

# DUALITY

Aaron Councilman

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<b>Difficulty \ Outcome</b>	<b>Very Bad</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Mixed</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Very Easy</b>	$\leq -1$	0 – 2	3 – 5	6 – 8	$\geq 9$
<b>Easy</b>	$\leq 2$	3 – 5	6 – 8	9 – 11	$\geq 12$
<b>Medium</b>	$\leq 5$	6 – 8	9 – 11	12 – 14	$\geq 15$
<b>Hard</b>	$\leq 8$	9 – 11	12 – 14	15 – 17	$\geq 18$
<b>Very Hard</b>	$\leq 11$	12 – 14	15 – 17	18 – 20	$\geq 21$

Table 1: Outcome Table for Unopposed Rolls

<b>Difference</b>	$\leq -6$	-5 – -3	-2 – 2	3 – 5	$\geq 6$
<b>Outcome</b>	Very Bad	Bad	Mixed	Good	Very Good

Table 2: Outcome Table for Opposed Rolls

## 1 Rolls

When a Player Character (PC) attempts to do something that is not certain, they must roll for it. There are two types of roll: opposed rolls for when another character is resisting the effort and unopposed rolls for when success is not guaranteed but nobody is actively resisting the effort. The result of a roll is measured by an **Outcome**: *Very Bad*, *Bad*, *Mixed*, *Good*, or *Very Good*.

When the *Outcome* of a roll is *Mixed* or better (*Mixed*, *Good*, or *Very Good*), the PC achieves what they rolled for; on a *Very Good* outcome they either achieve something extra or gain an *Advantage*. When the *Outcome* is *Mixed* or worse (*Mixed*, *Bad*, or *Very Bad*), there is either a negative repercussion, and a particularly bad repercussion on a *Very Bad* result, or the GM gains an *Advantage*, or two on a *Very Bad* result.

The GM may declare any roll to be **Dangerous** in which case a *Bad* outcome is treated as a *Very Bad* outcome.

### 1.1 Unopposed Rolls

For an unopposed roll, the GM will select the appropriate *Attribute* for the task and whether the character has an appropriate *Specialization* and determine whether an *Experience* suggested by the player would apply. Then, accounting for the nature of the task, and the character's *Specialization*, if any, the GM will determine the **Difficulty** for the task, which is *Very Easy*, *Easy*, *Medium*, *Hard*, or *Very Hard*. The player then rolls 2d8 and adds their *Attribute* bonus, relevant *Specialization* bonus if any, and relevant *Experience* bonus if they are activating an experience. This total is then compared to Table 1 to determine the *Outcome*.

### 1.2 Opposed Rolls

For an opposed roll, both the Player and GM roll and add their appropriate *Attribute*, *Specialization*, and *Experience* bonuses as appropriate. Then, the Player's result is computed as their roll minus the GM's roll and this is compared to Table 2. Similarly, the GM's result is computed as their roll minus the Player's and this is compared to Table 2.

### 1.3 Group Rolls

Groups rolls, for circumstances where multiple characters are working together on something or all doing something where failures can impact each other, have slightly different rules. There are two types of Group rolls, whose rules are detailed below.

#### 1.3.1 Collective Rolls

A Collective Roll is used when characters are working together on a large task that could not be reasonably be completed by just one. For example, a Collective Roll might be used when a group of PCs is researching in a large library looking for information pertaining to the location of an ancient ruin. In a Collective Roll, the GM may also allow multiple rounds of rolls to be collected together for tasks that might take more time and effort than just the single roll.

For a Collective Roll, the GM sets a *Difficulty* and a **Magnitude** (a whole number). The characters then each roll as normal, but instead of converting their roll to an outcome, they instead total their rolls together. This total

is then divided by the *Magnitude* set by the GM (always rounding towards zero) and then this result is compared to Table 1 to determine the group's outcome of the roll.

In our example of searching a library, the GM may determine that this task is relatively easy and risk free and set a *Difficulty* of *Easy* but because of the massive size of the library determine that the *Magnitude* is 10. Then, if the party rolls a total of 58, we divide this by the *Magnitude* to get a 5, which is a *Bad* outcome.

When a GM allows multiple rounds of rolls, the party totals their rolls from each round together and then divides by the *Magnitude* to determine the *Outcome* for each round. While a *Bad* or *Very Bad* result on a round of rolls is not a failure of the entire effort, the GM may still impose negative outcomes or gain *Advantage* for each round until the group reaches a *Mixed* or better result.

If the GM for the party searching the library allows the party another round, the GM may collect an *Advantage* for the failure on the first round (or impose some negative outcome). The party then rolls a total of 43 on the next round, for a total of 101 now, which is a 10 after division by the *Magnitude* and is therefore a *Mixed* result now. The party therefore has now found the information they are looking for, but the GM may take another *Advantage* or impose a negative outcome.

### 1.3.2 Cooperative Rolls

A Cooperative Roll is used when characters are each performing similar actions with similar goals but failures by some characters may impact the entire group. For example, a Cooperative Roll might be used when a group of PCs is sneaking into the collections of a museum seeking an artifact not on display.

For a Cooperative Roll, the GM sets a *Difficulty* for each character which each character rolls against. This *Difficulty* and the *Attribute* used for the roll is often the same for all characters involved but not necessarily. Then, the total successes and failures are totaled, where a *Very Bad* counts as  $-2$ , *Bad* as  $-1$ , *Mixed* as  $0$ , *Good* as  $+1$ , and *Very Good* as  $+2$ . This total then is converted into an *Outcome* in the same manner, so a result of  $-2$  or less is *Very Bad*,  $-1$  is *Bad*,  $0$  is *Mixed*,  $1$  is *Good*, and  $2$  or higher is *Very Good*. The GM may also allow that if the result is greater than  $+2$  or less than  $-2$  that the players or GM, respectively, gain additional *Advantage*, for example that  $+3$  is a *Very Good* result and generates an additional *Advantage*.

For our party attempting to sneak into the museum collections, the GM may set a *Difficulty* of *Hard* and have each PC roll *Dexterity* for sneaking. If the party rolls two *Bad*, one *Mixed*, and one *Very Good* result, the outcome of the roll is *Mixed*. If, instead, they had rolled two *Bad*, one *Good*, and one *Very Good* the outcome would be *Good*.

## 1.4 Helping Out

A character can **Help** another creature on a roll with approval from that creature and the GM. Based on how they are helping out, the GM will pick the parameters of the roll for the helper as usual; this will generally be against a *Medium* difficulty though the GM may adjust this for particularly difficult tasks or when the assistance is difficult to render. On a *Mixed* or better result the creature being helped gains an *Advantage*.

## 1.5 Increased and Decreased Rolls

In some circumstances a character's roll may be **Increased** or **Decreased**. *Increases* and *Decreases* can stack and cancel each other out, so one *Increase* and one *Decrease* cancel out, while two *Increases* and one *Decrease* cancel out to one *Increase*.

On a roll which is *Increased*  $n$  times, roll  $n + 2$  d8s and total only the highest two. On a roll which is *Decreased*  $n$  times, roll  $n + 2$  d8s and total only the lowest two.

## 2 Advantages

**Advantage** are meta-currency which represent power, preparation, luck, and other circumstances that may benefit the players or the GM. Each Player can collect *Advantage*, as can the GM. *Advantage* can be spent in a number of ways, detailed below and there may be other options that a GM allows or that are available based on particular creatures' abilities. In general, players can spend their *Advantage* to help other characters but their use should always make narrative sense; players should explain how they are narratively assisting and the GM may decide that a use of *Advantage* is not possible given the circumstances.

1. *Increasing a roll*: An *Advantage* can be spent to *Increase* a roll.

2. *Decreasing a roll*: An *Advantage* can be spent to *Decrease* a roll.
3. *Increase damage*: An *Advantage* can be spent to increase the number of damage dice rolled by a creature by one.
4. *Decrease damage*: An *Advantage* can be spent to reduce the number of damage dice rolled by a creature by one.
5. *Use an experience*: An *Advantage* can be spent to add a character's *Experience* to a relevant roll; Can only be spent to activate a character's own *Experience* on their own roll.

## 3 Character Statistics

Characters are defined by their *Attributes*, *Specializations*, *Experiences*, *Abilities*, and *Combat Styles*. *Attributes* define the character's broad statistics as well as their movement, wealth, and ability to take damage. *Specializations* define specific skills that the character possesses and the nature of those skills. *Experiences* reflect the character's past and offer bonuses to rolls in certain circumstances. *Abilities* provide unique mechanics for a character. *Combat Styles* define a character's fighting style, both offensive and defensive.

### 3.1 Attributes

Character **Attributes** represent the character's basic abilities. Each character has four kinds of attributes that describe: their base statistics, their health, their movement abilities, and their wealth.

#### 3.1.1 Basic Statistics

A character's basic statistics are defined by six *Attributes*: **Strength**, **Finesse**, **Willpower**, **Instinct**, **Presence**, and **Knowledge**. These *Attributes* each have a numeric value between  $-1$  and  $+2$  (for starting characters) and may increase to  $+3$  when a character levels up.

These *Attribute* values provide bonuses that are applied to rolls. The GM should pick the *Attribute* that makes most sense for the roll:

- **Strength**: A character's physical strength; their ability to lift, carry, climb.
- **Finesse**: A character's manual dexterity and control and their ability to move carefully and quietly.
- **Willpower**: A character's will to live; their ability to push off death and rely on pure luck.
- **Instinct**: A character's senses and intuition; their ability to perceive, sense motive, evaluate.
- **Presence**: A character's person skills; their ability to convince or deceive, to put on a performance.
- **Knowledge**: A character's knowledge and experience; their ability to recall and analyze.

#### 3.1.2 Health

There are three health related *Attributes*: **Life**, **Recovery**, and **Block**. A creature's *Life* defines how much damage it can take until it falls unconscious or dies. Its *Recovery* defines how much *Life* a creature regains when it heals, rests, and recuperates. *Block* defines how much damage a creature can just absorb without any impact, as described later *Block* is subtracted from damage dealt to a creature before subtracting the damage from its *Life*.

A character's *Maximum Life* has a numeric score between 1 and 40, its *Recovery* a numeric score between 1 and 20, and its *Block* a numeric score between 0 and 2. Other creatures may have values outside of these ranges.

#### 3.1.3 Movement

Each creature has a **Speed** which determines how fast it moves and has *Attributes* which determine by what means. A creature's *Speed* is one of *Slow*, *Normal*, and *Fast* which abstractly define how quickly it can move. Note that these speeds should be interpreted in the full context of a creature, a *Slow* dragon may still fly faster than a *Fast* snail or even mouse can move, though alternatively a *Fast* dragon may still walk slower than a *Normal* mouse can.

By default a creature's speed is its *Walking* speed, but a creature may also be able *Climb*, *Burrow*, *Swim*, and *Fly*; each of these is its own *Attribute* a character can possess which indicates whether it can move in that manner.

Wealth Value	Example Purchases
None	nothing
Limited	basic food and lodging daily
Modest	basic (though sturdy) supplies like rope, arrows, and tents
Comfortable	rare supplies like climbing equipment, a day of unskilled labor, a beast of burden
Luxurious	a sailboat, a comfortable wagon, a day of skilled labor
Aristocratic	a mercenary, an abandoned warehouse or small property

Table 3: Wealth

### 3.1.4 Wealth

The **Wealth** *Attribute* describes how much money a creature has and can easily spend. Creatures with a high *Wealth* are able to make larger purchases, without expending other meta-resources, than a creature with low *Wealth*. *Wealth* has one of the values in Table 3 which also describes the sorts of things that can be bought with that level.

## 3.2 Specializations

**Specializations** represent talents and abilities a creature has. There are a total of sixty possible specializations, each described by the combination of a verb and noun and each character may possess a bonus associated with the specializations which can be used on relevant rolls and a *tag* describing special mechanics for the character when they use that specialization. The verbs and nouns that define *Specializations* are:

- **Verbs:** *Control, Create, Destroy, Perceive, Know, Transform*
- **Nouns:** *Air, Earth, Fire, Water, Animals, Plants, Body, Illusion, Mind, Arcana*

The bonus for each *Specialization* can be 0, +1, or +2 (for starting characters) and may increase up to +4 when a character levels up.

Each *Specialization* has an associated tag that specify the limits of the character's ability with that *Specialization*. These tags are:

- **Human:** the character can only perform within normal human ability.
- **Superhuman:** the character can perform within normal human ability easily ( $-1$  *Difficulty*<sup>1</sup>) and can perform with superhuman ability (though within the laws of nature).
- **Simple & Weak:** the character can perform simple acts of magic easily ( $-1$  *Difficulty*) and can perform trivial acts of magic without a roll; the extent of the ability must be narrowly defined between the Player and GM.
- **Complex & Powerful:** the character can perform complex acts of magic but any act of magic is difficult ( $+1$  *Difficulty*); the extent of the ability is widely defined and should be pushed to the limits. Failures on rolls to perform magic often result in magic gone awry.

In general, a tag cannot be changed after character creation unless the *Specialization* only had a bonus of +0 and the *Human* tag in which case the new tag represents learning a new ability. The GM may allow changing tags in other situations as makes sense with the story.

Note that with magic setting the base difficulty of the roll depends on how magic is being used. If the use of magic is ancillary to the task, for example a character is conjuring fire in their hand in an attempt to intimidate a Lord, then the base difficulty is the difficulty of the task they are attempting to accomplish, in our example intimidating the Lord. If, instead, the use of magic is essential to the task, especially if the task could not be accomplished without magic, then the base difficulty is generally *Medium*. In both cases, the GM may adjust the difficulty as appropriate to the situation; for example they may increase the difficulty if there is limited time or if the Lord is familiar with magic and unlikely to be spooked, or may decrease the difficulty if, for instance, the Lord has never seen magic before.

<sup>1</sup>On an opposed roll, if a creature has a  $-1$  *Difficulty* they add a +3 bonus to their roll and if they have a  $+1$  *Difficulty* they add a  $-3$  penalty to their roll.

### 3.2.1 Big Magic

While the *Complex & Powerful* tag provides a character access to powerful and broad magic, there should still be things beyond their capacity. When starting a campaign, a group should discuss what kinds of magics are beyond the capability of this tag; some examples that may be beyond the tag are magics that are permanent or have a long lasting impact and magic that has a large area of impact or impacts a large number of targets. Magic beyond what be achieved using the *Complex & Powerful* tag is the realm of **Big Magic**.

To perform Big Magic requires more time, ability, and possibly resources than normal magic. First, to undertake Big Magic, at least one character involved must have a relevant specialization with the *Complex & Powerful* tag because the ability to perform Big Magic still relies on some ability to perform magic. Next, the GM may determine that a particular act of Big Magic requires some resources: these can be *common* resources in which case the GM picks a wealth value required to acquire them or *rare* resources which would require some kind of quest to acquire. For *rare* resources, instead of going on a new quest the GM may allow the use of some number of XP to cover the resource cost, but this would only be done when the Big Magic being worked on will have a permanent impact on the party or important ally. Once any necessary resources have been acquired, performing Big Magic requires a Collective Roll, often with a high magnitude. Generally the Difficulty of the roll is Hard (because it relies on the *Complex & Powerful* tag) but the GM may chose to increase or decrease this Difficulty. Each roll as part of the Collective roll represents preparations and efforts to perform the magic and it can be assisted by any number of creatures, only one of whom needs to be rolling for a relevant *Specialization*. Generally each roll represents about two hours of work, though the GM may increase or decrease this time as appropriate, for example a group of experienced practitioners may be faster while novice ones may be slower.

On rolls for Big Magic, bringing additional materials and resources, especially ones connected to the magic being performed, can be used, at the GMs discretion, to gain an *Advantage* for the roll.

## 3.3 Experiences

*Experiences* provide additional depth to a character by detailing parts of their past that may provide useful experience in circumstances they encounter in adventuring. Each *Experience* has a short, couple word, description and a bonus attached to; when a character is attempting something related to one of their *Experiences* they may spend an *Advantage* to activate it and add the *Experience's* bonus to their roll. Good experiences will be broad enough that there are a number of possible circumstances they could apply but they should not be able to apply in all circumstances. Work with your GM and group to determine the appropriate breadth of *Experiences* for your game and to decide when an *Experience* applies. The bonus associated with an *Experience* is +1 or +2 for newly created characters and can be increased to +3 when a character levels up.

## 3.4 Abilities

*Abilities* provide additional unique mechanics for characters, generally to do with gaining or using *Advantage*. While not solely for non-magical characters, these *Ability* are designed to assist non-magical builds by offering additional options for play and ways to gain *Advantage* which allows the more use of *Experiences*. Below is a list of such abilities, along with their XP costs; players and GMs should feel free to build other *Abilities* to match their desires. Several of these abilities have a *level n* which, for example, impacts the number of *Advantage* that a character gains; to take the ability you at first gain it at level 1 and can then spend the specified cost to increase it to level 2 and so on. When acquiring an ability whose cost depends on *n*, you must spend XP based on the level (*n*) you are upgrading to, so **Take the Advantage** costs 2 XP for level 1, another 3 XP for level 2, and so on.

- **Take the Advantage** ( $n + 1$  XP): At the beginning of each session, gain *n Advantage*.
- **Good Under Pressure** (*n* XP): Once per session, ask the GM how many *Advantage* they have; if they have more than all Player Characters combined, gain *n Advantage*.
- **Tank** (*n* XP): When hit by attack, you can spend *Advantage* to decrease the damage you take by *n* per *Advantage*.
- **Natural Healer** (*n* XP): Each session, your first *n* attempts to triage creatures (as described in Section 4.2.1) do not require spending an *Advantage*.
- **Powerful Healer** (*n* XP): Each *Advantage* you spend to do additional healing when you triage a creature heals an additional *n Life*.

- **Draw Blood** ( $n$  XP): When you hit a target with an attack, you can spend two *Advantage* to inflict a *bleed* on the target. The target takes  $n$  damage at the beginning of each of their turns until they spend an action or spend an *Advantage* to end the condition.

### 3.5 Combat Styles

*Combat Styles* define the character's abilities in combat, including their bonus to attack and defend, their range on attacks, their damage die, and other special abilities. Combat Styles are divided into *Offensive* and *Defensive* styles. Except at character creation, gaining a new Combat Style costs 3 XP. Each Combat Style, when chosen, is associated with a particular Basic Statistic which forms the base of the bonus for the style; when an additional Combat Style is chosen using the same statistic as another Combat Style the character already has, an additional 3 XP must be paid per such Combat Style (i.e., if a character has two Combat Styles that use Finesse then 6 XP must be paid to add a third Combat Style using Finesse). For Combat Styles that provide a bonus to attack or defend, this bonus can be increased for the same XP costs as a *Specialization* and is subject to the same maximum cap (as described below). For Offensive Combat Styles, the number of damage dice it grants can be increased by 1 for a number of XP equal to  $5 \times$  the new number of damage die (after the increase), so an increase from 1 die to 2 dice costs 10 XP. Some Combat Styles have other upgrade options that are described with them. The Combat Style options are detailed below:

#### 3.5.1 Offensive Styles

**Melee** Choose a Basic Statistic as the base attack bonus; the character gains a +1 bonus to attacks with this style on top of the Basic Statistic's bonus. The range of attacks with this style is *in hand-to-hand combat*. The damage die for attacks with this style is d8; and attacks with this style deal a base of 0 damage die. Describe a new Experience (ideally related in some way to the character's combat abilities this style represents, for example related to knowledge of weapons, combat tactics, etc.); this Experience has a bonus equal to the attack bonus (not including the Basic Statistic) granted by this style.

Upgrades:

- The range can be changed to *just outside the reach of a similarly sized creature* for 2 XP.

**Ranged** Choose a Basic Statistic as the base attack bonus; the character gains a +1 bonus to attacks with this style on top of the Basic Statistic's bonus. The range of attacks with this style is *within a reasonable distance*. The damage die for attacks with this style is d6; and attacks with this style deal a base of 0 damage die. Describe a new Experience (ideally related in some way to the character's combat abilities this style represents, for example related to knowledge of weapons, combat tactics, etc.); this Experience has a bonus equal to the attack bonus (not including the Basic Statistic) granted by this style.

Upgrades:

- The range can be changed to *from an unreasonable distance* for 2 XP.
- The damage die for this style can be changed to d8 for 5 XP.

**Simple & Weak** Choose a Basic Statistic as the base attack bonus; choose a *Specialization* with the Simple & Weak tag, this Specialization is the attack bonus with this style (on top of the Basic Statistic's bonus). The range of attacks with this style is *nearby*, meaning that the attacker can be targeted by both ranged and melee attacks from their target. The damage die for attacks with this style is d4; and attacks with this style deal a base of 0 damage die.

Upgrades:

- The range can be changed to either *in hand-to-hand combat* or *within a reasonable distance* for 2 XP.
- The damage die for this style can be changed to d6 for 5 XP.

**Complex & Powerful** Choose a Basic Statistic as the base attack bonus; choose a *Specialization* with the Complex & Powerful tag, this Specialization is the attack bonus with this style (on top of the Basic Statistic's bonus). The range of attacks with this style is *from an unreasonable distance*, but for attacks from a long range an additional  $-1$  penalty should be applied to the roll. The damage die for attacks with this style is d10; and attacks



with this style deal a base of 0 damage die.

Upgrades:

- The penalty for attacks at long range can be eliminated for 2 XP.

### 3.5.2 Defensive Styles

**Evasive** Choose a Basic Statistic as the base bonus to defend; the character gains a +1 bonus to defend with this style on top of the Basic Statistic's bonus.

**Armored** Choose a Basic Statistic as the base bonus to defend. The character also gains a +1 bonus to Block when using this style (this bonus can be increased, up to a maximum of +2 at character creation or +5 thereafter, for XP equal to  $3 \times$  the new bonus).

**Shielded** Choose a Basic Statistic as the base bonus to defend. When using this style and hit by an attack, the character can spend an *Advantage* to reduce the damage by this Basic Statistic.

Upgrades:

- The number of *Advantage* that can be spent at a time may be increased to 2 for 2 XP.

**Parry** Choose a Basic Statistic as the base bonus to defend. When using this style, if you deal damage to the attacker you may choose one of your Offensive Combat Styles and use its Basic Statistic and damage dice to deal damage.

## 3.6 Character Creation and Leveling-Up

When creating a new character for a campaign, the GM should specify the number of *Experience Points* (XP) that the players have to start with to build their characters. A starting character (before spending any XP) has a +0 bonus for each of their basic statistics, a *Life* of 20, a *Recovery* of 10, a *Block* of 0, a *Speed* of *Normal* (and only the ability to walk), and a bonus of +0 and the *human* tag for all *Specializations*. A starting character also has one Offensive and one Defensive Combat Styles (for these to have the same Basic Statistic still costs 3 XP). A starting character also has one *Item* whose construction does not cost XP beyond the cost of the *Item* itself (see Section 5 for details). A starting character also has a *Wealth* of *Limited*. These statistics can be increased by spending XP, and in some cases decreased to gain XP, as follows:

- To increase a basic statistic (to a maximum of +2) by 1 costs  $3 \times$  the score after the bonus; so increasing from +0 to +1 costs 3 XP, and from +1 to +2 costs 6. A basic statistic can also be decreased to -1 to gain 3 XP.
- To increase the character's Total *Life* costs 1 XP for each point up to 30 Total *Life* and then costs 2 XP for each point up to the maximum of 40. The Total *Life* can also be decreased to gain XP, gaining 1 XP per point down to 10 and then 2 XP per point down to a minimum of 1.
- To increase the character's *Recovery* costs 2 XP for each point up to 15 and then 4 XP for each point up to the maximum of 20. *Recovery* can also be reduced to gain XP, gaining 2 XP for each point down to 5 and 4 XP for each point down to the minimum of 1.
- Increasing the character's *Block* (up to a maximum of 2) costs  $3 \times$  the new block; so a block of 1 costs 3 XP and increasing that to 2 costs 6 XP.
- A character's *Speed* can be increased to *Fast* for 1 XP or can be reduced to *Slow* to gain 1 XP.
- A character can add a Climb or Swim speed at *Slow* for 6 XP, with it costing 1 XP to increase to *Normal* and another 1 XP to increase to *Fast*, a Burrow speed at *Slow* for 10 XP (with increasing speed costing the same), or a Fly speed for 16 XP (with increases costing the same).
- To increase a *Specialization* (up to a maximum of +2) bonus by +1 costs the score after the bonus; so increasing from +0 to +1 costs 1 XP and from +1 to +2 costs 2.
- To add a tag to a *Specialization* (that only has the default *human* tag costs the following:
  - **Superhuman:** 3 XP

- **Simple & Weak:** 2 XP
- **Complex & Powerful:** 2 XP
- To gain a +1 *Experience* costs 1 XP and then increasing it (to a maximum of +2) by 1 costs the score after the increase; so increasing a +1 experience to a +2 experience costs 2 XP.
- To gain an *Ability*.
- To upgrade a *Combat Style* or gain a new one as described in Section 3.5.
- To add additional features to their initial item or to construct additional items as described in Section 5.
- To increase their *Wealth* from Limited to Modest for 2 XP, from Modest to Comfortable for 6 XP, from Comfortable to Luxurious to 10 XP, or Luxurious to Aristocratic for 25 XP. A creature can also decrease their *Wealth* from Limited to None to gain 2 XP.

Throughout their journeys, characters will also earn XP that they can use to improve their characters. These may be spent in the same ways as above, but can also be spent to:

- Increase a basic statistic to +3; cost is as described above.
- Increase a character's Total *Life* beyond 40; the cost of each increase is one additional XP for each 10 points, so each point up to 50 costs 3 XP, up to 60 costs 4 XP, and so on.
- Increase a character's *Recovery* beyond 20; the cost of each increase is two additional XP for each 5 points, so each point up to 25 costs 6 XP, up to 30 costs 8 XP, and so on.
- Increase a character's *Block* up to 5; cost is as described above.
- Increase a *Specialization* bonus up to +4; cost is as described above.
- Increase an *Experience* bonus up to +3; cost is as described above.

## 4 Combat

Combat is broken up into rounds during which each participant has the chance to act. During each round, the GM and Players alternate taking turns to have one creature act, until all participants have acted; if there are more participants on one side or the other the remaining creatures generally act at the end, though one side may pass to allow the other to act an additional time. Either side may also spend *Advantage* once each turn to have two creatures go instead of just one. No creature can act more than once per round, except as allowed by an *Ability* or other rule.

On a creature's turn, they can move to any point the GM deems they could reasonably reach in a few moments without needing to make a roll, take an **Action**, any take any reasonable number of **Quick Actions**. An action can be to make an attack, to move more or take movement that would require a roll, to *Help* someone else, to interact with a complex object, or similar actions that the GM may permit. Quick Actions include simple tasks like drinking a potion or drawing a weapon.

### 4.1 Making Attacks

When a creature makes an attack against another creature, the attacker and target make an opposed roll. The attacker chooses one of their Offensive *Combat Styles* for the attack and rolls the specified *Attribute* plus any bonus for the *Combat Style* and Weapon if they are using one associated with that *Combat Style*. The target chooses one of their Defensive *Combat Styles* and rolls the specified *Attribute* plus any bonus for the *Combat Style* and Weapon if they are using one associated with that *Combat Style*. A target may have multiple Defensive *Combat Styles* that could be useful to them; before rolling they may choose to use multiple by spending an *Advantage* for each additional they want to activate; if doing this they must choose one which is used for the roll to defend and bonuses to the same statistics from multiple *Combat Styles* do not stack. Some creatures may have abilities that allow them to attack multiple targets simultaneously, in such cases the attacker rolls once and then computes and resolves their *Outcome* against each target separately.

If the attacker's result is *Mixed* or better, they roll damage based on the *Combat Style* and any relevant *Weapon* and add the same *Attribute* bonus as on the attack (though they do not add the other bonuses to the attack). The target subtracts their *Block* from this number and any remaining damage is subtracted from its *Life*. If the attacker's result is *Very Good* they gain an *Advantage* as normal, which can be spent to gain an additional damage die on their damage roll. If the result is *Mixed* or worse then the target has the chance to strike back if it reasonably can; if it does it deals damage in the same manner (though does not add any damage dice from a *Combat Style* and add the *Attribute* they rolled to defend unless another rule specifies otherwise; they may add dice from a *Weapon*), alternatively it can take *Advantage* as usual.

While *Advantage* can be spent on any damage roll to add a damage die to it, the GM cannot spend more *Advantage* for additional damage on a single damage roll than the current round number (where the first round of combat is round 1).

## 4.2 Healing

To recover *Life* lost during combat or otherwise during their adventures, creatures will need to **Heal**. When a creature successfully heals, it regains a number of *Life* equal to its *Recovery*. The easiest and simplest way to heal, is to get a night's rest; if a creature rests for 8 hours, with at least 6 hours of sleep and no strenuous activity over the period of time, they heal. Creatures can attempt to heal, or attempt to help another creature heal, in less time with a roll, with the difficulty depending on the time taken to heal. The *Difficulty* is generally set based on the time taken to rest: if they spend 4 hours the roll is *Very Easy*, 1 hour is *Easy*, 30 minutes is *Medium*, 10 minutes is *Hard*, and 1 minute is *Very Hard*. The GM may adjust these difficulties based on the situation, for instance a hospital might decrease the difficulty while a busy or dangerous environment may increase it. The time it takes to heal accounts both for time to tend wounds, relax, and so on, it also includes the time to find the necessary supplies; the GM may allow a shorter rest time without increasing the difficulty if sufficient supplies are available. Based on the situation, the GM may allow healing to be attempted as an *Action* in combat, though such a roll is likely to be *Very Hard* and *Decreased*. On a healing roll, the target of the healing regains *Life* equal to their *Recovery* if the roll is *Good* or *Very Good*, on a *Mixed* result they heal half of their *Recovery*. On a *Bad* or *Very Bad* result, the target does not heal but on a *Bad* result the GM should not impose a negative outcome, reserving that for a *Very Bad* result.

A creature can only benefit from the effects of a night's rest or a successful roll for healing once per day each.

### 4.2.1 Triaging

Sometime quicker healing is needed, especially if someone needs to be healed in the midst of combat. To attempt healing in the midst of combat, the healer must spend an *Advantage* and requires a relevant *Specialization* that can be used to help heal. The difficulty of the healing is generally *Medium*; on a success the target gains number of *Life* equal to the healer's specialization bonus. On a success, the healer can also spend *Advantage* to heal an additional *Life* per *Advantage*.

Once a creature is successfully healed in this manner attempts to heal them in this way again require spending an additional *Advantage*. If the *Specialization* used has the Simple & Weak tag, then the ability to use it for Triaging must be specifically defined as part of the ability.

## 4.3 Defeat

When a creature is reduced to 0 *Life*, they are **Defeated**. Depending on the circumstances, the GM may declare that the creature falls unconscious or becomes incapacitated for a number of hours, at which point they will awake with 1 *Life*. If the creature is still in danger, for instance in combat, the creature must choose one of the following options:

- **Unconsciousness:** the creature falls unconscious and is stable for the moment. An unconscious creature will remain unconscious for several hours, if not attended to, and then awaken with 1 *Life*. If an unconscious creature is hit by an attack, it becomes *Unstable*.
- **Unstable:** the creature remains alive but barely, with its fate hanging in the balance. The creature remains conscious and can act. At the end of each of its turns and each time an unstable creature takes damage, it must roll using its *Willpower Attribute* and must achieve a *Mixed* or better outcome; the *Difficulty* of this role is *Very Easy* the first time and increases one step each time they roll. If an unstable creature fails this

roll, it dies. An *Unstable* creature can be stabilized into *Unconsciousness* by a successful *Medium Difficulty* roll.

#### 4.3.1 Optional Rule: Blaze of Glory

A group may chose to play with the following third option for when a player character is defeated:

- **Blaze of Glory:** the creature dies, but gets to take a final Action whose result is *Very Good*. This action may not be used to Heal itself.

#### 4.3.2 Optional Rule: Resurrection

For groups that want it, death does not need to be the end of a character's journey, because there's magic in this world. A group should discuss whether they want to include resurrection in their game before beginning a campaign and exactly how it should work, but the following rules are provided as a suggestion.

Each character gains three boxes, that are initially unmarked, and marking these boxes represents the character's connection to the world slipping away. When a character dies, their party can attempt to resurrect them as an act of Big Magic, the magic should be made difficult not impossible, a Magnitude double the number of other party members is likely reasonable but the group should agree from the beginning. For each roll to perform the Big Magic that is a result of *Bad* or *Very Bad*, the dead character marks one of the boxes. If the character marks their third box they are permanently dead and cannot be restored to life as they have lost their connection to the world. If a character is successfully resurrected, they regain 1 *Life*. The process of dying and being resurrected has an impact on a character; they take a permanent  $-1$  penalty to one of their experiences and gain a  $+1$  bonus (or new  $+1$  experience). They take an additional  $-1$  penalty and  $+1$  bonus for each box that was checked during their resurrection. A group and GM may choose to allow a player to spend 3 XP to unmark a marked box, in which case the character also loses the associated  $-1$  penalty, thoughts keeps the  $+1$  bonus they received.

If using the optional Blaze of Glory option described above, it is recommended that that option also marks all of the boxes immediately, heroic sacrifice is a lot less heroic and meaningful when they can be brought back.

If a character marks their last box during an attempt to resurrect them, if the player is interested and with the agreement of the GM and the group, the player may create a new character that possesses the body of their former character, as the failed resurrection actually brought some other being into the body. The new character should be created and leveled as normal, the player can choose whether or not to unmark the boxes and for each box left marked they retain a total of  $+2$  experiences from the dead creature, representing how their new character still has some memory of the body's former occupant.

## 5 Items

Beyond a character's own abilities, they are also generally equipped with certain equipment that aids in their adventures. Much of the equipment is not noteworthy and can generally be assumed, but the key pieces of equipment are **Items** and given their own statistics. These statistics define bonuses and other features that the *Item* may grant to the character using it. *Items* fall into one of two categories: **Weapons** and **Relics**. Weapons, including defensive items like shields and armor, are associated with a particular Combat Style the character has and grant bonuses to combat abilities. Relics are any non-Weapon items and they grant the user an additional *Experience* that reflects the nature or possibly history of the Relic. Both Weapons and Relics can also grant other benefits, including bonuses to other *Attributes* or *Specializations*, additional *Experiences*, or even new *Abilities*.

### 5.1 Creating an Item

At character creation a character receives one Item for free, but otherwise creating an Item costs 1 XP which reflects the costs of time, money, and resources that procuring or creating the Item takes. For this cost, the item that is created is a *Basic Item*, the properties of which depend on whether it is a *Weapon* or *Relic*. When the item is created you can also spend XP to add additional features or improve on the Items basic features.

#### 5.1.1 Creating a Basic Weapon

To create a basic weapon, choose one of the character's Combat Styles to associate it with. If the chosen Combat Style is Offensive, the item grants a  $+1$  bonus to attacks and 1 additional damage die. If the chosen Combat Style is Defensive, the item grants a  $+1$  bonus to defend and  $+1$  bonus to *Block*.

### 5.1.2 Creating a Basic Relic

To create a basic relic, define the *Experience* that the Relic grants a +1 bonus for. At the beginning of each session, the Relic gains an *Advantage* (if it does not have one already) that can only be spent on activating its *Experience*.

### 5.1.3 Finishing an Item

Finally, additional features can be purchased for an Item using XP.

- To increase a bonus (to an *Attribute* or *Specialization*, to *Block*, to an *Experience*, and for weapons to the attack or defend bonus it grants) the cost is based on the *total bonus* the item will offer after the increase. For basic statistics and Block (which normally cost 3× their new bonus) the cost is the total bonus plus 2× the total bonus to that stat or the total bonus to block. As an example, if we have a basic defensive weapon, which grants +1 to defend and 1 block, increasing the bonus to defend to +2 will cost 3 XP, and adding a +1 bonus to *Strength* costs 6 XP (4 because the total bonus is now +4 and 2 more because the total bonus to Strength is +1 and add 2× that number of XP as well). The cost to add a new bonus of any of these kinds (including through adding a new +1 *Experience*) is the same. The maximum bonus to an *Attribute*, *Specialization*, *Block*, *Experience*, or to attack or defend is +2 at character creation and +3 thereafter.
- To add a bonus to *Life* costs 2 XP per point up to a maximum bonus of +10
- To add a bonus to *Recovery* costs 4 XP per point up to a maximum bonus of +5
- To add an *Ability* costs the cost of that *Ability*

For weapons, the following options can also be added

- To add an Combat Style that the weapon can be used with costs 3 XP.
- An additional damage die can be added for 5× the new number of damage dice granted by the item. A weapon can grant a maximum of 3 damage dice.

## 5.2 Other Item Rules

There are a few other Item rules, especially for governing how they interact. First, if a character has two Items which grant a bonus to the same thing (the same *Attribute* or *Specialization*) these bonuses do not stack, instead only the higher bonus applies. Similarly, if a character has multiple different weapons, the attack bonus only applies when using that specific weapon. For defensive weapons, similarly only the highest bonus to defend applies.

Additionally, if a character has more than 2 items in use (a character can hold onto other item but if they are not in use they would require several hours to be able to use them) they must hold onto 1 XP for each item past 2 they have.

Finally, sometimes a character outgrows a particular item, either they find something better or they have changed enough that the item no longer makes sense for them. In such case they can sell the item to regain all XP that they had invested in creating the item (make sure to track this for all Items); because this represents, in game, finding a buyer or perhaps melting down a weapon to forge it into something else. The GM may not allow an Item to be sold in a circumstance where it does not fit the narrative.

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## A Inspirations and Mechanics Borrowed From

- Ars Magica
- Daggerheart
- Fudge
- Prismatic Wasteland
- Tavern Tales

## B Development Notes

### To Do List

- Transformation/Companion abilities
- Experience Points as money/resources
- Additional uses of advantage (as ability): retaliation attack on a successful hit, additional turn in combat