

# Rath RPG

GM Handbook



Erratic Eye Games

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Thank you for playing Rath RPG!

# Rath RPG GM Handbook

## 1. Running Your Game

### Make It Your Own

Rath was built on player-GM negotiation. The aptitudes and rules in this book are a starting point, not a limit.

**Do what feels right for your game:** - If a player wants something unusual and it fits your world, figure out how to let them have it - Don't be afraid to modify rules that don't work for your table - The rules exist to support your game, not constrain it

**When players ask for something unusual:** 1. Say "yes, and let's figure out how" instead of "no" 2. Work together to find the right mechanical fit 3. Adjust after play if it doesn't work—that's expected, not failure

The best campaigns emerge from this collaboration.

### NPC Reactions

When NPC reaction isn't obvious, roll **2d6**:

Roll	Reaction
2	Hostile — Attack or threaten
3-5	Unfriendly — Suspicious, unhelpful
6-8	Unsure — Waiting to see what PCs do
9-11	Talkative — Willing to help (for a price)
12	Helpful — Genuinely friendly

**Modifiers:** +1 polite approach, -1 rude approach, +2 gift/favor offered, -2 bad reputation precedes them

### Morale

NPCs have a **morale rating** (typically 5-9). When facing danger, roll **2d6**. If result > morale rating, the NPC flees or surrenders.

**Check Morale When:** - Half the group is defeated - Leader is killed - Lone enemy reaches half HP - Facing overwhelming odds

**Typical Ratings:**

Rating	Type	Examples
5	Cowardly	Goblins, bandits

Rating	Type	Examples
6-7	Average	Hired guards, humanoids
8	Brave	Soldiers, loyal guards
9	Fearless	Elite warriors, fanatics
10+	Never flees	Undead, constructs

**Henchmen:** Check morale when employer dies, they go unpaid, they face traumatic danger, or someone offers a better deal.

## Test Difficulty

DC	Difficulty	When to Use
10	Easy	Trained person, good conditions
12	Standard	Default for most tests
15	Challenging	Difficult task, poor conditions
18	Hard	Expert-level difficulty
20	Very Hard	Near-impossible for most

**Remember:** DC 12 is the default. Only change it when the situation clearly warrants easier or harder.

**Note:** Players must meet or beat the DC to succeed ( $d20 + \text{stat} \geq \text{DC}$ ).

## 2. Dice Pools

Rath uses dice pools for two purposes: **timers** (something is coming) and **conditions** (something is happening). Both work the same way but serve different narrative functions.

### How Dice Pools Work

1. Create a pool of d6s (size depends on severity)
2. Each interval, roll all dice in the pool
3. Check results and remove dice as specified
4. When the pool is empty, the effect ends (or the event triggers)

**Tracking Tip:** Write down the pool size (e.g., “6d6 poison”). Roll, apply effects, remove dice, write new total.

### Doom Dice (Timers)

Use doom dice for impending events—something bad is coming and players can see the clock ticking.

**Setup:** Create a pool of **6-10 d6s** based on how much time you want.

## Quick Reference

### NPC Reaction (2d6)

2 Hostile | 3-5 Unfriendly | 6-8 Unsure | 9-11 Talkative | 12 Helpful

### Morale Check

Roll 2d6 > morale rating = flee/surrender

### Condition Dice

Roll pool each interval. 1-2 = effect triggers. 5-6 = remove die.

### Doom Dice

Roll pool each interval. Remove up to 2 dice on 5-6. Last die removed = event triggers.

### Trap/Lock Scale

Impossible → Disadvantage → Straight → Advantage

### Test DC

10 Easy | 12 Standard | 15 Challenging | 18 Hard | 20 Very Hard

**For player rules:** See the [Players Handbook](#) **For advanced aptitudes:** See [Advanced Aptitudes](#) **For magic system:** See [Advanced Magic](#)

change who the character is - Have narrative costs (social consequences, quests, etc.)

## Overloaded Inventory

Characters have inventory slots equal to  $10 + \text{CON}$ . When carrying more than their limit:

Slots Over	Penalty
1-3 over	Half movement speed
4-6 over	Quarter movement, disadvantage on physical tests
7+ over	Can barely shuffle, no combat actions

**Dropping items** is a free action. Encourage players to drop packs before combat if overloaded.

## 6. Optional Rules

### Capped Explosions

By default, exploding damage chains infinitely. This creates exciting moments but can result in extreme spikes.

**The Rule:** When you roll max damage, roll again and add. **If this second roll is also max, stop.** The explosion caps at one additional die.

**Maximum With Cap:** - d10: 20 damage max ( $10+10$ ) - d8: 16 damage max ( $8+8$ ) - d6: 12 damage max ( $6+6$ )

**When to Use:** If characters are being one-shot frequently, or your group prefers tactical play over high-variance chaos.

### Gritty Fortune

For deadlier campaigns, limit Fortune Points.

**Limited Fortune:** Max 1 Fortune instead of 3. Start sessions with 0, earn through natural 20s only.

**No Fortune:** Remove Fortune entirely. Every roll stands.

**Shared Fortune:** Party shares a single pool (3-5 points). Any player can spend, but replenishment is slower.

**Warning:** These significantly increase lethality.

**Each turn or interval:** 1. Roll all remaining dice 2. Remove up to 2 dice showing **5-6** 3. When the **last die is removed**, the event happens

**Examples:** - Flooding dungeon (8d6) — water rises each round - Pursuing enemies (6d6) — they're getting closer - Ritual completing (10d6) — cultists are almost done - Reinforcements arriving (7d6) — guards heard the fight

**Pacing:** Larger pools = more time. Removing only on 5-6 (not 4-6) makes it slower. Adjust to fit your desired tension.

### Condition Dice (Ongoing Effects)

Use condition dice for ongoing harm—poison coursing through veins, flames burning, wounds bleeding.

#### How Conditions Work:

1. When affected, create a condition dice pool based on severity
2. Each turn (combat) or interval (exploration), roll all dice
3. **If any dice show 1-2:** The condition's effect triggers
4. **Remove all dice showing 5-6:** The condition is fading
5. When the pool is empty, the condition ends

**Key Insight:** As dice disappear, the condition becomes less likely to trigger. A character with 2d6 poison left is fighting it off.

**Multiple Sources:** If hit by the same condition again, add new dice to existing pool.

#### Poison

When a creature is poisoned, they suffer ongoing effects until their body fights it off.

**Initial Save:** When first poisoned, CON test DC 12: - **Success:** Start with half dice (round down, minimum 2d6) - **Failure:** Start with full dice pool

**Severity:** | Type | Dice Pool | ——— | ——— | Weak poison | 4d6 | Moderate poison | 6d6 | Strong poison | 8d6 | Lethal poison | 10d6+ |

**Each turn (combat) or 10 minutes (exploration):** 1. Roll all poison dice 2. **On 1-2:** Effect triggers (see below) 3. **On 5-6:** Remove that die

**Poison Effects (choose when designing poison):** - **Damage:** Take 1 damage per die showing 1-2 - **Paralysis:** Can't act this turn - **Sleep:** Fall unconscious (wake if shaken/damaged) - **Weakness:** Disadvantage on physical tests this turn

**Curing Poison:** - Basic antitoxin (5 gp): Remove 2d6 from pool - Superior antitoxin (20 gp): Remove 4d6 from pool - Temple/healer (1 gp): Remove all poison dice - Short rest + CON test: Remove additional 1d6 - Long rest + CON test: Remove additional 2d6

## **Fire**

When ignited, a creature suffers ongoing fire damage.

**Severity:** 4-6d6 depending on source (torch splash vs oil immersion)

**Each turn:** 1. Roll fire dice 2. **On 1-2:** Take 1 damage per die showing 1-2 3. **On 5-6:** Remove that die (flames dying down)

**Extinguishing:** - Action to drop and roll (DEX test DC 12): Remove 2d6 - Doused with water: Remove 2d6 immediately

## **Bleeding**

Major wounds cause ongoing blood loss.

**Severity:** Typically 4d6 for serious wounds

**Each turn:** 1. Roll bleeding dice 2. **On 1-2:** Take 1 damage per die showing 1-2 3. **On 5-6:** Remove that die (blood clotting)

**Stopping the Bleeding:** - Action to apply pressure/bandage (no test): Remove 2d6 - Field Medicine aptitude removes all bleeding dice

## **Disease**

Infections cause ongoing harm over longer intervals.

**Initial Save:** When first infected, CON test DC 12: - **Success:** Start with half dice (round down, minimum 2d6) - **Failure:** Start with full dice pool

**Severity:** 6-8d6 depending on disease

**Each hour (or day for slow diseases):** 1. Roll disease dice 2. **On 1-2:** Take 1 damage per die and feel weakened 3. **On 5-6:** Remove that die (immune system fighting)

**Curing Disease:** - Temple cure (1 gp): Remove all disease dice - Healing magic: As specified by spell - Let it run its course: Eventually the pool empties

## **Drowning**

When out of air underwater, a creature begins drowning.

**Setup:** 6d6 drowning condition

**Each round underwater:** 1. Roll drowning dice 2. **On 1-2:** Take 1 damage per die showing 1-2 3. **On 5-6:** Remove that die

**Reaching Air:** Condition ends immediately when the creature can breathe (surfacing, spell, etc.)

## **5. Special Situations**

### **Scrolls Without Magic**

When running OSR modules or treasure-heavy dungeons, characters may find scrolls and spellbooks even if no one has Circle of Magic.

**Using Scrolls (No Circle Required):** - Any character can attempt to use a scroll - INT test DC 12 (higher for powerful spells) - Success: Effect activates, scroll destroyed - Failure: Nothing happens, scroll destroyed - Relevant aptitudes (Scholar, Hedge Magic) or keywords ("Wizard's Apprentice," "Scribe") grant advantage - Disadvantage if illiterate or unfamiliar with magical writing

**Spellbooks:** - Trade goods worth 50-200 gp depending on contents - Or: Keep as narrative justification for taking Circle of Magic at next level-up (see Advanced Character Handbook)

### **Funnels and Level 0 Characters**

A funnel is a deadly adventure where each player controls multiple fragile characters. Survivors become level 1 PCs.

**Level 0 Creation:** - Each player makes 5 characters - Must roll stats (no array) - No aptitudes, no weapons, no armor - Still roll on gear tables - 10 HP, stats don't apply yet

**During the Funnel:** - Characters can gain keywords through play - "My character has fighter training" → if GM agrees, gain "Fighter" keyword - Keywords grant advantage when relevant - No aptitudes yet—save that for after survival

**After the Funnel:** - Each player picks one survivor to promote to level 1 - Apply rolled stats - Choose 2 aptitudes that fit actions during the funnel - Finalize keywords - Calculate proper HP (10 + CON), AC, inventory

### **Gaining Inherent Aptitudes**

**Skill Aptitudes** can always be learned at level-up.

**Inherent Aptitudes** represent fundamental nature changes. After character creation, they require: - GM approval - Strong narrative justification - Often significant story events

**With Existing Demihuman Keyword:** A Dwarf (Darkvision) could gain Treasure Sense through: - Quest to awaken draconic heritage - Blessing from earth spirits - Training with master delver

**Through Transformation:** Characters can gain new keywords that justify inherent aptitudes: - Werewolf bite → "Lycanthrope" keyword → Natural Weapons, Feral Attack - Magical ritual → "Gargoyle" keyword → Armor Skin, Wings - Infernal pact → "Infernal" keyword → Sense Infernal

**Transformations should be:** - Significant story events (not off-screen) - Fundamentally

## Average (Level 2-3)

**Orc Warrior** AC 13, LVL2(2d8), #at 1, dam 1d8, mv 20, ml 7, Person Leather armor, crude weapons.

**Wolf** AC 12, LVL2(2d8), #at 1, dam 1d6, mv 40, ml 7, Object Pack Tactics. Keen smell.

**Zombie** AC 10, LVL2(2d8), #at 1, dam 1d8, mv 10, ml 12, Person Never flees. Vulnerable to fire (double damage).

## Dangerous (Level 4-5)

**Ogre** AC 13, LVL4(4d8), #at 1, dam 1d10, mv 20, ml 7, Warhorse Can throw rocks (near range, 1d8).

**Troll** AC 14, LVL5(5d8), #at 3, dam 1d6/1d6/1d8, mv 30, ml 9, Warhorse Regeneration 5 HP/round. Fire or acid stops regeneration for 1 round.

**Wyvern** AC 13, LVL5(5d8), #at 2, dam 1d8/1d6, mv 20 (fly 60), ml 8, Warhorse Stinger: Target makes CON test DC 12 with disadvantage or gains 6d6 damage poison condition.

## Major Threats (Level 6-8)

**Hill Giant** AC 13, LVL6(6d8), #at 1, dam 2d8, mv 40, ml 8, Elephant Throw boulders (far range, 2d6). Knocks prone on crit.

**Young Dragon** AC 16, LVL7(7d8), #at 3, dam 1d8/1d8/1d10, mv 30 (fly 60), ml 10, Warhorse Breath weapon (4d6, near cone, recharge 5-6 on d6). Resistant to breath type.

**Vampire** AC 15, LVL8(8d8), #at 2, dam 1d8+drain, mv 20, ml 10, Person Regeneration 10 HP/round (stopped by radiant/sunlight). Bite drains 1d4 CON. Charm (WIS DC 15). Shapeshift.

## Encounter Balance

- **Equal level monster** = moderate challenge for 1 PC
- **2-3 equal level** = tough fight for party
- **Higher level** = threatens entire party

**Use morale.** Not every fight goes to the death. Smart enemies flee or surrender.

**Unbalanced encounters are fine.** Some things should be avoided or outsmarted, not fought.

## 3. Traps and Locks

### The Advantage Scale

Traps and locks exist on an advantage scale:

**Impossible → Disadvantage → Straight Roll → Advantage**

Characters move up or down this scale based on tools, aptitudes, and trap complexity.

### Detecting Traps

Any character can actively search for traps: - Spend your turn examining a 10 ft area - Make a **WIS test DC 12** - Success reveals the trap's location and general mechanism

**Dungeon Sense aptitude:** Advantage on detection + learn detailed mechanics (trigger, effect, bypass methods, complexity)

### Disabling Traps and Picking Locks

Once a trap is detected (or a lock is encountered):

**Base:** DEX test DC 12 with **disadvantage** (requires thieves' tools)

**Without Tools:** Impossible (though you can try triggering traps from a distance)

**Failing by 5+:** Trap triggers OR tools break (1 gp to replace)

### Complex Traps and Locks

Some traps and locks are particularly sophisticated. Complex mechanisms shift you **down one step** on the advantage scale:

- Advantage → Straight roll
- Straight roll → Disadvantage
- Disadvantage → Impossible

**Simple:** Tripwire, basic lock, pit trap **Complex:** Multi-stage mechanisms, master locks, magical wards

## Aptitudes That Help

- Break and Enter** - Advantage with tools (straight roll on complex). Can work without tools at disadvantage
- Dungeon Sense** - Advantage on detection. Learn complexity and details. No help with disabling
- Trapsmith** - Advantage with tools (straight roll on complex). Can work without tools (disadvantage on complex). Identify complexity at a glance

**Stacking:** A character with both Break and Enter and Trapsmith has significant capability, but aptitudes don't stack—use the better one.

## Example Situations

Aptitude	tools	lock difficulty	Result
No aptitude	Yes	Simple	Disadvantage
Break and Enter	Yes	Simple	Advantage
Break and Enter	Yes	Complex	Straight roll
Break and Enter	No	Simple	Disadvantage
Break and Enter	No	Complex	Impossible
Trapsmith	No	Complex trap	Disadvantage

## 4. Monsters

### Stat Block Format

**Format:** AC, LVL(HD), #at, dam, mv, ml, size

- AC:** Armor Class
- LVL(HD):** Level/Hit Dice (roll d8s for HP)
- #at:** Attacks per round
- dam:** Damage per attack
- mv:** Movement (feet)
- ml:** Morale rating
- size:** Size category

**Example:** AC 13, LVL2(2d8), #at 1, dam 1d8, mv 20, ml 7, Person

### Size Categories

Size	Description	Examples
Item	Carryable	Cat, rat, dagger, imp

Size	Description	Examples
Object	Bigger than carryable	Barrel, door, wolf
Person	Human-sized	Human, orc, skeleton
Warhorse	Horse-sized	Ogre, troll, wyvern
Elephant	Massive	Giant, dragon

## Creating Monsters

### Level/Hit Dice:

Level	Threat	Examples
0-1	Weak	Goblins, rats, kobolds
2-3	Average	Orcs, wolves, zombies
4-5	Dangerous	Ogres, wyverns, trolls
6-8	Major	Giants, young dragons
9+	Legendary	Demon lords, ancient dragons

### Armor Class:

AC	Type
10-11	Unarmored
12-13	Light armor, hide
14-15	Medium armor, scale
16-17	Heavy armor, plates
18+	Magical, dragon scales

### Damage:

Die	Power	Examples
d4	Weak	Rat bite, peasant
d6	Standard	Sword, goblin
d8	Strong	Greataxe, wolf
d10+	Powerful	Ogre club, dragon

**Special Abilities:** - **Darkvision** — See in darkness - **Pack Tactics** — Advantage if ally nearby  
- **Regeneration** — Heal X HP/round - **Resistance** — Half damage from type - **Immunity** — No damage from type - **Poison** — Specify dice and effect

## Example Monsters

### Weak (Level 0-1)

**Goblin** AC 12, LVL1(1d8), #at 1, dam 1d6, mv 20, ml 6, Person Darkvision. Cowardly when outnumbered.

**Skeleton** AC 11, LVL1(1d8), #at 1, dam 1d6, mv 20, ml 12, Person Never flees. Blunt weapons deal double, piercing deals half. Immune to poison and fear.

**Giant Rat** AC 10, LVL0(1d4), #at 1, dam 1d4, mv 30, ml 5, Item Disease: CON DC 12 or 4d6 disease condition.