Dark Realms
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Welcome to the DARK REALMS, a fantastic land of knights and castles, where journeys are dangerous and dangers lurk in the dark, where priests perform miracles and alchemists command the powers of magic.

These lands are chaotic and violent. The roads and even the streets of cities are unsafe. Justice is uncertain. Bribery and corruption has tainted clergy. Nobles struggle for land, power, wealth and influence and the darkest fears of the people are real: Monstrosities lurk in the dark, abominations infest the underground and make their way to the surface, sorcerers and witches ensnare the unwary and diabolical cults work for the very destruction of the world.

DARK REALMS is based on a real time and place: The Holy Roman Empire of German Nation of the 15th century, an agglomerate of states, cultures and ethnicities stretching from Burgundy to Bohemia, from Schleswig to Italy. There is an important difference between the historical Empire and that of DARK REALMS, though. This is before the Age of Enlightenment and the dawn of modern science and logic. People are superstitious. Popular believes and myths are widespread. If there is something supernatural that people thought as real, it probably is real in the world of DARK REALMS.

DARK REALMS is tabletop pen-and-paper fantasy roleplaying game. In DARK REALMS, each player controls a player character through which he explores the game world. Apart from the players, there is also the game master who runs said game world: He controls non-player characters and other creatures and sets up the whole adventure.

All you need to play DARK REALMS is a is this rule book, three six-sided dice (ideally three for each player and the game master), paper, pencils and a lot of imagination. If you would like to use the optional random tables, you need a d100 as well. With that, you are ready to travel through the Empire, perform heroic deeds, gather wealth and fame - or die trying to confront the darkness that threatens the Empire and its inhabitants.
Character Creation

In DARK REALMS, every player controls a player character. Through this character, a player acts and explores the game world. DARK REALMS characters are intended to be young adventurers seeking glory and fighting against the darkness that has befallen the Empire. However, it is ultimately up to the game master and the rest of the group to decide what kind of game they want to play with what kind of characters. Character creation is divided into a number of steps:

Background
A character’s family background shows where that character was born; whether he is from a family of rich merchants, a noble house or merely the child of peasants. Each background comes with a certain benefit.

Occupation
A character’s occupation indicates what he does in life, whether he is a knight or peasant, a priest or a burglar. An occupation grants a character certain skills - includes skills not every character has access too.

Attributes
Seven attributes define a character’s strength in body and mind: Strength, constitution, dexterity, agility, intelligence, wisdom and charisma. These attributes indicates how good (or bad) a character is at accomplishing tasks, be it talking his way past a guard, defeating someone in combat, bargaining with a merchant or picking a lock. Attributes are bought with generation points during character creation.

Skills
Skills are abilities and professional skills based on an character’s background, education and occupation. There are three sets of skills: Common and advanced skills. Every character has access to the same set of common skills, but advanced skills require training. Mechanically, both skill types work the same, though.

Equipment
Before the adventure starts, all characters need a little bit of starting equipment. This equipment can be bought from a character’s starting money. Some character will start with some equipment due to their profession or background.

Name, Gender and Appearance
A character's name, gender and physical appearance are chosen by the player. They have no mechanical impact on the game - female and male characters are equally capable.

All this information can be summoned up on a character sheet. A blank character sheet can be found at the end of this book.
Backgrounds

A character's family background shows where a character was raised and the social class his parents belong to. Each background grants a character certain benefits and adds some flavour. Coming from a certain social layer does not mean that the character remained there, though.

Nobility
You are the son or daughter of a nobleman. While you are not the heir (this is the right of your older siblings), you know wealth, privilege and power. However, the Empire's nobility is in decline: Wealthy citizens gain political power, mercenaries replace knights on the battlefield and more than one aristocrat is a robber baron nowadays.

Benefit: You have the Advantage on *Etiquette* checks. Other nobles who know you will offer you hospitality.

Townsfolk
Not everyone who lives in a city is a citizen - far from it. Most people are merely inhabitants, whereas political powers lies with townsfolk with citizenship that elects the members of the city council. Your family is comparably wealthy and you had education few commoners have access to.

Benefit: You have Advantage on *Lore* checks. Patricians, merchants and other townsfolk will associate with you.

Craftspeople
Your family might lack blue blood, but it does not lack talent: Your are form a family of craftspeople; not patricians, but better off than some others.

Benefit: You have Advantage on *Craft* checks and gain proficiency in a Craft of your choice.

Urban Commoners
Not everybody who lives in the city is privileged. Your family has neither money nor political power and is probably depended on others. However, people like you know their way around in cities.

Benefit: You have Advantage on *Streetwise* checks. Common townspeople are more likely to be friendly to you.

Rural Commoners
The majority of the Empire's inhabitants live on the countryside. They live in small communities and, if they are peasants, often serve a nobleman. Your family lives a simple life and the way up is stony.

Benefit: You have Advantage on *Athletics* checks and are welcome among others of your status.
Character's occupation shows what he was trained in and what he does in life. An occupation grants a character bonuses to common and advanced skills and sometimes a special benefit.

**Anatomist**

You are trained in the art of medicine and are well-acquainted with physiology and the human body. Your profession is a clean one. Unlike barbers and quacks, you spend your time with tomes of knowledge and skeletons, not with disease-ridden commoners. However, you occasionally work as a medical consultant or treat patients of higher status.

**Skills:** Lore +2, Etiquette +1, Medicine +2, Language (Script) +2, Language (Old) +1

**Benefit:** Advantage on Medicine checks

**Equipment:** Dagger, scalpel, textbook

**Money:** 2d6 Thaler

**Barber-Surgeon**

You are a practical surgeon. Everything from cutting off hair to cutting off limbs fall under your area of expertise. Unlike those who call themselves physicians, you do not fear blood, guts and rotten teeth. The work a barber-surgeon does may be less prestigious, but at least you are there when someone needs help - and often gone after you helped them.

**Skills:** Artifice +2, Insight +2, Medicine +2, Language (Spoken) +1, Short Blade +1

**Benefit:** Advantage on Medicine checks

**Equipment:** Dagger, surgeon's tools

**Money:** 1d6 Thaler

**Knight**

You are a mounted warrior, trained with lance and sword. Bravery, strength and courtesy are what you live for - at least ideally spoken. In truth, knights and their ideals are in decline, threatened by the harsh reality of a battlefield full of organised footsoldiers. Nevertheless, knights are still feared and respected among the common folks.

**Skills:** Ride +2, Etiquette +1, Language (Script) +1, Long Blade +2, Polearm +1

**Benefit:** +2 hit points
**Swindler**

You are a trickster, liar and artist. Nobody knows that, of course. Instead, people think you are a respected merchant, a simple beggar or a pilgrim - whatever the situation demands. You live a risky life, but as long as they do not catch you, it will be worth it.

**Skills:** Artifice +1, Insight +2, Persuasion +2, Streetwise +2, Language (Spoken) +2, Short Blade +1

**Benefit:** Advantage on *Persuasion* checks

**Equipment:** Dagger, fake clothes

**Money:** 2d6 Thaler

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**Thief**

Your survive by taking what belongs to others, be it food, clothes or coin. The city is your home. Unlike the countryside, the crow protects you unknowingly and traders bring in a steady flow of things worth taking.

**Skills:** Acrobatics +2, Artifice +2, Stealth +2, Streetwise +2, Short Blade +2, Thrown Weapon +1

**Benefit:** Advantage on *Artifice* checks

**Equipment:** Dagger, thief's tools

**Money:** 1d6 Thaler
Attributes

Seven attributes how physically and mentally capable a character is: Strength, dexterity, constitution, agility, intelligence, wisdom and charisma. Attributes are applied to a number of factors like attacks rolls or skill checks.

Strength
Strength indicates a character's muscle power and is added to attack rolls with heavy mêlée weapons.

Constitution
Constitution describes a character's vitality and stamina. A high Constitution score allows a character and resist poison and diseases. Each point of Constitution is added to a character's base three hit points, allowing him to survive more wounds.

Dexterity
Dexterity shows how nimble a character is. Dexterous characters are good at delicate tasks. Dexterity is added to attacks with ranged weapons.

Agility
Agility represents reflexes and speed. Agile characters act first in combat and are good at acrobatics. Agility is added to initiative rolls.

Intelligence
Intelligence indicates a character's ability to learn and rationalise. It does not represent wit as much as it does academic knowledge and analytic capabilities. A high Intelligence score is important for alchemists.

Wisdom
Wisdom is an abstract representation of a character's willpower and spiritual strength. Characters with a high Wisdom score are sane people with a strong connection to their patron saints.

Charisma
Charisma represents a character's strength of personality and presence. It is not a measure of looks or comeliness. A high Charisma score allows a character to inspire others and resolve potential combat situations with words.

Attribute Generation
When a new character is created, all his attributes are at 0 and he has 30 attribute points to spread among them. Raising an attribute to +1 costs one point. Raising it to a higher value costs points equal to that value plus the points needed to buy all values below it. Thus, raising an attribute to +3 costs six points: One to buy the +1 bonus, two to buy the +2 and an additional three to get to +3.
A lowest attribute value is +1. The highest attribute value a character can start with is +5. This indicates that the attribute is truly exceptional. Investing that much into a single attribute means neglecting a few others, though. Most characters will be better off with a balanced array of attribute values.

**Leftover Attribute Points**
When a character has attribute points left that cannot be invested in any of his scores (because raising another score would cost more points than he has left), those points are not lost. For every attribute point left, a character gains two additional skill points to purchase his initial skills.
Skills

Skills define what a character can do and how good he is at doing it. Like attributes, skills have ranks from 0 to +5. A skill value is added to rolls related to the skill. There are two types of skills: Common and advanced skills. Every skill is tied to an attribute. If a skill has more than one attribute, the game master decides which attribute applies for a specific situation.

Advanced skills require a certain amount of training. With a few exceptions, all characters can still use advanced skills. However, characters that do not have any ranks in an advanced skill have Disadvantage on checks for that skill. If a character does have ranks in an advanced skill, the check is identical to a common skill check.

**Polyglot Alchemists?**

At the game master discretion, certain advanced skills can only be used if the character had training or has ranks in the skills. This is mostly relevant for skills such as alchemy, craft and languages.

Weapon skills are advanced skills: Not being proficient with a weapon means that a character who it anyway attacks with Disadvantage. A weapon skill always applies to a category of weapon, like impact weapons or devices, not just a single weapon. Weapons are detailed in the chapter on equipment, not in this chapter.

**Acquiring Skills**

Each occupation provides a character with a couple of skills. In addition to that, each new character has 15 skill points to buy skills. Buying skills works just like buying attributes does with each rank becoming increasingly more expensive. Characters can freely invest in common skills. When a character wants to gain a rank in an advanced skill and he currently has no ranks in that skill, he needs to invest three skill points initially to gain a +1 rank in that skills. After that, new ranks are gained at the usual cost. Characters can gain additional skills and skill ranks later in their career when they have gained experience.

### Table 1: Common Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acrobatics</td>
<td>AGI, DEX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifice</td>
<td>DEX, INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>STR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive</td>
<td>DEX, WIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insight</td>
<td>INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td>STR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lore</td>
<td>INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>WIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion</td>
<td>CHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ride</td>
<td>DEX, WIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealth</td>
<td>AGI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common Skills

**Acrobatics** (AGI, DEX)
Acrobatics allow to jump down from a roof without hurting oneself, swing across a room on a chandelier or perform similar tasks that require balance and coordination.

**Artifice** (DEX, INT)
This skill covers tasks that require aptitude and steady hands, such as picking pockets and locks or handling mechanisms.

**Athletics** (STR, CON)
Unlike acrobatics, athletics cover tasks that require physical strength and endurance rather than balance. This includes swimming, escaping a grasp or climbing.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Weapons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Axe</td>
<td>STR</td>
<td>Battleaxe, Hand Axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow</td>
<td>DEX</td>
<td>Bow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flail</td>
<td>STR</td>
<td>Great Flail, Military Flail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact Weapon</td>
<td>STR</td>
<td>Great Mace, Mace, Military Hammer, Warhammer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Blade</td>
<td>STR</td>
<td>Longsword, Zweihänder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missile Device</td>
<td>DEX</td>
<td>Arbalest, Brass Gun, Crossbow, Iron Gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polearm</td>
<td>STR</td>
<td>Halberd, Spear, Pike, Quarterstaff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Blade</td>
<td>STR, DEX</td>
<td>Dagger, Short Sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrown Weapon</td>
<td>DEX</td>
<td>Dagger, Hand Axe, Spear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Drive** (DEX, WIS)
The driving skill is needed to use common land vehicles such as a carriage or an ox cart.

**Insight** (INT)
Insight allows to read body language, determine whether or not they are lying and what their motives are.

**Intimidation** (STR)
Intimidation is used to scare others and push them around. Unlike persuasion, intimidation is based on physical presence rather than psychological pressure.

**Lore** (INT)
Lore covers common knowledge about general topics that are not supernatural. Common knowledge does not always equal truth, though.

**Perception** (WIS)
Perception describes the ability to perceive things, usually by sight or sound. This ability is used to notice an ambush, detect a trap or discover some who is hiding.

**Persuasion** (CHA)
This skill is used to influence others and change their attitude and behaviour - often for personal gain.

**Ride** (DEX, WIS)
The riding skill is used to mount and control horses and similar animals. It is also important for jousting tournaments.
**Table 3: Advanced Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alchemy</td>
<td>DEX, INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcana</td>
<td>INT, WIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boatmanship</td>
<td>AGI, CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft</td>
<td>STR, DEX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>CHA, INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etiquette</td>
<td>CHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language, Old</td>
<td>INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language, Script</td>
<td>INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language, Spoken</td>
<td>CHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>DEX, INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>CHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>WIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streetwise</td>
<td>CHA, INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swim</td>
<td>STR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwise</td>
<td>WIS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stealth** (AGI)
Stealth is used to move unnoticed, hide from others or sneak past a group of guards.

**Advanced Skills**

**Alchemy** (DEX, INT)
Alchemy is the art of the magical transmutation of matter. This includes brewing potions, making poison and other alchemical substances such as Arabian fire.

**Arcana** (INT, WIS)
Arcana covers knowledge of the supernatural. This includes sorcery, witchcraft and fantastic creatures such as dragons or werewolves.

**Boatmanship** (AGI, CON)
Boatmanship allows a character to handle boats and other water vehicles.

**Craft** (STR, DEX)
The craft skills allows a character to produce and maintain certain goods. This skill can be taken multiple times for different crafts such as blacksmithing, carpentry, leatherwork or baking. How differentiated those crafts have to be is up to the game master. Ranks in different crafts have to be bought separately.
Commerce (CHA, INT)
The commerce skill encompasses determining the right price for goods, bargaining with merchants, knowledge of the market and more.

Etiquette (CHA)
A character with the etiquette skill knows how to greet people of status properly, how to act at the court or how to identify the insignia nobles. Less important for commoners, knowledge of etiquette is essential for the rich and powerful.

Language, Old (INT)
This skill covers old languages like Latin or archaic Greek. Latin is still actively spoken by the member of the Church and scholars. Knowledge of such languages also helps to decipher manuscripts and scientific texts.

Language, Script (INT)
Being able to speak a language does not automatically mean that one can write it too. Few people can read and write properly. This skill allows a character to read and write a language provided he can already speak it.

Language, Spoken (CHA)
This skill allows a character to speak a contemporary language such as High German, Low German, French, Italian or Czech. However, regional differences and local dialects can make it difficult to communicate with people far from home even if a character is proficient in a language.

Law (INT)
The law skill covers knowledge of the juridical system, makes it easier to understand local laws and helps to interpret fine points of a contract.

Medicine (DEX, INT)
Knowledge of medicine is essential to treat wounds, diagnose diseases and help to cure infections.

Performance (CHA)
The performance skills covers entertaining others, be it with music, singing, dancing or jugglery.

Philosophy (WIS)
Philosophy is the study of reality, existence and knowledge. Utterly alien for simple people, philosophy is considered an
important academic subject. It helps characters to understand academic texts and deal with scholars.

**Religion** (INT)
The religion skills encompasses knowledge of God and the Church, other cults, religious ceremonies, holidays and saints.

**Streetwise** (CHA, INT)
Being streetwise enables a character to gather information, sense who is pulling the strings behind the curtains and to avoid getting into trouble. This skill is mostly used in an urban environment.

**Swim** (STR)
Not everybody is a natural swimmer. Swimming allows a character to stay afloat, carry someone else while in the water and judge whether or not is would be a good idea to try to swim through a river.

**Woodwise** (WIS)
Woodwise is essential for survival in the wilderness and helps to improvise shelter, make a fire or judge which plants are edible and which are not.
No adventurer should travel without weapons and armour. Weapons are not only useful for self-defence, but can help to avoid violent conflicts altogether. Quality equipment is hard to come by, though, and can not be bought in every city.

**Weapon Traits**

Every weapon has one or more traits that make it a little different (but not necessarily better) than other weapons. Because of these differences, the seasoned adventurer often has more than one weapon on his person.

**Anti-cavalry**

An anti-cavalry weapon is especially effective against mounted enemies. If used against a horse, the attacker has Advantage on his attack roll.

**Defender**

A weapon with this well-suited to parry strikes and grants its wielder a +1 defence roll bonus.

**Destructive**

Hit by this weapon are especially devastating. The attacker rolls critical hits not only with a roll of two sixes, but also with rolling a five and a six.

**Dismount**

This weapon is build to lift riders out of the saddle. When hit by such a weapon, a mounted opponent has to make a DC 9 *Ride* check or will be dismounted and fall *prone*. If the attacker scores a critical hit, the rider is automatically thrown out of the saddle.

### Table 4: Ranged Weapons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>Price (Thaler)</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbalest</td>
<td>Missile Device</td>
<td>Slow, two-handed</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axe, Hand</td>
<td>Thrown Weapon</td>
<td>Versatile</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow</td>
<td>Bow</td>
<td>Two-handed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossbow</td>
<td>Missile Device</td>
<td>Slow, two-handed</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagger</td>
<td>Thrown Weapon</td>
<td>Versatile</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun, Brass</td>
<td>Missile Device</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun, Iron</td>
<td>Missile Device</td>
<td>Slow, two-handed</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spear</td>
<td>Thrown Weapon</td>
<td>Versatile</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: Mêlée Weapons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>Price (Thaler)</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Axe, Battle</td>
<td>Axe</td>
<td>Destructive, two-handed</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axe, Hand</td>
<td>Axe</td>
<td>Versatile</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagger</td>
<td>Short Blade</td>
<td>Light, versatile</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flail, Great</td>
<td>Flail</td>
<td>Flexible, two-handed</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flail, Military</td>
<td>Flail</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halberd</td>
<td>Polearm</td>
<td>Dismount, reach, two-handed</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammer, Military</td>
<td>Impact Weapon</td>
<td>Mounted Combat</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammer, War</td>
<td>Impact Weapon</td>
<td>Destructive, two-handed</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance</td>
<td>Polearm</td>
<td>Jousting, Mounted Combat</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mace</td>
<td>Impact Weapon</td>
<td>Destructive</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pike</td>
<td>Polearm</td>
<td>Anti-cavalry, reach, two-handed</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterstaff</td>
<td>Polearm</td>
<td>Nonlethal, defender, two-handed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spear</td>
<td>Polearm</td>
<td>Reach, versatile</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sword, Long</td>
<td>Long Blade</td>
<td>Defender</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sword, Short</td>
<td>Short Blade</td>
<td>Light, Versatile</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sword, Zweihänder</td>
<td>Long Blade</td>
<td>Destructive, two-handed</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Flexible**

Chain weapon have this trait. Due to their unique design, they ignore an opponent's shield.

**Jousting**

This weapon can be used a jousting weapon. If used during a tournament, its user adds his *Ride* skill to his skill check.

**Light**

Light weapons can be used with either STR or DEX.

**Mounted Combat**

This weapon is often use by mounted warriors. If used against an opponent who himself is not a rider, its grants its wielder Advantage on attack rolls.

**Nonlethal**

Anyone who uses this weapon can deal lethal or nonlethal damage at will.

**Reach**

Long weapons like polearms have reach and can be used from the second row.
### Table 6: Armour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Armour</th>
<th>Defence Bonus</th>
<th>Max. Agility Bonus</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Price (Thaler)</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brigandine</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuir Bouilli</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Slow**
Ranged weapon that require one round between each shot to be reloaded have this trait.

**Two-handed**
To use this weapon, the wielder needs both hands and can thus not combine it with a shield.

**Versatile**
Versatile weapons can be used for both mêlée and ranged combat.

**Equipment Quality**
Not all items an adventurer gets hold of will have the same quality. Especially well-made weapons will grant the user a bonus to attack rolls. Quality armour grants additional protection. Likewise, low-quality or old equipment imposes a penalty to the user's weapon skill or defence bonus. However, weapons and armour never reduce the defence or weapon skill bonus to a negative value, no matter how low their quality is.

Equipment of high quality cannot be bought everywhere. Many master blacksmiths make only few such items and they are often special orders from wealthy customers.

**Increase and Decrease of Quality**
A piece of equipment that drops below two negative points of quality falls into pieces and cannot be repaired (though the material can sometimes be used to make a completely new item). Equipment drops in quality under certain circumstances; it can damaged in combat or hit by an alchemical substance. Equipment can be repaired. Brining back a point of quality this way costs about half the item’s original price.

### Table 7: Equipment Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Bonus</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rusty or rotten</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>200%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>500%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masterwork</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>1000%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Increasing the item’s quality beyond its original quality costs at least the item's original price. Improving weapons and armour is difficult, takes time and can only be done by experienced and talented armourers. As a general rule, non-metal armour is easier to repair than metal armour.
Adventuring

Once everyone has created a player character, the adventure can start. From this point on, the game master and to a certain extend the player have all the power and can determine what happens. The players decide what their characters do and the game master decides how the non-player characters, monsters and the environment react.

Experience Progression
Over the course of their adventures, the party will defeat enemies, slay monstrosities, find treasure and cheat death more than once. The reward for this (apart from treasure and fun) are skills points. How frequently and how many skill points are awarded is up to the game master. Skill points awarded mid-game can be saved for later. This way, player will not be frustrated and feel forced invest their points so that no point is wasted.

Sudden Philosophers?
At the game master's discretion, characters have to attempt to use a skill a couple of times or receive training before they can active a new advanced skill. Likewise, the game master may decide that acquiring new skill ranks is only possible during downtime and not while a character is hanging on a cliff and getting ranks in Athletics looks like a good idea.

Skill and Attribute Checks
The core mechanic used for DARK REALMS is based on a 2d6 roll, a roll with two six-sided dice. Whenever a character actively or passively attempts to do something, the character's player rolls 2d6. Any relevant bonuses or penalties are added. These are usually bonuses from an attribute relevant to the check (e.g. DEX when a character tries to pick a lock) and situational modifiers (e.g. when the character has a set of lockpicks). The final score - dice roll and modifiers added together - has to beat the task's difficulty class (DC). The difficulty class indicates how difficult the task is and is determined by the game master. The table below can be used as a guideline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8: Difficulty Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty of the Task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impossible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legendary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some task (notably DC 12 or higher) can be so difficult that a character without high attributes or skill ranks can never make them.
Opposed Checks
Some checks do not have a DC. Instead, they are checks of two characters who try to achieve opposing goals, like an attacker trying to hit a defender or a burglar trying to hide from a guardsman trying to spot him. In this case, both parties make their roll and the one with the higher result wins. If the guardsman has the higher result on his *Perception* check, he spots the burglar. If the burglar has the higher result on his *Stealth* check, he successfully hides. If both results are the same, the situation remains unchanged: The burglar has not been discovered yet but the guardsman will remain suspicious.

Attribute Checks
An attribute check tests a character’s mental and physical capabilities but is not tied to a skill. The character adds the attribute value of the attribute to his roll and nothing else.

Group Checks
A group check is a check made by one character for the entire group. If, for example, an agile character makes a successful *Stealth* check, it is assumed that he coordinates the rest of the group and gets everybody past the guards. Alternatively (if the game master rules that everybody's effort is required to the task), a successful check grants everybody else Advantage for their roll.

Critical Rolls
Critical rolls for skill and attribute checks work like critical rolls for attack and defence checks: A roll of two sixes means that the character has succeeded critically, a roll of two ones indicates a fumble. Whether this has any additional consequences and what exactly happens is up to the game master.

Advantage and Disadvantage
When a character has Advantage on a check, he rolls 3d6 instead of 2d6 and takes the two best rolls. When he has Disadvantage on a check, he also rolls 3d6 and takes the two lowest rolls. This Advantage/Disadvantage system is a simple mechanic.

Some character have Advantage or Disadvantage on certain rolls due to their background or their occupation. In addition to that, the game master decides whether or not a character has Advantage or Disadvantage in a specific situation (e.g. a character with an injured hand trying to climb a tree has the Disadvantage). This is based on what the character can do, not how difficult the task is. The difficulty of the task determines the DC and is the same for all character, independently from their skill.

A character either Advantage or Disadvantage or does not have it. Having either one multiple times due to different factors does not grant extra bonuses. When a character has both Advantage and Disadvantage on the same check, the check is made with the usual 2d6 roll.
**Encumbrance**

Every character can carry six plus his STR units of weight. For every additional unit, one point is subtracted from the character's AGI and he suffers appropriate drawbacks (like Disadvantage to checks). A character's AGI cannot drop below +0, but a character carrying twice the weight he can haul without suffering penalties cannot move at all.

---

**A Myriad of Daggers!**

Some items have no designated weight: They are too light and taking their weight into account would just result in additional bookkeeping. That does not mean that character can carry an unlimited number of light items. Be reasonable.

---

**Rest and Healing**

When a wounded character has shelter, enough food and drink and eight hours of sleep with no major interruptions, he can heal a wound. The healing check is a DC 5 CON check. If the check is made, the character heals one wound. For each hit point a character has lost, the DC is increased by one.

Additional wounds can be healed with a *Medicine* check. A successful DC 7 *Medicine* check heals one wound, but only a single wound per character per day can be healed this way. If the check is not successful, the healer can make a second attempt. However, the wounded character will suffer an additional wound if this attempt fails too. A third attempt cannot be made (until the next day, that is). When a healer tries to treat his own wounds, the *Medicine* check is made at Disadvantage.
Not all conflicts can be solved with words and the moment where steel needs to be drawn will come. In its core, combat consists of nothing more than opposed skill checks: Your ability against that of the enemy. However, as explain below, there is a little more to combat than just that.

**Combat Rounds**
Combat is divided into rounds. Rounds are handled in an abstract manner, but it can be assumed that they last just a couple of seconds. During a round, a character can take a number of actions:

**Free Action**
Each character has one free action per round. A free action is used to perform tasks that only take a small amount of time or can be performed in addition to other tasks. Free actions include drawing a weapon, drinking (but not searching for) a potion or doing a passive skill check (like an Insight or Perception check).

**Standard Action**
A character has two standard actions per round. A standard action takes a little longer than a free action and can be used to make an active skill check, move further than usual or pick up a weapon.

**Full Action**
Instead of taking two standard actions, a character can also take a full action. A full action is something that takes relatively long, like making an attack, searching for an item in your rucksack or mounting a horse. A full action always includes movement (unless a character does not want to move).

**Initiative**
The order in which combatants act in a fight is determined by initiative. At the beginning of the fight, each combatant rolls 2d6 and adds his Agility. The character with the highest number acts first. If two characters have the same initiative, the one with the higher Agility acts first. If their Agility is equal too, they roll off against each other to determine who goes first. To quicken things a little bit, the game master can roll a single initiative for all opponents.

**Surprise**
When one side in a fight surprises another one, initiative is rolled as usual, but everybody on the side that surprised their opponents gets an additional full action. After this surprise round is over, the fight continues as usual.
**Combat Actions**

**Attacking**
When a combatant attacks someone else, he rolls 2d6 and adds his skill bonus and his attribute bonus. The defender rolls 2d6 and adds his agility as well as bonuses granted by his equipment. Then both results are compared. If the defender's total value is higher, the attack is not successful. If the attacker's value is higher or if the values are equal, the attack is successful and the defender suffers a wound.

**Attacks of Opportunity**
Attacks of opportunity are free attacks that do not cost any actions. A combatant can make such an attack when his opponent disengages from mêlée without taking a full action to do so, runs directly past him or in similar situations.

**Blocking Attacks**
When a combatant is hit and would suffer a wound, he can decide to block the blow with his armour or shield. If he does so, the combatant does not suffer a wound. However, the defence bonus of the armour or shield will be reduced by one point.

**Damaging Armour**
Instead of dealing a wound, a successful attacker can also damage the opponents armour or shield. If he does so, the defence bonus of the armour is reduces by one. If it is reduced to zero, the armour crumbles and becomes unusable. Only weapons based on Strength can damage armour.

**Disengaging**
When combatant takes a full action to disengage from mêlée combat, he can do so without repercussion. Disengaging with a standard action provokes an attack of opportunity.

**Grappling**
To grapple an opponent, the attacker has to make an unarmed attack. If the attack is successful, the opponent is grabbed and incapacitated. Once per round, the victim can try to break free by making an unarmed attack himself. If the attack is successful, the opponent breaks free. This attack is rolled against an unarmed attack of the grappler.

**Superior Numbers**
If a combatant is engaged in mêlée combat by more than one opponent, his opponents receive a +1 bonus to their
attack rolls for every attacker in the front row after the second.

**Unarmed Combat**

Unarmed attacks work like attacks made with weapons. The attacker applies his STR to the attack roll. An unarmed attack (which represents a kick or hit with a fist) deals a nonlethal point of damage. When the opponent has a weapon, he can make an attack of opportunity after the unarmed attack. The rules for unarmed attacks do not apply to monsters that use a natural weapon, like a horn or a bite. Those attack deal actual wounds.

**Movement and Distances**

Movement and distances in *DARK REALMS* are handled in an abstract manner. Generally, characters who take a standard action to move advance further than those who take a full action and move. Those who take both their standard actions to move more even further. The game master decides whether or not can reach a destination in their turn and if a ranged weapon can reach its target.

**Critical Rolls**

When an attack roll is made and the attacker rolls two sixes, he scored a critical hit. A critical hit automatically hits. If the attack is a mêlée attack, the attacker rolls 2d6 to see what addition effect the attack has:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2d6</th>
<th>Effect on the Defender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Suffers an additional wound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Armour is destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Sickened</em> for 1d6 rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Blinded</em> for 1d6 rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Weapon loses a quality point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Armour loses a quality point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Shield loses a quality point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><em>Incapacitated</em> for 1d6 rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shield is destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Weapon is destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Opponent is slain outright</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a critical hit affects the opponent’s weapon even though he does not have one, his shield is hit instead. If he does not have shield either, the armour is hit. If the enemy has either weapon, shield nor armour or is an animal or other creature that does not use equipment, the attack simply deals an additional wound.
A critical fumble happens when the attacker rolls two ones. Analogous to a critical hit, the attack automatically misses and rolls 2d6 to see what other effect the fumble has on him:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2d6</th>
<th>Effect on the Attacker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Weapon destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weapon loses a quality point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fails next defence roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Sickened</em> for 1d6 rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>Falls prone</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Weapon dropped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Wounds nearby ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><em>Blinded</em> for 1d6 rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Suffers an attack of opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Shield loses a quality point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Suffers a wound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Critical Fumble

If the attacker hits a nearby ally, the ally is determined randomly. Bystander and neutral combatants count as allies for the purpose of fumbling. If no other ally is nearby that could be hit, the attacker drops his weapon instead.

If the defender rolls two sixes, he automatically blocks the attack. If he fumbles, the attacker automatically hits.

**Damage and Death**

Characters have three hit points (HP) plus one for every point of Constitution they have. Hit points are an abstract representation of the ability of a creature to avoid being killed. When a character has no hit points left, he has to make a DC 9 **CON** check. If he succeeds, he is left with no hit points and will stay unconscious until he recovers at least one hit point. If the character fails the check, he dies. If an unconscious character with no hit points is successfully attacked, he dies.

**Nonlethal Damage**

Most weapons and hazards deal actual wounds. Some of them (like the quarterstaff) can also deal nonlethal damage. Nonlethal damage can take a character out, but will not kill him by itself. If nonlethal and actual damage combined reduce a character to nought hit points, he falls unconscious. If the lethal damage alone reduces him to nought hit points, the character has accidentally been killed.

Some weapons (like the quarterstaff) can deal nonlethal damage at will. A combatant can deal nonlethal damage with other weapons at well, but any such attack is made...
with Disadvantage. Thrusting or piercing weapons like a spear or a longbow are not suitable for dealing nonlethal damage.

**Advantage and Disadvantage**
Advantage and Disadvantage works for attack and defence rolls just like it does for other checks. Attacks are usually made with Advantage when the target is attacked from behind, unaware of the attacker or is exposed in some other way. Likewise, attack roll are made with Disadvantage when the defender is in cover or moving quickly.

**Blinded**
A blinded creature cannot see can cannot use abilities based on sight. It makes attack and defence rolls with Disadvantage.

**Frightened**
A frightened creatures has Disadvantage on all checks while exposed to the source of its fear and cannot move closer to it willingly.

**Incapacitated**
An incapacitated creature cannot take actions with the exception of defence rolls. In addition to that, it automatically fails checks based on STR, DEX and AGI with the exception of attack rolls made to break free from being grappled.

**Paralysed**
A paralysed creature is incapacitated and additionally cannot make defence rolls.

**Prone**
A creature that is prone moves half as fast as usual. It has Disadvantage on attack rolls and cannot use bows. Mêlée attacks against a prone creature are made with Advantage, ranged attacks with Disadvantage.

**Sickened**
A sickened creature has Disadvantage on all checks. This effect also covers conditions like exhaustion or poisoning.

**Status Effects**
Some abilities, items or attacks cause a status effect. Most of these hinder player character and monsters in one way or another. Status effects can stack. If they cannot be combined, the most severe one applies.
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