

Pits & Perils IV:  
**The Divine Spark**

*Additional Rules for Role-Playing in a World of Medieval Fantasy*

by  
James & Robyn George



**W**ide  
house  
Rules

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Electronic Edition

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Dedicated heart and soul to Robyn;  
my lovely wife, collaborator, and co-conspirator,  
whose imagination and clever insights  
brought this expansion to its divine conclusion

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1	Expeditions.....	17
Playing Style.....	1	Dividing the Spoils.....	18
I. PLAYER RULES.....	3	IV. ENEMY RULES.....	19
Non-human Abilities.....	3	Assigning Enemy Hits.....	19
Class and Race.....	3	Enemy Revisions.....	19
Class Variants (Hermit)....	4	Angels.....	21
Class Variants (Militant)...	4	Avatars.....	21
Optional Equipment.....	6	Legends.....	28
Applying Bonus Hits.....	7	V. TREASURE RULES.....	31
Character Advancement.....	7	Magic and Literacy.....	31
Gods and Blessings.....	8	Useable Items by Class.....	31
Literacy.....	9	Artifacts.....	32
Non-human Skills.....	9	Preserving Balance.....	39
II. MAGIC RULES.....	10	Holy Relics.....	41
Spell Descriptions.....	10	VI. CAMPAIGN RULES.....	43
Spell Revisions.....	12	Strongholds.....	44
Reincarnation.....	13	Non-human Clerics.....	46
III. GAME RULES.....	14	Other Worlds.....	46
Playing War-style.....	14	Off-World Encounters.....	47
Situational Modifiers.....	14	Becoming a Legend.....	48
Combat Moves.....	15	Afterword.....	48

## INTRODUCTION

This is the latest expansion to the Pits & Perils role-playing game. As such, it requires the basic rulebook, although owning all supplements is highly encouraged to get the most out of this and any future offerings. Within its pages, the referee will find a wealth of exciting new content to challenge and reward their players, who should likewise benefit from a number of powerful new classes, spells, and magic items to win and wield..

Every attempt has been made to keep these expansions independent, for they were always mere suggestions for the referee to pick apart as suits their respective campaigns. But even the freshest milieu can grow stale, especially once its champions have gotten around, and the insertion of new enemies or magic items can dramatically alter the course of events and steer a campaign to new heights well worth the time it takes to read this book.

## PLAYING STYLES

The early hobby was a military simulation more than anything, albeit with magic and the monsters of legend. This quickly changed as players became invested in their characters and referees in the stories their campaign worlds made possible. Pits & Perils is more in line with the latter vision; even so, certain players may prefer the war-gaming approach, and this expansion makes room for two distinct play styles to sate any gaming taste:

ROLE-STYLE games are the rules as written. New characters have a buffer against sudden death, allowing them to survive beyond the first fight in the first room of a dungeon. Make no mistake, enemies quickly catch up, making strategy important to survival; but this play style lets them experience some of the setting before this happens. Adventures are unkind to the foolish or careless, and the referee is in the best position to test their mettle.

WAR-STYLE is closer to the hobby's origins. New characters are vulnerable from the start, taking play in a whole other direction. The prudent party avoids even a fair fight, preferring to strategize, seizing loot with minimal risk to life and limb (and even that might not be enough to survive their deadly adventures). Life is short (and sometimes cheap), and those who love this approach like its ever-present danger and strategic challenge...

Parties are more like an expedition to the Congo, with footmen, porters, and torch bearers cautiously braving the depths. Battles are skirmish affairs, with characters (each one a proxy for their respective players) maneuvering their forces to maximum tactical advantage. Magicians and other non-combatants avoid hostilities for the relative safety of the rear, contributing in other ways, for even war-games amount to more than mere fighting and thrive on teamwork.

This lethality is achieved by reducing the starting hits for all characters and henchmen, adding +1 hit/level up to 10th (15th for combatants):

CLASS*	HITS	HENCHMAN	HITS
Cleric	4	Archer	3
Dwarf	5	Footman	4
Elf	2	Guide	3
Fighter	6	Porter	2
Magician	1	Sage	1-3#
Thief	3	Torch bearer	1

\*Includes approved variants

#Or as magicians, where applicable

Armor adds bonus hits as usual, noting that this system can use either the original (play-style) combat tables or the (war-style) approach provided below, noting that the latter is especially deadly at low levels. Moreover, prudent players always designate an heir per *Infernal Realms* to inherit their wealth in the event of an untimely demise, a common fate under this style...

Finally, all are combatants (C) or non-combatants (NC), fighting on the war-style attack table with its greater lethality and faster battles:

COMBAT STATUS	COMBAT STATUS	ATTACK TABLE
Cleric --	Elf	NC 2d6 DAMAGE
-Hermit NC	-Elven fighter	C 2-7 0
-Militant C	Fighter	C 8-9 1
Dwarf C	Magician	NC 10-11 2*
-Hill dwarf NC	Thief	NC 12 3#

\*Maximum for non-combatants (porters, sages, torch bearers)

#Maximum damage for all others (enemies and henchmen)

Of course, the war-style is but one way to enjoy the rules which follow...



## I. PLAYER RULES

The following (completely optional) rules are added for the referee, including restructuring of the classes to better support new variants...

### NON-HUMAN ABILITIES

Anyone wishing to play a non-human character can roll (when not choosing) on the following table. Dwarves and elves are as varied and nuanced as humans, although with predispositions born of their physiology. The referee might also find this useful when generating non-players for their campaign:

2d6	DWARF	2d6	ELF
2-4	Intelligence	2	Constitution
5	Dexterity	3-6	Dexterity
6-8	Constitution	7	Wisdom
9	Wisdom	8-10	Intelligence
10-11	Charisma*	11	Charisma
12	Any 2 (choose)	12	Any 2 (choose)

\*Constitution; but charismatic to dwarves

Nothing in these tables is meant to imply that dwarves are less racially intelligent (for instance) or elves less hardy (although their slighter builds certainly make it more likely). Rather, it reflects the general adventuring sort and produces something more archetypical of their kind within a fantasy milieu. Bold players wishing to break the mold and stand apart can choose a defining ability, making waves as a truly unique adventurer...

### CLASS AND RACE

CLERICS of either type (explained below) may spend additional faith points to perform SPECIAL HEALINGS beyond the usual, provided the referee's game calls for grievous injuries. Resurrection is the highest form of this, although all manner of injuries can be reversed through faith in the gods:

SPECIAL HEALING	COST
Cure blindness/deafness	2
Regenerate lost limb	3
Bodily resurrection of the dead*	5

\*Or reincarnation for druids

Moreover, clerics are now divided into two distinct types: the spiritual HERMIT and battle-hardened MILITANT, each serving the gods in their own manner.

HERMITS (sometimes called contemplatives) explore the spiritual side of the faith, eschewing the ferocity of battle for a peaceful life performing miracles and winning converts. As such, they cannot employ armor (or shield) and may only fight with a simple staff in self-defense. Spiritual seekers, hermits get double faith points at every level these are obtained, making them superior healers who add +1 when turning the undead, noting that any 1st-level targets so rebuked crumble to dust for a personal experience point award.

#### CLASS VARIANTS (HERMIT)

DRUIDS are servants of an older, nature-based faith. They belong to the same order as those in the basic rulebook, but represent an adventuring faction endowed with unique abilities as befits their special calling. Alone among the priesthood, druids are always neutral, seeking harmony with nature and its vital (although often cruel) balance. But while nature is famously red of tooth and claw, these pagans are generally peaceful, cooperating with their peers, especially elves, who understand their mysterious path.

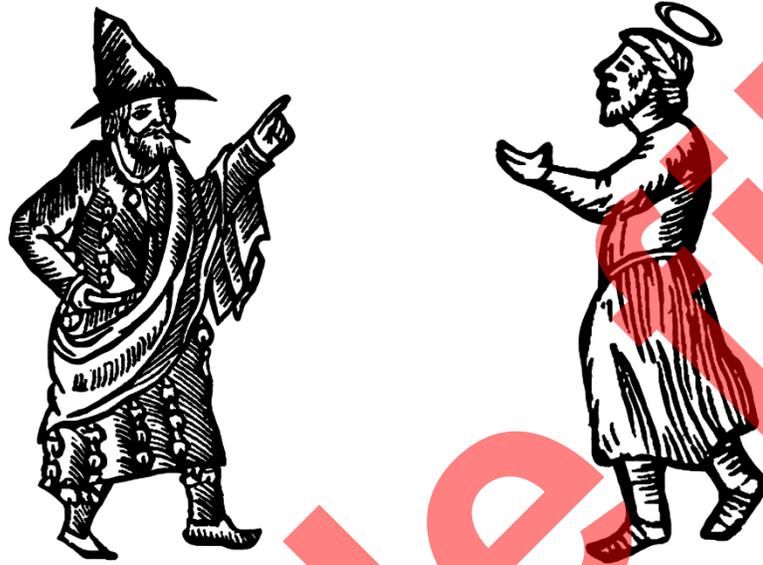
A hermit variant, druids cannot wear armor or shield, although they may use fighting staves when needed. Initiated into elder secrets, they perform an array of earthly magic: Ally, Cure, Form, Heal, Mist, Move, and Vine, having impressive powers like a magician. Instead of turning undead, druids repel wildlife similar to a Calm spell rolling saving dice, going unmolested through the wilderness they serve and protect. At 9th level (versifier), these pagan remnants can reincarnate their slain friends in animal form.

MILITANTS are the clerics of the basic rules, an order of fighting priests charged with defending the faithful. Their ability to wear armor makes them a formidable force, and their access to healing lets them function like combat medics on the front lines. While not so spiritually attuned, militants are the pummeling gauntlet of their chosen faith, going toe to toe with enemies and using strength to evangelize. Optionally, the referee can allow them the bash maneuver to better reflect their great fighting prowess.

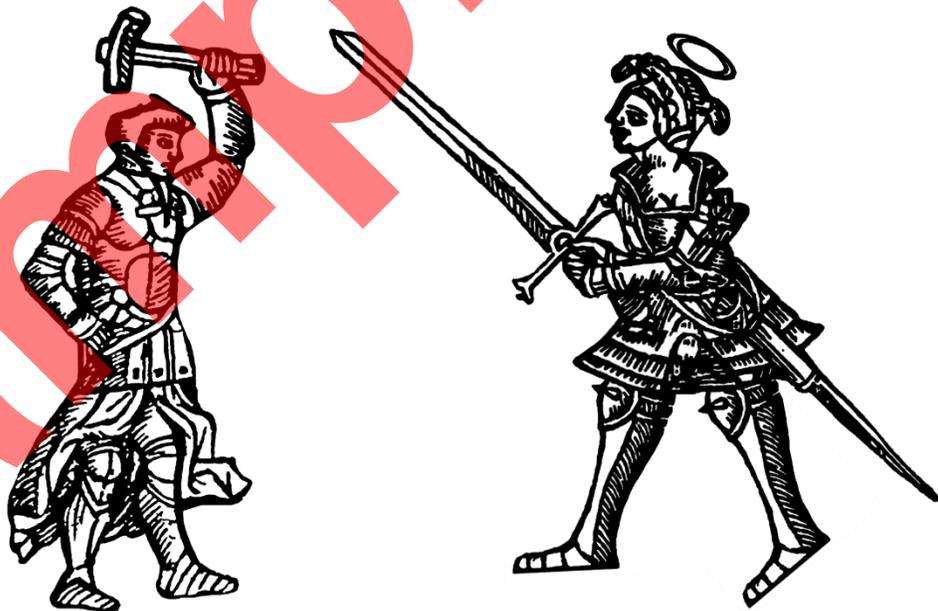
#### CLASS VARIANTS (MILITANT)

MONKS are a militant variant under the new classification system.

PALADINS are faithful knights; not quite clergy, but closely aligned with some religious order and sworn to protect the innocent. As their mission implies, these holy warriors can only be lawful. Any accidental deviation from their oath requires penance from a 9th-level cleric (often a quest), while deliberate acts of wickedness automatically make them common fighters beyond hope of future redemption. Sworn to humble service, paladins cannot possess wealth beyond that required for basic upkeep (usually 500 GP on their person).



HERMITS: DRUID (LEFT) AND CONTEMPLATIVE (RIGHT)



MILITANTS: CLERIC (LEFT) AND PALADIN (RIGHT)

As holy warriors, paladins can wear armor and shield and fight with any weapon, much like their fighting peers. Lacking a priestly vocation, miracles are limited to Cure and Heal (including special healing), allowing them to support their companions in more ways than one. Stalwart champions of light, they inspire their companions, adding +1 to party (and personal) initiative against evil foes and all personal dice against demons. At 9th level (cavalier), paladins get 2 melee attacks per combat round like their fighting peers.

DWARVES have new maneuvers to choose from; and while HILL DWARVES are non-combatants under the optional rules, this reflects their small size rather than any lack of fighting skill (and certainly not their courage).

ELVES (magicians) are also non-combatants owing mainly to their builds, wearing armor, summoning spells, and wielding effective weaponry against the deadliest of enemies. Their fighters benefit from new fighting moves.

FIGHTERS and their variants benefit both from their new combatant status, which translates to greater combat damage, and new moves as well.

MAGICIANS can choose from a number of new spells. Moreover, they know powerful COUNTERSPELLS. If some already known spell is used against them in or out of combat, the affected character rolls saving dice to cut its damage and/or duration by half (rounding up), deconstructing its magical powers.

THIEVES (but not corsairs) might be allowed to employ short bows, using their considerable stealth while striking from the cover of darkest shadow.

#### OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

The following special equipment is included for groups wishing to use it:

ARMOR	PROTECTION	COST	NOTES
Helm, leather	+1 vs. subdual	5	also against certain traps
Helm, iron	+2 vs. subdual	10	--
Shield, kite	medium (+2)	10	bonus hits, per the basic rules
Shield, Pavise	heavy (+3)	20	--

HELMETS normally come with the price of armor, doubtless contributing to its bonus hits. Here, these grant a bonus against subdual and/or to saving dice against traps targeting the head per the referee and conditions, etc.

KITE SHIELDS are ideal for mounted warriors, providing better coverage from horseback, although routinely used by footmen as well. The PAVISE is even larger, providing complete cover for archers and crossbowmen to reload against a volley of enemy missiles, although only when holding a single position.

## APPLYING BONUS HITS

For simplicity, any damage taken is subtracted from a character's basic hit points first. Should these fall to zero, they revert to a number of hits equal to their armor bonus in a rally. The armor and/or shield is damaged beyond further use until repaired at half its total value, although a Mend spell may also suffice to restore a single item (double SP for magic armor).

Suppose Otto (a 1st-level cleric) wears chainmail (+2) and shield (+1) for a total of 8/+3 hit points. Damage taken in battle is subtracted from the base value first, and only when this falls to zero do armor hits kick in. A battered Otto reverts to 3 hits (his armor bonus), noting that he could choose to sacrifice his armor, shield, or both to tactical advantage. The gear is ruined and cannot be used again until repaired, but he lives another day...

Note: The above system can combine with (or completely substitute for) the equipment damage rules from *Infernal Realms*. Adventuring is tough, and this rule allows players to easily tell personal and armor hits apart.

## CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

The revised cleric (and variants) advance on the following table, noting that hermits, being non-combatants, get fewer hits than militant clergy:

CLERIC		HERMIT/MILITANT		DRUID	PALADIN
EXP	LVL	HP	FP	TITLE	TITLE
0	1	8	2/1	Initiate	Squire
150	2	+2	--	--	--
300	3	+4	4/2	Ovate	Gallant
600	4	+6	--	--	--
1,200	5	+8	6/3	Haruspex	Templar
2,500	6	+10	--	--	--
5,000	7	+12	8/4	Heathen	Knight errant
10,000	8	+14	--	--	--
20,000	9	+16	10/5	Versifier	Chevalier
40,000	10	+18	--	--	--
80,000	11	--/+19	12/6	--	--
160,000	12	--/+20	--	--	--
320,000	13	--/+21	14/7	--	--
640,000	14	--/+22	--	--	--
1,280,000	15	--/+23	16/8	Druid elder	Paladin

Hermits trade armor, shield, and hits at higher level for double faith points and their superior (and destructive) turning abilities against the undead.

## GODS AND BLESSINGS

Optionally, the referee can let clerics and druids (but never monks or the paladin variant) identify which SPHERE their god commands. Once per game day, they might spend double (2) FP to receive a BLESSING related to that god's dominion. Where applicable, these holy boons work at 1st level regardless of the character's ability, being mysterious and remote phenomenon:

SPHERE	WORSHIPPERS	BLESSING
Air	cleric/druid	Mute
Blacksmiths	cleric	Keen
Combat	cleric	Rout
Death	cleric	Bane
Destiny	cleric	Deny
Earth	cleric/druid	Load
Evil	cleric	Glow*
Farming	cleric	Heat
Fire	cleric/druid	Ring
Good	cleric	Glow
Hunting	cleric	Calm
Knowledge	cleric	Know
Law	cleric	Obey
Medicine	cleric	Balm
Necromancy	cleric	special#
Outlaws	cleric	Jinx
Prophecy	cleric	Omen
Restoration	cleric	Mend
Sorcery	cleric	Read
Travelers	cleric	Hale
Vampires	cleric	Fear
Water	cleric/druid	Slow
Weather	cleric/druid	Ruin
Werebeasts	cleric	Form

\*Reversed, creating total darkness

#Spend 1 FP to turn undead when failing

Note: This works best when all other options are included; otherwise, clerics can become overpowered, diminishing the experience for everyone.

Regardless, blessings indicate divine favor, withdrawn if the cleric fails to uphold the tenants of the faith (a reminder that good role-playing is essential to survival given the importance of healing). Such campaigns are best with a detailed setting where players can distinguish themselves because their actions affect the natural order of the universe. This should always be the goal.

## LITERACY

These rules assume literacy for all characters, although this may not be realistic in a medieval setting. To this end, the referee can limit literacy to clerics, magicians, and those with the intelligence ability (or from a noble background). Of course, later education is possible by means similar to learning a new language, whether a willing party member or non-player owing them a favor (and perhaps they pay to learn). That said, literacy in a single language requires 3-6 months, until which reading attempts must be rolled.

## NON-HUMAN SKILLS

Dwarves and elves have different cultures calling for unique skills, noting that they can choose (or roll) as human or off the assigned racial table:

2d6	SKILL	NOTES
2-4	Blacksmith	--
5-7	Brewer	save at +1 to avoid getting drunk
8-9	Jeweler	appraise gems, identify ore deposits
10	Merchant	to include things of dwarven make
11-12	Spelunker	move at full speed through crevices

2d6	SKILL	NOTES
2-4	Fletcher	--
5-8	Hunter	implies tracking smaller animals
9	Tanner	1 in 1d6 chance to mend light armor*
10	Winemaker	save at +1 to avoid getting drunk
11-12	Woodsman	identify poisonous plants and herbs

\*Includes magical; requires 1d6 rounds and applicable tools

