious reasons. But in most cases they only grant miracles once their followers pray for them. Each particular Saint or Deity stands for a certain area of interest and influence, in which they grant miracles. Gabriel grants visions, Rafael healings, and Michael will help driving out demons and the like.

You may have faith in one or more Saints. Each Saint you worship and have faith in counts as a separate skill. And each Saint has his or her own sense of ethics. As a faithful worshipper you are supposed to follow this path of right and good. If you go too much astray the Saint will not grant your miracles any longer, and if you are particularly virtuous you will be rewarded even more. What Saints expect from their worshippers is handled in more detail in the section about Virtues and Sins.

If you pray for a miracle, you roll a d10 and add your faith skill. What you need to make for your miracle will be decided by the Game Master using the table below.

6	 cure B, or a small miracle, like inspiration
9	 cure L, or a typical miracle, like protection
12	 cure S, or a powerful miracle, like exorcism
15	 cure C, or summoning of a minor angel
18	 bring one person back from the dead
if the area affected by the miracle is very large, or the miracle continues very long add 3 to 9 to the difficulty	

If you pledge something to the Saint in your prayer, or make some sort of appropriate sacrifice, the Game Master may give you a +3 on the roll. Of course, the bigger the miracle you ask for, the more impressive the sacrifice or pledge must be. Also, if you are asking for something that the Saint would want himself (or herself), and you are in a shrine or chapel of this Saint, you also will get a +3 on your roll.

Sometimes Saints may also help grant miracles outside their area of influence, but this is seldom. They will then never go against their own principles, and the Game Master will at least give a penalty of -3 on your roll.

Gaab had no idea where to start looking for the bones of St. Anatina. They were stolen from the crypt last week, so they could be anywhere right now. He sank away in prayer, and promised to return the relics to its shrine if St. Gabriel would help him find them. Gabriel answered his prayer promptly, and Gaab saw in his mind a cart speeding over a muddy road. On the cart sat two soldiers of the king, protecting the missing cask with the bones. Puzzled, Gaab opened his eyes. (The Game Master rules the miracle a base 9, as it also is in the interest of the Saint. Gaab rolls a 4, and has faith 4 in Gabriel. Gaab also pledged to bring the stuff back, so that's a kind of sacrifice Gabriel might like, and he gets +3 for that. So the total is 11, and the vision is granted!)

Miracles cost no Strain

Since miracles are performed by the Saints or Deities, they cost no sanity. But you may pray only once for the same miracle. If it is not granted, it never will, unless you use a luck point to pray again.

Resisting the effects of ceremony or prayer

Resisting prayer and ceremony is just like resisting magick. You will have to find an appropriate way to resist first (counter-prayer, magick, evading on DEX, or whatever), and then make at least as much as was rolled in total for the prayer or ceremony in the first place.

Rimala had only just turned vampire, but she had no intention of being scared by the cross of that Inquisitor. She hissed ferociously and her eyes sparkled as she resisted the priest's banning ritual with all her force of will. Oh yes, she hissed a lot! But she still moved back. (The Inquisitor rolled 4 plus a Ceremony of 3, making only 7, but enough to hold a vampire at bay for a moment. Rimala rolls a 3 plus WIL 2, making only 5: less than the 7 of the Inquisitor! She is scared anyway!)

Sins and Virtues

The Saints (and deities in general) do not just tolerate any behaviour from their followers. They expect the highest standards of morality, and a strong sense of good in their subjects. They reward virtuous behaviour, and abandon those who are too sinful in their eyes, until they prove their regret and come back to the right path.

Not all virtues and sins are just as important however. You have capital virtues and sins, and the normal ones. In general the Game Master will only do something if a capital virtue or capital sin is involved. Only if you are very consistently virtuous in a small way (helpful, loyal, truthful, etc.) or continuously sinful in a small way (stealing, cursing, lying, abusing, etc.) the Game Master may reward or punish this too.

Capital Virtues

The most typical capital virtue is to save someone from dying while endangering your own life.

If a you profess a capital virtue, the Game Master will either reward you with a Luck Point, or give another divine gift to show the appreciation of the Saint. You may raise your total of luck points up to three this way. The Game Master may give a Luck Point immediately or at the first rest that follows in the story. A divine gift may take many forms, but often it is a free miracle, such as a sudden vision of the future, miraculous protection from harm, or a miraculous fast recovery from wounds or disease.

St. Michael of Demonsmiting and Justice

Michael is one of the Archangels serving God, and one of the major Saints of the World. He is the Angel of Vengeance and the right hand of the Lord.

The capital virtue for Michael is to fight a demon, or great evil while really staking your own life. He considers it the greatest sin if you kill an innocent (someone who has done little harm).

Michael grants the miracles of exorcism (casting out a demon, typically 12) and protection against demons and devils (base 9). He may also give strength when you are fighting other kinds of evil (base 9), or send help when you are betrayed (12 or 15).

Now Litho was truly stuck between demons. And the girl was still possessed by one of the worst. It just had to be driven out. He held his cross high and he prayed, and prayed, and prayed that Saint Michael would give him strength and cast out this demon. "Vade retro Satanis!" he cried, "Michael, angel of the heavens, I pray to you, cast out this foul creature!". A faint light began to shimmer from his cross. And it grew brighter and brighter. (Litho rolled a 4, plus a faith in St. Michael of 5 is a 9. Because he is still in St. Michael's own chapel, he gets a +3, making 12. This is enough for an exorcism. But the demon might still resist...)

St. Gabriël of Visions and Divine Messages

Gabriel is the messenger Archangel of the Lord. His followers walk the path of goodness and humility, spreading both the word and the holy spirit through the world.

The capital virtue for Gabriel is if you save someone's life while you were really in danger of losing your own doing so. Conversely, he considers it the greatest sin if you kill anyone.

Gabriel grants the miracles of visions of the future (9 or 12), insights that may help to avert danger (6 or 9), and insights that bring about good (6 or 9). Also he may give visions of the past (base 9), or of other places (base 9), he may help you find lost things (9 or 12) or point out the truth (9 or 12), and he may send your thoughts to others for you (base 9).

St. Raphaël of Healing and Protection

Raphaël is the healer Archangel. The capital virtue for Raphaël is if you save someone from grave harm while you were in danger of losing your own life. Conversely, he considers it the greatest sin if you severely hurt or kill anyone.

Raphaël grants the miracle of healing, both of sickness and wounds. Sometimes the wounds may just heal faster (three easier than in table), sometimes they heal instantaneously (as in table). In special instances Raphaël may also bring someone back from the dead (18), or allow you to survive very deadly things like lethal poison, deadly fires, staying under water for ten minutes (base 9), a week without drinking (base 12), and so on.

Sir Launcevere brought the body of the young princess to the tiny shrine in the village. She had been pierced by several arrows, her young life taken from her. He explained what happened to Catherine, and they agreed that without the princess, who grew up with Catherine as a child, the kingdom would be lost. So Catherine prayed all night to Raphaël, with Launcevere on her side, that the Angel might restore life to the girl. Naturally, they would understand if it was not his wish, but if he brought her back, they would erect a church devoted to Raphaël with their bare hands on this very spot. (To bring someone back from the dead needs an 18, but the Game Master figures that the reasons are good, and the pledge of building a church would be great enough to warrant a +3. Catherine has a faith of 6. So she needs to roll 9 or better...)

Capital Sins

The most typical capital sin is that of killing someone.

Another typical capital sin is if you pledge to make a huge sacrifice, get your prayers heard, and then never do anything to fulfil the pledge. Saints and deities of course expect you to keep your word!

If you commit a capital sin, the Saint will no longer be on your side. You will still have your faith skill, but you will not be granted any miracles unless you use a luck point in your prayer in the first place.

The only way to regain the favour of a Saint, is to perform atonement, by showing regret of your sin in church, and by making up for it. You usually can only make up for your sin by doing the capital virtue, or by travelling barefoot to the Holy Land. In some cases your patron Saint may give you another way to atone, by a quest for example, and tell you in a vision or dream what to do.

Paladin Roland was a fervent believer in Saint Michael, and had hunted down many a demon. How was it possible that he had let himself be tricked so badly? The demons had made him believe that the young girl was one of them, and he had struck her down with his sword! He repented his sin as soon as he realized what had happened, but Michael was adamant. None of his prayers were answered since that day.

Roland had cursed the Saints at times, but now he knew what to do again. He would hunt down the demon that had done this to him, and once it was slain, Michael would grant his prayers again.

Caveats

There are a few cases where you may commit the capital sin, but only to make sure that you would not let an even worse thing happen. The most important example for this is if you hurt or kill some evil person in order to save the life or lives of others who are more deserving. Of course, there must be little choice to have done otherwise, and you must have done your best to find other ways to solve the problem. But if this really was about the last way to do the good thing, and you afterwards pray for forgiveness, then your Saint will remain on your side, and keep granting miracles.

8. Experience: The Character Grows

Wisdom not only comes with the years, but it also comes with experience. And Cloak had had a lot of that lately. In his quest for the seventh mirror he had met the strangest people. He had fought the strangest foes. And the long strenuous journeys had built his muscles and tested his constitution to the limit. The berber folk had taught him to speak a bit of arabic. All this made him a wiser man.

But especially that trip on the high seas stayed with him. That terrible fight with the horrible seamonster and the dreaded man-eating white sharks had taught him a lot. Before next time, he would learn to swim.

Once you have finished an adventure alive, whether you were succesful in your mission or not, you will have gained experience. Experience is measured in experience points, and these are given to you by the Game Master. For every ten experience points you get one new skill point. And with every skill point you can buy new skills, or raise your abilities or old skills, just as when you first built your character.

Experience Points

The Game Master awards experience points at the end of each session as follows.

1. You will get one point for **every hour** you played in real life. So if the session lasted five hours, you get five points.
2. You will get from one to ten points for **how well you played**. If the Game Master feels you were very smart, or that you played your role very convincingly, he may give you more points. This is much like a school grade. On average he will give five or six points.
3. You will get between one and ten points for how **dangerous and heroic** the **adventure** was. If the adventure was like an Indiana Jones movie, it will be a 9 or 10. If it was more like a daily soap, and nothing much happened, it will be a 2 or 3. If it was in between, it will be in between.

The game had lasted a full ten hours (10 pts), and the Game Master felt Amy had played her character Kriss very well. She had not only solved most of the problems during the mission, but also played Kriss as if she was for real (the Game Master grades it a 9, for 9 pts). And the adventure had been a true roller coaster, they saved a princess, slew a dragon, uncovered a plot to rule the kingdom and captured a traitor (the Game Master grades this an 8, for 8 pts).

Kriss had learnt a lot this time, and gained quite some selfconfidence (a total of 27 experience points, or 2.7 skill points).

Sometimes the Game master may award a few extra points, if the adventure was particularly important for a campaign, or if one of the other characters died during the adventure.

Buying Skill and Ability Levels

New skills and abilities should if possible have something to do with the adventure you have experienced. So if you fought a lot with your sword, then maybe you should improve your sword skill. If you did a lot of talking in a new country, then perhaps you should learn a bit of the country's language. And if you have exerted yourself a lot physically, then maybe you should raise your strength. This is not a hard rule. But it is good role playing.

Raising an ability costs 20 experience points per point, and raising a skill costs 10 experience points per point. If you decide to learn new skills, you must make sure that you have all the ability and skill levels that you need as prerequisite. If you can not use all your points, you may keep the excess points for a next time.

Zork actually had had a hard time getting used to this new secret assignment. To make himself believable as a priest, he actually had to become one of their order. Fortunately he already started learning Latin some time before, and he could read and write since a long time. So he studied until he could speak and read Latin as if it was his mother's tongue, and then entered the priesthood with his vows.

(Zork has gained 24 points in the adventure, and 7 left from his last one. He already has Latin 2, and now raises it to 3 for ten points. Now he can buy Crosstian Ceremony, and immediately buys to level 2, for 20 points. His last remaining point he keeps, for the next adventure.)

Becoming a Master: Raising Above 5

After your first adventure, the Game Master may allow you to raise your skills and abilities above the starting limit of 5. You can buy these higher levels at the normal cost, but there is a limit to how fast you can go. The levels above five belong to masters of a skill or ability only, and require a lot of dedication, training and experience.

Whether you may raise a particular skill or ability above the level of five is the decision of your Game Master, but two rules will certainly apply.

1. You may never have more points above the level of 5 combined over all your skills and abilities, than you have played game sessions with this character.

Gwynnet is just a girl of seven years old. She is quick afoot, and smart for a child. Since she is a child, her player built her for only 15 points, and not the usual 50. She just finished her third adventure, and so could have three points above five with this rule (that is one skill 8). But both the player and the Game Master feel that this is not right for such a young child. So, Gwynnet's highest score remains a pretty high DEX of 4 until she grows a lot older.

2. How high you can ultimately go depends on how much you specialize. There are four general areas of expertise: general skills, combat skills, faith and ceremony, and magick. If you specialize in just one area, you may ultimately go to skill 10 in that area, but must leave all other skill types 5 or less. If you specialize in two areas, you may only go to skill 8, but in both areas, while the others stay at five max. With three areas, you may only go to skill 7, and with all areas only to skill 6.

Greystar liked developing his skills in a broad sense. He was an excellent warrior, but a good mage too, and he could sneak around and break in as few others could. He liked to think of himself as a true renaissance man. But he also knew that this broad development stopped him from ever becoming such a mighty mage as Emrys, or such a devastating warrior as Feara.

(Greystar has skills above level 5 in three categories: combat, magick and general. He can therefor only raise general, weapon or magick skills to a level 7 maximum, and faith or ceremony only to level 5.)

9. The Story: Game Mastering

GM: It takes you almost a whole day to reach the dark forest at the edge of the country. The wind is cold, and you nearly freeze as the rain whips in your face.

Jelena: I wonder whose idea it was again to go there

Shimrod: Stop nagging! We are here to rescue the princess!

GM: But aside from the rain and wind, nothing much happens to you. Until you see the dark trees rising from the rocks. The trees are almost a hundred meters tall. Pine trees. Dark pine trees. To your right, at the edge of the forest, you see a small group of men on horseback.

Kadzjim: How far? Are they armed?

GM: Some three hundred meters. Some seem to carry swords. There must be at least five of them.

Kadzjim: Five. That's two more than us. If there aren't more.

Shimrod: I'll hide behind the rocks and prepare a fireball spell.

Jelena: We don't know if they're unfriendly.

Kadzjim: I'm not going to wait and see. I'll hide with Shimrod.

Jelena: Fine with me. I stay here and wave at them.

GM: Shimrod and Kadzjim quickly hide behind a high rock. (To Shimrod and Kadzjim) You can find a good high spot, and see that there are even four more, armed with longbows. Jelena meanwhile waves. The men in the distance wave back and start approaching.

If you are playing a role playing game for the first time, and you are the one who is going to Game Master, you are in for a fun task, but some hard work too! You will be the one who is going to spin the story and make the setting of the adventure the other players are going to play their heroes in. Also you will be the one to referee if their actions will succeed or fail. And you will judge at the end how well they have done as heroes. So, you need to know the rules a bit better than the others, and you need a story.

Learn the Rules

The easiest way to learn the rules quickly is by making your own character and trying all of the rules on him (or her). Just think up situations your character will be facing, and do as in the examples. Try doing a fight with a guard, do a few spells, test a few skills and abilities, try a prayer for a miracle. You see? You're game mastering a bit all ready! If you've tried all these rules at least once, it will make you feel a lot more confident once you're game mastering for your friends.

Make a Story

Once you know the rules a bit, it's time to think up your first story. You can do this several ways.

1. You might get your idea from a film, a book, a comic strip, a TV episode, or a short story. You don't have to steal the whole idea (you could, though), but you can use parts of anything you like and base your story on it.

2. You could use a commercially available adventure for either this game, or another (I won't mention any names, but there are many good adventures available). Or, you could obtain a free adventure from the web or another source.

3. You can build a story from scratch, by using the method below. You think of a setting, a villain, and the stakes of the adventure, and then you build the scenes the adventure will have. Especially, you think about the start of the adventure, and the climax.

The Setting

First, you should choose a setting for your adventure. Will it be in a medieval city like Bruges? Or will it be in a dark fantasy forest, or in the desert, or at sea? Perhaps most of the adventure will take place below the earth, in an underground city of the dead. Or maybe you prefer a heavy and long journey through the mountains, searching for a lost temple. And what is the time of year? Is it harvesting, winter, spring, does it rain all the time or is it sunny?

If you can, make a few maps of the area you will use (even if they're just rough sketches), and start thinking a bit on what you will find there. The better you know what it is like, the better you can describe it later on to your players!

The Villain

Next, you should decide who the villain of the story is going to be. Someone is going to make life hard for the heroes of the players. Is it an ancient wizard who wants revenge on the locals, or a witch perhaps who wants to seduce a prince? Or is the villain a dragon that has awakened very hungry after twenty years of sleep? Maybe the villain is a robber baron, or a pirate who steals from the rich and keeps the money for himself! Or else the villain could be a vampire, or a werewolf, who terrorizes a trading route.

Think about the villain, and try to describe him or her in important skills, abilities and equipment (weapons and armour!). Don't hesitate to make a villain stronger than the heroes, but don't make him or her too strong either. Also, a villain seldom comes alone. So, prepare some minor villains who help your master villain, too. A vampire probably has a ghoulish aide, and perhaps some minor vampires as help. And if he terrorizes a village, the villagers might be on his side too, for fear that he might hurt them. A robber baron will have a band of robbers, or even a black knight to help him!

The Stakes

Thirdly, you should figure what the adventure is about. What are the stakes our heroes are going to wage their lives for? Is it a princess who is kidnapped by the villain? Is it a legendary treasure hidden in an accursed temple of a vampire priest? Or is it the lives of fifty villagers who are threatened by local bandits - and the reward they will pay for protection?

The stakes are closely related to the mission of the adventure. Maybe the heroes are asked to do some scouting for the local Duke, to prepare a military attack, and they will be paid for this. Or maybe the heroes participate in a boat race to bring the first wine of the year to the king so that he may taste it.

And the best adventures are often those that are personal to the heroes. If one of the players has thought up that her heroine had a brother who was kidnapped by an evil baron... well, maybe they can now rescue her brother from this baron!

The Scenes

Once you have decided on the setting, the villain, and the stakes, you must make an outline of the story in scenes. The most important of these are your beginning scene (or Story Hook), and your ending scene (or Climax). You should also fill in some or all of the scenes in between, certainly if you are doing this for the first time. Later, if you feel confident, you may leave those scenes to improvisation in the game itself.

A scene typically lasts somewhere between half an hour and an hour of real time. If you have many players (more than three), it may take up to twice that long. So if you plan a session to last some four or five hours, keep your story in four to six scenes, and you will be on the safe side.

Basically, there are four types of scenes. These are the fight, the role playing encounter, the problem solving situation, and the chase. If you can, try to have at least one of each of these in your game session. Your adventure will then be more varied, and probably more exciting too.

Fighting Scenes

The fight is often also a good way to start the adventure. It plunges the players right into the action, and leaves them little time to think and get bored. Also, if they are attacked by aides of your villain who then escape, it gives them reason to take revenge and have a goal for the rest of the adventure. Another typical place for a fight is at the climax, when your hero players slug it out with the big villain and his minions. Try to find special locations for your fights, like on the top of a cliff, in the middle of an inn, on a fish market, or on a bridge. That way your fight gets extra color. Someone might fall off that cliff, for example, or an innocent bystander could be hit, or maybe someone starts throwing furniture!

Role Play Scenes

You can't fight all the time. And most players will love a good conversation too. Maybe they try to talk a local noble into helping them fight the villain. They might try to get information from an absentminded wizard, who thinks his lost research more interesting. Or maybe one of the players tries to seduce the wife of the Marquis, just for the heck of it. Social situations can be a lot of fun to play out, just try them! And don't forget to let players play out when they first meet each other's characters. Maybe the knight secretly falls in love with the witch, or maybe the whole group can't stand the priest. You never know what happens!

Problem Solving Scenes

The brain also needs some exercise, and this is where problem solving comes in. Perhaps the heroes are confronted by a Sphinx that asks them a riddle to solve. Or maybe they find themselves in a castle filled with deadly traps they need to negotiate. You could prepare a treasure map and tear it in four pieces, so that the players can find the pieces one by one, making a puzzle of where they ultimately need to go. And searching the site of a murder for clues to find the killer is also a problem solving situation.

Chase Scenes

Finally, there is the chase. A chase can be with horses through a forest, ships on a river, jumping over rooftops, or running through a complex of tunnels and caves. Anything you can think of really. Maybe the heroes try to catch the villain, or maybe they try to get away from him if he is too strong. Often a chase involves quite a few checks for dexterity (running nimbly, jumping down), strength (running fast, jumping far), constitution (running a long time), horse riding or sailing.

Starting Scene

As said, the starting and ending scenes are extra important. With the beginning scene you must make clear who the villain is (well, who he seems to be), and what the stakes of the adventure are. If the goal is to rescue a princess from a black knight, her father the king might offer our heroes a reward at his court. If

they need to find the treasures of a long forgotten vampire priest, they might run into a girl with a piece of the map to the tomb of this priest. She wants to hide with them, because she is hunted by the villain, a ruthless thief, and his henchmen. And so, they roll into a high adventure!

A good trick is to ask the players what would motivate their characters into an adventure. Some may go for gold, but others may go for honor or a good cause. Some only choose the path of danger if it's for very personal revenge. Ask your players, and do a bit of what they ask! Often you'll get entirely new ideas, and it's more fun for them and you!

Ending Scene

The ending scene is usually the climax, where the heroes confront the villain. And often it is a fight, or a chase, which might again end in a fight. And probably, this is also the place where the heroes either win the stakes, or lose them.

Make sure this is a scene where the heroes can be really heroic, and choose a dramatic spot. It could be in the throne room of the evil wizard king. But a fight on top of a high church tower is maybe more impressive. Or a torturous chase through the streets of a city, to get to the assassin who is going to kill the Duke in the parade. Or a final stand when the dragon attacks the village, and may burn it down if they don't kill it then and there.

And once the player heroes have won (if they are heroic enough and not too stupid they should win, because they are the heroes), there will be some time to tend to their wounds, count their treasures, kiss the princess, and drink and be merry. And (the brother of) the villain can swear to take revenge and ride into the sunset.

Then again, the heroes could also lose in the end.

Running the Adventure

Have you prepared your scenes, decided what your villain is like, and how you are going to begin your story? Good! Invite your friends over, and let them bring or make a character. Keep your notes and these rules handy, put on some fantasy film music, and make sure there is plenty of food and drink. Then check out the characters of the players. Ready to go!

If the heroes don't know each other yet it's a good idea to start with a round of descriptions. You describe where they are (a local pub for example), and let each player describe what their character looks like. Let them meet and acquaint a little. And then, start with your first scene! Good luck!

Isabella was a young innkeeper's daughter with a pretty face, clad in leather and armed with a dagger. And Plugh was a young sailor with a broad grin, short white hair, armed with a staff. It was in her father's inn that they met for the first time. And it was a meeting to remember. She was just serving a young soldier called Martin when he jumped in between them.

Plugh: You shouldn't trust him! He's a mercenary, and my mother always told me never to trust mercenaries.

Martin: I beg your pardon?

Isa: He's a client, so I serve him his beer. May I?

Plugh: (stays in between them) Well... alright. But be careful. I heard about them mercenaries, you know. Just pleasure they're after!

Martin: Thanks for the beer. (smiles charmingly)

Isa: You probably never heard of Innkeepers daughters?

Tips for being a Game Master

Becoming a good Game Master takes some practice. But it also can be a lot of fun! You are the one who ultimately controls what the story is like, and where it all goes. Actually, as a Game Master you're a bit of a writer, performer and a director at once! The more exciting you can make the game for you and your players, the more fun the game will be. Below are a few tips coming from years of experience.

1. Be fair, but give the players the edge in doubt.

This is probably the most important thing of Games Mastering. Since you can control how powerful the adversaries are that the players will meet, and you decide how high the players must roll, you can always let them lose or win. So, you should do your utmost to be fair as a referee.

Note that 'fair' does not mean you have to make sure they can win at all - you just must make sure they can run away and survive, and know what they are up against. Still, if they are smart, it does not hurt to let them win some, even against impossible odds. The players play heroes after all!

Another part of being fair is making sure that all players get their share of the action. Don't just let one player dominate the game, but give all players a personal chance to use their skills, have a fight, and have a conversation with someone important in the game world.

2. Feel free to let the rules slip, and improvise.

These rules are just guidelines. We have done our best to make them the best rules there are, but we are simulating life - and that's not easy. So if you feel a die roll gives a result that changes your story too much, or if you don't know the right rule for a second, just improvise. Some of the best Game Masters improvise all the time and hardly use any rules. The point is, that you can tell a story, and keep letting the players feel they have a chance to win and do something. The rules are here to help you, the goal is to have fun!

3. Build in a twist, or a surprise in your story.

An average story can do without one. But a good story needs a surprise, a twist, something that changes the whole story as it is going on. Try to give your story a surprise at least once, and you'll see it becomes much more interesting.

A twist can be that someone who has been helping the heroes all along suddenly turns out to be a traitor who has led them all into a trap. Or it could be that the treasure they have been digging for turns out not to be gold, but the old bones of a Saint. Or if they try to rescue a princess, they find out that the princess had staged the whole kidnap to get money from her father and marry with a vagabond. Let your imagination roam free, and think of a few surprises yourself!

The best surprises are those that you could have seen coming if you paid attention. So always try to give some subtle hint. Try the example below to get your mind started.

GM: The village is burnt to the ground. It is awful. You find just one old woman, sitting in the ashes. She seems to be quite confused.

Judas: Can we talk to her? "Hello, old woman, are you all right?"

GM: She looks up to you and comes toward you. (mimics old woman's voice) "Oh, it's so horrible! All my people have been burnt, killed and burnt!"

The Baron of the Spinward Marshes

a First Adventure

- Her breath is awful, by the way. Too much garlic soup, probably.*
- Judas:** *Ugh! Gross. I try to calm her a bit, and ask her if she has seen the leader of the perpetrators.*
- GM:** *Oh yes, she tells how she was face to face with him. (mimics old lady again) "He came to me to kill me, with his sword. He was dark and very tall, with dark eyes. Ar. Yes. But I plead him not to do it, ya see. And he suddenly changed his mind. Me thinks he was frightened by some sound or something. He just turned and went away."*
- Ahw. Her breath is really bad!*
- Judas:** *(holds his nose) Scared by a sound eh? Her breath is more likely. Ugh! I try not to let her notice my disgust though.*
- GM:** *You don't think she noticed.*

Much later in the adventure, it turns out that the robber baron who fled for the old woman, was really... a vampire. And vampires hate garlic.

Below follows a short adventure for two to five beginning characters. If you want to Game Master this adventure, read it well before you start, and feel free to change things and improvise as you see fit. It's yours from this point on.

**If you are going to play in this adventure, don't read on!
Stop now!**

The Baron of the Spinward Marshes takes place north of Dominio (which resembles Italy), in late summer. It is still very hot by day, and sweaty at the night time. Our heroes start at the town of Hartbey, a smugglers hellhole with a harbour full of unreliable traders and shifty pirates. Yes, life is good.

In the course of this story, our heroes will become adversaries of Thargan the Black, one of those merciless pirates that roam the coasts in these waters of the Azure Sea. Thargan and his band of swashbuckling pirates, his treacherous girl friend Pasha, and his lieutenant Donollo with the eyes of a witch. Thargan loves only one thing more than torture and slaughter, and that is treasure.

And there is one treasure in this area that is legendary. The treasure of the mysterious Baron of the Spinward Marshes. It has been buried now for over a hundred years, deep in the swamps somewhere. And nobody has found it. Yet. But now, a young girl has come into town, with a riddle and a map.

Opening Scene: Fight in the Black Seagull Inn

Our heroes (the characters of the players!) have just arrived in Hartbey. Some may have come with an old ship with a cranky captain, and others may have come by the road. Maybe one lives in this area, in a village nearby, or maybe even in town.

By chance, all come together in the Black Seagull, one of the few nicer inns in town. A place where you can drink, rent a room for the night and get acquainted with new friends. *(Give the players a chance to introduce themselves and describe their characters a bit. And let them talk a bit to each other, tell stories where they come from and the like.)*

And just while they are enjoying some food as the sun sets outside, a fourteen year old girl bursts in and dives under their table. Right behind her, a big man with a hairy chest and an axe follows. And guess what, he starts chopping right at her! *(In all likelihood, a fight will follow between your heroes and this pirate. Have fun and let the heroes break a lot of plates and furniture! If you find that this one man is too easy for the players, have a couple of other pirates come in and help him.)*

After the dust settles, the hairy chested pirate is identified as one of the henchmen of Thargan. Someone in the pub will explain to them who Thargan is, and why they should fear him. But what was this pirate after?

The girl is Alicia, and she has received a letter from her lost brother Axel with a map to find the legendary treasure of the long dead Baron. *(If she died, make sure they find the map and riddle on her corpse, and let someone explain what the treasure is. If she lives, she asks the heroes to protect her and help find her brother and the treasure.)*

Fantasy Creatures

Most good fantasy stories have at least one special creature or monster. Be sure to have some for your stories too. Below are a few examples with some suggested ability scores, skills, and armour and weapon values. Assume that the abilities that are not mentioned are average (0).

Uruk

The Uruk is a foul creature that lives in war tribes, and lives its life for slaughter and battle. There are many kinds of uruk, but all look like twisted humans, with a big jaw and big canine teeth. They have a greenish skin, pointed ears, and a bad temper most of the time. They fight well, but they are also stupid, and easy to fool. Their size varies a lot, but many are as big as humans. They typically come in raiding groups of two to twenty, but they live in tribes of many more. Below are some typical scores.

STR 2-4, CON 2-4, INT -2, APP -2,
Shortsword 3, Shield 3, Spear 3, Excellent hearing 1
often clad in leather or brigandine with a leather helmet

Zombie

The zombie is a decaying corpse that has been brought to a semblance of life by an evil wizard. The corpse can slowly move around, and fight with its long fingernails and bite, but it can not talk much sense. Zombies often have a taste for fresh human flesh, and may carry nasty diseases. They cannot stand sunlight.

STR 3, DEX -1, Claw 3, Bite 3 (class 1)

Dragon

There are many sorts of dragons. You have them smart and stupid, talking or dumb, flying or without wings, and some even without legs. And they come in many colors. Some can breathe fire, and some are very old and wise, and may even know magick skills. Not all dragons are evil, either. And some may even help the heroes on their quests. Below is just an example of a firebreathing, flying dragon.

STR 8, CON 8, INT 3,
breathe fire 5 (damage class 2), claw 4 (class 2),
bite 6 (class 3), fly 5, speak common 3
It has strong scales for armour covering its body (class 3)

Wolf

Common animals can also threaten the heroes, and a hungry pack of wolves in winter time can be a nasty foe. Wolves usually come in groups of four to ten. They only attack if they have a majority and are hungry. Fire may scare them away.

DEX 3, Bite 3 (class 0 or 1), Excellent Hearing 3, swim 2

Where the adventure goes from here is a bit up to you, but if the players help Alicia, some of the following scenes are likely. Choose your own path, and let your heroes roam about!

Chase on the Spinward Seas

Once the heroes take the map (*if you can, draw one yourself on a piece of paper*), they will see that it is a map of the coast south of Hartbey. It notes some towns and known islands for recognition. In the corner, just behind four small isles in a straight row, there is and a black tower in the swamps, and a cross is drawn there: X marks the spot!

Once they arrange a small ship (a cranky old captain will help them for a good sum), they can sail to the islands and find the black tower. But they are followed by Thargan's ship! And if he gets a chance he may board them! A chase follows in which the heroes can test their skills and smarts to avoid and perhaps even lose Thargan the Merciless.

Pasha's Proposal

If the heroes hang about in town long enough before arranging a ship, a mysterious woman will meet with the heroes, and offer a deal. She has heard about Axel's letter and the map, and she can help them solve the riddle. She also knows about the dangers there, and can help them overcome the ghost of the black tower. If she may join them, she says, she only wants a small part of the treasure so that she can find Axel again. Axel she says, is her lost love.

Is it true what she says? That is up to you as a Game Master. She will certainly turn out to be Pasha, and if they figure out that Pasha is the girl friend of Thargan, they may not trust her anymore! Here are some possibilities:

1. She lies. She just tries to get the map for Thargan.
2. She lies. But she will help the heroes until they find the treasure, and then she calls in Thargan.
3. She lies, and wants the treasure for herself. But in the course of the adventure she falls in love with one of the heroes. And she will betray Thargan for him in the end.
4. She is truthful. Axel is her lost love, and if they help her, she will gladly betray Thargan in the end too. She just joined Thargan to find Axel in the first place.

Confrontation on Thargan's Ship

Maybe the heroes want to teach this Thargan a lesson for chasing little girls, or maybe they check out where Pasha comes from. Or maybe they have another reason to end up on Thargan's ship in the harbour. Once they get there, they will be invited in the cargo hold, where Thargan sits amidst a host of pirates and prostitutes. There are too many to handle in a fight. Thargan may offer them a deal if they wish to share the treasure with him. Not that he will keep to the deal though. If they ask about Pasha, she will come sit on his lap...

(If the heroes get into an argument or fight here, give them a good chance to escape. You don't want them to die here, yet. If needed, you could let the city harbour guard pass by and rescue them out of any trouble.)

(Also, this is a good place to show a bit what Donollo can do with his telekinesis or shapeshifting, so that he becomes more scary later in the story)

Supporting Cast for "The Baron..."

Thargan the Black

Relentless and greedy, this is one of the worst pirates you can find. It's fortunate he is not really all that good if left on his own. He is clad in black and brown leather, is bald with green eyes, and he wields a longsword decorated with small skulls.

STR 3, CON 3, DEX 2, longsword 5, brawling 4, leader 4, stealth and sneak 3, rock climbing 3, sailing 5, swim 5

Pasha

She is a beautiful woman, with flowing black hair and piercing blue eyes. Most often she is clad in brown leather, high boots, and armed with four daggers and a rapier.

DEX 4, INT 1, APP 3, throw dagger 4, rapier 3, seduce 3, intrusion 2, sleight of hand 2, history 2, r&w 3, swim 3

Donollo the Witcheyed

The lieutenant of Thargan is a blackeyed Dominican (Italian) with reddish hair and beard. He wears black and red, with silver bracers and a wolfshead amulet. He is a warlock.

DEX 2, INT 4, WIL 3, APP 2, animal shapeshift 4, r&w 3, dagger 2, telekinesis 4, clairvoyance 2, history 3, Latin 3, swim 3

Pirates (4 to 20 in number)

Thargan's henchmen vary a lot in appearance, but most are not too bright, nor nice, nor goodlooking. They can fight and sail, that counts. Some wear a leather jacket and boots.

STR 2, dagger 3 or axe 3, sailing 3, brawling 3, swim 2

Alicia

This young girl is quick afoot, and has lived on the street for quite a while. She has hazard brown hair, wears a dirty dress, and is tall for her fourteen years. She has a knife. She can't swim.

DEX 3, APP 1, dagger 1, r&w 2, sailing 1, first aid 2

Captain Roy Rumble

Is a grumpy old captain with a ramshackle boat, just big enough for the heroes. He has a grey beard, bald head and an eyepatch. He has two crewmembers (John and Mike) to help him sail.

WIL 2, APP -1, sailing 4, r&w 1, sing 3, short sword 2, swim 4

John: INT 3, sailing 3, brawling 2, short sword 2, swim 3

Mike: STR 3, DEX 2, sailing 2, brawling 4, swim 3

The Ghost of the Spinward Baron

The roaming soul of the deceased pirate baron is evil and twisted, and in agony over his wife he has killed by accident. He moves his old plate and chain armour (class 3) with the ghostly powers of his mind, so that it seems a man. But the armour is empty, and you can only hear him moaning and wailing. He can only be banned by an exorcism, although he will also disappear when the sun comes up. He may attack with a bastard sword (class 4) or a morningstar (class 3).

STR 5, bastard sword 5, morningstar 3, telekinetic power 5

If the heroes start fighting with the armoured ghost, treat the ghost as a normal man in armour, and let him react to wounds as normal. But even when he is 'killed' like this, he will rise again next night, unless he is brought to rest with an exorcism.

Treasure Hunt near the Baron's Black Tower

Once the heroes arrive in the mosquito-infested swamp, they will find the ruin of the black tower a few hours from the coast. It is the only real dry place, and they could make camp there. If they stay overnight, they will be plagued by haunting sounds. What are they? The ghost of the baron?

Again its your choice. Here are some possibilities.

1. The sounds are made by rats and bats and mice and insects. Nothing to worry about, but scary like hell.
2. The sounds are made by a pack of swamp wolves and their cubs. If the heroes find the cubs, the black, stinking, houndlike wolves will defend their cubs to the death if necessary.
3. Yes. The sounds are made by the baron's ghost. He walks around in his armour and wails about his lost wife. If he stumbles into an awake hero, he may attack. At the very least he will scare the wits out of them. (Check WIL 6 the first time you see him, or either freeze on the spot or run away in terror. If you run or freeze, the ghost gets a +3 on his first attack.)

Once the heroes get through the night, they may start looking for the treasure. So where is it? The riddle Alicia received from her lost brother Axel goes like this:

*When the sun sets, the shadows of my barony fall,
It is there where my love ends,
And only through my love you would find,
How unimaginably great my treasure is,
Seven times seven steps from there.*

Let the players crack their brains a bit on the riddle before you start helping them. Let them explore the surroundings, and maybe let one of them slip in quicksand so that the rest can rescue him or her. But in the end they should solve the riddle. Let Alicia or Pasha give a suggestion if they are really stuck.

The solution of the riddle is this: due east of the tower (the sun sets west and casts its shadow east), at the edge of the marsh (edge of the tower's shadow) is buried the dead body of the baron's wife (love). If they dig there, they will find her hand pointing in a direction. If they walk forty-nine paces in that direction, they will find the spot where the treasure is buried. Digging there, they will find a small, locked ironbound chest.

Final Scene: The Treasure of the Baron

Ultimately, our heroes should solve the descriptions of the riddle, and find the spot where the Baron's treasure lies. But unless they somehow managed to defeat Thargan and all his henchmen before, they will certainly face him now. Just while they are digging in the swampy soil, Thargan's ship will go to anchor nearby. And he and his men will silently try to surround our heroes. If they aren't noticed before that, they will wait until the heroes find something.

Once they get the chest up Thargan will come out and demand it from them. And Thargan has just a few more men than the heroes. He probably has the edge if they will enter a fight. *(Now, the players can decide, will this be an all out fight, or will they surrender? Maybe the pirates capture Alicia and put a knife to her throat. Will they risk killing her?)*

Whatever happens next is in your hands, and that of the players. Maybe Thargan gets the box and is so distracted that the heroes can overwhelm him then. Or maybe they can flee in time and reach their own ship. Play it out, and see!

How will it all end? And what is in the ironbound chest if they or Thargan open it? Here are some possibilities:

1. The treasure was never very big. The rumours were wildly exaggerated. In the chest are a few hundred gold coins, and three healing potions. One of these has now turned to poison.
2. In the chest are old crumbled maps. Once they pointed to the real treasure, but nobody can use them now anymore.
3. In the chest are the clothes and jewels of the baron's dead wife, including her wedding ring. Together it's worth only 20 gold. That was the baron's real treasure. His wife's love...
4. In the chest are a few hundred silvers, some gold, and a key to a bank vault somewhere. There is a piece of paper here too, with a riddle of where the vault can be found. If the heroes wish to follow this trail, they walk into a next adventure!

Magick Objects

Many fantasy stories also feature special magick items, like potions that turn you invisible, swords that suck soul from their victims, daggers that flame on command, and lamps with treacherous spirits in them who may grant you some wishes so that they can be set free. They make great treasures, and can enrich your stories a lot. But watch it!

If your heroes have too many of these things, they will beat your villains too easily, and have little left to fight for. So make sure that every item you make up either has an inherent problem, or can be used only once or only in very specific circumstances. Below are a few examples:

Potion of Healing

These come in a lot of varieties and colors, and may taste sweet or bitter. They are often kept in expensive flasks because they are so valuable and hard to make. Some may heal only a Light wound over a full day, others may heal even Severe or Critical wounds in half an hour. Usually, you will have to drink the full potion for it to work at all. If a potion grows many years too old it may turn poisonous instead.

Cloak of the Elves

This is a fine woven cloak of silk and light wool, in green and brown colors. If you wear it, and hide in the shadow or in the woods, it will make you virtually invisible. Even if you are standing quite close to others, people may not notice you, just as long as you keep still. In practice, you will have a +3 on surprise and hiding with this cloak.

Pouch of Holding

These come in various sizes, but are very valuable and expensive to make. Some are of leather, others of strong silk or sturdy canvas. All look like normal pouches. But on the inside they are much larger than on the outside, and they can hold two to ten times as much as a normal pouch. Also, they often make their load lighter at the same ratio, so you can carry much more in them. A rumour goes that a very powerful knapsack of this type exists with an angry wizard locked up inside!

Blessed Sword of St.Procopius

It is said that three of these swords were forged by a pious soldier in the ImperiMor army. They are sturdy and sharp short swords of excellent quality, and are marked with the roman sigil VI for the sixth legion. Most of the time these swords do nothing unusual, but if a demon is near, they suddenly will grow warm and shine with a faint light. And if the sword is used against a demon, it will burn the demon with holy light! In practice, the sword is class 2 as usual, but class 4 against demons.

Equipment Price List

In Yaddrin, the most used coin is the silver piece. Its value is roughly equivalent to five dollars in our time. You also have the gold piece (= 20 silvers), roughly a hundred dollars, and the copper piece (5 copper = 1 silver), worth one current dollar.

Remember that you can't buy everything everywhere. In a city you probably can get most things, but in a village or a hamlet of a few farms it's unlikely that you can just buy a sword. An axe maybe, or a spear. But not a sword. Below is a list with average prices. Quality items, rare items and custom made items will be more expensive. Low quality items may sell for a bit less.

Armour:

Leather Jacket (no sleeves)	2 gold
Leather Jacket (with sleeves)	4 gold
Leather Pants	2 gold
Boots	1 gold
Riding Boots	2 gold
Studded Leather Jacket	5 gold
Chain Hauberk (with sleeves)	15 gold
Chain Suit (top to toe)	25 gold
Plate Armour (top to toe)	100 gold
Steel Open Helmet	6 gold
Steel Closed Helmet	9 gold
Visored Helmet	12 gold
Leather Helmet	10 silver
Leather Armguards	10 silver

Weapons:

Mace	10 silver
Dagger	10 silver
Rapier	4 gold
Short Sword	3 gold
Long Sword	9 gold
Bastard Sword (twohanded)	12 gold
Short Bow	5 gold
Long Bow	8 gold
Crossbow	4 gold
Bolt or Arrow	1 silver
Shield, iron banded	2 gold
Shield, small wooden buckler	10 silver

Various:

Horse, Riding	15 gold
Horse, War Trained (for a knight)	100 gold
Saddle and Gear	5 gold

Torch or Candle	1 copper
10 meters of climbing rope	10 silver
Leather Backpack	25 silver
Canvas Pouch	5 silver
Paper, ink and pen	10 silver
Cloak or Blanket	1 gold
Simple Clothes	10 silver
Rich Clothes	5 gold
Simple Meal	1-2 silver
Rich Meal	10 silver
Good Rations for a day	5 silver
Wine (jug) or Beer (pint)	2-8 copper
Bread or Pastry	1-2 copper
Stay at an Inn, one night	2-10 silver
Stay at a Quality Inn, one night	1 gold or more

Typical (Nett) Wages:

Waitress or Laborer	1-10 silvers per full day
Craftsman	3-20 silvers per full day
Scholar	5-50 silvers per full day

What You Didn't Get in this Version

The version of the Dark Dungeon 2nd Edition rules you are holding now is complete in its own right. You can play many games just with these rules, your friends, a 10-sided die, and a lot of imagination. But there is more to come!

The full fledged Dark Dungeon 2nd Edition rules will feature more skills, more magick, more Saints and deities, more creatures, and more Artwork. Below follows a sample list of the things you missed out on in this version:

- rules for martial arts disciplines and maneuvers
- rules for enchanting your own magick items
- more precise rules for missile weapons and shields
- many more weapons, their descriptions, and pictures!
- many, many more skill descriptions
- over seventy magick disciplines with examples
- many other religions, Saints, Deities, Gods and Goddesses
- Evil Deities, Fallen Angels, Dark Elves, Maelstroms
- The eternal battle betwixt Good and Evil, and Chaos
- many extended character templates for Templar Knights, Necromancers, Catburglars, Alchemists, Inquisitors, Gnome Illusionists, Pirates, Ninja, and so on, and so on
- equipment, weapon and armour descriptions and prices
- tips and tables to give your character more depth and history
- more tips and ideas for more fun and better role playing
- more tips for Game Mastering and building Stories
- a series of short Stories to Game Master
- a series of worked out campaign descriptions
- an outline of the medieval fantasy world Yaddrin
- a limited timeline of Yaddrin's history and famous people
- gazettes and maps of several lands and cities of Yaddrin
- many, many descriptions of medieval fantasy creatures
- many, many descriptions of special creatures of Yaddrin
- many, many descriptions of Artefacts and Relics
- full color and black and white artwork

Interested? Keep your eyes open and aimed on www.yaddrin.org and the bookshelves of book and game-stores.

When will I finish the full edition of Dark Dungeon 2nd Edition? I wish I knew. Send your support emails and serious commercial proposals through www.darkdungeon.ws!

Yes, if there is enough interest we will go public on Wall Street! Elves with Uzi's galore!

Dark Dungeon Rules!

Just kidding... no, no, I didn't mean it. What's that needle for? Ahw, ahw, stop it! Ahw!

This document was prepared with Corel WordPerfect 6.1 and Adobe Acrobat 4.0 under Microsoft Windows 95.