

FANTASY CRAFT

GUIDANCE & ERRATA

NOTES

These suggestions and revisions are for **Fantasy Craft Second Printing** and current as of **May 13, 2011**.

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All material is presented in the order the original text appeared in the book. Page numbers are included throughout for easy reference. Any note without a page number applies universally within the section.

THE FANTASY CRAFT METHOD

Fantasy Craft is, first and foremost, a toolkit specifically developed to support *your* vision of the perfect cinematic high adventure roleplaying experience, from lifelike to extraordinary, subdued to bombastic, and anywhere in-between. The game features default “out of the box” rules but due to the myriad groups and preferred styles out there, this baseline is quite liberal, allowing much more than it restricts. Because of this, Fantasy Craft operates best when the GM and players make decisions (preferably together) about the game they want to play. This can begin with one or more campaign qualities (*see Fantasy Craft, page 322*), but it’s also about choosing which parts of the game to ignore.

Fantasy Craft is intentionally modular and the changes made here reinforce that versatility book-wide — there’s simply no reason you *have* to include every Origin, class, feat, magic school, action, trick, and monster unless there’s a special and unique place for all of them in your world (and what an overwhelming world that could be!). One of the strongest and bravest decisions you can make for any setting is where the choices end and where the world stops. Some options, like the magic-using classes and spellcasting rules, should be considered together but for the most part you can and should omit at your preference.

Just as importantly, if not more so, is how you *use* the rules. There are four critical pointers on this front and we’ll provide examples for each.

No RPG works without cooperation and mutual trust that everyone is focused on everyone else’s fun.

Competition works against the strengths inherent in roleplaying, turning them into weaknesses. The GM should never be “out to get” the players and the players shouldn’t ever get the impression that he is. Likewise, the players need to realize that the GM has their best interest at heart and is looking for ways to enhance their enjoyment of the game (yes, even when he’s beating their characters to a pulp — as any good movie-goer or book reader will tell, a victory without adversity is hollow indeed).

This is perhaps best illustrated with the use of action dice, especially when applying Narrative Control and Cheating Death (*see pages 366 and 384, respectively*). It’s trivially easy to abuse these rules simply by debating yourself into a better position, but it pulls everyone out of the game and simultaneously turns them into adversaries (at the very least across the screen), all at the expense of an uplifting collaboration.

Pointer the First: When in doubt about the rules, work together to find a solution.

No RPG works without the GM and players wanting it to work — especially not a toolkit.

The best of us stumble over rules that seem to be doing something irrational, or implausible, or just not fun. This is never any designer's goal but language and game design being such fluid, subjective things it's bound to happen every so often, especially in a game that actively leaves the rules open to the needs of the audience. The all-important factor in these cases — the one you should observe over all others — is that you must *want* the rule to function. If you look for holes you'll find them — no amount of future-proofing, playtesting, or editing can safeguard against a desire to break the game, and no game can aspire to perfect clarity and balance without utterly sacrificing utility.

A great example of this is one of the biggest changes we made to the base d20 system way back in 2002: Blend and Sneak, and their companion skills, Notice and Search. Unlike 3E's Hide and Move Silently, Listen and Spot, our four skills aren't triggered by different actions but rather the same actions taken in different ways. This has a host of benefits, including the fact that both pairs of skills in Fantasy Craft are applied in exactly the same way.

Blend and Notice are intended as the default skills for passive hiding (audibly and visually) and Notice is the skill for passive observation (again, audibly and visually). These checks aren't generally called for by the player; instead, the GM uses them, sometimes secretly, to determine whether a character is spotted when he's not trying to hide, or if he notices something when he's not looking for anything. These are both very common occurrences in adventures — so common, in fact, that these skills should probably be used in all cases except when the *player* asks for a check. Then the activities swap to Sneak and Search, which involve the character intently trying to succeed at those tasks.

Some players have refuted that any character can passively do anything — that all checks should default to the active skills. We contend that while that's a valid way to play, it's overlooking an important strategy to both character building and approaching danger in the game world. It's implausible to us that any adventurer is "on" every minute he's awake and so there's really no logical reason he should be defaulting to only two skills for all his stealth and observation needs. Plus, even D&D accepted that no combination of only two skills for these activities was balanced, which should make the need for four skills obvious.

Other misinterpretations of these skill rules include allowing characters to use both skills for some checks and letting the party make more than one roll to see something or hide as a group. Both of these rulings skew the odds wildly and unfairly in the heroes' favor — so much so that the check's probably irrelevant and the GM should just let them succeed. The rules we include for all these cases — in the skill check descriptions and in the team and cooperative check sections (*see page 66*) have been developed over years working with the game in practical application, and for them to function as written... well, you have to want to see the reasons they exist.

Pointer the Second: When in doubt about the rules, assume there's a rational, plausible, and fun explanation. Think about the intent (it's usually obvious from the context), then what your instinct tells you is balanced (that's usually obvious by comparing to similar rules), and if those two things line up, you've probably got the "official" answer — and even if you don't you've certainly got one that works for your group, which is all that really matters.

No RPG works without rules calls.

This one's short and simple: every RPG system is built with the central conceit that rules must (frequently) be interpreted to fit the situation. The same rule can be applied two ways in two situations, perhaps with different modifiers and maybe even with mutually exclusive results. We embrace this philosophy when writing for Fantasy Craft and intentionally leave some things open for this reason.

Take the Path of Strength, which at Step IV grants both Unarmed and Natural Resistance (*see page 313*). But wait! Aren't natural attacks considered unarmed attacks? Yes. So shouldn't those Resistances stack? Clearly not. For one thing, the context makes it pretty clear that they're separate benefits, but more importantly it's obviously imbalanced — based on the Resistances offered everywhere else in the game — that they would.

Another more commonly accepted interpretation is the application of different attribute modifiers when using skills in unconventional ways, as described in the Mix n' Match Skills sidebar on page 67. In both these cases the GM, with input from the players, frames and defines the rules to suit his needs. So following the Mix n' Match model, Unarmed Resistance might be applied exclusively to non-weapon attacks (including natural weapons, which are covered by Natural Resistance), or they might be applied on a case-by-case basis for each specific attack. Neither of these rulings is endorsed by errata because neither is wrong.

Pointer the Third: When in doubt, and after you've considered the previous two pointers, make a call and stick with it. If you're still unsure, flag the ruling and come back to it later, when it won't interrupt the game. Ultimately, all that matters is everyone accept the final ruling, no matter how "official" it is.

No RPG works without definition and restriction.

The limits of what's plausible are different for every group, even those sharing the same setting. Some groups prefer over-the-top results and outlandish possibilities, while others are more reserved. Again, to support all groups, Fantasy Craft leaves a lot open — including a lot of toys available to players. It's everyone's job, including the players', to exercise restraint appropriate to the setting, story, and the tolerances of everyone at the table (you might want to go back and read the first pointer again as a refresher).

A great example is the NPC system, which is left fairly open to accommodate the countless monsters GMs want to throw at the party, but it's also used to create PC-built followers, hirelings, and contacts. Sure, players can theoretically use the system's adaptable nature to min-max mechanically ideal helpers but that's clearly not the intent of those rules and it doesn't showcase a desire to embrace the system for what it is. Going back to the first pointer, it's also a textbook illustration of not looking out for everyone else's fun.

Magic items are another great example. When we first released Fantasy Craft we didn't specifically restrict players from using the magic item creation system, but we thought it was pretty clear that wouldn't work to anyone's advantage. Nevertheless we saw posts claiming our rules were "broken" because of some of the crazy items we were letting people loot. Unless you're playing in a world where corner stores stock artifacts and every combination of known magical effects, or where every kill is a component in a universal Wish spell, it's not very likely the character's going to get exactly what they want and besides, *the randomizers along the sides of those tables should have been a dead giveaway.*

Pointer the Fourth: The GM can and should withhold unbalanced or implausible rules from players. Fantasy Craft is not strictly a player's game. GMs are players too and part of their fun is being able to define worlds, including the parts of them that don't exist or aren't automatically available.

CHAPTER 1: HERO

Enlightened Skill: Enlightened skill may only be applied to skills in Chapter 2.

BASE CLASSES

Expertise: All instances of this ability also allow you to take 10 with the chosen skill, even when you wouldn't normally be allowed to.

Mage (page 43): The *master of magic* ability is now: "While the mightiest of spells still require your full attention, lesser spells are now trivial for you. At Level 14, a number of times per scene equal to your starting action dice, you may take 10 with Spellcasting checks and the time required is not doubled to do so. Also, once per scene, you may attempt to cast any spell of any level you're able to cast, even if you don't know it."

CHAPTER 2: LORE

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

Investigate (page 76): In the Decipher, Identify, and Research check descriptions, failure increases the error range of future attempts by 2, not by 2 per action die spent (you're not spending any action dice with an error — only a critical failure, which already has a separate outcome).

CHANCE FEATS

Fortune's Fool (page 94): This feat's benefit is now: "When the GM spends an action die against you, you gain a bonus d4 action die. You may use this ability a number of times per session equal to the number of Chance feats you have."

SPECIES FEATS

Greater Breath (page 102): This feat's benefit is now: "Your breath weapon becomes a 40-ft. line, 20-ft. cone, or 15-ft. sphere (your choice). If you choose a sphere, the attack is a flaming ball of spit you may position anywhere within 20 ft. of you."

CHAPTER 3: GRIMOIRE

SPELLCASTING

Taking 10 and 20: You may only take 10 or 20 with Spellcasting checks when another rule or option specifically allows you to do so.

SPELLS

Command I (page 122): The forced Movement action takes place on the target's next Initiative Count and replaces the target's next normal action (e.g. a forced Standard Move leaves the target with 1 half action to use, while a forced Run takes up all the target's actions except perhaps one or more free actions, as the GM allows).

Command II (page 123):

- This spell's Duration line has been removed (the spell now lasts 1 round).
- This spell's Effect is now: "As Command I, except that up to 1 character per Casting Level perform 1 Movement action each."

Dancing Lights (page 127): This spell's bonus is applied to Conceal Action checks and Distractions, not Diversions.

Scare I (page 144): This spell's effect is now: "One character becomes frightened for 1d6 rounds. This spell has no effect on undead."

CHAPTER 4: FORGE

MAGIC ITEMS

Table 4.32: Essences and Charms (page 195): In the Lesser Charms portion of this table, the Spell Effect line is now...

D20 Result	Essence	Effect	Reputation Cost
13–17	Spell Effect (Level 0–5)	Trigger item for 1 spell effect	Spell Level (min. 1) × uses

Essence Descriptions (page 196): The introduction to this section is now...

ESSENCE DESCRIPTIONS

Each Essence grants a specific fixed benefit regardless of the magic item's level.

All of an Essence's details — such as the specific Alignment conveyed by Aligned Damage and the specific School affected by Casting Level Bonus — must be chosen when the item is introduced and cannot change.

Remember, a magic item may only have 1 Essence, while an Artifact may have up to 5 Essences. Essences with no details to select may only be applied to an artifact once, while other Essences may only be applied once for each possible detail. For example, the Aligned Damage Essence may only be applied to an artifact as many times as there are Alignments in the campaign (and again, to a maximum of 5 total Essences, regardless).

The GM always chooses an item or artifact's Essence(s) and all related details.

Charm Descriptions (page 199): The introduction to this section is now...

CHARM DESCRIPTIONS

Unlike Essence effects, which are fixed, Charm effects are determined by the item or artifact's level. This ensures that magic items gradually improve over the life of the campaign, and it's the cornerstone for artifact advancement.

As with an Essence, all of a Charm's details must be chosen when the item is introduced and cannot change. A magic item may only have one Charm, while an Artifact may have up to five. Charms with no details to select may only be applied to an artifact once, while other Charms may only be applied once for each possible detail.

The GM always chooses an item or artifact's Charm(s) and all related details.

CHAPTER 5: COMBAT

DAMAGE TYPES

Sneak Attack Damage (page 211):

- Sneak attack damage is always expressed as a number of bonus d6 damage dice.
- Sneak attack damage may only be used to augment lethal, subdual, and stress damage.

Subdual Damage (page 211): This damage type's first bullet is now:

- Certain sources of subdual damage logically damage objects. The GM decides which sources make sense on a case-by-case basis. Hammers should damage windows, for example, even when they inflict subdual damage. Fists, however, are probably — though not always — useless against steel doors.

ACTIONS

Disarm (page 219): The combatant with the bigger weapon now gains +2 bonus per Size category of difference, not +4.

ADVANCED ACTIONS AND TRICKS

"Forte" (pages 221–222): When an action or trick has the word "Forte" in parenthesis, it may only be applied when the character has the forte for his current attack (whether it's unarmed or with a weapon).

CHAPTER 6: FOES

STATISTICS

Signature Skills (page 228): As noted in the natural spell quality (*see page 234*), the Casting Level of an NPC with the Spellcasting Signature Skill is equal to the NPC's Threat Level.

NPC QUALITIES

Critical Hesitation (page 233): This quality triggers when the NPC suffers a critical "miss or failure," not a "hit or failure."

Expertise (page 233): This quality's description is now: "The NPC may always take 10 with the skill. Also, when he takes 10 with the skill it doesn't take twice as long, and when he takes 20 it takes only 10 times normal."

Tricky (page 235): Prerequisites may be ignored when applying this quality.

ATTACKS

Table 6.5: Extraordinary Attacks (page 238):

- The XP value of the Paralyzing Save Attack is now 3 XP per grade.
- The XP value of the Stunning Save Attack is now 4 XP per grade.

USING AN NPC

Proficiencies (page 241): NPCs are automatically proficient with all weapons they carry.

ROGUES GALLERY

Wizard (page 248): This NPC's Identify and Sleep spells should be listed as Identify I and Sleep I.

ROGUE TEMPLATES

Saurian (page 249): This template's Benefit is now...

Benefit: One of his attribute scores rises by 2 and he gains *aquatic I*, *cold-blooded*, and *darkvision I*. He also gains *Bite I* (dmg 1d8 lethal, threat 18–20) and *Tail Slap I* (dmg 1d8 lethal, threat 20, qualities: *reach +1*).

BESTIARY

Dogs (page 260): The riding dog is a Small creature, as noted in its "SZ" entry. The "Medium Animal Walker" text after its name is incorrect.

MONSTER TEMPLATES

Skeletal (page 294): Skeletons also gain *Achilles' heel (blunt)* and the Relentless Attack trick (see page 222).

CHAPTER 7: WORLDS

PATHS

Path of Death IV (page 311): This Step is now: “You may Turn undead a number of times per combat equal to your Death Step (see page 223). You may also cast Animate Dead III once per scene.”

GM ACTION DICE

Table 7.20: Nature's Fury (page 369):

- Attack penalties inflicted by wind also apply to bow attacks.
- A near lightning strike now inflicts 3d6 flash damage, rather than 1d6.

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