

# Diabolical D20

## Introduction

This is a game set in a medieval world where the gods have either fled or have withdrawn their blessings and protection from the majority of the population. As a result it is coming under increasing attack from Diabolic forces. A number of Diabolic Princes are competing to convert or conquer the nations of men and all that stands between them and victory are a few bands of heroes.

These travel from land to land on quests to drive back the forces of the Diabolic Princes. Sometimes they are successful, oftentimes they are not.

## *Inspiration.*

Some readers will quickly recognise that these rules owe a considerable debt to the Diablo series of computer rpg's, especially Diablo II. Unlike the previous D&D version though, these rules and the setting have not slavishly copied the computer game, but transferred its core ideas to a simpler format and similar setting.

## *Microlite D20 Game Engine*

This is a reduced version of the D20 rules that has been designed to be quick and easy to play. The goal was to create a simpler game, but one where many of the resources of core D20 (monsters, spells, adventures and equipment) could be used without any serious conversion.

## Character Creation

### *Attributes*

There are 3 attributes - Strength, Dexterity and Intellect. These are abbreviated as STR, DEX and INT.

When creating a new character roll 4d6, and ignore the lowest scoring dice. Total the remaining 3 dice and allocate to one of the attributes. Repeat for remaining attributes.

Attribute bonus = (Attribute-10)/2, round down.

Note that this can result in penalties as well as bonuses.

There is one secondary attribute:

Hit Points = STR + [Level x3]

### *Race*

The default race is Human. What other races still exist is not truly known, for most have withdrawn from the world of men as the tendrils of the dark powers have become more apparent. Some may have even succumbed to the lure of power and the philosophy of hate spread by the agents of the Diabolic Princes.

There is still much variety in the human race. Between the hulking, pale-skinned barbarians of the Northern Tribes to the slender, dark-skinned amazons of the southern jungles of Vendhya, are men and women of every hue and size.

### *Classes*

The classes are Barbarian, Assassin, Sorceress, Paladin and Amazon.

Characters begin at Level 1. Note that there are no multi-classes as each class has an intrinsic background from which their specific skills and abilities is drawn.

### **Barbarian.**

The mighty warriors of the Northern tribes are one of the few peoples to have held their own against the diabolic onslaught. Their courage, strength and bonds of honour have kept the tribes relatively safe. A few barbarians are now travelling south to see what can be done for these kingdoms and cities. The Wolf and Bear clan warriors are ever in the forefront of this effort.

- Barbarians add +1 to melee attack and damage rolls.
- They can use any weapons, wear any kind of armour and use any shield.

## **Diabolical D20**

- A Barbarian can specialise in a single type of bladed melee weapon (Spear, Sword or Axe), gaining a +2 to melee attack and damage rolls with this type (this bonus is not cumulative with their general +1).
- They have a +3 bonus to the Physical skill.
- A Barbarian can sense immediate danger which means that he is never surprised by an ambush or trap.

### **Assassin.**

The Guild of Knives long held the peace between the fractious noble and mercantile houses of the Petty Kingdoms and City States. They are adept with dealing with the enemy within and in recent times have turned their lethal attentions to those that would serve the Diabolic Princes and undermine the Guild's peace.

- Assassins can use any light weapons, light armour and light shields.
- They add +2 to melee attack and damage rolls against opponents that are flanked, prone or otherwise prevented from effectively defending themselves.
- They have a +3 bonus to the Subterfuge skill.
- Assassins can use the Subterfuge skill to find and disarm traps.

### **Sorceress.**

As the wizards have succumbed, one by one, to the easy temptations of the diabolist's path, only the Order of the Unseeing Eye, and its fierce Sorceresses, have held the line in the world of arcane magic. These solitary practitioners have been fighting against the coming storm for longer than any other.

- All sorceresses are women.
- Sorceresses can use the dagger and the staff, but can only wear light armour and cannot use shields.
- They can cast arcane spells.
- They gain a +3 bonus to the Knowledge skill.
- Sorceresses can use the spell Detect Magic, at will, and at no cost.

### **Paladin.**

In an early strike by the Diabolic Princes, the main fortress of the Templars of the Light Eternal was utterly destroyed. Only a handful of brave Paladins still exist, bringing light back to the dark places. Unlike priests, who depend completely on the gods for their powers, Paladins draw upon the belief and hope of the people and so can still cast divine spells.

- Paladins can use any bludgeoning weapon, wear any armour and use any shield.
- They can cast divine spells.
- They gain +3 bonus to the Communication skill.
- Paladins are immune to fear and give their comrades a +2 bonus on saving throws it.

### **Amazon.**

From the Citadel of the Dragon, deep in the lush jungles of Vendhya, come these lithe warrior women. They have been sent by their Empress to discover what is happening in the world of men and to fight the darkness wheresoever they may find it.

- All Amazons are women.
- Amazons can use any weapon, light or medium armour and use a light shield.
- They add +1 to missile weapon attack and damage rolls.
- They gain a +3 bonus to the Survival skill.
- Amazons are very agile and can add +2 to their AC against non-magical missile fire.

## **Diabolical D20**

### ***Starting Equipment***

Every character's order, tribe or community will try and equip their scion with the best that they can spare.

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Barbarian | Clothes, Studded Leather Armour, Light Shield, one Light Weapon, one Medium Weapon.        |
| Amazon    | Clothes, Padded Armour, Shortbow & 20 Arrows, Dagger.                                      |
| Paladin   | Clothes, Studded Leather Armour, Light Shield, Holy Symbol, one Medium Bludgeoning Weapon. |
| Sorceress | Clothes, Staff of Magic Missiles [15 charges], Arcane Talisman, Dagger.                    |
| Assassin  | Clothes, Leather Armour, Light Weapon, Thieves' Tools, 2 vials of Blade Poison [2D6 STR].  |

In addition each character begins with two Healing [1D6] Potions and 2D6 pieces of silver.

### ***Level Advancement***

Experience Points are handled a bit differently in this game.

Add up the Encounter Levels (EL) of every creature defeated in an encounter the character takes part in.

Divide this total by the number of characters who began the encounter, round down and award to each character still alive at the end of the encounter.

When the total = 10 x the character's current level, they have advanced to the next level. Reset the total to 0 after advancing.

As these are heroes any benefits that accrue from increasing a level are felt immediately. There is no need to have two days of R&R to 'level up'. DM's generally award experience at the end of a stage of an adventure anyway so no-one is going to level up in the middle of a battle.

Each level adds:

- +1 to all skills, or +2 to two skills, or +3 to one skill (player's choice).
- 3 Hit Points.
- +1 to all attack rolls.
- If the character's level divides by three (i.e., level 3, 6, 9, etc.) then add 1 point to either STR, DEX or INT (player's choice).
- Paladins and Sorceresses gain access to new levels of spells at character levels 3, 5, 7, 9, etc.

# Diabolical D20

## Skills.

There are just seven skills - Physical, Subterfuge, Craft, Knowledge, Perception, Communication and Survival. Each represents a grouping of related skills that require similar physical and mental disciplines to master.

To succeed with a skill in a dangerous or stressful situation a character must roll higher than the given Difficulty Class. The DM will often allow characters to succeed automatically in less dangerous or stressful situations if they are sufficiently and appropriately skilled.

A character's Skill Rank = their level + any bonus due to their class.

Skill Roll = D20 + Skill Rank + whatever attribute bonus is most applicable to the use of the skill.

For example:

- Climbing would use Physical + STR bonus.
- Dodging a falling rock is Physical + DEX bonus.
- Finding a trap is Subterfuge + INT bonus.
- Disabling a trap is Subterfuge + DEX bonus.
- Following tracks is Perception + INT bonus.
- Making or repairing a weapon or armour is Craft + DEX bonus.
- Recalling an ancient legend would use Knowledge + INT bonus.
- Treating a comrade who has been poisoned would use Knowledge + INT bonus.
- Bargaining for provisions with tribesmen would use Communication + INT bonus.
- Tracking a deer or finding water is Survival + INT bonus.

## Difficulty Class.

As characters develop their skills and abilities the level required for an action of moderate difficulty for them also increases as the challenges they face will also become harder.

As a guide the standard difficulty class for a character should be 10 + Character level. This can be increased or decreased depending upon whether the task is easier or more difficult than their present average ability. Thus the DM should add 1 [more difficult], 3 [much more difficult], 5 [extremely difficult] or 7 [incredibly difficult] to the DC if the task is more difficult, and deduct 1 [less difficult], 3 [easy], 5 [very easy] or 7 [really easy] from the DC if it is less difficult.

## Saving Throws.

|           |                        |  |
|-----------|------------------------|--|
| Fortitude | = 1D20+Level+STR bonus | Generally used against physically damaging attacks where dodging is not an option (poison, asphyxiation etc.). |
| Reflex    | = 1D20+Level+DEX bonus | Generally used against special attacks where dodging is an option (fireballs, lightning bolts, traps etc.).    |
| Will      | = 1D20+Level+INT bonus | Generally used against enchantments, illusions and mind controlling powers.                                    |

# Diabolical D20

## Combat.

Roll D20 + DEX bonus once per battle for initiative order Characters and monsters whos scores tie first compare their Dexterity attributes and if these are the same then reroll against each other. If one side is springing an ambush on an enemy, they get the initiative in the first round, then roll for initiative. Note that no-one is flatfooted. Barbarians are never surprised so they do roll initiative against an ambusher and thus may get to act before the ambush is sprung.

Everyone can do just one thing each turn such as move, attack, use a skill, cast a spell, etc. The exceptions being:

- the Charge, where a character can make a single move (in a straight line) and then make one attack against the target, and
- the multiple attacks available to more experienced characters.

Especially with some skill uses the DM may determine that they take more than one turn to complete.

Attack bonuses:

- Melee attack bonus = STR bonus + Level [plus any bonuses from class, enchanted items, spells or the situation, as determined by the DM]
- Missile attack bonus = DEX bonus + Level [plus any bonuses from class, enchanted items, spells or the situation, as determined by the DM]

Add the attack bonus to D20 Attack Roll. If the resulting score is higher than their opponent's Armour Class (AC), it's a hit.

Typical situation bonuses include:

|  |    |  |
|--|----|--|
| Attacking an opponent who is prone, blinded or stunned | +2 |  |
| Attacking an opponent who is flanked by an ally        | +1 |  |
| Attacking an opponent who is invisible                 | -2 |  |
| Firing a missile weapon at an opponent in light cover  | -1 | [Light cover is that which conceals but gives no protection] |
| Firing a missile weapon at an opponent in solid cover  | -2 | [Solid cover is that which conceals and gives protection]    |

Rolling an unmodified, 'natural' 20 is automatically a hit and a critical and does maximum damage. Rolling an unmodified, 'natural' 1 is a miss.

If an opponent is held, paralysed or unconscious the attacker still rolls a D20 Attack Roll. However he is just rolling to see if he rolls a 1 and thus fails to penetrate or a 20 and does a critical.

There are no attacks of opportunity. It is assumed that in a combat situation characters will remain aware of their enemies.

If the character's total attack bonus is +6 or more, a second attack can be made at -5.

If the character's total attack bonus is +11 or more, two additional attacks can be made at -5 and -10.

Weapon damage as per table below. Add STR bonus to Melee damage, and 2x STR bonus for 2-handed weapons.

Armour as per table below. AC = 10 + DEX bonus + Armour bonus.

# Diabolical D20

## *Weapons and Armour*

| <b>Weapon</b>  | <b>Damage</b> | <b>Range</b> | <b>Weight</b> | <b>Type</b>          | <b>Availability</b> | <b>Cost</b>    |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Unarmed        | d4-1          | -            | Light         | Bludgeoning          | Not applicable      | Free           |
| Dagger         | d4            | 20'          | Light         | Piercing             | Common              | Cheap          |
| Club           | d4            | -            | Light         | Bludgeoning          | Common              | Free           |
| Axe            | d6            | 20'          | Light         | Slashing             | Common              | Cheap          |
| Shortsword     | d6            | -            | Light         | Slashing/Piercing    | Standard            | Moderate       |
| Rapier         | d6            | -            | Light         | Piercing             | Uncommon            | Moderate       |
| Mace           | d6            | -            | Medium        | Bludgeoning          | Common              | Moderate       |
| Staff          | d6            | -            | Medium        | Bludgeoning          | Common              | Free           |
| Spear          | d8            | 30'          | Medium        | Piercing             | Common              | Moderate       |
| Battleaxe      | d8            | -            | Medium        | Slashing             | Standard            | Moderate       |
| Longsword      | d8            | -            | Medium        | Slashing             | Standard            | Expensive      |
| Morningstar    | d8            | -            | Medium        | Bludgeoning/Piercing | Uncommon            | Moderate       |
| Warhammer      | d8            | -            | Medium        | Bludgeoning/Piercing | Standard            | Expensive      |
| Long Spear     | 2d6           | -            | Two-handed    | Piercing             | Standard            | Moderate       |
| Great Sword    | 2d6           | -            | Two-handed    | Slashing             | Rare                | Very Expensive |
| Poleaxe        | 1d12          | -            | Two-handed    | Slashing             | Uncommon            | Expensive      |
| Maul           | 1d10          | -            | Two-handed    | Bludgeoning          | Standard            | Expensive      |
| Sling          | d4            | 80'          | Light         | Bludgeoning          | Common              | Cheap          |
| Shortbow       | d6            | 120'         | Light         | Piercing             | Common              | Cheap          |
| Light Crossbow | d6            | 200'         | Medium        | Piercing             | Standard            | Moderate       |
| Longbow        | d8            | 240'         | Medium        | Piercing             | Standard            | Moderate       |
| Heavy Crossbow | d10           | 200'         | Medium        | Piercing             | Uncommon            | Expensive      |

| <b>Armour</b>     | <b>Bonus</b> | <b>Weight</b> | <b>Availability</b> | <b>Cost</b>                                       |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|---|
| Padded            | +1           | Light         | Common              | Cheap   |
| Leather           | +2           | Light         | Common              | Cheap   |
| Studded Leather   | +3           | Light         | Common              | Moderate  |
| Chainmail Byrnie  | +4           | Light         | Standard            | Expensive   |
| Brigandine        | +4           | Medium        | Standard            | Moderate  |
| Chainmail Hauberk | +5           | Medium        | Standard            | Expensive   |
| Scale Mail        | +6           | Heavy         | Standard            | Expensive   |
| Lamellar          | +6           | Moderate      | Uncommon            | Expensive   |
| Breastplate       | +6           | Medium        | Uncommon            | Very Expensive                                    |
| Plate & Mail      | +7           | Heavy         | Uncommon            | Very Expensive                                    |
| Full Plate        | +8           | Heavy         | Rare                | If you have to ask the price you cannot afford it |
| Shield, Light     | +1           | Light         | Common              | Cheap   |
| Shield, Heavy     | +2           | Medium        | Common              | Moderate  |

## **Diabolical D20**

### ***Movement***

Character's movement per round is measured in 5' squares, and is generally 6 + DEX bonus squares.

Wearing heavy armour reduces total movement by 2 squares. Wearing no armour increases total movement by 2 squares and wearing light armour increases it by 1 square. Apply these reductions or increases before calculating speed across difficult terrain.

Movement through or across difficult terrain is halved, as is movement through a square occupied by a friend who is not engaged in combat, or through a square adjacent to an unengaged enemy. A character cannot move through a square occupied by friend who is engaged in combat.

Climbing and swimming is at half speed.

When halving speed always round up to the nearest whole square.

# Diabolical D20

## Magic

### Spells and Spell-casting

Sorceresses can cast any arcane spell with a spell level equal to or below half their class level, rounded up. At first level they may choose five arcane spells from the D20 Microlite spell list [see below].

Paladins can cast any divine spell with a spell level equal to or below half their class level, rounded up. At first level they may choose five divine spells in the D20 Microlite spell list [see below].

Learning new spells can be achieved by finding a scroll with the spell on [see Enchanted Items below], or by finding someone who already knows it and is willing to teach it for money, or more often in trade for a spell they don't know. Neither Sorceresses nor Paladins automatically learn new spells when they advance a level.

Casting a spell of any kind costs Hit Points. The cost is 1 + the level of the spell being cast. This loss cannot be healed by curing spells, but is fully recovered after eight uninterrupted hours of rest, or by drinking a Healing Potion (as this restores both physical damage and mental fatigue).

Certain enchanted items can store power that can be used to cast spells instead of hit points [see Enchanted Items below].

There is no need to memorize spells in advance. All spell-casting is spontaneous.

All spells require verbal and somatic components. Material components are replaced with Holy Symbols (Divine) or Talismans (Arcane).

The DC to resist a spell = 10 + Spell Level + INT.

### Arcane Spell List

| Cantrips         | 1st Level           | 2nd Level     | 3rd Level             | 4th Level      |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Arcane Mark      | Charm Person        | Alter Self    | Animate Dead          | Arcane Eye     |
| Dancing Lights   | Feather Fall        | Darkness      | Dispel Magic          | Bestow Curse   |
| Detect Magic     | Hold Portal         | Fog Cloud     | Fireball              | Confusion      |
| Detect Poison    | Mage Armour         | Invisibility  | Fly                   | Dimension Door |
| Light            | Magic Missile       | Knock         | Heroism               | Ice Storm      |
| Mage Hand        | Ray of Enfeeblement | Levitate      | Hold Person           | Polymorph      |
| Message          | Shield              | Mirror Image  | Lightning Bolt        | Secure Shelter |
| Prestidigitation | Silent Image        | Scorching ray | Major Image           | Stone-skin     |
| Ray of Frost     | Sleep               | Web           | Protection vs. Energy | Wall of Fire   |

### Divine Spell List

| Orisons           | 1st Level            | 2nd Level          | 3rd Level         | 4th Level             |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Create Water      | Bless                | Augury             | Continual Flame   | Control Water         |
| Cure Minor        | Bless Water          | Con/Desecrate      | Create Food/Water | Cure/Inflict Critical |
| Detect Poison     | Command              | Cure Medium        | Cure Serious      | Death Ward            |
| Detect Magic      | Cure Light           | Enthral            | Magic Circle      | Divination            |
| Disrupt Undead    | Detect Alignment     | Remove Paralysis   | Prayer            | Divine Power          |
| Light             | Divine Favour        | Restoration Lesser | Remove Disease    | Raise Dead            |
| Purify Food/Drink | Magic Weapon         | Silence            | Remove Curse      | Neutralize Poison     |
| Read Magic        | Protection/Alignment | Spiritual Weapon   | Speak with Dead   | Restoration           |
| Resistance        | Sanctuary            | Zone of Truth      | Water Walk        | Tongues               |

A list of higher level spells will be provided in a future supplement.

Cure spells cure 1D6 + caster level hit points.

The divine spell Raise Dead is a little different under these rules. Instead of losing a level the character is reduced to 0 experience points [see below]. Thus they do not lose a level but have to begin advancing towards the next level again.

## Diabolical D20

Note that Undead who usually cause negative levels in D&D do not do so in D20 Microlite. Instead their special attacks are aimed at attributes.

### *Enchanted Items.*

The most common enchanted items are Healing Potions. They are produced by apothecaries and come in a range of strengths from 1D6 to 4D6 hit points. A healing potion is a 4 fluid ounce vial of minty red liquid.

For instance some weapons and armour have one or more sockets on them into which can be placed magical gems or runestones. These gems & runestones give a variety of effects, but once set in a socket cannot be removed without destroying the entire item. Certain combinations of runes can give greater powers.

Common enchanted gems and runestones include:

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Rubies      | Adds 1D6 fire damage to weapons, or prevent the first 1D6 damage from ice attacks when placed on armour.          |
| Sapphires   | Adds 1D6 ice damage to weapons, or prevent the first 1D6 damage from fire attacks when placed on armour.          |
| Emeralds    | Adds 1D6 poison damage to weapons, or prevent the first 1D6 damage from poison attacks when placed on armour.     |
| Obsidian    | Adds 1D6 necrotic damage to weapons, or prevent the first 1D6 damage from necrotic attacks when placed on armour. |
| Pearls      | Hold 1D6 points of power that can be used for casting spells. They become worthless once power is discharged.     |
| Amethysts   | Discharge 1D6 healing energy per day upon command.  |
| Iron Rune   | Increase AC of Armour or Shield by 2  |
| Copper Rune | Prevent the first 1D6 damage from electricity when placed on armour   |

As stated in the section on Magic there are crystals that contain points of power that allow spell casters to cast spells without losing hit points. These come in three types:

1. Disposable pearls have a number of power points and once these are used the pearl is useless.
2. Rechargeable crystals that can be refilled by the sacrifice of the caster's hit points into the crystal. This is usually done between adventures.
3. Regenerating crystals are the rarest and most sought after. These regenerate the power points within them if left unused for 24 hours.

Then there are matrix crystals. These rare elven diamonds not only have power in them but also the matrix for a spell. Any character can cast the spell from a matrix crystal simply by saying the command word carves into one of its facets.

Most matrix crystals are one-use, but a few regenerate the power required to use them if left unused for 24 hours.

Some spells can be found on scrolls. These each contain a complete spell that has been cast into the scroll. Simply saying the last word of the scroll activates the spell. Any character can cast a spell from a scroll if they can make a Communications Skill roll against a DC of 15. Failing to cast it does not ruin the scroll, but a second attempt by the same character is not allowed for 24 hours.

A secondary use of the scroll is to allow the Sorceress or Paladin to learn the spell and add them to their repertoire. learning a spell from a scroll discharges it.

Another relatively common item, which is somewhat similar to the matrix crystal is the Wand. Unlike standard D&D these do not contain the power for a spell, just the matrix. The sorceress must provide the power either from their hit points or from a power crystal. What they allow sorceresses to do is cast spells they do not know yet or of a higher levels than they can yet use. Paladins have an equivalent to this in the Holy Relic.

## **Diabolical D20**

### **Equipment Lists.**

There are no prices listed for the weapons and armour above. This is because there are no set prices for anything in this chaotic age. We have added a rough guide to the availability and cost of these items, but these should be taken as just that, rough. Some equipment will be provided by the characters' patrons when they begin, other items can be scavenged from the dead or looted from enemies.

There will come a time though when the characters will need to pay for things, especially in the very few towns that exist in the period. They will pay for these things in pieces of silver. Most craftsmen will accept silver and gold items in trade for goods. A character's Communications skill will be of great importance in this form of barter.

The most common coin is the silver piece. This is often called a shilling and it weighs about an ounce depending upon how adulterated it is. Some cities, tired of merchants cutting their silver coins into halves or quarters, have issued copper pennies at a rate of twelve pennies to the silver. These pennies are worthless outside the city that minted them.

A pound of silver in metal or coin is worth roughly one Gold Mark. This is a smaller coin than the silver shilling, but still weighs about an ounce. It is more likely to have a high level of purity than silver coinage. Gold coinage is always acceptable outside the city that minted it.

The DM will consider how difficult a thing is to make, how long it takes to make, the cost of the base materials and the market (i.e. are there plenty or few of these things available).

Eleven things you can buy with one piece of silver:

1. A night in an Inn, with a good dinner and breakfast.
2. A ride on a wagon from one village to the next.
3. Any common item that took no more than one day to make (i.e. a haversack, 30' rope, knife, six candles, large wicker basket, a plain cloak, a copper cloak pin, a horse bridle, a woollen shirt, a wheelbarrow, four arrows).
4. A lady of the night for an hour.
5. Stabling for your horse for a day and a night.
6. An afternoon in a public bath house.
7. A porter or labourer for half a day (note that porters charge for both ways if they have to travel away from their community)..
8. Bribe for a Guard for a minor infraction or favour.
9. A bottle of half-decent wine.
10. A pitcher of drinkable beer.
11. A letter written for you by a scribe.

### ***Other things of worth.***

#### **A Promise.**

In the wreck that is the world one of the most valuable things a person may give is his promise. A promise is an open ended obligation that pledges the allegiance and assistance of that man at some future date. It should neither be given nor redeemed lightly. Men and women of honour will die to fulfil a promise made.

#### **Your Reputation.**

Little is of more value to a man or a woman than their reputation. In an uncertain world it is the thing that sails before you and opens doors. A reputation that is bright and honourable will gain you the ears and promises of the wise and powerful. A reputation that is dark and dangerous may bring you fear and respect.

To impugn a person's reputation is a deadly game to play. People will fight to maintain their reputation, they may even kill to do so.

#### **Your Ransom.**

Most wise adventurers bank their spare cash with a friend, a Guild or an Innkeeper. Many will try and keep a few hundred silver pieces aside to act as their ransom. When all is lost they can they shout that they have a ransom and then surrender. Most intelligent assailants would prefer to have the money than a dead body.

## **Diabolical D20**

Nearly every town has a point close by to it where such transactions take place. Some even have agents who will negotiate between the captors and the ransom holder for a fee. The usual deal is to hand over the captive with his equipment in return for the cash. Not all captors are so generous and may also ransom choice items of equipment back to their captive or his agent.

As a rule of thumb an intelligent captor will demand at least one hundred silver pieces per captive level. This may be reduced if the captive is not 'complete'.

Innkeepers have become common agents in this trade, and many will happily put the adventurer's ransoms in their strongboxes with the hope of making a fat fee if they should become captured or the whole amount if the adventurer dies kinless. Those who double cross their clients quickly achieve a dark reputation and are not in business for long.

# Diabolical D20

## Appendix 1 - What is Known.

The World is divided into many City States and Petty Kingdoms. The majority of these are in a poor state, riven from within by diabolic cults, and assailed from without by the forces of the Diabolic Princes. Many are nervous and unwelcoming of strangers.

The areas of wilderness that once bordered these communities have grown both in size and in danger, separating them from each other such that only well-protected caravans can now travel between them. Few of the City States or Petty Kingdoms have the strength to do any more than protect what remains and in their hour of need they turn to companies of adventurers to drive back the darkness.

Many of the world's sage wizards have turned into diabolists, leaving a scattered few to teach their magics to the next generation. The Gods have fled and as a result most churches and temples are now empty. Only the Templars of the Light Eternal, the Paladins, are sufficiently holy to be able to draw upon divine belief to power their spells. Unfortunately most of these are dead.

### ***The Enemy.***

The main forces of the Diabolic Princes include the Corrupt, the Undead, the Fallen, and various Devils.

### **The Corrupt.**

Many humans have given up the fight against the forces of the Diabolic Princes and sold their souls in the hope of immortality, or at least staving off the inevitable. These fools form into secretive Diabolic Cults. The Diabolic Princes use these cultists to undermine the morale and organization of the remaining kingdoms.

Although they remain ostensibly human the longer they spend in the service of their dark masters the more bestial they become.

### **The Undead.**

One of the ways a Diabolic Cult can increase its power is to create or attract Undead minions. Amongst the Corrupt are those who were once Priests of the Old Gods and who have since become foul Necromancers.

The most common undead are Skeletons and Zombies, though not uncommon are all manner of depraved creatures such as ghouls and ghosts. Only the most powerful Cults and Necromancers can command the allegiance of Vampires and Wights.

### **The Fallen.**

These are what the Corrupt become once they have mutated so far they can no longer be considered to be human. They are still humanoid in appearance but often exhibit grossly over muscled bodies, horns, cloven feet and tails. These form tribes out in the wilderness, where they infest the ruins of civilization and prey on the remaining human communities that border their dark domains.

### **Devils.**

Most devils find it difficult to manifest upon the Prime Material plane, and where they do they cannot maintain their physical form for long. Thus they are only common close to dimensional gates and rifts, or where summoned by the Corrupt.

One minor type of Devil has managed to transfer permanently to this world by possessing the form of a goblin cultist. These are small, quick and vicious. They are led by Diabolic shamen who exhibit arcane powers.

### ***Other Enemies.***

Although the forces of the Diabolic Princes do pose the greatest threat to humanity there are others who can cause pain and suffering who have no allegiance to them.

### **Brigands.**

When the rule of law is gone many men turn to Brigandry to feed themselves and their families. Robberies on the highways and byways of the Petty Kingdoms is rife. Some traveller's, such as wealthy caravans, can afford to buy them off, but many are much less fortunate.

## **Diabolical D20**

### **Goblin Warbands.**

With the collapse of the borders many goblin tribes are sending our warbands to raid and loot outlying villages and farmsteads. What they lack in strength of arms they more than make up for in numbers and a cruel cunning.

Goblins are nocturnal raiders, using their excellent night vision and sense of smell to guide them through the darkness. Although not particularly brave they are more than capable of overwhelming a few humans by sheer weight of numbers.

### **Halflings.**

Halflings were once reasonably common in human cities and kingdoms, but since the fall they have become increasingly rare. Where they all went to few humans can even guess, and even less care. The fact is that the only time a human generally see's a halfling now is when they are being robbed.

When you are three feet tall in a man's world you tend to have develop strategies for evening up the situation. Halflings have always had a talent for stealth and larceny. When they depended upon human's good nature to get by well they kept the larceny down to a minimum. Now though the gloves are off.

Imagine a Goblin Warband, but with an intelligence that matches that of a human and the ability to disappear in a heartbeat. Halfling gangs are now responsible for about half of all robberies and theft in human cities. More than one wealthy burgher has woken up on the floor of his bedroom to find everything stick of furniture, every morsel of food and every last copper piece has been purloined while he slept.

### **Dark Knights.**

What happens to a Paladin who has lost all hope? Whom the gods have deserted and whose spirit lies broken? Many have turned to evil and have become Dark Knights. Some of these maintain a semblance of chivalry and go through the motions of their previous lives, such as maintaining their castle, holding foul tournaments or defending a bridge or road against all comers.

Others draw to their banners ambitious and cruel young men and form retinues. These company's of darkness raid caravans, villages and even small towns, revelling in an orgy of destruction.

Few though have fallen further than Sir Turquine sans Pitie. Once a Knight of the Argent Circle of the Temple of Light Eternal he has become a true fiend and has carved a small kingdom for himself in the Grey Mountains. He rides forth from here to reave and enslave his neighbours.

### **The Wild Hunt.**

Although most have withdrawn to their ancient forest holds, some Elves now prey upon humans. They blame humanity for releasing the Diabolic Princes and seek to avenge their losses. They rarely wander far from their forests, but form a deadly threat along their borders.

Upon a full moon they are rumoured to ride forth upon sylvan steeds with a baying pack of barghests at their head. They are led by a powerful Elven Lord, known as the Master of the Hunt, and they give no mercy to anyone who passes before them.

### **Ogres.**

Once upon a time human champions drove these beasts so far into the wilderness that they became legends. A monster to frighten children to bed with. Now they are coming back, and not just in ones or twos, but in warbands numbering dozens.

They are driven by their hunger for flesh and have no compunction about who they attack. More than one Diabolic Cult or Goblin Warband has been wiped out and then eaten by ravenous Ogres.

Ogres are large, slow and immensely strong. They are bright enough to be able to cobble together makeshift armour from what they loot, and use huge clubs and crude spears in combat.