

LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

As a character completes adventures, he practices his skills and becomes more talented. Characters earn experience points (XP) that allow them to progress in level.

DCC RPG takes a different approach to experience points than the historical precedent and its modern interpretation. There is certainly a strong case for the historical approach which the author calls a "fiddly" system - a calculation-based method that accurately captures the abilities of a creature in a final XP-based number. There is also a case for an "encounter calculation" system - such as that used in 3E - that scales the XP awarded for each encounter based on the relative power of the characters and provides an ability to calculate the appropriate challenge rating of a set of opponents.

Another perspective is provided by Appendix N. The heroes of Appendix N did not always face enemies suitable to their power level nor did they proceed on a predictable path to greater competencies. Occasionally, they fled their enemies -- better to stay alive and fight another day. And as they advanced in power - for example, from wanderer to mercenary to king - they never quite knew exactly when the next opportunity for advancement would present itself.

The author has made one last consideration in his choice of XP system. As gamers grow older and must squeeze their sessions into complicated lives involving families, jobs, and other time commitments, the most enjoyable elements of the game must rise to the top. Bookkeeping related to XP tracking is not one of those elements.

Therefore, DCC RPG uses an extremely simple XP system. If this system is not to your liking, the author encourages you to adapt one of the many "fiddly" systems existing from prior and current editions. However, I urge you to give this system a try, as I suspect it will ease your game play experience considerably.



Basics of the XP System: The DCC RPG experience system works as follows:

- All character classes use the same advancement table.
- Each *encounter* is worth from 0 to 4 XP, and those XP are not earned merely by killing monsters, disarming traps, looting treasure, or completing a quest. Rather, successfully surviving encounters earns the characters XP in DCC RPG. A typical encounter is worth 2 XP, and the system scales from 0 to 4 depending on difficulty.
- All characters that participate in the encounter receive the same XP.
- The judge determines how much XP is awarded.
- Characters level up when they reach the XP threshold for the next level.
- The level thresholds become progressively higher. The number of "average adventures" required to advance to each subsequent level is higher than the preceding level.

The XP Table: The table below shows the experience points required for each level.

As an optional rule, consider allowing any 0-level characters that survive their first adventure to automatically advance to 1st-level and 10 XP. Zero-level adventures are a harrowing, deadly experience with particularly high fatality rates. As long as each player controls a portfolio of multiple 0-level PCs, such a play style can be fun. However, too many games with a 0-level character exchange novelty for enforced cowardice.

A 1st-level character retains his hit points from level 0, and gains new hit points according to his class. All characters of 1st-level or higher thus have their class hit dice *plus* 1d4 hit points from level 0.

TABLE 1-4: XP LEVEL THRESHOLDS

Zero-level characters start at 0 XP. The indicated level of XP is necessary to achieve each new level. For example, a 0-level character becomes a 1st-level warrior when he reaches 10 XP, a 2nd-level warrior when he reaches 50 XP, a 3rd-level warrior when he reaches 110 XP, and so on.

Level	XP Required
0	0
1	10
2	50
3	110
4	190
5	290
6	410
7	550
8	710
9	890
10	1090



CHOOSING A CLASS

What man calls free will is but the options remaining after destiny and the gods have made their plays. If your character survives to 1st level, you can choose a class. Your free will is constrained by the fatalism of the dice; pick a class that suits your randomly determined strengths and weaknesses. The demi-human classes of dwarf, elf, and halfling may only be selected by characters whose 0-level occupation was of that race.

The following terminology is introduced in the class descriptions:

Hit points: Each class uses a certain die to determine hit points. Note that all characters receive 1d4 hit points at 0 level, and their class hit points are *in addition* to the 1d4 hit points from 0 level. For example, a cleric has 1d8 hit points per level, so a 1st-level cleric actually rolls 1d4+1d8 to determine hit points. When that cleric achieves 2nd level, the player rolls another 1d8 hit points and adds it to the prior total.

Weapon training: Each class is trained in a certain list of weapons. Characters use their normal class action die when attacking with these weapons. When using other weapons, they roll a lower die (according to the dice chain).

Action dice: Action dice are used to make attacks, cast spells, and use skills. The most common use of an action die is to attack; most characters roll 1d20 for their attack rolls because they have a 1d20 action die. As characters ad-



vance in level, they may gain additional action dice. Typically, these start as additional dice of lower facings (i.e., a d14 instead of d20) to reflect that the character's secondary attacks are not as effective as his primary attacks. Character classes with spellcasting ability, or specialized skill uses, may be able to use action dice to cast additional spells or use additional skills rather than make attacks, as described in the class descriptions.

Title: Titles are included for characters of levels one through five. These titles reflect the most common terms for characters of that power level. In some cases, these titles are tied to formal orders; in other cases, they are generic terms. Formal orders (such as those noted in the thief and warrior descriptions) may have different titles. Characters of 6th level and above are extremely rare, so much so that no generic titles exist. Players are encouraged to develop their own titles for such levels using Appendix T for inspiration as needed.



WARRIOR



You are a mailed knight on a king's errand, a greedy brigand loyal to no man, a wild bear-skinned wanderer with an empty stomach, or a stout man-at-arms armored by a merchant's gold.

Of all the classes, warriors have the best attack bonus, the highest hit points, and the most potential for extra attack actions.

Hit points: A warrior gains 1d12 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: A warrior is trained in the use of these weapons: battleaxe, club, crossbow, dagger, dart, flail, handaxe, javelin, lance, longbow, longsword, mace, polearm, shortbow, short sword, sling, spear, staff, two-handed sword, and warhammer. Warriors wear whatever armor they can afford.

Alignment: Warriors can follow one of several paths based on their alignment, which in turn affects their title. Royal warriors, employed by nobility, are lawful. Lawless warriors, fighting merely for profit or carnage, are chaotic. Wild warriors, natives of the barren steppes or deadly forests, are neutral or chaotic. Hired warriors, loyal to a cause, a man, or simply the fattest purse, can be lawful, neutral, or chaotic.

Attack modifier: Unlike other classes, warriors do not receive a fixed attack modifier at each level. Instead, they receive a randomized modifier known as a *deed die*. At 1st level, this is a d3. The warrior rolls this d3 on each attack roll and applies it to both his attack roll *and* his damage roll. On one attack, the die may give him a +1 to his attack roll and damage roll. On the next attack, the die may give him +3! The deed die advances with the warrior's level, climbing to d7 by 5th level, and then higher up to d10+4 at 10th level. The warrior always makes a new roll with this die in each combat round. When the warrior has multiple attacks at higher levels, the same deed die applies to all attacks in the same combat round.

Mighty Deed of Arms: Warriors earn their gold with pure physical prowess. They swing across chapels on chandelier chains, bash through iron-banded oaken doors, and leap over chasms in pursuit of their foes. When locked in mortal melee, their mighty deeds of

arms turn the course of battle: a brazen bull rush to push back the enemy lines, a swinging flail to entangle the beastman's sword arm, or a well-placed dagger through the enemy knight's visor.

Prior to any attack roll, a warrior can declare a Mighty Deed of Arms, or for short, a Deed. This Deed is a dramatic combat maneuver within the scope of the current combat. For example, a warrior may try to disarm an enemy with his next attack, or trip the opponent, or smash him backward to open access to a nearby corridor. The Deed does not increase damage but could have some other combat effect: pushing back an enemy, tripping or entangling him, temporarily blinding him, and so on.

The warrior's deed die determines the Deed's success. This is the same die used for the warrior's attack and damage modifier each round. If the deed die is a 3 or higher, *and the attack lands* (e.g., the total attack roll exceeds the target's AC), the Deed succeeds. If the deed die is a 2 or less, or the overall attack fails, the Deed fails as well.

Refer to the Combat section for additional information on Mighty Deeds of Arms (see page 88).

Critical hits: In combat, a warrior is most likely to score a critical hit and tends to get the most destructive effects when he does so. A warrior rolls the highest crit dice and rolls on tables with more devastating effects. In addition, a warrior scores critical hits more often. At 1st through 4th level, a warrior scores a crit on any natural roll of 19-20. The threat range increases to natural rolls of 18-20 at 5th level and 17-20 at 9th level. See the Combat section for more information on crits.

Initiative: A warrior adds his class level to his initiative rolls.

Luck: At first level, a warrior's Luck modifier applies to attack rolls with one specific kind of weapon. This kind of weapon must be chosen at first level and the modifier is fixed at its starting value – neither the weapon nor the modifier changes over the course of the warrior's career. The weapon type must be specific: longsword or short sword, not "swords."

Action dice: A warrior always uses his action dice for attacks. At 5th level, a warrior gains a second attack each round with his second action die.



MIGHTY DEEDS IN ACTION

The mechanic for Mighty Deeds of Arms was designed to encourage exciting stunts by ambitious warriors in the tradition of literary heroes. The goal was to create a rules system that encouraged situation-specific freedom without creating a lot of cumbersome rules. The author's original expectation was that this system would be used for disarms, parries, and other traditional combat maneuvers, but in actual playtesting the Mighty Deeds of Arms have been exciting and unpredictable. It's clear now that the system encourages creative actions, and the author believes it works best with creative warriors who devise interesting attacks. Here is a selection of actual Mighty Deeds of Arms performed by real players in real games, all of them declared on the spot in the midst of a grand adventure. Refer to the Combat section for more information on executing Mighty Deeds in play.

- When fighting opponents on a staircase, the character used a sword to stab an opponent and then lever him over the edge of the staircase. Later, the same character tried attacking the foe's legs to knock him over the edge.
- When facing a carven image with eyes that shot laser beams, the character used a mace to smash out the carved eyes (and thus disable the laser beams). In another game, a different player tried a similar attack to stab out the eyes of a basilisk and disarm its hypnotic gaze.
- When fighting a flying skull that was out of melee reach, a character leaped from the back of an ally into a flying lunge that brought him within reach of a melee swing at the skull.
- When hurling flasks of burning oil at a giant toad, the warrior aimed for the toad's open mouth to throw the oil down its gullet.
- When fighting enemies arrayed in a single-file line, a character hurled a javelin and tried to spear both of the front two enemies. The warrior impaled the first enemy, then speared the second, in effect pinning the second enemy to his ally's corpse.
- When fighting a chaos beast with a scorpion tail, a character attempted to chop off the tail.

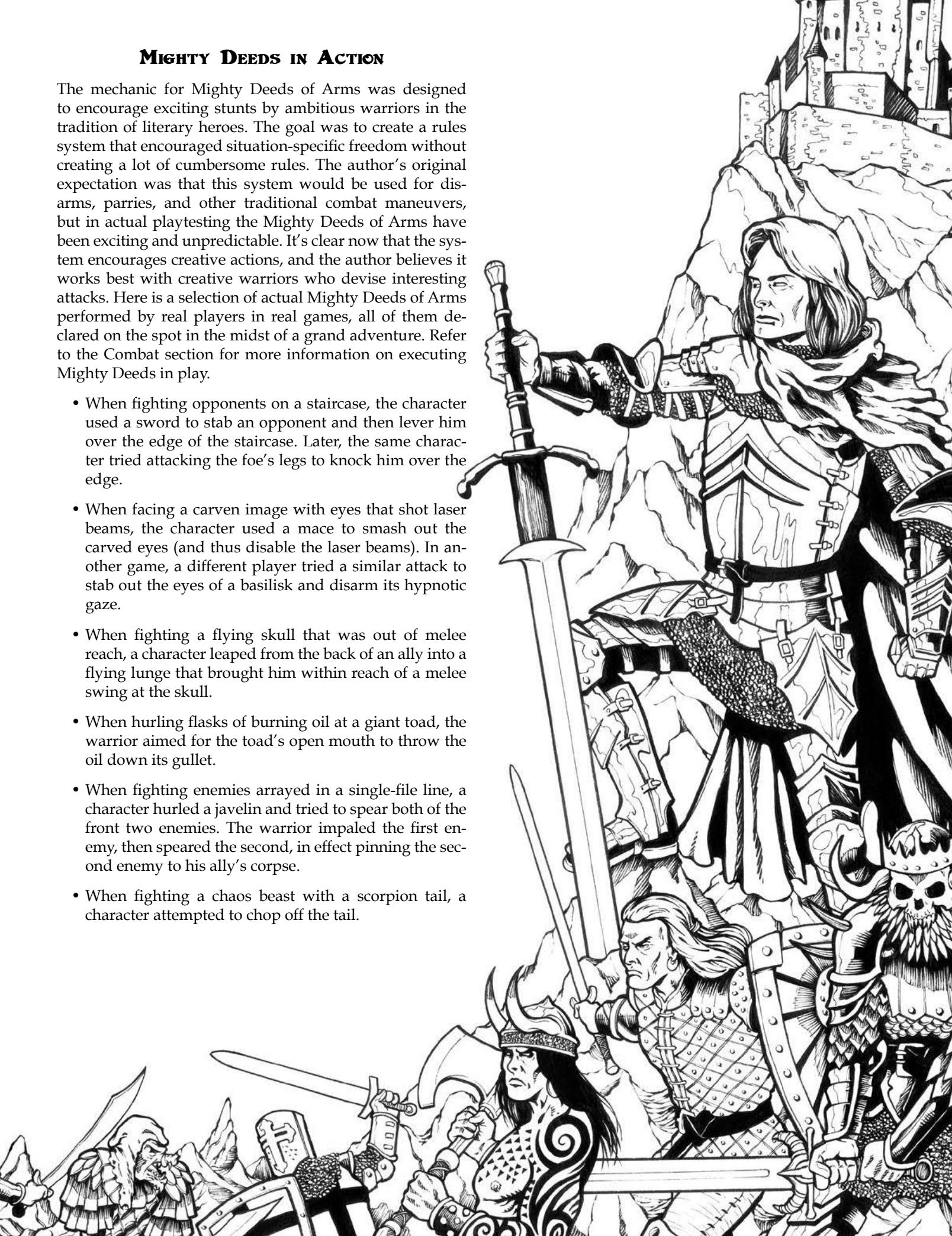


TABLE 1-10: WARRIOR

Level	Attack (Deed Die)	Crit Die/Table	Threat Range	Action Dice	Ref	Fort	Will
1	+d3*	1d12/III	19-20	1d20	+1	+1	+0
2	+d4*	1d14/III	19-20	1d20	+1	+1	+0
3	+d5*	1d16/IV	19-20	1d20	+1	+2	+1
4	+d6*	1d20/IV	19-20	1d20	+2	+2	+1
5	+d7*	1d24/V	18-20	1d20+1d14	+2	+3	+1
6	+d8*	1d30/V	18-20	1d20+1d16	+2	+4	+2
7	+d10+1*	1d30/V	18-20	1d20+1d20	+3	+4	+2
8	+d10+2*	2d20/V	18-20	1d20+1d20	+3	+5	+2
9	+d10+3*	2d20/V	17-20	1d20+1d20	+3	+5	+3
10	+d10+4*	2d20/V	17-20	1d20+1d20+1d14	+4	+6	+3

* A warrior's attack modifier is rolled anew, according to the appropriate die, with each attack. The result modifies both attack and damage rolls. At higher levels, the warrior adds both a die and a fixed value.

TABLE 1-11: WARRIOR TITLES

Level	Title by Alignment and Origin		
	Lawful	Chaotic	Neutral
1	Squire	Bandit	Wildling
2	Champion	Brigand	Barbarian
3	Knight	Marauder	Berserker
4	Cavalier	Ravager	Headman/Headwoman
5	Paladin	Reaver	Chieftain





WM

Militant Orders

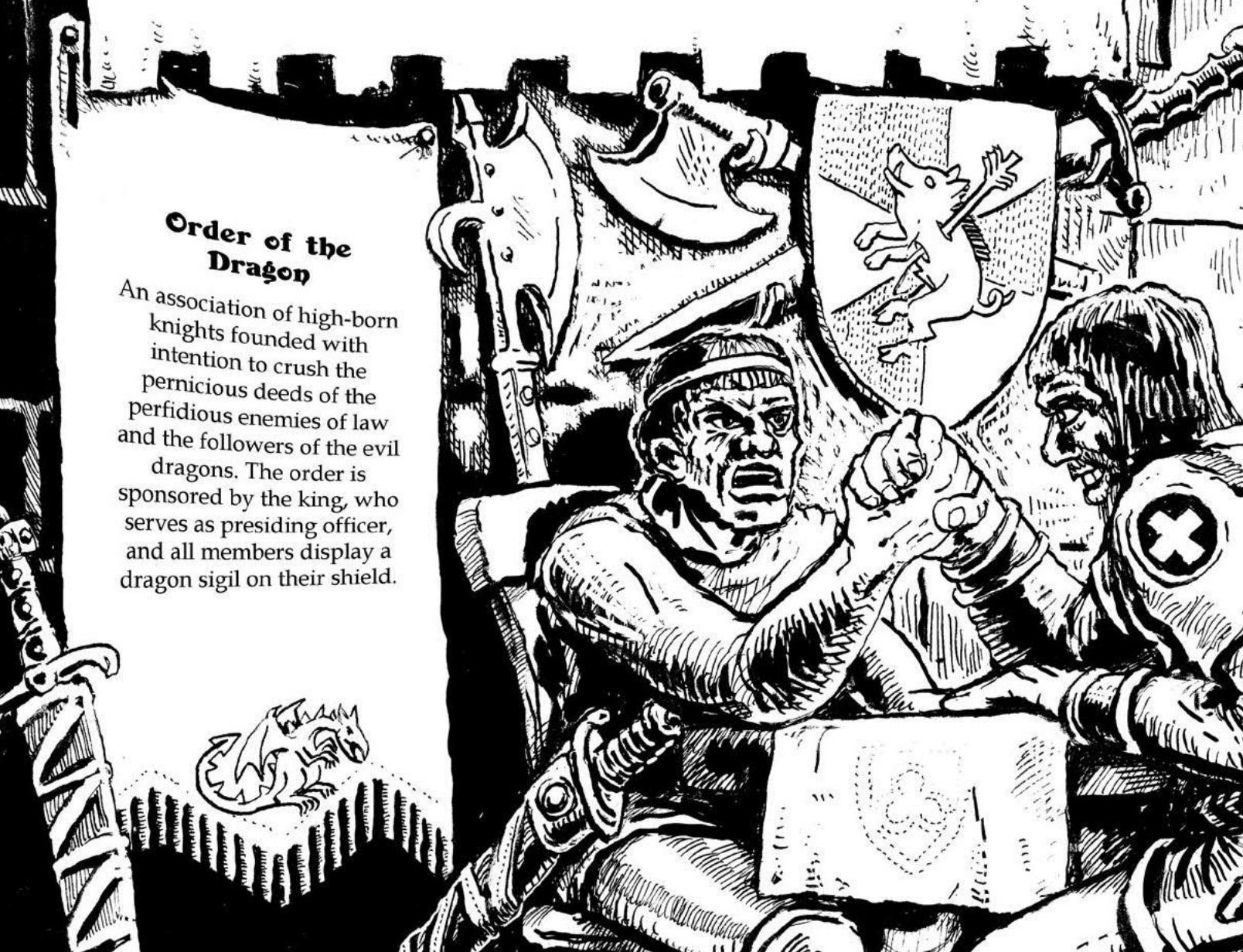
Militant warriors of the feudal lands serve their lords by maintaining the rule of law, and, more specifically, the rule of their monarch's law. These warriors belong to knightly orders that serve their lord, their state, or their ideals. Your warrior may belong to such an order. Membership typically entails an oath to support the goals of the order and defend your fellow members, a pledge to provide service to the order's crusades when necessary (typically one or two full weeks out of every year or upon extraordinary circumstance such as war), and a tithe or dues of up to 10 gold pieces each year.

Membership in an order is reserved for noble warriors with steel weapons. Common footmen with their wooden spears and homespun clothes do not belong to knightly orders. Wildmen may be members of a totem-tribe where they fight in the style of bear, wolf, eagle, or other creature.

These are the best-known knightly orders.

Order of the Dragon

An association of high-born knights founded with intention to crush the pernicious deeds of the perfidious enemies of law and the followers of the evil dragons. The order is sponsored by the king, who serves as presiding officer, and all members display a dragon sigil on their shield.



Order of Saint Stephen

An order founded by the grand duke to defend his lands in the tradition of valiant Saint Stephen, who died in single-handed combat against the giants. The order's emblem is a cross and they stand in staunch defense of all the grand duke's lands.

Enterprise of the Green Shield with the White Lady

This chivalric order of twelve knights and their squires is led by the most senior knight. Each knight serves for five years and, inspired by knightly ideals, must defend women suffering any form of oppression, thievery, or dishonor. Their symbol is self-explanatory.

Fraternal Company of the Black Swan

A fraternal order of knights charged with cleansing a war-torn region of demi-human raiders. The company succeeded, and continued in peacetime as an ongoing society. All black swans must possess a war horse trained and equipped for mounted combat. Members display a black swan with red beak and feet on a white field.

Order of the Golden Spur

This is an honorific society ruled by the highest-ranking cleric of the land. Knights who have distinguished themselves in the service of the church may be offered the chance to petition for membership in the Order of the Golden Spur. Petitioners must complete a great act of service to the church: for example, recovering a lost relic or defeating a chaos champion. If accepted as a member, the knight receives a medal and the right to wear a golden spur.



DWARF

Dou are a short, stout demi-human with an unabashed love of gold. Nothing pleases you more than the gleam of gems and the solidity of a gold ingot. You love to count your coins! The sight of treasure sometimes makes you lose your head – just as does the swirling chaos of combat. You love to fight wildly, swinging a weapon with brutal effectiveness as you chop your way through your foes.

Dwarves live far beneath the ground and rarely set foot above it. Dark caves and deep cities were once your home, but now you live a wandering life: you are an exiled defender selling your martial might, a curious craftsman trading your talents, or a bitter renegade unwilling to settle for your lot in life. You are an object of suspicion to surface-worlders as well as other dwarves.

Dwarven societies are rigid, orderly, and prescribed, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities bound by byzantine rules of age and occupation. Any dwarf who rejects this lawful model of insular defensiveness to pursue a vocation of gregarious curiosity is, to his fellows, a loose cannon or even a traitor.

Hit points: A dwarf gains 1d10 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: Dwarves prefer to battle with a weapon and shield. A dwarf is trained in the use of these melee weapons: battleaxe, club, dagger, handaxe, longsword, mace, short sword, spear, two-handed sword, and warhammer. A dwarf is also trained in these missile fire weapons: crossbow, javelin, shortbow, and sling. Dwarves wear whatever armor they can afford.

Alignment: Dwarven life impresses lawful behavior forcefully. A dwarf who rejects this must have a good reason. Adventuring dwarves of a lawful alignment are syndics: agents of their native governments sent to spy, reconnoiter, procure goods, or build alliances. They are often possessed of many useful skills that represent their nations favorably, chosen for the traveling role based on fortitude and attitude.

Chaotic dwarves are exceedingly rare in their home countries. Death or exile is their natural fate; banishment due to rebellion and disobedience is the best they can hope for. Lacking the temperament to dedicate decades to learning a dwarven craft, they depend on martial skill and violence to endure their

community's punishment for their tergiversation. Those who survive become adventurers.

Neutral dwarves adventure to learn of the world – a rare personality among this solipsistic race. A neutral dwarf is a master blacksmith, tanner, or miner seeking to expand his skills among the surface dwellers.

Attack modifier: Dwarves do not receive a fixed attack modifier at each level. Instead, they receive a deed die, just like a warrior. At 1st level, this is a d3. The dwarf rolls this d3 on each attack roll and applies it to both his attack roll *and* his damage roll. On one attack, the die may give him a +1 to his attack roll and damage roll. On the next attack, the die may give him +3! The deed die advances with the dwarf's level, climbing to d7 by 5th level, and then further to d10+4 by 10th level. The dwarf always makes a new roll with this die in each combat round. When the dwarf has multiple attacks at higher levels, the same deed die applies to all attacks in the same combat round.

Mighty Deed of Arms: Dwarves have a militant heritage that glorifies martial prowess. Like warriors, they can perform Mighty Deeds of Arms in combat. See the warrior entry for a complete description.

Sword and board: Dwarves excel at fighting with a shield in one hand and a weapon in the other. When fighting with a shield, a dwarf always gains a shield bash as a second attack. This shield bash uses a d14 to hit (instead of a d20). The dwarf adds his deed die to this number, as with all attacks, and can attempt Mighty Deeds of Arms involving the shield as well as his weapon. The shield bash does 1d3 damage. Some dwarves customize their shields with spikes or sharp edges to do more damage, while others enchant their shields with unique powers. Dwarves with multiple action dice (levels 5+) still receive only one shield bash each round.

Infravision: A dwarf can see in the dark up to 60'.

Slow: A dwarf has a base movement speed of 20', as opposed to 30' for humans.

Underground Skills: Long life beneath the ground trains dwarves to detect certain kinds of construction. When underground, dwarves receive a bonus to detect traps, slanting passages, shifting walls, and other new construction equal to their class level. Additionally, a dwarf can smell gold and gems. A dwarf can tell the direction of a strong concentration of gold

or gems within 100'. Smaller concentrations, down to a single coin, can still be smelled but require concentration and have scent ranges as low as 40' (for a single coin or gem).

Luck: At first level, a dwarf's Luck modifier applies to attack rolls with one *specific* kind of weapon (e.g., "longsword," not "swords"), just as a warrior's does. This kind of weapon must be chosen at 1st level, and the modifier remains fixed over time, even if the dwarf's Luck score changes.

Languages: At 1st level, a dwarf automatically knows Common, the dwarven racial language, plus one additional randomly determined language. A dwarf knows one additional language for every point of Int modifier, as described in Appendix L.

Action dice: A dwarf receives a second action die at 5th level. Dwarves always use their action dice for attacks. A dwarf's shield bash is always in addition to his base action dice.



TABLE 1-14: DWARF

Level	Attack (Deed Die)	Crit Die/Table	Action Dice**	Ref	Fort	Will
1	+d3*	1d10/III	1d20	+1	+1	+1
2	+d4*	1d12/III	1d20	+1	+1	+1
3	+d5*	1d14/III	1d20	+1	+2	+1
4	+d6*	1d16/IV	1d20	+2	+2	+2
5	+d7*	1d20/IV	1d20+1d14	+2	+3	+2
6	+d8*	1d24/V	1d20+1d16	+2	+4	+2
7	+d10+1*	1d30/V	1d20+1d20	+3	+4	+3
8	+d10+2*	1d30/V	1d20+1d20	+3	+5	+3
9	+d10+3*	2d20/V	1d20+1d20	+3	+5	+3
10	+d10+4*	2d20/V	1d20+1d20+1d14	+4	+6	+4



* A dwarf's attack modifier is rolled anew, according to the appropriate die, with each attack. The result modifies both attack and damage rolls. At higher levels, the dwarf adds both a die and a fixed value.

** In addition to this basic action die, the dwarf receives a shield bash using a d14 action die.

TABLE 1-15: DWARF TITLES

Level	Title by Alignment		
	Lawful	Chaotic	Neutral
1	Agent	Rebel	Apprentice
2	Broker	Dissident	Novice
3	Delegate	Exile	Journeymen
4	Envoy	Iconoclast	Crafter
5	Syndic	Renegade	Thegn

