Crawl!

First Issue!   No.1

Features:

A Patron from
the imminent future!

Sword & Sorcery
Campaigns!

Alternative Skill
Systems!

Use your Old-School
Spells!

Crawl!fanzine

No.1
PDF Edition

Credits:

COMPATIBLE WITH
DCC RPG

Divine Aid!

Why **Crawl!**?   I have been playing the Original game since, I believe, 1979. When I was a kid I used to write, compile and collect house-rules, new material and art for my game. All I had was a pad of graph paper and a friend with the original "Blue Box", the Holmes Edition. At first we totally played it wrong. By the time I owned the original Red Box, then the Player's Handbook, I was playing it "right", and had piles of hand written "supplements" and house-rules. My life has never been the same. It was crazy how much we played during those years, and even crazier how much time we spent (re)interpreting the rules, imagining new characters, creating new magic weapons and drafting out the domains of our (cheating) high-leveled heroes. Those were the days. Since the release of DCC RPG, this is the first time since those times that I've been inspired to create, collect and share stuff for any game. And that's what **Crawl!** is, a fanzine made by fans for fans. I hope what I do here will expand and inspire your own game and make your adventures as enjoyable and exciting as mine have been since I first started gaming decades ago. Let me know what you think. And if you want to contribute, don't hesitate to submit. Sharing is part of the hobby. And, I don't mind doing all the work making these little booklets for everyone to enjoy.

This issue features a new patron created by a player in my weekly home campaign, Brett Miller. His character was a wizard, and the patron is himself from the future! There is also some amazing art by Brett and from another player in the group, who only wants to go by her character's name, Count Spatula. The rest of the articles are some rules used in my home campaign written by yours truly. One starts a series of converting OSR (Old-School Renaissance) and Older Edition materials for use in DCC RPG! Several of the articles also make use of a new Variable DCs rule found on page 16.

Enjoy and (Adventure) Party On!

The Reverend Dak, April 2, 2012
(Dungeon) Master-in-Chief

P.S. This issue is dedicated to my Thursday Night D&D Group, who have made these past few months of gaming the best in a long, long, time.
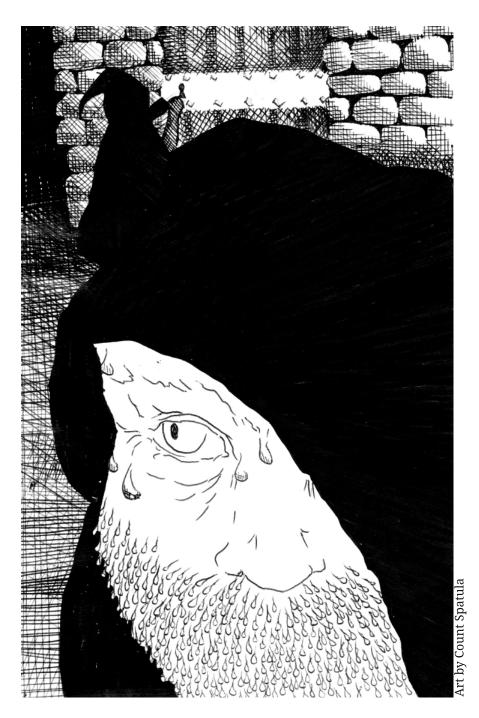
Contents!

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Wizards and Warriors! Part 1

Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG makes for an excellent Sword & Sorcery game campaign. S&S is rooted in the pulp fiction of Robert E. Howard's Conan and Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd & the Gray Mouser, among others. It is distinctly different from popular forms of Fantasy, such as high fantasy of the likes of J.R.R. Tolkien and their traditional tropes like Elves and mundane magic. S&S is typically grittier and the magic tends to be dangerous if not flat out scary. For DCC RPG to fit the S&S mold, the removal of demi-humans (such as elves & dwarves) is the first obvious step. It's easy enough to ignore the demi-human races from DCC RPG because they're not necessary for basic play. The magic system, fortunately, is rare and dangerous by default. While classes such as the Thief and Cleric arguably don't have a place in S&S, they have important roles that would be missed in standard DCC RPG play. The following hacks can be used to replace demi-humans during character generation, along with solutions for removing Thieves and Clerics (as you wish.)

Humans Only

Mankind is at the center of Sword & Sorcery adventures. Anything that isn't human are considered unusual, and extraordinary, if not inherently evil. It's easy enough to not use the Dwarf, Elf and Halfling classes. When rolling the Occupation (see core rules) re-roll any demi-humans, drop the reference to a race or replace demi-human results with one of the following occupations: (d10)

1	Miner – Pick (as club) and Lantern
2	Hermit – Club and Animal skin
3	Carpenter – Saw (as dagger) and Plank of wood
4	Fisherman – Knife (as dagger) and Net
5	Sailor – Scimitar (as short sword) and Bottle of rum
6	Butcher – Knife (as dagger) and 1 lb of meat
7	Handyman – Hammer (as club) and Nails
8	Inn/Bar-keeper – Club and Flask of wine
9	Brewer – Mallet (as club) and Bottle of beer
10	Artist – Dart and Paint & brushes

You're all thieves!

Sometimes you have to be a bit more subtle than kicking down every door to get to the loot. Tricky traps and tall towers shouldn't stop a pack of cutthroats from reaching their gold. All classes should have access to certain skills classically reserved to the Thief class. One solution is to give every class access to thief skills. The simplest method is to use the *Thief Skills by Level and Alignment Table*, and give Warriors and Wizards all the appropriate skills according to their level, except Backstab (which in my opinion is a purely Thief class feature, but this is optional.) Apply the PCs Agility modifiers and don't forget Armor Check penalties.

The following is an alternate set of rules to simplify the thief-like skill checks.

Thieving Skills
An alternative skill system

It's not that far fetched to assume that all PCs are skilled in the ways of adventuring, looting and stealing. It can be argued that all adventurers should be able to climb, open locks and hide in the dark. If the PC attempts any Thief-like acts, just have them make a simple skill check. Use their Level, and factor in any Armor Check penalties and appropriate Ability modifiers. Use the following Table: Thieving Skills, for the base DC. (Judges should increase the difficulty when needed.) Recommended Ability is listed, and

Thieving Skills: Roll d20+CL+Ability Modifier-Armor Check

Sneak Silently:	Agility, DC 18 (Hard)
Hide in Shadows:	Agility, DC 18 (Hard)
Pickpocket:	Agility, DC 18 (Hard)
Climb Sheer Surfaces:	Agility or Strength, DC 7 (Easy, Stone Wall) to DC 22 (Impossible, Glass surface)
Pick Lock:	Agility, DC 10 (Routine) to DC 22 (Impossible)
Find Trap:	Intelligence, DC 15 (Moderate) to DC 22 (Impossible)
Disable Trap:	Agility, DC 18 (Hard) to DC 22 (Impossible)
Forge Document:	Agility, DC 18 (Hard)
Disguise Self:	Personality, DC 18 (Difficult)
Read Languages:	Intelligence, DC 22 (Impossible)
Handle Poison:	Luck, DC 18 (Difficult)

variable DCs are found in parenthesis if using Variable DCs, the alternative skill system on page 16 in this issue.

No Clerical Healing

There are those that don't think Clerics fit the Sword & Sorcery genre. The easiest solution is to omit the Cleric class from the campaign. The most missed effect would be healing. Blessing can be replaced by a Warrior's *Mighty Deed of Arms*, through a *Rallying Maneuver*. Healing can be replaced by allowing more hit-points or faster healing. The following optional rules allow for extra HP to be healed between encounters.

Hit Dice Pools

One option would be Hit Dice pools. Here's how HD pools work. For every point of Stamina, the character has an extra reserve of HD. For example a Warrior with a Stamina of 14 has 14 d12 HD in reserve, while a Wizard with a Stamina of 9 would have 9 d4 HD. While resting between fights, with a minimum of one turn of uninterrupted rest, a PC can restore up to their level in HD. For example, the 3rd-level Warrior can restore up to 3d12 HP during a rest (up to their natural maximum.) These HP are restored at the end of the turn, and only if they are not interrupted. Stamina loss (permanent or temporary) will affect the HD pool. The pool can be completely refreshed with a good night's rest.

Burning Stamina

Another option, and a lot more gritty, is to allow a PC to temporarily burn Stamina to regain Hit Dice. Instead of a separate pool of HD (see above), the HD comes from burning Stamina. One HD per point of Stamina. This loss of Stamina would be temporary, and can heal like normal. Level limits, per rest, still apply.

Combat Healing

A PC that is reduced to 0 hit points during combat may be treated during combat once, and only once, per combat. It will take another PC a full action to treat a dying PC. If a PC is treated during that combat, the PC must make a DC 10 (Routine) Luck check. If successful, the PC may use one HD from their pool or burn Stamina to recover. The PC will also suffer a -2 penalty on all check, attack, or damage rolls until the PC gets a full night's rest. After combat, the PC may recover as usual, and may heal as normal.

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Van den Danderclanden

A patron from the Imminent Future! by Brett Miller

One hundred years hence, in the most exalted of the parallel worlds, the great wizard Van den Danderclanden has at last attained the highest rank of his order: Supernal Archmage of Empyreal Aptitude! His sorcerous knowledge is legendary! The corruption he has suffered is profound! And yet, unsatisfied with the ceaseless praise of his legions of admirers and sycophants, the master enchanter endeavors a new enterprise. Employing the arcane arts passed down to him from Nyarlathotep itself, Van den Danderclanden reaches back through time and the multitude of parallel manifestations to contact his previous selves and their followers. He seeks to manipulate the paths of their lives in order to synchronize them to an existential resonance; the vibrations of such an alignment will serve to amplify his magical endowments and bestow upon him the mantle of godhood. The means of the awesome magician's manipulations are capricious, however. Though the interventions are usually of ultimate benefit to the past self, the Future Master will often command his pawn to ruin, as befits his unfathomable design.

Invoke Patron check results

12-14 Shining Path. The Unholy Patron unveils the proper course of actions and right decisions for his acolyte. All spent luck is restored. Additionally, 1d6 luck points are temporarily bestowed. If unspent, these points will expire at midnight of the current day.

15-17 Whispered Secrets. For the next 1d4 hours, the Invisible Shepherd murmurs quietly into his apostle's ear, informing the listener of the hidden names of things and the forgotten utterances of power that unlock the potential of his spellcraft. All spellchecks made during this period use one die higher (e.g. If the spell check is usually a d20, the check will be made with a d24 instead.)

18-19 Slow Time. The wizard is thrown out of phase with time. His actions appear greatly sped up. From the wizard's perspective, everything moves glacially. This effect will last for 1 turn (in objective time). During this period, the wizard always wins initiative, may perform one extra action per round, and enjoys a +5 bonus to armor class and Reflex saves.

20-23 Transdimensional Assistance. 1d4 adjacent parallel dimensions are merged suddenly, resulting in duplicate invokers. The extras will have the same stats as the caster at the time of invocation. All of the conjured wizards are under the player's control, and none are given "preference" as the original. If an extra dies, its body and all of its accessories vanish, collapsing into the present plane. The extras remain manifest until they are killed. The effect persists until only a single wizard remains.

24-27 Hidden Sanctuary. The wizard and his entourage are whisked away to Van den Danderclanden's ancient manse, located in a tiny, extra dimensional paradise. The party are received as honored guests and may stay as long as they wish, being well fed and entertained by various amusing demons and spirits. The past self is given access to Van den Danderclanden's personal library, where he may memorize a single exotic spell of the highest level he may cast. When the group decides to leave the house -- and they must do so in unison --

they reappear in the exact place they departed, a single round later.

28-29 Channeled Sorcery. Van den Danderclanden possesses the caster's body, casting a spell of magnificent power, appropriate to the situation at hand. The possession lasts for 1d6 rounds.

30-31 Unholy Bodyguard. The invoker is sent an ethereal protector, who appears to any observer as the most terrifying monster imaginable. It radiates icy fear to all within 100 feet (Save vs. Will or flee, screaming like a child for 2d4 turns). It viciously attacks anything that threatens the nascent demigod. Init +2; Atk deathray +4 (2d8 dmg); AC 18, harmed only by magical weapons; HP 50; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +5; AL N. If unslain, it will return to the void following 2d4 turns of service.

32+ Direct Intercession. Holy shit. The Great Sorcerer projects himself into the present space-time stream to sort out whatever obstacles stand in the way of the true path of his ward. This manifestation is not the true sorcerer, only a reflection of him, and as such performs merely as a 10th level wizard. He will remain until the present peril is dealt with. If (somehow), the apparition is slain, Van den Danderclanden is not killed, but is wounded so deeply that he will likely abandon the self in this parallel as lost to his own fate.

Patron Taint

As the frequency with which the wizard solicits help from the Great and Future Despot increases, he will begin to experience subtle fluctuations in his identity and the reality of his circumstances. Van den Danderclanden will focus his attentions on the supplicant, and will tinker with the variables of his existence, often to the extent that the wizard's existence becomes ill defined and tangled with adjacent realities. When patron taint is indicated for Van den Danderclanden, roll 1d6 on the table below. Taints rolled more than once become more advanced conditions.

1 Identity Fluctuation. *First taint:* At the beginning of each session, one random Ability score will change 1d4-1d4, permanently. His physique and face will be subtly changed, but still recognizable. *Second taint:* In addition to the previous taint, every time the wizard casts a spell, there is a 10% chance that his memorized spells will

swap for unmemorized ones. His appearance each day is completely unrecognizable. *Third taint:* Every day, an entirely different person. Looks completely different, different background, etc. Still a wizard (or Elf), with the same name, but that's about all that persists from day to day.

2   **Ghosts.** *First taint:* When the wizard assists in the slaying of a creature or person, there is a 10% chance that the "ghost" of that being follows the wizard for 1d4 turns, behaving as if it hadn't died at all. It can effect nothing as it is merely an echo of a parallel in which the creature did not perish. Although it is spectral and at times barely visible, still it may potentially make a lot of racket. *Second taint:* The chance is reduced to 5%, but the ghost will remain all day. It looks quite real, although still ineffectual. It so unnerves the companions of the wizard that all actions are performed with a -2 penalty. *Third taint:* As above. Fallen companions will now appear from time to time to accompany the party for a day or so. Because the companion is actually operating in an adjacent universe, his or her actions may be subtly inappropriate for present circumstances.

3   **Blinking.** *First taint:* During combat (and other similarly stressful situations), the wizard may suddenly teleport a very short distance away (1 in 8 chance per round). He is not in control of this ability: it is caused by an abrupt change in the proximate past that places him in a slightly different position. The teleport is in a random direction, up to 10 feet away. During rounds that he blinks, his armor class is increased by 5, but spellchecks and other action rolls are reduced by 5. *Second taint:* Same as above but he now switches places with another person/monster in the area. The other person suffers the same disorienting effect and AC bonus. *Third taint:* As above, except the blinking pair no longer switch places. One of them will teleport to the safest place in the room, the other to the most dangerous place in the room. (If the target location is so dangerous that instant death results, a saving throw is allowed)

4   **Insubstantiation.** *First taint:* The wizard becomes indistinct, hazy. His armor class is improved by 1. *Second taint:* The wizard is now becoming transparent.

His AC is improved by a further +3 and he may now Move Silently as a thief of the same level. Melee engagement is becoming ineffectual, however, as his attacks often pass right through the intended target. He consequently suffers a -3 for melee. *Third taint:* The wizard is now nearly immaterial. AC is further increased by +3. Non-magical weapons cause half damage. The wizard may freely pass through nonmetal objects, but has nearly lost the ability to manipulate material objects, e.g. door handles, sacks of gold, etc. To do so requires a dexterity test against a DC of the judge's discretion. Melee attacks are made at a -8 penalty.

5   **Lost & Found**. *First taint:* Items come and go from the magicians pockets. Any time he tries to make use of a held item, roll a d20. On a 4 or less, the item is not there. (Roll again the next time the item is requested. It may be there this time.) If a 1 is rolled, a foreign item is found in its place. *Second taint:* As above but it now it happens with his companions. *Third taint:* Lost items are permanently lost. On the other hand, the things that show up are really really good.

6   **Mental Illness:** *First taint:* Acute paranoia. *Second taint:* Delusions of Grandeur. *Third taint:* Hallucinations.

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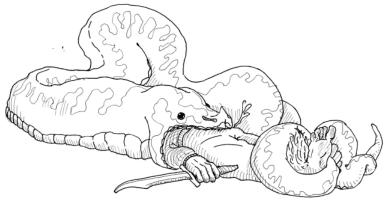
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Save or Die!

These rules are a slight variation to the standard *Bleeding Out* rules (see core rules.) These allow a dying character to possibly cry for help or **Crawl!** to safety.

When a Player Character's Hit Points fall below 1, the character makes a DC 15 (Moderate) Fortitude Save. If the PC fails, the character is unconscious and dying as usual. If the PC succeeds, the character remains conscious but is still dying. A conscious PC may attempt one move, or equivalent action, but may not attack or cast a spell. Every following round the PC must make DC 15 (Moderate) Fort Save or fall unconscious and move one step closer to death. If any time the PC rolls a natural 1, the PC immediately dies. If the PC fails a total of three times, the PC also dies. If any roll is a natural 20, the PC is conscious and recovers 1 hp and is groggy for one hour, per standard *Recovering The Body* rules.

Optionally, any time a PC takes damage that is equal to or more than their Stamina score in a single attack. And that attack drops the PC below 1 HP, they must make Fort Save or immediately die. The DC is equal to the damage taken.

These rules can also be applied to important NPCs.

Art by Brett Miller

Variable DCs

The Skill Check system in DCC RPG is simple and loose, just how I like them. The following rules don't change the existing rules, but add some depth while making full use of Ability scores for passive checks and to add a bit of randomness.

This system focuses on comparing a variable Difficulty Class to a character's actual Ability Score but also factors in Occupation and Character Class for passive checks and replaces flat DCs with a variable one.

Difficulty

The first thing to figure out is the base difficulty of the task. The core rules have four degrees of difficulty, DC 5 if the task is of any challenge to the unskilled (Easy). DC 10 if it has a measure of difficulty to the skilled (Routine). DC 15 if it would be challenging to the trained (Moderate). And DC 20 if only a highly skilled hero can do it (Hard.) This system adds another layer of difficulty that only a super hero could accomplish, "Impossible" with a base DC 22. Use the Difficulty Table for replacing the flat DC with an equivalent DC based on variable d6s. This adds a bit of randomness to the check, for example, what was originally DC 10 can be anywhere between 3 and 18. This is particularly useful when comparing to an Ability Score as a passive check. Variable DCs can increase possibilities or make the mundane surprisingly difficult, e.g. A mundane lock can be rusted shut, or a normally impossible to detect secret door can be accidentally left ajar.

DIFFICULTY TABLE

Flat DC	Difficulty	Variable DC
8 or less	Easy	2d6
9-12	Routine	3d6
13-16	Moderate	4d6
17-21	Hard	5d6
*22+**	*"Impossible"*	*6d6**

*Optionally, add an additional d6 for every 3 or so points above 22.

Occupation Skills

There are no formal skill lists in DCC RPG. It is assumed that any character can attempt to do anything that their previous occupation required. For example, a former Ostler can handle horses, and likely do minor work with leather and iron. While a Shaman might know a bit about nature, minor healing and understand some primitive magic, such as fortune-telling. It's up to the Judge and Player to determine what these specific skills are. In this system, if the task is something everyone can do, the task should be at least one step easier in difficulty for someone that has the skill. For example, digging a hole would be Moderate difficulty (DC 15 or 4d6) for an Ostler, might be Routine (DC 10 or 3d6) or even Easy (DC 5 or 2d6) for a Grave Digger. Adjust the DC accordingly.

Class Skills

Class can also be a factor during an Ability Check. If the skill is related to the class, the character should get a modifier to the check equal to their class level. For example, if a 3rd-level Wizard is analyzing some runes (a typical skill for a wizard), add 3 to the effective Ability score. Optionally if the task is something that every class can effectively do, but certain classes would inherently be better at it, combine the bonus with an additional skill die, see Table: Class Skill Dice. This allows the skilled to roll some extra dice. Racial modifiers should also be added accordingly.

CLASS SKILL DICE

Class Level	Skill Die	Class Level	Skill Die
1	d3	6	d8
2	d4	7	d10
3	d5	8	d12
4	d6	9	d14
5	d7	10	d16

Note: This bonus die would be in addition to their Class Level.

Passive Skill Checks

In general, non-combat tasks should be role-played. A passive Skill Check is used if there are consequences or danger from failure. Tripping traps, stumbling upon secret doors and avoiding detection are examples. The check should use the most appropriate Ability Score (see *Skill Checks for Common Activities* in the DCC RPG Core Rules for examples.) The effective DC is rolled by the Judge. Start with the base difficulty, factor in occupation skill then directly compare the result to the chosen Ability Score (modified by Class Level & Skill Die if appropriate.) If the modified Ability Score is equal or less than the DC rolled, the check is successful. For example, a party is walking down a hall, but not specifically searching for traps or secret doors. There is a secret door, determined to be **Hard** by the Judge, in the hallway. The Judge would roll **5d6** and compare it to the Luck of each member of the party. Every PC whose Luck is equal or higher than the roll would notice the secret door. If the party is running down the hall, away from a tribe of lizardfolk, finding the secret door would be more difficult. Increase the difficulty to 6d6 or "Impossible."

Ability Tests

Ability Tests are quick and easy checks that would test pure ability and not skill (i.e. Class or Occupation.) Traditionally the player rolled their most appropriate ability score or less with a d20. But rolling variable d6s can make the outcome more random and unpredictable!

Art by Count Spatula

OSR Conversions: Spells

In DCC RPG, spells don't automatically work when cast, there is a chance of spell loss, failure, corruption, or all of the above. The spell also has a variable amount of effects, and when cast successfully it can be cast again. Here's a simple way of emulating the effect with older edition spells without going though a whole spell conversion process. This is particularly helpful when bringing in established characters from OSR/D&D. The major change is that spell checks are rolled for each spell cast, there is also the potential for fumbles and crits. Note that this is a temporary fix and permanently transferred characters should be converted to DCC RPG rules. DCC RPG spells are limited to 5th-level.

Spell Checks

When you cast a spell you have to make a spell check. Roll a d20, add the Caster Level, modified by the Intelligence modifier if the caster is a Wizard, or Personality if a Cleric. Wizards must also subtract any armor check penalties. The base DC is 10 plus twice the spell level [DC 10 + (2x spell level)]. The roll is compared to the following *Table: Spell Check Effects*. A roll equal or greater than the DC means the spell is successfully cast. A wizard does not lose the spell from memory if cast successfully. A roll less than the DC results in a spell failure. Wizard spells are lost for the day. Clerics who fail a spell check don't lose the spell, but increase the natural chance of a fumble by one (See *Deity Disapproval* in the core rules.)

Critical success and Fumbles

A natural 1 is always a fumble (sometimes more for clerics.)

Fumbled Wizard spells are automatically lost for the day, and the caster must suffer a misfire or corruption effect: d10 modified by Luck; (0 or less) greater corruption, (1-2) major corruption, (3-4) minor corruption, (5 or more) misfire (See *Corruption* in the core rules.)

Fumbled Cleric spells increase the chance of Deity Disapproval by one and suffer the effects of disapproval (See *Deity Disapproval* in the core rules.)

A natural 20 is always a critical success. A critical success results in the spell cast with an additional bonus modifier equal to the caster level.

SPELL CHECK EFFECTS

Spell Level	Failure	Min.	Normal	Max.	Enhanced
1	11 or less	12-13	14-17	18-19	20+
2	13 or less	14-15	16-20	21-22	23+
3	15 or less	16-17	18-21	22-23	24+
4	17 or less	18-19	20-23	24-25	25+
5	19 or less	20-21	22-25	26-27	28+

Failure: Spell does not cast and is lost or disapproval range increases.
Minimum: The minimum possible spell effect is cast. May cast again later.
Normal: Spell is cast normally. May cast again later.
Maximum: Spell is cast with maximum possible effectiveness. May cast again later.
Enhanced: All spell effects are maximized (and doubled if applicable.) May cast again later.

Quick OSR Spells Effects

This method quickly produces similar results without granular spell effects (e.g. minimum or maximum effects.)

Spell Check: When you cast the spell you have to make a spell check. (Roll a d20, Modified by Caster Level, plus/minus appropriate Intelligence or Personality mod, minus Spell Level x2, minus Armor Check penalty.)

Roll: Result

10 or less: Spell Fails. Wizards lose the spell for the day. Clerics increase chances of fumble by one.
11-19: Spell casts as usual, spell is available to be cast again.
20 or more: Spell casts with maximum effect, spell is available to be cast again.

Critical success and Fumbles: A natural 1 is always a fumble (sometimes more for clerics.) Fumbled spells are subject to the effects of either corruption or disapproval (see above.) A natural 20 is always a critical success. A critical success results in all spell effects maximized and doubled if applicable.

Crawl!
fanzine

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