



(Sorcerer Character Has Warrior Adventure)

Yet another Fantasy Role-Playing Game

this one by Oedipussy Rex

[generic fantasy-themed artwork]

What giants in the industry are saying about Ə

“Do you have a copy of my book, *How to Sell Your Game Design?*”
-Lou Zocchi, founder of Game Science

“I don't have time right now.”
-Steve Johansson, co-creator of *HackMaster*

Table of Contents

Introduction	1	Armor & Shields	16
Rank Table	1	Spellcasting	17
Dice Emulation	1	Silent & Motionless Casting	17
Exploding Dice	3	Chain Casting	18
Success and Failure	3	Scrolls	18
The Aspects	4	Dwarves and Elves and Spells	18
Aspect vs Resist Rolls	5	Casting Fatigue	18
Character Creation	6	Beginning Spells	18
Rank Advancement Table	6	Spells	20
Character Points	6	Dickery	26
Increasing Aspect Ranks	7	Hand-waving & Encumbrance	27
Races	8	Monsters	28
Time/Turns in Combat	11	Dragon	31
Power Attacks	11	Combat Notes	32
Dual-Wielding	11	Magic Items	33
Multiple Mêlée Attacks	12	Awarding Character Points	35
Mêlée Weapons	13	Your RP Skills Suck	36
Ranged Weapons	14	Legal Crap	37
Rapid Fire	15	Art Contributors	38
Careful Aim	15	Character Sheet	Back
Firing into Mêlée	15		Cover

So. Who to thank? No one, that's who. I, and I alone, am responsible for this work. I had no help in creating this and no one inspired me to keep going. Not my parents, not my so-called friends who all disappeared when my wife started sleeping around with them, and *especially* not the guys over at the now defunct tripleoakleaf (rredmond, morrie, and that Kersus jagoff immediately come to mind). If anyone feels I left them out, let me know and I'll exclude you in later updates.

Tenth Anniversary update: Nothing new to report.

<http://SCHWARpg.com>



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Have you ever played a Barbarian or taken proficiency in the Awl Pike just to be able to use your 12-sided die? Do look wistfully at your 24- and 30-siders and dream of rolls that haven't come? Or played a spell-caster, no matter how much you dislike the class, just for the opportunity to roll a handful of six-sided dice at higher levels? Or had your character jump off a cliff on the promise that you could roll your own damage? If any of these questions sound completely reasonable then *Sorcerer Character Has Warrior Adventure* might be the game for you.

Sorcerer Character Has Warrior Adventure, or Θ , uses dice. A lot of dice. The sizes of the dice are arranged into eleven Ranks. The following table defines the Rank of each die. In practice, Rank is interchangeable with the die. If an Aspect is of 5th Rank, it has a d8 assigned to it. Usage of Rank or the associated die will change for sake of clarity; “d2 damage” is clearer than “1st Rank damage.”

Rank	Die
1	d2
2	d3
3	d4
4	d6
5	d8
6	d10
7	d12
8	d16
9	d20
10	d24
11	d30

How to roll the more uncommon dice

Many people do not have d3s, d16s, d24s, or d30s. Here's how to emulate these with dice you likely have.

d2: Roll a d6 and either divide by three, rounding up, or call odds 1 and evens 2. Alternatively, flip a coin.

d3: Roll a d6, divide by two, rounding up

d16: Roll a d8 and a d6. If the result of the d6 is a 4, 5, or 6, add 8 to the result of the d8.

d24: Roll a d12 and a d6. If the result of the d6 is a 4, 5, or 6, add 12 to the result of the d12.

d30: Roll a d10 and a d6. If the d6 rolls a 3 or 4, add 10 to the result of the d10. If the d6 rolls a 5 or 6, add 20.

Tenth Anniversary update: I had been promoting a site that sold d2s but it was a small, one-man operation, and is no longer extant. Sorry, you'll have to settle for those shitty-looking, mass-produced d2s.

Why no d5, d7, or d14? Two reasons: one, other than rolling a larger die and rerolling results that are too large, there are no alternate methods to emulate the d7 and d14; and two, they slow down the die progression. As is, there is a nice flow to the progression that I find pleasing. Adding in any one of the aforementioned dice would create a “clumping,” if you will. Don't get me wrong, I love my Game Science dice. Well, I only like, not love, that ugly hunk of a d7. But that d5 is probably my favorite die – I'll roll that beautiful, pale blue, translucent piece of perfection all night long – Lou Zocchi is a god among mortals is all I'm saying. Wait. What was I saying?

Characters in Θ have five defining traits: Defense, Health, and the three Aspects: Sorcerer, Warrior, and Adventure.

Defense is a character's innate level of awareness, instinct, and resistance to damage. That word “innate” should clue you in that Defense is pretty much immutable, but in rare, special cases the Game Master may declare that a character or monster is so unaware of an impending attack that Defense is halved. Typical reasons for halving Defense: comas, persistent vegetative states, and terminal cases of dead.

Health determines how much damage a character can endure before dying. When a character reaches 0 Health he is dead. No unconsciousness, no bleeding out, no staggering about for a dramatic death scene.

Sorcerer is a measure of magical ability, knowledge, and intuition.

Warrior is a measure of combat ability, strength, and endurance.

Adventure is a measure of stealth, finesse, luck and everything that doesn't properly fit in the Sorcerer and Warrior categories.

Aspects, amazingly enough, have eleven Ranks, 1 through 11, and are represented by the dice of equivalent Rank. Higher Ranks provide a greater chance of success when attempting actions.

Major actions are accomplished by rolling on the appropriate Aspect. A major action is anything that the Game Master determines to be difficult enough that there is more than an insignificant chance of failure. Getting on a horse and riding out of town isn't a major action. Jumping onto a horse as it's galloping past is. A roll with a result greater than the target number for the action is successful. Any roll of a 1 on an Aspect roll is always a failure.

Farfel is trying to break a stallion. The target number to stay on the horse is 3. The result of a roll on the Adventure die is a 3 – failure. His friends laugh heartily as he tumbles the ground and the horse runs off.

Bonuses and penalties in Θ are applied to the Rank, not to the die roll. That is, if a character has a bonus/penalty to, say, an Aspect roll, he rolls as if his Aspect were higher or lower in Rank by the size of the modifier.

Drog attempts to climb a cliff while under enemy fire. The Game Master determines that the arrows flying about give a -2 penalty to the Adventure roll. Drog is 7th Rank (d12) in Adventure but he rolls as if he were 5th Rank (d8).

0th Rank: Technically, there is a twelfth Rank: Rank 0. Rank 0 uses a d1, a die that always rolls a 1. There is no need to roll anything for a d1 but if you feel you must roll something, buy a Weeble™. If a character is somehow dropped to Rank 0 in any Aspect, he is considered dead. What's the point of playing a character that fails every single roll?

Impossible rolls: Sometimes an Aspect roll needs a number higher than the Aspect's die size to succeed. Θ uses “exploding” dice when rolling an Aspect die (and only Aspect dice). When the result of a roll is the largest number for that die, it “explodes.” Re-roll the die and add one less than the result to the total. As long as the die keeps exploding, keep re-rolling. Yes, subtracting one means that nothing might be added to the total. Deal with it. With exploding dice, those impossible rolls are now merely improbable.

Andrew wants to break down a door. The Game Master determines that the thickness of the door and the construction of the building warrants a target number of 5. Andrew has only a d3 (2nd Rank) for Warrior but fortunately for him he rolls a 3. His next roll is also a 3 and the following roll on the exploding die is a 2 giving Andrew a total of $3+(3-1)+(2-1)=6$.

Rank 12 and higher: As my nephew would say, “There ain't no sech thang.” 11th is the highest Rank in Θ . Bonus points that would raise an Aspect die above 11th Rank are converted to bonuses to the die roll. A roll of 1 is still a failure regardless of extra bonus points.

Sarah's character is 9th Rank in Warrior. She gets a +4 bonus to her next Warrior roll, raising the die from 9th Rank to 11th Rank with two points to be added to the result of the die roll. She rolls a 1, failing in her attempt, even though she only needed to beat a 2.

Degree of Success/Points of Success: For game-play, knowing that a roll succeeds isn't enough, in general; you also need to know how well the roll succeeded, called the Degree of Success, or Points of Success (PoS): the amount the result of a die roll exceeds the target number. Oppositely, the Degree, or Points, of Failure (PoF) is amount a roll fails (1 plus the difference).

Sarah needs to beat a 2 to hit a goblin. She rolls a 14. The Degree of Success for the attack is 12. Alternatively, the attack has 12 Points of Success.

Meanwhile, Peter needs to roll better than 6 to avoid a poison trap and rolls only 3. The Degree of Failure is 4.

[game master with a wicked grin looking at]
[two 12-siders: "who's standing in front, again?"]
-Dean Zachary

The Aspects

Sorcerer

All things intellectual and magical fall under Sorcerer. Beyond casting spells, explained later, the Sorcerer die is useful when knowledge and/or intuition are needed. As an example, when encountering someone who speaks a different language, a roll on the Sorcerer die can determine how well you are able to understand each other's attempts to communicate. High rolls indicate a high level of understanding, low rolls indicate no understanding at all, while an extremely low roll can mean that the other took an opposite meaning from what was intended.

If the Game Master allows, a roll on the Sorcerer die can assist in solving puzzles. A high number rolled can provide a good hint while a low roll will provide a poor hint. Only one such roll should be allowed per character and the Game Master should never allow this roll as a substitute for solving the puzzle. For example, the character is trapped in a room with no apparent way out and the Game Master is tired of listening to the player whining, “How can I get out if there aren't any doors or windows?” So he has the player roll on Sorcerer. A low roll would provide as a hint, “Likely, the locals will get themselves trapped accidentally, so they probably have some means of getting out.” A moderate roll might provide, “You notice the floor is a little more worn in one section of the room.” While a high roll could result in, “You notice that one brick in the wall seems much smoother than all the others with a bit of a shine, as if it's been worn smooth by the touch of thousands of hands.” However, the player still has to say, “I press the brick.”

A low Ranking in Sorcerer does not necessarily mean the character is stupid, only that he has poor innate magical ability, little force of will, a lack of knowledge, and isn't very intuitive.

Warrior

If strength, endurance, and/or vitality are needed then Warrior is the Aspect to use. Want to break down a door? Roll on Warrior. Need to move a heavy object? Ditto. Have to quick-march over a long distance? That's right, grab that Warrior die to see if you're able to maintain the pace.

Ogg tries to slide a large stone blocking the passage (TN: 8) and rolls a 10 on his Warrior die, a d12. The stone moves 2 feet. Not enough. Ogg tries again, but because of exhaustion suffers a -1 penalty and rolls a 6 on a d10 for a Degree of Failure of 3 – the stone tries to roll back onto Ogg. Ogg Resists and rolls only a 4, taking damage.

Adventure

In a well-designed adventure, the Adventure die will be used most often. Here's a small, nowhere near comprehensive, list of applications of the Adventure die.

- **Sleight of Hand**
- **Climbing**
- **Setting and Removing Booby Traps**
- **Finding Hidden Items** [*I have always been baffled about rolling to find a concealed door. Is it too difficult to move the bureau out of the way or, I don't know, look behind the curtain?]*
- **Moving Stealthily**
- **Jumping**

Aspect Rolls vs. Resist Rolls

While Resist rolls are considered Aspect rolls for the purposes of bonuses and exploding, there are differences. An Aspect roll is used when the character is trying to accomplish something: cast a spell, strike an opponent, jump a chasm, etc. A Resist roll uses the appropriate Aspect die and, as the name implies, is used when trying to resist something that is happening or may happen to the character: break a Charm spell, shake off an illness, avoid falling into a trap, etc. It's important to know the difference; an Elf's bonus to Sorcerer Resist rolls doesn't help him when casting a spell.

[spectre guarding a treasure-filled room]

-Mike Mabrey

Character Creation

Every character starts with 40 Character Points (CP). Spend these Character Points on traits to modify your character as you please. Want a fighting powerhouse? Raise the Ranks in Warrior. Want a sneaky spell-caster? Bump up Sorcerer and Adventure. Unspent Character Points are saved until used.

Rank	Die	Character Points to Advance	Cumulative (Modified)
0	d1	1	–
1	d2	1	1 (2)
2	d3	1	2 (4)
3	d4	2	3 (6)
4	d6	2	5 (9)
5	d8	3	7 (12)
6	d10	3	10 (16)
7	d12	4	13 (20)
8	d16	5	17 (26)
9	d20	7	22 (33)
10	d24	10	29 (44)
11	d30	–	39 (58)

Tenth Anniversary update: Apparently the above table is too complicated for many people. It is intended to show what the costs in Character Points to increase the Aspects (Sorcerer, Warrior, and Adventure) from one Rank to the next and the cumulative Character Points spent to achieve each Rank. So if Adventure, for example, is 6th Rank the cost to improve it to 7th Rank is 3 CP and a total of 10 CP have been spent to get there (16 for certain races for certain Aspects). That last column is especially useful for creating characters because at a glance you know how many CP you will need to spend to start an Aspect at a particular Rank.

[hapless accountant buried in adding machine paper]

Character Points

Character Points are awarded for successfully completing an adventure or mission and for performing amazing feats in game as simulated by an Aspect die of 8th Rank or higher (d16+) exploding twice on a single roll. The Game Master may award additional Character Points as he sees fit.

Character Points can be used to:

- Increase Aspect Ranks; see table above
- Increase Health; see Race descriptions
- Increase Defense by 1 for every 5 Character Points spent, to a limit of a Defense of 8

Roll a mulligan on an Aspect or Resist roll for 1 Character Point

Rules for increasing Aspects:

- No more than two Aspects can have the same Rank at a time. If both Warrior and Sorcerer are 5th Rank and Adventure is 4th, either Warrior or Sorcerer has to advance before Adventure.
- After character creation, multiple Aspects can advance at the same time but no single Aspect can advance more than one Rank without further adventuring.

Gillian's character receives 4 Character Points. Gillian can raise Warrior from 7th to 8th Rank or raise both Adventure and Sorcerer (4th and 3rd Rank, respectively) one Rank each, but she cannot raise Sorcerer from 3rd Rank to 5th even though she has the CP to do so.

- Only two Aspects can be above 7th Rank (d12) and only one Aspect can increase above 9th Rank (d20). Aspect Ranks are maxed out when a character has a d12, d20, and d30.

[blonde, barely-armored, dual sword-wielding]
[human female flanked by two black wolves]

-Von Hase

Races

Ideally, everyone will want to play a Human but some people like to “let out” their “inner fairy,” whatever the hell that’s supposed to mean, so here are some other races. No, they aren’t balanced and yes, Elves suck. You know why? Because Elves have always sucked. Well, they did up until Tolkien, but that’s mainly because he conflated Elves with the Fey. Now, the Fey, those are some *serious* bad-asses. No, you cannot play a Fey.

Dwarf: Stoic, yet surly, Dwarves are hearty and stout with an affinity for hirsute women. And they suck at magic. Players of Dwarves constantly ordering mead and challenging others to feats of strength and endurance are unimaginative assholes. Don’t be one of those people.

- Gain 7 Health with each purchase
- Sorcerer costs 1 extra Character Point per Rank up to 7th Rank (d12). Advancing Sorcerer costs 2 extra CP beyond 7th Rank, and 4 extra CP beyond 9th (d20)
- Spells are more difficult to cast; see Spell Casting
- Resist rolls on Sorcerer against magic are made with a +4 bonus
- All spells and magical effects that affect a Dwarf require a Sorcerer Resist roll, even if it’s beneficial. None of this “voluntarily dropping resistance” bullshit, *especially* for healing spells. You chose this race because of the resistance to magic, so suck it up. If a spell allows a Warrior or Adventure Resist, use Sorcerer instead

Elf: Limber and lithe. The female Elf is every basement-dweller’s fantasy woman. Hell, the males are androgynous enough that the basement-dwellers really don’t care all that much. Elves aren’t very durable. Players of Elves constantly harping about nature are also assholes. Yes, the climate is going to pot and we bear the responsibility, but the table isn’t the correct venue.

- Costs 6 Character Points to increase Defense and gain only 4 Health with each purchase
- Warrior costs 1 extra Character Point per Rank up to 7th Rank (d12). Advancing Warrior costs 2 extra CP beyond 7th Rank and cannot be Advanced beyond 9th Rank (d20)
- Warrior suffers a -1 penalty on Resist rolls
- Adventure and Sorcerer gain a +1 bonus on Resist rolls
- Elves cast spells more easily; see Spell Casting
- Gain an additional +1 to all Adventure Aspect rolls in wooded settings. No, a couple trees in the courtyard does not make it a wooded setting
- Suffers a -1 penalty to all Adventure rolls, both Aspect and Resist, when underground or in urban settings (replacing the bonus above)

Orc: Brutish thugs. Players of Orcs don't carry on about how "misunderstood" they are. They know Orcs are vicious beasts who would sooner tear out your throat with their teeth than listen to you prattle on about the exploits of your character. Orc is the one race where it's considered "playing your character" when being an asshole.

- Gain 8 Health with each purchase
- Adventure costs 1 extra Character Point per Rank up to 7th (d12), 2 extra CP per Rank to 9th (d20), and 4 extra CP per Rank thereafter
- Resist rolls on Warrior receive a +2 bonus
- Can use mêlée weapons to greater effect; see Mêlée
- Cannot use ranged weapons, heavy armor, shields, or dual-wield mêlée weapons; see Combat

Human: The standard by which all other races are measured. Well, the standard by which *Humans* measure all other races. Let's face it, Humans are self-centered and egotistical. You know. Assholes.

- Gain 5 Health for each Character Point spent toward Health
- All Aspects have normal cost
- Can use any weapon or armor

[<<ip-protected monster that rhymes with]
["shmeholder" but we're going to call it, oh,]
[let's say an "eye-stalker" for the sake of trying]
[to avoid being sued into oblivion>> hovering]
[menacingly over a terrified female]
[fighter: "beauty is in my eyes"]
-Mitch Foust

And for those looking for a challenge:

Gnome: Small and fragile. Gnomes start weak and stay that way. Players who prefer Gnomes really need to grow a pair and get some self-esteem.

Tenth Anniversary update: Also, you're assholes. Just had to put that in so they don't feel left out.

- Start with only 30 Character Points
- Cannot advance Warrior beyond 6th Rank (d10)
- Limited in Weapon and Armor selections
- Gain only 3 Health for each Character Point spent toward Health
- Adventure Resist rolls have a +1 bonus
- Only earn half the Character Points for adventuring, minimum 1

Sample characters:

Peter hates when his characters die; it feels like a piece of his soul dies, too. Therefore he chooses a Human and immediately puts 15 Character Points into Defense to raise it to 3, making the character more difficult to hit. He then spends eight more points to raise the character's Health to 40, allowing him to survive more damage. With the remaining 17 Character Points five are spent to raise Sorcerer to 4th Rank, two to raise Warrior to 2nd Rank, and the remaining ten points to raise Adventure to 6th Rank.

Andrew Fleetfoot – S:d6 W:d3 A:d10 Defense: 3 Health: 40

Sarah, on the other hand, really hates her job, hates her boss, and absolutely despises her co-workers. All she wants to do is beat the crap out of imaginary foes and make them feel the pain she can't deliver to the people who truly deserve the full fury of her ire. Sarah chooses an Orc and spends 22 Character Points to raise Warrior to 9th Rank, three Character Points to raise Sorcerer to 3rd Rank, 2 points to bring Adventure to 1st Rank, ten points to increase Defense to 2, and uses the remaining three points to increase Health to 24.

MistrPalmrShuld BurninHell – S:d3 W:d20 A:d2 Defense: 2 Health: 24

[barbarian cleaving a pict's head with an axe]

-John Lucas

Combat

It is assumed you have played an RPG before and understand the basics of combat and initiative. In Θ , initiative is determined by an Adventure roll, highest number goes first, ties are re-rolled. Turn order can be kept throughout combat or re-rolled after everyone has had their turn. In the long run, it really doesn't make all that much a difference.

Time in Combat: Time is measured in Turns. A Turn is the time it takes a character to perform an action. "On my turn, I attack the Goblin." "My turn again? I cast Shield." This is abstract combat; if you're looking for military simulation, try joining a Civil War reenactment group. No, on second thought, this is probably more realistic. Some examples of actions that can be taken in a turn: attack a foe, attack a friend, attack a particularly annoying branch, cast a spell, drink a potion, draw a weapon, change weapons, run up to an opponent, run away from a superior opponent, attempt parley, get bashed in the skull while talking when you should be fighting.

Optional Initiative Rule: For every multiple that one combatant's initiative is over the other's, the combatant with the higher initiative is allowed a free Turn. For example, Andrew has a 7 for initiative and the monster he encountered has only a 2. Andrew can take actions for 3 turns ($7 \div 2$) before the monster can take its first. If using this rule, do not roll a 1 for initiative.

Mêlée

Standing toe-to-toe against your adversary, weapon in hand, and beating the ever-loving crap out of each other. A mêlée attack uses the Warrior die and is considered successful when the roll exceeds the opponent's Defense. For each Point of Success (PoS) of the attack, roll the weapon's damage die and add the results.

Power Attacks: Before rolling to attack, the attacker can declare a Power Attack whereby for each Rank in Warrior he drops for the attack roll, the weapon's Damage Die is increased by two Ranks. The increase in the Damage die is limited by weapon, so a double Power Attack with a Bastard Sword will increase its Damage die to a d8, while a triple Power Attack will increase the die to only a d10.

Dual-Wielding: A d8 or greater (5^{th} + Rank) in Adventure is required to Dual-Wield mêlée weapons. Doing so grants a +1 bonus to Warrior rolls in mêlée but decreases the weapon's Max. Damage by one Rank. When Dual-Wielding, the weapons must be of the same class, e.g., a Long Sword with a Dagger, or two Hand Axes. To determine damage, use the larger weapon. Needless to say, yet somehow players keep making the need necessary, a character cannot use a Shield while Dual-Wielding.

High Ranks in Warrior: Beyond 7th Rank (d12) in Warrior, the character can attack opponents more often in mêlée. Additional attacks are part of the same Turn as the first attack and always happen after the opponent's attack. A player cannot change actions or targets with the additional attacks; doing so forfeits any further attack and ends the Turn. When both combatants have multiple attacks, alternate attacks until one has finished his attacks for the Turn then the other combatant finishes all remaining attacks.

Warrior Rank	Die	Attacks/ Turn
1-7	d2-d12	1
8	d16	2
9	d20	3
10	d24	4
11	d30	5

MistrPalmrShuld BurninHell (W: d20) is fighting against a Were-Wallaby (two attacks per turn). The Were-Wallaby wins the initiative and attacks. MistrPalmrShuld BurninHell then uses the first of his attacks followed by the Were-Wallaby's second attack for the Turn. MistrPalmrShuld BurninHell finishes his Turn with the two attacks remaining to him.

Optional – Critical Hits and Fumbles: Option 1: If an attack roll is half the opponent's Defense or less, the attack is considered a fumble and the player loses any remaining attacks for the Turn as well as his next Turn.

Option 2: If the player rolls a 1 on the attack roll, he must then roll a Warrior Resist to beat a 1 to prevent damage to the weapon. Damaged weapons receive a cumulative and permanent -1 penalty to the Damage Die. If this penalty takes the weapon below a d1, the weapon becomes useless.

There are no critical hits; players should be happy for the increased Degree of Success that comes with exploding dice.

Backstabbing, Sneak Attacks, and Flanking: No. Just, no.

[swords and other bladed weapons. nothing taller]
[than an nba player or heavier than a car]

-Jim Hall

There are three sets of what are essentially the same mêlée weapons with cosmetic differences. These have been added for “flavor.”

Mêlée Weapons	Damage Die	Max. Die ¹	Min. Warrior ²	Races Allowed	Use Shield	Dual Wield
Dagger	d1	d3	–	Any	Yes	Yes
Short Sword	d1	d6	d4	Any	Yes	Yes
Long Sword	d2	d8	d6	H,D,E,O	Yes	Yes
Bastard Sword	d2	d10	d8	H,D,E,O	No	No
Great Sword	d3	d12	d12	H,O	No	No
Hatchet	d1	d3	–	Any	Yes	Yes
Hand Axe	d1	d6	d4	Any	Yes	Yes
Battle Axe	d2	d8	d6	H,D,O	No	No
Great Axe	d2	d10	d8	H,D,O	No	No
Great Battle Axe	d3	d12	d12	H,D	No	No
Club	d1	d3	–	Any	Yes	Yes
Hammer	d1	d6	d4	Any	Yes	Yes
Mace	d2	d8	d6	H,D,E,O	Yes	No
Morningstar	d2	d10	d8	H,D,E,O	Yes	No
War Hammer	d3	d12	d12	H,D,O	No	No
Spear/Javelin	d1	d6	d4	H,D,E,O	Yes	No
Great Spear	d2	d10	d8	H,D,E,O	No	No
Fist	d1 ³	d30	–	Any	–	–

¹ Orcs increase Maximum Damage by 2 Ranks
² Orcs can use mêlée weapons one Warrior Rank early
³ One die for every 2 full PoS, 3 for Gnomes. Min. 1 point of Damage with success. Increase Damage die by 1 Rank for each Warrior Rank above 7th

Damage Die: Roll once for each Point of Success of the attack and add the results for the total damage.

Max. Damage: The Maximum Damage die is the upper limit of damage die a weapon can have. See Power Attacks.

Min. Warrior: The minimum Rank in Warrior required to be able to use the weapon.

Ranged Combat

A Character CANNOT use a ranged weapon attack when an opponent is within mêlée distance *EVEN IF THE CHARACTER IS NOT IN MÊLÉE COMBAT.***** Hopefully that is clear enough for even the most argumentative player. It's in all caps, italicized, bold print, and double underlined. Any player who tries, despite the clear warning, will find that not only does the shot miss its target, but it will invariably hit either an ally or himself.

Tenth Anniversary update: I. Don't. Care how cool *John Wick* looks. You still cannot use ranged weapons in mêlée, so shut the hell up and take 37 damage.

Success with Ranged Weapons: Ranged weapon attacks are rolled on the Adventure die. To succeed, the roll must exceed the target's Defense plus 1 less than the roll of a range-based die – d3 if the range is short, d4 for medium range, and d6 for long range.

Ranged Weapons	Damage Die	Min. Adventure	Attacks/ Turn	Races Allowed	Range in Yards
Hurled Rock	d1 ¹	–	2	H,D,E,G	10/20/30 ²
Dagger	d1	–	2	H,D,E,G	10/20/30 ²
Hatchet	d1	d4	2	H,D	10/20/30
Hand Axe	d1	d4	2	H,D	10/20/30
Club	d1	d4	1	H,D,E	10/20/30
Hammer	d2	d4	1	H,D,E	10/20/30
Spear/Javelin	d2	–	2	H,D,E	30/60/90
Sling, Bullet	d2	d4	2	H,D,E,G	40/80/160 ²
Sling, Stone	d1	–	2	H,D,E,G	40/80/160 ²
Short Bow	d1	d4	2	H,D,E	50/100/150
Long Bow	d2	d8	2	H,E	70/140/210
Great Bow	d3	d12 ³	1	H,E	100/200/300
Light Crossbow	d1	–	1	H,D,E,G	60/120/180
Heavy Crossbow	d3	d4	½ ⁴	H,D,E	80/160/240

¹ Cannot increase in Rank
² Ranges are halved for Gnomes
³ Also requires a d8 in Warrior
⁴ Requires a full Turn to reload

Rapid Fire: Each decrease in Rank of the Adventure die allows one extra attack per turn. Cannot be used with Crossbows.

Careful Aim: Using a full Turn aiming gives a +2 bonus to the damage die on a successful hit. This bonus can only be applied once per attack attempt. That is, aiming for two turns will not give a +4 bonus.

Firing into Mêlée: A shot is considered to be fired into mêlée when anyone, or anything, who should not be hit is within 10' of the target. Examples of what should not be hit: friends, civilians, hostages, beehives, and loot. If the result of the Adventure roll of a shot fired into mêlée is odd, the shot misses the intended target. The shot hits the unintended target if the roll exceeds the target's unadjusted Defense.

Andrew fires two shots at long distance from his Short Bow at the Ogre fighting the Orc BurninHell. The Ogre has a Defense of 3 and BurninHell has 2 for Defense. The roll for the first shot is a 4, but misses the Ogre because the result of the Range Die is a 4, meaning the attack needed to be better than 7. The roll for the second shot is a 5, resulting in a successful hit on BurninHell for 3 Points of Success. The Range Die doesn't factor in because the Orc is a friendly.

The moral of the lesson? Don't fire into mêlée, idiot.

Ammunition is unrecoverable when the attack roll is odd, regardless the success of the attack. This includes magical ammunition. Mêlée weapons that can also be thrown are not ammunition but are lost on odd rolls that miss.

[combatants wearing fantasy armor]

[with no fucking spikes]

[seriously, who the hell thought that was a good idea? one decent blow and]
 [either the spike breaks off, compromising the integrity of the armor, or the idiot]
 [wearing the armor is thrown off balance. you're more likely to poke yourself in the]
 [eye than intimidate an opponent. "but they can be used to do damage in bull]
 [rushes and grappling attacks." oh, great. just what I need: to try to remove the]
 [corpse that's stuck to my sword arm while three guys are using me as a pincushion]
 [moron]

Armor and Shields

Armor provides protection by possibly reducing the Degree of Success of an attack. In combat, the defender rolls his Armor Die and adds 1 less than the result to his Defense.* The Armor roll is made for every attack against the defender and represents how well the character was able to utilize the armor.

Shields provide a bonus to the Armor die. If a shield is used without armor, use the die in parentheses in the table below. Large Shields offer better protection from ranged attacks. Yes, Shields miraculously provide extra protection to the entire body – head, back, and off-shield side – regardless of orientation of the attack. Again, it's abstract combat. If you're looking for military simulation, try the SCA. Oh, wait.

MistrPalmrShuld BurninHell wears Banded armor and eschews a shield as it indicates the cowardice of those who hide behind them. In combat, he will receive a 0 to 5 point benefit to his Defense.

Andrew Fleetfoot couldn't possibly care any less about what an Orc thinks. He proudly wears Plate Armor (d12) and uses a Large Shield (+2/+3). In combat he rolls a d20 against mêlée attacks and a d24 against missile attacks.

Gnomes can only use a Shield when wielding a Dagger.

Armor	Armor Die	Adventure Penalty
None	–	–
Leather	d3	–
Scale	d4	–
Banded ¹	d6	–
Chain ¹²³	d8	-1
Brigandine ¹²³	d10	-2
Plate ¹²³	d12	-3
Shield ³	+1 (d2)	–
Large Shield ¹²³	+2 (d3) /+3 (d4)	-1

¹ Gnomes cannot use these armors
² See Spell Casting for restrictions
³ Unusable by Orcs

Adventure Penalty: Applicable with the penalty stacking, or not, where the Game Master deems fit to apply it.

Equipment Costs: So how much does all this stuff cost, anyway? The simple answer is “whatever.” It all depends on the economy the GM has made. The main issue is that the better the equipment, the more expensive it should be. A typical starting character should be happy with a Dagger, a Sling, and Leather Armor. If he gets a Shield, too, you know he had parents who loved him.

* It is worth noting that adding one less than the Armor roll to Defense is equivalent to adding one less than the Defense to the Armor roll.

Spell Casting

Any character of 3rd Rank or higher (d4+) in Sorcerer can attempt to cast any spell he knows. Spells are cast by rolling the Sorcerer die to exceed the spell's Spell Number. The Spell Number is the Spell Base plus any modifiers.

Spell Failure: If the spell-casting roll fails to exceed the Spell Number, a cumulative -1 penalty to all subsequent spell-casting attempts is incurred. Removing this penalty requires an extended period of meditation and rest which cannot be accomplished by making camp and taking a nap. If the accumulated penalties take a character's effective Sorcerer Rank to 0, he can no longer attempt to cast spells.

If the character is casting a spell outside of Combat or dangerous situations he gets a +1 bonus to the Sorcerer die. Characters are considered to be in combat if an opponent is within weapon range, including ranged weapons, with the intent to harm or the character suspects an intent to harm.

Grafter (S:d12) attempts to cast Magic Dart at two different targets to do d4 damage per Point of Success in combat. The Spell Number is 0 for the Spell Base, +2 for the second target, and +3 for the 3 Rank increase in the damage die for a total Spell Number of 5. The roll for the spell is a 3 so the spell fails and all attempts at spell-casting are now made using a d10.

Spells can be cast in the middle of mêlée. Even if the character is being pummeled mercilessly, spell-casting does not get “disrupted.” For those who want to complain that it makes no sense, please tell me what part of imaginary, fantastical creatures beating up on other imaginary, fantastical creatures using forces that make a mockery of the fundamental laws of the universe makes sense to you?

Silent & Motionless Casting: All spells require the caster to move and speak, and anyone observing him will know a spell is being cast. Eliminating either speaking or motion invokes a -1 penalty to the Sorcerer die and increases the spell number by 2 (cumulatively). Spells cannot be cast in this manner if the adjusted Sorcerer die is smaller than the minimum die for the spell.

Tim is 5th Rank (d8) in Sorcerer. To cast Magic Dart both silently and motionlessly, he would have to roll higher than 4 while using a d4. Even though Tim is able to cast Cure, he cannot cast it motionlessly because doing so reduces the Sorcerer die to a d6 which is smaller than the required d8.

Casting Spells in Heavy Armor or with Large Shields is possible but the spell-casting must be done motionlessly, with all the drawbacks and penalties. (Complainers are directed to three paragraphs up. I don't care how form-fitting medieval armors were.)

Chain Casting: Two or more characters can combine their Sorcerer abilities to cast a single spell. Each spell-caster in the chain rolls his Sorcerer die and adds one less than the result to the focus' roll. The focus of the chain must know the spell to be cast but those in the chain do not. If a chain-cast spell fails, only the focus receives the -1 penalty. If the focus rolls 1 for the spell, the spell fails regardless the result of those in the chain. Chain Casting cannot be performed by anyone engaged in mêlée.

Three characters (7th, 5th, and 5th Rank in Sorcerer) attempt to chain cast a 5th Rank (d8) Magic Dart at a target 120' away (Spell Number of 10). The focus rolls 8 on the d12, and one in the chain rolls a 6 on a d8. The last caster does not know Magic Dart, but also rolls a d8 because lack of knowledge of a spell has no bearing when not the focus of a chain, and rolls an 8 followed by a 2, for a total of 21 for the spell, 8+(6-1)+(9-1), achieving 11 Points of Success.

Casting from Scrolls: Scrolls are a means by which a character can cast spells he otherwise wouldn't be able to cast to a degree he would be unlikely to achieve otherwise. Scrolls have fixed maximums for ranges, damage dice, duration, etc., although smaller amounts can be used if desired. Casting from a scroll requires that it be read aloud (no Silent Casting, see above). To succeed in the reading, a Sorcerer roll has to exceed the Spell Number for the scroll. Scrolls are consumed in the reading of the spell regardless of the success or failure of the attempt. Scrolls contain only one spell and cannot be Chain Cast.

Dwarves and Spells: As stated before, Dwarves really suck at magic. Every spell cast by a Dwarf suffers a -1 penalty to the Sorcerer die. This penalty includes chain-cast spells and casting from scrolls.

Elves and Spells: Elves, being naturally adept at magic, reduce the Spell Base of any spell they cast by 1. This benefit does not apply to any modifiers, only the Spell Base. The benefit applies to chain-cast spells only when an Elf is the focus of the chain. The Spell Number for scrolls is not affected.

Casting Fatigue: A character can cast a number of spells equal to his Sorcerer Rank within a short period of time (e.g., combat) before Casting Fatigue sets in. Each additional casting attempt increases the Spell Number by 2, cumulatively. Only an extended period of rest relieves the fatigue.

Beginning Sorcerer Rank	Starting Spells
1-2	0
3-4	1
5-6	2
7+	3

Beginning Spells: The player chooses the character's beginning spells. A character is capable of knowing up to as many spells as his Sorcerer Rank.

Learning New Spells: The mechanics on how to handle learning new spells between adventures are up to your Game Master. Maybe he decides to hand-wave and says characters learn one new spell of the players' choice after the successful completion of an adventure. Maybe he decides that the character needs to do research to learn a new spell. Maybe characters just buy spells from spell merchants. Whatever. Spells cannot be learned from scrolls; scrolls don't work that way.

Spells

Min. Rank: The lowest Rank in Sorcerer a character can have to be able to cast/know the spell. This is the unmodified Sorcerer die; Silent and Motionless Casting, as well as other situational factors, can affect which spells can be cast by a character.

Modifiers: Most spells can be modified to increase the range, area of effect, target of the spell, etc. These modifications increase the Spell Number by the amount indicated, making the spell more difficult to cast successfully.

Resist: Aspect die used to reduce or eliminate a spell's effects. The Target Number to Resist is the result of the Sorcerer roll, not the Degree of Success. If a spell affects a certain number of Ranks of an aspect and the target is only partially affected (5 Ranks are affected but the monster is of 7th Rank, for example) apply a bonus equal to the difference to any Resist roll.

Opposed Rolls: When a spell, such as **Charm**, requires an opposed roll, the roll for the spell's target is considered a Resist roll and all bonuses and penalties apply. If the opposed Resist is successful, the casting is a failure and all penalties apply to the caster as a result.

Ineffective Success: Some spells can have the damage reduced by Armor, e.g. **Magic Dart**. Roll the Armor die as with melee and ranged combat to reduce the Degree of Success. Defense does not apply as it is overcome with the success of casting the spell. If, for example, a **Magic Dart** gets absorbed by armor, the casting is still successful and no penalties are incurred.

3rd Rank Spells

Create Meal

Spell Base: 0
Min. Rank: d4
Resist: No

Create a meal of food and drink to feed d1 Ranks in Warrior per Point of Success (PoS).

Modifiers: +1 for each increase in die Rank

3rd Rank Spells

Create Meal

Spell Base: 0
Min. Rank: d4
Resist: No

Create a meal of food and drink to feed d1 Ranks in Warrior per PoS.

Modifiers: +1 for each increase in die Rank

Floating Disk

Spell Base: 0
Min. Rank: d4
Resist: No

Creates a 5' diameter disk at waist height of the caster that is able to support up to 500 lbs. for one hour/PoS or until dispelled. The disk moves to remain within 5 feet, horizontally, of the caster but can be raised or lowered 10'. The disk reshapes, while maintaining its total surface area, if the caster moves into a space narrower than the disk's diameter. Impenetrable obstructions, like the floor or ceiling, cause the disk to stop. So no, you can't use it to flatten a monster against the ceiling like a fly on a windshield. And yes, I'm being a dick about it. The caster is unable to get on the disk.

Modifiers: +2 for each 3' increase in diameter and 500 lb weight limit
+1 for each additional 10' to raise or lower the disk

Heal

Spell Base: 0
Min. Rank: d4
Resist: No

Heals d1/PoS Health to a character of the caster's choice. Requires touch.

Modifiers: +1 for each 10' to the target to be healed. Eliminates touch
+1 for each increase in Rank of the Healing die
+2 per character to spread Healing evenly between multiple characters (round down, minimum 1 point each)

Light

Spell Base: 0
Min. Rank: d4
Resist: No

Create a sphere of light in a 10' radius around the caster or target object for one hour per PoS that allows vision as if in bright moonlight when in total darkness, or as daylight when in dim lighting. The light does not counter the Darkness spell or blind opponents.

Modifiers: +1 add 5' to radius of the sphere

Magic Dart

Spell Base: 0
Min. Rank: d4
Resist: No

On a successful casting, a magical Dart shoots out from the caster to do d1 damage per Point of Success to a single target up to 20' away. Magic Darts do physical damage and can be used against non-living targets. Armor reduces the Degree of Success of the spell.

Modifiers: +1 for each increase in Rank of the damage die
+1 for each 20' increase in range
+2 for each additional target

Strike

Spell Base: 0
Min. Rank: d4
Resist: No

The target weapon or ammunition of the spell does an additional d1 damage per Point of Success of the spell on its next attack if the attack is successful. The spell dissipates if the enchanted item is handed to someone else or at the end of the character's turn of attack. The spell-caster must touch the item.

Modifiers: +1 for each increase in Rank of the damage die
+2 to enchant an additional weapon

Shield

Spell Base: 0
Min. Rank: d4
Resist: No

Creates a magical barrier that absorbs d1/PoS points of damage from physical attacks. The barrier remains until all points are used or dispelled by the caster.

Modifiers: +3 include protection from magical attacks
+1 for each increase in Rank of the Shield die

5th Rank Spells

Cure

Spell Base: variable
Min. Rank: d8
Resist: No

Cure target of poison, blindness, disease, paralysis, or curses with a Sorcerer roll that exceeds the target difficulty of the ailment. If a character has multiple ailments that need to be cured, the spell cures in order of difficulty, the most difficult first. If a spell, disease, curse, etc. causes loss in Ranks of an Aspect, Cure will restore one Rank for each success in casting, but will not cure the underlying problem until all Ranks have been restored first.

Darkness

Spell Base: 2
Min. Rank: d8
Resist: No/Adventure

Creates a 10' diameter sphere of Darkness centered up to 10' away from the caster that is impenetrable to light or vision. The Darkness spell trumps all non-magical vision, light sources, and the Light spell. The Resist only applies if cast upon a living creature or an object in the possession of a living creature.

Modifiers: +1 for each 5' increase in diameter
+1 for each 10' increase in range

Elemental Stream

Spell Base: 2
Min. Rank: d8
Resist: Warrior

Creates a stream of element of the caster's choosing (Earth, Wind, and Fire) (or Water) that shoots 10' from the caster, doing d1/PoS damage to anyone caught in the stream. Armor can reduce the damage. The Element will affect mundane items as one would expect: paper will burn, torches will go out if wet, etc.

Modifiers: -2 to light a campfire, blow out a candle, rinse off a dirty object, or perform some other mundane task
+1 for each additional 5' in range
+1 for each Rank increase of the damage die

Flash-Bang

Spell Base: 2
Min. Rank: d8
Resist: Warrior

Creates a bright flash and loud bang centered up to 10' from the caster that stuns d1 Ranks in Warrior of creatures within a 10' radius for one turn per Degree of Failure of the Resist roll. A successful Resist still results in loss of initiative. The spell does not affect creatures that can neither see nor hear.

Modifiers: +1 to increase the die Rank by 1
+1 for each 5' increase in radius
+1 for each 10' increase in range

Luck

Spell Base: 2
Min. Rank: d8
Resist: No

Allows the caster to add or subtract the success of the Sorcerer roll to another character's or opponent's next Aspect or Resist roll. If said roll is a 1, the action fails regardless the Luck modifier. Luck can never be cast on one's self.

Repel Undead

Spell Base: 2

Min. Rank: d8

Resist: No/Sorcerer

Causes d1 points per PoS of undead within a 20' radius to flee from the caster. Intelligent undead, such as Vampires and Liches, are allowed a Resist. Repelled creatures will fight back if pursued or cornered.

Skeleton	1	Spectre	6	Wraith	12
Zombie	2	Wight	8	Vampire	16
Ghoul	4	Mummy	10	Lich	20

Modifiers: +1 for each 10' increase in radius
+1 for each increase in die Rank

Silence

Spell Base: 2

Min. Rank: d8

Resist: No/Sorcerer

The caster creates a 5' radius sphere centered up to 20' away lasting 1 Turn per PoS that eliminates all sound in the area of effect. If cast upon an unwilling creature, a Resist is allowed. Spells must be cast silently in a zone of Silence.

Modifiers: +1 for each 10' increase in the radius of the sphere of effect
+1 for each 10' in range

7th Rank Spells

Charm

Spell Base: Opposed Sorcerer

Min. Rank: d12

Resist: See description

Success, determined by opposed Sorcerer rolls, causes one humanoid (Humans are humanoid) to have a friendly disposition – eager to please and willing to do anything within his ability and personality to help the caster. The target will not go against his nature; a charmed bandit might be willing to slit his buddy's throat but a farmer will not kill his daughter. Well, not unless he's a real rat-bastard. Abusive behavior or commands that go against the charmed target's nature allow another Resist to negate the spell. Subsequent Resists gain a cumulative +2 bonus to the roll.

Modifiers: +1 for each additional humanoid affected
+2 for non-humanoid intelligent/semi-intelligent creatures
+2 for each additional non-humanoid
+4 for unintelligent creatures

Communicate

Spell Base: 4

Min. Rank: d12

Resist: No

Allows the caster to speak to, and understand, one person/humanoid who speaks a language for one Turn/PoS. To those listening to the conversation, each person is speaking a different language, while to the caster and target it sounds like the other is speaking his own language.

Modifiers: +1 for each additional person added to the conversation
+1 to read/write a written language
+2 for each non-humanoid intelligent or non-vocal language
+4 to communicate with a semi-intelligent creature

Dispel Magic

Spell Base: variable

Min. Rank: d12

Resist: No

End a single, targeted spell centered up to 10' away. The Spell Number is the Degree of Success in casting the spell plus the Rank in Sorcerer of the sorcerer who cast the spell.

Modifiers: +1 for each additional 10' in range

Elemental Blast

Spell Base: 4

Min. Rank: d12

Resist: Adventure

Creates a 20' diameter elemental sphere centered up to 50' from the caster that does d1/PoS damage to each creature caught in the sphere. Armor does not reduce damage.

Modifiers: +1 for each 10' increase in diameter
+1 for each 20' increase in range
+1 for each increase in Rank of the Damage die

Fly

Spell Base: 4

Min. Rank: d12

Resist: No

Allows the caster to hover or fly at a rate up to walking speed for up to d1 Turns per PoS. Combat, whether mêlée or ranged, is impossible while flying although spells can be cast. The spell will end when the character lands.

Modifiers: +1 for each additional person/creature of up to humanoid weight. Each person controls his own movement
+1 for each multiplier to the velocity (+1 for x2, +2 for x3)
+1 for each increase in Rank of the die

Lightning Bolt

Spell Base: 4

Min. Rank: d12

Resist: Adventure

Create a bolt of electricity up to 50' long that shoots out from the caster's hand doing d2/PoS damage to the target. Armor does not reduce the damage.

Modifiers: +1 for each 50' increase in length
+1 for each +2 in Rank of the damage die
+2 per fork of the bolt. Each fork does full damage

Rigor

Spell Base: 4

Min. Rank: d12

Resist: Sorcerer

Paralyze one creature up to 20' away for at least 1 hour. The creature can have up to 1 Rank/PoS of the casting in Sorcerer; additional Ranks provide a bonus to the Resist. At the end of each hour, another Resist roll with a cumulative +1 bonus is allowed.

Modifiers: +1 for each 10' increase in the radius of the sphere of effect.
This makes it an area of affect spell that affects the lowest Ranks in Sorcerer first.
+1 for each additional 10' in range

Sleep

Spell Base: 4

Min. Rank: d12

Resist: Sorcerer

Causes d1 Ranks in Sorcerer/PoS of creatures within a 10' radius of the caster to fall into a deep sleep for 10 Turns. Affected creatures will awaken if harmed enough to cause at least a point of damage.

Modifiers: +1 for each additional 10 turns duration
+1 for each 10' increase in the radius of the sphere of effect
+1 for each 10' in range
+1 for each increase in die Rank

[bearded wizard casting a spell from the orb]
[on his staff, reducing a roomful of ogres]
[to a pile of loosely connected bones]

-Lonnie Easterling

Some Preemptive Dickery

Why aren't Staves on the Weapons List?

Buy a dagger; call it a Staff. Simple enough. Don't try to use a shield, though.

How do I do a Spot Check?

Tell the GM you're looking around for anything unusual or of interest. If there is, he will tell you. Or he'll probably have you roll on either the Sorcerer or Adventure die, whichever is smaller, then regardless of the result, he'll put a pained expression on his face and say, "Ooo. No, you don't find anything out of the ordinary."

Well then, how do I sense motive?

Look, there are only three motives: because you have something they want, because they have something they think you want, and because they don't want to do it themselves. That's it. You want to know the motive? Pick one.

Waaah! I want to play a Druid.

Charm: Affects semi-intelligent animals, +2 to affect unintelligent creatures, +4 to affect humanoids

Communicate: Affects semi-intelligent animals, +2 to communicate with plants, +4 to communicate with humanoids

There, now you've got your Druid. Christ, this shit ain't rocket science. I'm mean, hell, I was able to write this frickin' game.

I want to play a dual Sabre-wielding Half-Dragon Frost-born Mage/Shadow Dancer/Warlord who's misunderstood in a world that fears and rejects me.

Tenth Anniversary update: Hey, you be you. Unfortunately, you can't be you here. Maybe try some mass-produced schlock for which you have to actually pay money.

Where are the rules for psionics?

A science fiction trope has no place in a fantasy setting.

Why aren't the even pages numbered?

Because *shut your cake hole*. That's why.

What's up with the funny upside down 'e'?

It's called a schwa. The English language, it might be worth learning. Why the game is called Θ has its origins from when I first went public with the game.

Maybe I'll call it Sorcerer Character Has Warrior Adventure, so that possibly the following conversation can occur:

'God, I'm soooo bored. What do you wanna do?'

'You want to play some Θ ?'

'Uhh...'

'Great! I'll get the dice.'

Phonetics humor. What's not to love?

Game Master Stuff

Hand Waving

A character can carry a number of Items equal to his Rank in Warrior. An Item is an object that requires a die roll (weapons, armor, etc.), 100 monetary units (gold), or its equivalent.

A character can carry as many permanent magical objects as his Rank in Sorcerer. This includes magical Items, so a magical sword counts against both the Warrior and the Sorcerer limits. Potions are considered permanent, scrolls and ammunition are not. Deal with it. Players exceeding this limit will find that their characters have lost 2 Ranks in Sorcerer permanently from the magical backlash. These Ranks can only be regained by using Character Points.

If an object is not an Item and not (permanent) magic, it's just Stuff and a character can carry as much Stuff as he wants. Within reason. A bow and two quivers of arrows? Fine, whatever. Fifteen quivers and three anvils? No.

So time in combat is measured by nebulous unit called a "Turn." What about outside of combat? Ok, how about 10 minutes for a complete combat with another 20 to recover, 8 hours to walk 30 miles on maintained roads, and 10 minutes to search a 10'x10' area. Or you could say it takes half the day for the adventure party to get where they're going and the other half to accomplish everything to the point when it's time to call it quits and the players go home.

If you're concerned about world-building and game economies, more power to you. Have fun with it. For the rest of us, it's assumed the characters have enough money to purchase all the mundane Stuff they need: supplies, clothes, meals, 10-foot poles, sleeping roll, door spikes, chickens, 50' of rope, etc. Horses? Ok, you have to pay for horses. And houses, castles, monasteries, and keeps. Come up with a price. While it's assumed the characters have the funds to purchase any needs, the player must still get GM approval and to list all that the character has on the character sheet. No sudden claims out of the blue of "Fortunately, I happen to have a sausage maker right here." If it's not on the character sheet with approval, it doesn't exist.

[half-nude woman morphing into a
werewolf and baying at the full moon]

-Andre Miller

Monsters

The reason we pull out the dice

A monster is anything that isn't a character. Goblin? Monster. Horse? Monster. Beer wench at the inn? Monster. Seriously, how does someone with that kind of attitude stay employed?

Monsters use Sorcerer/Warrior/Adventure Aspects, just like characters, as well as Defense and Health. Also listed is the monsters' Size. Warrior has two dice listed, the Warrior die and the damage die, as will Adventure if the monster has an inherent ranged attack. Defense shows the Defense value and Armor die. The Armor die also reflects natural armor.

Tenth Anniversary update: Monsters fall into ~~nine~~ eleven broad categories:

	Offense/Damage	Defense/Health	Magic	Special
Pest	Swarms. Each does only a single point of damage but attack simultaneously	One is killed for each Point of Success, but there are many more from where those came	No	Maybe
Fodder	W:d4/d1. Attacks are unlikely to hit and damage is low	Unlikely to survive to a second turn in combat	No	No
Weak	Attacks are still low but ranged attacks common	Survival still relies on a lot of missing on the attacker's part	Unlikely	No
Facile	Warrior or Adventure at d6/d2	Typically killed in two hits with Warrior or Adventure at d8/d2	Doubtful	no
Standard	Attacks with d8 to d10 for d1 to d3 damage	Killed in two to three hits with d8/d2	d4 to d10	Maybe
Tough	Typically has d10-d12 /d2-d3 for attack/damage	Can take three to six turns at d10/d2, if not longer	d8 to d12	Maybe
Demanding	d12-d16/d2-d4 possibly with multiple attacks	Easily able to survive multiple explosions on an attack	d10 to d16	Likely
Difficult	d12-d20/d3-d8 with multiple attacks	Five to eight turns at d16/d4	d12 to d20	Yes
Challenge	d16-d24/d3-d12	Can take 10+ turns with d20/d8 to kill	d16+	Yes
Holy Crap!	d20+/d6+	Don't even think about trying without at least d24/d16	d24+	Yes
Oh dear god, please make it stop	See Dragon			

Offense/Damage is fairly self-explanatory. If a monster uses Adventure for its primary attack, do not apply the range modifier die to its target's Defense. This exemption applies only to racial attacks, not individual creatures. So goblin archers gain no benefits.

The guidelines for **Defense/Health** take into account the total Health of the monster, Defense, and any armor reduction. A monster with low Health can still survive a long time if it has a high Defense and/or a large armor die.

Magic can mean spellcasting ability or spell-like effects. A lack of magic does not mean a low Sorcerer Rank; A Dwarven Clan is highly unlikely to have any spellcasters of significant Rank, but they can still use a d24 to Resist spells.

Special can be anything from poisonous stings to damage reduction to magic items to the ability to attack multiple opponents.

Sample Monsters

Rats (Pest)

S: d2 Defense: 1/0
W: d24/1 Health: 1
A: d4 Size: T

Special: At 10 points damage delivered in a turn to a single character, the character must make a Resist on the Warrior die with a Target Number of 4 (Resist W4) or contract a disease. The Resist is made with a -1 penalty for each additional 10 points damage delivered in the turn. If the Resist fails, the Target Number to Cure is 4 plus 1 for each penalty. The disease decreases the character's Rank in Warrior by 1 each day until cured or Warrior reaches 0.

Like all Pests, Rats swarm. Do not roll for each individual rat but roll once per turn for each adventurer on Warrior with the Degree of Success being the number of Rats that delivered a 1 point damage bite. Defensively, the PoS of the character's attack is the number of Rats killed in the attack.

Kobold

S: d3 Defense: 2/0
W: d6/d3 Health: 10
A: d4/d3 Size: S

Kobolds are vicious little bastards. Their battle tactics are primarily to attack from a distance using their small spears (unusable by characters) to either lure or corral enemies into traps. Kobolds rarely engage in mêlée combat. Their preferred tactic is to scurry into tight, twisting tunnels to circle around for an attack from behind where larger monsters cannot easily maneuver. If cornered, Kobolds will attack *en masse* to overbear their enemy.

Goblin

S: d6 Defense: 2/armor
W: d8/by weapon Health: 20
A: d6 Size: S

Goblins are nocturnal cowards preferring to snatch chickens from their coops to facing anything that can actually fight back effectively. Goblins will gladly attack if they heavily outnumber the opponent but will quickly decide to run away if their losses start getting heavy (25% or so). Most carry only a club (d1) but a few (1 in 10) will have a short sword and wear leather armor. The Goblin leader (S: d6 W: d10 A: d8 Def: 2 Health: 30 Size: S) will wear scale armor and use a long sword. If found in their lair, Goblins will fight to the death to protect the women and children. Although the women and children are noncombatants, if trapped they will fight mercilessly biting and scratching (treat as Rats, including the Resist for disease).

Viscous Blob

S: d12 Defense: 1/d4
W: d8/d1 Health: 50
A: d4 Size: L
Special: Surprise d30; Paralyzation

A Viscous Blob's appearance is that of a vast quantity of clear jelly. The blob's transparency makes it very hard to detect in its native dungeon settings. As such, it gains an advantage at the beginning of combat with a d30 for initiative, see Surprise in the next section. Targets of attacks require a Warrior Resist with a Target Number equal to the Degree of Success of the attack with failure resulting in the character being paralyzed for a number of turns equal to the Degree of Failure of the Resist. If a character gets ingested by a Viscous Blob, he receives d8 damage per turn until dead or rescued.

Minotaur

S: d12 Defense: 2/d2
W: d16/d2 Health: 80
A: d10 Size: M

Bulls, swans... was there an animal the Greeks *weren't* willing to screw?

Elemental

S: d16/d6 Defense: 4/d4
W: d20/d4 Health: 75
A: d12 Size: L
Special: Elemental Blast

Elementals are conjured beings of one of the four elements. They are immune to elemental damage of the same source and suffer double damage from their opposed element. Elemental Blast is similar to the spell of the same name with the exception that the Spell Base is 0 and the base damage is d6.

Lich

S: d24 Defense: 8/0
W: d16/* Health: 500
A: d12 Size: M

Special: Cast spells; Spell Immunity; Paralyzation; Command Undead

Liches are former people, strong in Sorcerer, who have achieved a form of immortality by interring their soul into a phylactery. While a Lich's body may be damaged, the Lich will never be destroyed until the phylactery is. Its touch causes a flat 10 points of damage for each Point of Success of the attack and invokes opposed Sorcerer rolls to Resist being paralyzed for a number of days equal to the Degree of Failure. Fortunately, this rarely occurs as a Lich prefers to use spells and sic its minions after intruders rather than physical confronting its enemies.

Dragon

S: d24/d1 Defense: 12/d16
W: d30/d12 (claws x2)/d16 (bite) Health: 3000
A: d24/d12 (tail) Size: Gargantuan

Special: Breath Weapon; Tail Swipe; Magic Damage Reduction -5

Dragons are the top of the food chain. Good thing there aren't many of them. In fact, anyone claiming to have seen a Dragon is either telling tales or doesn't know what a Dragon is. The "Dragon's" head in the king's throne room? Not a Dragon. Just a really big lizard, possibly even a giant Fire Salamander, but definitely not a Dragon.

[dragon ravishing a beautiful blonde as a]
[knight tied to a stake looks on helplessly]

-Jerry "The King" Lawler

When in attack mode (Dragons are never in defensive mode, attack mode or sleep mode, and you'll never encounter a Dragon in sleep mode), a Dragon will strafe the target(s) with its Breath Weapon (Spell Base: 0, d1/PoS, +1 to increase Damage die, range 100', AoE: 20' by 100', Resist: Adventure) increasing the damage with each pass until either there's nothing left or the Breath critically fails (roll a 1), whereupon he will either try to grab a victim (Grapple) or enter mêlée. If a victim is grabbed the Dragon will fly to a great height (500+ feet) and drop him. Entering into mêlée, the Dragon attacks with its two front claws and a bite attack. When opponents have gathered close enough together (within 30' of each other) the Dragon will employ its Tail Swipe, doing d12 damage per Point of Success and stunning everyone hit for one turn for each Point of Failure on an opposed Adventure roll.

31

Special Combat Notes

Unless otherwise noted in their description, monsters get a number of attacks per turn according to the Warrior Chart in mêlée for each listed "weapon." For example, a goblin has one attack per turn and a Dragon has 5 attacks per claw and 5 bite attacks for a total of 15 attacks each turn. Keep in mind, monsters are able to use the same combat tactics as the characters, especially Power Attacks. (That Dragon can do d30/PoS while attacking with a d20 up to 15 times a turn.) (Do *not* poke a Dragon!)

Damage Reduction: Attacks against monsters with Damage Reduction will have the damage die used against them reduced by a number of Ranks. If Damage Reduction takes the damage die below 0th Rank, no damage is done, e.g. a monster with Damage Reduction of -2 will take no damage from an attack that does d1 or d2 damage/PoS and only d1/PoS from an attack that would normally do d3/PoS.

Grapple: A grapple is an opposed Adventure roll. An opposed Warrior roll is required to break free. At the GM's discretion, a +1 bonus can be applied to the Warrior roll for each level of difference in size of grappling opponents.

Overbearing: Unlike grappling, overbearing is not an opposed roll despite the similarities of the two actions. The defender rolls a Resist on Adventure against the number trying to overbear him. For each size difference between the overbearing and the overborne, halve the target number. So the target number for the Resist when 8 medium-sized monsters try to overbear another medium-sized monster is 8. With 8 small or 8 large monsters the target number is 4, and the target number for the same number of tiny or huge monsters is 2.

Surprise: Some monsters, such as the Viscous Blob, are difficult to detect before combat starts. These monsters use a larger die to determine initiative for the first attack of combat only. If they win initiative, they can take an action for a number of turns as per the optional initiative rule (see Combat).

Creating New Spells

To be honest, the selection of available spells really kinda sucks, so it's a good sign when players try to come up with new spells; it means they are involved in the game. There are plenty of options for new spells – ~~serying~~ and ~~magic-weapon~~ creation come to mind – but several questions need to be asked when making new spells. The first of which is, "Is it necessary?" For instance, if you don't have amputations and loss of limbs in your game then a Regrowth spell is unnecessary. Next: "Is this just a variation of a spell that already exists?" "I call it 'Magic Arrow.' The spell base is 2, has a base range of 100', and does a base d3 damage." This is just a Magic Dart spell (with a cheaper cost). Don't allow it. Lastly, and most importantly, "How does the spell scale?" In what ways can the spell's stats be increased? How does Degree of Success on a spell-casting roll apply?

Magic Items

In general, magic items provide a bonus to certain Aspect rolls, not recreate spell effects – that's what scrolls are for. That's not to say that Flying Carpets and Rings of Invisibility don't exist, just that Aspect affects are far more common.

Magical Mêlée Weapons: Magic provides a bonus to either the damage die or, rarely, the Warrior die for attacks. Weapons that provide a bonus to both are rare to the point of uniqueness. Bonuses to the damage die also affect the Max. Damage. Magic cannot increase a weapon's damage die more than 5 Ranks or above a d12 for base damage, whichever is lower. (To do d30/PoS a character must use a at least a double power attack.)

Magical Ranged Weapons and Ammunition: Magical bows, slings, and crossbows will provide a bonus to the Adventure roll or to the weapon's range, never to damage. Arrows, bullets, and bolts only affect the damage die, never the attack roll, up to a +5 Rank bonus. Attack bonuses for thrown weapons that can also be used in mêlée will affect either Warrior or Adventure, never both, although any damage bonus applies to both mêlée and ranged attacks.

Armor and Shields: Maximum magic bonus to armor and shields is +2 but can go up to +5 if limited in scope, such as only against missiles or only in mêlée combat.

Wands and Magical Staves: Wands can provide a bonus of up to +3 to the Sorcerer die when casting spells. This does not allow the character to cast spells he would not be able to cast otherwise, just which die is rolled when casting. Motionless casting does not receive any benefit from a Wand.

A Magical Staff will be one of eleven Ranks. When casting a spell with a Staff, add the result of the Staff's die roll minus 1 to the result of the Sorcerer roll (a 1st Rank Staff has a range of 0 and 1 while a 6th Rank Staff has a range of 0 through 9). If the Sorcerer roll is a 1, the spell fails regardless of the Staff roll. Spells can be cast silently and/or motionlessly, but the usual restrictions and penalties still apply. A character cannot use a Staff of higher Rank than his Sorcerer Rank.

Wands and Staves cannot be used in conjunction with each other and cannot be used to cast Scrolls, but they can be used when Chain Casting. Using Magical Staves as mêlée weapons can best be described as a “Bad Idea.”

Other Magic: Magic items that affect the Aspects are always limited in scope and affect only a single Aspect. +2 to Warrior on strength tests, +2 to Warrior on Resists, or +2 to Warrior for mêlée attacks are all acceptable. +2 to all Warrior rolls or +2 to mêlée and ranged weapon attack rolls are not.

Cursed Items: Cursed items, unlike beneficial magic, can affect the whole of an Aspect, but such items are rare. The Target Number to remove a cursed item should reflect the severity of the curse. One guideline is 7 for each 'minus' to an Aspect and 3 for each 'minus' to an application of an Aspect, but this is just a guideline, not a rule.

A Few Sample Magic Items

Long Sword of Slicey-Dicey: This Long Sword does +1 damage. That is, where a regular Long Sword does d2 damage per Point of Success and has a Maximum Damage of d8, the Long Sword of Slicey-Dicey does d3 damage per Point of Success and has a Maximum Damage of d10.

Short Bow of Pin-Cushioning: Targets of attacks from this bow have a -1 penalty on the range modifier die, so short range attacks allow only a d2 modifier to Defense, a d3 for medium range, and a d4 for long range attacks.

Sling Bullet of Boom: On a successful hit the bullet emits a loud boom that stuns everyone within a 10' radius causing them to lose their next turn in combat on a failed Warrior Resist against the Degree of Success of the attack.

Boots of Prancing: The wearer of these boots receives a +1 bonus to all Adventure rolls that involve movement.

Helm of Padded Comfort: +1 bonus to the Armor die when in mêlée combat.

Potion of Tasty Nummyness: Restores 20 Health.

Ring of Prestidigitation: +1 bonus to Adventure on actions requiring dexterity outside of combat.

Gauntlets of “I Meant to Do That”: The poor schmuck who puts on these cursed items might live long enough to regret it, but it's doubtful. Every time the character makes a mêlée attack he has a 25% chance of dropping his weapon causing him to miss his next turn as he attempts to pick up his weapon. If the character dual-wields, *both* weapons are dropped and he loses his next turn. It doesn't matter if he wants to make a ranged attack, cast a spell, or run away, he's cursed and loses his next turn. If the character is female then *she* is cursed. Stop trying to find a loop-hole and accept the fact that you made a boneheaded decision when putting on the gauntlets. Target Number to remove: 6.

[unicorn jousting with a knight]

Awarding Character Points

There are three means for players to earn Character Points: finish an adventure, have an Aspect die of 8th Rank (d16) or higher explode twice on the same roll, and Game Master beneficence.

Completing an Adventure: Or mission, quest, module, dungeon crawl, etc. What's the buzzword these days? "Path?" Whatever. I grew up calling them "adventures," although our attitude was more of the "What different creature from the monster manual can we kill today?" variety than "What new and exciting places can we explore?" But I digress. Each character completing an adventure should receive at least one Character Point. Characters can earn up to four CP for the very hardest, most difficult adventures.

Exploding Aspect Rolls: Includes exploding Resist rolls. The size of the die rolled has to be d16 or greater. If a character with a d8 gains a bonus for a roll that increases the die to d16 or more, it still qualifies. These Character Points are awarded immediately.

Game Master Beneficence: At the Game Master's discretion, he may award a Character Point for superior play or coming up with a clever solution to a particularly intractable situation. Such bonus CPs are awarded immediately.

When a Character Point is awarded, the player can opt to save it for later use or apply it on the spot for any purpose, including raising an Aspect or increasing Health.

[wizard in his library: "was it one toad or two to make]
[that potion? where did i put that conjuring book?]
[and where did that darned, lazy troll go? can never]
[find good help"]

-Peter Melonas

General Advice

Have plenty of dice on hand. If you do not have many of the "rare" dice (d2, d3, d16, d24, d30) make certain you have a large stash of d6s. Roll all the dice from Points of Success (damage, healing, etc.) at the same time. Do not allow players to roll for each point separately, especially that jackass who has to perform a ritual each and every time he rolls a die. Life's too short to put up with that kind of OCD-like bullshit.

Be tough; don't fudge the dice. If a roll results in the death of a character, let the character die; characters in FRPGs were born to be killed. The point of the game is to see how long they can last before their inevitable demise. What makes the game fun is knowing that the end for a character could be around the next corner. Otherwise we'd all be playing Farmville or somesuch waste of time.

[group sitting around a table strewn]
[with dice, miniatures, paper, pencils]

Don't be a dick. This isn't a game of you versus the players, it's a game of the players versus the situation. Your job is to challenge the players, not defeat them. If the players lose (TPK), it should be because of poor decisions on their part or because of bad luck, not because you put them in a situation they could not possibly survive. Pride should be taken from providing a challenge where the players succeed.

Watch out for the player who tries to turn the game into a zero-sum end-game strategy session. You know the guy. He spends a few minutes trying to figure out that one move that "wins" the encounter. He'll intently study the map and ask questions for details about the terrain, wind direction, creature height and mass compared to his character's, etc. Then he'll start in with the questions that start with, "What happens if...." The easiest way to deal with this player is to tell him, "There are four options, attack, cast a spell, run away, or do nothing. It's the RPG equivalent to Candyland, not chess. What does your character do?" If he persists, roll an attack and tell him that while his character was frozen in indecision he was hit for 24 points of damage.

This is a Role Playing game, not community theater. Many players will always refer to their characters in the third person and never speak in character. This is fine as long as they detail what their characters are doing and saying. Not acceptable are general statements of action. “Chandler tips the bar wench and asks if she's seen anything unusual lately,” is good role playing. “What rumors does my character learn at the pub?” is not.

Sometimes a player will want to use a weapon that their character is too low in Ranks to use. Let him. If he wants to give up the use of a Shield with a Long Sword because he thinks War Hammers are cool, that's perfectly fine. However, the “bigger” weapon will only be as effective as the best weapon the character is qualified to use and all other restrictions apply, so no Battle Axe-wielding Gnomes. Also, any magic bonuses do not apply until the character gains the appropriate Rank for the weapon, because we all know how much disinterest there is in that Great Spear until its found to have a +2 bonus.

Unless you have young players (3rd grade or younger), be sure to ridicule any players who cannot handle the simple mathematics required for this game. There isn't anything here that wasn't taught in 1st grade and reinforced every year until graduation. If they want to whine about their “learning disability,” point out to them that it's a disability, not an inability, and that they need to man up to the fact that they're just too goddamn lazy to memorize the addition tables.

[ouroboros]

Legal Crap

The Skinny: This work, including all art, is released under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International. See <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> for all the legalese. Why bother with a license for a game that, other than my mother who feels she has an obligation, maybe five people will ever see? Because I wrote this to be shared. And because I've had people take credit for my work before. Fuck them. I hope they die alone, unmissed, and unloved. Of cancer.

Tenth Anniversary update: Or Covid.



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Contributing Artists

Originally, I used my own artwork, but the following people agreed to donate artwork to use in Θ . For free! They mostly claimed they were happy to help. But just because they obviously have no taste whatsoever doesn't mean they lack artistic talent. If I had half the talent these people have – well, needless to say, I hate each and every one of them.

Tenth Anniversary update: It's been at least five years since I wrote the last of these bios and I'm too lazy to update any of them. They could all be dead by now, for all I know. If so, it wasn't my fault.

Jim Hall

<http://jnhall.com>

The first person to agree to give me artwork. He earned the eternal enmity of Mitch and Dean by convincing them to also contribute art. Jim worked on *The Tigress* for Hero Comics, *Primal Force* for Malibu as well as some some stuff for DC, Marvel, Dark Horse. He has also proven himself to be an artistic whore by selling out and illustrating for major corporations like FedEx, Warner Brothers, and Acclaim.

Dean Zachary

<http://deanzacharyart.com>

Dean Zachary worked on Malibu's *Ferret* and *Night Man* before Marvel bought out Malibu for their printing technology and completely raped the Ultraverse characters. More recently he worked on the *Phoenix* mini-series for the recently relaunched Atlas Comics. Dean is also a sci-fi movie buff and a Green Bay Packers fan who understands that quarterbacks shouldn't have their own touchdown celebrations. Yes, we're looking at you, Aaron Rodgers.

Mitch Foust

<http://mitchfoust.deviantart.com>

Mitch has been illustrating superhero and fantasy art since the mid-eighties. Being an icon in the industry, he wasn't interested in making a contribution. But after much begging and tears on my part, and cajoling from the others, he agreed to allow his name to be used by plagiarizing a piece from Dean.

Peter Melonas

<http://comicartcommissions.com/Melonas.html>

Do not judge Peter's talent by the website. Peter is an artist who takes pride in his craft. It makes me sad to realize that he is better at art and drawing the human form than I will ever be at anything. Give this man money. Or at least buy some of his work.

Andre Miller

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/ALM-Premier-Graphics-Art-by-Andre-L-Miller/128608387183967>

Andre is part of an increasingly endangered career: art teacher in the US school system. That he does it full-time is nothing short of astounding. When he isn't trying to stop children from drawing penises and massive breasts, he does work for his graphics design company, Andre LeMoyne Miller Creations. Poke him on bookface; ask him about the Fargo Strut.

Joltin' Johnny Lucas

<http://www.comicartfans.com/GalleryDetail.asp?GCat=25265>

<http://joltinjohnnylucas.deviantart.com/>

<http://himwhatjolts.blogspot.com/>

So nice, he's websited thrice. As he likes to point out on his many sites, *"John's work has appeared in funny books published by D.C., Marvel, Darkhorse, AdHouse, Top Cow, and BOOM!"* He is currently working on a new graphic novel, *Four Norsemen of the Apocolypse*, for some comic book company due to hit the shelves at some date later. Oh, and don't hit on his wife at a convention when he steps away. She won't be flattered and it's just rude.

Von Hase

"Internationally published illustration bad-ass that has totally done a ton of awesome work for, like, totally legit gaming publishers. Yeah."

That's what he wants me to print, and he's probably right. Von Hase has provided art for Discwars, Troll Lord Games, TSR, I.C.E., GDW, Hero Games, FASA, WoTC, and Games Workshop. But then again, he's a guy who's day job is website design yet he doesn't have his own website, so there's that. If you run into him at a con, challenge him to a game of Go; you'll have a friend for life.

Lonnie Easterling

<http://www.spudcomics.com>

Lonnie is a freelance graphic designer, father of three, and creator of Spud Comics. The cartoony style and humor of his comics bely the fact that he has problems creating art in the present participle, which is somewhat ironic given his surname.

Jerry Lawler

<http://www.kingjerrylawler.com>

Graphic designer, recording artist, actor, father, hero, heel, and world-famous wrestling champion. There's not much that I can say that will do him justice other than he looks good in a cloak and crown. From one King to another, thank you for your contribution.

Mike Mabrey

<http://facebook.com/Mr.Mabrey>

Mike is so new to the art scene that he still thinks book-facing is a viable model for self-promotion. He was also very enthusiastic in his contributions, giving me more art than I could use. Unfortunately, I couldn't use my favorite piece of his, so I'm reproducing it below – partly because I needed to fill the space, but mostly because it's an amazing piece. But I did need to fill the space.

Tenth Anniversary update: Wow, that snark didn't age well.

[a blacksmith forging]

-Mike Mabrey

Name:

Race:

Equipment

Sorcerer:

Spells:

Resist:

Warrior:

Mêlée:

Resist:

Adventure:

Missiles:

Resist:

Defense

Health

Armor

Weapons

Spells

Character Points