

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

Rulebook

PLAYER'S OPTION™ Spells & Magic

by Richard Baker



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Foreword

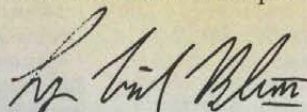
My introduction to fantasy began when I was assigned J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* in my 6th grade reading class. Although I was only eleven at the time, I was already a fan of science fiction—I'd read a lot of Robert Heinlein's juvenile SF, as well as Doc Smith's Lensman books and a smattering of other titles. I hadn't read anything in the fantasy genre, and as I recall, I had little desire to do so. *The Hobbit* changed that for me, and I went back and re-read it as soon as I finished turning the last page. After that, I was off and running. The next thing I read was the *Lord of the Rings*. Then I found Terry Brooks' *The Sword of Shannara*, followed by Ursula K. Leguin's *A Wizard of Earthsea*.

And that's where I was brought to a screeching halt. My hometown library was on the small side, and all of their fantasy and science fiction books occupied one carousel in the kids' section. It may be hard to believe now, but even as recently as 1977 fantasy was a poor cousin to science fiction, which was a poor cousin to mainstream fiction. Bookstores just didn't have the massive sections devoted to fantasy and science fiction that they have today. By hook and by crook, I eventually tracked down more and more fantasy titles. But when I was still desperately searching for fantastic fiction, sometime in 1978 or 1979, I ran across a brand-new game called DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. So, like many people, I came to fantasy role-playing through my love of fantasy fiction.

In writing this book, I've come to the conclusion that the single defining characteristic of the fantasy genre is magic. Every fantasy story features a character who can use magic, owns a magical item, or is confronted with a magical situation or paradox. Movies like *Indiana Jones* or *Robin Hood* are wonderful adventures, but they're not fantasy stories because they have no magic. On the other hand, the popular *Star Wars* movies are fantasy, not science fiction, because magic (referred to as the Force) is part of the story. Science fiction is the literature of things that *could* happen; fantasy is the literature of things that *can't* happen. And magic is the very essence of the impossible.

So, here's a book about magic in the AD&D® game. I've tried to include enough options and choices to give you, the reader, the ability to give magic in your particular campaign almost any kind of flavor or feel that you like. If you want to make magic rarer, more "realistic," or more dangerous, you can find rules in here for doing so. If you want rules to add detail and complexity to the AD&D magic system, they're here. Or if you just want some new wizard and priest character types as well as some complementary spells, you'll find them. When I started this project, I thought that I'd have a hard time filling this whole book . . . now, I can't believe how much more I could have written if space had permitted.

Have fun, and good gaming!



Rich Baker
January, 1996
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

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Introduction

What's a fantasy game without magic?

Sure, the AD&D® game can be played without spellcasters, enchanted monsters, or magical items. Everyone can still role-play brave heroes, confront deadly foes, and attempt great quests or deeds of mythical proportions. In fact, it can be fun and challenging to do so in a nonmagical setting. But the point remains that magic, more than any other characteristic, defines the AD&D game. As a *fantasy* role-playing game, AD&D is anchored in the traditions of fantasy literature, and fantasy literature by definition features some element of magic. Even if the heroes of a fantasy story distrust or dislike magic, it's still there in the background as part of the world they live in.

Generally, most writers of fantasy literature create their own unique systems of magic to explain the supernatural powers their heroes and villains employ. With great care and deliberate effort, authors define what magic can and cannot do in their worlds. For example, in *The Lord of the Rings*, J.R.R. Tolkien circumscribes the wizard Gandalf's power by placing restrictions on Gandalf's freedom of action. The great wizard is bound by a code of secrecy and noninterference that prevents him from directly challenging the power of Sauron, and he can only help and advise as the Free Peoples of Middle-earth fight their own battles. Jack Vance's *Dying Earth* stories assume that wizards must study complicated patterns and formulae to memorize very specific spells that may only be used once before vanishing from the wizard's memory. (Sound familiar?)

There are very good reasons for limiting magic's power from a literary point of view. Modern readers need to see real challenges and obstacles for the characters in a story, and magic systems that are too open-ended can wreck a story's credibility and sense of suspense. If Gandalf could have just *wished* the One Ring into the fires of Mount Doom from Frodo's living room, what would have been the point of the trek to Mordor? Since fantasy role-playing games are flexible models of the fantasy genre, the same considerations are true for them. A fantasy RPG has to set very precise rules for how magic works and what it can do, and the presentation and workings of the magic system inevitably become the game's salient characteristics.