

A Game for 2 or More Players

The Elf Game

Includes All Dice & Scrolls Needed for Play

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These rules are largely concerned with those things which cannot be adequately imagined in group settings. By necessity, that means we have had to focus on the rules for Combat at the expense of discussion on the nature of **Intelligence**, as an example. Do not take this focus in *rules* to mean that the focus of the *game* is Combat. Rather, it is simulation. Of other Worlds, of other Times, of other lives than our own.

Characters have 6 Ability Scores, representing their various talents (and lack thereof, as the case may be), each ranging from 3 to 18 and generated by a roll of 3d6. The Abilities, and a few of the Actions they might determine the outcomes of, are:

Strength Open Stuck Door, Lift Object, Break Item, Leap High or Far

Dexterity Use Intricate Device, Balance, Aim, Somersault, Sew Pattern

Constitution Hold Breath, Run Far, Stay Awake, See in Bright Light

Intelligence Use Unknown Item, Identify Object, Learn New Skill

Wisdom See in Dim Light, Hear Noise, Smell Scent, Use Known Item

Charisma Flirt, Intimidate, Convey Secret, Fake Sincerity, Impress

Each Ability Score also generates an Adjustment, that being:

Ability Score	3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	18
Adjustment	-4	-3	-2	-1	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4

Ability Tests are made when a Character is attempting to perform some action with a possibility of both failure and success. An Ability Test is made by rolling a D20 and adding all appropriate Adjustments, then Testing the result against the Ability Score. If the Adjusted number is

LESS THAN or EQUAL TO

the score, the Test is successful. If it is greater, the Test fails. A naturally-rolled (that is, rolled on the die, before Adjustments)

1 is always a Success, 20 is always a Failure.

In any case, the Referee determines the actual outcome of the Test.

Characters begin play at Level 0, equivalent to average skill with little specialized knowledge, and can gain up to 3 Levels of experience. Level 1 is roughly equivalent to a few years' experience in a field, Level 2 a few decades' experience, and Level 3 a lifetime's experience. The Referee determines when and why a given Character gains a Level.

Characters also have 5 Combat Scores, **Melee**, **Ranged**, **Armor Class**, **Hit Points**, and **Saving Throw**.

- ❖ **Melee** score is equal to a Character's Level plus their **Strength** Adjustment.
- ❖ **Ranged** score is equal to a Character's Level plus their **Dexterity** Adjustment.
- ❖ **Armor Class** is equal to 10 minus the **Constitution** Adjustment, **Dexterity** Adjustment, and **Level**.
- ❖ **Hit Points** are equal to the **Constitution** Adjustment plus **Level**. At each Level (including Level 0), Characters roll 1d6 and add the result to their total **Hit Points**.
- ❖ **Saving Throw** is equal to the Character's **Constitution** Score, plus their **Wisdom** Adjustment and **Level**.

Turns in Combat are broken down into Move, Attack, and Action. A Character can Move up to their Speed each Turn, which can be done at the same time as Attack or Action, as logic permits.

Characters are of 3 Size Categories, **Small**, **Medium**, and **Large**. When using a grid map, **Medium** Characters take up 1 Square (5 feet), and on average will have **Speeds** of 4 Squares (20 feet per Move). **Large** Characters have Double these numbers (2 Size, 8 Speed) on average, while **Small** Characters have Half (½ Size, 2 Speed). A grid map, or any physical representation of the world of any kind, are not needed to play this game, though a Character's Size and **Speed** should be taken into account nonetheless.

There are two Classes of Character in this game: **Fighter** and **Tradesman**.

- ❖ **Fighters** are those who spend their time practicing combat. They roll an additional D6 for **Hit Points** at each Level beyond 0 and may use their Actions in combat to Attack instead.
- ❖ **Tradesmen** are those who spend their time in pursuits other than fighting. They subtract their Level from all non-Attack Ability Test rolls and may use their Attacks in Combat to perform Actions instead.

There are also two Stances for a Character: **Magical** and **Mundane**.

- ❖ **Magical** Characters possess special powers not of the World, and may thus use Actions to cast **Spells**.
- ❖ **Mundane** Characters, being closer to the World, gain a +1 Adjustment to **Hit Points**, **Speed**, **Saving Throw**, **Melee** score, and **Ranged** score, and a -1 to **Armor Class**.

A **Spell** is any effect which cannot be brought about by a Character physically, but is nonetheless desired. **Spells** are performed by telling the Referee the effect desired, components used (if any, such as incantations, magical objects, arcane gestures, etc.), and method of casting (prayer, force of will, ritual, etc.). Roll an Ability Test for the appropriate effect and add any Adjustments determined by the Referee for circumstances, such as the overall power of effect desired, the **Level** of the Character, the amount of Magic put into the **Spell** by whatever means, and the events occurring nearby the Character, for example. On a failed Test the **Spell** does not work, but nothing else occurs. On a successful Test, the **Spell** works as expected. If the result is above 20 or below 1, it is likely some powerful effect will occur, for good or ill. In all cases, the Referee determines the final outcome.

Spells in this game are an intentionally nebulous thing. Whatever effect a Character might desire, it is possible through Magic. The questions to ask of the Referee are always: "Will it succeed?" and "To what degree?". The answers depend on *every other variable in the game*.

Characters typically begin play with some number of items. These items, and their effects, should be determined before the game by the Player and Referee together, based upon the Character's life so far. These can be recorded on the Equipment Scroll for each Character, as detailed on the other side of this Rules Scroll.

Attack Rolls are made by rolling a D20, subtracting the **Melee** or **Ranged** score, and comparing the result to the target's **Armor Class**. If the modified roll is Less Than or Equal To the **Armor Class**, the Attack is successful.

Attacks will tend to deal 1d6 in **Hit Point** Damage. Weapons may have higher numbers of D6s, or may increase the associated Combat Score, or may have some other special property, or all of the above, it is also possible for a weapon to be worse in some way, subtracting from the **Melee** or **Ranged** scores, or reducing the result of the Damage rolled on the D6 by a flat number, for example.

If a Character wears armor of any kind, their **Armor Class** is Adjusted by -1. As with weapons and Attack Rolls, some armors may have different numbers to Adjust **Armor Class** by, or some other property they possess.

A Character may Defend rather than Attacking during a Turn. This Adjusts their **Armor Class** by -1 until their next Turn.

If a character wishes to resist a magical effect or is reduced to 0 **Hit Points**, they roll a Test against their **Saving Throw** score. Whether successful or not, the Referee will determine the results.

Actions are any non-Attack, non-Move action which can be imagined to take place. Each Turn lasts roughly 6 seconds, and Characters act in order of highest **Dexterity**. In cases where two or more Characters share a **Dexterity** score, they act simultaneously.

Characters typically **Heal** at a rate of 1 **Hit Point** per long rest (usually about a third of a day or so). Certain arts and items in the world may aid the **Healing** of characters in varied ways.

There are several terms in this game which may seem to imply more about the events occurring in the World of the Game than is intended. Such terms as "**Armor Class**", and "**Intelligence**" are mere abstractions, and not meant to imply a Character is wearing, armor of any kind, nor necessarily that they are using force of personality when making a Test against **Charisma**, for example. **Armor Class** is simply a number indicating the difficulty of harming that Character in Combat, and likewise, **Hit Points** indicate only the number of **Hits** a Character can sustain before falling, and not some overall level of Health. The Ability Scores represent a Character's general aptitudes, not the sum-total of their being.

Whenever a rule is not present, yet needed for the continuation of play, the Referee is the one who decides what that rule shall be in the game they run, and may change these rules if they deem it necessary. If a rule is not needed, it should be abandoned. In the end, the goal of this game should be to have fun with a friend, or perhaps several, and not anything else. If some aspect of this game prevents enjoyment, be rid of it.

"D20" means a 20-Sided Die

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"D6" means a 6-Sided Die

Welcome, Fae One, to The Earthen Realm! This is the world which we, those who developed this form of The Rules, have created for our play. It need not be the world in which you Quest and Adventure (or perhaps merely take Respite), for your own imagination contains endless worlds suited to endless needs. So long as your goals be Worthy and your methods Just, you can do little wrong. In this game, at least one Player takes on the role of Referee, and embodies the World itself. All this and more is explained herein.

In The Earthen Realm, Fae such as us take up the form of Elves most commonly. Elves are shorter than Humans on average, and tend toward the pudgy as physicality goes. They have pointed ears to mark their station as Helpers - that is, we Fae who take their form do so in order to aid those in The Earthen Realm with tasks both big and small. Our reasons vary, but on the whole we find this way of life entertaining, and find camaraderie in our fellow Fae, as well as, occasionally, those of the Realm. Those with pointed ears have thus come to be known as those one can come to for help in times of need - whether to hire for work, or to ask a boon out of altruism. Children of the Realm are often taught by their parents to "Seek out when lost the Elven-eared folk".

The game which we play began by centering around a small village called Toyer, and the residents therein. Outside the village lay an ancient castle owned by a wealthy family in the midst of a well-tended forest. By taking on the personae of these townfolk, our players were able to overcome obstacles, explore the labyrinthine corridors beneath the castle, and defeat the scourge of Goblin invasion. Some died, and were mourned by their friends. Others came to the village over time, and became a part of it themselves. Children grew to adulthood, and had adventures of their own.

Around Toyer, the world grew into focus, as we built other towns, and other castles in our minds (and on our gaming tables!) and eventually, we had an entire world, that of The Earthen Realm, in which to set our games. We very much recommend that you do similar, and begin in some small scale with your imaginings. One adventure, one group of people, one fantastic event which pulls them out of their heretofore simple lives - that is all you need in order to begin.

There are, as suggested here, of course many types of creature in our, and surely your, world. However, we choose not to delineate here specific details about them, as some sort of Almanac, but rather say that you, the Players of this game, should find and develop your own in whichever ways suit you. Likewise for the scenarios your Characters find themselves in, the designs of buildings and the details of items. This game system is not *missing* these aspects, but rather the creation of them is a *vital and entertaining portion of the game itself*. This game is about imagination, and not, in general, about using shortcuts to *avoid* imagining things.

In this game, each Player is expected to embody the characteristics and perspectives of their Character. The Referee is expected to perform as the literal rest of the world beyond the other Players' Characters, making such large decisions about it as "Does the Sun rise in the Sky?" and also such trivial decisions as "Does Ruth from down the road eat marmalade this morning on her toast?". It is important, then, that these roles be taken with some degree of seriousness, although of course entertainment is the purpose of this game.

Many players, both new and veteran, find themselves asking the Referee "What can I do?"

The Answer, simply, is Anything.

For Elyn, the Elf

The way we accomplish this in **The Elf Game** is that a Player tells the Referee what they wish to do. The Referee then determines whether the action is

A: Possible (whether with or without Magic)

B: Failable, and if so, which Score the action Tests

If the Referee determines an action is not possible, it cannot be done. If it is possible, and the Referee determines that the action cannot fail, then no roll is needed, the Referee simply describes the outcome to the Players. If, however, there is both a probability of success and failure, then it is likely that a Score on the Player's Character Record Scroll will suffice to determine the outcome. First, the Referee chooses the appropriate Score, whether **Strength** for actions which test physical prowess, or **Charisma** for actions which test interpersonal ability, or even an Attack Roll might be called for. In all cases, a single die roll per action should be enough to determine the outcome of an action. If it is a particularly complex action, such as using an intricate tool one has never encountered before by reading a schematic, then the Referee might see fit to call for two tests of separate Scores, but this should be done sparingly, for the sake of ease of play. If an action *can* be rendered as a single die roll, it likely *should* be.

You will, as you play, find that you need to figure a probability from time to time, and this game uses dice to accomplish this. This game approximates all probabilities using either a number of D6s or a single D20. Higher numbers being better on the former, and Lower numbers being better on the latter. For example, whenever we need to roll for the probability that a Character meets someone on the road, we roll 1d6, with a 1 indicating an unfortunate encounter, 2-5 none, and 6 a fortunate encounter of some kind or other. Meanwhile, for a much larger probability, say out of 100, we would use a single D20, with each number representing 5%. As an example, if there were a 15% chance of inclement weather, then whether the weather is favorable or not can be determined by rolling a D20, with 1-17 being fine weather and 18-20 being poor weather. Sometimes these rolls are Adjusted, either by circumstance or the Adjustment related to an Ability Score (for example, Adjusting a 2d6 probability Roll for Character reactions using the **Charisma** Adjustment). Such decisions, and details, are at the behest of the Referee.

Sometimes, the question becomes muddled during play: "Who determines what happens?" The answer is, that if it is an action which a Player's Character can perform, the Player will generally decide what the Character does. All *other* events - those caused as a result of Character action or otherwise - are decided by the Referee, with assistance from The Rules and dice. In much the way that in our waking world we cannot decide the outcomes of our actions, only our actions themselves, likewise within the imagined worlds of **The Elf Game**, we can only control the

Characters we inhabit. It is the Referee's role to imagine the results of actions, the nature of places traveled to, and so on.

Included with this Rules Scroll are Character Record Scrolls. We hope that the use of these items is self-evident by their design. In the case that we have failed in this regard, a brief explanation follows.

The details of a given Character's Ability Scores and Combat Scores should be recorded on the Scroll, as well their name, and any pertinent information about them which is important to remember, such as knowledge they possess, for example, or the names of people they know, or perhaps their physical or personality features. The events of their life may be recorded on the back of the Scroll; it has been left intentionally blank for this purpose. Most, if not all, of this should be events which occur during gameplay, and not those imagined to have taken place prior, as each new Character is, at 0th Level, supposed to be relatively inexperienced, and new to the World.

The other Scroll included with each Character Record Scroll is an Equipment Scroll. These Scrolls can be used when keeping track of a Character's possessions. On one side is a diagram of a typical Elf, with spaces for the various places around the body items may be worn. There is also space included to write the possessions that are hidden in pockets, pouches, purses, etc.

On the other side is a picture of a backpack, though it should not be taken to imply that the items delineated thereon are necessarily *in a backpack*. This side of the Scroll is for those possessions which a Character owns but are not on their person. This could include in a backpack while traveling, or in a Character's home, or any variation in between.

There are also circumstances in Combat and other situations where the Referee will decide that one or more Characters has some sort of upper-hand over other Characters. In these cases, it is likely, though not necessarily true, that the Referee will grant an Adjustment to a Roll or Score.

In this game, we aim to help others. Sometimes, that help is defensive. Sometimes, it is charitable. It is usually benevolence, and it is *always* kindness. **This game is not for Evil deeds, nor for Evil People.**

The only other piece of gaming advice we have for you here is that you should keep strict record of Characters' supplies and belongings. When exploring dangerous places, perhaps calculate their usage every Turn, or every 10 Turns (roughly 1 minute), or every 600 (1 hour). Every day that passes in the game world, a day's worth of food should be consumed, and a day's worth of firewood. Water must be brought up from the well, and boiled for safety. Grain must be farmed, and milled, and baked before there is bread. A Torch only lights the way for so long before it is gone. When you've fired an Arrow, it is no longer in your Quiver. When you've used up all your healing Herbs, what then will you do if injured?

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? orselfgame@gmail.com for inquiries.

הלום ער אלטראויזם

Helping Others is How We Survive.